

THE ACQUISITION AND PRESERVATION  
OF LABOUR UNION RECORDS IN CANADA

by

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## ABSTRACT

In times of shifting cultural and institutional priorities, the acquisition and preservation of private records by large publicly funded archival institutions is becoming increasingly problematic. Repositories are looking for new ways of meeting their cultural mandates while also dealing with reduced budgets and staffing levels.

This thesis examines the issue from the perspective of who is to be responsible for the preservation of labour union records and where are they to be preserved. After putting the issue in context with an literature review and then by examining the juridical and social framework within which unions operate the thesis studies the question from two traditional perspectives: preservation solely by an archival institution and preservation solely by the organization or union. The thesis concludes by recommending a third option, a mixed or shared responsibility approach between the union and the institution, specifically, a cost-shared / partnership arrangement between the

union and archival repository regarding the acquisition and preservation of  
labour union records.

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INTRODUCTION:  
THE ACQUISITION AND PRESERVATION  
OF LABOUR UNION RECORDS IN CANADA

In a recent series of articles in the *Archives Association of British Columbia Newsletter*, reprinted in *Archivaria*, historian Robert A. J. McDonald and archivist Christopher Hives explored the issues of acquisition and preservation of private records Canadian archives. McDonald questions "the tide of diminishing commitment by British Columbia's publicly-funded institutions to collect private records," which, he feels, signals a departure from "the Canadian tradition of preserving government and private records in state-funded provincial and national archives."<sup>1</sup>

By contrast, Hives argues that new cultural priorities have in fact imparted new archival priorities in the archival community, and further that, "cultural priorities, once considered paramount, have, of necessity, been supplanted by administrative priorities." He also argues that all public bodies

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<sup>1</sup>Robert A. J. McDonald, "Who is Preserving Private Records?" *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994), p. 155.

face increased pressure to account for their activities by "the citizens on whose behalf they act." He then concludes that "the management and preservation of [public] institutions' records is and must be the primary responsibility for archives of government and publicly funded bodies."<sup>2</sup> Hives' comments are not completely unsympathetic to McDonald's concerns. However, he does underscore the problem that public archival institutions cannot separate administrative and cultural reasons for preserving archives as was often supposed in the past.

Susan Hart frames the problem from a different viewpoint by looking at "the records created by small businesses, by families, by voluntary associations ranging from high school soccer clubs to Free Trade protest groups."<sup>3</sup> Hart writes,

Many of these fonds are extremely valuable to society,  
and some of them used to be sought out and welcomed at  
our major archival institutions. Not so much any more,

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<sup>2</sup>Christopher Hives, "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally", *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994), p.158.

<sup>3</sup>Susan Hart, "An Active Approach to Preserving Non-Governmental Records". Paper presented at the Association of Canadian Archivists Conference, Banff, Alberta, Canada, 1991. (Unpublished paper), p.1.

so now there are more street archives.<sup>4</sup>

While Hart's choice of metaphors is perhaps questionable, her concern for private records is not. Her solution is a model based on a typology of societal functions, what she calls a "documentation plan." She advocates "a system for determining which records creators are most valuable." Hart's emphasis is specifically on the creators of records as opposed to what she sees as the inherent limitations of the emphasis accorded subject content in the recent discussion of documentation strategy; documentation strategy being an "on going analytic, cooperative approach designed, promoted and implemented by creators, administrators, including archivists and users to ensure the archival retention of appropriate documentation in some area of human endeavor."<sup>5</sup>

Documentation Strategy, according to Helen Samuels, consists of four specific activities: i) choosing and defining the topic, ii) choosing both advisors and a site from which to launch a strategy, iii) organizing the project

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<sup>4</sup>Hart, "An Active Approach to Preserving Non-Governmental Records," p.1.

<sup>5</sup>Lewis J. Bellardo and Lynn Lady Bellardo, comps. *A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators and Records Managers*, Chicago, The Society of American Archivists (1992), p.12.



and analyzing all available documentation and finally, iv) selecting and housing the documentation. In effect, documentation strategy is a subject specific approach to the appraisal for acquisition of archival records.<sup>6</sup>

Hart, on the other hand, envisions a province wide "documentation plan" based partly on the ideas of German archivist Hans Booms as presented in his essay "Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources," which aims to, "document society as a whole, rather than reacting to a desire to document certain aspects of it."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>See Helen Samuels, "Who Controls the Past," *American Archivist* 49 (Spring 1986), p.109-124; Larry J. Hackman and Joan Warnow-Blewett, "The Documentation Strategy Process: A Model and a Case Study," *American Archivist* 50 (Winter, 1987), p. 12-47; Philip Alexander and Helen Samuels, "The Roots of 128: A Hypothetical Documentation Strategy," *American Archivist* 50 (Fall, 1987), p. 518-531; Richard Cox and Helen Samuels, "The Archivist's First Responsibility: A Research Agenda for the Identification and Retention of Records of Enduring Value," *American Archivist* 51 (Winter/Spring 1988), p. 28-42; Terry Abraham, "Collection Policy or Documentation Strategy: Theory and Practice," *American Archivist* 54 (Winter 1991), p. 44-52; Helen Samuels, "Improving Our Disposition: Documentation Strategy," *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-1992), p. 125-140; Terry Cook, "Documentation Strategy," *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992), p. 181-191; Richard Cox, "The Documentation Strategy and Archival Appraisal Principles: A Different Perspective," *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994), p. 11-36.

<sup>7</sup>See Hans Booms, "Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources," *Archivaria* 24 (Summer 1987), p. 69-107,

Hart then proceeds to identify three general areas for action: i) a commitment of resources, mainly time and money, from the archival community; ii) a strengthening of the Canadian network of archival repositories in an effort to coordinate a national acquisitions strategy and finally, iii) the actual implementation of the documentation plan itself, "a system for acquisition based on a holistic view of society and the records creators in it."<sup>8</sup>

Hart's model for the acquisition of private records by public institutions accepts Booms' concept of the analysis of societal functions and activities as the first step in forming a documentary heritage. However, the model fails to account for the "new priorities," as identified by Hives, in the public sector. As Hives points out, priorities have changed considerably since that "golden age" of public sector acquisition of private sector records. A case in point is the moratorium on the acquisition of union records by the National Archives

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and, "Überlieferungsbildung: Keeping Archives as a Social and Political Activity," *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-1992), p. 25-34.

<sup>8</sup>Hart, "An Active Approach to Preserving Non-Governmental Records," p.12.

of Canada instituted in 1987.<sup>9</sup> It would seem that public records institutions can no longer afford to acquire private records and the creators of records, if they are concerned for the preservation of their own documentary resources, can no longer afford to have public institutions look after them.

Canadian Society has changed considerably since the late nineteenth and early twentieth century when individuals such as Douglas Brymner and Sir Arthur Doughty, the first two heads of the Public Archives of Canada, set out to acquire everything of significance for the writing of Canadian History.<sup>10</sup> Today, many more and larger organizations, both public and private, exist than did then, and they all generate quantities of records undreamed of by either Brymner or Doughty. Faced with this situation, that public archival institutions cannot do the job of preserving the records of private organizations, those very organizations have to reassess their role of

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<sup>9</sup>Peter DeLottinville, "Life in the Age of Restraint: Recent Developments in Archives in English Canada, *Archivaria* 27 (Winter 1988-1989), p.11.

<sup>10</sup>Ian E. Wilson. "'A Noble Dream': The Origins of the Public Archives of Canada," *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-1983), p. 16-35.

preserving a record of their activities for their own immediate purposes or for larger cultural oriented reasons.

Labour unions, like most social groupings, are defined by the social and legal framework within which they function. Unions are, for all intents and purposes, corporate bodies or "juridical persons with the rights and duties of such bodies established in Canadian law."<sup>11</sup> In her series of essays on diplomatics, Luciana Duranti writes that the term "juridical person," is used

in the sense of an entity having the capacity to act legally and constituted either by a collection or succession of physical persons or a collection of properties.<sup>12</sup>

In that unions are invested with the rights and duties accorded a juridical person, they also, considering the recent trend towards Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation, must begin to attend to their

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<sup>11</sup>Luciana Duranti, "Diplomatics: New Used for an Old Science," *Archivaria* 28 (Summer 1989), p.27.

<sup>12</sup>Luciana Duranti, p.27.

records as primary and valuable sources of evidence of their activities. As Rod Young points out,

the highly legalistic structure of the industrial relations system, in conjunction with the growing urgency and complexity of members concerns underlines the value of [the] types of records that unions produce.<sup>13</sup>

Trade unions, like most other juridical bodies in society, have both a duty and an "obligation to their members to ensure that [their] records are properly preserved and maintained."<sup>14</sup>

If labour unions may be considered juridical bodies with a legal as well as perhaps a moral responsibility to preserve their records for both evidential and probative purposes, then, considering the new "cultural priorities" identified by Hives, coupled with the potential viability of the framework for a documentation plan as suggested by Hart, who will be responsible for the preservation of the records of labour unions? Publicly funded archival institutions or the labour unions themselves?

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<sup>13</sup>Rod Young, "The Evidentiary and Probative Value of Trade Union Records," *Archivaria* 18 (Summer 1984), p.209.

<sup>14</sup>Young, "The Evidentiary and Probative Value of Trade Union Records," p.209.

This thesis will explore these questions from a number of perspectives. It will begin with a literature review which will examine the context within which the preservation of labour records debate has taken place over the past twenty-five years. Chapter 2 will examine the question, "what do unions do?" It will locate union organizations within a juridical framework as well as delineate their functional role in society. The purpose of both of these chapters will be to establish a context for both an historical (the archival discourse as it evolved in archival literature) and practical (that is, the juridical and practical framework for union activities) context for answering the master question.

Chapter 3 will explore the two most popular options: i) acquisition / preservation solely by an archival institution and ii) acquisition / preservation by the union. Further to this, this chapter will consider some of the "traditional" approaches as they have been outlined above, specifically, documentation strategy. Finally Chapter 4 will conclude and propose that the most appropriate approach is perhaps a mixed approach and explore the implications of a third option a cost-shared / partnership arrangement between the union and the archival repository.

## **CHAPTER 1: THE ARCHIVAL DISCOURSE ON THE ACQUISITION AND PRESERVATION OF LABOUR UNION RECORDS**

Much of the discourse in archival literature concerning the preservation of labour records in Canada and the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, focused on the acquisition and preservation of labour records from an institutional perspective. An “institutional perspective” in the sense that, larger archival institutions, it was posited, were in the best position to manage the records of large organizational entities like labour unions. Repositories like the National Archives of Canada and Wayne State University, Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs, two of the largest archives in North America which actively sought out labour archives, argued persuasively the necessity of acquiring these types of records from the perspective of an institutional obligation and archival responsibility. Their rationale was simple: primarily due to their size, they were in the best position to acquire and preserve the records of labour unions. As the decades and debates wore on, it became evident, as Peter DeLottinville put

it in his 1989 article, "Life in the Age of Restraint", that in an era of increasing fiscal awareness "where and how do we find the resources to preserve the records of labour?" Thus, by the beginning of the 1990s, the debate had shifted from the question of who should preserve the records of labour to how could they be preserved?

This chapter will examine the labour union records issue as it evolved in archival literature in both Canada and the United States over the past two and a half decades. It will review the issues, the positions taken and, the solutions offered by the writers. It will conclude that while the debate thoughtfully explored the many issues as they were perceived at the time it did not, indeed, could not, offer a fully satisfactory solution to the difficulty of essentially where and how to preserve the records of labour. This was due in part to the limitations of perspective by the participants on the perceived role of archives and their relationship to the Canadian Archival System.



In the March 1972 issue of *Canadian Labour*, the official journal of the Canadian Labour Congress, Eldon Frost, the Labour Archives Coordinator at the Public Archives of Canada (PAC), issued a call: "We welcome the assistance of all persons who may have, or know the whereabouts of minutes, publications, declarations or other documents of the labour movement."<sup>1</sup> Over the preceding year, an acquisition program "of documentation of the history of trade unions in this country," had been initiated in Ottawa. Frost writes,

in undertaking this program, the Public Archives is fulfilling its obligation to collect and preserve documentation of the various activities of Canadians in many walks of life. For the labour movement, the collection and preservation of historical documents will help ensure that the contributions of workers and their unions to the development of this country will not be overlooked.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eldon Frost, "Public Archives seeks Labour Records," *Canadian Labour* 17, 3 (March 1972), p.17.

<sup>2</sup> Frost, "Public Archives seeks Labour Records," p.17.

Frost concluded: "the preservation of historical records also will ensure that the work of the labour leaders of the former decades will not be forgotten."<sup>3</sup>

In May 1987, the National Archives of Canada imposed "a moratorium on new [labour union] acquisitions...accepting only those that were in danger of destruction."<sup>4</sup> Peter DeLottenville noted that "the National Archives refused transfers from ten major Canadian labour organizations which had already entered into archival agreements with the institution."<sup>5</sup> This change in policy reflects how rapidly conditions of archival acquisition changed in a mere fifteen years.

Nancy Stunden recounts that the initial impetus to create a labour archives program at the Public Archives derived from three sources. First,

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<sup>3</sup> Frost, "Public Archives seeks Labour Records," p.17.

<sup>4</sup> Peter DeLottinville, "Life in the Age of Restraint: Recent Developments in Labour Archives in English Canada," *Archivaria* 27 (Winter 1988-1989), p.11.

<sup>5</sup> DeLottinville, p.11.

increased interest in the history of the working class spurred archivists to seek out sources for research into labour union history. Second, with the labour movement entering into a period of relative stability, more union effort was focused in the direction of both education and public relations. Furthermore, some of the larger labour organizations were "feeling the pressure of the expense and effort required to maintain extensive dormant files." And, finally, the growth in both facilities and staff of Canadian archives generated "a broader sense of purpose and responsibility."<sup>6</sup>

As early as the mid-1960's, in conjunction with the Canadian Labour Congress Confederation Centennial Project, the Congress' research director, Eugene Forsey, began to prepare an extensive history of the labour movement. "The efforts of Dr. Forsey," writes Stunden, "resulted in the preservation of some labour records not only in local and provincial archives, but also in the national institution."<sup>7</sup> This study and the

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<sup>6</sup> Stunden, "Labour, Records and Archives: The Struggle for a Heritage," *Archivaria* 4 (Summer 1977), p.74.

<sup>7</sup> Stunden, "Labour, Records and Archives: The Struggle for a Heritage," p.74.

subsequent publications of Forsey illustrate the burgeoning interest in labour union history and support the first of Stunden's three pre-conditions to the labour study / archives revival in the late 1960's. There were other labour history projects, but Forsey's efforts are notable for the sheer amount of documentary material they were to amass.

In accordance with its "Systematic National Acquisitions Program," the Public Archives of Canada "began to collect actively in the field of labour in the late 1960s."<sup>8</sup> In fact, "a voluminous collection" of the records of the Canadian Labour Congress was acquired in early 1970, followed by records from the national office of the Canadian Food and Allied Workers dating from 1941, microfilmed copies of records of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, as well as the head office records of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers. Writing in 1977, Stunden reports that presently "the national offices of several other unions, including the Canadian Union of Public Employees

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<sup>8</sup> Stunden, "Labour, Records and Archives: The Struggle for a Heritage," p.76.

and the Textile Workers of America, are in the process of transferring their historical records to the PAC."<sup>9</sup>

Personal papers believed to be complementary to union records were also acquired by the PAC in this period. For example, the private records of Madeline Parent and R. Kent Rowley, both "left-wing militants," who led the United Textile Workers of America in Canada from 1940 to 1952, as well as the papers of J. L. Cohen, a lawyer "for many left-wing political groups... during the 1930s and 1940s," were acquired in the early 1970s.<sup>10</sup> It is clear that the Cohen papers do not relate specifically to union affairs, which suggests that there was some confusion on the part of archivists as to what to include in the labour archives program. The labour union movement and the working class experience are two quite different things and it seems that archivists did not always recognize this fact in their acquisition of the records of labour unions.

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<sup>9</sup> Stunden, "Labour, Records and Archives: The Struggle for a Heritage," p.76.

<sup>10</sup> Stunden, "Labour, Records and Archives: The Struggle for a Heritage," p.77.

In a 1978 interview, English historian Eric Hobsbawm commented that he had a "strong prejudice" towards labour history. He wrote that "a history of the parties, leaders and others of labour...seems to me quite inadequate," for, he added, "it tends to replace the actual history of the movement by the history of the people who *said* they spoke for the movement."<sup>11</sup> This naturally presents a dilemma for the archivist and scholar alike. Hobsbawm further observed that, "this leaves the door wide open, partly for the creation of mythologies and for the sort of diplomatic difficulties that have made it extremely hard to write official histories of trade unions, political parties and other organizations."<sup>12</sup> Archivist Philip Mason has identified the same problem. "Many archival institutions," he writes, "emphasize the official records of labour organizations." Moreover, there has been in his opinion an undue "emphasis upon

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<sup>11</sup> Pat Thane, "[Interview with] Eric Hobsbawm," *Visions of History: Interviews with...*, edited by Henry Abelove and others. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), p.31.

<sup>12</sup> Thane, "[Interview with] Eric Hobsbawm," p.31

collecting the personal papers of major leaders of the movement,"<sup>13</sup> the "great men syndrome," he calls it.

Archivists have a social obligation, a responsibility to preserve the fullest possible record of society - its documentary heritage - not just the records of "great men" no matter what side of the tracks they hail from. Joan Rabbins underlines this very same point. "There is a need," she writes, "to collect and describe material from...non-traditional unions...those that have been organizing professional, white-collar workers, or those that represent dissidents who have broken away from the leadership."<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that the context within which the records are generated is of paramount importance to their full comprehension, meaning and use.

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<sup>13</sup> Mason, "Wayne State University: The Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs," *Archivaria* 4 (Summer 1977), p.140.

<sup>14</sup> Joan Rabbins, "Redescription Reconsidered: Current Issues in Description and their Application for Labour Archives," *Archivaria* 27 (Winter 1988-1989), p.62.

This raises a second point, initially introduced above, with regard to archivists' tendency to see working people's experience and the labour union experience as synonymous. An excellent illustration of this is the *Archivaria* issue number 4, published in the summer of 1977. The issue is sub-titled "The Working-Class Record," when in fact it is about The Labour Movement's record from a specifically academic point of view. There is very little about the "working class record" in the issue. In contrast, Raymond Williams in his book *Culture & Society: Colridge to Orwell* has argued that "we may now see what is properly meant by 'working class culture'." Williams writes, "it is not proletarian art, or council houses, or a particular use of language; it is, rather, the basic collective idea, and the institutions, manners, habits of thought and the intentions which proceed from this."<sup>15</sup> In other words, "the working class record" encompasses more than the union and its activities. It extends into the realm of that which we may call "popular" or "mass" culture as well as other institutional environments such as fraternal organizations and

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<sup>15</sup> Raymond Williams, *Culture & Society: Colridge to Orwell*. (London: Chatto & Windus Ltd., 1958; reprint London: the Hogarth Press, 1990), p. 327.



political parties. It is the space of the everyday and the hours spent away from work. Thus the concept of the working class experience, which began to draw attention from historians at this time, is much more complex than the simple documentation of labour union affairs.

Of course, this confusion between working people's experience and union records extends beyond the parameters of the issues of the acquisition and preservation of labour archives. Yet archivists, it seems, had mistakenly wanted it this way. Put simply, either archivists adhere to the records of labour, that is to unions, or acknowledge the full scope of and potential difficulties of the project. No measure of justice is achieved by collapsing the working class experience into a problematic notion of the "labour movement." These are questions and issues archivists should acknowledge, if archivists are purporting to preserve the "working class record," and not just the records of organized labour. The notion of what constitutes this record is surely fuller than the "great men" and their organizations. As Williams and others have made adequately clear, the

scope and sphere of the working class experience is greater, richer and more complex than it initially appears.

The above should be qualified by adding that it is not necessarily an argument in favour of expanding the sphere of archival activity in this area. A notion as complex as "working class culture" presents numerous difficulties for archivists, and that is why boundaries should be drawn and priorities established. Trade unions present one dimension in the mix of working class culture and, therefore, present a provenancial sphere wherein sound decisions regarding appraisal, acquisition, arrangement and description can be made. In fact, to proceed on anything but a provenancial basis would run contrary to current archival principles, and be fraught with difficulty and confusion. Ideally what is required is not just a clearer definition of the working class experience and its component parts, but equally a provenance based appraisal and records management methodology implemented and supported by the unions in conjunction with archivists in order to counteract the random and ad hoc acquisition and preservation of union records.

Not much more was written in formal articles on the subject of labour union records until Peter DeLottinville noted in 1989, "if labour archives have made some progress during the last ten years, there remains some issues that have not been properly addressed."<sup>16</sup> Repeating a point Stunden had made earlier, DeLottinville was referring to the international character of some unions. Many Canadian unions are part of larger American organizations with headquarters in the United States. Sometimes these larger international unions adopt a policy detrimental to programs like that of the PAC. For example, the United Auto Workers (UAW), which has local branches in the United States and Canada, requires all its locals to deposit records at Wayne State University in Detroit in accordance with a decision undertaken at the UAW Convention in 1962.

To both Stunden and DeLottinville, this situation presents some difficulty for the study of the history of union activity in Canada. In the

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<sup>16</sup> DeLottinville, "Life in the Age of Restraint: Recent Developments in Labour Archives in English Canada," p.16.

best of circumstances, records may be physically located in the United States, but at least accessible. In the worst of cases, Canadian records are not being preserved at all. As Stunden characterizes the situation, it is clear that the general bureaucratic process of Canadian union offices works against the preservation of its own records. She writes that, in general, "a Canadian vice-president or local officer of an international probably did not bother to ensure the survival of the records in his possession on the assumption that the head office of the union had copies of the most important communications or reports which summerized major developments."<sup>17</sup> This neglect of records is ironic considering the nationalist character of so much of the Canadian labour movement. Stunden adds, "it would not occur...that because [the] head office was located in the United States, no documentation of the union's activities in Canada would be preserved in this country."<sup>18</sup> No one knows the extent of this problem. Many unions are solely Canadian but where they are not, it

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<sup>17</sup> Stunden, "Labour, Records and Archives: The Struggle for a Heritage," p. 82.

<sup>18</sup> Stunden, "Labour, Records and Archives: The Struggle for a Heritage," p. 82.

is important to bear in mind that they alone decide their policy. Archivists, do not.

This problem is further compounded by the actual physical storage of Canadian records in the United States. Peter DeLottinville notes, "Canadian archivists have been arguing for some time that the records created by Canadian workers should remain in Canada." He adds, "whether workers were members of national or international unions, their history was shaped by Canadian economic development, labour legislation, cultural and social trends and government policy."<sup>19</sup> DeLottinville's argument is persuasive in that he grounds his polemic firmly on archival principles. Specifically, he argues that records should not be removed from the context of their creation. The provenancial dimension of DeLottinville's argument can be neatly contrasted with the more pragmatic perspective of American archivist Philip Mason on the same issue.

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<sup>19</sup> DeLottinville, "Life in the Age of Restraint: Recent Developments in Labour Archives in English Canada," p. 19.

In 1962, the United Auto Workers designated Wayne State University's labour archives as their official repository. Mason acknowledges that some archivists liken this to "raiding" another country's records, but defends his institution's actions on three grounds. First, Wayne State acts as a repository for labour records in accordance with a "legally binding policy established by the auto workers."<sup>20</sup> Second, that there was "real uncertainty" that the Canadian UAW records would not be "preserved at all had not Wayne State obtained them at the time." And finally, Mason believes that the centralized repository scheme is more "convenient for researchers." In regard to his last point, he adds, "the complaint against centralization overlooks the role of the cooperation by archives which makes pertinent records readily available on microfilm to a variety of institutions."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Philip Mason, "Wayne State University: The Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs," p. 147.

<sup>21</sup> Mason, "Wayne State University: The Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs," p. 147.

Mason's rationalizations of Wayne State University's acquisition practices, however, are more problematic than he suggests. For instance, in a later 1982 article, Mason cites archival jurisdictional problems as a major obstacle in the acquisition of labour records. "There is some disagreement," he writes, "between those archives that collect material on a national basis and those that concentrate on regional areas."<sup>22</sup> In conclusion, Mason adds, "serious consideration also should be given to i) avoiding competition for particular collections, ii) splitting collections between more than one repository, iii) denigrating the programs of other labour archives...."<sup>23</sup>

Five years later, Thomas Connors in a 1987 article in *The Midwestern Archivist*, identified the same problem. The lack of communication between regional and national programs, has, Connors proposes, "serv[ed] to inhibit the development of a cooperative agenda for

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<sup>22</sup> Philip Mason, "Labour Archives in the United States: Achievements and Prospects," *Labour History* 23, 4 (Fall 1982), p. 495.

<sup>23</sup> Mason, "Labour Archives in the United States: Achievements and Prospects," p. 496.

the collection and preservation of labour records...."<sup>24</sup> That is to say, the issue of centralization and cooperation is not as settled in the United States as Mason would have his Canadian readers believe.

A second major problem besides the so-called "records raiding" issues, which has impeded the acquisition of labour records in Canada, is the question of tax credits to unions. Again, both Stunden and DeLottinville highlight this issue as a major concern for labour archivists. In that unions are non-profit organizations and therefore pay no taxes, they do not qualify for tax credits from the donation of their records. Major companies and business, on the other hand, regularly receive tax credit for the donation of their records to archival repositories. The ramifications of this are troubling for some archivists. Stunden observes, "money normally put into records keeping brings not direct or indirect tax deductions but only reduces the funds generated to pursue the purpose for which the union

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas Connors, The Labour Archivist and the "Labour Question": Two Steps Forward, One Step Back," *The Midwestern Archivist* 12, 2 (1987), p. 66.



exists, which is, after all, the improvement of their members and non-organized workers."<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, in order to meet the deadlines imposed by the National Archival Appraisal Board and the Cultural Properties Review Board, tax credited acquisitions are given high priority in terms of their arrangement and description. Thus, "archival value," as DeLottinville points out, "is no longer the sole determining factor for obtaining adequate resources to properly care for a collection once it reaches an archival institution."<sup>26</sup>

A third problem for Canadian labour union records is the issue of centralization. DeLottinville observes, Canada's "decentralized" approach to organized labour management has evolved due to certain historical circumstances. "Labour unions," he writes, "are currently represented by a number of national federations [and, so] over the past number of years, the

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<sup>25</sup> Stunden, "Labour, Records and Archives: The Struggle for a Heritage," p. 85.

<sup>26</sup> DeLottinville, "Life in the Age of Restraint: Recent Developments in Labour Archives in English Canada," p. 85.

percentage of Canadian workers who belong to international unions has declined." Consequently, the organizational structure of unions in Canada has shifted to a more fractured or regional format than was previously the case. The question for archivists then became, how best to accommodate this structural shift?

Some of the responsibility for their under representation in archival repositories' must also be assumed by unions themselves. As the Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci observed, "the trade union is not a predetermined phenomenon. It becomes a determined institution...to the extent that...its members impress a policy and purpose and aim that defines it."<sup>27</sup> Regarding the preservation of labour archives, this is true enough. In fact, as Mason notes, "approximately seventy international unions have no current plans to preserve their historical files."<sup>28</sup> In Canada too, notes

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<sup>27</sup> Antonio Gramsci, "Unions and Councils", in *An Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935*, edited by David Foracs. (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), p. 92.

<sup>28</sup> Mason, "Labour Archives in the United States: Achievements and Prospects," p. 491.

DeLottinville, "the paper files of unions are rarely controlled by systematic records keeping practices."<sup>29</sup> In fact, it is even questionable as to whether or not unions even recognize the problem. DeLottinville adds, "the success of archival programs in the early 1970s removed the most obvious symptoms of poor records management, the uncontrolled growth of paper." As a consequence of this, most unions "simply sent larger and larger amounts of records to their archives." This "short-term method of coping," concludes DeLottinville, "has now become a long term problem for their archival institutions."<sup>30</sup>

Rod Young, in an article which attempts to address the acquisitions problem from a more functional and juridical perspective, suggests that union records have both an evidentiary and probative value to the labour unions which create them. He writes, "the values inherent in union records are of two kinds: primary values which exist to serve the originating

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<sup>29</sup> DeLottinville, "Life in the Age of Restraint: Recent Developments in Labour Archives in English Canada," p. 17.

<sup>30</sup> DeLottinville, "Life in the Age of Restraint: Recent Developments in Labour Archives in English Canada," p. 17-18.

agency itself, and secondary values which benefit other agencies and private users.”<sup>31</sup> More specifically, Young writes,

at the primary level, union records serve to accomplish the purpose for which the agency has been created, namely its administrative, fiscal, legal and operating functions.<sup>32</sup>

Following this thesis, Young examines “the sanctity of documents,” particularly trade unions records and their “evidentiary value” in a court of law. Young underscores the importance of records-keeping as well for both the union and the archivist in so far as he feels it is necessary to divorce historical issues from the overall need to preserve trade union records for business purposes.

The discourse surrounding labour records acquisition, preservation and description, as it evolved throughout the 1970s and 1980s, was initiated by the emergence of the “new history.” That is, the history of the

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<sup>31</sup> Rodney Young, “The Evidentiary and Probative Value of Trade Unions Records,” *Archivaria* 18 (Summer 1984), p. 203.

<sup>32</sup> Young, “The Evidentiary and Probative Value of Trade Unions Records,” p. 203.

working class, of women, of "others" in relation to the more traditional subjects of history. However, whatever the agenda driving the labour archives interests in labour records, it was only once the debate began to more fully consider issues that the central question was asked, "where and how do we find the resources to preserve the records of labour?"<sup>33</sup>

DeLottinville was correct in his observation that perhaps the role which large institutions like the National Archives of Canada and the Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs had established for themselves, was to be their own "bete noir." That is to say, these institutions were perhaps the victims of their own success. Of course, the archival programs they established in the early 1970s ostensibly addressed the one major problem the unions were facing. Namely, where and how to preserve their records. With the larger institutions looking after the problem, why then, should they worry about it. Their preservation problem had been solved for them.

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<sup>33</sup> DeLottinville, "Life in the Age of Restraint: Recent Developments in Labour Archives in English Canada," p. 11.

Another important issue to be introduced during this period is that of the “probative value” of union records, first introduced by Rod Young in the mid-1980s. Young’s central point was that union records are created first and foremost to support union functions and that this was their “primary value.” He suggests that, as archives, it would be problematic to lose sight of this very important fact. Young then moves his article into another direction altogether, exploring the issue of probative value in terms of a court of law, but his insight remains. If records are created primarily to support specific organizational functions, then perhaps they should remain under the jurisdiction and administration of that organization, thus ensuring their probative value is always maintained.

Finally, this raises the question of “where is the best place for the records of labour unions to reside?” However, before offering solutions to this question, I want to first consider the context and environment within which labour records are created from both a juridical and functional perspective. In other words, I want to now examine the legal framework and social role of unions.

## CHAPTER 2: THE JURIDICAL AND SOCIAL ROLE OF UNIONS

Unions, like most social groupings in society, are not solely self-determined, but are defined by the legal and social framework within which they operate. Unions are, for all intents and purposes, corporate bodies or “juridical persons with the rights and duties of such bodies established in Canadian law.”<sup>1</sup> In her series of essays “Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science”, Luciana Duranti writes that the term, “juridical person,” is used

in the sense of an entity having the capacity  
or the potential to act legally and constituted  
either by a collection or succession of  
physical persons or a collection of properties<sup>2</sup>

Unions’ purposes and activities have been just as much defined for them as unionists have had a hand in defining and directing them themselves. Unions are regulated by laws and more importantly, form a distinct class of society -

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<sup>1</sup> Luciana Duranti, “Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science”, *Archivaria* 28, (Summer 1989), p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Duranti, “Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science”, *Archivaria* 28, (Summer 1989), p. 27.

juridical persons - whose records are important to both society as a whole as well as having a probative value in support of ongoing union functions and activities.

Before turning to the master question: "who is to be responsible for the preservation of the records of labour unions and where are they they to be preserved," it is important to fully understand the context within which union records are created. This chapter will examine both the juridical and civic environment in which union records are created, maintained and used. This kind of information is essential to the archival enterprise of understanding provenance and even more specifically, to the acquisition of records by an archival institution. "The context is all,"<sup>3</sup> writes Heather MacNeil in her essay "The Context is All: Describing a Fonds and its Parts in Accordance with the *Rules for Archival Description*", and if it is lost, she continues, we simply do not have archives. This chapter will delineate the context with regard to the

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<sup>3</sup> MacNeil, Heather. "The Context is All: Describing a Fonds and its Parts in Accordance with the *Rules for Archival Description*" in *The Archival Fonds: from Theory to Practice*. Edited by Terry Eastwood. Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1992, p. 195-225.



creation of union records, both from the perspective of their juridical nature, as well as the civic context for their creation and use, by answering the question: what do unions do?

Obviously it is not possible in the scope of this essay to overview all the laws governing the regulation of labour. This would be an overwhelming task. For example, between 1900 and 1950 alone there were approximately twenty-six separate pieces of federal legislation affecting the management of trade unions. Included among these were major initiatives such as the *Industrial Disputes Investigation Act* (1907) and the *Unemployment Insurance Act* (1940) as well as the less significant *Technical Education Act* (1919) and *Lord's Day Act* (1906). The focus of this section will be on the three major pieces of federal labour legislation introduced between the years 1872 and 1972 which most informed the direction of labour relations in Canada: *An Act Respecting Trade Unions* (1872) or, the *Trade Unions Act* as it is more commonly referred to, the *Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act* (1948) and the *Canada Labour Code* (1972).

Trade union activity in Canada can be dated back 180 years to the organization of skilled workers in Saint John, New Brunswick during the war of 1812.<sup>4</sup> It has been estimated that by 1859 there were between 30 and 35 unions operating throughout the country.<sup>5</sup> Labour historian Bryan Palmer has estimated that between 1815 and 1860 alone, 132 strikes occurred in Canada and that "a further 700 strikes [took] place between 1860 and 1890."<sup>6</sup> Thus, it was in an era of extreme labour-capital antagonism that the Canadian Parliament passed *An Act Respecting Trade Unions* in the summer of 1872.

Under nineteenth century common law traditions, trade unions were considered bodies whose purposes, both explicitly and implicitly, acted as a

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<sup>4</sup> Eugene Forsey, *The Canadian Labour Movement, 1812-1902*, The Canadian Historical Booklets No. 27. (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 1974), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> John Smart, *Records of the Department of Labour*. National Archives of Canada. Government Archives Division, General Inventory Series, (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, Canada, 1988), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, p.1.

restraint to trade, hence their illegality. Further, as trade unions were deemed illegal and not acknowledged to be legal entities, they were unable to sue or be sued. So far as the common law was concerned, trade unions were considered to be voluntary associations. As labour law specialist H.W. Arthurs points out, "even if [the unions'] purpose had not been in restraint of trade, they were merely to be treated as clubs were by the law."<sup>7</sup> In effect, this meant that trade unions could be considered criminal and moreover, that they were not in a position to enforce any agreements they had reached with an employer, let alone protect their property, that is, their lodges or meeting halls.

With the passage of *An Act Respecting Trade Unions* in 1872, the Canadian Government legalized the organization of all trade unions. The legislation ensured that, henceforth, unions were to be regarded as legal institutions and, more importantly, as not being in restraint of trade. For the first time in Canada, as a result of the passage of the legislation, the term

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<sup>7</sup> Arthurs, H.W. and others, *Labour Law and Industrial Relations in Canada*. Deventure, The Netherlands: Kluwer Law and Taxation Publishers, 1988, p. 160.

“trade union” was legally defined. Under the “Interpretation” clause of the Act, Section 22 reads, in part, that the term trade union is to be understood as “such combination, whether temporary or permanent, for regulating the relations between workmen and masters, or for imposing restrictive conditions on the conduct of any trade or business....”<sup>8</sup>

Section 2 of the *Trade Unions Act* states specifically that, “the purpose of any trade union shall not...be deemed to be unlawful.” Marc Chartrand, in his essay “The First Canadian Trade Union Legislation: An Historical Perspective,” suggests that, while Section 2 of the Act “declared that the purpose of a trade union were no longer unlawful,” it made no provision for the “protection for the means used by a trade union to effect those purposes.”<sup>9</sup> In short, trade unions, by virtue of their being trade unions, were not necessarily in restraint of trade. Yet any steps they took to demonstrate this, in other words to act upon their unionism, would be deemed unlawful under the

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<sup>8</sup> 35 Victoria, c. 30, p.131.

<sup>9</sup> Mark Chartrand, “The First Canadian Trade Unions Legislation: An Historical Perspective”, *Ottawa Law Review* 16 (1988), p. 178.

*Criminal Law Amendment Act*. As Chartrand concludes, "it is clear that most of the impediments to the activity of trade unions under the criminal law of conspiracy persisted notwithstanding the enactment of the trade unions acts."<sup>10</sup>

While the Act was clear on what a trade union was, it was nonetheless vague on the means, that is, how it was supposed to go about its purpose.

What was essentially absent from the 1872 *Trade Unions Act* was any mechanism of regulating and/or mediating industrial disputes. While the state had endeavored to legitimize trade unionism within the sphere of social relations, it had neglected to create an effective legal framework for mediation. Such a mechanism would be slow in materializing and in fact it would not arrive until the industrial prosperity of the of the post Second World War years. In early 1948, amid much debate and revision, *An Act to Provide for the Investigation, Conciliation and Settlement of Industrial Disputes* was introduced in Parliament. Otherwise known as the *Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act*. It was assented to on June 30, 1948. Not only did

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<sup>10</sup> Chartrand, "The First Canadian Trade Unions Legislation: An Historical Perspective", p. 181.

Canada now have new labour legislation, but it also now possessed a means of settling labour disputes: The Canadian Labour Relations Board.

The *Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act (IRDIA)* was first introduced by the Industrial Relations Committee of the Canadian Government in July and August 1947. Essentially, the Act followed the pattern established by the Wartime Labour Relations Regulations and was “designed to replace the older *Industrial Disputes Investigation Act*.”<sup>11</sup> The *Industrial Disputes Investigation Act* was originally passed in 1907 and at the time was lauded as “the most important piece of labour legislation passed in Canada since the creation of the Department of Labour in 1900.”<sup>12</sup> The then Deputy Minister of Labour, William Lyon Mackenzie King, noted in the Department’s Annual Report for 1907-1908, that the new labour legislation was involving the Department of Labour in the “frequent exercise of functions

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<sup>11</sup> The Labour Gazette, “Industrial relations Bill introduced in the House of Commons”, *The Labour Gazette* 48, 4 (May 1948), p. 425.

<sup>12</sup> quoted in Smart, p.6.

of a quasi-judicial character.”<sup>13</sup> In other words, the Department found itself increasingly called upon to mediate between parties involved in industrial disputes. It was this particular activity that became one of the centre pieces of the 1948 legislation.

The Act set out to establish procedures i) for mandatory collective bargaining and the negotiation of collective agreements between employers and employees as well as ii) for the settlement and arbitration of grievances arising under collective agreements between employers and employees. The legislation ensured that once a contract was signed, new disputes would be dealt with through a formal grievance system and ultimately result in arbitration if no resolution was reached. As a consequence of this, observes historian Craig Heron, a “vast network of shop stewards at the base of the industrial union movement became the watchdogs of workers’ interests in processing grievances.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> quoted in Smart, p.6.

<sup>14</sup> Craig Heron. *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Short History*. Toronto: James Lorimar and Co., Publishers, 1989, p. 86.

A trade union was now defined by the new legislation as any “bargaining agent...that acts on behalf of employees, (i) in collective bargaining; or (ii) as a party to a collective agreement with their employer.”<sup>15</sup> Trade unions were now defined according to their functions as opposed to the terms of the 1872 legislation which defined a trade unions as, a “combination...for regulating the relations between workmen and masters.”

The two major achievements of the *IRDIA* were its entrenchment of the right to collective bargaining and the establishment of a lawful “Conciliation Board” with regard to the mediation of industrial disputes. A serious criticism leveled at the 1872 legislation was that while it legitimated the purposes of trade unions, it made no provisions “for the means used by trade unions to effect those purposes.”<sup>16</sup> Obviously, the terms “purposes” and “means” can

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<sup>15</sup> 11-12 Geo., VI., Vol. i, p. 573.

<sup>16</sup> 11-12 Geo., VI., Vol. i, p. 574.



be interpreted broadly. However, with the establishment of the right to bargain collectively, that is according to the Act, "negotiating with a view to the conclusion of a collective agreement,"<sup>17</sup> as well as with the creation of mechanism for arbitration of disputes, the *IRDLA* was progressive in its approach to labour relations.

According to Part II of the *IRDLA*, which concerns "Application and Administration" of the Act, it is noted that while the Minister of Labour "shall exercise the powers and perform the duties imposed...by Part I," it is the Canada Labour Relations Board which shall be charged with the administration of the Act. In fact, this remained the Canada Labour Relations Board's primary function up until the early 1970's.

Under Section 61, of the Act, the CLRB has the power to determine who qualifies as an employee and employer, and what qualifies as an employer and employee association or organization; as well as determining the

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<sup>17</sup> 11-12 Geo., VI., Vol. i, p. 273.

parameters of collective agreements. For example, the CLRB determines not only the appropriate unit for collective bargaining but also who is not in “good standing” with the union. As well, the CLRB has full authority in managing labour relations in Canada with a view to mediating and arbitrating industrial disputes. In effect, the Department of Labour, through an agency such as the Canada Labour Relations Board, sets the agenda for future labour-capital relations by being the final arbitrator on labour relations issues in Canada.

In the final analysis, the passage of the *IRDIA* attempted to mitigate a growing problem during the post-war period: the regulation and management of industrial relations. At the very least, it instituted a framework for discussion of labour issues. Whereas previously, labour unions were considered by both the state and capital as criminal and an impediment to trade, they were now acknowledged as partners.

With rapid population growth in the 1960's, industrial relations in Canada began to change dramatically. In his essay “The Direction of

Unionism in Canada", Arthur Kruger highlights four important characteristics of this change: the rapid urbanization of the Canadian population and the accompanying "concentration in certain parts of the country," the rise of the service industries, the white-collar worker and the increase in the female participation in the work force.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, with a seemingly unprecedented rise in strike activity in Canada during the mid-1960's (in 1966 alone the number of strikes surpassed the previous Canadian peak in 1946), the public began to lose faith in the collective bargaining process.<sup>19</sup> These factors combined were partly responsible for prompting the federal government to appoint a special task force on Labour Relations. "It is in this troubled context," the Woods Report noted, "that we are assigned the task of examining the performance of Canada's present industrial relations system."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Arthur M. Kruger, "The Direction of Unionism in Canada", *Canadian Labour in Transition*, edited by Richard Ulric Miller and Frank Isbester. (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall-Hall of Canada, Ltd., 1971), p. 88.

<sup>19</sup> Heron, *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Short History*, p. 105.

<sup>20</sup> Canada. *Canadian Industrial Relations: The Report of the Task Force on Labour Relations* (hereafter referred to as the Woods Task Force on Industrial Relations). (Ottawa: Privy Council Office, December 1968), p. 4.

In December 1968, *Canadian Industrial Relations: The Report of the Task Force on Labour Relations* was published with a view towards overhauling the existing industrial relations system. The bulk of the report concerned the issue of collective bargaining and "how the existing system can be improved, extended and preserved by a combination of parliamentary support, federal-provincial cooperation and voluntary action by the parties of interest."<sup>21</sup> Overall, the report concluded, "we propose an increase in government involvement." The result was a review and expansion of the provisions initially outlined in the 1948 *Industrial Relations Disputes and Investigation Act* in an effort to better manage the increasing vicissitudes of labour-capital relations in the late 1960's. The *Canada Labour Code* (1972) was partially a result of these recommendations.

Specifically, the divisions of the *Canada Labour Code* concern, "Basic Freedoms," the "Canada Labour Relations Board," the "Acquisition and

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<sup>21</sup> Woods Task Force on Industrial Relations, p. 137.

Termination of Bargaining Rights,” “Conciliation and First Agreements,” “Prohibitions and Enforcement” and finally, a “General” section which outlines broad provisions for the “promotion of industrial peace.” The current version of the *CLC* is over sixty-five pages long and is by far the most complete labour legislation thus far enacted in Canada. It would be impossible to examine in full the network of complex relationships which the Code outlines. However some understanding of the provisions regarding collective bargaining is necessary in order to begin to illustrate the full scope of the legislation as well as to further delineate what unions are, how they are defined under the law and ultimately, what unions do.

Division 4 of the *Canada Labour Code* is entitled “Collective Bargaining and Collective Agreements” and along with the section on prohibitions and enforcement, is one of the *CLC*’s longest sections. Division 4 is further divided into three subsections which address the employers “obligations to bargain collectively,” “technological change” and the “content and interpretation of collective agreements.” It is important to note that prior to either bargaining or entering a collective agreement, CLRB determination

of the bargaining agent and unit as well as certification of that agent and unit must occur.

According to the "Industrial Relations" Section of the *CLC*, a bargaining agent is defined as "a) a trade union that has been certified by the Board [CLRB] or, b) any other trade union that has entered into a collective agreement on behalf of the employees in a bargaining unit." A bargaining unit, on the other hand, is defined as any unit which is "a) determined by the Board to be appropriate, or b) to which a collective agreement applies."<sup>22</sup> Both the bargaining agent and the bargaining unit must be certified by the Canada Labour Relations Board. According to Section 15 subsection C, the CLRB has the authority to determine certification of any trade union as a bargaining agent for a bargaining unit. Section 16 of the Code stresses that, the CLRB "has, in relation to any preceding before it, power...to examine

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<sup>22</sup> *Canada Labour Code*, p. 3.

documents...of any trade union or council of trade unions seeking certification.”<sup>23</sup>

Post-war labour legislation has been applauded for introducing the “rule of law” into the workplace.<sup>24</sup> In 1973, 1978 and 1984, amendments to the *Canada Labour Code* accorded additional powers and duties to the CLRB which substantially increased its authority in the management of labour relations in Canada.<sup>25</sup> As part of a continuum that was initiated with the *IRDLA* in the late 1940s, the Canada Labour Relations Board was granted considerable authority in determining who qualifies as both a bargaining agent and a bargaining unit. In other words, in determining who and what qualifies as a trade union for the purposes of collective bargaining. However, while labour law has certainly impinged on the concerns and goals of unions, it has also defined what unions are and what their purposes may be. To be sure, this

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<sup>23</sup> *Canada Labour Code*, p. 10-11.

<sup>24</sup> Heron, *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Short History*. p. 105.

<sup>25</sup> *CLRB 18th Annual Report*, 1990-1991, p. 3-4.

is essential for understanding the provenance of any trade union and, more importantly, for understanding its records. Determining what unions do in juxtaposition with labour legislation is, at best, a complex undertaking. There is no general consensus on what a union's overriding purpose(s) may be as many labour commentators are writing within a polemical discourse which sometimes precludes their agreement on certain fundamental issues and questions.

I now want to examine more closely examine two recent books on the labour movement (Craig Heron's *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Short History* and Richard Freeman and James Medoff's *What do Unions Do?* ) in an effort to understand the role unions play in society vis-a-vis their legal obligations. While the scholarly disciplines which inform both these books differ, history and economics respectively, their central theses are the same. Both books argue favourably for the social and economic good of unions to society and in doing so, articulate what a union's goals and broad operational purposes are. From an archivists perspective, the models outlined in these books present a framework for determining what a union's functions and



activities are. This kind of information is essential to archivists in that it provides the basis for archival research which ultimately informs acquisition decisions made by archivists.

In the final chapter of his history of the Canadian labour movement, historian Craig Heron bemoans the rhetoric and weak unchanging character of the contemporary structure and activities of Canadian labour. Labour leaders, he writes, “have only reacted...repeating their general faith in the legalism and gradualism of the post war collective bargaining system and social democratic politics, neither of which,” he believes, “are paying off.”<sup>26</sup> Heron concludes that the contemporary Canadian labour movement appears “unable to envision any different route for winning justice for workers.”

To summarize Heron’s hopes for the labour movement: he envisions a labour movement grounded firmly in “working class goals,” which, he argues, have persistently informed Canadian labour history and therefore

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<sup>26</sup> Heron, *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Short History*. p. 164.

suggest a constant and ready "resource in current struggles." Heron states that working people have consistently challenged "the logic of capitalist economics that their labour power was simply another factor in production;" in other words, that "they were human beings, not machines, and demanded to be treated as such."<sup>27</sup> As outlined by Heron, there are four essential components which would comprise the foundation of an ideologically revitalized Canadian labour movement. They are: "a fair day's wage," "a fair day's work," "democracy," and a "social vision."

These "working class goals" as Heron calls them are in some measure self explanatory. "A fair day's wage" being that which allows workers to "enjoy a basic level of decency and respectability,"<sup>28</sup> where as the notion of "a fair day's work" pertains to working people's struggle to maintain their "dignity, self respect, and mental and physical health."<sup>29</sup> On the other hand,

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, p. 164.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*, p. 165.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*, p. 166.

Heron's notion of "democracy" and "a social vision" are much more complex in terms of defining characteristics. For example, the notion of "democracy" for Heron, relates to unionists' "long standing faith in liberal-democratic rights but also in a more collectivist democracy based on the representation of common class interests."<sup>30</sup> Closely connected to this is the concept of "a social vision" which, for Heron, is informed primarily by a political "alliance with like-minded social groups," such as, Marxists, social democrats, liberals, environmentalists and feminists.

Heron's recommendations for "rebuilding the house of labour" suggest a way to consider how a union's purpose may be expressed. If a function is, "all the activities aimed towards one purpose, considered abstractly,"<sup>31</sup> then abstract formulations such as "a fair day's wage," "a fair day's work" and a more "democratic social vision," convey what unions attempt to achieve in society, albeit in a generalized, abstract manner. Further support for the

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, p. 169.

<sup>31</sup> School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of British Columbia, Select List of Archival Terminology, s.v. function.

contention that these formulations express a union's basic purpose may also be found in Harvard economists Richard Freeman and James Medoff's examination of union activities in their book *What do Unions Do?*

Freeman and Medoff's book argues that, contrary to popular belief, unions play a crucial and beneficial role in society. For the most part, *What do Unions Do?* examines various issues from an economic perspective surrounding popular perceptions of trade unions such as, general productivity levels within union and non-union shops, inequality in the workplace, fringe benefits and union bureaucracy and like Heron's book, also suggests a framework for determining what unions do and how they actually operate.

Freeman and Medoff posit that unionism in general has "two faces," the monopoly face and the collective voice/institutional response face. These divergent points of view are, in turn, characterized as the good and bad faces of unionism. On the one hand, the monopoly face expresses some economists' contentions that unionism implies a form of monopoly power,

which the unions in turn use "to raise wages above competitive levels." On the other hand, the collective voice/institutional response face of unionism endeavors to create a working environment wherein cooperation and choice are exercised on the part of both the employer and the employee through dialogue and collective action. "The important point," the authors stress, "is that just as there are two sides to all markets, demand and supply, there are also two sides to collective agreements, management's and union's. Industrial relations practices and economic outcomes depend on the policies and actions of both management and labour."<sup>32</sup>

It is possible for unions to exhibit both a monopoly and voice/response face. Therefore the primary task, so far as Freeman and Medoff are concerned, is to determine whether or not unions are "primarily monopolistic institutions or...voice institutions that induce socially beneficial responses?"<sup>33</sup> Determine

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<sup>32</sup> Richard B. Freeman and James L. Medoff, *What Do Unions Do?* New York: Basic Books, Incorporated, Publishers, 1984, p. 12.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*, p. 19.

this, they contend, and you determine the social and economic benefits of unions.

In support of their claims, the two Harvard economists examine three major economic issues against which they measure and evaluate the monopoly and voice / response “faces” of unionism. They examine unions’ effects on economic efficiency, their effects on the general distribution of income and their effects on the social nature of union organization, that is, “the extent of economic equality and political freedom.”<sup>34</sup> These then, become the yardsticks by which Freeman and Medoff measure unionism’s social and economic benefits. Needless to say, within each of these spheres the “two faces” of unionism are always present.

The authors conclude that, on the question of general efficiency from a monopoly point of view, unions do reduce employment, although from the voice/response perspective, they initiate “workplace practices and

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid*, p. 14.

compensation packages more valuable to workers; and in many settings [this] is associated with increased productivity."<sup>35</sup> Regarding distribution of income, again, within a voice / response face, unions help reduce wage inequality at the expense, however, of overall profits to owners and investors. Finally, within the sphere of political freedom or "social organization," as Freeman and Medoff refer to it, unions are less undemocratic than is popularly perceived and in fact "provide political voice to all labour" as well as to other social issues. Overall, Freeman and Medoff conclude that "in an economy where governments, business and unions work imperfectly...there is a place for unions to improve the well-being not only of their members but of the entire society, to increase the total amount of goods and services, including the dignity and rights of workers."<sup>36</sup>

Freeman and Medoff's conclusions present not just an economic justification for the social benefits of unionism but also answer the question:

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<sup>35</sup> *ibid*, p. 27.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*, p. 27.

what do unions do? As I noted earlier, the theoretical framework which they employ suggests a model for articulating a union's purpose. In particular, I am referring to their decision to examine the "two faces" of unionism from the perspective of economic efficiency, income distribution and social organization. For Freeman and Medoff, this is what unions do.

There is an connection to be made between Freeman and Medoff's thesis and historian Craig Heron's proposal for a fair day's wage, a fair day's work and a more democratic social vision as the "working class goals" of a rejuvenated Canadian labour movement. In fact, I suggest these three spheres of activity comprise the three primary functions of a union: That is, to facilitate a fair day's wage (income distribution), to facilitate a fair day's work (economic efficiency which includes concerns for worker's dignity, health and safety etc.), and, to work towards a more democratic social vision (that is, rectify existing political and social cleavages). These three functions, as well as that of the everyday administrative duties (the funtion of sustaining itself) form the functional core of what a union's purpose is.



In her series of articles on diplomatics, Duranti posits that "every social group ensures an ordered development of the relationships among its members by means of rules." She observes that, " a social group founded on an organizational principle which gives its institution(s) the capacity of making compulsory rules is a juridical system. Thus, a juridical system, she concludes, "is a collectivity organized on the basis of a system of rules. The system of rules is called the legal system."<sup>37</sup> Put simply, there is an inextricable link between the juridical system set up to manage industrial relations - labour law - and the kind of system enacted in the day to day management of a union and its activities. This link is acted on in the policies and procedures and activities of unions. In their efforts to establish themselves as legal bargaining agents, whether as a local of parent union or as a national or international union onto themselves, carrying out the collective bargaining process, in addressing the day to day needs of its members, such as health and safety or technological change issues as well as the grievance arising from the

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<sup>37</sup> Luciana Duranti, "Diplomats: New Uses for an Old Science", *Archivaria* 29, (Winter, 1989), p. 5.

shop floor, unions function within a juridical framework which prescribes for them what they can and cannot do, in effect, what they are.

Also implicit in Duranti's comments, is the notion that it is impossible to fully understand one without comprehending the nature of the other. To be sure, the social relations of labour, capital and the state and "the system of rules governing [their] collective relations"<sup>38</sup> are profoundly inter-connected, and this is where the issue of the archival preservation of records may be introduced. In that unions are invested with the rights and duties accorded juridical persons, they also, especially considering their dependence on a legal framework to articulate and defend their gains, must begin to attend to their records as primary and valuable sources of evidence of their activities. Unions are established in order to protect their members on both a daily and long term basis and in order to accomplish this, union preservation of their most important source of evidence is imperative.

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<sup>38</sup> Arthurs H.W. and others, *Labour Law and Industrial Relations in Canada* p. 42.

### CHAPTER 3: THE ARCHIVAL ACQUISITION AND PRESERVATION OF LABOUR UNION RECORDS

In his essay "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally", archivist Christopher Hives proposes that "we must shift our focus away from individual repositories and towards a more holistic approach of archives management which embodies a collective shared responsibility for the preservation of private records."<sup>1</sup> To summarize his proposals, Hives has adopted the slogan of the environmental movement: Thinking Globally, Acting Locally. This "two-part" strategy suggests, writes Hives,

that we should view the acquisition of private records not as a responsibility of individual repositories but rather as the collective responsibility of the archival community. Secondly, records creators should be encouraged to assume responsibility for the reservation of their own records.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Hives, "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally", *Archivaria* 38, (Fall 1994), p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> Hives, "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally", p. 161.

As Hives points out, organizational responsibility for organizational records can assume many forms, one of which involves encouraging the establishment of in-house archives and records management programs as well as developing cooperative and cost-shared ventures with organizations to "help defray the cost of maintaining the records."<sup>3</sup> These proposals are unique in that it shifts archival responsibility back onto the records creator. Moreover, it realigns the preservation of archives with ongoing operational needs as opposed to abstracting them for secondary purposes. In this context, archives are then not thought of solely in terms of "research use" but "use" in Terry Eastwood's sense of the term, that is, "use" as a "utilitarian object" within the "immediate social context of [their] creation."<sup>4</sup>

After reviewing the archival discourse on the acquisition and preservation of labour archives in Canada in Chapter 1 followed by an analysis of the context for the creation and use of labour's records in Chapter 2, this third chapter will

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, p.160.

<sup>4</sup> Terry Eastwood, "How Goes it with Appraisal?", *Archivaria* 36, (Autumn, 1993), p. 117.

examine, specifically, the issue of acquisition and preservation: under what conditions, should institutional archives be responsible for the acquisition and preservation of labour's records? In order to answer this question, I will also examine two contrasting theoretical models for the archival acquisition of labour records. In particular, I will examine the relationship between Documentation Strategy and the acquisition/preservation of labour records solely by an archival institution and, the relationship between the theory of "use-value"<sup>5</sup> and "probative value"<sup>6</sup> and the acquisition / preservation of labour records solely by the union.

Under ideal circumstances, institutional records are scheduled and records identified as permanently valuable to the organization are retained by the archives. For example, an organization first inventories its active and semi-active

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<sup>5</sup> See Terry Eastwood's, "How Goes it with Appraisal?", *Archivaria* 36, (Autumn, 1993), p. 111-121 and "Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal", *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh Taylor*, edited by Barbara L. Craig, 1992, p.71-89.

<sup>6</sup> See Rodney Young, "The Evidentiary and Probative Value of Trade Unions Records," *Archivaria* 18 (Summer 1984), p. 202-213.

records then, in consultation with the archivist, identifies "types" of records, usually at the records series level, which it believes should be maintained permanently. Once records are scheduled in this fashion, they then go through their life cycle, perhaps spending some time in a records centre, before meeting their final disposition in the archives. In the above scenario, the appraisal, acquisition and preservation of the records is managed internally from the perspective of an institutional responsibility. Unfortunately, as both Peter DeLottinville and Nancy Stunden have suggested<sup>7</sup> this is not always the reality, nor is it always feasible. Indeed, archivists have had to resort to all kinds of methods to acquire records from institutions and organizations they have identified as important to the documentary heritage of the society. One such method archivists have employed is what has been called "Documentation Strategy."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See Peter DeLottinville's "Life in the Age of Restraint: Recent Developments in Archives in English Canada." *Archivaria* 27 (Winter 1988 - 1989), p. 8-24 and Nancy Stunden's "Labour, Records and Archives: The Struggle for a Heritage." *Archivaria* 4 (Summer 1977), p. 73-91.

<sup>8</sup> See Helen Samuels, "Who Controls the Past," *American Archivist* 49 (Spring 1986), p. 109-124; Larry J. Hackman and Joan Warnow-Blewett, "The Documentation Strategy Process: A Model and a Case Study," *American Archivist* 50 (Winter, 1987), p. 12-47; Philip Alexander and Helen Samuels,

Over the past decade and a half, the work of American archivist Helen Samuels on appraisal and in particular her contribution to the theory of documentation strategy, and currently on the functional approach, have gained prominence in both the American and Canadian archival communities. The genesis of Samuels' writings can be traced to comments made in the early 1970's by historian Howard Zinn. In an unpublished essay entitled "The Archivist and Radical Reform", Zinn wrote, "the archival record in the United States is biased towards the rich and powerful...while the poor and the impotent remain in archival obscurity."<sup>9</sup> In response to this, F. Gerald Ham in his landmark 1975

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"The Roots of 128: A Hypothetical Documentation Strategy," *American Archivist* 50 (Fall, 1987), p. 518-531; Richard Cox and Helen Samuels, "The Archivist's First Responsibility: A Research Agenda for the Identification and Retention of Records of Enduring Value," *American Archivist* 51 (Winter/Spring 1988), p. 28-42; Terry Abraham, "Collection Policy or Documentation Strategy: Theory and Practice," *American Archivist* 54 (Winter 1991), p. 44-52; Helen Samuels, "Improving Our Disposition: Documentation Strategy," *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-1992), p. 125-140; Terry Cook, "Documentation Strategy," *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992), p. 181-191; Richard Cox, "The Documentation Strategy and Archival Appraisal Principles: A Different Perspective," *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994), p. 11-36.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in F. Gerald Ham, "The Archival Edge", *A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice*, edited by Maygene F. Daniels

article entitled, "The Archival Edge", surveyed the then current state of archival holdings in the United States. He concluded that further development was necessary and subsequently identified three areas for potential growth and further consideration: specialized archives, state archival networks and a possible model for "urban documentation."<sup>10</sup>

Expanding on the last of these, Ham asked: "Why couldn't archivists determine the documentation needed to study contemporary religious life, thought, and change and then advise denominations and congregations on how their records selection can contribute to this objective?" Ham's rationale was that then archivists could "discover biases and distortions" in their own "selection process" and ultimately offer a more "informed analysis on how [they] should document [religion, for example] and its institutions."<sup>11</sup> The drive to uncover social, political, ideological, institutional and structural biases informed the logic

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and Timothy Walch. (Washington: The National Archives and Records Service, US General Services Administration, 1984), p. 326.

<sup>10</sup> See Ham, "The Archival Edge", p. 326-225.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, p. 333.



underpinning Ham's thesis: that archivists and archives were not sufficiently adjusting to the documentary research needs of a rapidly changing research community. Ham concluded his article with a call to arms. If the archivist, he wrote, "is passive, uninformed, with a limited view of what constitutes the archival record, the collections that he acquires will never hold up a mirror to mankind." He added, "if we are not helping people understand the world they live in, and if this is not what archives is all about, then I do not know what it is that is all that important."<sup>12</sup> This was an eloquent and well intentioned call for increased "social relevance" in archives acquisition policies.

Ham's ideas struck a responsive chord among certain members of the archival community. Archivists - activist archivists - began to devise strategies which took into consideration both Ham's and Zinn's concerns. The most successful, if not the most controversial, of these excursions was the theory of a documentation strategy. According to Helen Samuels, one of the most influential proponents of the approach, a documentation strategy approach would enable the

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, p. 334-335.

archivist to capture the "total documentary record" by assuring "the documentation of an ongoing issue, activity or geographic area."<sup>13</sup>

Documentation strategy according to Helen Samuels, consists of four specific activities: i) choosing and defining the topic, ii) choosing both advisors and a site from which to launch the strategy, iii) organizing the project and analyzing available documentation and, finally, iv) selecting and housing the documentation.<sup>14</sup> In her first published formulation of the theory, her essay "Who Controls the Past?", Samuels stresses the research and contextual component of a documentation strategy approach. "They begin," she writes, "with a detailed investigation of the topic to be documented and the information required." Elsewhere in the same essay, she notes that documentation strategy involves two levels of analysis: the first concerns "the history and scope of the topic," and the second concerns an "analysis of the available sources of information."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Helen Samuels, "Who Controls the Past" *American Archivist* 49 (Spring 1986), p. 112;115.

<sup>14</sup> Samuels, "Who Controls the Past", p. 116.

<sup>15</sup> Samuels, "Who Controls the Past", p. 120;122.

Six years later, in 1992, Helen Samuels' essay "Improving our Disposition: Documentation Strategy", was presented as a plenary address at the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) Annual Conference in Banff, Alberta. The essay was, in part, excerpted from her larger work *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities*, published later that same year. Cumulatively, these writings articulate a subtle yet significant shift in Samuels' theories. That is, a shift which previously highlighted a focus on the general framework of a documentation strategy approach to one which foregrounds, specifically, the functional analysis component of what Samuels now calls, an "Institutional Documentation Plan" or IDP.

The essay "Improving our Disposition: Documentation Strategy" and *Varsity Letters* articulate a vision of what may be termed a "functional study." They outline a functional approach which, insists Samuels, is a "new tool" that adds to existing archival practice and then, "turns it around." It is the necessary "first step" for an archivist attempting to establish "documentary goals and collecting plans." And, while it is not particularly concerned with "specific sets of

records," it is most concerned with the "context in which records are created."

Not only will this strategy enable the archivist to more fully comprehend the documentary environment in which he/she works, but it will also provide a more thorough knowledge of what is and should be documented as well as identify any potential problems associated with "gathering the desired documentation."<sup>16</sup>

These ideas are first and foremost, a departure and modification of more traditional archival practices: most specifically, claims Samuels, with regard to the "level" and "objectives" of archival analysis as well as the "scope of documentary problems examined" and the role of the archivist throughout the process. These revisions to more "traditional archival approaches" are important to underscore in that they, within the context of Samuels' writings, signal a shift in the focus of the "traditional" documentation strategy approach and its initial four part structure to an emphasis on the contextual and analytical first stage of the process.

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<sup>16</sup> Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, p. 3.

While it can be acknowledged that the "ability to appraise is enhanced by understanding the activities through which records are created,"<sup>17</sup> Samuels' formulations ultimately remain incomplete, for she fails to acknowledge both the juridical context within which all functions and activities occur, as well as neglecting to incorporate the notion of the functions hierarchy into her conception of a functional approach.<sup>18</sup> Samuels' shift in perspective also lays bare the overriding weakness of her theories in general; by neglecting to address the theoretical shortcomings of her earlier work on Documentation Strategy, Samuels' repeats and undermines her entire approach on the appraisal and acquisition of organizational archives. As Terry Cook, in his commentary to Samuels' Plenary Address at the ACA conference in Banff, remarked, "Samuels' needs to state more explicitly how her functions are defined." He asks, in his

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<sup>17</sup> Joan Haas, Helen Samuels and Barbara Trippel Simmons, *Appraising the Records of Modern Science and Technology: A Guide*. (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1985), p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> For further information on the concept of the functions hierarchy see Heather MacNeil's "Weaving Provenancial and Documentary Relations", *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992), p. 192-198.

published commentary "Documentation Strategy",<sup>19</sup> are they "imposed by archivists or have they evolved organically from the institution at hand?"

Moreover, adds Cook, "I would like Samuels to clarify the criteria, or general theory, by which functions are to be related or defined."<sup>20</sup>

To be sure, Cook's criticisms highlight the fundamental weakness of Samuels' thesis: the lack of a satisfactory definition for what is and what is not a function. While the term "function" is relatively absent from Samuels' earlier writings on documentation strategy, it is employed consistently throughout her most recent writings. Yet remains undefined. For example, in *Varsity Letters*, a function is both "what an institution does"<sup>21</sup> and its activities.<sup>22</sup> In other words, functions and activities are the same thing and are equated mechanistically throughout the text with the general or overall activities of an institution. Whereas

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<sup>19</sup> Terry Cook, "Documentation Strategy." *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992), p. 181 - 191.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*, p. 185.

<sup>21</sup> Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, p. 12.

in her previous statements, the analytical stage of a documentation strategy approach was given equal emphasis within the entire multi-stage process, it is now accorded special status. Samuels writes, "the intellectual approach that underlies documentation strategies is the same as that for institutional functional analysis." An institutional functional analysis, therefore, is implemented specifically to "improve" documentation. Documentation strategies and institutional functional analyses are, according to Samuels, "separate techniques but are mutually supportive."<sup>23</sup> Needless to say, there is much confusion here. As Terry Cook observed in Banff, the institutional functional analysis and the new connections made by Samuels with documentation strategy "sit, uneasily, side-by-side." Samuels, he added, is trying "to have it both ways at once."<sup>24</sup>

Documentation Strategy presupposes a number of assumptions. In particular it proposes that an archival repository is so inclined and in a position to undertake such a project. And while it does not exclude cooperative ventures, it

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<sup>23</sup> Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> Cook, "Documentation Strategy", p. 185.

particularly highlights joint repository cooperative ventures as opposed to “partnerships” with records users and creators. In effect, it proposes a traditional approach typical of the kind Hives is critical of. Like the National Archives dilemma<sup>25</sup> of a decade ago, this kind of acquisitions option is proving to be no longer viable. As Hives points out,

there have been significant changes in the bureaucracies in which publicly funded repositories are located...these new priorities have, in turn, affected archival priorities: cultural priorities, once considered paramount, have, of necessity, been supplanted by administrative priorities with respect to the management of recorded information throughout its life cycle.<sup>26</sup>

DeLottinville, too identified the trend specifically in relation to labour records in the late 1980s, when he wrote,

in the 1970s, labour unions responded positively to the archivist's approach to place records in public institutions. In the 1980s,

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<sup>25</sup> In May 1987, the National Archives of Canada imposed "a moratorium on new acquisitions...accepting only those that were in danger of destruction." Peter DeLottinville noted that "the National Archives refused transfers from ten major Canadian labour organizations which had already entered into archival agreements with the institution."

<sup>26</sup> Hives, "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally", p. 158.



however, public institutions seem to stress the priority of the records of their sponsoring agency, and to devote fewer and fewer resources to the private records in their custody<sup>27</sup>

If "traditional" methods of archival acquisition are no longer supporting "traditional" preservation arrangements, that is, organizations donating their records to archival repositories then, perhaps what is needed is both a revised model for the acquisition of archives, as well as new arrangements for the ongoing preservation of organizational records like labour archives.

I now want to consider the recently expounded theory of archival appraisal which, like Rod Young's discussion of probative value and union records,<sup>28</sup> assigns archival value to the creators of archives and shifts responsibility back onto the records creators and users. If organizations create and maintain records to support their own ongoing operational needs, which is

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<sup>27</sup> Peter DeLottinville, "Life in the Age of Restraint: Recent Developments in Labour Archives in English Canada," *Archivaria* 27 (Winter 1988-1989), p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> See Rod Young, "The Evidentiary and Probative Value of Trade Unions Records" *Archivaria* 18 (Summer 1984), p. 202-213.

what Eastwood's "use-value" theory suggests should be the priority, then perhaps they too should be assuming responsibility for the preservation of these records as well. As Hives also notes, "large organizations, like labour unions...must be persuaded to assume greater financial responsibility for their own records."<sup>29</sup> The remainder of this chapter will examine Eastwood's theory of "use-value" in relation to the second acquisition/preservation of labour archives option: the acquisition/preservation of records of enduring value maintained solely by the creating agency.

"Archives are utilitarian objects," writes Terry Eastwood in his essay "How Goes it with Appraisal?". Archives and their appraisal, he writes elsewhere, are best understood and conducted with the "closest attention to the immediate social context of [their] creation." Eastwood, in a series of recent essays and addresses has begun to develop a "social theory" of appraisal which relies mostly on the concept of "use" as its principal foundation. These notions can also be related to the acquisition of archives, in that both notions reflect a

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<sup>29</sup> Hives, "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally", p. 160.

contemporary emphasis that is fundamental to both archival and records management practices.

Eastwood sets out the parameters of his ideas by first defining the context: the purpose of archives and archivists. Archives are "transactions carried out in the performance of functions and activities,"<sup>30</sup> and therefore the archivists' mission or role is to ensure the protection of their "continuing value." As he writes in "How Goes it with Appraisal?", "archival documents are a means by which we carry forward the experience and results of action in the past...."<sup>31</sup> In other words, archives are linked to the notion of public and private memory. While Eastwood states clearly his position at the beginning of each of these essays: "archives are utilitarian," he supports and develops his argument by initially reviewing current approaches or assumptions regarding appraisal theory in general. Specifically, he expounds upon the problems of both the provenancial

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<sup>30</sup> Eastwood, "How Goes it with Appraisal?" *Archivaria* 36 (Autumn 1993), p. 117.

<sup>31</sup> Eastwood, "Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal", *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh Taylor*, edited by Barbara L. Craig. (Ottawa: The Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), p. 83.

and pertinence approaches to appraisal for acquisition or, what Eastwood calls, the "grounds of appraisal."

Eastwood reminds us that appraisal theory is distinct from appraisal methodology, theory being the analysis of the ideas employed by the archivist versus the method eventually adopted or acted upon. Thus his critiques of both the provenance and pertinence approaches to appraisal explore the nature of their intellectual underpinnings less than their particular results. For example, we may all agree that provenance is an important dimension of all archival work. However, as Eastwood points out, "using provenance as the principal or sole grounds for appraisal merely shifts the question one remove, where it becomes: important or significant to what?"<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the pertinence approach to appraisal, that of determining value according to archives' content, for example, their legal, administrative or fiscal values and ultimately their future values or their potentiality for posterity, is even more problematic. Eastwood writes, the "viability of pertinence alone as a ground for appraisal would appear even shakier

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<sup>32</sup> Eastwood, "How Goes it with Appraisal?", p. 116.

than that of provenance." Pertinence, it seems, relies on the highest ranking or best order of information about the past. Indeed pertinence is concerned with information more than with the archives per se. "If pertinence is the sole grounds for appraisal," concludes Eastwood, "nothing of the essential nature of archives remains to be accounted...", in fact, "it would be easy to dismiss it entirely."<sup>33</sup>

In effect, what Eastwood has done in these essays is to deconstruct the theoretical nature of appraisal - the archival exercise of determining value for acquisition - in order to establish a context for the introduction of the notion of "use-value." In accomplishing this, he has had to first examine, and then reject, the two most prevalent approaches to archival appraisal for their relativism. In fact, he suggests that all current and past theoretical excursions into the realm of appraisal theory are guilty of the same relativism. Eastwood states, "archivists' classification of values is not much help, I fear, and even seems to cloud the issue...putting such labels on value lead to tautology, to statements bound up in themselves but explaining nothing."<sup>34</sup> The solution, proposes Eastwood, is to

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<sup>33</sup> Eastwood, "How Goes it with Appraisal?", p. 116-117.

<sup>34</sup> Eastwood, "How Goes it with Appraisal?", p. 115.

"step back a pace or two" and consider the grounds for evaluation, namely, in his opinion, the use value of archives or a "social theory of appraisal."

If archives are utilitarian things, then they require a utilitarian appraisal. "That is," writes Eastwood, "appraisal based ultimately but not exclusively on use."<sup>35</sup> He believes, this proposal is successful on two accounts. First, it is grounded firmly in archival theory. If archival theory is considered to be the analysis of the ideas about the nature of a thing, not necessarily how to do something, but a contemplation of what the thing is, then Eastwood's social theory of appraisal is theoretical in the true sense of the word in that by considering archives' nature, it attempts to answer the root question regarding appraisal: why do we acquire records? This, as opposed to answering the question or providing guidance on the issues of how we go about appraising and acquiring archives.

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<sup>35</sup> Eastwood, "Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal", p. 83.

Second, in that it grounds appraisal within the framework of utilitarianism or use-value, it locates the theory within a context of archival practice. That is, it opens the door for practical application or use. For example, Eastwood makes two fundamental proposals in his social theory of appraisal which underscore their potential use value. He proposes that archives "be appraised on the basis of an analysis of the use to which they are put by the society that created them," and that the process of appraisal "be undertaken with closest attention to the immediate social context of creation."<sup>36</sup> In other words, a social theory of appraisal must take into account both the context of the archives creation as well as the records' use within that context. Once this is done, the acquisition and appraisal process begins.

Eastwood's concept of "use" contrasts neatly with Samuels' notion of documentation strategy. Underpinning all of Samuels' writings is the appraisal issue of pertinence. From Zinn through Ham through Samuels, and most recently

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<sup>36</sup> Eastwood, "Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal", p. 83.

in the writings of Richard Cox,<sup>37</sup> the implicit and sometimes explicit objective is to account for the future research needs of an undefined academic research community. This is appraisal based on pertinence and, as Terry Eastwood demonstrates in "Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal", this notion has its roots in Schellenberg's concept of "informational value" and in effect, is a process of determining archives' "importance." But, he asks, importance to what? Ironically, both Schellenberg and Eastwood agree that this is an exercise in pondering the "somewhat imponderable."

More importantly, Eastwood also demonstrates that, "if we wish archives to serve as an essential expression of the society in which they were created and its values, [then] the only possible criterion to guide evaluation is the experience of the use of the thing."<sup>38</sup> To be sure, locating archival appraisal within a utilitarian framework satisfies one of the fundamental conundrums surrounding any theoretical debate: theory and practice. If archives are "utilitarian objects"

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<sup>37</sup> Richard Cox, "The Documentation Strategy and Archival Appraisal Principles: A Different Perspective", *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994), p. 11-36.

<sup>38</sup> Eastwood, "Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal", p. 82.



then they have a value above and beyond any of the values archivists have traditionally identified, in this case, their probative value as evidence of union activities. As Young notes, "the regularity with which unions resort to their records in the course of daily operations while defending membership concerns underlies their importance as invaluable information sources on any number of unions' issues."<sup>39</sup> Young concludes, "trade unions have both a duty to themselves and an obligation to their members to ensure that these records are properly preserved and maintained."<sup>40</sup>

The above relates most urgently to the "acts and deeds" noted earlier in Chapter 1, in particular, to Eldon Frost's call for "documents of the labour movement" and the subsequent "moratorium on new acquisition" fifteen years later by the National Archives. Further, the notion of "use" as it is presented by Eastwood not only raises the question of use for research versus use for

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<sup>39</sup> Young, "The Evidentiary and Probative Value of Trade Unions Records" p. 202.

<sup>40</sup> Young, "The Evidentiary and Probative Value of Trade Unions Records" p. 209.

continuing operational needs, assuming, that is, that one can be considered exclusive of the other, but also impacts on the issue of where the preservation of such organizational archives should occur. In other words, what is the role of the National Archives or more generally, of any repository in relation to unions, in assuming responsibility for the permanent preservation of their own records?

Terry Eastwood has proposed that archives are primarily "utilitarian objects" and as a consequence, are best maintained within their immediate social context. To be sure, archives removed from their operational context adopt a secondary contextual relationship: they become things maintained for something else, something usually associated with "research value." Again, in his essay "How Goes it with Appraisal?", Eastwood observes that, "research value...mean[s] practically nothing, because in fact [it] just add[s] an adjective to the word value without in any way illuminating it." In effect, it amounts to "everyday shorthand that archivists and historians use when making unsupported, and sometimes insupportable, assertions of value."<sup>41</sup> In many ways, this is what

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<sup>41</sup> Eastwood, "How Goes it with Appraisal?", p. 115.

happens to archives recontextualized in a piecemeal fashion into an adopted repository.

In order for records to maintain the kind of "use-value" which Eastwood posits is inherent to archives, it follows that archives are best preserved by the organization which created them. This way, not only is their continuing value preserved in context, but also they propose a continuing purpose to the union. In fact, this is similar to the conclusion which Young suggests and which both DeLottinville and Stunden recommend: that unions must now begin to assume greater responsibility for the preservation of their own documentary heritage. To my mind, however, the pendulum has continued to swing, and the era of partnerships, in a more full-fledged sense of the term, has arrived. Post-custodial archives, knowledge management initiatives and traditional assumptions regarding the role of government belie and challenge traditional approaches to records keeping strategies and options. The final chapter will propose a third option to the traditional arrangements for the acquisition and preservation of union records by an archival repository.

#### CHAPTER 4: THE ARCHIVAL ACQUISITION OF LABOUR UNION RECORDS, A THIRD OPTION

In his essay "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally", Christopher Hives recommends that larger organizations begin to assume a greater role in the preservation of their own records. In particular, he suggests a greater financial responsibility be borne by the organizations who create the records. He writes,

this could take a number of forms including the establishment of in-house archival programmes, the development of cooperative or cost shared arrangements with other organizations or partnerships with existing repositories to help defray the costs of maintaining records.<sup>1</sup>

While the above options in many ways remain viable, in the 4 years since Hives wrote his article, the archival landscape has shifted even further in the direction he initially identified.<sup>2</sup> Capital and operational budgets of major archival

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Hives, "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally" *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Specifically, Hives cites a philosophical shift on the part of large bureaucracies as well as changes in "societal attitudes" on the part of the public.

institutions have been cut or, at best, frozen; staffing levels as well have been capped. Further, with the regional growth of archival institutions over the past twenty-five years, major archival repositories have begun to shift their own internal operational focus away from acquisition and onto access. More specifically, larger archives have focused on a re-thinking of descriptive standards, in particular, the use of the *Rules for Archival Description* and the retro-active conversion of holdings that are, for the most part, not *RAD*-compliant as well as focusing on the use of data communications technologies to increase public access to archival holdings.<sup>3</sup>

The cost-shared and partnership options initially suggested by Hives have begun to be considered the preferred options by some. For example, in a recent study prepared for the Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine entitled "A Framework for the Management and Disposition of Hospital Archives: The

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<sup>3</sup> In particular see the Canadian Council of Archives, "Raising CAIN: Building Canada's Archival Information Network," Prepared by the CCA Information Highway Task Force, (November 15, 1997) as well as the Archives Network of Alberta (ANA) and the British Columbia Archival Union List (BCAUL), both projects designed to enhance and facilitate access to archival holdings in Alberta and British Columbia repositories.

Alberta Medical Archives Survey,” authors Elizabeth Denham and Donna Kynaston made just such a recommendation. They suggested that a potential option for the disposition of hospital records would simply be to deposit them in an existing archives. They cautioned, however, that “it is not realistic to expect a public archives to provide these services at no cost to the health agency.” In fact, Denham and Kynaston recommend the contracting of a fairly comprehensive agreement outlining the “funding requirements and identifying specific archival services to be provided...”<sup>4</sup> prior to committing resources. Denham and Kynaston’s recommendations touch on an fundamental point of archives not always acknowledged or fully understood: that archival institutions offer an information service to both the organization and, if the archives provide public access, to the citizenry.

Finally, if the paradigm is to shift and we are to begin to consider a more fully integrated notion of cost-sharing and partnership arrangements, then there

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<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Denham and Donna Kynaston, “A Framework for the Management and Disposition of Hospital Archives: The Alberta Medical Archives Survey,” unpublished study commissioned by the Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine, (November, 1997), p. 25.

are a number of issues and strategies which must be considered. This final chapter will endeavor to outline a series of steps to be taken before implementing such an option. It will also identify key mechanisms on how this option could be made to work and finally, it will make a series of recommendations regarding making the cost-shared / partnership option a more viable alternative for future consideration by larger archival institutions.

Perhaps the first step which needs to be taken is a re-connection with the labour unions themselves. So much has happened since the original enthusiasm of the labour-archives relationship in the late 1970s and early 1980s. For instance, the decade old "moratorium" on new labour archives acquisitions by the National Archives, the debate regarding the "raiding" of Canada's international unions' records, the tax credit issue, debates surrounding the study of "new history" and attempts to initiate records keeping strategies with unions, have shifted the focus away from acquiring, preserving and making available records onto other, sometime more contentious questions and issues. Considering the regional character of most Canadian unions coupled with the increased emergence of regional archives, there is a dual and complementary infrastructure emerging

which could potentially accommodate the "acting locally" dimension of Hive's proposals.

Nancy Stunden, in part, touched on this twenty-years ago. She wrote,

the most promising scheme for labour records in Canada would seem to lie within the established system of general repositories. Working in separate institutions, in the regional and national professional associations, in federal - provincial meetings of archivists and through informal channels, this system can be made to be more responsive to the labour archives situation.<sup>5</sup>

To this, I would add the issue of organizational responsibility and ongoing support or some kind of financial commitment. To be sure, the first step in any effort to initiate a revised cost-shared / partnership arrangement is to approach the union at the regional, national and international levels with a plan for solving their records keeping problems. The caveat, of course, is that the repository and the union are on an equal footing in that the union should assume part of the financial responsibilities.

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<sup>5</sup> Nancy Stunden, "Labour, Records and Archives: The Struggle for a Heritage." *Archivaria* 4 (Summer 1977), p. 90.



This kind of arrangement could potentially shift the repositories' role as well. No longer will access to union records be framed solely in research terms, but records management practices may introduce a more "use" orientated purpose to the acquisition and preservation of union records. Also, considering the shared financial dimension of the relationship, perhaps traditional access conditions and traditional notions of "custody and control" may have to be reevaluated. These issues and questions are characteristic of some of the things which will have to be answered during the negotiation phase of any such partnership arrangement. However, the answers, in some instances, may not be ideal from a traditional archival perspective.

Following potential changes to traditional notions of access conditions and "custody and control," a second step in the process may be a review of the traditional institutional acquisition policy. Archival repositories, both large and small, have tended to follow the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) guidelines on the development of their acquisitions policies. Acquisition policies in this context articulate a fairly strict outline of what and what not to include in one's

acquisitions policy framework. For instance, CCA guidelines for “method of acquisition” and “roles and responsibilities” as well as “access,” within a more comprehensive partnership arrangement with a union, may have to be revisited. More specifically, traditional notions of custody and control of archives may have to be made more flexible, and changes to traditional notions of the role of archives in relation to the sponsoring agency may also have to be revisited in light of acquisition policy statements which rely on more traditional notions of the archives’ role as passive repository of historically significant documents. To be sure, depending on the nature of the agreement, the practice of “postcustodial”<sup>6</sup> archives may become the working strategy for larger archives.

Finally, a third step essential to the success of the cost-shared / partnership option would be to seek support funding to initiate a pilot project between an archival repository and a labour union. The pilot project would outline the terms

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<sup>6</sup> I am using the term “postcustodial” in a literal sense, meaning not having traditional archival custody of records as opposed to Terry Cook’s usage of the term. Cook’s notion of “postcustodial” pertains to the “physical to [the] conceptual, from [the] product-focused to [the] process orientated activity....[in other words,] “mind over matter.” See Terry Cook’s essay, “What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift”, *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997), p. 17-63.

of the agreement, specifically the kinds of services the repository would offer in exchange for direct and ongoing financial commitment. Fundamental to the pilot project's success would be Canadian Council of Archives support of the project and in particular, CCA grants offsetting initial union costs. This kind of funding formula would be crucial to the project's success in that it would present a cost effective option to the union to manage its records. The funding of the pilot project would provide the union with firm cost-benefit and risk analysis data and, following the completion of the project, both the union and the archives would be in a firm position to demonstrate the benefits of this kind of archives / records management arrangement.

A pilot project of this nature highlights one of the fundamental mechanisms required for the success of this kind of cost-shared / partnership arrangement, Canadian Council of Archives financial support. Within its present framework, the CCA is charged with monitoring and sometimes even coordinating the direction of archival initiatives much as they have done with the *Rules for Archival Description* and the Canadian Archival Information Network initiative or

CAIN, as it is popularly called.<sup>7</sup> For example, under one of the two planning streams identified by the CCA's Planning and Priorities Committee, "improving the use of archival heritage," which to date has focused on "network strategies and development" but also has a mandate to support and investigate both "public service standards" and "a reassessment of the needs of the Canadian archival community,"<sup>8</sup> there is a mechanism to indirectly address the impact of resourcing issues that the larger archival institutions are facing and to support new strategies for the acquisition and preservation of archives. Further, financial support could be accessed through the Council's Cost Shared Cooperative Special Projects grant program with the repository costs providing the required match for the funding which, for the pilot project, could represent the labour union's initial contribution.

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<sup>7</sup> Essentially the Canadian Archival Information Network is "a detailed strategy and action plan for the development of Canada's archival information network, articulating the network's broad goals...as a basis for the strategy's development." See "Raising CAIN: Building Canada's Archival Information Network", Prepared by the CCA Information Highway Task Force, (November 15, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Canadian Council of Archives, "Canadian Council of Archives, Tenth Anniversary Retrospective, 1985-1995 (Ottawa: Canadian Council of Archives, 1995), p. 15-16.

Canadian Council of Archives support from both a planning (on the agenda of the Planning and Priorities Committee) and financial (Special Projects program) perspective is one of the key mechanisms for making the cost-shared / partnership arrangement a viable option. Another, and potentially more important, mechanism is to successfully promote the option internally within the repositories' own organization. That is: promote it to one's own resource allocator. Increasingly, the capital and operational budgets of large government sponsored archival institutions are coming under strain. Indeed, this was one of the primary issues identified by Hives on why government sponsored archives are being forced to meet internal obligations first. However, the cost-shared / partnership arrangement presents a way to increase revenues which, in turn, may support archival programs beyond the immediate needs of the labour union's financial arrangement. The option then, in effect, allows the repository to meet its cultural mandate as well as explore revenue generation schemes so far as cost-sharing and partnerships are concerned.

With an implementation strategy in place of re-contacting unions regarding their records management and administration, and then, in some sense, reformatting traditional notions of archival “custody and control” and finally, an actual pilot project, the requisite steps for the realization for a cost-shared / partnerships arrangement could be made viable. Complimentary to this, internal and external mechanisms must also be on side if this third option is to be a success. Both organizational commitment on the part of the repositories’ senior administration as well as Canadian Council of Archives support could effectively shift traditional archival practices regarding the preservation and acquisition of archives towards broader notions of cost-shared / partnership arrangements.

Recommendations for further action:

- Archival institutions re-connect with labour unions regarding the importance of their records to society and the services archives have to offer regarding records management and administration;
- Develop guidelines for and initiate a pilot project on the preservation and acquisition of labour records within the context of a cost shared / partnership arrangement, with the union’s financial contribution being funded by the Canadian Council of Archives’ Cost Shared Cooperative Special Projects program;

- Build support organizationally for the project by promoting it as having revenue generation potential.

As Hives concludes in “Thinking Globally, Acting Locally”,

in an archival context the slogan suggests that we should view the acquisition of private records not as the responsibility of individual repositories but rather as the collective responsibility of the entire archival community<sup>9</sup>

To be sure, the rethinking of traditional strategies for the preservation and acquisition of private records or, in this case, labour union records, by larger archival repositories suggests that archival practices are evolving to accommodate notions of organizational responsibility, partnerships and “use-value,” or, in a word: archival theory and practice.

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<sup>9</sup> Hives, “Thinking Globally, Acting Locally”, p. 160.

**CONCLUSION:  
THE ACQUISITION AND PRESERVATION  
OF LABOUR UNION RECORDS IN CANADA**

This thesis has examined the question, “where is the best place for the records of labour unions to reside?” However, before answering the question, it was considered essential to contextualize the issue by first examining the labour / archives discourse as it has evolved throughout the late 1970s and mid-1980s, particularly as it underscored many of the issues to be addressed later in the thesis, as well as informing my attempt to offer a solution to the present problem.

Specifically, Chapter 1 examined the labour union records issue as it occurred in archival literature in both Canada and the United States over the past two and a half decades. It reviewed the issues, the positions taken, and the solutions offered by the writers. It concluded that while the debate thoughtfully articulated and explored the many issues as they were perceived at the time, it did not offer a satisfactory solution to the vexing question of where and how to preserve the records of labour. In part, the chapter suggested that this was due to inherent limitations in the perspective of the participants on the perceived role of



archivists and archives and their relationship to the Canadian Archival System.

The chapter concluded that perhaps the traditional role and perspectives of archives may have to be amended in order to more satisfactorily answer the question in the late 1990s.

A second important issue to be introduced in Chapter 1 concerned the concept of the “probative value” of union records, initially introduced by Rod Young in the mid-1980s.<sup>1</sup> Young’s central point was that union records are created first and foremost to support union functions and that this was their “primary value.” He suggested that it would be problematic for archivists to lose sight of this very important fact.

Before turning in more detail to the master question, it was also deemed important to fully understand the context within which union records are created. Chapter 2 examined the juridical and practical, or social environment, in which union records are created, maintained and used. This kind of information is

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<sup>1</sup> Rodney Young, “The Evidentiary and Probative Value of Trade Unions Records,” *Archivaria* 18 (Summer 1984), p. 202-213.

essential to the archival enterprise of understanding provenance and even more specifically, to the acquisition of records by an archival institution. "The context is all," wrote heather MacNeil and, if it is lost, "we simply do not have archives."<sup>2</sup> This second chapter thus delineated the context for the creation and use of union records, both from the perspective of their juridical nature by examining key labour legislation in Canada, as well as the social context by answering the question "what do unions do" in the second part of the chapter.

After reviewing the archival discourse on the acquisition and preservation of labour archives in Canada in Chapter 1 followed by an analysis of the context for the creation and use of labour's records in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 examined the issue of acquisition and preservation. It asked the question: under what conditions, should institutional archives be responsible for the acquisition and preservation of labour's records? In answering this question, the chapter examined two contrasting theoretical models for the archival acquisition of labour

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<sup>2</sup> Heather MacNeil, "The Context is All: Describing a Fonds and its Parts in Accordance with the *Rules for Archival Description*" in *The Archival Fonds: from Theory to Practice*, edited by Terry Eastwood, Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1992, p.195-225.

records. In particular, it contrasted the relationship between Documentation Strategy and the acquisition / preservation of labour records solely by an archival institution with the theory of "use-value"<sup>3</sup> and notion of "probative value"<sup>4</sup> and the acquisition / preservation of labour records solely by a creating agency or in this case, the union.

Chapter 3 concluded that following Terry Eastwood's proposals that in order for records to maintain the kind of "use-value" which he posited are inherent to archives, archives are perhaps best preserved by the organization which created them. This way, not only is their continuing value preserved in context, but they also then serve a continuing purpose to the union. This was similar to the conclusions which Young suggested and which both DeLottinville and Stunden recommended as well: that unions must now begin to assume greater responsibility for the preservation of their own documentary heritage. However,

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<sup>3</sup> See Terry Eastwood, "How Goes it with Appraisal?", *Archivaria* 36, (Autumn, 1993), p. 111-121 and "Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal", *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh Taylor*, edited by Barbara L. Craig, 1992, 71-89.

<sup>4</sup> See Young, "The Evidentiary and Probative Value of Trade Unions Records," p. 202-213.

in the years following DeLottinville and Stunden's proposals, the pendulum has continued to swing, and Chapter 3 concluded that the era of partnerships, in a more full-fledged sense of the term, has arrived. Postcustodial archives, electronic document management, information management and knowledge management initiatives, as well as traditional assumptions regarding the role of government in relation to culture and heritage, in effect are challenging the traditional approaches to records keeping strategies and options.

Chapter 4 proposed a third option to the traditional arrangements for the acquisition and preservation of union records by an archival repository. While traditional options may, in some instances, remain viable, the archival landscape has shifted even further in the direction first articulated by Christopher Hives in his article "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally"<sup>5</sup> and the issues of post-custodial archives and more flexible cost shared / partnership arrangements for archives are now being discussed. The final chapter outlined possible steps and

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<sup>5</sup> Specifically, Hives cites a philosophical shift on the part of large bureaucracies as well as changes in "societal attitudes" on the part of the public. See, "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally" *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994), p. 158.

mechanisms for the realization of a third option including, re-approaching the unions for support; re-framing traditional institutional acquisition policies; as well as funding mechanisms for a pilot project and garnering both institutional and archival community support through the aegis of the Canadian Council of Archives. In essence this offers a revised and more flexible approach to an ongoing problem regarding acquisition and preservation of private records by public institutions.

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