



## **CLARA THOMAS ARCHIVES**

**Inventory of the  
Women, social justice, and Canadian trade unions collection**

**Inventory #F0494**

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F0494 - Women, social justice, and Canadian trade unions collection

**Fonds/Collection Number:** F0494**Title:** Women, social justice, and Canadian trade unions collection**Dates:** 1973-2006**Extent:** 2.7 m of textual records

**Biographical Sketch/  
Administrative History:** Since the 1970s, the Canadian union movement has produced extensive documentation on equity-related issues. This material often had an ephemeral existence as unions lacked resources to preserve and provide access to the documents, and there was no labour library to collect it. In order to promote access and to raise consciousness about important union sources, Professor Linda Briskin, a feminist and union activist, began collecting these documents in the 1970s. Professor Briskin received her Bachelor of Arts degree from McGill University in 1970, taught English and history at the secondary school level from 1971 to 1975, and became involved in the nascent English-speaking women's movement in Montreal. She moved to Toronto to pursue graduate studies with York University's Department of Social and Political Thought, leading to a Master's degree in 1977 and a Ph.D. in 1986. Briskin worked as a Teaching Master at Sheridan College from 1976 to 1986, and was the Director of its Centre for Women from 1980 to 1982. Briskin joined York University's Division of Social Science in July 1986, and was appointed to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for the Women's Studies Programme in 1992. She has held a cross-appointment to the School of Women's Studies since 2001, and was a Guest Researcher in Stockholm, Sweden, from 1992-1994. Her teaching has focused on women's studies (in particular feminist theory, women organizing, and women and society), and was recognized with awards in 1998, 1999, and 2004. Briskin has been an active member of unions, taking part in International Women's Day committees, helping to organize the first provincial women's committee for the Ontario Public Service Employees Union in the 1970s, and co-chairing the Status of Women Committee of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations in 1990-1992. This concern regarding women and unions was also reflected in Briskin's research and writing, which focused on: unions, globalization, and women's power; equity bargaining and bargaining equity; feminist organizing with a focus on socialist feminism; worker militancies; pedagogies and power; and privileging agency (a strategy for women's studies in troubled times). This collection is a product of Briskin's research in these areas. She wrote to the large Canadian unions on an annual basis, requesting any new material that dealt with women and equity-related issues. Briskin compiled her first bibliography on these topics for "Union sisters : women in the labour movement," co-edited with Lynda Yanz (The Women's Press, 1983), and has written or edited several articles and books on equity, collective bargaining, feminism, public policy, women, and unions.

**Scope and Content:** Collection consists of publications, policy statements, research reports, conference and educational documents, and newsletters accumulated by Professor Linda Briskin in the course of her research on women and equity in organized labour in Canada. The documents were published by or about local, provincial, and national organizations, including the Canadian Labour Congress, provincial federations of labour, Canadian and United Auto Workers, Canadian Air Line Employees' Association, Canada Employment Immigration Union, the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, the Committee for Cleaners' Rights, International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Metro Labour Council, Union of Provincial Government Employees, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, Public Service Alliance of Canada, United Steelworkers of Canada, Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, and the Windsor Hospital Clerical Workers Union of Canada. The collection deals with equity in collective bargaining units, including issues of sisterhood and solidarity, education, human rights, anti-racism, aboriginal issues, affirmative action, violence against women, and the impact of technological change. The documents are arranged into files by organization, and they reflect the equity initiatives undertaken by unions to transform organizational practice and culture in order to ensure fairness and representation for women and

members of other equity-seeking groups.

**Restrictions on Access and Use:** No restrictions on access.

**Finding Aid:** File list is available. Readers should consult Professor Briskin's "Bibliography of union equity documents" compiled in November 2005 at:  
[http://libgwd.cns.yorku.ca/gwd/wp-content/uploads/Briskin\\_Unions\\_and\\_Equity\\_Bibliography.pdf](http://libgwd.cns.yorku.ca/gwd/wp-content/uploads/Briskin_Unions_and_Equity_Bibliography.pdf)  
This bibliography provides an item list of the documents in the collection, broken out by organization and then by document type (reports, policy, publications, educational material, and other such as surveys, conference agendas, financial reports, and memoranda). A copy of this bibliography with entries cross-referenced to the box and folder numbers in the Linda Briskin collection is available in the reading room of the Clara Thomas Archives.

**URL of Finding Aid:** <http://archivesfa.library.yorku.ca/submissions/fonds/ON00370-f0000494.htm>

**Accruals:** The fonds comprises the following accessions: 2006-014. Further accruals may be expected.

**Immediate source of acquisition:** The collection was donated by Professor Linda Briskin in 2006.

**Provenance Access Points:** Briskin, Linda, 1949-

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