

THE LABOR ARCHIVIST AND THE “LABOR QUESTION”: TWO STEPS FORWARD, ONE STEP BACK

THOMAS CONNORS

ABSTRACT: Although the “labor question” has carried various political, economic, and sociological meanings in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for the labor archivist it has been a question of preservation and control. Efforts of labor archivists and academics to collect, preserve, and make available the records of organized labor in the United States are traced from the early decades of the twentieth century through the 1980s. The state of labor’s records cannot be separated from the state of the movement that created them. Labor archivists, too, must adapt to the changing environment facing organized labor in America if they are to construct their project “for the long haul.”

There are two anecdotes in American labor’s legend and lore that illustrate the “labor question” vis-a-vis the labor archivist.

First anecdote: Sam Gompers was defeated for the presidency of the American Federation of Labor once in his career. The Convention of 1894 voted John McBride in and Sam Gompers out. Following his defeat, Gompers returned to the federation’s New York City headquarters to complete some work and to tidy up his files. There he encountered August McCraith, the newly elected secretary of the AFL. In his autobiography, Gompers wrote that “McCraith was a printer and an anarchist. He held what Henry Ford later declared, that history is bunk, and cared nothing for historical material.” Apparently seized by some extreme notion of proto-modern records management, McCraith was going through the voluminous historical files Gompers had collected over the years, happily weeding materials he considered nonessential to the daily operation of the American Federation of Labor’s national office. “There were two big heaps on the floor over six feet high when he had finished,” Gompers wrote. He gathered up what he could that day, intending to return to salvage the rest. But the next day, to his chagrin, Gompers found the AFL offices devoid of any remaining historical files—the night janitor had disposed of them.¹

Second anecdote: Miners’ Union Day was a workingman’s tradition in Butte, Montana. The day’s events consisted of a parade, rousing speeches, and general imbibing. The parade of June 13, 1914, was led by Frank J. Hayes, vice-president of the United Mine Workers of America. The celebration this year, however, was marred by internecine strife between the conservative leadership of the Butte Miners’ Union and the “progressives,” a radical faction of the local

membership. The preeminent Montana historian K. Ross Toole describes the progressives' attack on the union headquarters:

As the parade approached the corner of Park and Dakota Streets, a mob surged in from Park Street. The union leaders were de-horsed and chaos broke out in the streets. The sheriff, Tim Driscoll, was brushed aside, and he and his deputies were helpless. The embattled union officials, Hayes in tow, managed to fight their way into the Broadway Theater, whence they escaped by the rear door, bruised and bleeding. The mob then surged on down the street to the Miners' Union Hall, which they proceeded to ransack. The union records were cast out the second-story window to the street below. Furniture was splintered to pieces . . . All day the riot continued. The safe was dragged from the building and dynamited. The police stood by but did not interfere.²

The terms "labor question" and "labor problem" were used often and variously in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.³ In general, they referred to the impoverishment of the industrial wage earning class, and to the consequent social unrest—the danger—among this class. To moderate reformers, the solution to the labor problem was general uplift and improvement brought about by providing workers with a higher standard of living and enacting protective legislation. For radicals, the solution was the abolition of the wage system itself and the establishment of some form of working class political rule, some form of socialism. (Both these solutions found expression in the American labor movement.)⁴

Technically, the labor question has been one of political economy and sociological analysis. For the labor archivist, the labor question has been one of preservation and control. The two anecdotes recounted above represent an archivist's nightmare: the willful and uninformed destruction of the documentary record on the one hand; on the other, its willful and violent destruction by its own creators.

In working through to a historical understanding of what labor archivists do, the labor archives project is posed against the backdrop of a compound appreciation of the labor question, keeping in mind organized labor's attitude toward its own record and the American public's attitude toward the labor movement over time.⁵

Labor's attitude toward its own record is really a matter of organizational development, of institutional growth. When Sam Gompers lost part of the record with the evening trash, the AFL was still in its infancy. When he wrote about that event, circa 1923, his own days were numbered but his organization stood solid and poised, ready to enter a new period—a period of greater organizational coherence, though not necessarily one of increased membership.⁶

In the Gompers era, the names Ely and Commons are the hallmark names for the labor archives project in the U.S. This period has been admirably described by Harry Miller among others.⁷ University of Wisconsin professors Richard Ely and John Commons worked diligently with their associates for some twenty years to gather and publish key documents relating to the American labor movement and the development of industrial society in the New World.⁸ Though Gompers never fully trusted intellectuals, he seems to have been on good terms with Ely and Commons. Whether or not they discussed

the need to collect and preserve the record of American labor is not known, but there is considerable documentation of each man's understanding of the need to gather and disseminate information on the aims of organized labor and of the role of schools and universities and of intellectuals and scholars in this endeavor.⁹

It is in this broader conception of the labor archives project that the 1920s and 1930s—the post-Gompers era—take on some importance for our historical self-understanding. In the 1920s and into the 1930s, the Rand School for Social Science produced its *American Labor Yearbook* and other informational publications on a regular basis.¹⁰ Throughout this period, the Rand School Library was collecting materials of an archival nature as well: Socialist Party records, the papers of American labor figures, pamphlets, and newspapers that would otherwise have been lost.

This Rand School activity, though not an official function of the AFL, was not so far from the national center's aims as one might think. William Green, Gompers' successor, was personally close to or politically allied with some of the key supporters of Rand School activities, such as Alexander Baroff, David Dubinsky, Harry Lang, and Lucy Robbins. The importance of information was not lost on William Green. Early in his tenure he expanded the AFL's library services and created two new information-related departments: a publicity and a research department. Interesting for present purposes are two clear indications of Green's awareness of the power of information and of the importance of its organized gathering and storage. In 1927 the Workers' Education Bureau (a semi-official AFL function) published a small pamphlet entitled "How To Keep Union Records" by Stuart Chase. That same year the AFL published "Organized Labor and Research," a reprint of an article by Morris L. Cooke.¹¹ Cooke, of course, had been a pivotal figure in converting a hostile AFL to critical support for scientific industrial management. And Stuart Chase went on to become one of the main publicists for the concept of enlightened human relations in the machine age.¹² Two years earlier, soon after his ascendancy to the AFL presidency, Green first expressed his appreciation of information's role in the work of modern trade unionism:

The trade union movement has been passing through that period when physical controversies and the tactics of force were most effective; it is now in a period when its leaders must seek the conference room, and there by exposition and demonstration, convince conferees of the justice of Labor's position. In such service Labor is finding a special need for trained representatives and effective information.¹³

In the mid-1930s an historic breach took place in the ranks of organized labor that impaired the AFL's institutional modernizing efforts. The CIO's split from the House of Labor created bitter rivalries, often expressed publicly, that took their toll on the membership as well as on the leadership of organized labor in America.¹⁴ The labor archives project in these years may be best exemplified by the work begun at the Commons Research Library in Madison to process the materials gathered by Ely and Commons some time before. But lacking a national effort supported by a single national trade union center, the mid-to-late thirties was a period of stasis for the labor archives project. The establishment of the Division of Labor Department Archives at the National

Archives in 1938, however, may be regarded as the moment of inception for the project as we view it today. Division chief Paul Lewinson not only argued for a systematic approach to the gathering of labor related records in the federal government and beyond, but he also sought to include labor representatives in the process.¹⁵ Indeed, Lewinson supported two of his staff members, Hamlin Cannon and Herbert Fine, in compiling a short description of sources in the National Archives for labor history which was published in the AFL's monthly organ, the *American Federationist*.¹⁶

World War II brought with it the call for labor unity on the home front. AFL and CIO peace negotiations started in 1942, and perhaps more symbolic than not was the inclusion of both national labor federation presidents, Bill Green of the AFL and Philip Murray of the CIO, among the sponsors of the American Labor Archives and Research Institute, centered at the Rand School in New York.¹⁷

Looking at the stated program of this institute, labor archivists can only applaud the professionalism in the formulation of its mission. The institute was to function as a repository for labor source materials and as a clearinghouse for information on the location of sources not housed there. However, a close look at its track record makes it obvious that the institute's bold agenda was only minimally realized. The organizational and financial complexities of the proposed enterprise never quite squared with what could be achieved. The institute never won the practical support of the labor movement. In short, it never got off the ground, existing in a perpetual planning stage until 1949, when, after a futile attempt at reorganization, it was dissolved.

The 1950s was the crucial decade for the labor archives project in the United States. It was in the fifties that a number of forces, events, and individuals came together to generate a broad professional appreciation of the need to collect and preserve the records of labor on a national basis and in a sustained way. But a look at the organizational history of this coming together of forces, events, and people reveals that, while the need could be articulated in national terms, the project could not be sustained on a national level. The fifties was indeed a decade of progress for the labor archives project, but its progress was limited, so that, to paraphrase the title of a pamphlet by Lenin, for every two steps taken forward, one step was taken back.

As early as October, 1951, Paul Lewinson's interest in the fate of labor union records was taking organizational form. In his quarterly report to the Archivist of the United States, he noted that he had conferred several times with a member of the Society of American Archivists' committee on the archives of labor organizations and that the committee was considering a survey of such materials.¹⁸ Lewinson became chairman of that committee, properly called the Committee on Labor Union Archives, in 1953.¹⁹ In 1954, *The American Archivist* published Lewinson's first article on the subject of labor archives. "The Archives of Labor" was a brief and very general discussion of where labor sources could be found in government archives, in labor movement archives, and in international agencies in the United States and Europe. It was the "first shot" in the Lewinson committee's long range program, whose goal was to conduct a thorough survey of source materials held by labor organizations and other agencies and to produce a union listing of these sources. But this work was slow going and ultimately unsatisfactory. In 1957, Lewinson reported that

the committee had been frustrated in obtaining the blessing of labor's hierarchy for a thorough survey.²⁰ Lewinson had sought the AFL-CIO's endorsement of the SAA committee's plans for a guide to labor records in the U.S. in 1956. His correspondence with George Meany shows the AFL-CIO president's personal sympathy for the project on the one hand, and his reluctance to act without the expressed approval of the AFL-CIO Executive Council on the other.²¹ It must be remembered that in March, 1956—the period of Lewinson's correspondence with Meany—the AFL and CIO had only recently merged. The two national headquarters had merged, but merger at the state and local level would take place at a slower pace, and in some cases only at the direct insistence of the national office.²² It also must be remembered that in 1956 the question of corruption was raising its head both inside and outside the AFL-CIO. In 1957, the Teamsters and Bakers were expelled from the AFL-CIO on charges of corruption and in 1959 the Landrum-Griffin Act, the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, was passed, which had a profound impact on the records-keeping procedures of unions, by bringing public scrutiny to many aspects of labor union administration, including the financial dealings and business practices of union officers and their employees.²³ Given these internal and external difficulties—the labor question writ in the language of the 1950s—it becomes significant that organized labor in America did, in fact, formally take up the matter of archives at the 1959 AFL-CIO convention.²⁴

Lewinson's final report, published in 1962, draws mixed conclusions about his committee's work over time. The report, entitled "Labor Union Records in the United States," admits the fundamental incompleteness of the committee's survey of labor union archives in the United States, yet it points to the continuing interest of labor unions and of the AFL-CIO in the process that had begun. And important for the present and future concerns of American labor archivists, it clearly identified the next step in the national labor archives project:

Further investigation should take the form not of a questionnaire sent to unions, but a survey made on the spot by substantive scholars and archivists working in cooperation. The interest shown both by the AFL-CIO and the 118 organizations that troubled to respond to our queries, permits the hope that over a period of time such an endeavor could be carried quite far.²⁵

What is not addressed is the means by which this enormous and, as today's labor archivists know, daunting, effort should be carried out.

The AFL and the AFL-CIO's relationship with SAA is only one aspect of the thrust and progress of the labor archives project during the 1950s. The federation's dealings with the historical profession merits some elucidation. In 1952, historian Vaughan Bornet was allowed to examine certain historical files housed in the basement of the old AFL building in Washington, D.C. In the course of his research, Bornet compiled a rough inventory and general description of the archival holdings of the AFL. Bornet discussed his findings in "The New Labor History: A Challenge for American Historians," published in *The Historian* of Fall 1955. In replying to Bornet's published assessment, AFL secretary-treasurer William Schnitzler noted that a microfilming project had

gotten underway in the three years since Borner's visit and that the AFL's non-current records were no longer in the condition or shape described.³⁶ This microfilming program and the general work of streamlining the AFL's records-keeping practice had become an area of concern for other representatives of the historical profession. Clifford Lord, director of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, made inquiries about the status of noncurrent AFL records as early as 1953. In following years, he met with George Meany in Washington and ultimately secured an agreement for the transfer of such files to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.³⁷ With the acquisition of the AFL national files (along with other non-Wisconsin materials), the State Historical Society of Wisconsin became the center for labor history research in the United States. Yet this institution was mainly concerned with the labor movement in Wisconsin.³⁸ This contradiction between the State Historical Society's regional interest and its national collecting scope would determine the labor archives project in the U.S. for the next two decades. It would provide for the preservation of important bodies of endangered records but it would also serve to inhibit the development of a cooperative agenda for the collection and preservation of labor records nationally.

As the work of the Lewinson committee was winding down, the Committee for the Preservation of Labor Archives was beginning its work. This committee, which emerged from a conference initiated by the Tamiment Institute in November, 1958, was instrumental in the passage of the 1959 AFL-CIO resolution in support of labor union archives.³⁹ Its ongoing and practical aim was to publish periodic descriptions of the labor-related holdings of various American repositories in the pages of *Labor History*, a journal launched in 1960. These miniguides, it was hoped, would ultimately be brought together as a comprehensive guide to labor holdings in the United States. Numerous miniguides appeared, including a special archives issue of *Labor History*, but the work of national compilation and publication fell by the wayside.⁴⁰

The 1960s and 1970s could be characterized as an era of massive collection of labor source materials. The very success of this effort brought about a rethinking, not only of archival collection priorities, but of the physical capabilities of collecting institutions as well. The establishment of the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University, the ongoing and expanding work of the Labor-Management Documentation Center and Catherwood Library at Cornell, the continuing work at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the emergence of the Southern Labor Archives at Georgia State and of the Urban Archives Center at Temple, the inclusion of labor records in the collection policies of various university archives and special collections departments, and the Wagner Archives program which gave a new thrust to the NYU/Tamiment Library—all this has meant that literally thousands and thousands of feet of labor-related materials have been gathered and are being preserved under the best archival conditions available. But with these massive acquisitions, new problems of access and use have cropped up; problems of day-to-day management of information have begun to overtake the older, more genteel problems of a national agenda and a national coordination of efforts. But, like labor martyr Joe Hill, those old questions never died: they were central concerns for the SAA Committee on Urban and Industrial Archives established in 1969, and of the Labor Archives Committee that spun off from it in 1973.⁴¹ But a

look at the broader American socio-economic scene will uncover something about the failure of labor archivists to resolve these concerns. In the mid-1970s the guns, butter, and welfare politics of the Great Society came under critical public scrutiny—to put it mildly. The gathering momentum of reaction, culminating in Ronald Reagan's election victory of 1980, brought home the financial difficulties inherent in the expressed desire of both labor archivists and labor historians to establish national control over the collected record of American labor.

The sobered expectations of interested professionals are noticeable in the "Report of the Conference on the Records of American Labor," sponsored by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and held at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in November, 1980. Eighteen representatives of labor, academia, and government archives discussed the situation in terms of the new fiscal realism. The costs of developing a systematic national information network were deemed prohibitive. Space problems, it was noted, were leading repositories with ongoing labor records programs to modify those programs. Participants felt that their efforts should be concentrated on helping unions to help themselves. These conclusions, though grim, should not be interpreted as the product of political demoralization or custodial backsliding. After all, once the bleak picture had been drawn, conference participants outlined positive, feasible projects, and generated specific recommendations for the consideration of the AFL-CIO. One suggestion was that a national labor archives service system be established at the Meany Center that could: (1) provide consultation and advice on placing materials and on beginning records management programs for unions, and (2) coordinate the gathering and dissemination of information on the location and extent of collected materials. Both projects were to be supported by a consortium of cooperating institutions. It was specifically suggested that the AFL-CIO appoint an archivist to begin the work of processing its historic records and to initiate a records management program for the national trade union center. This specific recommendation has been and is being carried out.³²

Moreover, since the 1980 conference, three significant regional labor archives projects have been launched: the New York City local union survey, the Connecticut labor records survey, and the establishment of the Labor Archives and Research Center at San Francisco State University. New labor collections have been brought into the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and the University of Vermont, and a collecting project is being planned for the state of Montana. Since 1980, labor representatives and labor leadership have become very much involved in planning and promoting regional projects or in establishing archives departments in national and international unions.³³ These activities, along with the formation within SAA of the Labor Archives Roundtable in 1984, indicate a significant positive momentum for the labor archives project in the United States. But this momentum needs to be consolidated, and consolidated around the labor archives service system idea proposed by the 1980 NHPRC conference. The George Meany Memorial Archives has the potential to serve as a clearinghouse of information, given adequate staff and space, and the Labor Archives Roundtable is the embryo of a "consortium of cooperating institutions." What is missing is the human element—the person or persons available and willing to devise a plan of action and to generate the

necessary consensus among the obvious participants to sanction such a plan. So the question remains: Will American labor archivists be able to take the next few steps forward without having to relinquish one or two steps in the process? Put another way: Can American labor archivists maintain a viable organizational vehicle to insure the continuity of their project?

The latest manifestation of a national effort to coordinate the labor archives project in the U.S. is SAA's Labor Archives Roundtable. Initially organized at SAA's 1984 annual meeting in Washington, D.C., the roundtable has shown great promise in the area of developing communication among the various labor archives user groups, that is, among trade unionists, labor historians and researchers, as well as among labor archivists themselves. This is being accomplished primarily through *Labor Archives News*. As important as communication is, however, it is not enough. The roundtable's organizational apparatus must develop to allow it to provide definitive leadership in service to its constituencies. If activity involving the creation and use of labor archives continues to increase as it has in the last five years, this organizational issue will become an increasingly critical concern for the Labor Archives Roundtable.

The labor problem today involves the erosion of historic union gains and the threat of new impoverishment for middle and lower income wage earners. Some social observers envision the future as a "two-tier society" in which the best-paying jobs are held by a highly-trained technocrat minority while the rest of the working population subsists on low-paying service jobs or slowly sinks into the ranks of the permanently unemployed.³⁴ Labor unions have begun to address this threatening vision, to insist on retraining programs in the event of job loss through automation or to insist on notice well in advance of a plant shutdown. Some unions are turning to a new militancy to win back what may have been lost through concession bargaining in the past. Other unions are experimenting with new forms of membership—associate memberships—and new membership privileges. Most unions have entered the computer age and are learning how to use new audio-visual technology to put their message across—both to the general public and to new members.³⁵

Labor leaders like to point out that the labor movement is built for the long haul, that as long as the labor problem exists, so will its solution in the form of voluntary association, which is to say, trade unionism. Labor archivists, too, must consider the long haul, not only in the abstract or on the ad hoc organizational basis which has been the traditional practice. To be able to meet the complex archival challenges to come—challenges that stem from labor's changing responses to changed conditions—labor archivists must begin to appreciate their work more analytically and more programatically, not merely to hold the ground that they have stepwise gained (or to recover the ground they have lost along the way), but to move consciously in step with the creators of the historical record that they, as labor archivists, maintain.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: From 1982 to 1987, Tom Connors was assistant archivist at the George Meany Memorial Archives of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations, Washington, D.C. He currently resides in Los Angeles.

NOTES

1. Samuel Gompers, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1925), 361.
2. K. Ross Toole, *Twentieth-Century Montana, a State of Extremes* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 133.
3. For early American uses of both terms, see Wendell Phillips, "The Labor Question, April 1872, Delivered to the Knights of St. Crispin" (Boston, 1884) and Eugene Hutchinson, "The Great Labor Problem Solved" (Boston, 1873). Carroll D. Wright's definition of the labor question is perhaps most representative of late 19th century academic use of the term. "I shall constantly use the term 'labor question' as embracing the wants of the wage laborer, or in a general way as representing the discussion of the just and equitable distribution of profits, or the products of labor and capital." See Wright, "The Relation of Political Economy to the Labor Question" (Boston, 1882), 5-6. This term seems to have gone into eclipse in the early 20th century, whereas the latter term—"labor problem"—has continued in use until fairly recent times. See Morton Robert Godine, *The Labor Problem in the Public Service, a Study in Political Pluralism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951). See also Warren B. Catlin, *The Labor Problem in the United States and Great Britain* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1935). For a somewhat politicized definition see Waldo R. Browne, *What's What in the Labor Movement, a Dictionary of Labor Affairs and Labor Terminology* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1921).
4. The literature on reformism and/or socialism in the American labor movement is voluminous. John Laslett offers an excellent discussion of policies and tactics of several of the more overtly socialist affiliates of the AFL. See *Labor and the Left, a Study of Socialist and Radical Influences in the American Labor Movement, 1881-1924* (New York: Basic Books, 1970). That a number of socialist trade unionists, in some cases leaders of the AFL, consciously sought to keep separate socialist doctrine and trade union action is a phenomenon that has yet to come under critical scrutiny. For an indication of this phenomenon see Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952) and David A. Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America, a History* (New York: Macmillan, 1955).
5. The term "project" is used here in its general philosophical sense, i.e., as action in the light of a future end. In this usage, "project" designates the efforts of archivists, historians, and others *over time and discontinuously* to collect and preserve the historical record of American labor. The term should be understood generically.
6. The 1920s saw a severe decline in AFL membership. See Leo Troy, *Trade Union Membership, 1897-1962* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965) and also Philip Taft, *The A.F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger* (New York: Harper, 1959), 2. This period is commonly portrayed as one of stagnation and loss of ground. A revisionist view would see the AFL struggling to hold on to its gains in the face of anti-labor programs such as the American Plan campaign, or in the face of the drastic changes taking place in the American industrial system, middle class culture, and the application of labor law. AFL response to these in the form of institutional modernization has not been covered in the literature. Perhaps Christopher Tomlins comes closest to this in his recent book, *The State and the Unions, Labor Relations, Law and the Organized Labor Movement in America, 1880-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
7. Harold L. Miller, "The American Bureau of Industrial Research and the Origins of the 'Wisconsin School' of Labor History," *Labor History* 25 (Spring 1984): 165-88. See also David B. Gracy II, "A History and Reminiscence: Archives for Labor in the United States," *Archivaria* 4 (1977); F. Gerald Ham and Margaret Hedstrom, *A Guide to Labor Papers in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin 1978); and Philip P. Mason, "Labor Archives in the United States," *Archivum* 27 (1980).
8. See Richard T. Ely, *The Labor Movement in America* (New York: T.Y. Crowell & Co., 1886); John R. Commons and Associates, *History of Labour in the United States*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1918); and *A Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, 11 vols. (Cleveland: A.H. Clark Co., 1910-11).
9. Extant correspondence between and among Gompers, Commons, and Ely is scarce but telling. Periodic communication between 1902 and 1925 (these last letters to Rose Lee Guard, Gompers' secretary) covered subjects such as written contributions to the *American Fed-*

- erationist by Ely or Commons, or quantities of printed matter to be distributed to students or deposited in university libraries for students' use. In response to a request from Gompers to submit a short message of greeting to the *American Federationist* for September, 1915, Ely said, "I do not want to write something that is merely perfunctory, but I want to say certain things which may prove at least in some slight degree helpful to you and to those who are associated with you An economist, who is really friendly to labor, ought to give some suggestions which may aid in the development of policy." (Ely to Gompers, July 29, 1915, The American Federation of Labor Records, Microfilm Edition, Reel 79. For other letters see Reel 58, Index to Office of the President, General Correspondence.) For Gompers' general distrust of intellectuals see the *American Federationist* (April 1900): 100-01, and (August 1911): 608-9. For a discussion of this see Lyle W. Cooper, "The American Federation of Labor and the Intellectuals," *Political Science Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (September 1928).
10. *The American Labor Year Book* began publication in 1916. In his introduction to the first edition, Socialist leader Morris Hillquit wrote, "This volume represents the first attempt in this country to establish a reliable annual chronicle of the aims, struggles and achievements of labor throughout the world." The A.L.Y.B. covered such subjects as the labor movement, the socialist and (after 1919) the communist movements, labor and the law, government and politics, the international scene, and social and economic conditions. A rival information gathering and dissemination effort was launched in 1927 by the Labor Research Association, Inc. Alexander Trachtenberg, the original editor of the A.L.Y.B., was associated with this effort as were Scott Nearing, Art Shields, Robert Dunn, and other supporters of the American Communist Party.
 11. Stuart Chase, "How to Keep Union Records, a Primer for Trade Unions and Study Classes," Workers' Education Pamphlet Series No. 12, n.d. Morris L. Cooke, "Organized Labor and Research," Reprinted from the *American Federationist* (August 1927).
 12. Re: Cooke, see Milton J. Nadworny, *Scientific Management and the Unions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955). Chase's books include *The Economy of Abundance* (New York: Macmillan, 1934); *Men at Work, Some Democratic Methods for the Power Age* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1945); and *Roads to Agreement, Some Successful Methods in the Science of Human Relations* (New York: Harper, 1951).
 13. William Green, "Modern Trade Unionism" (Washington D.C., 1925), 13.
 14. Acrimonious public statements by American labor leaders regarding the AFL/CIO split became more frequent toward the last years of the 1930s. Notable among the public attacks on William Green were those of Heywood Broun, president of the Newspaper Guild. (See especially Broun's columns in *The New Republic* and the *Nation* ca. 1936-39.) Green was not reluctant to offer his opinions for publication, characterizing Broun as a "stooge" of the CIO communists. (See the *AFL Weekly News Service* for July 24, 1937.) The emotional fallout from the AFL and CIO split is indicated in Green's speech to the United Mine Workers convention of 1936 in which he argued the AFL Executive Council's point of view before an unfriendly assembly. See the Proceedings of the Twenty-fourth convention of the UMWA. Also Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine, *John L. Lewis* (New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Book Co., 1977).
 15. This division became the Industrial Records Division (ultimately Branch) in 1947-48. Lewinson served as chief until his retirement in the early 1960s. Lewinson's quarterly reports to the Archivist of the U.S. are beautifully detailed accounts of the policy and practice of the division which included lucid discussions of the need for in-service training of labor archivists, use of records by union staff researchers—Katherine P. Ellickson, associate director of research for the CIO, for example—and professional development for staff. Lewinson's reports can be found in Record Group 64, Records of the National Archives, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The author wishes to thank Leonard Rappoport, who worked for Lewinson at the National Archives, for pointing out the existence and location of this important source of information.
 16. M. Hamlin Cannon and Herbert Fine, "Repository of Labor Records," *American Federationist* (July 1943): 29-30.
 17. Algernon Lee, president of the Rand School for Social Science, wrote to Green in April, 1942, to inquire whether he would agree to Murray's inclusion as a sponsor for the ALARI. (Other sponsors included Walter Reuther, A. Philip Randolph, R.J. Thomas, Matthew Woll and Max Zaritsky.) Green had no objection, but when Lee invited Murray, he politely declined on the grounds that he would not lend his name without having some real touch

- with the work of the institute. Lee persisted, however, and ultimately Murray's name was listed among the sponsors. See *Socialist Collections in the Tamiment Library, 1872-1956*, (Sanford, N.C.: Microfilm Corporation of America, 1979), Algernon Lee Papers, 1896-1954, Collection 14.
18. "Report of the Chief for the Quarter Ending September 30, 1951" dated October 26, 1951, Record Group 64, National Archives Records, NARA.
 19. See *American Archivist* 16 (1953): 178.
 20. Paul Lewinson, "The Archives of Labor," *American Archivist* 17 (1954): 19-24. See also *American Archivist* 20 (1957): 64.
 21. Meany to Lewinson, June 27, 1956, Office of the President, AFL, AFL-CIO, George Meany (1952-1960), 0008/0032/0024, George Meany Memorial Archives, AFL-CIO. See also Meany Copybooks, microfilm, March 13, 1956, George Meany Memorial Archives, AFL-CIO.
 22. For a good account of the inherent difficulties of merger at the state level see Jacqueline Brophy, "The Merger of the AFL and the CIO in Michigan," *Michigan History* 50 (1966): 139-57.
 23. In August 1960, in response to the Landrum-Griffin Act's reporting and filing provisions, the national AFL-CIO instituted a headquarters records control program. In his "Report on Records Control," administrative assistant for records E.L. Kimmel explained its scope and rationale. "The general problem of Records Control encompasses a larger field than the processing of financial records. In many organizations, the volume of departmental files creates space and storage difficulties. In order to overcome these difficulties, we have adopted a Records Control program . . ." (E.L. Kimmel's files, George Meany Memorial Archives, AFL-CIO.) For AFL-CIO's account of Landrum-Griffin's impact see *Proceedings of the Third Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: AFL-CIO, 1959), 396-430.
 24. See "Labor Union Archives—Resolution 134," *Proceedings of the Third Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: AFL-CIO, 1959), 301-02.
 25. Paul Lewinson and Morris Rieger, "Labor Union Records in the United States," *American Archivist* 25 (1962): 44-5.
 26. William Schnitzler to Bornet, March 25, 1955, Vaughan Bornet file, George Meany Memorial Archives, AFL-CIO.
 27. The New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations was also interested in acquiring the AFL's historic records, as was the Library of Congress. For this correspondence and correspondence between Meany and Lord see E.L. Kimmel's "Records" binder, George Meany Memorial Archives, AFL-CIO.
 28. Wisconsin economist Edwin Witte, writing to Meany on behalf of Clifford Lord before agreement on the records transfer was reached, noted that "Since Dr. Lord became Superintendent of the State Historical Society about 10 years ago, he has greatly added to this (labor) collection, getting materials from many unions and individuals. He is interested particularly in getting material bearing on unions in Wisconsin, but our collection is truly national and there may be some material which you are discarding that we would like to make a claim for." Witte to Meany, April 26, 1955, E.L. Kimmel's "Records" binder, George Meany Memorial Archives, AFL-CIO.
 29. "In November, 1958, The Tamiment Institute sponsored a conference of librarians, archivists, and historians to discuss problems relating to the identification, location and preservation of source materials in labor history. The special problem of preserving trade union archives and primary records for the use of scholars received particular consideration." *Labor History* 1 (1960): 98.
 30. *Labor History* 23, no. 4 (1982), carries articles describing the labor history resources for thirteen American archival facilities. For a brief discussion of the purpose of this special issue, see Dan Leab's editorial note, p. 485.
 31. The Committee on Urban and Industrial Archives was founded "to promote the preservation of archival materials pertaining to urban and industrial society that have been received or accumulated by (a) labor organizations, (b) business firms and business-oriented institutions, and (c) civic institutions: to advise and to guide these groups in the techniques of collection, physical protection, arrangement, description, and publication of archival materials . . ." The committee's proposed activities included "1. Preparation of a directory of institutions that have systematic collections of archival materials . . . 2. Devising of the methodology to publicize the need for collection of archival materials. 3. Development of a list of consultant institutions, individuals and publications from which the

collecting institutions can seek guidance in respect to particular aspects of archival technique." These goals were never realized. The committee could not secure the funding to meet between annual SAA meetings, and once-yearly meetings were not enough to insure committee continuity, let alone momentum.

Under these difficult conditions the committee did draft three brochures relating to its three areas of constituent interest. These brochures were aimed at persons responsible for records within organizations that fell under the rubric of urban or industrial archives. Though drafted, the brochures were never produced for distribution.

Although the Committee on Urban and Industrial Archives broke into its constituent sub-groupings in 1973, it can claim one modest victory. In 1971, committee chairman Meyer Fishbein approached the AFL-CIO to try to impress upon the relevant officers the importance of archives and archival programs within institutions. This insistence, plus the professional advice of other archivists, notably Philip Mason, ultimately convinced the AFL-CIO Executive Council of the urgent need for an AFL-CIO archives program.

This information was gathered from memos, reports, and correspondence on the subject of the SAA Committee on Urban and Industrial Archives found in the personal files of Meyer Fishbein. The quoted material above is found in an unpublished draft statement of purpose of the committee, ca. 1970. The author wishes to express his appreciation to Mr. Fishbein for granting him permission to inspect his personal files.

32. The 1981 AFL-CIO convention approved funding for the George Meany Memorial Archives and hired an archivist. In 1982 two staff assistants were hired under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to process 460 cubic feet of records, which included the papers of George Meany up to 1960 and also the records of the AFL and AFL-CIO's Legislative Department. In May 1986 ground was broken at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Silver Spring, Maryland, for the new George Meany Memorial Archives slated for official opening in the summer of 1987.
33. The Montana State AFL-CIO passed a resolution in support of a Montana labor history/labor archives project at its 1986 convention. The Communications Workers of America is now engaged in setting up an archival memorial to its past president Joseph Beirne. The Plumbers Union has hired an archivist/historian to assemble its historic materials for research access. The United Mine Workers is conducting an archives project as part of its centennial celebrations. A number of national unions, such as the Auto Workers, the Teachers, the Farm Workers, and the Newspaper Guild, continue to transfer noncurrent records to regional repositories (notably the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs).
34. See AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department, *De-Industrialization and the Two-tier Society: Challenges for an Industrial Policy* (Washington, D.C.: AFL-CIO, 1984). See also Barbara Ehrenreich, "Is the Middle Class Doomed?" *New York Times Magazine*, September 7, 1986.
35. See AFL-CIO Committee on the Evolution of Work, "The Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions" (Washington, D.C.: AFL-CIO, 1985). The AFL-CIO's Labor Institute for Public Affairs was created in 1982 "to develop a coordinated, long-term strategy for labor in the communications field. The institute produces and distributes television programming, conducts issue and audience research and prepares advisory materials on communications technologies." See *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: AFL-CIO, 1983), 70.