

OUR UNION

Fabriks: Studies in the Working Class
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Capital is dead labor.

KARL MARX

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The Political Economy of Workplace Injury in Canada

BOB BARNETSON

Our Union: UAW/CAW Local 27 from 1950 to 1990

JASON RUSSELL

OUR UNION

UAW/CAW LOCAL 27 FROM 1950 TO 1990

Jason Russell



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OUR UNION

INTRODUCTION

LOCAL UNIONS IN THE POST–WORLD WAR II DECADES

This book is as much an outgrowth of years of rank-and-file union activism as it is the result of academic curiosity. My interest in organized labour began when I first became a union member through summer employment at a gas utility in St. Catharines, Ontario. I became aware of Local 27 of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW; formerly the United Auto Workers [UAW]) when I found work at another gas utility in London, Ontario, and joined a comparatively small Communication, Energy, and Paperworkers Union (CEP) local with barely one hundred members. That local rented the Local 27 hall for its monthly meetings. I sat in the hall as a visitor, anecdotally learning some aspects of its past. My academic interest in organized labour was piqued as an undergraduate student and has not abated since. Having been a rank-and-file member of a large Canadian industrial union, as well as a local officer, I spent years reading about and considering the meaning of unions.

A growing body of scholarship has established that the working-class experience in Canada underwent some profound changes in the half century after World War II. In the 1950s and 1960s, real wages rose, hours of work were reduced, and increased disposable income allowed more formal schooling for children and a much higher level of expenditures on cars, suburban homes, and other consumer goods; at the same time, state social-security measures brought some protection against unemployment, illness, and old age. The workforce experiencing these changes was also undergoing transformations that brought more women and new immigrant groups into the labour market. Roughly a third of workers

— historically, a huge increase in the proportion of the workforce — confronted those changes as union members. This book addresses the role of one local union within these developments.

Among the many changes that the postwar period brought to the working class was a new legal framework for peacetime labour-management relations. This framework took shape in the immediate postwar years, especially with the adoption of laws like the federal *Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act (IRDIA)* and its provincial counterparts. Canadian industrial workers joined unions, many of which were affiliates of the American Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and, after 1955, the unified AFL-CIO. Those unions — especially the UAW — pursued bargaining agendas that improved workers' standards of living. Canadian unions tried to influence foreign policy in various ways, one of which was to forge links with the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and the New Democratic Party (NDP) at the national and provincial levels. Unions sought to represent their members in the workplace while also articulating a wider social and political agenda.

The labour movement's importance in working-class life has drawn considerable scholarly attention. The resulting research — concentrated on national unions, anti-Communism, state policy, and issues surrounding collective bargaining — has revealed much about the nature of unions and working-class life in postwar Canada. More specifically, the UAW, which is central to this study, has been the focus of much analysis in both Canada and the United States.¹ This union, one of the products of the CIO's creation in 1934, helped shape a working-class political agenda in the postwar years.² It sought not only to play a central role in its members' lives, including those in Canada, during those years, but also to exert close administrative and political control over local affairs.

Unions' political agendas in the postwar period reflected divergent ideologies and party politics, all of which were situated at different points on the Left of the political spectrum. The UAW included leftists who would have preferred that their union and the rest of the North American labour movement pursue a more progressive political agenda, especially objectives to which they had been exposed through contact with Communist

parties in Canada and the United States.³ The UAW international administration, under long-serving international president Walter Reuther, was committed to anti-Communism in both Canada and the United States even though leftists were instrumental in helping to build unions, particularly at the local level. It is almost impossible to discuss the UAW in the postwar decades without considering Reuther and the people whom he appointed to staff positions across the UAW.⁴ Efforts were made in the late 1940s to root out suspected leftist sympathizers, and people such as future Canadian UAW leader George Burt narrowly avoided expulsion. The Left caucus in the UAW in Canada was able to endure longer than its American counterpart, but only with great difficulty.⁵

Unions concentrated on helping workers through the collective bargaining process. As noted in the American context, the UAW's bargaining program was predicated on "a prosperous industry, on competition for market share among the [auto] manufacturers, and on union dominance of the labour market."⁶ The UAW, through its bargaining agenda, articulated a provider role for itself with respect to its members during their working lives and through their retirement years. Economic measures dominated collective bargaining: for example, pension plans became an important bargaining objective in both Canada and the United States, as did inflation protection in the form of cost-of-living allowances (known as COLA).⁷ First adopted in American UAW collective agreements in 1948, COLA was bargained in Canada in 1950. COLA, along with the annual improvement factor (AIF) had "a stabilizing effect on union-management relations and constituted the first steps in the construction of Fordist wage relations."⁸

Many analyses of organized labour's development in the post-World War II decades focus on the idea of a postwar settlement or compromise between employers and unions. The postwar settlement is conceptualized as organized labour trading the unfettered right to challenge management, including the right to engage in spontaneous strikes, in return for the right to legal collective bargaining and better economic rewards. Industrial relations practitioners and labour historians view the postwar period in different terms. The former argue that the postwar labour

relations system represented a form of industrial democracy, while the latter often take the view that it was a co-optation of workers' interests. Recent research, such as work by Jane Poulsen, suggests that relations between unions and employers depended on the industry in which they operated and the time period in question. My study, as it pertains to interaction between Local 27 and the employers with which it bargained, will also suggest that the labour relations process was not completely uniform.⁹

Discussions of the postwar settlement often focus on Fordism, which in turn is sometimes used in discussions of industrial pluralism. Fordism, a term with a range of definitions, shaped wage relations but was also influenced by unions and their members in other ways. Bryan Palmer suggests that Fordism included high wages, mass production, increased leisure time, and the “conscious structuring by capital of labour into a republic of consumption.”¹⁰ Julie Guard, on the other hand, emphasizes that the postwar system was primarily about enhancing the masculinity of male workers.¹¹ Therefore, while consumerism was an important part of the postwar system, gender also played a central role.

Unions like the UAW eventually abandoned efforts to exert control over the work process through collective bargaining, in exchange for annual wage increases, COLA, pension plans, and other economic rewards. This shift in policy direction — which Peter McInnis calls a “Faustian bargain”¹² — was charted by union leaders such as Reuther, and it helped fuel the consumerism described by Palmer. Leo Panitch and Don Swartz suggest that the postwar labour relations framework ushered in “an era of free collective bargaining” that came under assault in the early 1970s; their analysis supports McInnis’s view, since they further note that “the trade unionism which developed in Canada in the postwar years bore all the signs of the web of legal restrictions which enveloped it.”¹³ Michael Burawoy describes the postwar workplace as one in which a worker became “a citizen in an internal industrial state” and suggests that efforts were made to shape workers into good citizens in that state.¹⁴

Analyses of the meaning of the postwar settlement, and Fordism, have thus been done within a range and combination of perspectives,

from gender to economics. Workers became consumers but were differentiated by gender. They enjoyed legal collective bargaining rights but also faced legal restrictions on how those rights could be exercised. The existing research thus collectively suggests that the postwar settlement and its associated elements, like Fordism, brought both gains and losses for workers and their unions.

Evaluating Fordism's influence on the postwar autoworkers' union is further complicated by contrasts between Canada and the United States. The UAW certainly pursued economic objectives associated with Fordism in both countries. Governments in both Canada and the United States concluded the Auto Pact, an agreement that obliged the Detroit automakers to build as many cars in Canada as they sold.¹⁵ But in some respects, state responses to organized labour were different in the two countries. In the United States, government policy came down hard on labour militancy, notably in the 1947 *Taft-Hartley Act*, and the postwar system essentially unravelled until labour ceased to be a countervailing social force.¹⁶ In contrast, the Canadian state did not implement such overtly anti-union laws in the immediate postwar years.

The post-World War II labour movement, in particular the UAW, appears to have often been driven by priorities set by its national and international offices. Fordism, in its various forms, influenced and shaped union policy. The union accepted greater economic gains at the bargaining table in return for leaving management free to run corporations without direct interference from labour. The UAW leadership pursued a political program that was linked to its overall economic program and strove to quell dissent with the broader structure. In disciplining the members to accept the "Fordist regime," people like Reuther became "managers of discontent" among their rank-and-file members.¹⁷

Academics have engaged in spirited debate over the meaning of the UAW's program and its impact on workers and working-class life.¹⁸ The agendas and activities of national and international union offices, however, should not be considered the sum total of what unions actually did in the postwar years; the internal operations of union locals in this period played a critical role as well, but have received little scholarly attention,

with the notable exceptions of work by Peter Friedlander and Don Wells.¹⁹ Local unions have most often been seen as part of national and international union structures through purges of progressives or compulsion to accept wider union bargaining priorities.²⁰ Like their parent unions, they have been described as riven by internal political squabbling, with Left caucuses frequently succumbing to social democratic groups.²¹ Some independent local unions have been studied, as have some locals in relation to the workplaces that they organized.²²

Despite existing analyses of union locals, which show the complexity of union membership and the important role that a local played in working-class life, the union local has not received adequate attention as a key agency for the organized working class in Canada as it sought to create a new place for itself in post-World War II Canadian communities. This book makes the case that the union local, as an institution of working-class organization, was central to new directions for working-class life in the postwar period. It also suggests that examining the role of local unions in the labour relations framework will lead to a more nuanced understanding of the postwar settlement than can be provided by Left, social democratic, or liberal analyses based solely on the behaviour at the top of unions.

National and international unions were, in many ways, the sum of their local unions. Workers who joined the UAW, and later the CAW, became members of a local chartered by the national, not direct members of the national; the local union was consequently their point of contact with the larger organization and their principal bargaining representative. Union locals, dependent on a core group of committed volunteer activists to sustain them, thus formed the basis of the postwar labour movement. This same group of activists worked to rally rank-and-file members and attempted to make the local a larger presence in workers' lives by promoting social and political agendas outside of the workplace. The union local, then, though grounded in the workplace, also strove to shape working-class life beyond the factory floor.

Research on the post-World War II labour movement has frequently focused on the difference between social unionism and business unionism,

and on the objectives that unions pursued in the wider community. Stephanie Ross provides a useful definition of social unionism in her analysis of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) when she suggests that it is a form of unionism “in which unions struggle for the interests not only of their immediate membership but also the broader working class.”²³ Pradeep Kumar provides a fairly clear description of both approaches: social unionism, he says, is based on a collectivist view of society and views the labour movement as a force for improving the lives of all workers while business unionism emphasizes economic, or “bread and butter” issues.²⁴ But, as Ross notes, “social unionism’s precise meaning and implications remain vague for unionists and academics.”²⁵

An institutional approach that focuses on themes like politics, collective bargaining, the role of the state, and the influence of national and international union leaders forms part of the analysis in this book but does not in itself sufficiently describe the nature of organized labour in the postwar period. The challenge is to integrate with such a focus the social historian’s concerns about issues like gender, class, ethnicity, race, and community. Research on labour in Canada and the United States in earlier periods points to how this can be accomplished. Analyses of workers’ movements from antebellum New York City to the Knights of Labour in Canada and of the various movements that collectively struggled through the “workers’ revolt” of 1917–25 all point to how social history can blend with institutional analysis to reveal greater insights into the nature of organized working-class life in a given period.²⁶

This study of UAW/CAW Local 27 combines social and institutional methodologies in order to reveal how the local operated in a range of spheres, from the workplace, to the union hall, to the family household. Gender and ethnicity influenced the development of local unions.²⁷ Family economics also played a role, as did the changing communities in which they were situated: the unionized working class participated in an expanding consumer culture in the postwar years that influenced its economic aspirations.²⁸ Working-class leisure expanded, including organized sports, and alcohol continued to be a part of time away from work.²⁹ However, working-class leisure assumed different forms, depending in part on the

types of bonds that formed: for example, immigrants who joined local unions formed family ties that were often closer than ties to either the workplace or a union.³⁰ All of these factors must therefore form part of this broader analysis.

Why choose a comparatively unknown local in a mid-sized southern Ontario city that is known more for a research university and the insurance industry than for its labour history? Local 27 was the most prominent industrial local union in London in the postwar decades, and examining its history affords an opportunity to see how a local dealt with a broad range of industrial employers and a large rank-and-file membership. Its diversity was part of its uniqueness: it was the One Big Union that organized workers in diverse occupations across a range of industrial workplaces, from locomotive assembly to envelope manufacturing.³¹ It included workplaces with hundreds of workers and others with less than twenty. It was thus unlike larger UAW/CAW locals in the postwar period, such as Local 222 in Oshawa, Ontario, which overwhelmingly represented workers in automotive assembly. The local's founding was initiated by the UAW Canadian office, but Local 27 leaders and rank-and-file members exercised a great deal of autonomy within the larger national and international structure, and within broader union bargaining objectives. Furthermore, the community in which Local 27 was founded — London, Ontario — has not been the subject of much scrutiny by academic labour historians. I hope that this study will stimulate further research on labour in that city.

Local 27 was not representative of all local unions in Canada in the postwar decades: its size and the range of workplaces that it organized distinguished it from smaller locals or those concentrated in one workplace. Moreover, no two locals were the same. As two prominent former CAW activists noted in an interview for this study, even the automotive assembly locals were different from each other. The issues and challenges that union activists and members in this local faced, however, were similar to those confronting the unionized parts of the working class in Canada from the 1950s to the 1980s.³²

Overview of the Book

The period from 1950 to 1990 began with the local's founding and ended during a time when both Local 27 and the broader CAW were strong. To have extended this study beyond 1990 would have risked losing the perspective that only time can provide. Local 27's story is told over eight chapters that explore specific themes. Chapter 1 addresses the founding of the local and the major influences on its subsequent development, including the role of women and immigrants, internal dissent, and the core group of activists. This narrative also considers the role of activists and internal political differences within the local, and the creation of Local 27's internal communications, particularly the *Local 27 News*.

Chapter 2 focuses on the local's interaction with the UAW and CAW national and international offices. I review the role of staff representatives and of the UAW Canadian office in the local's development, as well as the importance of union education programs. This chapter also examines Local 27 support of broader union policy positions and assesses the extent to which the local became bureaucratized in the postwar decades.³³

In Chapter 3, I discuss the addition of new bargaining units, employer opposition, and the response of London's workers to Local 27. This chapter also provides an overview of the workplaces organized by Local 27, including their products, location, ownership, and size. I analyze aspects of technological change in the workplace, such as Fordism, as well as industrialization and de-industrialization.

Chapter 4 explores how Local 27 approached collective bargaining, focusing on the collective agreements negotiated by the local and the differences among those agreements. Local 27's size and the number of bargaining units that it organized meant that it negotiated many more collective agreements than were bargained by a local that only negotiated with one or two employers. Good wages and benefits were an essential part of advancing the aspirations of working-class families; in this chapter, I review the tangible impacts of COLA clauses, pensions, and other paid benefits.

Chapter 5 considers how the labour relations process worked once a workplace was organized and a collective agreement was in place. It

reveals how Local 27 moved through the labour relations process — more specifically, to what extent it responded to employer actions as opposed to shaping a workplace agenda. Collective agreements, grievances, and arbitrations were key parts of the labour relations process, but this chapter also looks at labour relations away from the bargaining table.

Chapter 6 explores the attempts of Local 27's core group of leaders and activists to rally a large group of rank-and-file members around a social and recreational program centred in the local's hall. Local 27 members were spread across a range of bargaining units. What efforts were made to engage them in a social sphere in the local's own meeting hall and around a social agenda in the London community? I describe how such programs as sports teams, specialized committees, and family events were created. I also show how the local's social programs were sustained by the *Local 27 News* and how the union culture connected to the wider cultural patterns of working-class life in the city, including consumerist leisure outlets.³⁴ The roles of women and of non-English-speaking workers in the local's social sphere constitute an important part of the analysis.

Chapter 7 examines Local 27's efforts to engage in electoral politics in London, Ontario. The community agenda that the local attempted to promote among its members looked outward, toward broader social and political objectives. Pursuing a political program through an alliance with the New Democratic Party (NDP) was key to meeting these objectives, as was involvement with the London and District Labour Council (hereafter the London Labour Council). This chapter discusses the ongoing role of a core group of activists in the local's political efforts and assesses the effectiveness of those efforts.

Chapter 8 considers how local leaders, and the national representatives who worked with them, responded to the economic concerns of workers' families. It determines whether those efforts bore tangible results. Fordism returns to the narrative, as does working-class family life in postwar London and how Local 27 fit into it. Workplaces changed from 1950 to 1990, as did families. Birth rates shifted, divorce law and rates changed, and more women entered the full-time workforce. Working-class men

still strove to conform to the breadwinner role, but married women also became regular wage earners and sometimes the principal breadwinners in their families. This chapter emphasizes the importance of understanding what workers and their families wanted when assessing the role of the local union in the postwar decades.

Working-class families aspired to owning the two major items that were available in postwar consumer culture: homes and automobiles.³⁵ The state played an active role in helping to finance home purchases in the postwar years, and working-class families took advantage of such programs.³⁶ In general, the final chapter considers how the union helped working-class families achieve their goals, but it also reviews the limitations on what the local could accomplish for its members and their families.

Researching a Postwar Local Union

This book draws on a range of sources. Union records were, of course, a critically important resource. Activists in the Canadian labour movement who have had the chance to interact with the CAW know that its members, both locally and nationally, take great pride in their union's history and have worked to preserve it through archival donations. Local 27 is no exception. This study would not have been possible without access to the UAW Region 7 and UAW Local 27 collections at the Archive of Labour and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University. The CAW national librarian also facilitated access to the CAW fonds at Library and Archives Canada. The large collection of Local 27 collective agreements at Library and Archives Canada and the Archives of Ontario were also crucial to my research.

Although public archival holdings were indispensable, access to often unorganized personal collections of documents was invaluable as well. For instance, the only available Kelvinator of Canada collective agreements are carefully kept by a former employee who now resides in Strathroy, Ontario. Similarly, a revealing collection of documents on a decertification campaign at Kelvinator are proudly stored in the east London basement of the man who led the decertification drive. Local 27

has also kept a valuable collection of documents in London, including photos and local newspapers, that added immeasurably to my analysis.

To supplement these written sources, I have relied extensively on oral history. Thirty-two current and former members of Local 27, and other people who had some links to it, agreed to sit and reflect on the local's activities and impacts from 1950 to 1990. Indeed, three of them did so more than once. Their personal recollections added meaning to the archival documents. Those people, some of whom had not been Local 27 members for many years, were mostly found through word-of-mouth contact. I was a visitor at two meetings of the Local 27 retirees' chapter, but making connections through interviews proved even more effective. Some interviewees, however, were not accessible through the local itself. Since none of the former employees of London's Kelvinator plant were still connected to the local because their bargaining unit ceased to operate in 1969, I reached them through a person-to-person advertisement in a free community newspaper called *The Londoner*.

Many interviewees were quite elderly and had to be reached as quickly as possible. Their recollections were invaluable, sometimes including detailed memories of events and always indicating the meaning and importance of what they experienced as members of the local, or through contact with it. Some interviews only lasted about half an hour, but three people were interviewed twice for much lengthier discussions. Older interviewees, especially those over eighty, were more likely to remember Local 27 in thematic terms than in detailed recollections.

Most of the interviewees were, or had been, volunteer activists. Thus, although they worked in businesses organized by Local 27, their memories were not necessarily representative of average rank-and-file members who were not particularly active in union affairs. They shared common hopes and aspirations with those members, but they made the union a more central part of their lives. Oral narratives such as those used for this book are consequently not perfect records of what happened in Local 27 between 1950 and 1990.³⁷

At the same time, without oral histories, themes like women's activism, the Left caucus, and the full role of national representatives in

founding and shaping Local 27 would never have been revealed.³⁸ Sources like the *London Free Press*, which is frequently cited in this study, also had inherent biases. The *Free Press* was owned by a prominent London, Ontario, family; although it usually promoted industry and business, it was at times sympathetic towards organized labour. The various sources cited herein thus provide a range of different perspectives on how Local 27 developed.

Initially founded by the UAW, Local 27 was chiefly the result of efforts by local leaders and activists to build a strong union and to use it on behalf of its working-class members. The local proved to be an effective agent of change, even though it was often forced to respond to pressure from employers in the workplace. It operated within clear limits, only truly representing all of its membership when actually operating in the workplace. Its agenda beyond the workplace, while ostensibly representative of all members, in reality engaged the same core group of white, male, Anglo-Canadian activists who led union efforts through collective bargaining. The local represented a wide array of workplaces, and thus was unlike other large industrial local unions, many of which only organized one principal bargaining unit. Despite this uniqueness, Local 27's founding and subsequent development reveals much about how a local union operated in the postwar decades.



BUILT TO LAST

A local union is an ambiguous collective entity. It can be viewed as the manifestation of the collective will of a group of workers to further their aims in the workplace. Alternatively, it can be seen as a creature of a national or international union office that has little interest in fostering rank-and-file democracy. A local union, being a product of many influences, is multi-dimensional. This chapter attempts to capture the complexities of Local 27's founding, including the major influences on its development.

Several salient questions are germane to this chapter. As a large local in an important international and later national union, to what extent was Local 27 the product of grassroots activism? Who led the local and attempted to guide its policies? How well did it tolerate dissent? How did it deal with the influx of immigrants into Canada in the post-World War II era and the entry of women into the blue-collar work environment? And finally, to what extent did it afford its working-class members an opportunity for direct participation? The answers to these questions are complex and frequently intertwined, and they reveal a local union structure that afforded members a chance to participate in an organization of their own making.

The United Auto Workers International: Goals and Practices

The initial formation of Local 27 and its subsequent growth must be considered in relation to the overall development of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union in the postwar era. Founded in 1934, the UAW was a leading industrial union in 1950 and was the dominant union in the automotive industry. It relied on aggressive organizing tactics to enter new workplaces

and fostered a sense of union identity within its membership that was based on formidable victories, beginning with the 1936 General Motors strike at Flint, Michigan. The Oshawa, Ontario, General Motors strike in 1937 established the union in Canada, while the 1946 Windsor Ford strike led to the creation of the Rand Formula and the institutionalization of union security through dues check-off.¹

While the UAW billed itself as an international union, it was overwhelmingly shaped by Americans. By 1950, the year Local 27 was founded, the international union had been wracked by internal division. Left-leaning groups within the union either had been or were being purged by the UAW administration led by Walter Reuther. Some locals, such as Local 248 at Allis-Chalmers in Wisconsin, were assaulted by the international office in Detroit, their leaders forced from office, while others acquiesced to pressure to purge themselves of left-leaning elements.² The Canadian locals belonged to UAW Region 7, which was led by George Burt in 1950. Region 7's office was originally in Windsor, Ontario, but was moved to Toronto by Burt's successor, Dennis McDermott. Burt, a veteran of internal union politics, rose through the union's ranks in the pre-World War II years but was not considered a Reuther ally.³ Region 7 included the Canadian Council, founded in 1939. As Charlotte Yates notes, the council was a rank-and-file deliberative body to which delegates from the various locals across the country were assigned on a per capita basis.⁴ It met several times per year, had the power to create regional bylaws, and allowed greater membership control over union policy. The union had a small staff in Canada in the early 1950s, and its efforts were largely devoted to organizing new workplaces and otherwise expanding the union's influence in the broader labour movement.

The UAW was initially concentrated in major automotive manufacturing centres in the immediate postwar years and had 60,000 members in Canada in 1950.⁵ The labour movement in London, Ontario, had not been involved with a union like the UAW before 1950. Until that year, the city's labour movement was divided between the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada and the Canadian Congress of Labour. The former federation was affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL),

and the latter with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), which comprised unions that had left the AFL in 1935. The UAW was affiliated with the Canadian Congress of Labour. Some industrial employers, such as Kelvinator, had employee associations. The arrival in London of a militant industrial union based in the United States was therefore an event that would reshape the character of the city's labour movement and of the entire labour relations environment within the city. It also marked the expansion in Canada of the UAW beyond its initial strongholds in Oshawa, Windsor, and St. Catharines.

The Founding and Expansion of Local 27

Local 27 was founded partially as an institutional response to corporate policy and partially in response to worker hopes for union representation. Workers at Eaton Rich Automotive [hereafter referred to as Eaton Auto] in Windsor, Ontario, had shown interest in joining the UAW in the late 1930s, and they eventually certified a local union.⁶ By the 1950s, conditions in the plant had not improved, and management's construction of a new plant in London was viewed by the UAW Canadian leadership as an exercise in union avoidance. Burt dispatched international UAW staff representative George Specht to London to lead an organizing drive at the new plant.

The Eaton Auto plant was built in a solidly working-class area of London on Highbury Avenue. Windsor workers were offered employment in the London facility, a decision that quickly undermined the company's hope of avoiding the UAW. Joe Laporte, who worked at both Eaton Auto plants in Windsor and London, remembered that the economic decision to move to London was fairly obvious for many Windsor workers: "They asked seven or eight guys, some girls too, if they wanted to come. . . . [If I didn't move] I wouldn't have work." Laporte recalled that Eaton Auto management did not want the UAW in the London plant, having dealt with the union in Windsor, but that the London workers were certainly in favour of it. Although the exact number of workers who transferred from Windsor is unclear, it is evident that former Windsor workers formed

the nucleus of the first local executive.⁷ Organizing Local 27 was thus dependent on a membership that originated in Windsor and was transplanted to London.

The creation of Local 27, London's first UAW local, would initiate the growing prominence of the UAW in London. In fact, the union was becoming increasingly active across southern Ontario, occasionally facing competition from other unions.⁸ Indeed, Local 27 was founded despite such a challenge. According to the *London Free Press*, Local 24689 Steelworkers Federal Labour Union, chartered by the AFL, had applied for certification at the new Eaton Auto plant but the UAW intervened to prevent the application from moving forward.⁹ Interestingly, Eaton Auto management apparently did not resist the AFL affiliate, but they did attempt to avoid the UAW. The AFL claimed that the London plant should in no way be covered by the UAW agreement at the Windsor Eaton plant, since "most of the employees at the new plant were Londoners."¹⁰ Burt and Specht vigorously opposed the AFL drive, however, and both of the unions and Eaton Auto appeared before the Ontario Labour Relations Board to argue their positions. In addition, the autoworkers' union sent a letter to Eaton Auto workers extolling their union's advantages:

You will soon have to choose between the United Automobile Workers (CIO) and the AFL Steelworkers as your collective bargaining agent. The best way to see what each can do for you is to "look at the record." . . . Your choice in the labour board vote is between something and nothing, between a union and something that would like you to help it become a union.¹¹

Eaton Auto workers chose the UAW by a wide margin, with eighty-seven workers voting to join the autoworkers and twenty-six choosing the AFL affiliate.¹²

The creation of Local 27, London's first UAW local, would mark the beginning of the growing prominence of the UAW in London. Side by side this growth, spontaneous worker organizing appears to have diminished in the postwar era. Don Wells argues that the creation and administration of union locals became more bureaucratic and more controlled by

national and international union structures.¹³ This theory is partially borne out by the founding of the Eaton Auto unit since the organizing drive was initiated by the UAW Canadian office and thus represented a form of bureaucratic reaction to anti-union corporate policy. On the other hand, the drive's success was dependent on the willingness of workers at Eaton Auto to draw upon the tradition of UAW membership that they had acquired during their years working in Windsor.

Organizing new units was accomplished by having potential new members sign cards confirming their interest in joining the union. This was followed by a vote to certify the union as the sole bargaining representative in the workplace. The 1950s were a brisk organizing period for Local 27, with over one thousand members added between 1950 and 1953. General Motors opened a diesel locomotive factory in London in 1950, and its collective agreement was actually negotiated through Local 27 before that of Eaton Auto. GM and Eaton Auto were followed by the addition of two more units: Minnesota Mining and Manufacture (3M) in 1952 and Kelvinator in 1953. GM and 3M had previous experience working with the UAW since the UAW had organized other GM and 3M plants in Canada; negotiating with the union in their London plants was therefore not unusual for them. Other smaller units were added in the later 1950s and early 1960s. Eaton Auto announced that it would expand its workforce to 200 workers when it opened, 3M employed 400 people shortly after it opened, GM initially had 560 people in unionized jobs, and Kelvinator joined with 700 members.¹⁴

Local 27's founding was somewhat different from the founding of the local autoworkers' unions described by Lisa Fine and Peter Friedlander.¹⁵ Most notably, it was organized in a city in which the UAW had not previously appeared. The workers described by Fine and Friedlander formed locals in the shadow of major UAW locals in the Detroit area. The Madison, Wisconsin, battery workers discussed by Robert Zieger formed a stand-alone local.¹⁶ Don Wells discusses the creation of a UAW local in Oakville, Ontario — a city that also had no previous experience with the UAW.¹⁷ All of the locals examined by Fine, Friedlander, Zieger, and Wells were based in one workplace. Thus, this research on Local 27's formation

brings some new insights to the existing work on local unions due to both the circumstances of its founding and its composite form.

Some new units had previously been represented by other unions or staff associations, notably Kelvinator and Northern Telecom. The certification of former employee associations as unions was not unusual in the immediate post-World War II years. Lisa Fine examined a similar process at the REO Motor Company.¹⁸ Kelvinator was different, as it had been in operation in London since 1928. Kelvinator's staff association, formed in 1943, stayed in place until Local 27 organized the plant. This association was a manifestation of employer paternalism, and former employees considered it a company union. Management adeptly maintained control over it, listening to enough demands to keep the association from becoming militant. George Medland, who worked at Kelvinator, remembered management meeting some of the association's demands during negotiations.¹⁹ Kelvinator also fostered employee social interaction through a wide range of clubs and committees. Employees eventually became disenchanted with the association, however, because plant management changed in the post-World War II era. The new management showed less respect for the association and did not practice paternalism as skillfully as their predecessors had.²⁰

The next major units to join Local 27 were Northern Electric in 1968 and Firestone in 1972. Northern Electric's association was different from that of Kelvinator. Tom McSwiggan, who worked at Northern Telecom, recalled the difficulty of trying to deal with management through the association and how its ineffectiveness helped to spur worker organization, which resulted in a dramatic confrontation at Northern Electric. The company had first opened a small experimental plant in older east London in the late 1950s. This facility was eventually replaced by a much larger plant at the city's southern periphery, immediately adjacent to Highway 401. Unlike other major Local 27 bargaining units, which were part of American-owned subsidiaries, Northern Electric was a large Canadian company. Organizing drives had taken place at Northern Electric before, virtually from the time its first pilot plant opened in London in 1959 — a plant that subsequently closed when its larger successor was built. An

internal organizing committee consistently remained in place in the new plant.²¹

Since the 1940s, the United Electrical Workers (UE) had been recognized as the dominant union in the electrical parts sector and would thus have been a natural fit for the London plant.²² The UE was also widely believed within the labour movement to be Communist-led, a perception that was also found at the local level among Local 27 members and UAW staff reps.²³ The United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers were interested in organizing the London Northern Electric plant, and ultimately so, too, was the UAW Local 27 activist Tom McSwiggan, who was heavily involved in both organizing campaigns.²⁴ He initially organized on behalf of the UE, in 1966, but eventually supported and participated in the UAW drive. In fact, he had helped get cards signed for the UAW in 1960, although he and other Local 27 officers had been directed by George Burt to return the cards, as the Northern Electric plant was not considered part of the UAW's jurisdiction. The Canadian UAW had declined to raid the UE and absorb its locals following the latter's expulsion from the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC).²⁵

By 1968, the UAW was prepared to represent a plant that it had previously considered the UE's turf, but this time, it faced the USWA. Raymond Murray, a former CLC representative, recalled that the USWA was very active in the London area during the 1960s and 1970s — a situation that certainly spurred that union to try to organize Northern Electric.²⁶ Local 27's rapid expansion brought it into competition with the USWA, while also leading to changes in rank-and-file allegiance. The UAW's message was clearly more compelling, as its activists, such as McSwiggan, signed sufficient cards to certify a bargaining unit. Some people who had initially supported the USWA drive, such as future UAW staff member Jim Kennedy, switched their union affiliation during the organizing drive.²⁷

Local organizing involved some peril at this time: McSwiggan and his family found themselves under some duress during the first organizing campaign at Northern Electric. This was one of the instances when anti-Communism played a role in Local 27's activities. Northern Electric workers were not necessarily Communists; they simply wanted a more

effective union than the staff association that was in place in their plant. Regardless, the CLC sought to influence the outcome of the Northern Electric certification vote in opposition to the UE. Two members of the London Labour Council, one of whom was a member of a skilled trade union, visited McSwiggan's home while he was away and threatened his wife, Sheila, telling her that her husband had better be careful or he would be "deported for being a Clydeside Red."²⁸ Upset over this visit, Sheila initially urged Tom to rethink his involvement in the organizing campaign.²⁹ Former Local 27 activist and GM Diesel worker Roland Parris confirmed that Tom Harkness from the Carpenters' Union and Bob McLeod from the CLC were the people who threatened Sheila.³⁰

Local 27 went from organizing one plant, Eaton Auto, at the start of the 1950s to representing seven units by the end of the decade with a total of fifteen hundred members. Major gains had clearly been made in a short time. The process of expansion continued through the 1960s, with the addition of six additional units: Fruehauf Transport and Tecumseh Products in 1963, Keeprite Unifin in 1967, Northern Electric and Bendix in 1968, and Eagle Machine Tool and International Harvester in 1969. The local focused on organizing in automotive parts production, as Tecumseh Products, Unifin, and Bendix were parts factories. The latter two joined the local after the introduction of the 1965 Auto Pact. Fruehauf, although a transport company, was dependent on industrial production for business, and International Harvester was a farm implement firm. Northern Electric was the notable exception since it produced telephone equipment. Although Local 27 was not initially a product of the Auto Pact, it grew through representing some workplaces that were engaged in automotive parts production.³¹

The local continued to add new units in the 1970s. Firestone Steel, previously a barrel manufacturer and later becoming Accuride, joined in 1970. Globe Envelope, joining in the same year, was a manufacturer of envelopes and paper products and was not related to automotive production. Universal Engineering joined in 1971; ITT Lighting, which manufactured lighting fixtures, in 1972; and Alcan, a window manufacturer, in 1973. A small unit comprising Bendix office staff also joined in 1973, and two more

units certified in 1974: AWL Steego, an automotive parts distributor, and light bulb manufacturer Phillips Electronics. Vinyl siding manufacturer Mastic Manufacturing joined in 1976. Although the type of products that they produced varied, all of these companies had a focus on manufacturing or were workplaces related to manufacturing, so Local 27 made no substantial move toward service sector organizing during this period.³²

The late 1960s and early 1970s also brought the loss of some existing units. Kelvinator shut down in 1969, followed by Eaton Auto in 1971. Both closures were largely unexpected and attracted considerable attention from the media and the broader labour movement.³³ They brought the first major job losses suffered by the local. Bob Nickerson, who had been appointed staff representative just prior to the announcement of Kelvinator's closure, was surprised by the closure, as negotiations were underway between the company and the union, and management had not indicated any major changes.³⁴ The closure led to the loss of seven hundred jobs and had a significant impact on Local 27 because Kelvinator was a major bargaining unit and its focus on appliances diversified the type of work performed by the local's members. Having members in a smaller number of industries meant that the local was more likely to suffer the effects of economic cycles in those industries. Representing workers in a broader range of industries and workplaces also helped the local gain wider bargaining expertise.

The 1980s brought a continuation of the expansion and closure cycle. Some service sector organizing occurred with the addition of auto mechanics and autobody technicians at London Motor Products (LMP) in 1980. Light manufacturing firm, Carmor Manufacturing, joined in 1980. Sparton of Canada, which manufactured military sonar systems, joined the local in 1981 after previously being represented by a small union called the National Council of Canadian Labour (NCCL). This was another occasion when Local 27 found itself in competition. The NCCL accused the UAW of attempting to raid its membership as early as 1975. Sparton workers eventually voted for the UAW and joined Local 27.³⁵

Proto Tools, a producer of hand tools, closed in 1986. It was one of the earlier units in Local 27, having joined in 1953, and was never as large as units like GM or Northern Electric. Bob Sexsmith, who worked at Proto,

remembered that workers unsuccessfully tried to buy the plant prior to its closure.³⁶ This was the only attempt at employee ownership during the local's history. Highbury Ford, an automotive dealer, was certified briefly in 1988. Form-Rite, another auto parts manufacturer, joined the local that same year. The last large addition was the 1989 merger of Local 27 with the remaining units of CAW Local 1620. Local 1620 had seen its membership reduced due to the closure of the Fleck Manufacturing plant in Huron Park, approximately forty kilometres north of London. Two smaller bargaining units — Easttown Chevrolet Oldsmobile and Burgess Wholesale — were organized by the local in 1990. Local 27 ended the 1980s with 5,800 members.³⁷ This was a substantial increase over the 1,500 members represented at the end of the 1950s.

The UAW, a new phenomenon in 1950s London, clearly wanted to establish a major presence in the London area. A prominent industrial union with a visible public profile, the UAW attracted a large number of new members. Workers at plants like Northern Electric chose the UAW over other unions, having observed the union's success in the local community and beyond. Local 27 represented some of the most important plants in London, including GM, and it would have seemed a natural choice for disenchanted workers seeking workplace representation.

Local 27 consisted of several bargaining units in a variety of industrial facilities. Its composite form was one of its most defining traits and would shape its internal development, including who led it. The local initially requested composite form from the international UAW office and approval was granted.³⁸ Locals that represented just one workplace seem to have been more common than composites. Local 27's request was probably granted for one main reason: to quickly expand the local and the UAW's influence in London. The UAW and later the CAW included other composite locals. For example, Local 222 in Oshawa, which became the largest autoworkers' local in Canada, included units other than its principal GM plant. UAW Local 199 in St. Catharines also grew to encompass smaller workplaces in addition to its main GM unit.³⁹

Local 27, however, was different from those composite locals because it included a broader range of manufacturing plants and, most importantly,

because it was not dominated by a single large bargaining unit. Locals 199 and 222, although composite, were almost exclusively associated with GM. But while Local 27's inclusion of a variety of workplaces became a source of strength and diversity, it also occasionally caused some contention. Composite locals, such as UAW Local 211, were also found in the United States, but they appear to have been less numerous across North America than locals that represented a single workplace.⁴⁰

Creating an Internal Structure

Local 27 began as a relatively small administrative operation. The addition of the GM Diesel unit strengthened the local but also created an entity that would compete with the Eaton Auto unit for broader influence. The addition of GM also necessitated the creation of two levels of local leadership: unit and local executives. Eaton Auto and GM Diesel began holding separate unit meetings in the mid-1950s.⁴¹ Other units adopted the same practice. Some units almost grew into locals within a local, while others remained comparatively small.

Rank-and-file members who wanted to become involved in the union could do so by running for elected positions. Local officers in the 1950s were not paid for their services outside of reimbursement for costs incurred while on union leave. By the mid-1960s, paid full-time local and bargaining unit officer positions had become common in the larger units, such as General Motors Diesel and Northern Electric, but smaller units, such as London Generator Service in the 1970s and London Motor Products in the 1980s, always had volunteer officers who had to request leave time to conduct union business.⁴²

The elected staff at the local's hall consisted of a president, vice-president, recording secretary, secretary-treasurer, and sergeant-at-arms. Trustees were also elected for various terms of service. Duties performed by local staff officers included routine administrative tasks like taking notes at meetings, correspondence, and bookkeeping. Written correspondence between officers, with employers, and with the UAW national and international offices was voluminous from the 1950s to the 1980s.

Everything from requests for office supplies, to approval of political donations, to requests for union leave was routinely typed and mailed. These administrative demands grew so time consuming that in 1963, the local hired its first full-time employee — secretary Olive Huggins.⁴³

It is clear that from its inception, Local 27's local officers were familiar with the basic functions associated with administering the organization, including corresponding with employers, leading meetings, and handling the local's finances. There are two possible explanations for their competence. The role played by former Windsor Eaton Auto workers at the new London facility was undoubtedly crucial to the local's early success. Of the nine people on the first executive in 1951, including two women, Elta Efford and Gladys Scott, four had transferred from Eaton Auto in Windsor: Efford, Scott, Ernie Axon, and Archie Wrench. Axon was the local president and Scott was financial secretary. Even if they had not served as local officers in Windsor, they were familiar with union membership and were able to guide new members.⁴⁴

The other factor was the regular attendance of UAW staff representative, George Specht, at local meetings and unit meetings. He monitored the local's progress and responded to issues relating to the national and international offices. The UAW Canadian office had devoted considerable effort to pursuing Eaton Auto from Windsor to London and undoubtedly wished to ensure that its new London local was developing in a manner that did not challenge the national and international union agendas but that ensured its survival and growth. Specht's regular presence at meetings helped foster that process.⁴⁵

Building the local's administrative structure also required the creation of a financial apparatus. Member dues were the primary source of revenue from 1950 to 1990, and the local was generally on its own when it came to financing its operations. It began with a small budget but ended the 1980s with substantial financial assets. For example, for the fiscal year 1958–59, the local had a total income of \$88,848.29 and had cash assets of \$36,317.⁴⁶ Those assets were allocated in various savings accounts. By the end of the 1980s, the local's balance sheet was more detailed and reflected a complex administrative operation. Total annual revenues for the local,

as of October 1990, were \$262,171, equivalent to \$50,818 in 1958 dollars, and the available funds totaled \$742,877, equivalent in 1958 dollars to \$143,997.⁴⁷ Revenues, as expressed in 1958 dollars, declined somewhat between 1958 and 1990, but the local's cash assets increased. Furthermore, in 1990, the local had the hall, a valuable asset not listed on the balance sheet.

The local's money was used for a range of purposes. In 1990, the per capita payment, paid to the CAW national office for each member of the local, was the largest expense at \$105,273. Two of the next largest expenses, \$58,449 on lost time (wages) and \$26,957 for travel and expenses, were related to official union business. Those three categories of expenses constituted 66 percent of overall expenses. The bar cost \$47,119 and brought in \$53,474. The per capita tax was the most important expense paid by the local. Remitted to the national union office, it provided the principal form of revenue for the UAW and CAW. Dues were the main source of revenues for national and international unions operating in Canada. Local 27, like all local unions, collected dues for the national and national union offices. Local unions thus played a crucial role in maintaining the financial solvency of those offices.⁴⁸ Local 27 was never put under trusteeship, or direct control, by the national or international offices. It maintained a stable financial structure.

Along with an internal financial system, Local 27 adopted a democratic structure, which included a set of bylaws and an accompanying governing apparatus. The chairperson of each bargaining unit had a seat on the local's executive board, and members of each unit could vote in their specific units as well as in local elections. They could also run for local positions.⁴⁹ Local officers were elected primarily from the executives of the various bargaining units. Those officers included Ray Atkinson and Archie Baillie from GM, Bill Froude from Kelvinator, and Jerry Flynn from Tecumseh Products. GM quickly became the largest unit, with a commensurately large unit executive.⁵⁰ Roland Parris, who worked at GM, remembered that a common view among local members was that his unit ran everything.⁵¹ This opinion is at least partially borne out in the election results from the early 1950s to the late 1980s. Some of the local presidents — such as Atkinson and Baillie, who led the local in the 1960s

and the 1980s, respectively — came from GM.⁵² Local presidents like Al Campbell and Bill Froude did not, however, come from GM: Campbell was from Eaton Auto and Froude worked at Kelvinator. Sam Saumur, president in the mid-1970s, worked at Northern Telecom. Overall, fewer than half of the local's presidents came from GM.

All of the local and unit officers were drawn from the rank-and-file membership, but it seems that the same people tended to run, either successfully or unsuccessfully, for elected positions. Local and unit officers also appear to have worked predominantly in production rather than skilled trades jobs, probably because skilled tradespeople were a minority in most industrial workplaces. Al Campbell, the chairperson of the Eaton Auto unit for many years, ran unsuccessfully for local president in the 1960s before finally becoming president when Bill Froude could no longer run after Kelvinator closed. Campbell, Froude, Atkinson, and later Sam Saumur, Rene Montague, and Archie Baillie won elections at both the local and unit levels.

Local leadership positions were not equal in terms of influence and working conditions. They were initially part-time volunteer positions, but some became paid jobs in the mid-1960s. Language that stipulated how local and unit officers could perform union business during working hours was included in collective agreements with some agreements, such as GM's, providing detailed instructions on the number of committee representatives and how much time they could take away from work to perform union business.⁵³ Unit chairs at places like GM, 3M, Accuride, and Northern Electric became full-time paid roles. Some units had more than one paid position: for example, GM had a paid full-time health and safety representative by the late 1970s.⁵⁴ GM and Northern Telecom unit officers also enjoyed super seniority, which meant that they were exempt from layoffs in their bargaining units. Full-time unit officer roles were compensated by the employer, while local officers were funded by member dues. Smaller units, like London Motor Products in the 1980s, relied on part-time officers who had to request permission from their employers to conduct union business.⁵⁵ They were not compensated for any expenses beyond those incurred while on union business.

Whether an elected position was full-time or part-time and whether any compensation was involved would certainly have influenced a person contemplating running in an election. Although acting as a union representative meant an additional workload, being able to devote time exclusively to union business — even just a few hours per day — would have been a welcome break from routine factory work. Running for an elected position at a unit like Northern Telecom or GM could entail considerable electoral effort. It also meant that a person's profile was raised within the broader Canadian UAW. For example, Rene Montague worked at Northern Telecom and eventually became plant chairperson during the 1970s. He remembered putting considerable personal resources and time into running in plant elections. While he was not elected to a local executive position, he nonetheless became the CAW's nominee to the Ontario Labour Relations Board in 1986.⁵⁶ Unit officers from larger workplaces also participated in groups specific to a particular employer, such as the GM Council.⁵⁷

The foregoing discussion should not suggest that smaller units like Central Chevrolet or London Generator Service were necessarily marginalized within the broader Local 27 structure. They were able to draw upon the collective bargaining experience and resources of the entire local. They also played an important role in deciding the outcome of an election that was being contested by candidates from the larger units. However, leaders from smaller units had to build political support within the larger bargaining units if they had any aspirations of winning a local executive position. Unit officers from medium-sized workplaces like Tecumseh Products or Phillips, such as Jerry Flynn and Jim Ashton, were able to win local executive positions, but to do so, they first devoted years to local activism, thus building support within the larger bargaining units.

Unit and local officers occupied roles at the top of the leadership hierarchy. Below them was a range of stewards who varied in number across the units. In the 1950s and 1960s, stewards were considered the foundation on which local unions are built.⁵⁸ Despite this, the steward position was often difficult to perform and did not attract sufficient

numbers of people, a reality certainly found within Local 27. Being a steward required steady commitment to the union and its goals, and yet the job was performed on a volunteer basis. Unit and local executive positions were almost always contested and filled, but steward positions were not always filled, and elections for them were not overly competitive. For instance, the 3M unit had a full slate of officers and committee members following its 1963 election, but only half of the required number of stewards.⁵⁹ Even elections for local officer positions were not always contested. For instance, in 1969, the positions for first and second vice-president, financial secretary, recording secretary, and sergeant-at-arms were filled by acclamation.⁶⁰ Even though this was a period when the local was expanding, the membership showed little interest in running for all of the leadership positions.

Stewards were not the main policy makers in the local despite being the initiators of membership grievances and the primary point of contact with management on the shop floor. Serving as a steward was in many ways a thankless task. As Leonard Sayles and George Strauss noted in the early 1950s, a steward was the “man in the middle,” with little real authority.⁶¹ People like unit chairpersons did not necessarily have to be in constant contact with rank-and-file members, but stewards worked alongside the membership and were buffeted by a continuous stream of union issues, while also carrying out work for their employers.

The fact that elections were not always closely contested probably had something to do with the influence exercised by the incumbent leadership. Activist Roland Parris described the election process:

What will happen, as the executive is coming along [for re-election], is the current president will get all of the key players — all the plant chairs and key activists — and they will caucus and divide the [Local 27-wide] positions, to a degree.

This did not necessarily mean that election outcomes were predetermined, but efforts were certainly made to achieve a consensus prior to votes being cast. Anyone who attempted to challenge this method of selecting candidates had the potential to split the local.⁶²

Rank-and-file participation in local policy decisions primarily manifested itself through membership meetings rather than by running in elections. Meetings were held for the entire local and within each unit, but attendance was not always particularly high unless something noteworthy like an election was on the agenda.⁶³ It was also through those forums that political differences within the local appeared. Parris and Sexsmith recounted how different bargaining units would form competing electoral caucuses before local elections.⁶⁴ These caucuses often coalesced around differing political ideologies. The Left caucus was based at Eaton Auto, while the Right caucus formed in GM.⁶⁵ In the 1950s and 1960s in the local, Right and Left meant tension between social democrats and Communists.⁶⁶ The UAW was not unique in having internal political debates across its national structure or within its locals. Bill Freeman describes similar internal conflict within Steelworkers Local 1005.⁶⁷ The fact that meetings were at times sparsely attended suggests that the debates between Left and Right were largely between competing core groups of activists, who chose to run initially for steward positions, and then for local executive roles. The policy debates within the local were consequently conducted within an active minority that also constituted the core group of activists.

Some members, in specific circumstances, would comment on the local's internal ideological debate. For example, members of a community group called the Militant Co-Op picketed the Eaton Auto plant as its closure approached. Most of the remaining workers signed a petition opposing the demonstration out of concern that it would jeopardize their severance packages. The co-op's involvement was coordinated by Al Campbell and the London Labour Council. Campbell was still Local 27 president at this point, but his successor as Eaton Auto plant chair, Don Watt, told the *Free Press* that he did not want the closure to be "used as a political platform for groups such as the Militant Co-Op or the NDP Waffles and certainly not the Canadian Communists." Rank-and-file members and activists were willing to support a leftist like Campbell in his capacity as a union officer, but they did not necessarily want to be associated with any Left political movements.⁶⁸

Women's Issues Are Union Issues

Women became key activists in Local 27, and gender consequently played an important role in its development. The local was predominantly male, and, even in the case of women members, the vast majority of members were either Canadian born or European immigrants. Two-thirds of the faces looking proudly out from a photograph of six charter members of the local (see figure 1.1) are male, the exceptions being Gladys Scott and Elta Efford. They are all white, but with some obvious variation in age. Scott and Efford, both employed at Eaton Auto in production jobs, were among the five women of the fifteen original charter members.⁶⁹ Collective agreements available from the 1970s onward illustrate the number of men and women found in each bargaining unit, with women occasionally outnumbering men.⁷⁰ GM had few, if any, female production workers in the 1950s and 1960s, but some were hired in the 1970s and 1980s. 3M employed women as early as the 1960s, and they became more numerous during the 1970s and 1980s. Kelvinator does not appear to have had any women production workers from the time of the plant's certification until its closure in 1969.



FIG 1.1 Founding members of Local 27. *Left to right, back row:* Ed Brennan, René (Joe) LaPorte, Ernie Axon. *Left to right, front row:* Gladys Scott, Archie Wrench, Elta Efford. Source: CAW Local 27, *Fiftieth Family Album*.

Northern Telecom had by far the highest proportion of women workers of any of the bargaining units. Other smaller units such as Central Chevrolet were overwhelmingly male. Workplace relations between men and women also differed depending on union membership. Shirley Martin, who worked as a secretary in the local office, remembered only one instance of dealing with a belligerent man at the local hall. He was inebriated and a member of a different union.⁷¹ Rose Hurt, a non-union administrative employee at Kelvinator, remembered male production workers stopping work to call out something like “boom-ba-boom” whenever a woman walked out on the factory floor wearing heels.⁷² She found this behaviour “innocent” and did not consider it offensive. Maida Miners, who also worked at Kelvinator as a payroll clerk, recalled male production workers jokingly asking her to add some more hours to their timecards, but otherwise did not remember them doing or saying anything inappropriate.⁷³

Although male unionized workers may not have said anything overtly offensive to women working in administrative positions, they did view women as occupying a separate workplace sphere. The local’s first employee, Olive Huggins, retired on July 21, 1966. She was duly presented by the local with a gift valued at \$50, a fairly substantial sum at this time.⁷⁴ An account of the event noted that “after the presentation and unwrapping the officers eagerly lined-up for kisses from Mrs. Huggins . . . the Recording Secretary was his usual bashful self.”⁷⁵ Olive Huggins may have been “some kind of secretary” in the eyes of a woman co-worker like Shirley Martin, but Martin developed an eye twitch obviously brought on by the stressful work pace that was partially set by Huggins.⁷⁶ The men who worked with Huggins saw her differently. Kissing her goodbye was not degrading in their eyes, and perhaps not in hers. Rather, it symbolized their view of her as a maternal figure who had earned a generous retirement gift and with whom they felt an emotional connection, but who also occupied a different workplace sphere than them despite sharing an office.

Women’s entry into unionized blue-collar workplaces has been documented by a range of researchers, and most have concluded that women faced significant obstacles. As Kevin Boyle notes, white male workers

used their masculinity as a defence mechanism against employers and against the arrival of women and people of colour in the workplace.⁷⁷ White male workers felt hostility toward women in the workplace and did not know how to cope with their arrival. Former GM Diesel worker Roland Parris commented that men felt that their pride had been hurt when women started doing the same jobs as theirs and thought that it became a “woman’s job.”⁷⁸ Pam Sugiman found similar patterns across the UAW; she argues that the union was a highly gendered environment and that UAW leaders, until the late 1970s, did little to advance women’s issues.⁷⁹ Research completed in the 1950s and 1960s confirmed the difficulties faced by women in industrial workplaces. For example, Sidney Peck’s 1963 study found that blue-collar men did not consider it “natural” for women to be industrial workers.⁸⁰



"It's me! Around here during the winter months the boys have a tendency to forget."

FIG 1.2 Pin-up cartoon. Source: Local 27 Archive, *Local 27 News*, February 1959.

As figure 1.2 illustrates, women who worked in production were not viewed by men in the same manner as those who worked in more traditional female occupations. This image is the only overtly sexualized image in the *Local 27 News*. Like the workers examined by Peck, men in Local 27 appear to have had difficulty accepting women in the industrial workplace. Most men who belonged to the local were married at some point, and their spouses generally did not work.⁸¹ If they did, it was in jobs that were not economically equal to their husbands. The exception was immigrant workers, some of whom had spouses who worked full-time.⁸² Introducing women into the union and the shop floor would have led to a substantial change in how men in Local 27 perceived women's role in the workplace, particularly beyond the domestic sphere.

The factory floor, unlike an office, was not recognized as a female workplace by male workers, for whom the factory was a masculine environment. It was also where women first encountered the union and where those who wanted to become activists had the first chance to do so. While some women encountered overt biases, such as harassment, all of them faced structural barriers in the union that initially made it difficult for them to advance women's issues. Beulah Harrison, who joined Local 27 through Northern Electric in 1962, clearly indicated that women suffered discrimination based on wages:

When I started at Northern, I only made a \$1.44 per hour. They had a grading system. When they hired a male he went right to the male category, which was more money than a woman — she started at the low [rate].

Harrison initially became an active organizer for the USWA because people in the plant were “desperate for a union, and wanted out from under the association.” Workers “were just as pleased” that the UAW eventually certified the plant. Women at Northern Electric had clear bargaining objectives:

We went in with the position that they [management] could not hire anybody in the lower [wage] grades anymore. They had to upgrade them to the next grade up, and if they started a man . . . he started at the bottom, too.⁸³

It took time for women to gain leadership roles in the local despite initially playing an important role in founding it. Gladys Scott's term was relatively short, but there was considerable change on the local executive in those early years, with all of the original members replaced by 1954.⁸⁴ Joe Laporte commented that most of the people who came from Eaton Auto in Windsor eventually returned to their hometown; it is possible that both women wished to return to Windsor for their remaining employment years. Laporte also noted that Scott and Efford were "pretty old" at the time that they moved to London, a perception that may have been based on his comparative youth.⁸⁵ A woman named Betty Doupe was elected sergeant-at-arms in 1954 but did not serve for a long period.⁸⁶ Although the sergeant-at-arms is generally known to have little administrative authority, the person filling that position was responsible for ensuring that no one at a union meeting became abusive or violent. Local 27 members must have felt that Doupe was capable of handling those duties. Another woman, Chris Lynch, was a member of the Eaton Auto plant committee in 1960, but all other major unit and local positions were occupied by men.

Edith Johnston joined the local in 1964 through employment at 3M. She remembered that women in her plant became active because of the same issues mentioned by Harrison, but she was also encouraged to become an activist by men in her bargaining unit:

I wasn't there very long . . . a few months . . . and the supply man who brought our supplies . . . wanted to talk to me about coming to a union meeting. I can remember very clearly saying, "What would I want to go to a union meeting for?" He tried to explain to me what went on at a union meeting, and I asked why he was asking me to go. He said that he had been watching me, and that I spoke to everyone in the same manner, whether it was management or a worker. I had the same way of pleasantly talking to them. He thought that would go good in doing union business. I realized afterward, years later when I looked back on that situation, [that] there had been a need in most of those [Local 27] units who had union meetings and in Local 27 meetings for women to attend — and apparently women didn't go to union meetings in those days.

Johnston eventually rose up through the local's activist ranks and served as financial secretary from 1966 to 1975. Her duties prior to leaving the local to join the UAW staff included meeting with other local unions in the UAW to advance women's issues; as she remembered, "I used to talk to the presidents about getting [their] women together into a women's committee . . . so I did a lot of that work."⁸⁷

Johnston did not describe many obstacles to women's progress within Local 27, but she dealt with problems encountered by other women when she joined the UAW staff:

3M was a decent plant to work in. To begin with, I think that 3M's commitment began with what kind of business they wanted to run. They would not have allowed their foremen to allow rough stuff to go on with women like what happened in some of those plants in Windsor. For instance, when I was put on staff, it was amazing how immediately I got phone calls from women telling me some of the awful things that were going on and some of the awful things that would get put on the assembly line . . . how humiliating it was. Then I also had women who came to me and told me how hard they were working in their local union and how put down they were in their local union meetings. . . . Even when I was in Local 27, I began dealing with some of those things [going on in other locals].

Johnston benefited from being part of a Local 27 bargaining unit. When considering how men in Local 27 behaved in contrast to men in other locals, she commented:

[It was] probably the different type of people that they had in leadership roles. If I think of Local 222 and 195 and 444 . . . macho, big-time men, full-time . . . always at the mike shouting away about stuff, and when I look at Gordon Parker and Bill Froude and Al Campbell — very intelligent people but much quieter.⁸⁸

Neither Harrison from Northern Electric nor Georgina Anderson from Bendix remembered experiencing overt discrimination or harassment from male co-workers.⁸⁹ Regardless, Local 27 women, like those discussed by Sugiman, realized that they needed to challenge established practices

in the union if they wanted to work in factories.⁹⁰ According to Edith Johnston, women “wanted to go to a union meeting and be recognized.” There were no women’s caucuses or conventions when she and Harrison joined the union. The “main thing,” Johnston said, “was to get women to bring their bylaws book and constitution book, and go over it and over it.”⁹¹ They had to pursue their objectives in opposition to social expectations of how women should behave. Johnston, who separated from her husband before working at 3M, faced the difficulties of raising her children alone while working to advance women’s issues in the union. She recalled:

At that time, if you talked about being separated, or even wanted to talk about unhappiness in marriage, other women — your friends — would say to you, “What did you do, Edith, to make it all [so] that it wasn’t right?” If you said to someone that maybe your husband was going to hit you, they would say, “What did you do to make him want to hit you?”⁹²

In contrast to the women who preceded her, Julie White, who joined 3M in the early 1970s, felt that her workplace had been sexist. White (not to be confused with sociologist Julie White) is the youngest in the group of women activists interviewed for this book. A member of the baby boom generation, she wanted well-paid industrial work. While she was not unlike the women who came before her in the local — issues of basic fairness in the workplace spurred them all to become activists — she benefited from the earlier efforts of women like Johnston and Harrison, both of whom were established activists when she became a Local 27 member. White particularly noted Harrison’s ability to present arguments in membership meetings, even when dealing with men:

Beulah, when I look back, she was kind of a mentor for me when I first went on the women’s committee. . . . My first real exposure to the local union was through the women’s committee. The chair at the time was Beulah Harrison. I remember going to membership meetings and watching Beulah, and boy, she challenged things. I thought, “Oh my gosh,” she had so much tenacity; she was up challenging the boys sometimes at the general membership meeting. She was really respectful and knew her

stuff — really researched it. So she was a real leader, at least for me, and I think for a lot of other women.⁹³

Johnston said that she did not accomplish her political success alone and that she needed support — particularly from the GM local.⁹⁴ Her experience with local UAW leaders and with UAW Canadian Region Vice-President Dennis McDermott counters some of Sugiman's evidence on the union leadership's unwillingness to advance women's issues. Froude and Campbell would have known of women's efforts in other locals — like Local 199 in St. Catharines — to further a more inclusive union agenda.⁹⁵ Former staff reps Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson also emphasized their interest in encouraging women to become more involved when they were Local 27 staff reps.⁹⁶

Johnston's support from other units was primarily rooted in her ability to perform union work. Other past members of the local and staff, including Shirley Martin and Hector McLellan, commented on how Johnston approached people about becoming local activists.⁹⁷ Without doubt, support from the local executive also helped her. While her political leanings are not evident from campaign articles in the *Local 27 News*, her support from GM — the centre of the Right caucus — suggests that she too was part of that caucus.

The local and national leadership's decision to promote greater female worker activism was partially based upon the realization that more women were working in industrial jobs, but it should also be viewed as a response by women like Harrison and others at Northern Electric who wanted gender biases in the workplace removed. Campbell and Froude may have been particularly mindful of the need for newly organized women workers to see some female representation on the local executive.

Johnston and Lorna Moses went on to join the UAW Canadian staff as the first female staff representatives.⁹⁸ It would be several years before another woman leader came to prominence in the local: Georgina Anderson was elected the chair of the Bendix unit. Bendix was an auto part manufacturer, and Anderson worked in a line job. The Bendix workforce comprised both men and women, with the latter slightly outnumbered by

the former. Anderson nonetheless won elections in the plant with male support. This is in contrast to Northern Electric, where male candidates invariably won with female electoral support. Anderson attributed her success to the fact that she had earned the confidence of the men in her bargaining unit. They were less concerned about the sex of the person representing them than about the effectiveness of the representation that they received from the union. This is particularly noteworthy because Anderson was a woman of colour at a time when Local 27 was overwhelmingly white.⁹⁹

Julie White joined the 3M unit's bargaining committee in the late 1980s. 3M was a predominantly male work environment, although the number of women employed at the plant had begun to rise during the 1970s. White enjoyed electoral success because she too was able to garner votes from both men and women, having earned considerable respect from her unit's membership. Steve Van Eldick, who was hired at 3M during the late 1980s, described White's leadership ability in glowing terms because of her willingness to champion new bargaining issues like same-sex benefits. Like Anderson and Johnston before her, White's success was based on her skill at representing workers, her ability to earn their respect regardless of gender, and the support of women in the union.¹⁰⁰

Women's advancement in the union occurred in the face of enormous challenges. For instance, Johnston's success, regardless of how she achieved it, happened despite facing obstacles not encountered by men aspiring to similar leadership positions. She was a single parent raising three children when she first became involved with the union. Beulah Harrison, Georgina Anderson, and Julie White were also single parents during their years in the union.¹⁰¹ In contrast, no male activists appear to have been single parents. As Jane Stinson and Penni Richmond argue, union work was "greedy work" in the sense that it could quickly become all-consuming.¹⁰² Becoming an activist thus meant juggling the often-conflicting demands of mother, worker, and union leader. Men, in contrast, could rely on traditional notions of domesticity and expect their wives to handle parenting while they concentrated on the workplace, thus benefiting from having a life partner more than women activists

did. Women, regardless of their generation, chose to take on the burden of working long hours, as they were determined to change their place in the union. They also served as mentors to each other and drew inspiration from the struggles waged by the first women activists in the local.

Immigrants and Membership

In addition to gender, immigration and ethnicity played an important role in Local 27's development. Pockets of immigrant groups were found in some units, but not in others. Immigrants from varying backgrounds became Local 27 members, but their involvement in the local's activities varied. London, like other major Canadian cities, experienced a significant influx of immigrants in the postwar decades. In the early decades of the local's development, most of them came from western and southern Europe, relying on support networks within their own communities in order to find work, much as was done by immigrants in other communities.¹⁰³ For example, Dutch immigrants like Peter Hensels and John Groenewegen learned of employment openings at Kelvinator through other people in their immigrant community.¹⁰⁴ Most immigrant members in Local 27 seem to have been primarily dues-paying, rank-and-file members who appreciated union representation but did not wish to run for steward positions or become local activists. But they were not averse to union membership: for instance, Hensels and Groenewegen both expressed positive views on the representation that they received from Local 27.

The problem was that activities were mostly geared to the tastes of white Anglo workers, and, while not overtly hostile to immigrants, the activities were not accessible to many of them. Furthermore, the structure of the Canadian labour movement may have seemed alien to many immigrants. For instance, some Dutch unions identified themselves as Christian, and the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC), founded in 1952 at a meeting in London, was almost entirely the creation of Calvinist Dutch immigrants in southern Ontario.¹⁰⁵ Some Dutch immigrants, dependent on their immigrant community for support, may

have consequently felt greater affinity with a union like CLAC than with the UAW.

Georgina Anderson remembered Italian women who worked at Bendix showing some pro-union militancy because they did not want anyone “messing with their money.”¹⁰⁶ This meant that, even though immigrants may have chosen not to engage in union activities to the same extent as some English-speaking workers, they nonetheless valued the union’s ability to represent them if they felt aggrieved. Like the Italian immigrants described by Franca Iacovetta, familial and community ties were probably a greater influence on Italians in Local 27 than union activism.¹⁰⁷ Archie Baillie confirmed that most immigrant workers at GM had an average level of interest in the union’s activities.¹⁰⁸

Of all the immigrant groups, British immigrants were the most active in local affairs. Most of them appear to have been either from Scotland or from working-class areas in England. Some, such as Hector McLellan, had prior trade union experience while others, like Roland Parris, did not.¹⁰⁹ The more active involvement of the British immigrants was prompted by a variety of factors, but primarily by language. They were able to readily communicate with their Canadian co-workers, and London was not that culturally foreign to them. Like Tom McSwiggan, they were quite willing to become deeply involved in union business, and their British work experience informed their approach to unions in Canada. Neither Parris nor McLellan found their Canadian workplaces to be as rigidly hierarchical as those in Britain: McLellan remarked that it was a significant change to address his Canadian supervisors by their first names, since in Britain supervisors were always addressed as “Mister.”¹¹⁰ Parris also found much less class-based division in the workplace than he had known in England.¹¹¹ Both quickly became involved with the union upon obtaining employment in Canada. Baillie commented on the ability of British workers to manoeuvre through the union, saying that they would “come at you from every which way,” a telling commentary on the ability of British immigrants to navigate the labour relations process and to challenge both management and union leaders.¹¹²

The involvement of British immigrants like Hector McLellan and

Roland Parris in the local should not suggest that other immigrant groups were apathetic toward the union; Anderson's comment on Italian women illustrates that they were not. Parris remembered working mostly with people of European descent, although he noted that some ethnic diversity did exist at GM. There was, however, little interaction between people from different backgrounds:

They were [almost] all European, but I worked with people from Hong Kong, India, and the islands [Caribbean]. If you were an immigrant, you stuck with your own folks. . . . I think that the most tension that I saw was when Yugoslavia [began to] fall apart. There seemed to be a lot of hostility between the Croatians and the Serbians.¹¹³

Examination of the names that appeared at local membership meetings and on local and unit election ballots shows that workers with Anglo-Saxon surnames were the ones who took a more active role in the local. Ethnicity played a substantial role during local and unit elections. Former Proto Tools worker Bob Sexsmith indicated that someone running in an election would try to identify who led specific immigrant groups in a plant and would appeal to that person for his or her group's votes.¹¹⁴ Former staff reps Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson noted that this was also an important method used by organizers to get cards signed.¹¹⁵ Peter Friedlander described a similar process at UAW Local 229, where ethnicity — particularly among Polish workers — shaped an organizing drive.¹¹⁶ Although Sexsmith, Seymour, and Nickerson did not recall the names of immigrant leaders in the Local 27 bargaining units, the significant point is that there were people in those units who had enough influence to bring votes in an election.

Leadership at both the local and national levels handled the arrival of immigrants in the workplace differently than they did the arrival of women. No concerted efforts were made to advance immigrants from different backgrounds into leadership roles, and no special committees or caucuses were established to serve the needs of immigrant workers, who were simply expected to adapt to the local and national union as best they could. This approach helped indirectly to promote the interests of

those with good English language skills, but it also probably dissuaded workers whose first language was something other than English from becoming more active. While reaching out to immigrant groups at election time was certainly one method of engaging them, it was not the same as making the local more accessible at all times rather than just when it was time to cast ballots.

Building a Local Union from 1950 to 1990

Local 27 evolved considerably from 1950 to 1990. From a small runaway plant, it grew to include numerous bargaining units in a wide range of workplaces. However, it was not simply a creation of the UAW Canadian office; George Burt brought the UAW to London through Eaton Auto, but he would not have succeeded had rank-and-file workers from Windsor and London not agreed to ignore the overtures of the AFL affiliate union and instead support the UAW. The local was able to maintain a viable Left caucus into the 1970s because its executive and membership supported Al Campbell. On the other hand, the national and international offices consistently worked to identify who was pro- and anti-administration, and to promote policies — such as support for the NDP — that were aligned with wider national union objectives. The local, because of its composite form and size, needed to create a small internal bureaucratic structure. It also chose to adopt a form of membership that was based on employment rather than on simple union association. The local developed a democratic structure with many opportunities for involvement but with a relatively small number of activists substantially engaged in union affairs. Democratic participation meant attending major events like ratification votes, not regular participation in the major contending political caucuses. Because the local was largely white, male, and anglophone, it drew participation from people who fit this demographic profile. Gender imbalances within the local were at least partly addressed by the advancement of some women into leadership positions. However, this happened primarily because of a conscious decision by rank-and-file women to become more involved.

Women faced considerable structural barriers not encountered by men. While women like Gladys Scott played an important role in founding the local as a charter member, they lost influence in the late 1950s and early 1960s. However, women like Edith Johnston, Beulah Harrison, Georgina Anderson, and Julie White brought women's issues back to the forefront of discourse within the local. They also drew inspiration from watching each other advance as activists and helped mentor new women members as years passed.

The local included a range of people within its ranks, who chose different levels of involvement. For some, such as Al Campbell, it was an outlet for political activism; others, like Edith Johnston, used it as a springboard to a job in the UAW administration. People like Hector McLellan and Roland Parris never assumed major leadership roles but were local activists, helping to form the core group of activists who built the local's structure and led it. However, the majority of members were like John Groenewegen, Peter Hensels, and Joe Laporte: they felt that the local had developed in such a way that it would represent them if they needed it. Laporte, who was never particularly active despite being a charter member of the local at Eaton Auto, remembered Local 27 and the broader union as "real good"—a sentiment undoubtedly shared by most rank-and-file workers.¹¹⁷

Local 27, organizationally, ended the 1980s as a durable advocate for its members. Increasingly grand celebrations were held every ten years to commemorate its founding. Jim Ashton, the local's president at the time of its fortieth anniversary in 1990, commented in the commemorative book assembled for the occasion that Local 27 had grown from 180 members in 1950 to 5,800 members across 29 units in 1990. Its activists had created an organizational structure that withstood plant closures, sporadic conflict with the national and international offices, and changes in leadership. Many activists had gone on to prominent leadership roles in the national union and beyond. The local was also quite aware of its past and what had been accomplished. Local 27 had indeed been built to last.¹¹⁸

THE NATIONAL UNION

Local 27 was ultimately the creation of grassroots activists, but the UAW and later CAW national and international offices played an important role in its development. Representatives of the Canadian UAW office were with the local from its initial founding through its expansion from the 1950s to the 1980s. The local often interacted with the national and international union offices regarding broader policy issues, negotiations, and constitutional matters. What was the nature of those interactions? Did the local generally follow broader union policy? To what extent was Local 27 shaped by the national and international offices, and how did the local take advantage of UAW and CAW training programs? These are some of the questions addressed in this chapter. Although they were not the most important aspect of the local's development, the national and international offices and their representatives did have a major influence on Local 27.

Staff Representatives

The staff representatives, starting with George Specht, were the principal contacts between Local 27 and the broader UAW administration. Although officially employees of the national office, they more often occupied a middle ground between the local and the national office. Their jobs were therefore complicated by the need to represent the local's interests while also promoting the overall UAW agenda.

Staff reps, hired by the national and international offices out of local unions, generally had some years of local leadership experience and had

expressed interest in joining the paid union staff. They were mandated to work closely with the officers who led the locals that were part of their servicing assignments. They were also the principal spokespersons during contract negotiations, handled grievances at third step, and were often present at labour-management meetings. These official staff functions were augmented with an expectation that they would handle any other issues that either the local or the national office wanted addressed. Local officers and rank-and-file members would occasionally complain directly to the national office about staff rep performance. Conversely, the national office — often through directives from George Burt — could exert enormous pressure on a rep to bring locals into line. This situation was further complicated by demands on reps to keep both sides happy should they wish to be promoted in the union hierarchy. Working as a staff rep was thus a difficult job that required superior leadership and political skills.

George Specht, a Russian immigrant who joined the UAW in 1941 through Local 200 at Ford, served as staff rep for Local 27 from its founding until 1969.¹ Specht's involvement in union affairs was atypical of the non-English-speaking immigrants who worked with Local 27. He serviced other locals, such as 1380 in St. Thomas and 1325 in Stratford, although Local 27 was his principal assignment.² He handled routine duties and devoted considerable effort to responding to correspondence from Windsor and Detroit. Local 27 leaders and rank-and-file members may have been unaware of the degree of control exercised over staff reps by the national office. For example, Specht was required to have yearly physicals and had to obtain written permission from Burt prior to scheduling them.³ Burt evidently kept close watch over local spending because Specht had to obtain written permission before purchasing basic items like office supplies.⁴ Vacation scheduling also required written approval from Burt's office.⁵ Roland Parris recalled that staff representatives from different unions attended labour council meetings in the 1960s, and Specht was certainly in attendance in the 1950s and 1960s.⁶ He was the UAW's public face in London.⁷

The UAW added an additional staff rep to the London area in 1969 on

a temporary basis. Bob Nickerson was the appointee and he immediately became involved in bargaining at Northern Electric, having originally worked in a Duplate factory in Windsor, Ontario. He was young when appointed to the UAW staff, and he approached issues differently than Specht. He was, by his own admission, somewhat confrontational when he arrived in London to service Local 27, finding himself in major conflicts at Northern Electric, Eaton Auto, and Kelvinator. In 1974, he also led 3M workers into the only strike in their history. In fact, in fairly short order after his appointment, he led strikes at almost every plant that he represented.⁸

Nickerson still looms large in the memory of current and former local members. Archie Baillie recalled that “if he [Nickerson] thought that there was another nickel to get out of GM — he’d get it.”⁹ He also made considerable efforts to be visible in the workplace, such as entering Northern Electric during a contentious negotiation in 1969 to address the membership.¹⁰ Rank-and-file members listened to him, and management noted his influence. When Northern Electric workers went on strike by calmly leaving the plant and taking up picket positions without violence or rancour, management commented to Nickerson on how disciplined the striking members were.¹¹ He also had a considerably heavy work assignment as staff rep, including twenty-one plants for Local 27, with a total of 4,855 members.¹² He had a further 2,175 members spread across six other locals. In addition, he led the Northern Telecom Inter-Corporation Council and was active in the London Labour Council.¹³

Bob Nickerson was appointed assistant to Canadian Region UAW president Bob White in 1977, a path already followed by his predecessor, George Specht, who had become an assistant to UAW Canadian Region Vice-President Dennis McDermott.¹⁴ Specht and Nickerson both had bargaining assignments in addition to Local 27, and their appointment to senior leadership positions began a process of promotion into the union hierarchy for local or unit executives or staff representatives. Other staff reps followed Specht and Nickerson into the UAW Region 7 leadership, including Burt Rovers and Al Seymour. Seymour was with Local 27 during

the 1980s but had joined the UAW staff during the 1970s. He was part of the same generation as Nickerson and was one of the staff employees, along with Bob White, who would lead the departure of the Canadian Region of the UAW from the international union in 1985. Seymour's union experience was rooted in his early employment in a furniture factory in Woodstock, Ontario. He obtained a staff position just before George Burt's retirement and Dennis McDermott's election as leader of the UAW Canadian Region.¹⁵

George Specht, Bob Nickerson, and Al Seymour shared some common experiences despite their generational differences. Specht experienced employer harassment during his early days of organizing at Ford. Nickerson and Seymour were both involved with the bitter 1977 Fleck Industries strike. Fleck workers were not part of Local 27, but the strike still had an impact on the local. Seymour and Northern Telecom plant chairman Rene Montague were both arrested by the Ontario Provincial Police during the strike, and Nickerson was involved in getting them out of jail.¹⁶ Both Seymour and Montague subsequently went on trial for blocking a road leading to the Fleck plant.¹⁷ Montague referred to Fleck as a "wake-up call," presumably because of the coercive behaviour of the employer and the provincial government.¹⁸

Al Seymour was monitored in much the same fashion in which George Burt watched George Specht. Seymour was required, like other staff reps, to send in regular activity reports that discussed servicing and organizing. He also had to obtain written approval for medical leave and vacation. The staff rep role was clearly challenging since it could potentially place a person under duress — facing the police on a picket line, for example, while also working under the watchful eye of the national and international offices.¹⁹

Al Seymour was held in high regard both by local leaders and by rank-and-file members, but they, like their predecessors who had worked with Specht, may have been unaware of the challenges facing someone in a staff rep position. Jim Wilkes, who helped organize London Motor Products in the early 1980s, remembered Seymour mentoring younger activists, a role at which he was particularly adept.²⁰ Julie White remembered Seymour

making efforts to promote women's involvement in the union and being sensitive to the need to promote issues that were not always popular in the 1980s, such as same-sex benefits at 3M.²¹

Local officers and rank-and-file members usually supported the staff reps, but there were occasions between 1950 and 1990 when they did not. By the 1960s, the local had grown to a sufficient size to have a cadre of experienced leaders who were capable of challenging the same national office that had instigated its founding. By the early 1960s, Local 27 activists and members had enough union experience to show a willingness to challenge Specht occasionally. For instance, in January 1963, a Local 27 executive board member wrote directly to UAW International President Walter Reuther to complain that Specht had run for election as labour council delegate.²² He demanded that the UAW Public Review Board examine what had occurred during the nominating process. The complaint was based on a belief that delegates should be drawn from the rank-and-file membership, not from the union administration. Reuther responded by saying that the matter would not be put before the public review board until the international executive board had reviewed the situation.²³ George Specht remained a labour council delegate, which suggests that the complaint did not go far in Detroit.

Relations between Bob Nickerson and the local leadership and membership were generally good, but Nickerson occasionally experienced the same type of challenge faced by Specht. For example, thirty-three members of the Northern Electric unit submitted a petition in 1971 (it is unclear to whom) demanding that Nickerson be removed from their plant bargaining committee.²⁴ Members also complained directly to Detroit over local issues, an example being Joe Abela's 1973 letter to Leonard Woodcock to complain about a decision made by the Local 27 executive board.²⁵ Nickerson, like Specht, found himself caught between the local and the national office. In late 1974, Sam Saumur, who had become Local 27 president, complained to Bob White about the service that the local was receiving from the national office. White replied:

I received a telephone call from Bob Nickerson indicating that at your executive board meeting yesterday, there was some discussion about a lack of reply from me based on our meeting of November 1, 1974. . . . You should be aware that I have assigned a staff member to handle the negotiations in Hughes Boats and Dualine, in Centralia in order that Brother Nickerson can fulfill his obligations relating to arbitrations, etc., in the units of Local 27.²⁶

This letter seems like a commentary on how difficult it was for Nickerson to cover all of his various work assignments. In fact, Nickerson indicated that he may have very well induced Saumur to write the letter in order to get another staff rep into the London area.²⁷ The letter had the desired effect on White, who had received other correspondence on the same topic. In 1974, White wrote to Dennis McDermott outlining the challenges facing Nickerson in the London area. White felt that another rep should be added to London and argued that the city and surrounding territory was of vital importance to the UAW.²⁸

The staff reps also sought to influence who led the local because the national office had a clear interest in identifying leaders who would follow administration policy. George Specht utilized a typed form indicating who among the local executive was pro- and anti-administration.²⁹ Bob Nickerson used a similar document, saying, “That was a form that we used to use internally.”³⁰ Nine candidates for UAW Canadian Council delegate were listed on the form, with two of them — Tom McSwiggan and Al Campbell — identified as anti-administration.³¹ The reasons why McSwiggan was identified in this manner are unclear, but Campbell’s left-wing politics marked him as anti-administration. One candidate, Timothy (Jerry) Flynn from Tecumseh Products, was not identified as either pro- or anti-administration. However, the fact that the remaining six candidates were considered pro-administration illustrates that the local was viewed as primarily friendly toward the UAW national office. It probably also reflected past successful efforts by the ever-present Specht to ensure that local and unit officers agreed with the administration’s agenda.

Bob Nickerson remembered working well with Al Campbell on union matters despite the view that Campbell was considered anti-administration. Differences between the local and the national office were thus not always strictly defined and could be fluid, depending on the situation. Efforts to identify who was pro- and anti-administration may have ultimately had little effect, as the membership could still surprise the UAW Canadian office. Jerry Flynn, who was Local 27 president by the mid-1970s, wrote to Dennis McDermott in 1975 to apologize for actions taken by local delegates at a spring leadership conference.³² The local's delegation had risen and publicly left the hall as soon as McDermott began to speak. The delegates subsequently said that they left because they judged the subject of his speech to be useless to them.³³ However, McDermott's speech included references to then-federal Finance Minister John Turner's plan for voluntary wage restraints.³⁴ The UAW was in the midst of an internal debate about how to respond to wage and price controls in 1975, with the Left supporting a general strike and McDermott opposing it.³⁵ Local 27's delegation would have included Left delegates; hence, it is likely that the wage and price debate prompted the walkout.

There were times when the staff reps depended on local support, such as when Nickerson tried to obtain more servicing for London. The reverse was also true. One instance when local officers benefited from the assistance of the staff reps and the national office involved Jerry Flynn, who was unit chair at Tecumseh Products in 1970. A member of the unit approached Campbell, who was Local 27 president, to report that Flynn had misappropriated a total of \$50. Flynn resigned his position and repaid the \$50. This episode was reported to Emil Mazey, the UAW international secretary-treasurer,³⁶ who wrote to Dennis McDermott:

My immediate reaction was that I am opposed to taking Brother Flynn off the hook. If he has misused money he may do it again. He could not be bonded by our bonding company as a result of the recent misappropriation of funds, and can, therefore, not serve in a capacity in the Union where the handling of money is an essential part of the job.³⁷

McDermott wrote to Bob Nickerson, asking him his opinion on the situation. Nickerson responded:

Following a discussion with Al Campbell, and Edith Welch, they feel that since proper steps have been taken by the Local to correct this situation, that the subject should be dropped, and we are in agreement that Brother Flynn should never hold a position where he could handle funds. In my opinion the misappropriation of funds was very bad judgment on his part, but I feel that he is, and can still be, a good union member.³⁸

Nickerson remembered the entire Flynn episode as being a “tempest in a teapot.”³⁹ Flynn had acknowledged his mistake, and he eventually was able to regain his position in the local since he became president and, later, a staff rep. Nickerson did not appear to overtly influence Mazey, instead endeavouring to fully communicate what was happening with Flynn to the international union office. This was an isolated incident, but it showed that staff reps supported the decisions made by the local’s leadership regarding such matters.

Gord Wilson, who began his involvement in the union while working at the London 3M plant and later joined the Canadian UAW staff, felt that a larger local would exert more autonomy and be able to handle its own operations but a smaller local was much more reliant on staff reps to handle grievances and other servicing functions.⁴⁰ Local 27 became less dependent on staff reps as its membership grew and its leaders developed more expertise. Local activists and leaders became an additional level of representation for the membership. Staff reps benefited from their experience working with a large local since it raised their profile within the national and international union structure. Nickerson eventually became national secretary-treasurer of the CAW, and Seymour became a regional director. However, the staff reps also sought to influence activity in the local. Making efforts to identify who was pro- and anti-administration is the most obvious example of this, but so too is the decision to support Flynn over the misappropriation issue.

The National Office

The UAW Canadian office, and later the CAW national office, played a different role than that of the staff representatives. Virtually everyone who worked in either the Windsor UAW or the Detroit international offices, except the staff reps, was collectively considered somewhat different from people who were active in the local. This was evident in the distinction that past and present members made between “Our Union” and “The Union.”⁴¹ “Our Union” meant the local, while “The Union” meant either the Canadian or the international office. This distinction was not deliberate, but it was a crucial aspect of how local activists and members thought about the broader union.

The UAW international office in Detroit (called Solidarity House) had little direct interaction with Local 27. It mailed many directives to the Canadian office in Windsor and later Toronto, and took an interest in the financial activities of Canadian locals, but otherwise — in the case of Local 27 — the Canadian office dealt with most correspondence. Offices in Windsor, Detroit, and later Toronto officially handled broader policy issues. Unofficially, the national office sought to influence local attitudes — particularly with regard to political ideology. In the case of Local 27, local autonomy was permitted, especially when it came to financial funding, but ideological diversity was not always welcomed.

Much of the formal contact between Local 27 and Solidarity House in Detroit related to constitutional and financial questions. These queries were usually routed through Burt’s Canadian office before being considered by someone like Emil Mazey or Leonard Woodcock. The international office responded to constitutional matters but rebuffed appeals for financial aid: the local was on its own economically. Strikes, which gave locals access to the union’s strike fund, were approved by the national office but little other direct assistance was offered. National officers, such as Burt and McDermott, generally did not become involved in negotiations unless an employer was extremely intransigent or violent. They instead relied on the staff reps. For example, George Specht regularly updated George Burt on the 1964 Wolverine Tube strike — a struggle that

ended in decertification.⁴² Staff reps were expected to report negotiation progress and obtain strike authorization if needed.

Local 27's relationship with the national and international offices of the UAW became more contentious in the 1960s than it had been in the 1950s, and more stable in the 1970s and 1980s. Strained relations were partially due to the growing ability of local officers and members to assert themselves when they interacted with the UAW administration, but they were exacerbated by efforts from the Detroit and Windsor offices to exert more influence over the local's operations and leadership. During the late 1960s to the early 1980s, relations between the national and international UAW offices changed. Dennis McDermott replaced George Burt in 1968 as the UAW Canadian leader and began pursuing a more independent agenda in the Canadian region, which was still formally called Region 7 at that time.⁴³ He moved the Canadian office to Toronto and created a newspaper and research department separate from the international office.⁴⁴ Interaction between Local 27 and the UAW national and international offices thus happened during a period in which greater overall Canadian autonomy within the union was pursued.

Relations between the local and the national and international offices also reflected the political Left's continued influence in the local in the 1960s. The Reuther faction, which dominated the union, brooked little dissent within locals, as illustrated by the systematic purging of Local 248 at Allis-Chalmers in Wisconsin and by Stephen Cutler's analysis of UAW Local 600 at Ford in Detroit in the 1950s and 1960s.⁴⁵ The relationship between the Left and the administration was more complex in Canada than in the United States. George Burt resisted the politically motivated firing of staff members in 1947 and was subsequently part of a committee that conducted a trial of the 1955–56 GM bargaining committee.⁴⁶ In the aftermath of those events, Burt undoubtedly felt a need to try to keep any remaining left-leaning groups in the Canadian UAW quiet. He faced a particular challenge in Local 27.

The Local 27 Left coalesced around Al Campbell, who had once been a member of the Communist Party of Canada and had attempted to join the Mackenzie-Papineau battalion during the Spanish Civil War. He regretted

that he could not serve in the regular forces during World War II owing to a bad foot, but he did serve in the reserves. His wife, Jeanie, confirmed that he had belonged to the Communist party and had left it in 1956 in response to the Soviet Union's repression of the Hungarian Revolution that occurred that year. She also stated that he was proud to have been a Communist and still adhered to his beliefs long after his association with the party ended.⁴⁷

Many members of the Communist party reacted to the events of 1956 much as Campbell did. Norman Penner and others have recounted the grievous impact of suppression of the Hungarian Revolution and Nikita Khrushchev's acknowledgement of Stalinist Brutality.⁴⁸ Canada did not have a public anti-Communism spectacle on the scale of the hearings conducted by Senator Joseph McCarthy in the United States, but Igor Gouzenko's revelations about espionage had an impact in Canada, and purges of the civil service did happen.⁴⁹ Large numbers of Communists went underground because of the purges, but, like Campbell, they still adhered to and acted on their beliefs.

Campbell came from Cape Breton, and his family included other Communists. His ideology was heavily influenced by the deprivation that he experienced as a child, and later as a migrant during the Depression. During the Depression years, he paused to rest on a park bench in Hamilton, Ontario, one day and was approached by a stranger, who began to talk with him about Communism. He was subsequently an associate of notable Canadian Communists like Bill Walsh and Tim Buck, and was involved in Communist organizing in northern Ontario following his initial involvement with the party in Hamilton. He belonged to other unions before joining the UAW, including the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, which was strongly identified as Communist. He was thus a seasoned organizer and activist who could operate without guidance or interference from the UAW staff reps or administration.⁵⁰

Campbell's role in Local 27 was somewhat comparable to the role played by Communists in other local unions. Stephen Meyer's study of Harold Christoffel's activism in the UAW local at Allis-Chalmers shows similar activity.⁵¹ Roger Keeran also reveals the important role of Communist organizers in the autoworkers' union in the United States, as do

Judith Stepan-Morris and Maurice Zeitlin.⁵² A common theme in the experience of Campbell and of other Communists in industrial local unions is that they performed the often-mundane but essential organizing work that built a local union. Campbell almost single-handedly compiled and wrote the *Local 27 News* for many years in the 1950s and 1960s.⁵³

Aware of the negative attitudes about Communists in the UAW, Campbell began his activism in the local by organizing social events such as family picnics.⁵⁴ There was some evidence of anti-Communism within Local 27's ranks, with comments made during a 1960 GM unit meeting that Charlie Brooks from Chrysler in Windsor and Gordon Lambert from GM in St. Catharines were thought to be "taking direction once again from the Commie Party in Canada."⁵⁵ While this view was expressed during a GM Diesel unit meeting, that unit was known to be on the Right of political debate in Local 27, and Campbell would have known where GM's membership stood on Communism.

Campbell thus did not initially widely proclaim his political allegiances. He moved to London in the early 1950s since his political activities had made working elsewhere difficult.⁵⁶ Eaton Auto became the base from which he gradually espoused his political views and where he routinely won unit elections, including those for plant chairperson. He also developed a network of left-leaning supporters in Eaton Auto and in other units. Bill Harrington, another Eaton Auto worker and an associate of Campbell, became active in Left politics and eventually became president of the London Labour Council. Campbell was also well-known as an activist in the Waffle movement in the NDP, which was committed to a left-wing program for the party in the early 1970s.⁵⁷ UAW Canadian Region Vice-President Dennis McDermott had a somewhat ambivalent opinion of the Waffle, alternating between publicly attacking it and privately praising its value before finally firmly opposing it.⁵⁸ Campbell was out of Local 27 by the time the Waffle's influence peaked in the NDP, but despite the absence of references to the Waffle in Local 27 literature, he was likely not the movement's only supporter in the local.

Campbell's influence was duly noted by both staff reps and administration. Nickerson felt that he wielded considerable influence over Bill

Harrington, saying that Harrington had been “right in Al’s pocket.”⁵⁹ Nickerson also noted that Campbell was careful about being overly vocal in expressing his political views within Local 27 but that he more overtly expressed his beliefs at labour council and UAW Canadian Council meetings. Campbell may have felt that labour council meetings were less contested terrain than the local hall and that a national gathering was an appropriate venue in which to challenge the administration. He may have also found the local to be a less useful forum for expressing his views since it tended to focus on collective bargaining issues. Broader social issues were on the agenda at labour council meetings, and the agenda for the UAW was tabled at national meetings. For example, Bob Sexsmith recalled that there was a major debate within the labour council in the 1960s over support for charities like the United Way, with the social democratic Right urging support and the communist Left arguing that the state should provide citizens with a living wage.⁶⁰ Similarly, Campbell was an early supporter of an independent Canadian autoworkers’ union and would have pressed for greater autonomy at national meetings.⁶¹

Campbell also helped other leftists come to leadership positions in the local. Seymour and Nickerson believed that Sam Saumur, who worked at Northern Electric was aligned with Campbell. Seymour described him as a “fellow traveller,” while Nickerson was more specific in calling him a Communist. Both Nickerson and Seymour commented on how Saumur had initially been active in the United Electrical Workers organizing committee at Northern Telecom. Saumur was a protégé of Campbell, and his political ideology and union activity undoubtedly benefited from Campbell’s experience.⁶²

The division between the Left and Right caucuses naturally affected leadership relationships. Bill Froude from the Kelvinator unit was local president by the late 1960s. He was ideologically different from Campbell and wrote approvingly of supporting the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)/NDP in the *Local 27 News*.⁶³ Campbell actually supported Froude in at least one local election.⁶⁴ They shared some common experiences despite their ideological differences because their lives, like those of all their contemporaries, had been shaped by the Depression

years. Shirley Martin described Froude as a decent man but “funny” in the sense that he did not want to spend any money.⁶⁵ He was personally frugal and similarly careful with the local’s funds. Campbell was less frugal and willing to devote financial resources to local operations like construction of the local hall.⁶⁶

Froude does not appear to have engaged in many conflicts with Burt or Specht. Campbell, on the other hand, was the focus of considerable angst within the Canadian UAW leadership. Much of this centred on the UAW Canadian Council because the UAW administration became convinced that Al Campbell — a council delegate — embodied the Left in Local 27. While the council was a venue for discussing policy, it was also a space for local leaders to challenge the national leadership. Former Local 27 activist and 3M worker Gord Wilson recalled that a handful of people on the UAW Canadian Council in the 1960s could really challenge George Burt:

For a five- or six-year period before Dennis [McDermott] got elected . . . there were about a dozen people who could control debate on our council. There were about two hundred members at that time. The guys who Burt was terrified of and Dennis had a great deal of respect for were Al [Campbell] . . . [and] Charlie Brooks. Al was a smart guy, very measured.

Campbell, and others like him, played an important role in the UAW Canadian Council. Wilson further indicated that “it was a good schooling. The debate on what was then the UAW Canadian Council was really great. . . . It was one of the real strengths of the union.”⁶⁷

George Burt had concerns about Al Campbell, but he had to consider carefully how to handle him. Campbell was overheard making critical comments about the Canadian administration in 1960 at a UAW council meeting. Burt erupted in a confidential May 1960 letter to George Specht about Campbell and the problems that Burt felt he confronted in the Canadian region:

When I wrote to you on April 6th regarding the statements of Brother Campbell at the District Council I meant you to keep my letter confidential and to make your own inquiries. . . . I am also enclosing a copy of a

letter from Brother Simpson which is a clear indication of how Brother Campbell is elected to the District Council and the C.L.C. convention. . . . You can see that our charges against Brother Campbell's statements at the District Council have been almost completely ignored by the Executive and that he has apparently sufficient support from the Executive of Local 27 to get himself elected anywhere.

Burt continued:

May I also add that Brother Campbell immediately contacted our opposition in Montreal at the Convention and as far as I know he attended all of their caucuses and voted with them in all of the issues at the Convention. . . . I sincerely hope that you believe me when I suggest to you that Brother Campbell is part of our political opposition which he has a perfect right to be, but we also have the right to use what methods we have at our disposal to see that our policies are exposed to our friends in London.⁶⁸

George Specht shared Burt's initial inquiry about Campbell with the Local 27 executive, which led to the aggressive tone of the letter. The local sent a letter to Burt supporting both Specht and Campbell: "We believe he is the finest and best Int. Rep. of the UAW in Canada" and "[Campbell] has been one of our most conscientious workers and has served well on Recreation, as a delegate to London District Labour Council and as Editor of our Local Newspaper."⁶⁹ Burt was not placated by this correspondence. He sent another anxiety-ridden letter to Specht on 10 May 1960:

Having watched Brother Campbell at the recent C.L.C. convention I am more than ever convinced that something should be done with Local 27 and its political situation. . . . You must remember, George, that I am in a terrific fight in this region and pride myself on having enough organizational ability to win, but I can only do so with the assistance of all the staff members and because of the seriousness of this situation, it is going to be necessary for all of our friendly locals to stay friendly. . . . You heard Brother Spencer from Oshawa take me over the coals on Sunday and you can understand then that your personal feelings have to be discounted in order to cope with the problems that we have in hand.⁷⁰

Burt's correspondence and the local's response reveal much about interaction between the UAW Canadian administration, staff reps, and the union's main London area local. Burt, clearly under some duress from independently minded Canadian Council delegates like Campbell, sought to quell dissent. As Charlotte Yates notes, the Canadian Council was a crucial deliberative body, but it was a forum in which internal union battles were waged, particularly in the late 1940s.⁷¹ Burt was thus accustomed to such conflicts, but he did not welcome them. The local executive stood by Campbell regardless of what anyone in the national office thought of him. George Specht, faced with the need to work with the local while also placating George Burt, found himself caught between two contending forces.

The local's defence of Campbell went beyond the UAW. He became involved in the Northern Electric organizing campaign before the broader UAW effort to organize the plant. Campbell spoke on a local radio station in favour of Northern Electric workers joining the United Electrical Workers (UE), but he later threw his support behind the UAW once it started organizing.⁷² In 1966, he was attacked by building trades representatives on the London Labour Council over his initial support of the UE. While the minutes of labour council and Local 27 meetings rarely contain lengthy detailed descriptions of what occurred, there is a comprehensive entry from the local's meeting on 27 October 1966. Unit officers rose to support Campbell against defamatory comments by other labour council delegates. A motion was made to send a letter to the labour council:

That Brother Campbell was a delegate from Local 27. That we of Local 27 sent him down there and we have all the faith in him that 2,300 members have in a man . . . and we don't like what Bro. Reader did because he was not going with the London Labour Council. He's not just fighting Bro. Campbell, he's fighting Local 27 and the London Labour Council.⁷³

Froude agreed that a letter should be sent to the labour council in support of Campbell. Internal politics would not be brought beyond the internal local structure, and local leaders and members chose to unite behind one of their activists when he was under attack.

The national office, despite its anxiety about the Local 27 Left, chose to accept its presence. For instance, in 1966, a rank-and-file member named Joe Abela — whom Bob Nickerson described as a “pain in the ass” — took it upon himself to complain directly to George Burt about Al Campbell.⁷⁴ He and the four co-signers of his letter requested that the entire Local 27 executive be put on trial over their support for Campbell during the UE controversy.⁷⁵ The main crux of Abela’s argument was that Campbell was supporting a union — the UE — that had been expelled from the Canadian Labour Congress. Burt, following consultation with Specht, informed Abela, “Your suggestion that we institute trial proceedings against the Executive Board of Local 27 is without foundation and is utterly nonsense and we cannot contemplate it under any circumstances.”⁷⁶ Abela, displeased with Burt’s reply, appealed directly to UAW president Walter Reuther, saying that the Local 27 executive board had commended a brother who was a Communist.⁷⁷ Reuther’s reply is unknown, but Abela’s letter would have at least alerted Solidarity House to the political situation in London, if not confirming suspicions that were already held about Local 27. Burt, in order to avoid further exacerbating the situation, probably did not want to counter the local executive’s decision to support Campbell.

The response of Local 27’s activists and leaders to the attacks made on Al Campbell by other labour council delegates clearly shows that they would not stand for anyone outside of the local union attacking one of their members. Members such as those who were concerned about picketing by possible Waffle and Communist sympathizers at the closing Eaton Auto plant may not have always agreed with Campbell’s politics. However, he contributed more than a different ideological perspective to the local. Many members at all levels of the local would have known him for his work on the *Local 27 News* as well as for his contributions on the shop floor, and they responded accordingly when he was criticized.⁷⁸

The staff reps and the UAW Canadian office continued to be the main points of contact for the local during the 1970s and 1980s. The international office continued to be remote, with the exception of responding to incidents like that involving Jerry Flynn. The local had learned not to ask

too much of Solidarity House, especially when it came to monetary assistance, as such requests were always firmly rebuffed. For instance, Saumur wrote to UAW treasurer Emil Mazey in 1974 to ask for a \$500,000 loan to help finance expansion of the local's hall.⁷⁹ Mazey responded that "the International Union found it necessary to suspend loans to Local Unions a number of years ago and no money is available for this purpose at this time."⁸⁰ Mazey then suggested that Saumur meet with him in order to review the expansion plans and advise him accordingly. In other words, Mazey felt that the local could not be trusted to handle its own finances since it appealed for assistance. Saumur travelled to Detroit to meet with Donald Rand, Mazey's assistant, on 7 May 1974. Rand mailed a detailed summary of their meeting to Saumur and rejected the local's expansion plans.⁸¹ On another occasion, Edith Johnston wrote to Solidarity House asking for financial assistance. She cited difficulties with declining revenue from dues as the main reason for the request and shortly thereafter received a response indicating that no money would be forthcoming but that the international office would provide assistance to the local on how to better manage its finances.⁸²

Former staff reps Bob Nickerson and Al Seymour both recalled that the responses received by Edith Johnston and Sam Saumur were typical of what to expect from Solidarity House.⁸³ The American international office did not distinguish between Canadian and American priorities. Relations between the Canadian and American UAW offices changed with the election of Dennis McDermott as UAW Canadian Region vice-president in 1968.⁸⁴ Nickerson was part of a delegation led by McDermott that travelled to the Soviet Union in 1974 (see figure 2.1). He indicated that the trip was planned with the full knowledge of Solidarity House, and it was also subsequently publicized throughout Local 27. The trip coincided with a strike at Pratt and Whitney in Toronto that McDermott had authorized. Nickerson remarked that as soon as the delegation departed, Emil Mazey cut off strike pay to the Pratt and Whitney workers and that approving the trip may have been a ploy to get McDermott out of Canada in order to enforce policy from Detroit.⁸⁵

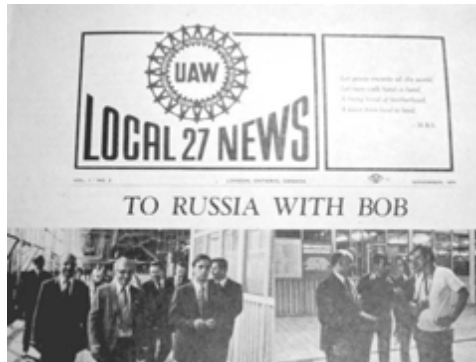


FIG 2.1 To Russia with Bob. This photo accompanied an article by Bob Nickerson in which he recounted his trip with the UAW delegation to the Soviet Union. Source: Local 27 Archive, *Local 27 News*, November 1974.

Local leaders also felt the effects of Solidarity House's efforts to exert control over policy. For example, former GM worker and activist Archie Baillie recounted a trip that he took in the 1970s to a UAW convention in Washington. Those whom the international leadership perceived to be in opposition to official policy, Baillie included, found themselves sitting in an area of the convention floor that was roped off from the rest of the delegates.⁸⁶ The international office was surely aware of McDermott's tolerance of the Left and the Canadian Region's independent views, and worked to oppose dissent in the union if the opportunity arose.

Relations between the local and the national and international offices were complex and shaped by a range of factors. Internal political debates over issues like auto trade agreements and protectionism were central to this relationship. The local, in terms of internal operations, was not controlled by the national and international offices. In fact, local leaders and rank-and-file members had no reluctance to express their views to the national and international offices — even if this meant writing directly to the international president. On the other hand, ongoing internal political struggles did not prevent the local from supporting broad international and national policy positions, such as the Canadian UAW's opposition

to wage and price controls in 1976. The *Local 27 News* devoted a special edition to the topic.⁸⁷ The local similarly supported efforts by organized labour in Canada to oppose the 1988 Free Trade Agreement with the United States (see figure 2.2).⁸⁸ Support for initiatives such as these showed a desire within the local leadership to promote an overall national union agenda as well as a willingness to challenge the national and international offices on issues that were more specific to the local.



FIG 2.2 Free trade protest. Local 27 activists, including Roland Parris, attended this anti-free trade rally along with other union members from across southwestern Ontario. Source: Local 27 Archive, *Local 27 News*, March 1988.

The international leadership's behaviour caused further resentment among Local 27's rank-and-file membership and its leadership. Similar sentiments would undoubtedly have been held by members of other locals whose delegates had been treated like Baillie. Such feelings of resentment helped foster what became the defining moment in the post-World

War II history of the autoworkers' union in Canada: the creation of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) in 1985. Local 27's experience with Solidarity House was not unique. Frustration with the way in which the American head office operated manifested itself most dramatically when 1982 negotiations with GM and the creation of a separate Canadian wage agreement gave momentum to the separation of the Canadian Region of the UAW.⁸⁹ Baillie, who came from GM, felt that an independent Canadian union had long been necessary.⁹⁰ Similar views were expressed by other present and former members of Local 27. Shortly after the CAW's founding, two Local 27 activists, Jerry Flynn from Tecumseh Products and Peter Kennedy from 3M, assumed prominent roles in the new union: Flynn became a staff rep and Kennedy became secretary-treasurer of the new CAW Council.⁹¹ Nickerson, whom Local 27 activists viewed as a de facto member of the local, became the first secretary-treasurer of the new union. Beulah Harrison nominated him at the CAW's inaugural convention.⁹²

The creation of the new union made the new national administration much less remote than Solidarity House had been. Local activists who had never met people like UAW international presidents Owen Bieber or Doug Fraser could truthfully say that they personally knew CAW President Bob White or Secretary-Treasurer Bob Nickerson. Local 27 members who were delegates at the CAW's founding convention conveyed opinions and emotions suggesting that they felt they had participated in a historically significant event. Because of their long association with Nickerson, they also felt that their local played an important role in founding the new union.⁹³

Education: Informing and Shaping Members

The UAW made worker education a priority in both the United States and Canada, and the role of its education programs in shaping Local 27 merits analysis separate from other discussions of the national and international UAW and CAW. While Local 27's rank-and-file members and leaders may have had ambivalent feelings about some of the policies of the UAW/CAW

national offices, and certainly about Solidarity House, they always placed great faith in the union's worker education programs, which were established in Canada during the early years of World War II.⁹⁴ The most visible manifestation of this effort was a collection of cabins that constituted the worker education centre in Port Elgin, Ontario. "The camp" (so called by more than one former local member) gradually grew in size and sophistication as years passed. Local 27's members became regular visitors to Port Elgin and felt that they benefited from its programs.

The UAW shifted its training in the late 1940s from general labour education toward more specific union education to train stewards and other local leaders as part of an effort to support the Reuther administration.⁹⁵ Pro-Reuther elements further strengthened their grip on education programs in the 1960s through the introduction of programs like orientation kits for new members.⁹⁶ Within the American context, worker education became "a spearhead" for recruiting people in the Reuther caucus in the late 1940s.⁹⁷ Local Union Discussion Leaders were specially trained to provide education in newly organized locals.⁹⁸

Local 27 encouraged its members to be politically active and attend events like public lectures, and the local developed a substantial link to the worker education programs within the broader Canadian union in the 1970s due to the influence of Gord Wilson. After a brief stint on the Canadian Labour Congress staff, Wilson returned to the UAW in 1972 to become Canadian Region education director. In that role, he succeeded in persuading the UAW to make paid education leave (PEL) a bargaining priority in 1976. The autoworkers became the only union to have such leave in their collective agreements, although it initially only applied to bargaining with the major automakers.⁹⁹

Many current and former members of the local commented on how they felt they had benefited from participating in union-sponsored training. Bob Sexsmith was able to attend a worker education program at Ruskin College, Oxford University, in England under the auspices of the UAW.¹⁰⁰ Jim Ashton, who joined the local through employment at the Phillips Electronics plant in London and eventually rose to lead both the local and the London Labour Council, clearly benefited from union

education. Edith Johnston referred to how it raised Ashton's confidence level and helped shape him into an effective leader.¹⁰¹

Former GM Diesel worker and activist Hector McLellan believed that he benefited from union occupational health and safety training. He eventually served full-time as a plant health and safety representative at the GM Diesel facility.¹⁰² Tim Carrie, who joined Local 27 through Firestone (later Accuride), talked about how participating in union training programs improved his own confidence level and helped "make the union a way of life."¹⁰³ Jim Wilkes, who joined the local as a body shop technician at London Motor Products, also commented on the benefits of union training and noted that union officers and stewards were taught to argue an issue from a variety of approaches.¹⁰⁴ Training at Port Elgin was also intended for rank-and-file workers and their families, but most of those workers eventually became activists. When commenting on the value of family education at Port Elgin, Hector McLellan remembered how his children so enjoyed the experience that leaving the education centre for home moved them to tears.¹⁰⁵ Beulah Harrison expressed similar sentiments about her children's visit to the centre.¹⁰⁶

UAW/CAW training brought several benefits for Local 27 members. It helped foster a learning culture within the local and, more importantly, exposed members to opportunities for personal growth that they would probably not have had access to in another organization. It is improbable that a line worker in a tool plant, such as Bob Sexsmith, would have been able to afford to spend several weeks in England had he not been a local activist. Family education at Port Elgin was additionally intended to be a kind of vacation, and this aspect cannot be underestimated. Sexsmith, when asked about family vacations, said that he and his family would drive down to his in-laws' cottage on Lake Erie "if I had a car that could make it."¹⁰⁷ So a few days in Port Elgin would have seemed like a real luxury to workers and their families.

Not everyone in Local 27 travelled to Port Elgin or chose to participate in union training, nor did they have the opportunity. The local executive nominated people to attend, and local activists were the main participants. Often, those same activists were the ones who assumed leadership

positions in the local. Attendance at Port Elgin was also more likely if a member was covered by a collective agreement that included PEL. In 1977, its first year in operation, PEL was included in thirty-five collective agreements covering 15,480 members.¹⁰⁸ PEL was designed to convey an ideological position, and it was conducted by and for union members.¹⁰⁹ Union education thus had the effect of helping develop a core group of people who were capable of leading the local and its various bargaining units. However, because the national office approved the content of the training, PEL had the further effect of communicating the national union agenda, and it drew rank-and-file members and leaders closer to that agenda. For example, the UAW took strong stands against wage and price controls in the 1970s and mounted similar opposition to free trade in the 1980s.¹¹⁰ So union education could bring tremendous benefits for individual activists and prepare them to ably lead their locals, but it also meant doing so according to terms that were largely amenable to the national office.

Another limitation of union education was that it appears to have primarily benefited workers from larger units, particularly if they were covered by PEL clauses in their collective agreements. The local could sponsor someone from a smaller unit to attend union training, but discussions with past members suggest that being in a large unit increased the likelihood of attending. Members of smaller units could also, of course, attend evening or weekend courses offered by the UAW or the CLC. Regardless, being fully paid to attend a course during regular working hours would have been much easier to accommodate in a person's schedule. Training, while beneficial, had the overall effect of reinforcing the influence of larger units in the local and the position of the officers who were based in them. UAW members took courses along with their peers from across the union in Canada and consequently learned about issues pertaining to their union, but they did not participate in these programs with people from other national and international unions. Training undoubtedly helped the union become a way of life for some local activists but not for most members since they did not have the same degree of access to it. UAW worker education also did not help members of locals like Local 27 build links with the broader Canadian labour movement.

Bureaucratization

There is a significant literature on union bureaucratization in North America in the post-World War II era, with an overall view that unions were diminished by this process. Peter McInnis suggests that labour's acceptance of the postwar labour relations framework contributed to the bureaucratization process, while authors like Paul Buhle point to leadership sclerosis as a leading cause of the problem.¹¹¹ Don Wells's research on the Oakville Ford local also supports the view that unions bureaucratized in the postwar years.¹¹² Much of the research on bureaucratization is rooted in a belief that unions became removed from the rank-and-file membership and otherwise suppressed dissent.

Local 27 became bureaucratized in some respects, and its size and composite form had a bearing on the process. One example of the local's bureaucratization is that it became an employer rather than simply acting as a representative of employees in other workplaces. This process was not deliberate; indeed, the local hired its first employee out of necessity. There were two categories of workers: elected leadership roles and administrative jobs. Aside from one group being elected and the other appointed, a clear gender distinction separated the two groups: the administrative group was always female and the leadership group almost always male.

The local's paid administrative staff had grown to three people by the end of the 1980s. The two secretaries were joined by a full-time bookkeeper, who kept track of the local's expanding finances and union hall. The construction of the union hall in 1969 expanded the local's paid workforce as the new building included a bar. The bar staff were usually male. Although it is not clear how all staff members were recruited, Shirley Martin was hired through a job advertisement and had no prior links to the UAW.¹¹³

The office and bar staff at Local 27 were unionized, but in two different locals. No strikes occurred during the negotiations to renew the various collective agreements signed with the staff, who were not necessarily paid in accordance with the contractual gains that the local made for its members. The collective agreements were not particularly long.¹¹⁴

The staff considered the wages and benefits fair, although the national office paid more, so negotiations between the staff and the local were not acrimonious. In fact, the staff had learned some bargaining techniques from watching local officers and staff representatives deal with management in other workplaces.¹¹⁵

There was little staff turnover in either the office or the bar from the time Olive Huggins was hired in 1963 until 1990, which suggests that the staff were generally satisfied with their jobs even if the work pace was demanding. Former officers and staff representatives spoke highly of the Local 27 employees. While they did not expressly say that they were in many ways dependent on the staff — particularly in the office — for successful completion of administrative tasks, the staff evidently played an important role in the local's operation. They managed the flow of paperwork through the office and were familiar with the administrative requirements of the UAW, and later the CAW. They also helped orient newly elected officers to the intricacies of running a substantial local labour organization. The staff thus provided important expertise and continuity over the years.¹¹⁶

Although the paid office staff provided some continuity, significant local leadership changes occurred as years passed. Both Bill Harrington and Al Campbell lost their union membership with the Eaton Auto closure in 1971. Jeanie Campbell felt that Al could have joined the UAW staff as a rep, but he instead chose to join the staff of a service workers' union. He maintained a familial connection with the UAW through his son-in-law, Gord Wilson. Campbell was never at a loss for words and made his views on the UAW known for many years. Jeanie Campbell recalled that she and Al encountered Dennis McDermott at a wedding reception for one of Gord and Bonnie Wilson's sons. McDermott said that he would like to keep in contact with Al since he wanted to stay in touch with the "intelligent Left." Al responded, "When you find somebody on the intelligent Right, give me a call."¹¹⁷ Sam Saumur maintained some part of the Left in the local but died at an early age. The Left was not lost due to dramatic confrontations or purges between pro- and anti-national administration groups, as happened in UAW Local 600 in Detroit and

elsewhere in the union.¹¹⁸ Instead, it gradually diminished because of external economic factors and because of both subtle and overt efforts by the staff representatives and UAW national and international offices to align the local ideologically with the broader union.

Other significant leadership changes occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s. For instance, Bill Froude left when Kelvinator closed in 1969. Froude asked McDermott if he could still stand for elected office even though his plant was scheduled to close. McDermott responded that he could stand and that many locals had created a “miscellaneous unit” for people whose plants had closed, implying that Local 27 could establish such a unit. McDermott’s response also suggested that he thought it appropriate for members who lost their jobs to still have a formal association with their local. However, the local did not create a miscellaneous unit, consequently limiting membership to those who were employed in a bargaining unit or who had retired.¹¹⁹

The aspects of the local’s development that more clearly illustrated bureaucratization came principally from the national and international offices, and to a lesser extent from within the local itself. Attempting to identify who was pro- and anti-administration is an example of bureaucratic efforts to directly shape the local. Those efforts may have had little effect since it was the members who ultimately voted and could choose candidates who did not support the national office. As Julie White recalled, anyone who attended a union training session — such as those in Port Elgin — in the 1970s invariably had an NDP membership form presented to them. This was a clear message: support the party and the political ideology that the national union supports. The gradual loss of the Left ultimately meant the loss of important internal discussion. For instance, internal local communications, particularly the *Local 27 News*, began to focus more exclusively on economic issues and collective bargaining in the 1970s and 1980s.¹²⁰

The national office drew the local closer to it through various means. Education programs were clearly part of this process, but so too was selecting Local 27 officers to join the UAW and CAW staffs. Paid full-time officers shared office space with staff reps and spent more time with them and

their peers than they did with rank-and-file workers. Full-time officers were also more likely to become UAW and CAW employees. 3M worker and activist Edith Johnston was the first woman on the UAW Canadian staff and was followed by others, including Peter Kennedy, Jerry Flynn, and Jim Ashton. Becoming a staff member meant adhering to national and international union policy, including bureaucratic efforts to control locals.

The servicing reps from Local 27 also rose in the union's hierarchy. Not coincidentally, this became a more regular process as the Left became less influential in the local. Staff reps felt that, compared to other locals in the Canadian UAW, Local 27 was about halfway between the pro- and anti-administration groups.¹²¹ However, as local leaders and rank-and-file members would have noted, supporting the national administration could lead to staff appointments and an overall positive image within the broader union. Accepting some aspects of bureaucratization could thus have seemed beneficial since it led to the promotion of Local 27 activists and helped raise the local's profile within the broader national union. Composed almost entirely of industrial workers, the local was a working-class organization that was formed by a group of committed activists who wanted to involve the broader rank-and-file membership, and who often did so by drawing on the resources of the national and international union.

Co-operation and Tension

Numerous challenges emerged in the relationship between Local 27 and the national and international offices over forty years. Tension developed over political ideology. Successive staff reps helped foster the local's growth but also attempted to shape its leadership. Drawn from the ranks of working-class union members, they found themselves occupying a middle ground between the national office and the local membership and leadership. Local members and activists gladly participated in education programs and other resources offered by the national office, but they also made it clear that they did not need the national office telling them how to conduct their internal affairs. Local leaders and rank-and-file

members demonstrated little reluctance to challenge the Canadian UAW leadership. Their principal allegiance was first and foremost to their local union, and they would not accept criticism levelled against their members from either the broader UAW or other unions. On the other hand, the decision not to implement McDermott's recommendation to create a miscellaneous unit, and thus permit Bill Froude to run for president again, limited membership to people who were either employed by or retired from a bargaining unit.

National officers and staff representatives may have been "managers of discontent" when dealing with workplace issues, but they were not in their handling of Local 27's internal structure and membership. In many cases, they were the focus of discontent and could not always effectively respond to it. On the other hand, the local invariably supported broader union policy on issues like wage and price controls and free trade. Local members and leaders, regardless of their level of activism, had shown their first allegiance to the local union that they had built: an independent working-class structure that would support workers as they faced employers, participated in the broader community, and formed their own families.¹²²

EMPLOYERS AND BARGAINING UNITS

Local 27 was defined by its relations with employers as much as it was by interaction among its members. People became union members by gaining employment in a workplace organized by the local or by organizing their own bargaining unit. Employment was the key to membership. A plant closure led to the loss of members, while the successful organizing of a new plant led to more people joining the local's ranks. Relations with employers were thus critical to the local's development during the post-World War II years. Workplaces, unlike the local union hall, were contested terrain that were owned by employers yet occupied by workers. They were also places where people forged dual identities: worker and union member. This chapter, focusing on the way in which Local 27 organized workplaces and the work performed in them, considers some key questions: What workplaces did the local organize, and what was manufactured in them? Was deindustrialization a factor? How did employers respond to Local 27? How successful was the local's organizing? And finally, how does Local 27's interaction with employers relate to the existing literature on post-World War II labour relations?

From the 1960s to the 1990s, the local negotiated solely with private corporations, all of whom were somehow related to manufacturing. The list of employers grew and changed over the years, but bargaining remained focused on manufacturing industries rather than services. Interaction with employers occurred through two principal activities: organizing new workplaces and collective bargaining once a workplace had been organized. The collective bargaining process was further divided into two realms: negotiation of collective agreements and administration

of those agreements. The state was indirectly involved in this process since the organizing and collective bargaining processes were regulated by law, but it was also more directly involved if the union or one of the employers with which it negotiated chose to apply to the government for intervention in the bargaining process.

Local 27's composite form led it to experience collective bargaining differently than most autoworkers' locals. It had to negotiate with thirty-two employers over a forty-year period. Some bargaining relationships spanned that entire time, while interaction with other employers lasted only a few years. Local 27 successfully achieved many of its bargaining goals in the workplaces that it organized, and the aims that it pursued were influenced by wider UAW policy objectives and by rank-and-file activism. Management generally mounted at least some resistance when the local began organizing a workplace.

The labour relations process in which Local 27 participated was primarily a product of 1930s and 1940s legal reform in both Canada and the United States. Unions in both countries had agitated for better legal protection for decades, and early legislation was implemented in some provinces — but not Ontario — in 1936 and 1937.¹ While the development and progress of the postwar labour relations system has been the subject of considerable analysis in recent years, an overview is nonetheless germane to this discussion. Legislation contemplated in the mid-1930s was a precursor to substantial change, but the Canadian labour relations framework was in many ways modelled on the Wagner framework created in the United States in 1935 with the passage of the *National Labour Relations Act*. This act gave unions the legal right to collective bargaining and obliged employers to participate in the process. This latter aspect was particularly important, and the federal government in Canada introduced versions of it with Privy Council order 1003 (PC 1003) in 1944 and the *Industrial Relations Disputes and Investigations Act (IRDIA)* in 1948. Provinces across Canada, including Ontario in 1944, implemented similar legislation. Local 27, which fell under provincial labour law, was certified as a bargaining agent by the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB). Its principal collective

bargaining interaction with the state thus usually involved dealing with the OLRB or with the Ontario Ministry of Labour.² PC 1003 and the IRDIA, and the labour relations system they created, helped establish industrial legality and illegality.

The Workplaces: When They Opened and What They Produced

The opening and closure of plants was shaped by a range of factors, including government policy and the prevailing economic environment. Most of the workplaces organized by the local, particularly the larger ones, were subsidiaries of major American corporations. While not just an automotive assembly local, therefore, it was still a branch-plant creation. The manufacturing aspect of Local 27's collective identity was established when the Eaton Auto plant was organized in 1950, which began a decade of industrial expansion in London. Eaton Auto manufactured auto parts for Ford, which also had plants in Windsor and Oakville. Like the vast majority of Local 27 units, it was located on the outskirts of 1950s' London. The *London Free Press* duly announced the opening of the Eaton plant, mentioning its purpose and its plan to employ two hundred workers.³ The plant maintained fairly even employment levels during most of its operation in London.⁴

The Eaton Auto plant was followed relatively quickly by General Motors Diesel. Somewhat anomalous within GM's broader Canadian operations as it never produced auto parts or finished cars, it was constructed to give GM access to the Canadian locomotive market. This facility was situated on the eastern edge of the city and would eventually produce an eclectic array of products, including transit buses, enormous Terex dump trucks, and light armoured vehicles (LAVs). The plant ended the 1980s focused on locomotive and LAV production, with the latter being particularly lucrative.⁵ GM's employment levels varied somewhat in the early years of its operation. Unlike automotive production, with new models introduced yearly, the Diesel Division plant made durable machines that did not require frequent replacement. It consequently

suffered when railway and transit companies refrained from replacing their trains and buses. Employment at the plant appears to have stabilized somewhat with the LAV's introduction in 1983.⁶

Several other manufacturers had moved to London by the end of the 1950s. Initially manufacturing abrasives and adhesives, 3M established its Canadian head office in London in 1952 — a major symbolic coup for the city. The plant employed four hundred workers, many of whom had transferred from a recently closed company facility in Brantford, Ontario.⁷ The Kelvinator appliance plant began its industrial life as a fire truck factory operated by the Ruggles Company. The plant was purchased by Kelvinator in 1927 and retrofitted for appliance production. It switched to munitions production in World War II, specifically Sten and Bren machine guns, then back to appliances in the postwar years.⁸ Like other Local 27 workplaces, it was situated in London's industrial east end, and a collection of working-class homes was constructed around it. London Generator Service and Central Chevrolet were loosely linked to other Local 27 units, as the former provided repair services to other businesses and the latter was part of GM's vast industrial web. Their workforces were dwarfed by the larger bargaining units.

Local 27's range of workplaces expanded in the 1960s. Fruehauf transport was a logistics company that serviced industry, while Tecumseh Products, Unifin, and Bendix brought new auto parts production. International Harvester manufactured heavy equipment. The addition of Northern Electric substantially expanded the breadth of the local's membership in manufacturing. It produced telephones and, unlike the other major bargaining units, was a Canadian firm. The bargaining units added in the 1970s and 1980s continued Local 27's focus on manufacturing. Light bulb manufacturer Phillips Electronics and aluminum siding producer Alcan (later Gentek) reinforced its manufacturing orientation. The addition of Mastic Manufacturing (later Vytec), Firestone, AWL Steego, Sparton, Universal Engineering, Globe Envelope, Wide-Lite, London Motor Products, Waugh and McKeown, and Form-Rite had a similar effect.

Local 27 members produced everything from locomotives to envelopes

to sonar systems. They also serviced cars and sold auto parts. Their workplaces fell into three basic groups. The first group comprised GM, Northern Electric and Kelvinator, which were the largest units during the 1960s; the former two anchored the local following the latter's closure in 1969. GM represented a sixth of the local's membership by the end of the 1980s, and Northern Electric accounted for a similar percentage.⁹ These major units were part of extensive networks owned by large corporations: for example, the Northern Electric facility was one of several in Canada owned by the firm. A collection of mid-sized workplaces with a few hundred workers each constituted the second category, including Eaton Auto, Phillips, 3M, Tecumseh Products, Unifin, Firestone, and International Harvester. They were also owned by multi-national companies. The third group of smaller companies — including the car dealerships — were locally owned, often by London families.¹⁰

The Local 27 workplaces were each unique despite their common focus around manufacturing. Some people who were associated with the local believe that it grew in the 1960s and beyond as a result of the 1965 Auto Pact.¹¹ This is certainly true to some extent, considering that the auto parts plants that were added in the late 1960s, and later in the 1970s and 1980s, focused on auto-related manufacturing. Yet other new units like Globe Envelope, 3M, and Alcan were completely unrelated to auto manufacture. The Auto Pact also had little impact on GM Diesel, which was not producing cars, but it undoubtedly led to the arrival of more auto parts plants in London. While benefiting from the addition of those plants, the local was still fundamentally rooted in established non-automotive manufacturing, and its broad mix of employers gave Local 27 strengths not possessed by other locals. The loss of a major unit like Kelvinator, grievous as it was, was offset by the almost simultaneous acquisition of Northern Electric. The local's future was not inextricably linked to the vagaries of one industry or one employer. The challenge for the local was learning how to deal with a range of employers.

The Work Process and Technological Change

Most of the local's members were engaged in some form of Fordist production. Assembly lines or continuous processes were found in a majority of plants. The exact methods of production are not described in print, but former members recounted working in some form of continuous process environment or on a line. The primary features of Fordism — rationalization of the work process, assembly production, and a closely controlled work environment — were all present to some degree in the various workplaces. Fordism is a feature of post-World War II labour relations across North America and is believed to have fostered worker alienation from the work process.¹² The rigid work conditions usually associated with Fordism have been found in many workplaces across North America. For example, Don Wells found such working conditions in Ford Canada's Oakville assembly plant.¹³

Factories like Northern Telecom, Kelvinator, Bendix, and 3M all used one or more assembly lines.¹⁴ General Motors used a type of batch production, with the integration of some assembly lines. Only the auto dealerships — London Motor Products and Central Chevrolet — did not use assembly lines or continuous production processes. The fact that workers toiled on some form of line raises the questions of how much skill, including training and experience, they actually employed and whether they felt any sense of work degradation. A considerable body of research has focused on degradation and deskilling, including the important work by Harry Braverman and James Rinehart.¹⁵ People who recounted working across the range of Local 27 workplaces did not reveal feelings of work alienation; for example, they did not say that they disliked their jobs or had little control over them. They had varying perceptions of the amount of skill that their jobs required. Some, such as Jim Wilkes from London Motor Products, were trained in skilled trade occupations — in his case, as an autobody technician.¹⁶ Others — such as Roland Parris from GM Diesel, who installed wiring harnesses on locomotives — performed jobs that required some skill but no formal trade licensing.¹⁷ Some people saw skill in their jobs — like Bob Sexsmith, who moulded tools at Proto Tools

— while others like Parris did not consider their jobs overly skilled.¹⁸ They all felt that they made good manufactured products and do not appear to have had second thoughts about production quality. When speaking with London media, Local 27 members generally made favourable comments about their workplaces and the products they made, except when talking about strikes.

The production processes in some work locations changed over time. Northern Telecom was a notable example since it initially manufactured all of the components used in telephone production, including the fasteners used to assemble the final product. As time progressed, the plant became more automated and focused more on final assembly than on component production.¹⁹ The work process in auto dealerships did not change substantially, although cars did become more technologically advanced from the 1950s to the 1980s and thus required a greater degree of knowledge to repair. Gender also played a role in how jobs were assigned in the production process in some workplaces. From the time Eaton Auto first opened, women were selected to work on specific production lines, on the assumption that they had greater dexterity than men.²⁰ Similar hiring practices occurred in places like Northern Telecom. Hiring women on the basis of assumptions about manual dexterity showed that employers harboured gendered notions of what constituted workplace skill.

Technological change had a mixed impact on workers. Health and safety reflected this pattern, as technological change brought both perils and improvements. For instance, Hector McLellan recalled that GM was a difficult work environment when he first started there in 1975 due to issues like welding fumes:

When you walked into General Motors [in the 1970s] it was black from welding smoke. There was ventilation, but it wasn't adequate. They used a different kind of welding then . . . flux core . . . and there was smoke everywhere. We [employer and union] got rid of the flux core welding, and went to M.I.G. welding [metal inert gas] . . . it was much cleaner. As years went on it [conditions in the plant] improved.²¹

Workers felt confident refusing unsafe work, and they demanded improvements in workplace safety.²² Tim Carrie refused to work a shift at Firestone in 1985 until a lifting apparatus was installed to help workers lift heavy wheel rims off the line — a decision that drew threats from management:

We were lifting heavy wheels, it was our job. . . . I was the first one [in the plant] to refuse to lift these heavy rims by hand. I will never forget that — it was a midnight shift. We had this new wash line — called it the superwash — and they [management] asked me to load and unload the rims. I called my supervisor and said, “I am not unloading these. I believe it to be unsafe; it may be superwash but I am not superman.” I got gathered around by supervisors and was sent home.²³

Conditions improved at Firestone when lifting devices were introduced in 1986, but this was due to increased union diligence over health and safety matters and improved legislation. Carrie indicated that Ontario Ministry of Labour inspectors visited Firestone at the workers’ request and ordered that changes be made to how wheels were taken off the line.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* was passed in Ontario in 1978 largely as a result of the Ham Commission inquiry.²⁴ Vivienne Walters notes that Bill 70 — as the act was formally known — was initially opposed by unions before finally being accepted.²⁵ The act mandated the appointment of health and safety representatives in the workplace, joint health and safety committees in workplaces with more than twenty workers, and protection for workers from employer reprisals, and it outlined employer, worker, and supervisory responsibilities pertaining to health and safety.²⁶ Bill 70 was built around the Internal Responsibility System, whereby workers and management were jointly responsible for workplace health and safety.²⁷ Workers became aware of the new legislation and their right to use its provisions: both McLellan and Carrie mentioned the Ontario *Occupational Health and Safety Act* when describing conditions in their plants and felt that they were exercising their rights under the act when they raised health and safety issues.

The array of products manufactured by GM, and likewise by 3M, helped to ensure that these plants stayed open. All the same, changes in workplace

technology and production methods were constant issues for Local 27 members. On the one hand, the introduction of health and safety legislation, coupled with a growing awareness among workers of workplace safety issues, led to improvements in production technology and thus to better working conditions. On the other hand, technological change also led to automation and the loss of some jobs previously performed by unionized workers. For example, Northern Telecom gradually introduced more advanced products and production methods, but it also stopped manufacturing all of the constituent components used in the plant.

Industrializing and Deindustrializing

In many ways, Local 27's development mirrored postwar industrial progress. The local grew during a period of substantial industrialization in Canada and the United States, but it also experienced two marked episodes of deindustrialization its first forty years. Those two events — at Kelvinator and Eaton Auto — revealed both the strengths and weaknesses of the local in dealing with plant closure. Many different American firms established subsidiaries in southern Ontario in order to access the Canadian and British Commonwealth markets. Kelvinator was following this practice when it established an appliance assembly operation in London. American Motors Corporation owned Kelvinator before its financial struggles led to the sale of Kelvinator to White Industries in 1968 and to the eventual closure of the London plant.²⁸

The closure was announced early in 1969 and attracted an immediate response from the union. Staff rep Bob Nickerson said that union representatives would soon meet with Kelvinator management to discuss terms of the phase-out program for employees, particularly pensions and supplemental unemployment benefits.²⁹ The union was in the midst of negotiations with the company at the time of the announcement of the closure, and Nickerson said that there had been no indication at the bargaining table that the plant may close. The *London Free Press* reported that a hundred office workers had been fired shortly after White Industries took over the plant the previous year.³⁰ Curiously, this mass firing does

not appear to have acted as a warning to the union of what could happen to bargaining unit employees.

The local was clearly shocked by the loss of Kelvinator. Long established in the city, it was the only one of Local 27's units to predate the 1950s as a manufacturing operation. The local was still troubled by the loss when, in 1970, the closure of Eaton Auto was announced. The plant made parts primarily for Ford, and the production of new components was being shifted to the United States. Yet Eaton Auto had seemed profitable and had been expecting higher profits in the coming year. The overriding conclusion was that the London Eaton Auto plant was closing not because it was not profitable but because it was not profitable enough.³¹ The union, having learned from its Kelvinator experience, requested that the provincial government hold fact-finding meetings to ascertain the real causes of the closure.³² Regardless of these efforts, however, and despite worker protests (see figure 3.1), the plant still closed.



FIG 3.1 “Why?” campaign. Eaton Automotive workers, including Al Campbell, protest the plant’s closure in 1970. Source: Local 27 Archive, *Fiftieth Anniversary Album*, 18.

Those closures, grievous as they were, could not have been easily prevented by the union since they were triggered by broader corporate policy. The union was unable to challenge that policy since it did not have an ownership stake in either Kelvinator or Eaton Auto. The closures were thus a reminder that, while it was possible to challenge the employer through collective bargaining, management ultimately determined the fate of a factory. All the same, the union was able to use the collective bargaining process to secure some benefits for workers prior to the closures.

The Kelvinator and Eaton Auto closures were Local 27's only real experience with deindustrialization. In fact, the local organized thirteen bargaining units after the Kelvinator and Eaton Auto closures, including larger units like Firestone (see Appendix A). Manufacturing employment had increased in London prior to the Kelvinator and Eaton Auto closures, with the employment index in that sector growing by 21 percent between 1961 and 1967. The Talbotville Ford plant just south of London, for example, was constructed largely as a result of the 1965 Auto Pact signed by the United States and Canada. The automotive industry, while already a vital part of the Ontario economy, would continue to become more central to the province's economic future.³³

Both closures attracted academic attention and were considered socially and economically important, but memory of them did not last. The closures would have seemed anomalous to London's business and political leaders since they had experienced nothing but economic growth in recent decades. They were also accustomed to living in a city that was not synonymous with one particular industry, unlike Hamilton with steel production and Windsor with automotive assembly. Local 27 was similarly fortunate since it continued to organize bargaining units in a range of workplaces.³⁴

Employer Responses to Unionization

The decision to join a union is an action taken in response to conditions in the workplace, and those conditions are usually the product of employer behaviour or policy. The people who joined Local 27 all did so because they were dissatisfied with at least some aspects of their workplace or

because other plants operated by their employer were already unionized. Most employers with whom Local 27 bargained accepted the parameters of collective bargaining while still testing the system's limits. Eaton Automotive and GM were the first organizing and bargaining experiences for Local 27, and organizing and bargaining with other employers added to the local's labour relations knowledge.

The founding of the local coincided with a major event in post-World War II North American labour history — the so-called Treaty of Detroit.³⁵ Walter Reuther led the UAW GM membership on a six-month strike in 1945, arguing that the world's largest automaker could afford to substantially raise the wages and benefits of its employees. He further pressed GM management to open their account books and share the firm's true financial state. Management demurred, but they acquiesced to granting wage and benefit increases in return for the international union agreeing to refrain from encroaching on management's right to operate the business.

The treaty represented the formalization of labour-management relations and labour's decision to accept greater economic rewards in return for not interfering in managerial prerogatives. Many historians have reflected on the meaning of this informal agreement within the context of wider discussions of the postwar settlement. Peter McNinnis suggests that “the entrapment of legalistic boundaries circumscribed labour's ability to respond effectively to the incursions of ascendant capital, which often sought to counter these reforms and return to the less regulated era of prewar labour-management relations.”³⁶ Nelson Lichtenstein argues:

If an accord could be said to exist during these years, it was less a mutually satisfactory concordat than a dictate imposed upon an all-too-reluctant labour movement in an era of its political retreat and internal division. At best it was a limited and unstable truce, largely confined to a well-defined set of regions and industries. It was a product of defeat, not victory.³⁷

These observations are relevant to relations between the UAW and the Detroit automakers as labour and management began to operate within established bargaining parameters, but those parameters were limited. For example, the terms of the agreement between the UAW and GM set

the pattern for bargaining with the other Detroit automakers — principally Ford and Chrysler. None of the major Detroit automakers remained non-union. General Motors thus accepted the organizing of its diesel locomotive plant in London because this was a pattern that occurred across the company and the broader automotive industry.

It is beyond the scope of this discussion to recount every organizing drive mounted by Local 27. Instead, some notable examples of organizing success and failure illustrate the challenges that the local faced. Some employers grudgingly accepted Local 27, while others did so after initially mounting significant resistance. A few did everything possible to stop the union from organizing. Only two — Universal Engineering and London Generator Service — actively encouraged unionization.³⁸ Eaton Automotive was one of the companies that reluctantly accepted the union. As noted in chapter 2, Eaton Auto moved to London less to avoid outright unionization than to dodge the UAW. Its management ultimately accepted that its London employees were joining the union and began to engage in collective bargaining, but only after an extended period of first-contract negotiation. GM's management did not resist the UAW organizing the plant and settled a first agreement before Eaton Auto. Having already fought its main battle over unionization in the late 1930s, GM instead chose to deal with the union through collective bargaining.³⁹ While 3M adopted a similar stance, Kelvinator deviated from this pattern and initially mounted fierce resistance to unionization.

Kelvinator crafted an unwritten but comprehensive form of workplace paternalism from the 1920s to the 1940s, and it is important to note the foundations of this system in order to explain management's response to the UAW's organizing drive in 1954. Using paternalism to resist unions was not unusual in North America from the 1930s to the 1950s. Lizabeth Cohen and Sanford Jacoby comment on its effective utilization by firms as different as Kodak and Swift.⁴⁰ Like other employers, the firms mentioned by Cohen in her study of meat packing firms in Chicago eventually abandoned paternalistic practices in the face of economic calamity during the onset of the Depression. Jacoby emphasizes the success enjoyed by firms like Kodak while staying non-union for many years. Robert

Storey and Joan Sangster examine similar behaviour — but within a Canadian context — at Dofasco in Hamilton, Ontario, and Westclox in Peterborough, Ontario.⁴¹

Paternalism generally manifested itself in a variety of ways. Kelvinator's methods ran the full gamut: the company sponsored numerous social events, and employees were eligible for discounts on household appliances and could join a plethora of social clubs ranging from choruses to a foremen's association.⁴² Those measures were intended to forge and strengthen employee allegiance to the firm. The difference between Kelvinator and firms such as those described by Cohen is that paternalism at the London appliance manufacturer endured through the Depression and into the early World War II years.

Kelvinator was able to maintain paternalistic practices for so long primarily by using techniques like those described by Jacoby, including carefully cultivating a belief among employees that they were being treated fairly at work. Managers, particularly long-time plant manager Charles Hadden, were well known and respected. More importantly, Hadden made a gesture toward listening to the wage demands of plant workers.⁴³ They felt that they were treated fairly and that plant management respected their contributions to the firm. The system of paternalism weakened somewhat during the later World War II years when workers chose to form the Kelvinator Industrial Association (KIA) in 1943. While ostensibly an independent union certified by the Ontario government, the KIA was in fact a company union. Former Kelvinator worker George Medland described a labour relations system that codified the informal paternalism previously practiced by Charles Hadden and his subordinate foremen.⁴⁴

The KIA's origins are not readily identified, but the reasons for its creation can nonetheless be surmised. Worker militancy is generally acknowledged to have increased during the war years.⁴⁵ Conditions in the plant, well-crafted paternalism aside, were highly regimented, if not harsh, during the 1940s. Albert Plumb, who worked briefly at Kelvinator during the early war years, remembered a rigidly organized workplace, with work stations and departments within the plant demarcated by boundaries painted on the floor. Plumb's most vivid memory of wartime

Kelvinator was being severely rebuked by a foreman for inadvertently stepping across a line on the floor that marked departmental boundaries.⁴⁶ These conditions, indicative of Fordism and combined with the demands to keep Bren and Sten guns coming off the line, probably spurred workers to seek some form of representation through an association, even though it resulted in only a pale version of full collective bargaining.

Management's decision to cease granting acceptable wage increases to the association appears to have been the ostensible reason that Kelvinator workers chose to affiliate with the UAW. George Medland, a former plant steward and activist at Kelvinator, recalled that new management felt that the workforce was already being paid competitive wages. The practice of listening to the association's bargaining requests ended, a poor decision that led to workers signing UAW cards. The contract language bargained by the UAW would give workers far more influence over the workplace than they had previously exercised as members of the association. As a result, management faced both a more sophisticated representative of workers' interests in the workplace and an institution that would vie for workers' allegiance. For example, there would now be parallel social functions run by both company and union, and workers could attend both. There would also be strikes and grievances from a union affiliated with the CIO rather than disagreements with an employee association.⁴⁷

The Kelvinator strike, which began in late June 1954, has been largely forgotten in London but was perhaps the most militant labour action to occur in the city in the postwar decades. This was the first negotiation between the UAW and Kelvinator, and wage increases were a central issue. The strike commenced peacefully but events became more confrontational when management elected to remove production dies from the plant so that they could be moved to Mel Hall Transport in London Township for shipment to Windsor. The exact reason for the shipment is unclear, but the strikers obviously thought that this was a precursor to them losing their employment. They attacked trucks leaving the plant and mounted a secondary picket at Mel Hall. Police fired twenty-five shots into the ground in front of strikers and into the air above them, supposedly to prevent them from damaging company property.⁴⁸

The strike drew national media attention, with coverage in the *Globe and Mail* and other papers outside of London.⁴⁹ The city was doubtless unaccustomed to receiving such attention. The strike concluded on 11 August 1954 and the strikers filed back into the plant with UAW membership cards in their wallets, an actual collective agreement, and a wage increase.⁵⁰ They had waged Local 27's first major workplace confrontation.

Kelvinator management still successfully constrained the union to the shop floor when, in 1958, it expedited the decertification of an office worker bargaining unit a few months after it had been successfully organized by Local 27. This decertification case, one of two major organizing reversals suffered by the union in the 1950s and 1960s, revealed Kelvinator management's desire to stymie union organizing efforts. Stan Ashworth, a clerical worker in the office, and two other employees led the effort to remove the UAW.⁵¹

The office collective agreement that the UAW concluded with Kelvinator clearly outlined management rights, vacations, job classifications, wages, and other issues that were usually included in such a document.⁵² Because of the decertification effort, it was never voted on by the membership. Office worker Maida Miners initially voted to unionize but subsequently voted to decertify since she did not feel that the union was doing anything on the workers' behalf despite collecting dues.⁵³ Ashworth led the decertification drive not because of issues related to money but because of alterations to working conditions. Prior to unionization, the office staff did not adhere to a rigid daily schedule; they had some discretion over when they arrived, departed, and took their breaks. In contrast, the blue-collar staff had to punch a time clock when arriving and departing and had to adhere to a strict schedule for breaks and lunch. A similar system was introduced soon after the UAW organized the office staff. Bells were installed that signalled when the staff had to arrive and depart, and when they could take their breaks. The office was treated the same as the plant floor. Ashworth felt satisfied with the compensation that he had received at Kelvinator but was clearly agitated by the memory of the bells regulating his daily schedule.⁵⁴ Rather than use the union to challenge the introduction of greater

workplace regulation, Ashworth vigorously worked to remove the union from the workplace because he blamed it rather than management for introducing greater regulation.

The company did not overtly support the decertification campaign. Ashworth recalled that he and his colleagues drove their lawyer, Oliver Durdin, back and forth to Toronto for labour board hearings in their own vehicles and on their own time. He also remembered collecting a few dollars from each office worker interested in removing the union in order to pay for legal fees. However, a representative of the Central Ontario Industrial Relations Institute, Mr. H.M. Payette, acted as a consultant on the decertification drive.⁵⁵

The UAW mounted a serious counter-campaign to challenge the decertification, placing notices in the workplace urging people to vote against it. However, the UAW was eventually forced from the Kelvinator office in 1959. Ashworth attributed the success of his campaign to support from his work colleagues. Although the company appeared not to have overtly influenced the campaign, Ashworth heard that after the union was forced from the office, a brand new refrigerator was sent directly from the Kelvinator factory to Oliver Durdin.⁵⁶

Ashworth managed to attract the attention of at least one anti-union lobby in Ontario, which sent him a newsletter called *The Outlook*, published by Responsible Enterprise, an organization from Toronto, and warning its readers of the dark perils of syndicalism and subsidized socialism.⁵⁷ Ashworth was pleased with the decertification; he had succeeded in removing the union, and Kelvinator obliged by removing the offending bells from the office.⁵⁸ The union referred to someone starting a decertification drive as a “red apple boy.”⁵⁹ Clearly, people so described were objects of derision among the union ranks. Although Kelvinator management was undoubtedly pleased to find a willing if unwitting agent to further their aim of limiting union influence in the company, they did not reward Ashworth for his efforts since he remained in administrative roles for the rest of his time with the company and was not selected for a managerial position.⁶⁰

Kelvinator employees joined Local 27 in 1953, the same year as workers

at Proto Tools, a medium-sized firm that had just opened in east London. They were followed in 1956 by Central Chevrolet Oldsmobile and in 1959 by London Generator Service. Compared to the Kelvinator or Eaton Auto workers' rationale for joining the local, that of the workers at Proto Tools, Central Chev, and London Generator Service is opaque. The rapid expansion of the UAW in London — with large units certifying in a four-year period — would doubtless have been noted by blue-collar workers who were considering unionization. The UAW would have seemed like a union on the move both locally and nationally. Local 27's success would probably have been a topic of conversation in east London neighbourhoods as the plants organized.

While the failed organizing attempt in the Kelvinator office was certainly a setback, 1964 brought the local's most major reversal with a failed organizing drive at Wolverine Tube of Canada. Yet another plant in London's expanding industrial east end, it opened in 1958 with 220 workers. Wolverine manufactured copper tubing for different applications and was a subsidiary of Calumet and Hecla, another sprawling American employer.⁶¹ The plant remained non-union until 1964, when the UAW began an organizing drive.⁶² The company immediately mounted fierce resistance and, despite workers initially voting for the UAW, refused to conclude a collective agreement. A strike began in August 1964 and continued into 1965.⁶³ The company used replacement workers — universally known in the labour movement as “scabs” — to operate the plant. The picket line became emotionally charged as both sides became further entrenched, and twelve strikers were charged with violence, including lighting cars on fire.⁶⁴

The UAW Canadian office waged a desperate effort to turn government and public opinion against Wolverine management. Local and national leaders appealed directly to Ontario Premier John Robarts, who represented a London riding, to intervene in the strike.⁶⁵ Following lobbying by both the UAW and the London Labour Council, London City Council voted to appeal to Wolverine management to end the strike.⁶⁶ The company held firm against the strikers. Management agreed to a small wage increase but resisted the inclusion of a union security clause based on the

Rand Formula.⁶⁷ A decertification vote held in July of 1965 was boycotted by all striking Local 27 members as the union felt that it was invalid. Nonetheless, all of the scabs were able to vote, and they handily removed the union by a vote of 165 to 2.⁶⁸ Wolverine management successfully dealt the local the most significant defeat in its history.

The local and the Canadian UAW office struggled valiantly to sustain the strike and support the new bargaining unit. However, union resources were severely stretched, and UAW staff rep George Specht could not handle coordinating the strike while also meeting the demands of servicing other bargaining units. More importantly, Wolverine strikers became exhausted and distressed over what seemed like an unending struggle. Two members of the Wolverine strike committee wrote to George Burt in 1964 to advise that the strike had “reached a serious stalemate, with no obvious means of settlement.”⁶⁹ They went on to say that they felt they had not had “the ‘personal’ leadership or attention that we might have needed or expected,” but added that “even if Walter Reuther had personally been in charge that the present circumstances would have been the same.” They suggested to Burt that Specht was “very definitely understaffed and over-worked” as he was running two strikes while also handling several different negotiations.⁷⁰ The memory of the prolonged struggle at Wolverine stayed with Local 27 for many years. Former staff rep Bob Nickerson expressed a belief that “we should have had that sucker.”⁷¹

The loss of the Wolverine organizing drive was almost immediately followed by the addition of one of Local 27’s most significant bargaining units — Northern Electric. That firm’s paternalistic approach was initially similar to that of Kelvinator’s management in the mid-1950s. Northern Electric did not have a long-standing operation in London. Management quickly worked to establish a paternalistic employment relations system but was much less successful in doing so than its counterpart at Kelvinator. Their principal method of attempting to implement this system was through a company union called the Northern Electric Employees Association, which operated in other Northern Electric plants. In contrast to the one at Kelvinator, however, this association does not appear to have been a success at any point in its existence: Northern Electric

management was simply unwilling to co-operate in discussions over routine bargaining matters.⁷²

The association became militant, mounting an unsuccessful strike in 1966 that lasted for fifteen days, but it could not effect sufficient workplace change.⁷³ Tom McSwiggan indicated that management was intransigent over even basic requests such as the details of employee benefit handbooks.⁷⁴ The Northern Electric association's main similarity with its Kelvinator counterpart was that its primary intent was to satisfy employee interest in collective representation while helping management avoid the challenges of dealing with a legitimate industrial union that was free of employer influence. The increasingly militant nature of the association and the unwillingness of management to seriously bargain with it were the principal impulses for unionization.⁷⁵

Organizing at Northern Electric was complicated by competition between unions, red-baiting, and the basic challenge of reaching plant workers. Management did not respond well to the entry of the UAW into the plant. Nickerson remembered company management being very difficult to deal with during the early years of negotiating. With management support, the employee's association issued notices in all Northern Electric plants across Ontario advising workers to "reject American unions" while offering to help workers in London stage another vote between the former employee association and the UAW.⁷⁶ A strike followed the UAW's organizing campaign.⁷⁷ Local 27 was firmly ensconced at Northern Electric by the end of the 1968 strike, despite management's dislike of the union.

Employers facing the prospect of being organized by the local in the 1970s behaved much like those in the 1960s, with some mounting substantial resistance and others ultimately accepting the union's presence in the workplace. Strikes often followed initial bargaining unit certification, as they had during the 1950s and 1960s, and revolved around first-contract negotiations. For instance, there were strikes at Firestone and Phillips in the early 1970s. Firestone was particularly known for highly contentious labour relations in that period. Tim Carrie, who worked there in the late 1970s, had been in the military before settling in London as a civilian. He recalled:

I started at Firestone in 1979. Here I am, I come out of the army. I'm used to discipline, I understand the concept of discipline, and I felt that I was at least treated with more respect from my superiors in the army than I was from my superiors at Firestone. It was just a thumbs-down approach [by management].

Management at Firestone was heavy handed and did not want to deal with a union.⁷⁸

Two smaller employers, one locally owned, put up fierce resistance to the arrival of the union in the 1970s. AWL Steego was the first to do so when it forced a strike over the negotiation of a first collective agreement. It was a small workplace with only thirty-four unionized workers, who began the strike on 14 March 1974.⁷⁹ AWL was a subsidiary of another American firm, American Sterling Precision Corporation, and local management led negotiations for the company.⁸⁰ The strike quickly became contentious when the union accused management of planning to use replacement workers.⁸¹ A collective agreement was finally signed, but AWL refused to take back all the strikers. Only seven were recalled after ratification, five were fired, and ten replacements were hired.⁸² Some strikers had found other jobs during the tumultuous two-month confrontation, but the union was determined to continue with the strike. An AWL employee had been fired during the initial organizing drive, and the union had helped him find a job elsewhere, so management had already established a pattern of bad-faith bargaining even before the strike.⁸³ Successive collective agreements were negotiated with AWL, but the process of bringing Local 27 into that workplace had been long and difficult.

The last example of substantial employer resistance to organizing occurred in 1982, when the union fought a determined battle against Wilco, a local employer. The company — named after its founder, Grant Wilson — manufactured tubing for automobiles and refrigerators. The plant suffered from a litany of health and safety problems, principally a lack of respiratory protection, dating back to 1972.⁸⁴ The impetus for unionization came entirely from within the workforce. Management, particularly Wilson himself, responded in a highly reactionary manner

to the UAW. Wilson assembled the staff to address them during the organizing drive, and his comments were secretly recorded. His remarks revealed the depth of his resistance to the union:

A couple of things, I am little bit disturbed and not very happy, no threats, but I understand that you have a labour movement on your hands. If you want to put in your own union, then that's your prerogative, to do what you wish to do. But I have my own prerogative that I want to do. I want to assure you that there will be no further growth in this plant. As a matter of fact, there will be a loss of jobs in many areas, and relocations, and this is what you've asked for and this is where you are going. . . . I am not threatening you, I would never threaten you, and I am not promising anything as a result of this, but I do run and control this plant, and let it be known by a labour union that wants to tell you otherwise.⁸⁵

Wilson was most certainly intimidating the staff, clearly threatening their jobs and the continued operation of the plant in London. The union responded to his hostility and outright intimidation by applying to the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) for automatic certification.⁸⁶ Wilson, in the midst of the board's hearing into the complaint, announced that he was closing the plant in London and relocating to St. Mary's, Ontario.⁸⁷

Grant Wilson was one of the few employers who led Local 27 to file complaints before the OLRB. Indeed, he caused more actual hearings before the board than any other employer. For example, Wilco employee Robert Zizek was suspended for refusing unsafe work.⁸⁸ Local 27 filed a complaint with the OLRB under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and the board ordered that Zizek be compensated for wages lost during the suspension. Wilson's pattern of intimidating employees led to so many complaints and lengthy hearings at the OLRB that the board certified Local 27 as the union representing Wilco workers.⁸⁹ Workers who lost their jobs because of their involvement with the union were reinstated.⁹⁰ But the struggle against Grant Wilson ultimately became a hollow victory since he followed through on his threat to relocate to St. Mary's, although he did not ultimately have lasting operations there.

Degrees of Resistance

As mentioned earlier, only two employers actively encouraged their workers to join Local 27, one of which was London Generator Service. But as staff rep Al Seymour remembered, London Generator was owned by a socially progressive family whose members gradually lost their social conscience. Universal Engineering was the other employer. It was a small machine shop founded by a former Kelvinator worker who liked to socialize in the Local 27 lounge. Al Seymour described being on a picket line at Firestone on Clarke Side Road in London and being approached by workers from Universal, which was a short distance down the road. When they expressed a desire to sign union cards, Seymour suggested that their boss could see them out on the road and that it would be better to meet elsewhere. They responded that their boss had sent them over.⁹¹

Although initial organizing proceeded uneventfully, the Universal Engineering plant manager was recalcitrant at the bargaining table. The owner himself initially took a decidedly hands-off approach to negotiations, but he eventually called Seymour directly, suggesting that they meet in the Local 27 lounge to resolve the bargaining impasse. Seymour recalled that he met the man, who, although inebriated at the time, sat and wrote down Seymour's negotiating demands on a napkin, promising to move things forward at the bargaining table. The owner clearly kept his word because everything listed on the napkin was agreed to by his bargaining team.⁹² However, Universal Engineering was gradually taken over by someone named Kline, who added his surname to the firm after assuming control. He was less amenable to dealing with the union than his predecessor had been.⁹³

The Universal Engineering organizing experience was atypical, but it illustrates some common aspects of dealing with smaller employers. Small and medium-sized business owners were more likely to be directly involved in negotiations, and their personal response to the process had enormous impact on the outcome. Employers like GM had well-established labour relations policies by the time Local 27 organized its London plant. Other employers, such as Northern Electric, gradually accepted the union,

choosing to challenge it through collective bargaining. Larger employers had labour relations managers, such as E.S. Brent at GM. The employers that Local 27 faced may have been involved in a variety of industries, but only two of them completely accepted and endorsed unionization. Struggles with employers were ongoing, even after bargaining units were organized. If degrees of employer acceptance of Local 27 were placed on a spectrum, Universal Engineering and London Generator Service would be on one end and Wolverine Tube and Wilco on the other. The rest of the employers fell somewhere in between.⁹⁴

Local 27's organizing and dealing with management was a complex process of getting bargaining units certified and then getting employers to recognize the union in the workplace. It was not simply a matter of being bound by legal boundaries of the type described by authors like McInnis and Lichtenstein. The local successfully used the postwar labour relations framework to organize new workplaces, a process that involved additional challenges since Local 27 organized such a diverse array of workplaces. Organizing bargaining units, dealing with plant closures, and countering employee hostility was not simply a matter of responding to management. Local 27 faced some defeats — such as Wolverine Tube — but enjoyed many more victories. The local thus set a pattern of organizing the workplaces that it wanted, regardless of how employers reacted.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Organizing new bargaining units brought Local 27 into contact with employers, but the labour relations process really began after a collective agreement was settled. Relations between unions and employers in the postwar period were conducted through collective bargaining, a legally regulated but fluid process that evolved over time. Collective bargaining certainly can involve strikes and lockouts, but negotiating and administering labour-management agreements is the dominant activity in the process. It is through collective agreements that unions most clearly push their bargaining agendas. This discussion thus considers four questions: How did Local 27 operate through the collective bargaining process and include agreements with employers? What clauses were included in agreements? What results did the local bring for its members? And finally, how did its bargaining gains fit into the employment regulation system and social programs in the postwar era?

The UAW developed considerable collective bargaining expertise in the post-World War II decades, and its bargaining objectives reflected the ongoing dynamic between economic and social issues. The literature on the postwar labour movement, such as research by Stephanie Ross and Pradeep Kumar, frequently focuses on the difference between social unionism and business unionism.¹ When bargaining collective agreements, Local 27 generally sought economic rewards that are usually associated with business unionism. The union developed its own bargaining priorities and sought to win them through pattern bargaining, which was part of the UAW's bargaining agenda.² Pattern bargaining was a system whereby a collective agreement was concluded with a company

in a given industry — such as GM in automotive — with the expectation that the terms of that agreement would be accepted by the other major employers in that industry. The staff representatives played a key role in this process, as they led negotiations and actively participated in routine labour-management discussions. Local leaders and activists were also an essential part of the bargaining process.

Collective Agreements

The collective agreement was a central feature of the postwar labour relations system. In 1943, the Ontario government introduced the *Collective Bargaining Act*, which clearly indicated that bargaining collectively meant that labour and management were to negotiate collective agreements.³ It furthermore stipulated that employers could not refuse to bargain collectively.⁴ This act was succeeded by the 1948 *Labour Relations Act*, which also created the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB).⁵ The OLRB had the power to compel both unions and employers to comply with the terms of a collective agreement. The 1948 *Labour Relations Act* covered most labour-management relations in Ontario. Labour relations legislation thus provided a framework for bargaining, encouraged unions and employers to negotiate collective agreements, and created a quasi-judicial body to enforce labour relations regulations. This system provided a labour relations framework through which Local 27 began to negotiate collective agreements in the 1950s and beyond.

The collective agreements negotiated by Local 27 between 1950 and 1990 reveal that bargaining was an enormously complex undertaking that evolved over time. The local negotiated close to one hundred collective agreements in those four decades.⁶ Negotiations were generally led by staff representatives, but local officers were also heavily involved. Negotiating a new agreement could be a lengthy process involving dozens of people on both sides, such as the local's negotiations with GM or Northern Telecom, or it could be concluded expeditiously, as in the case of the Local 27 staff agreements. Participation in Local 27 bargaining thus meant adapting to unique environments in a wide range of workplaces while also trying to

advance local and national bargaining objectives. Whereas other major UAW/CAW locals, such as 199 in St. Catharines or 222 in Oshawa, had to cope with one major employer and a few smaller ones, Local 27 had to bargain with a multitude of employers.

Although collective agreements varied depending on the workplace in question, Local 27 and the UAW national office viewed the agreement that they concluded with the major automakers as their ideal bargaining objective.⁷ Both former staff reps and local officers drew distinctions between bargaining with larger employers and their smaller counterparts. Big firms like GM and Northern Telecom were considered economically viable, but bargaining expectations were lower when it came to smaller companies.⁸ Nonetheless, the various collective agreements reveal that the local in fact successfully achieved a loose form of pattern bargaining and maintained it for forty years.

Collective agreements are binding documents that set out the terms of employment, including the process whereby workplace conflicts are resolved. They also recognize the union as the exclusive bargaining agent and stipulate rights that are reserved for management. The agreements that Local 27 concluded with the larger bargaining units were longer and more detailed than those with smaller units. Since examining all the specific terms of each agreement is beyond the scope of this discussion, I focus on specific clauses: membership, seniority, union security, management rights (sometimes called “reservation to management”), grievance handling, and job classifications. I also touch on the few agreements that included some unique clauses.

The first collective agreements concluded by Local 27 in the 1950s were not lengthy, nor did they include unique clauses. GM had not yet adopted pattern bargaining in Canada: as Daniel Benedict notes, the company preferred to conclude agreements in each plant rather than on a company-wide basis and did not begin to adopt pattern bargaining until 1953.⁹ The 1951 GM Diesel agreement was forty-five pages long and included 115 clauses and two appendices.¹⁰ This was much smaller than the master agreements under which the local would eventually be covered, but it still contained clauses that were union bargaining priorities. The

first GM agreement included many of the contractual provisions usually associated with collective bargaining: it delineated management rights, provided for automatic union dues deduction, and described a detailed grievance and arbitration process. The GM contracts became, by far, the lengthiest agreements. GM negotiated master agreements that covered all of its Canadian automotive manufacturing. However, the company also signed local agreements with each individual plant, which added further complexity to contract administration.

Pattern bargaining of the type found at GM and the other Big Three automakers became a primary bargaining objective in other large Local 27 units, principally Northern Electric in the late 1960s.¹¹ The Northern Electric agreements were also lengthy in comparison to other Local 27 agreements, averaging 170 pages, but were not comparable to the multi-volume GM agreements. The shortest agreements were those concluded between the local and its office and bar staff, which averaged fourteen pages in length.

One of the main clauses in all collective agreements pertained to when a person actually became a union member. The 1973 GM master agreement stipulated, among the other administrative details of a five-and-a-half-page union security clause, that a worker became a member of the union after forty days.¹² Similar probation provisions were found in the agreements at smaller bargaining units. For example, the Tecumseh Products collective agreement stipulated the following:

As a condition of employment, all employees covered by this Agreement shall become members of the Union and remain members of the Union during the term of this Agreement to the extent of paying an initiation fee and the monthly membership dues, uniformly required of all Union members as a condition of acquiring or retaining membership in the Union.¹³

This provision defined Tecumseh as a union shop and stipulated that a person would be on probation for forty days following their initial entry into employment.¹⁴ Other workplaces — such as Globe Envelope, Alcan, and Bendix — had forty-five-day probation periods.¹⁵ A person

who was still on probation could not expect union protection during his/her probationary period and could be terminated, the point being that even in smaller workplaces like Globe Envelopes with twenty workers, the probation period was close to the limit found in the GM master agreement.

Seniority was one of the first clauses mentioned in all collective agreements. The purpose of seniority clauses was evident in the first GM Diesel collective agreement:

Fundamentally the rules in this agreement respecting seniority rights are designed to give employees an equitable measure of seniority based on their length of continuous service with the company. The word “seniority”, as used in this agreement, shall mean the length of an employee’s unbroken service with the company measured from his seniority date in accordance with the terms of this agreement, it being understood and agreed, however, that the seniority of any employee who has an established seniority date on the effective date of this agreement shall be the length of his service with the company measured from such seniority date unless his seniority is hereafter broken under the terms of this agreement.¹⁶

Seniority lists were posted in all bargaining units. For rank-and-file members, seniority was the most important feature of any collective agreement since it guided other clauses that governed layoff and recall, vacation entitlement, and movement through job-progression steps. Longer seniority meant more protection from job loss, greater compensation, and better access to other jobs in a plant. Collective agreement clauses on job postings required that seniority be considered when management filled vacancies. For instance, the Bendix collective agreement stipulated the following:

All applications submitted in accordance with the above procedure will be reviewed by the company and the successful applicant will be the employee with the greatest seniority who has the qualifications to perform the job. The selected employee, should he not prove his ability or

perform in a satisfactory manner in said classification within fourteen (14) working days, shall be returned to his former classification. The resulting vacancy shall be filled from the qualified applicants, if any, from the most recent posting. If the employee is lacking qualifications, he will be advised, along with the Union chairperson, exactly what further training, education or experience he/she will require before he/she can be accepted for promotion.¹⁷

In other words, at Bendix, the management had to fill job vacancies by seniority but could remove a successful applicant from a job if he or she proved unable to perform it. It is important to note that seniority was accumulated on a bargaining unit basis. There was no master seniority list for all of Local 27.

All Local 27 collective agreements included union security clauses stipulating that all employees would pay union dues. Union security was another key aspect of the postwar labour relations system. Justice Ivan Rand's arbitration decision over a 1946 strike at Ford Motor Company settled the issue of union security when he, in a decision that led to the term Rand Formula, argued that workers need not join the union in their workplace but could be required to pay a membership fee since they benefited from the union's representation. As David Millar suggests, union security could only really be achieved through economic power. Dues checkoff, as union membership fee deductions were known, ensured economic security for unions.¹⁸

Another important aspect of union security clauses was that they did not change once they were initially negotiated. This was because, as noted earlier, the Rand Formula became a common feature of the labour relations process. Neither Local 27 nor the employers with whom it bargained would have seen merit in changing union security clauses. In fact, the inclusion of union security clauses in collective agreements was ultimately mandated in the 1980 *Ontario Labour Relations Act*.¹⁹ The management rights clauses agreed to by Local 27 also did not change. Those clauses were of varying length but generally specified exclusive management functions. The Globe Envelopes agreement included the following:

The Union acknowledges and agrees that it is the exclusive function and right of the Company to operate and manage its business in all respects; to maintain order, discipline and efficiency; to make and alter from time to time the rules and regulations to be observed by the employees; to direct the working force; to determine job content; create and abolish jobs; subcontract work and process; and to hire, promote, demote, transfer, retire, lay-off, because of lack of work, recall, discipline, suspend and discharge any employee, provided however that any alleged wrongful discipline, suspension, or discharge will be subject to the grievance provided herein. The foregoing enumeration of the Company's rights is subject to all other terms and conditions of this agreement. It is agreed that the foregoing enumeration shall not be deemed to exclude other management functions and rights not specifically enumerated.²⁰

The Globe Envelopes management rights clause was representative of the general length of such clauses found in Local 27 agreements.

Every collective agreement included a grievance handling procedure, including arbitration language. E.E. Palmer notes four specific types of grievances: individual, group, policy, and grievance of former employees.²¹ Most of the grievances filed by Local 27 were individual. Each step in the grievance process — usually from one to four — was governed by a specific timeline and delineated who would be involved in the process. For instance, the London Generator Service agreement specified that a grievance presented at first step would be filed verbally within five days after the grievor became aware of the violation of the agreement. The grievance would then be filed in writing at second step if it could not be resolved verbally. A third-step meeting would be held within three days of the announced outcome of the second-step meeting if the grievance continued to be unresolved.²²

Some agreements included more detailed grievance-procedure language. Phillips Electronics used a three-step process but also specifically referred to policy grievances:

A Committeeman may intercede on behalf of his constituents at any time matters which, in his opinion, may affect the employees either as individuals or as a group, regardless of whether the action taken as a result of a complaint by an individual or a group, or as a result of a personal observation. The Union agrees that the right to process grievances will not be abused to circumvent the regular grievance procedure.²³

Phillips and Alcan also had clauses permitting management to file grievances, with the former using this language:

It is understood that Management may bring to the attention of the Union any complaint with respect to the activities of the Union or its members and such complaint may be treated as a grievance and be subject to arbitration if not settled to the mutual satisfaction of the parties.²⁴

The policy grievance language is particularly noteworthy because it indicated that the bargaining unit executive was free to file grievances on behalf of individual members. A worker may have felt reluctant to file a grievance, but having his/her committee person do so would have helped strengthen the worker's resolve to receive redress. It is unclear if Phillips's managers exercised their right to file a grievance. However, the inclusion of that particular clause reinforced the fact that the collective agreement was a document owned and administered by both labour and management and that it was not the sole property of the union.

Grievances that were unresolved at the final step could proceed to arbitration. Although arbitration could be considered the culmination of the grievance process, it is nonetheless a distinct process within a collective agreement. Arbitrators were generally jointly selected by labour and management, except in cases where they could not be jointly agreed upon. Some agreements stipulated that in such cases, the Ontario Ministry of Labour would be asked to appoint an arbitrator. Language detailing this process was found in the agreements at Phillips, Firestone, Central Chevrolet, Universal Engineering, Forest City International Trucks, Alcan, London Motor Products, Bendix, Globe Envelopes, Kelvinator, GM, Northern Telecom, and Eaton Auto, as well as in the Local 27 staff

agreements. The only workplace to deviate from jointly selecting arbitrators was London Generator Service, where until the mid-1980s, the sole arbitrator was to be the senior judge of the County Court of the County of Middlesex.²⁵ Some agreements limited the potential scope of an arbitration decision. London Generator Service, GM, Kelvinator, Alcan, Globe Envelopes, Bendix, Forest City International Trucks, Phillips Electronics, AWL Steego, Central Chevrolet, Tecumseh Products, and Fruehauf Trailer all had collective agreement language that prevented an arbitrator from modifying the terms of the agreement.

Examining job classification clauses, our final area of comparison, reveals the astounding number of jobs held by Local 27 members and demonstrates the complexity of the local's bargaining. What is most remarkable is that a small workplace could have nearly as many job classifications as a larger workplace. London Generator Service, which had twelve employees, all male, in 1977, nonetheless had seven job classifications.²⁶ Globe Envelopes, which employed twenty workers in 1981 (ten male and ten female), had five classifications, each with four grades.²⁷ Theoretically, this could have meant twenty different active job grades — the same as the number of workers in the plant. London Motor Products, with thirty-three male members, had ten job classifications in 1980.²⁸ Northern Telecom listed seven hourly-rated production classifications at its London plant in 1981, and eighteen skilled trade jobs.²⁹

The number of job classifications may simply seem like a compendium of unrelated facts. However, what it clearly shows is that Local 27 was involved in negotiating the terms of forty-seven different jobs in just four of its bargaining units over a three-year period. Accomplishing this successfully required intimate knowledge of both the jobs involved and the collective agreements. It is unclear whether it was the union or employers who sought to include a wide number of job classifications in collective agreements. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to conclude that the local preferred to have a large number of clearly defined jobs rather than a smaller number of jobs with less clear boundaries between them. A smaller number of classifications would have made it easier for management to assign workers to different tasks across a plant. Being able to

perform a wider range of tasks did not necessarily mean that a worker would be paid more money, just that she/he would be expected to do more for the same wages. On the other hand, as E.E. Palmer shows, arbitrators have recognized the right of management to control the content of existing job classifications and to create new ones in the absence of restrictive provisions in a collective agreement.³⁰

Some Local 27 collective agreements contained unique clauses. For example, the London Motor Products agreement, like its counterpart at Central Chevrolet, provided comprehensive details on how workers would be paid for completing various automotive repairs.³¹ Cars had to come into a repair shop continually if workers employed there were to make money under a flat-rate system. The London Motor Products agreement ensured that auto mechanics and autobody technicians would be paid a minimum amount regardless of how many cars came in. The GM master agreement expanded to include paid education leave in the mid-1970s, and Northern Telecom's agreement broadened to include maternity leave benefits in the same period. All of these clauses were different from anything else found in other Local 27 agreements.

One last point about the content and scope of the collective agreements concerns their duration. Larger units like Northern Telecom and GM generally signed three-year agreements. Smaller units, like London Generator Service, signed either short-duration agreements or yearly agreements with no modifications. The bargaining pattern in smaller units reflected economic vagaries rather than a conscious departure from overall union bargaining strategy. Seymour, Nickerson, and Archie Baillie all felt that dealing with smaller employers was different from negotiating with larger ones.³² They hoped for the best bargaining outcome they could get considering economic conditions and the size of the smaller bargaining units, and consequently decided to sign agreements that were in effect for only a year or two. Clear distinctions were made between "Big Three bargaining" and bargaining with other employers. The local based its bargaining objectives on what the broader union had gained through auto assembly bargaining, and for Local 27, Big Three bargaining began in 1951 with GM Diesel.

Wages

Local 27 and the wider UAW made wages and benefits the core economic demands of the collective bargaining process. An examination of the pertinent clauses of collective agreements from the 1950s into subsequent decades illustrates how family priorities were reflected in contract language. Analyzing the wages paid in the various Local 27 bargaining units involves certain challenges: the workplaces were in different industries, varied in the number of workers employed, had different gender compositions, and included a range of job classifications. For example, Northern Telecom's collective agreement included a non-supervisory hourly-rated wage schedule that had seven job grades, with three progression steps for each of those grades.³³ Those job grades applied to assembly work and did not include the large number of skilled-trade classifications at Northern Telecom and their progression steps. Few collective agreements included detailed job descriptions. Forest City International Truck was an exception, as its agreement included paragraph-long descriptions of each job's duties.³⁴ Lack of detail on the exact nature of the various jobs in Local 27 bargaining units consequently means that definitive comparisons between all jobs in the various bargaining units cannot be easily made. However, some comparisons can be made between base rates in more unskilled jobs.

TABLE 4.1 *Wages at GM Diesel Versus Wages in London, Ontario, 1951*

	Yearly wages
GM Diesel, 1951	\$2,454 to \$3,702
Average London wage, men, 1951	\$2,250
Average London wage, women, 1951	\$1,250

SOURCES: Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 2, box 1, UAW Local 27 and General Motors Diesel. The GM rate is based on the wages paid to workers in the Mechanical Assembly classification. Average London wages are based on data found in Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada*, 1951, vol. 5, table 18.10.

TABLE 4.2 Selected Local 27 Wages Versus London Wages, Early 1960s

Collective agreement	Average yearly wage at start of agreement
Tecumseh Products, 1963a	\$3,845
Kelvinator, 1963–66*	\$3,598
Average London wage, men, 1961	\$4,000
Average London wage, women, 1961	\$2,098

* Year(s) the collective agreement was in effect.

SOURCES: CAW Local 27, *Fiftieth Anniversary Album*, 10 (for Tecumseh Products); George Medland Collection, Kelvinator of Canada and UAW Local 27, 1963–1966; Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada, 1961, Labour Force*, table 25.

TABLE 4.3 Selected Local 27 Wages Versus London Wages, Early 1970s

	Wage increase negotiated	Average yearly wage at start of agreement
Fruehauf Trailer, 1971–74	4%	\$7,051
Tecumseh Products, 1971–73	5%	\$7,113
London Generator Service, 1973–74	0	\$7,862
Universal Engineering, 1973–76	7%	\$6,136
Average London yearly earnings, men, 1971		\$7,380
Average London yearly earnings, women, 1971		\$3,334

SOURCES: Archives of Ontario (AO), RG7-33, box B255962, UAW Local 27 and Fruehauf Trailer, 1971–1974; AO, RG7-33, box B118565, UAW Local 27 and Tecumseh Products, 1971–1973; AO, RG7-33, box B261687, UAW Local 27 and London Generator Service, 1978–1979; AO, RG7-33, box B206978, UAW Local 27 and Universal Engineering, 1973–1976; Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1971*, vol. 3, table 38.3.

In 1951, production wages at GM Diesel ranged from \$1.04 to \$1.64 per hour.³⁵ Workers also received an additional fourteen cents per hour that year. Assuming a forty-hour week, this would have meant annual compensation between \$2,454 and \$3,702 — which was above the average wage earned by men in the London area and well above the wage earned by women (see table 4.1). In other words, in 1951, belonging to GM Diesel, one of Local 27's first bargaining units, meant earning better-than-average wages. In the case of GM Diesel, it was principally men who benefited from the higher wage rates, simply because the unit's membership was overwhelmingly male. As table 4.2 shows, the wages of Local 27 members in the early 1960s came to close to the average wages earned by men in London and exceeded those earned by women. Wages continued to grow in the early 1970s but, as table 4.3 illustrates, with some slight yearly wage differences among units. Notably, however, by the 1970s the wage premium enjoyed by male Local 27 members had gradually eroded in comparison to the 1950s.

In the 1980s, the local bargained more agreements than it had in previous decades, although wage disparities continued to exist, especially between larger and smaller units. As table 4.4 reveals, working in one of the larger bargaining units tended to be more lucrative than working at a smaller plant. There was also a significant variation in terms of percentage wage increases. For example, the Northern Telecom agreement, which ran for three years (1979 to 1982), increased wages by 8 percent each year, as did the two-year agreement at Alcan (1980 to 1982). In contrast, workers at London Generator Service signed a one-year agreement with no wage increases. At several plants, wages kept pace with the average annual wage for London men; at others, they fell below the average. It is, however, interesting to compare the average annual wage at Northern Telecom (\$16,577) with that at Firestone (\$15,204). In 1979, just over half the workers at Northern Telecom (1,000 out of 1,895) were women, whereas all of Firestone's 365 workers were men.³⁶ Thus, even though, on average, women in London earned considerably less than men, a high proportion of female workers at a plant did not necessarily mean a lower average wage.

TABLE 4.4 Selected Local 27 Wage Increases Versus London Wages, 1981

	Number of employees	Wage increase each year of agreement	Average yearly wage in 1981
Alcan, 1980-82	50	8%	\$13,041
AWL Steego, 1980-82	17	7%	\$10,982
Forest City International Truck, 1980-82	37	4.5%	\$15,683
Keeprite Unifin, 1979-82	111	35 cents per hour in the first year, 25 cents in the second	\$16,473
Northern Telecom, 1979-82	1,895	8%	\$16,577
Tecumseh Products, 1980-83	162	25 cents per hour, each year, all classifications	\$17,908
Firestone, 1979-82	365	3%	\$15,204
London Generator Service, 1981-82	13	0	\$14,289
London Motor Products, 1980-83	33	2.5%	\$9,984
Mastic Manufacturing, 1980-83	48	20 cents per hour increase in each year	\$12,355
Average London yearly earnings, men, 1981			\$17,010
Average London yearly earnings, women, 1981			\$8,736

NOTE: The wages shown here are based on roughly comparable production job classifications at various bargaining units.

SOURCES: Archives of Ontario (AO), RG7-33, box B183069, item 303-015, Alcan and UAW Local 27, 1980-1982; AO, RG7-33, box B312142, item 527-018 (this rate is based on the Group III classification at Alcan); AO, RG7-33, box B527018, item B312-142, AWL Steego and UAW Local 27, 1980-1982; UAW Local 27 and Forest City International Truck, 1980-1982 (this rate is based on the Service Centre Helper Classification at Forest City International Truck); AO, RG7-33, box B384162, item 316-010, Keeprite Unifin and UAW Local 27, 1970-1982;

As the preceding tables demonstrate, from the early 1950s to the early 1980s, the average wage of most Local 27 members remained close to the average wage earned by men in London. This was especially advantageous for women: wages bargained by Local 27 were much higher than the average wage earned by women in London during this period. Thus, having an industrial unionized job, even in a smaller plant like Globe Envelope, could significantly improve a woman worker's income. This is not to suggest that belonging to a union did not have a salutary effect on men's wages but that the wage benefits of union membership could be more significant for women.

Local 27 members enjoyed regular percentage hourly increases, but their wages were also affected by cost-of-living allowance (COLA) provisions in their collective agreements. COLA was important because it linked workers' wage raises to increases in inflation, protecting wages from erosion due to inflation. Furthermore, those linked increases were in addition to regular percentage hourly raises.

The UAW in both Canada and the United States made COLA a central part of bargaining in the late 1960s.³⁷ COLA was not unique to the auto-workers' union, but not all Canadian unions adopted the same approach. For example, the Energy and Chemical Workers Union chose not to pursue COLA clauses due to a belief that discussing it would eclipse other important bargaining issues.³⁸ As John Barnard reveals, international UAW

AO, RG7-33, box B301433, item 274-028 (this rate is based on the wages paid in sixteen classifications at Keeprite); Library and Archives Canada, National Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers Union of Canada fonds, vol. 90, file 11, Northern Telecom and UAW Local 27, 1979-1982 (this rate is based on the Grade 28 Hourly classification at Northern Telecom); AO, RG7-33, box B337541, item 316-007, Tecumseh Products and UAW Local 27, 1980-1983 (this rate is based on the All Assembly classification at Tecumseh Products); AO, RG7-33, box B358025, item 325-106, UAW Local 27 and Firestone Steel Products of Canada, 1979-1982 (this rate was paid in thirteen of fifteen classifications at Firestone); AO, RG7-33, box B261687, item 619-016, London Generator Service and UAW Local 27, 1981-1982 (this was the common wage rate at London Generator Service); AO, RG7-33, box B324546, item 656-007, London Motor Products and UAW Local 27, 1980-1982; AO, RG7-33, box B341733, item 385-081, Mastic Manufacturing and UAW Local 27, 1980-1983 (this was the top Operator rate at Mastic); Statistics Canada, 1981 *Census of Canada, Profiles of Census Tracts in London, Sarnia-Clearwater, and Windsor, Part B*, 16-17.

leader Walter Reuther initially opposed COLA clauses before including one in the 1948 General Motors collective agreement. By 1969, COLA and annual improvement factor (AIF) increases had added an estimated \$22 billion to the pay of UAW members.³⁹ Barnard notes that 92 percent of UAW members were covered by such clauses.

The centrality of COLA in collective bargaining was not simply a union objective. Charles Wilson, GM president at the time of the 1948 collective agreement, was a strong advocate of COLA provisions. He was interested in securing longer-term collective agreements from the union and in denying the union any control over the shop floor. While this approach emanated from General Motors, it was obviously part of a broader Fordist system of paying good wages while maintaining tight control over the work process.⁴⁰

Local 27 was part of the UAW COLA system from its first collective agreement negotiations — a major accomplishment for the UAW in Canada, and for Local 27. It clearly signalled to employers that the local had won wage inflation protection from the wealthiest employer with whom it bargained and that similar provisions would be a priority in subsequent bargaining rounds. It also signalled that the UAW would pursue the same bargaining objectives in Canada as it did in the United States. Since COLA increases were added onto hourly wage improvements, they were part of wage increases over the life of the collective agreement, which is what both Reuther and management intended with the 1948 GM agreement.

Although both the GM and Kelvinator collective agreements in the 1950s contained COLA clauses, such provisions were not ubiquitous in Local 27 agreements (see table 4.5). Barnard's observation on the commonality of these clauses obviously did not pertain to Local 27. The extant collective agreements negotiated between 1950 and 1990 show that a minority of the local's bargaining units enjoyed COLA provisions. Furthermore, most COLA clauses were negotiated in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when price inflation was high. The units that did have COLA in their collective agreements were the larger ones, which constituted a majority of Local 27's membership. This was particularly true in the 1950s and 1960s, when the local was dominated by Kelvinator, General Motors, and Northern Telecom. COLA was less common in smaller bargaining units.

TABLE 4.5 *Local 27 Bargaining Units with COLA Provisions*

	Year COLA first appeared in collective agreements
General Motors Diesel	1951
Kelvinator	1956
Minnesota Mining and Manufacture (3M)	1968
Keeprite Unifin	1969
Tecumseh Products	1971
Universal Engineering	1973
Northern Electric	1973
Bendix	1977
Mastic Manufacturing	1977
Phillips Electronics	1978
Proto Tools	1983

NOTE: COLA may have appeared earlier in the 3M, Northern Electric, and Proto Tools collective agreements, but agreements predating 1968, 1973, and 1983 (for those bargaining units, respectively) are not available in archival holdings.

SOURCES: Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 2, no. 1, UAW Local 27 and General Motors Diesel, 1951; George Medland Collection (GMC), UAW Local 27 and Kelvinator, 1956–1958; Library and Archives Canada, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers Union of Canada fonds, vol. 89, file 10, UAW Local 27 and Minnesota Mining and Manufacture; Archives of Ontario (AO), RG7-33, box B189716, item 316-101, UAW Local 27 and Keeprite Unifin, 1969–1972; AO, RG7-33, box B206987, item 316-006, UAW Local 27 and Tecumseh Products, 1971–1973; AO, RG7-33, box B206978, item 306-045, UAW Local 27 and Universal Engineering, 1973–1976; AO, RG7-33, box 22, item 335-021, UAW Local 27 and Northern Electric Company, 1973–1976; AO, RG7-33, box 1, item 325-024, UAW Local 27 and Bendix, 1977–1980; AO, RG7-33, box B341733, item 385-081, UAW Local 27 and Mastic Manufacturing, 1977–1980; AO, RG7-33, box 16, item 339-023, UAW Local 27 and Philips Electronics, 1978–1980; AO, RG7-33, box B293315, item 316-012, UAW Local 27 and Proto Canada, 1983–1986.

COLA clause calculations were initially based on the Dominion Bureau of Statistics Consumer Price Index and later on the Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index. COLA provisions were often among the more complex clauses in collective agreements. The 1951 GM Diesel agreement included the following COLA formula, which is fairly representative of what was found in later agreements bargained by the local:

The amount of the Cost-of-Living allowance which shall be effective for any of the three-month periods as provided above shall be in accordance with the following table:

DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS COST- OF-LIVING INDEX	COST-OF-LIVING ALLOWANCE PER HOUR
171.7 or less	None
171.8-173.0	1¢
173.1-174.3	2¢
174.4-175.6	3¢
175.7-176.9	4¢
177.0-178.2	5¢
178.3-179.5	6¢
179.6-180.8	7¢
180.9-182.1	8¢
182.2-183.4	9¢
183.5-184.7	10¢ ⁴¹

Other language in the agreement was associated with this clause, such as the three-month increments when cost-of-living payments would be calculated.

Did Local 27 members really benefit from COLA? Did it in fact protect wages from inflation erosion? Determining the historical impact of COLA on wages is a somewhat complicated process. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) had to rise to a certain rate in order for COLA clauses to activate. The 1951 GM Diesel COLA clause quoted above shows that those provisions

could have had an impact on wages, but only in the event of higher inflation. For instance, the cost-of-living index increased from 171.1 to 172.5 in early 1951, and prices on consumer goods rose to 179.8.⁴² However, lower fuel and lighting costs balanced out the higher price of consumer products. Thus, the GM Diesel COLA clause would have activated, but perhaps not at a sufficiently high level to cover the higher cost of consumer goods.

The cost-of-living index increased to 191.5 by the end of 1951.⁴³ This level of increase actually exceeded the scale in the GM agreement, which meant that the COLA clause activated. Why did this matter? In 1950, a Local 27 member could visit a local A&P store in London and purchase prime rib for 55 cents a pound and bread for 12 cents a loaf. The worker could even indulge the family and buy a pineapple for 35 cents.⁴⁴ A \$10 grocery bill could have quickly accumulated. By 1951, however, that same grocery bill would have been \$10.90, a 9 percent increase.⁴⁵ However, GM Diesel workers got a 2 percent increase every year from 1951 to 1955. If the CPI rose to the maximum indicated in the collective agreement — 10 cents per hour — then the COLA clause would have added an additional 6 to 8 percent to a worker's hourly rate above any other negotiated increases. Paying that grocery bill would have been easier because of COLA. Thus, an increase in inflation that triggered a COLA clause would have had a marked impact on a worker's standard of living.

The COLA clause in the 1977 Bendix agreement further illustrates how such clauses worked. In that case, the CPI on which the COLA increases were based was geared to 1961 prices, so the increases shown in the COLA scale were expressed as an increase over 100 percent of 1961 prices in Canada. For instance, a \$20 grocery bill in 1961 would have cost \$41.27 in 1977.⁴⁶ This was a 106 percent increase. It is unclear why the local did not ensure that prices in 1977 were based on consumer prices as shown in a more recent year than 1961.⁴⁷ Workers may not have been paying close attention to the details of their complicated COLA clauses. On the other hand, the average worker probably felt she or he benefited from COLA clauses because the union emphasized their importance. Workers would have also noted that they were not losing ground in terms of wages and cost of living.

The importance of COLA changed as the postwar decades progressed. Inflation was not especially high in the 1950s and 1960s, but it increased markedly in the 1970s and into the early 1980s. Inflation protection was more crucial in those latter decades, in part because of high inflation but also because of state efforts to regulate wage increases in the mid-1970s. The discussion in chapter 3 on the local's response to wage and price controls, whose intent was to combat inflation by limiting wage increases, illustrates that the union and its members responded strongly to state efforts to limit their wage gains. COLA became more important as overall inflation increased, especially when the state moved to limit wage increases, but the COLA triggers were not based on a one-to-one ratio of wages to inflation. It could thus only help alleviate the effects of inflation, not totally negate them. There was also the problem of dealing with employers who began to oppose the inclusion of COLA in collective agreements.

The most obvious reason that COLA was not achieved in all Local 27 collective agreements, even though it was a central UAW bargaining objective, was because the union could not induce more employers to accept it. It was one thing for employers to accept COLA in the 1950s, when inflation was comparatively low, but it was a costlier prospect in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Tecumseh Products actually forced a five-month strike in 1983 over COLA. The local was only able to end the strike by accepting a cap on COLA increases, even as some activists claimed that the union had “sold out” the bargaining unit and abandoned a “no-concessions” negotiating stance.⁴⁸ COLA was consequently a bargaining objective that was easy to push through in the 1950s and into the mid-1960s, but it became increasingly hard to achieve and maintain as the economy changed and as the state and capital became more hostile toward it.

Job Security

People who joined Local 27 were concerned with earning good wages, but they also wanted some job security, which was primarily achieved through seniority. As noted in chapter 2, seniority determined many important aspects of a unionized job, including job assignments and the sequences

in which workers were laid off. On the other hand, seniority clearly did not protect against all of threats that workers faced. For example, seniority did not guarantee protection from job upheaval: layoffs or plant closures always represented a major threat to workers and their families.

The case of one displaced Kelvinator employee shows the impact that job loss has on families. Anthony Luckman, a twenty-one-year employee who was sixty-three in 1969, told the *London Free Press* that he had to face the “humiliation” of trying to find work when Kelvinator closed and that “they just laugh at you if you’re over forty.” Luckman reported an income of \$175 every two weeks, and mortgage and appliance payments totalling \$258 per month. He and his wife had just purchased an income property in which they planned to reside while renting rooms to university students to finance their retirement. Mrs. Luckman “just went hysterical” at the news of the plant’s closure. Luckman had virtually no savings, perhaps enough for three months, and anticipated a company pension of only \$70 per month until he would be eligible for a government pension.⁴⁹ This analysis in the *London Free Press* may have been rather gender-biased since Anthony Luckman may have been just as “hysterical” as his wife, while she might have felt as humiliated as he did.

The Kelvinator case attracted the attention of Bernard Portis, a professor at the University of Western Ontario business school. With full co-operation from Local 27, Portis conducted a one-year study of displaced Kelvinator workers. The findings reported in the *London Free Press* were not encouraging. Portis found that the likelihood of getting a new job changed dramatically with age. For instance, 81 percent of workers under age forty had found work. Barely 21 percent of workers over sixty and only 55 percent of workers aged forty to fifty had found employment. The Luckmans’ worst fears were probably realized. Another former employee of Kelvinator, fifty-year-old Chester Devine, described waking at 6:30 every morning as he had while working at Kelvinator, yet having nowhere to go.⁵⁰

Luckman was not unique, and Portis’s evidence on the long-term impact of job loss at Kelvinator would have been found in other Local 27 workplaces. It was no wonder that workers’ families occasionally became

involved in public demonstrations against plant closures. In 1970, for example, the *London Free Press* reported that sixty “men, women, and children” conducted an information picket to protest the pending closure of Eaton Auto.⁵¹ In fact, every news story that the *London Free Press* published about production slowdowns or layoffs at Local 27 bargaining units from 1950 to 1990 emphasized the anxious reaction of workers. Even news of jobs being added to a workplace was not always sufficient to assuage workers’ fears. For example, when GM Diesel planned to transfer locomotive work from its Illinois plant to London in 1988, workers claimed that the added work could lead to people being recalled from layoff but would not mean new jobs.⁵²

Local 27 members faced a recurring pattern of layoff and recall, notably from the early 1970s into the late 1980s: there were twenty-two layoffs and recalls across ten bargaining units from 1971 to 1988.⁵³ Seven of those were at GM Diesel. This may not seem like substantial job loss, but workers’ lives were disrupted with every layoff. Well aware of this issue, the UAW and the local attempted to pursue policies through collective bargaining that would provide a modicum of job security. John Barnard argues that a proposal for a guaranteed annual wage (GAW) was the UAW’s most audacious job security proposal in the postwar period.⁵⁴ The GAW involved paying workers an annual rather than hourly wage. When Walter Reuther proposed the GAW to General Motors, however, it was not well-received. The union then began proposing supplementary unemployment benefits (SUB) to the Detroit automakers. Sam Gindin argues that SUB was a major UAW bargaining gain during the Reuther years.⁵⁵ SUB provided unemployment benefits paid by employers in addition to benefits paid through government programs.

SUB became a feature of automotive assembly bargaining, but among Local 27 collective agreements, it was only found in those with GM Diesel, Northern Telecom, and Firestone. SUB paid up to 75 percent of straight-time earnings at Firestone during a layoff.⁵⁶ Why would workers want SUB, and why would employers resist it? A plant facing the prospect of uneven production over the life of an agreement could have experienced more than one layoff. A SUB clause enabled laid-off workers to collect a

better wage than they would have without the clause, but, conversely, the employer might have incurred higher labour costs. Employers that accepted SUB would have considered it part of overall worker compensation, not something separate from it.

Union policy decisions could be wrenching for families, even when they were intended to help workers. An episode at GM in the 1980s shows how this could transpire. The plant experienced workload fluctuations before the introduction of light armoured vehicles production, and in 1983, Local 27 arranged for London GM workers facing layoffs to work at the company's massive vehicle assembly plant in Oshawa, 150 miles from London. The decision to commute to Oshawa for a prolonged period was not easy. One worker who made that choice, Paul Moss, told the *London Free Press*, "It's something that requires a decision ahead of time. . . . We're pretty close-knit and we decided that it had to be done for the good of the family."⁵⁷ The difficulty of travelling to Oshawa to work was exacerbated by the realization among commuting Local 27 members that their co-workers in London were working overtime while they had to spend many hours commuting, taking time away from their families. Twenty displaced workers who were on layoff and worked in Oshawa went so far as to hold an information picket outside of the GM Diesel plant to press their concerns. The picketers included Hector McLellan (see figure 4.1), who argued that "we have to share the work, even if it means only working 20 hour weeks."⁵⁸

Was the local's leadership aware of the turmoil caused by the Oshawa move? The information picket would unquestionably have been noticed. Initially, everyone thought that the Oshawa jobs looked like a good prospect, including the people who were offered work there.⁵⁹ But after commuting across the province for several months, the Oshawa workers concluded that the UAW was not protecting their interests.⁶⁰ Would the union have agreed? Since not only the local union office but the national and international offices placed such a premium on securing and maintaining well-paid, full-time work, local leaders would probably have felt that they had indeed looked after the workers who went to Oshawa. Maintaining such employment arrangements was part of the

accepted Fordist norm. Furthermore, Local 27 does not appear to have had an official union work-sharing policy. Archie Baillie, the GM plant chair, argued that although the union monitored overtime in the plant, it could do little to prevent some overtime due to production reasons.⁶¹



FIG 4.1 Hector McLellan and family. Hector is shown leaving church with his wife, Cecilia, daughter Alison, and niece Jennifer during the period when he and other GM Diesel workers were sent to Oshawa, Ontario. Source: Archives and Research Collections Centre, London Free Press Negative Collection, *London Free Press*, 12 February 1984.

The UAW had followed its normal pattern of endeavouring to protect steady full-time work. As Jonathan Cutler shows, the UAW was not interested in pursuing reduced work weeks or in sharing work.⁶² The case of the London GM workers going to Oshawa was not common, but it demonstrates the union's commitment to full-time working hours and its unwillingness to deviate from that norm. Hector McLellan and the other Local 27 members who went to Oshawa may not have realized that their desire to share work ran contrary to long-standing union policy.

Social Security: Pensions and Health Care

Like the UAW, Local 27 was concerned with how workers and their families would live after they stopped working. The local therefore adopted the UAW's objective of including pension plans in collective agreements, emphasizing that private sector plans were to operate in conjunction with those that were state-funded. Pensions were a major concern for workers in post-World War II Canada, and, like the rest of the labour movement, Local 27 wanted better state-funded retirement benefits. A 1961 article by Bill Froude noted the challenges confronting a retiree who collected a \$55-per-month government pension. Retirement, Froude argued, became not about leisure but instead about living in a "distressed" state.⁶³ Kenneth Bryden notes that unions agitated for better public pensions, and their lobbying helped lead to the introduction of the *Old Age Security* and *Old Age Assistance Acts* of 1951.⁶⁴ While the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) was an improvement over the 1951 legislation, it was not intended to be a munificent source of retirement income; it was also patriarchal in that the terms that governed payments were more generous to men than to women.⁶⁵

Private pension plans such as those bargained by Local 27 were particularly crucial in the 1950s and 1960s, regardless of how long it took to negotiate them. James Snell notes that private pension plans in combination with government annuity programs had begun to redefine old age in the 1940s.⁶⁶ People no longer thought they should be working when they were elderly. As Alvin Finkel argues, public pensions moved the public policy agenda further along with the CPP proposal in 1964.⁶⁷ Pensions had been provided at the federal and provincial levels in the 1940s and 1950s, but were paid within the context of considerable policy debate between business and labour.⁶⁸

Pension plans became a major component of collective bargaining. A plan was first proposed to the UAW by Ford Motor Company management in 1947 in lieu of wage increases.⁶⁹ Walter Reuther and the UAW Ford caucus initially declined the proposal but returned to it in short order. Reuther felt that convincing the auto companies to accept pensions as

a bargaining objective would induce the rest of industrial America to accept them.⁷⁰ The UAW — and by extension, Local 27 — believed that incomes should be provided to workers after their days in the workplace were over. In fact, the UAW’s position on pensions inspired the Joe Glazer song “Too Old to Work, and Too Young to Die.”⁷¹ The union was successful, and all three major American automakers — GM, Ford, and Chrysler — introduced pension plans between 1949 and 1950.⁷² The plans would collectively form part of the Treaty of Detroit.⁷³

Pensions became an important part of Local 27 collective agreements. While not all bargaining units would enjoy pension provisions, many would. As table 4.6 illustrates, pensions were fairly common but less so than COLA provisions. Achieving pensions did not immediately happen across all bargaining units, however, and some smaller units, such as the auto dealerships, never had them, probably due to the cost of providing them. No discussion seems to have occurred in Local 27 regarding the idea of creating a local-wide pension plan. As Bob Nickerson, Al Seymour, and Archie Baillie all suggested, although the automotive assembly collective agreements were the desired bargaining pattern, negotiating with smaller employers could be much different due to economic factors.⁷⁴

A worker who looked forward to collecting a pension from a company like GM, Kelvinator, or Northern Telecom was thus in much better long-term financial circumstances than a person who had to rely solely on private savings and government pensions. Company pension plans were clearly important to workers, but their primary intention was to provide, along with government pension benefits, a decent standard of living for retirees. When Bill Froude lamented the small amount paid by a government pension, he was referring to the minimum income that a retiree could expect to receive. A Local 27 retiree received pension benefits above the minimum and was thus able to enjoy some leisure after years of work without having to live in diminished circumstances.

TABLE 4.6 *Local 27 Bargaining Units with Pension Plans*

	Year that pension provisions first appeared in collective agreements
General Motors Diesel	1951
Kelvinator	1966
Northern Electric	1967
Fruehauf	1971
Keeprite Unifin	1972
Forest City International Trucks	1977
Firestone	1979
Tecumseh Products	1983
Wide-Lite	1982
Proto Tools	1986

NOTE: Minnesota Mining and Manufacture (3M) is generally known in Local 27 to have had a pension plan, but it is not discussed in any of the collective agreements available in archives. In the case of Proto Tools, 1986 is the year documented in archived agreements, but it is possible that a pension plan was bargained earlier.

SOURCES: Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 2, no. 1, UAW Local 27 and General Motors Diesel, 1951; George Medland Collection (GMC), UAW Local 27 and Kelvinator, 1966–1968; Library and Archives Canada, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers Union of Canada fonds, vol. 90, file 10, UAW Local 27 and Northern Electric, 1967; Archives of Ontario (AO), RG7-33, box B309115, item 619-002, UAW Local 27 and Fruehauf; AO, RG7-33, box B189716, item 316-101, UAW Local 27 and Keeprite Unifin, 1969–1972; AO, RG7-33, box B176216, item 658-006, UAW Local 27 and Forest City International Trucks, 1977; AO, RG7-33, box B261687, item 619-016, Firestone and UAW Local 27, 1979–1982; AO, RG7-33, box B206987, item 316-006, UAW Local 27 and Tecumseh Products, 1971–1973; AO, RG7-33, box B293325, item 339-019, Wide-Lite and UAW Local 27, 1983–1985; AO, RG7-33, box B293315, item 316-012, UAW Local 27 and Proto Canada, 1983–1986.

Health care was also a major concern for Local 27 members and for all Canadians in the postwar decades. Public hospital insurance did not exist in Ontario until the late 1950s, so the health care provisions in collective agreements in the early 1950s were particularly beneficial for union members. In 1951, GM Diesel became the first unit of the local to have health or insurance provisions.⁷⁵ The 1958 Kelvinator agreement included insurance provisions and also provided Blue Cross medical coverage in conjunction with the anticipated Ontario government hospital plan.⁷⁶ Local 27 continually agitated for universal public health care. For example, in 1963, *Local 27 News* readers were advised to vote for provincial election candidates who supported health care coverage so that “all are covered.”⁷⁷ Universal public health care was implemented in Canada in 1968 after years of wrangling between federal and provincial governments.⁷⁸ It was at this point that health care provisions became common across most Local 27 collective agreements.

The 1971 Firestone agreement is an example of the expansion of health care coverage since it provided life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment coverage, semi-private hospital coverage, and a prescription drug plan.⁷⁹ The fact that health and insurance benefits such as these were found at Firestone — a workplace that was roiled by contentious labour-management relations — illustrates that employers were willing to expand benefit coverage even if they resisted wage gains and COLA clauses. This could perhaps be attributed to the comparative costs involved. Health care benefits were intended to be a supplement to state-funded health insurance: for example, Firestone listed the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) in its benefits. As with CPP, the medical benefits found in Local 27 collective agreements were intended to provide for workers above the minimum care provided by the state.

The state influenced collective bargaining when issues like health care and pensions were negotiated by unions and employers. Both the union and employers considered state-funded social welfare programs to be part of overall health care and retirement benefits. The state also had a role in how wages were calculated because a part of the state apparatus created the Consumer Price Index. The state’s role in shaping wages was less overt

with respect to the rates and increases bargained between the local and employers, except in the case of imposed wage and price controls.

The other obvious issue with the wages and benefits won by Local 27 was their lack of uniformity: earnings varied across the bargaining units. Thus, when it came to wages, Local 27 was unable to ensure equal economic rewards to all its members. The same was true of SUB and COLA benefits. Local 27's situation in this regard differed from that, for example, of Local 222 in Oshawa: given that most of its members belonged to a single bargaining unit, gains made by that local applied more evenly. Were Local 27 members aware of the differences among constituent bargaining units? If nothing else, they would presumably have known that working at GM meant enjoying one set of economic returns while working at a place like Globe Envelope meant something quite different.

Working Time and Time Off

The employment terms of workers in Ontario in the first two decades after World War II were regulated by the 1944 *Hours of Work and Vacations with Pay Act*.⁸⁰ This act was in force until 1968, when it was superseded by the *Ontario Employment Standards Act*. The latter act mandated minimum standards like the forty-eight-hour week and eight-hour day.⁸¹ It also maintained time-and-a-half pay for time worked in excess of forty-eight hours and for work performed on a holiday, and it stipulated a minimum wage, equal pay for the same work, and a basic vacation allotment.⁸² As Mark Thomas notes, the act intended to provide minimum protections for non-unionized workers.⁸³

Judy Fudge argues that the *Employment Standards Act* has historically been “the little sister” of labour law: it played a subordinate role compared to other legislation but nonetheless regulated basic employment terms in Ontario.⁸⁴ The act was important in a collective bargaining context because it set minimum standards, and unions invariably sought to bargain in excess of those standards. Having paid employment and benefits of different types was important to workers, but so too was time away from work. Hours of work were clearly delineated in every collective

agreement. Most Local 27 members worked some form of shift rotation, and shift schedules were often found in collective agreements.

Time away from work was also regulated by collective agreements. For example, in the 1950s, Local 27 negotiated paid vacation. The 1951 GM agreement included basic statutory holiday pay, provided that an employee had worked the days immediately preceding and following the holiday in question. The statutory holidays were New Year's Day, Victoria Day, Dominion Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.⁸⁵ Workers were allowed paid vacations in addition to statutory days, and those needing a brief leave of absence could take up to three days off per year, unpaid.⁸⁶ Kelvinator workers enjoyed the same paid statutory holidays as their peers at GM and received two weeks of paid vacation.⁸⁷ By the late 1960s and into the early 1970s, vacations were generally included in all collective agreements but with some variation in how time off was allotted. The 1977 Bendix collective agreement is an example of a comprehensive vacation clause: it provided for pro-rated paid time off with less than one year's service, and up to fifteen days off for workers with ten or more years of service.⁸⁸

In contrast to agreements like those at GM, Kelvinator, and Bendix, the 1985 Central Chevrolet agreement provided for up to four weeks of vacation but specified that vacation pay equal to 10 percent of wages would be paid. This agreement also stipulated that the employer could require someone with four weeks of vacation to split the time into two-week periods. Furthermore, earning four weeks off required accumulating twenty years of seniority.⁸⁹ The common theme among all agreements was that longer service led to more paid time away from work.

Every Local 27 collective agreement had language pertaining to overtime and hours of work. For example, even a smaller unit like Globe Envelope guaranteed a forty-hour work week, with overtime paid at time and a half after an eight-hour day. Overtime was also paid for work on Saturday, increasing to double the worker's regular job rate after four hours. Double time was paid for all hours worked on Sunday. Workers were expected to volunteer for at least some overtime, if needed, and could refuse to work any extra hours. They were also paid a supper allowance in

certain circumstances.⁹⁰ While the terms of the various Local 27 agreements, in terms of overtime provisions and vacation allotment, were not exactly the same, they were all better than the minimum provisions in provincial legislation. For example, the employment terms of Globe Envelope — a small company with only twenty unionized employees, equally divided between men and women — were better than those provided under the *Employment Standards Act*.

Both time away from work and overtime pay mattered for workers and their families for several reasons. Being paid extra to work on a weekend, which was normally a welcome break from work, was a financial advantage for workers and their families. Vacation time provided a chance for workers to spend time with their families and to escape their blue-collar work. Furthermore, the longer a person worked in a unionized job, the more time away from work she or he accumulated. However, those benefits could make workers and their families increasingly dependent on unionized work if they wanted to continue to accumulate more vacation.

Equity

Union efforts to improve wages, benefits, and vacation time were often defended as being good not only for workers but for their families. Although implicit in many union bargaining strategies was the assumption that families were headed by male breadwinners, single-parent households headed by women also benefited from the gains that unions achieved. Such households were not uncommon in London in the 1970s and 1980s. As we saw in chapter 1, Georgina Anderson, Beulah Harrison, and Julie White, all of whom were single parents during their years in Local 27, played an active part in the drive for equity. White worked at 3M, a company that did not have separate wage rates for men and women; it did, however, have classifications in which women were more commonly employed than men, and the jobs in those classifications paid less than those in which men were more commonly employed. Issues such as this led White to run for a committee position. She successfully ran to represent an area of the plant that was predominantly male. She remembered:

Those issues were a lot of the reason that I decided to get involved in the union — equality issues. Back then, I did not know that they were equality issues. All I knew was that I was a woman and I was treated differently. It was something that I pursued immediately, for sure.⁹¹

Changes in the local's negotiating objectives were also initiated because women wanted issues important to them brought to the bargaining table. For example, Julie White remembered that women at 3M in the early 1970s wanted greater access to jobs in the plant:

Although there was never anything written in law [meaning official policy], there were certain jobs that we weren't allowed to work in. . . . The heaviest, the dirtiest, jobs was where they had the vacancies, so they hired men for those jobs. So, consequently, what happened was that you had a small percentage of women working in the plant.

She noted, though, that no serious discussion of women's issues took place within the context of the union's bargaining objectives:

I have one son and, when I went on maternity leave, I was forced off early. At that time, I could not collect Sickness and Absence benefit because there was no provision in there [the collective agreement]. Those issues were a lot of the reason why I decided to get involved in the union. We had no harassment policy at that time, when I first became involved.

However, women at 3M made progress, and in the 1980s, they introduced policies and procedures to address issues of concern to them. These gains were occasionally made through negotiations with women on the management side:

We negotiated our employment equity committee and talked about issues, about hiring practices. They [management] had a woman who was an HR [human resources] person, which was really good because it [discussion] started to change. It changes the relationship because women sometimes bring different solutions, different discussions, to both sides. It was good for me because I had a counterpart. When I was in meetings, it used to be me and the guys. So it was really nice to have another woman from management in those meetings.

But efforts to improve conditions for women in the workplace were not always welcomed by all union members, even when those efforts were made in co-operation with management:

We sat down with the company [in 1985] and said, “Look, we need to do some education work here in the workplace around harassment issues,” and they agreed. . . . If I ever had to go back and make a different decision, I certainly would have made a different decision [about participating in this]. . . . It probably wasn’t just the best thing to do. Sometimes, when you bring somebody in from the outside, people see them as being much more neutral. There were two facilitators, and we were both from the [bargaining] committee, and the other person — a skilled tradesperson — he never finished the training. We ended up bringing in someone else to co-facilitate with me.

White went on to describe male worker resistance to participating in harassment training.⁹²

The bargaining objectives described by White were pursued by women across the Canadian labour movement. As author Julie White explains, income issues such as pay equity were “perhaps the most important consideration for women working in the paid labour force, since women are concentrated in low-paying jobs, and generally received 60 to 65 percent of the wages paid to men.”⁹³ Furthermore, sexism, appearing in many forms, was a major issue in the labour movement.⁹⁴ Women like worker Julie White felt that there was overt sexism in both the workplace and the union. Effecting positive workplace change for women in Local 27 was consequently no mean feat. The fact that having women from management present at the bargaining table could make women in the union feel more at ease suggests that they did not always feel comfortable with the level of support that they received from their union brothers. Clearly, even by the late 1980s, many men in the local had difficulty accepting a bargaining and workplace agenda that provided better working conditions for their union sisters.

Changes in bargaining objectives put workplace equity alongside economic issues. For instance, Local 27 bargained its first same-sex benefits

clause in the 3M agreement in the late 1980s. Steve Van Eldick, a gay man who worked at 3M, asked the union to pursue same-sex benefits to cover his partner. He reasoned that he should have the same rights as all of the straight men with whom he worked, whose girlfriends were covered under 3M's benefits. This was seemingly about economics since it redefined who constituted a family member eligible for coverage. However, this clause illustrated the union's willingness to bring an aspect of wider social discourse into the bargaining process. Neither was making efforts to counter workplace harassment a clear economic issue. Both of these issues were examples of a social unionism agenda and an outgrowth of earlier union efforts to give equal rights to women, including maternity leave and the elimination of gendered wage structures.⁹⁵

Because by the late 1980s, most Local 27 members were earning wages at or above the London average, collective bargaining had an enormous impact on family life. This was especially true for women leading families alone. A woman making wages bargained by Local 27 earned more than the average gendered wage. For instance, in 1987, as the number of lone-parent households was continuing to rise, a woman working in the lowest-paying job at Phillips Electronics — a plant that had a slight majority of women workers — earned \$22,401 per year while enjoying a decent benefits package.⁹⁶ In the same year, the average full-time income for a woman in London was \$19,849.⁹⁷ The Phillips wage, which was not the highest bargained by Local 27, was still 12 percent higher than the average earned by women working full-time in the city. For a woman heading a household by herself or contributing to a joint family income, the union's efforts made a major financial impact.

The wide difference between the average wage earned by women in London and the wage that could be earned by a woman in Local 27 reflected a broad ambition among Canadian women in unions to promote pay equity. As previously noted, concerns about gendered wage differences between men and women spurred women in the local to become activists. Women in other unions pursued objectives similar to those of Local 27 women.⁹⁸ Indeed, women in Ontario had begun moving toward wage equality with the passage of the *Female Employees Fair Remuneration Act*

in 1951.⁹⁹ However, the union could not achieve a firm pattern of across-the-board increases for women in all bargaining units. Instead, Local 27 had to settle for the best gains possible given the economic circumstances of the firms with which it bargained.

It is important to note that Local 27 did not obtain all of the bargaining objectives that women members may have wanted. For example, in spite of the dire need for accessible child care in the early 1970s, this issue persisted into the early 1980s. A 1981 city study found that the total number of available day care spaces was far below the number of children who had working parents. This situation was exacerbated by low funding for child care. The city, which had seen demand rising in the early 1970s, was still not able to adequately cope with working family demands a decade later. On average, women who belonged to Local 27 were earning wages that better enabled them to pay for childcare than women who made non-union wages and who may have been more reliant on publicly funded care. While women belonging to Local 27 made substantial progress through collective bargaining, that progress did not apply to all of the areas that they would have liked to have advanced.¹⁰⁰

Setting the Framework

The collective agreements included the fundamental aspects of the post-World War II collective bargaining system such as union security, management control over the workplace, and distribution of economic rewards. But the local's success with achieving certain objectives should not suggest that it entirely controlled the bargaining process. For example, notes written during 1969 bargaining between Northern Electric and the local reveal difficult and slow negotiations: management wanted the option of fining anyone who did not return to work immediately after the strike, which was not permitted under the *Ontario Labour Relations Act*.¹⁰¹

When formally dealing with employers, Local 27 operated within the boundaries of the postwar collective bargaining system, and the collective agreements reflected some clear patterns that emerged over a forty-year period. Management-rights clauses were often long and detailed. The

local agreed to new job classifications and improved working conditions, such as the flat rate paid to mechanics. Grievance and arbitration procedures, mandated by law, were included in all collective agreements, but with some variation in their terms. Collective agreements provided the framework that governed relations between labour and management in the workplace, and Local 27 and management played equal roles in establishing that framework in the bargaining units that the local organized.

Were Local 27's members well served by their collective agreements? The foregoing discussion certainly demonstrates that workers were provided with generally strong contract language that gave them a formal method of challenging their employers. In terms of union security, management rights, and job classifications, they won agreements that often conformed to the patterns set in larger units like GM and Northern Telecom. Some clauses were clearly more beneficial than others. For instance, clauses that guaranteed seniority and the right to grieve and arbitrate management violations of the collective agreement were beneficial for workers. Conversely, management rights clauses raised barriers that could not be easily breached through the grievance process.

Although workers were asked by their bargaining committees to suggest items that they would like to see introduced or changed in their agreements, only the shortest and least detailed agreements, such as the Local 27 staff agreements, would have been readily accessible to the average worker. The local, and by extension the UAW national and international offices, created comprehensive agreements that improved workers rights, but the result was complex collective agreements that were generally the domain of leaders and officers with training and experience in contract negotiation and administration.¹⁰²

Thus, collective bargaining was complicated by a fundamental issue: did workers understand the agreements? Each member was provided with a copy of his or her collective agreement, and stewards and other local officials were available to answer questions about agreement provisions. However, the collective bargaining process that produced collective agreements was not always easily grasped by most rank-and-file members. Former activists Bob Sexsmith and Archie Baillie — both of whom were

involved with local bargaining, Baillie with all of the various units — indicated that rank-and-file members did not understand the collective bargaining process.¹⁰³ Sexsmith in particular felt that workers believed that they would gain more control over the workplace than their collective agreements could actually give them.¹⁰⁴ Roland Parris, who worked on the shop floor at GM, also felt that workers did not fully grasp the labour relations process.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, Jim Wilkes believed that the workers whom he represented understood collective bargaining.¹⁰⁶ It is thus difficult to definitively evaluate the extent to which Local 27 members grasped the labour relations process.

Local 27 generally pursued better economic rewards and employment terms for workers and their families within the constraints of industrial legality; it did not engage in widespread forms of illegality like deliberately ignoring collective bargaining or engaging in frequent wildcat strikes. Rather than fundamentally challenging the postwar collective bargaining system and its legalistic boundaries, the local showed a pattern of accepting and using that system to its full extent. In so doing, it brought tangible benefits to its members and recognized that new bargaining issues — such as same-sex benefits — had to be brought to the negotiating table. Workers wanted both better workplace conditions and the economic gains that Fordism had brought to working-class people. Members like Beulah Harrison and Julie White also sought recognition that what it meant to be a working-class person in an industrial workplace — in terms of gender — had changed.

LABOUR RELATIONS

Over the course of the postwar decades, the official methods of challenging employers through collective agreement grievance language were accompanied by a range of other unofficial tactics on the part of workers that were intended to challenge management. Discussions of workplace history sometimes portray employers as monolithic entities. Not uncommonly, accounts of labour-management relations emphasize the importance of senior executives like GM President Charlie Wilson, while frontline managers and supervisors remain largely anonymous figures.¹

In this chapter, I explore the nature of the postwar labour relations system, especially in terms of the extent to which labour and management compromised their demands.² I suggest that discussions of postwar labour relations should consider the importance of union resistance to employers outside of the bounds of collective bargaining, as well as the manner in which unions were able to use the labour relations process. The chapter addresses some key questions: How did Local 27 activists challenge management? Were their efforts frowned upon by staff representatives and national union leaders? What did the local and its members think of management? Why were unofficial means used to challenge management? Exploring these issues shows that what occurred outside of collective bargaining and the official labour relations process was often as important as what occurred in formalized collective bargaining.

Foremen and Managers

An analysis of Local 27's relations with employers affords an opportunity to see who assumed junior- and middle-management positions, how they behaved, and what the union thought of them. Overall, the local and its members did not like management: they were portrayed as morally lacking, laughable, or both. However, distinctions were drawn between levels of management, particularly between supervisors and senior executives. From the 1950s to the 1970s, frontline supervisors, universally called foremen (and they were always men), were generally drawn from the unionized workforce. The workers therefore knew them and their capabilities.

Although it did not change overall impressions of management, their habit of promoting supervisors out of the bargaining unit drew approval from the union. This process began early in the local's life when Lloyd Lansing — an Eaton Auto worker and member of the early executive — was promoted from the union ranks to be plant personnel manager.³ Indeed, he announced his promotion, along with his resignation from the union executive, at a membership meeting. By selecting foremen from the union ranks, especially from the executive, management chose men who were familiar with the collective agreement and who would already have won the confidence of rank-and-file workers. Archie Baillie, having worked in a sprawling GM facility, thought that unionized workers made “pretty good” foremen and questioned the idea of using foremen hired from outside of the firm.⁴ Foremen selected in that manner, therefore, brought considerable credibility to their jobs. Becoming a foreman would also have seemed like a rational career move for rank-and-file workers and for activists such as Lansing who were interested in doing something other than manual labour.

Specific criteria used to select supervisory staff seem to have been lacking, but the process of selecting and promoting supervisors was probably more comprehensive than that used for choosing production workers. Former Local 27 members who were hired during the 1960s remembered a fairly simple process of completing a brief application form

at a personnel office. For instance, Peter Hensels was quickly hired at Kelvinator even though he admitted to the person who interviewed him that his English language skills were poor.⁵ However, as Sanford Jacoby notes, other employers, such as Kodak, rigorously selected and trained supervisory staff in the postwar decades.⁶ Although not all employers who negotiated with Local 27 may have been as rigorous as Kodak, they would have chosen supervisors who could maintain control in the workplace.

The fact that supervisors were drawn from unionized ranks should not suggest that they interacted collegially with the workers. Workers, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, were expected to obey the foremen and maintain production standards. Russ Mackison, who was a production worker and foreman at Kelvinator, made it clear that workers were expected to be able to do their jobs properly without any excuses, an expectation that he believed changed later in his working years.⁷ Foremen were also encouraged to directly confront workers who were thought to cause headaches for management. Frank May, who worked in drafting at Kelvinator and later as a production supervisor at 3M, recounted how he was instructed by plant management to target and single out from his peers one worker who was thought to have a poor attitude.⁸ After this action resulted in May's car being vandalized, he continued to receive full backing from management and glowing performance reviews.⁹

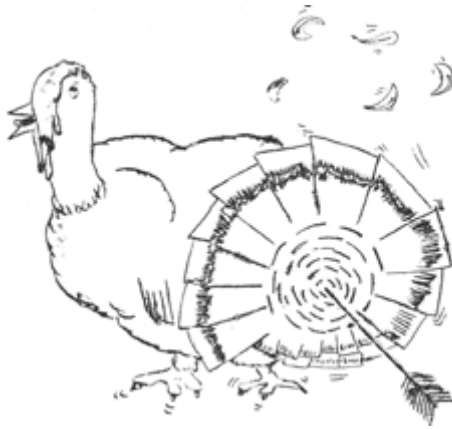
Rank-and-file union activists occasionally found themselves the objects of management hostility. For example, a 1970 letter from Local 27 to Northern Electric management accused the company of "initiating a program of harassment of Union representatives in order to curtail most Union activity."¹⁰ Management also sought to indirectly challenge the union's representational capacity through a range of methods, such as the continued operation of the London Works Council, and by limiting the amount of time that the London plant unit chairperson could devote to union business.¹¹ The Works Council was composed of workers from different levels of the London plant's organization, and the rank-and-file representatives were not chosen by the union.¹² Although claims of harassment by management are often subjective, engaging in practices such as

operating a works council that was intended to operate separate from the union, and limiting how much time a union representative could devote to union business, were obvious examples of management continuing to challenge the union's role as worker representative.

The local had less charitable views of senior managers than of foremen. Senior managers substantially influenced the way in which labour relations developed in a workplace. This was particularly obvious in the response of management at Wilco and AWL to unionization. Hostile labour relations were also an ongoing feature of places like Kelvinator, where the union and the company president Bob Woxman shared little else but mutual dislike. Former activist George Medland remembered Woxman becoming so enraged at the union during a labour-management meeting that he punched the outer housing of a fridge, sending it across the room.¹³ Some Local 27 activists would also occasionally go out of their way to deliberately provoke management. For instance, in the late 1970s, the Northern Telecom unit began awarding a Turkey of the Month Award (see figure 5.1) to someone in management whom workers felt was lacking in supervisory skills.¹⁴ Northern Telecom's management was incensed at this particular tactic and sent a letter to staff rep Bob Nickerson:

Articles such as: "Turkey of the Month" and "Superboss" aimed at ridiculing management do little to maintain good industrial relations. . . . I had not received the impression from our quarterly master meetings that we have serious industrial relations problems. However, the tone of some of the union local's "flyers" seems to indicate otherwise. Am I wrong in my impressions?¹⁵

The flyers in question were produced in the plant without Bob Nickerson's prior knowledge.¹⁶ They were the brainchild of Rene Montague and members of the Northern Telecom bargaining unit.¹⁷ The Turkey of the Month Award was posted on more than one occasion, and although similar notices do not seem to have appeared in other Local 27 bargaining units, they were obvious expressions of worker discontent. They also indicate that workers felt they had sufficient control over the workplace to cast aspersions on managerial competence.



TURKEY OF THE MONTH AWARD

OUR SECOND TURKEY OF THE MONTH AWARD (AND DESERVEDLY SO) GOES TO THE DEPARTMENT MANAGER KNOWN TO ONE AND ALL AS THE GODFATHER.

THIS TURKEY SEEMS TO THINK THAT GRIEVANCE MEETINGS WITH THE COMPANY ARE PETTY AND A WASTE OF COMPANY TIME.

HE ALSO FAILS TO RECOGNIZE UNION REPRESENTATIVES ON OVERTIME AND FEELS THE MEMBERSHIP SHOULD NOT HAVE REPRESENTATION ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY.

WELL, HE'S DEAD WRONG.

SO WE SAY, CONGRATULATIONS TURKEY... YOU'VE EARNED IT!!

FIG 5.1 Turkey of the Month Award. Source: Library and Archives Canada, CAW fonds, R3341-0-8-E, vol. 383, file 1.

Differing union opinions about frontline management and senior executives were shaped by specific variables. A foreman, disliked though he may have been, was someone with whom rank-and-file members identified. They looked at frontline supervisors and saw working-class people who had done jobs similar to those they themselves performed. In contrast, senior managers were usually remote figures with whom average workers had little contact. This sense of alienation was exacerbated by the fact that London's manufacturing sector included several major American branch plants, such as 3M and GM, and those facilities were often run by US-born executives. This seems to have been particularly true of 3M. In the late 1980s, when 3M Canada had already been in London for over

three decades, its outgoing US-born president informed the *London Free Press* that a Canadian would never head the company.¹⁸ His rationale for this policy was that 3M prohibited employees from running operations in their home countries.¹⁹ Rank-and-file workers were thus reminded that they were part of a branch plant economy.

The local took a keen interest in reporting what was going on in various plants to rank-and-file members. The *Local 27 News* always included reports from each unit. Some information was routine, such as a unit mentioning a discussion about creating its own social club, while other units reported layoffs.²⁰ Health and safety issues such as poor air quality in a location were also reported, as was the state of common areas like washrooms.²¹ Collective bargaining objectives, such as the drive for wage parity between Canadian and American Big Three workers, were also discussed in the *Local 27 News*.²² The local felt free to comment on all aspects of the workplace in its internal communications. The bargaining unit reports did not necessarily mention specific managers or supervisors, but they nonetheless represent a public critique of how management rights were being exercised.

As discussed in chapter 2, staff representatives often occupied a space between the local union and the national and international offices. Management viewed staff reps and other national union officers differently than they did elected officers and rank-and-file members. Much of this was rooted in close interaction between them. For instance, for many years UAW staff rep George Specht attended both arbitration meetings and labour-management meetings at which E.S. Brent represented GM management at the local level. Their exchanges may not have always led to agreement, but, after years of facing each other, the two would have presumably developed a rapport. Labour-management issues were confined to regular business hours, and labor-management meetings were usually scheduled in advance. Such arrangements helped to formalize relations between staff reps and their counterparts in management. Former staff rep Bob Nickerson remembered only one occasion on which a management representative called him at home to discuss an issue — a call that the man likely regretted, as Nickerson lambasted him

for contacting him outside of office hours.²³ Another indication of the intermediate space occupied by staff representatives and national union officers is that they were occasionally invited to attend specific functions in various plants. For example, GM invited UAW Canadian Region Vice-President Dennis McDermott to London to participate in a celebration marking the introduction of the new Terex dump truck in 1971.²⁴

Spontaneous worker protests against management behaviour, like the Turkey of the Month Award, complicated relations between management and the staff representatives since staff representatives and national officers preferred to have peaceful, if not cordial, relations with management. The role that the union officers and staff played in regulating conflict within the workplace brought them close to C. Wright Mills's description of union leaders as managers of worker discontent.²⁵ They opposed company managers, while still forming working relations with them. They also both identified and responded to worker discontent while ultimately channelling it into formalized conflict-resolution structures.

Labour-Management Meetings and Grievances

While shop floor protests against management behaviour were one aspect of the ongoing labour relations process in plants represented by Local 27, routine labour-management meetings of the type attended by Brent and Specht were a formal method of handling disputes and were preferred by both staff representatives and management. Although such meetings were usually not mandated by collective agreement language, they were as crucial to the bargaining process as negotiations over collective agreements or grievance arbitration since it was at these meetings where many issues were first discussed between the union and the employer. Labour-management meetings' agendas also included discussions regarding ongoing grievance issues.

Discussions at the GM unit, especially during the Brent-Specht era, provide considerable insight into what the union brought to the table at meetings and how management responded. For example, George Specht noted during a 1958 meeting that there was overcrowding at a particular

time clock, with the implication that an additional clock was needed.²⁶ E.S. Brent quickly replied that overcrowding around the clock was the fault of those using it.²⁷ Similar issues were raised in 1959, including a demand for doors on the toilet stalls and better distribution of paycheques.²⁸ A 1960 meeting included a question about the prices charged in the cafeteria.²⁹

Meeting agendas usually included such mundane issues, but they also reveal an ongoing union desire to question how the plant was run — specifically, management’s right to control the work process. A 1960 meeting between the GM shop committee and management focused on twelve agenda items, including the following seven grievances: time study, inspection of work, job operating in the general group, two instances of salaried employees performing hourly rated work, violation of an agreement on a junior employee being transferred during a work reduction, and a foreman doing hourly-rated work. All of these issues were at the core of management’s ability to run the plant. This approach is especially noteworthy in the case of GM Diesel since its parent company was instrumental in establishing the postwar bargaining framework. GM Diesel was intended to be the pattern for other Local 27 contracts, and its unit executive and membership continually challenged the bargaining rules that its international office had helped to establish.³⁰

Grievances and other labour-management issues fell into several broad categories in the 1970s. A labour-management meeting held at Northern Telecom in 1976 covered the following nineteen items:

- Problems with skilled trades
- Letter on apprentices
- Vacation pay grievance
- Requirement for a forklift driver on the second shift
- Adjustment to employee’s continuous service date
- Election committee refused access to the plant
- Managers’ comments on the new contract
- Appendix 2.1B of the contract that pertained to London
- Bob Cree grievance
- When will 0.35 cent increase be paid?

- Re-opening of south doors to the plant (also included was a discussion of the need for bicycle stands)
- Discussion on a room in the plant becoming a “clean room”
- Requirement for written notification of scheduled overtime
- Rate protection
- Safety program
- Unauthorized entry of a security guard into the plant union office
- Downgrading of established jobs
- R.J. Saumur benefits while on sick leave
- Application of Article 12.3 of the bargaining agreement³¹

What does this list reveal? Clearly, labour-management meetings involved discussion of a range of workplace issues that went beyond the grievance process. Several of the agenda issues related directly to managerial authority: skilled trades, apprenticeship, overtime scheduling, job downgrading, and managerial comments on a new collective agreement. Others, such as the union election committee being denied access to the plant and a guard entering the union’s office, were efforts to maintain the union’s legitimacy in the workplace. Some issues remained the same as years passed. For example, a 1977 labour-management meeting focused on similar issues related to skilled trades jobs. The agenda also included lines of demarcation between trades, qualifications required for roles, and apprentice seniority.³²

Labour-management meetings often dealt with the same issues, regardless of the bargaining unit in which the meetings were held. In the late 1950s, the list of agenda items at GM was similar to the list at Northern Telecom. Some issues, such as door access, seem relatively innocuous; others, like questions about how skilled trades would be trained and accumulate seniority, were more significant. So, too, were questions about how management in the plant commented on the collective agreement. Close to twenty years elapsed between the time when UAW staff rep George Specht sat in a meeting room and questioned E.S. Brent about GM’s behaviour and the time when Bob Nickerson sat and grilled Northern Telecom management. But the union’s decision to challenge the way in

which those plants were managed remained constant. The same pattern was found at mid-sized bargaining units. For instance, a list of grievances from Sparton in the early 1970s shows that ten people grieved that they were denied appointments to jobs in the plant.³³

The union's constant challenging of how plants were operated certainly did not induce management to adopt the union's positions. Nineteen grievances, all dealing with job posting issues, were filed at Northern Electric between the summer of 1972 and early 1973, and management denied all of them.³⁴ The grievances and management's decision to deny them reflected both management's determination to control the hiring and promotion process, and the union's equal effort to challenge that aspect of managerial control. What is quite evident from the proceedings of the labour-management meetings in the 1970s is a consistent union effort to question how management operated. At no point did the union ever stop and declare a topic to be ineligible for discussion because it fell under management-rights provisions in a collective agreement. Instead, the union basically ignored the management-rights provisions and tried to extend its sphere of influence over how workplaces were run.

Arbitrations

Local 27's habit of challenging managerial prerogatives through labour-management meetings and the grievance process continued in its use of arbitration, a key feature of the post-World War II labour relations system. The grievance procedure starts at an informal level with the complaints of individual workers; it is hoped that most complaints will be resolved at that stage since subsequent stages in the grievance process involve more formality and expertise.³⁵ While forming the basis of a legally mandated process that could end in arbitration, a grievance can be intensely personal for a worker. It is unclear exactly what percentage of grievances actually proceeded to arbitration, but it is generally thought to be a small fraction owing to the cost of the arbitration process and the uncertainty of its outcome.³⁶ The average union member does not loom large in labour history, but arbitration files allow rank-and-file voices and issues to be

heard. Arbitration decisions often reveal how well a local union interacted with management. Since the grievance arbitration process is a feature of the Wagner-based labour relations system institutionalized in Canada in the post-World War II years, arbitrations reveal the extent to which unions and their members were willing to challenge functions and rights that were considered reserved to management either through collective agreement language or because of the doctrine of residual rights. This latter right holds that management has the ability to exercise functions required to operate the business unless otherwise stipulated in a collective agreement. This matter was the subject of an arbitration board decision issued in 1966 in which a grievance over contracting out of work at Russellsteel was dismissed after an arbitration panel declined to broaden the interpretation of collective agreement language on the meaning of who could be considered an employee.³⁷ Grievances often contain little detail about what caused them to be filed other than the existence of a specific issue that spurred workers to approach their stewards, put pen to paper, and commence the process of challenging management. Arbitration decisions say much more.³⁸

Local 27 took eighty-four grievances to arbitration between 1950 and 1990. As table 5.1 shows, some units accounted for many more arbitrations than others. Overall, the local went to arbitration seven times in the 1950s, seventeen times in the 1960s, thirty-six times in the 1970s, and seventeen times in the 1980s. Activity clearly peaked in the local's third decade of operation for a range of reasons, some of which are seen in the case subjects.³⁹

A range of issues that local leaders and members felt were directly related to the collective agreement went to arbitration. The local prevailed in forty-five cases, slightly over half of the total. One company grievance was filed, but the other cases were initiated by the union. Seniority accounted for nine cases, and twenty-seven cases covered dismissal and discipline. Three cases referred specifically to management rights. Monetary issues like overtime, health plans, pensions, and incentive pay were the focus of fourteen cases. The rest covered a range of issues. All but three of the cases involved grievances filed by male workers.⁴⁰

TABLE 5.1 *Local 27 Arbitrations by Bargaining Unit, 1950–90*

Northern Telecom	40
Firestone	12
3M	12
Eaton Auto	7
Unifin	5
Tecumseh	4
Kelvinator	3
GM	1

SOURCES: The information in this table derives primarily from records of arbitration decisions located at reference code RG7-40 in the Archives of Ontario. These records were supplemented by information found in *Labour Arbitration Cases*, which is compiled annually by employer, and by arbitration decisions available in the CAW fonds at Library and Archives Canada and in the UAW Region 7 and UAW Local 27 collections at the Archive of Labour and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University.

Decisions regarding the progress of grievances and whether they would proceed to arbitration were made by individual bargaining units before being pursued by the local executive. This process began early in the local's history. Minutes of the GM Diesel unit meetings from the 1950s, for example, show frequent discussion of grievances and the progress of arbitrations.⁴¹ Arbitrations were attended by two groups, which presented arguments for labour and management. The cases were heard by either a sole arbitrator or an arbitration panel consisting of three members — one each for the union and the employer, and a board chair. Arbitrators were usually jurists, attorneys, or academics with legal training. The practice of drawing them from these occupations began in the 1940s, and many — such as academic and judge Bora Laskin — developed arbitration expertise as part of training that led them on to elevated positions on the legal bench.⁴²

The exact occupations of the arbitrators who heard the Local 27 cases is not included in the decisions that they wrote, but it is quite evident that

the local and the employers against whom its members grieved chose to use only a small number of arbitrators. J.F.W. Weatherhill, a full-time arbitrator, ruled on thirteen cases over a twenty-year period. E.E. Palmer, a professor at the University of Western Ontario who often heard UAW cases, heard ten Local 27 cases during the same period. Labour and management also called on G.J. Brandt, another UWO professor, for six decisions, and on Judge E.W. Cross for eight. The remaining cases were heard by a range of arbitrators.⁴³

Reliance on a small group of arbitrators to handle a high percentage of cases indicates that both the local and its employers were content with the overall trend of their rulings. Employers relied on the use of legal counsel in their proceedings, while the local relied on staff representatives to present cases. The fact that the union prevailed in slightly over half of the cases reveals that careful thought was devoted to choosing which cases merited arbitration, that considerable effort was put into preparing for hearings, and that the union's national staff was skilled in presenting the grievances. Other noteworthy trends are found within the arbitration cases. Some units, such as Firestone and Northern Electric, began sending grievances soon after joining the union. As previously noted, labour relations were contentious at those two plants, and the work environment surely spurred workers to sign grievance forms. Some bargaining units are scarcely mentioned, which suggests that their members either filed a smaller number of grievances or that they had fewer grievances taken to arbitration.

The most revealing aspect of the grievances that the local arbitrated is the number of cases that continued to challenge aspects of the management-rights clauses. I offer two possible interpretations of this trend. The first is that the local was futilely challenging a labour relations system — specifically management rights and prerogatives — that favoured management and was not easily altered. An alternate view is that the local had already challenged management's right to operate facilities in an unfettered manner in other venues, so continuing that challenge in arbitration was a logical progression. The local did not challenge the type of products that employers produced; it nonetheless devoted considerable

effort to pursuing to arbitration grievances that questioned managerial decisions on important issues like discipline, dismissal, and job assignment.

The local generally won cases pertaining to dismissal and discipline, but it was less successful in cases involving issues such as overtime allotment, seniority, or the posting of jobs. For example, in a 1963 case at Eaton Auto, arbitrator E.W. Cross reinstated a worker who had been terminated for persistent lateness. Although the worker had a previous suspension for lateness, Cross argued that there had in fact been no further lateness after the suspension. However, at the same hearing, Cross denied a second grievance filed at Eaton Auto concerning overtime allotment.⁴⁴

Arbitrators generally upheld discipline meted out by management. For instance, a 1973 hearing over a three-day suspension at 3M led arbitrator G.R. Stewart to dismiss the grievance. In this case, the employee had been disciplined for “several acts of alleged misconduct” toward a supervisor. The grievor was a thirteen-year employee who had no prior infractions on his employment record. Regardless of his previous record, Stewart noted that the “objective of disciplinary action is to deter not only the subject of such actions but others who might be inclined to emulate him.” Furthermore, Stewart held that the employer imposed the suspension “only after due consideration and without malice or ill will toward the grievor.”⁴⁵

In other cases, management decisions on discipline and dismissal were revoked by arbitrators. For instance, a man was terminated in 1979 by 3M management for misuse of company property, including welding metal stands for personal use. The grievor also had existing disciplinary notices on file for lateness. In her ruling, arbitrator Lita-Rose Betcherman agreed that disciplinary action was justified over the welding incident but stated that “the purpose of discipline is to correct misconduct and in the last six months of his employment the grievor appears to have corrected his lateness problem.” She therefore reinstated the grievor and imposed a five-day suspension.⁴⁶

Workers often filed grievances when they were not the successful applicants for jobs they wanted. For example, in 1980, a female employee at Spartan of Canada stated in her grievance, “I protest the action taken by the company for not awarding me the job of group-leader, I request

that I be awarded the job and be made whole.” The company awarded the job to another, more junior female employee. After a somewhat lengthy analysis of the requirements of the job in question, arbitrator M.R. Gorsky concluded, “I am not satisfied that the Company properly carried out its obligations in awarding the job in accordance with the Collective Agreement.” However, Gorsky did not automatically award the job to the grievor. Instead, he held

that this is a proper case for referring the matter back to the Company for consideration, after taking into account the relevant factors that I have referred to in the Award. In the circumstance the grievor should, at the very least, be given an interview where her specific areas of knowledge and her developed skills can be assessed in relation to the requirements of the posted position.⁴⁷

The overall arbitration pattern thus suggests that the local and its members demonstrated agency through the arbitration process. Most notably, the local used the grievance and arbitration process, often successfully, to protect its members and promote their interests. The manner in which management applied its right to discipline and dismiss workers was successfully challenged at arbitration hearings. On the other hand, arbitrators did not rewrite collective agreement clauses, nor did they overturn or alter management-rights clauses. Furthermore, they did not always find seniority to be a decisive factor when applying for a job. Instead, arbitrators generally ruled in a manner that allowed Local 27 members to keep their unionized jobs but that did not allow the local to substantively alter how management actually ran the workplace.

It is important to emphasize that the goal of an arbitration board is, in the words of E.E. Palmer, to “discover the intention of the parties creating the [collective] agreement.”⁴⁸ Furthermore, in his decision on the Russelsteel arbitration, Harry Arthurs notes that “reliance on over-broad philosophical considerations may preclude the pragmatic and realistic solutions to particular problems which would be of most assistance to labour and management in a given bargaining relationship.”⁴⁹ The arbitrators who ruled on Local 27 grievances followed the approach described by

Palmer and Arthurs, and did not attempt to rewrite agreements. Indeed, Palmer was the arbitrator on several Local 27 cases. Arbitrators sought to determine the intent behind the clauses in collective agreements and to ensure that labour and management adhered to them. Arbitration was not a method to remake collective agreements or otherwise change the collective bargaining process.

Local 27 appears to have been satisfied with the grievance arbitration process and did not often resort to using Ontario's *Labour Relations Act* to resolve workplace disputes. Like all industrial unions covered by provincial labour law, Local 27 had the ability to file complaints with the Ontario Labour Relation Board, but it did so infrequently. The local appeared at hearings before the board on six occasions between 1950 and 1990. Two of the complaints that it filed pertained to Wilco; the other four involved four different employers. In 1977, the local was in a dispute with Keeprite Products over whether a collective agreement was in place following a disagreement over anti-inflation legislation that occurred during negotiations. The employer, who had terminated two workers for undisclosed reasons, argued that an agreement had not been concluded. The local asked the board to appoint an arbitrator to hear the case involving the dismissals, and the board agreed.⁵⁰ The following year, the local appeared before the board over a dispute with London Generator Service. The company felt that the local had not given sufficient notice of intent to bargain a new collective agreement and refused the local's request for conciliation. The board ruled that the Minister of Labour had the authority to appoint a conciliation officer in that case.⁵¹

In 1983, Local 27 appeared before the board about a decision by Central Chevrolet to sell some of its assets to a subsidiary company, Complete Car Care, and to contract out work to that subsidiary. The local argued that employees of Complete Car Care should be included in the Central Chevrolet bargaining unit, but the board dismissed the local's application to unionize Complete Car Care because the subsidiary was shown to perform work for other auto dealers in London and to not be dominated by Central Chevrolet.⁵² And finally, Local 27 filed an unfair labour practice complaint against Sparton of Canada in 1985 over management's refusal

to grant a contractually mandated Christmas shutdown.⁵³ The board ruled in favour of the local in that case.

In a few other cases, Local 27 began the procedure of filing a complaint with the OLRB, but it was withdrawn before proceeding before the board. For example, in the 1970s, three complaints against Firestone, about which no details are available, were withdrawn.⁵⁴ Union members also began one complaint against Local 27. In 1983, an undisclosed number of members of Unit 13 — Eagle Machine Tool — filed an unfair labour practice complaint against the local, again with no available details, but it was withdrawn.⁵⁵ It appears to have been the only complaint of its kind lodged by Local 27 members from 1950 to 1990.

The board decisions suggest that the local only chose to file complaints under Ontario's *Labour Relations Act* when a dispute fell under the board's jurisdiction, as was the case with Central Chevrolet and the question of the unionization of its subsidiary's employees and with Sparton willfully ignoring a collective agreement clause and not bargaining in good faith. Otherwise, the local preferred to resolve disputes through the grievance and arbitration process. Local 27 applied for conciliation under Ontario's *Labour Relations Act* on several occasions, all in the 1950s and 1960s. Of those fourteen applications, five were made during negotiations with Kelvinator.⁵⁶ Conciliation, part of the postwar labour relations framework, preceded arbitration. Local 27's interaction with the OLRB thus suggests that local leaders and staff representatives respected the *Labour Relations Act* and the outcomes that it brought. The local expected employers to take the same approach.

Strikes

To pursue their agenda, the local and its members used more than formal negotiating and challenging employers through collective agreements and grievance arbitration. They also engaged in strikes and used informal forms of confrontation in the workplace. The way in which strike activity was regulated was a key part of the postwar settlement. Legislation such as Ontario's *Labour Relations Act* clearly restricted when workers

could strike.⁵⁷ Such acts set the parameters of industrial legality as they pertained to work stoppages. Moreover, as Peter McNinnis argues, unions operating within those parameters had to be responsibly militant and regulate their own behaviour.⁵⁸

While Local 27 settled most of its collective agreements without strikes, it nonetheless engaged in several. Strikes like those at Kelvinator, Wolverine Tube, and Northern Electric were landmark struggles that figure prominently in the local's past. But not only were strikes enormously stressful for the local and its members; they were also events for which the local could not rely only on its core group of activists for success. Instead, mounting a strike meant that those activists had to successfully lead a majority of rank-and-file members in a workplace out onto a picket line.

Not all bargaining units engaged in strikes, and of those that did, some went on strike more often than others. Strikes were common from the 1950s to 1970s, either during first-contract negotiation — as was the case with Kelvinator and Wolverine — or during the renewal of an agreement. Since GM and Northern Electric participated in full-pattern bargaining, their strike activity was tied to broader national union bargaining objectives. In fact, there is no evidence that workers in GM's auto assembly and parts plants went on strike over issues at the GM Diesel plant in London. Conversely, GM Diesel workers found themselves striking to support auto assembly issues, some of which directly affected their lives. In 1968, GM workers across Canada struck for wage parity with their American counterparts. This was an issue of particular interest to all workers, but those at GM Diesel wanted wage parity between workers in automotive and workers in production that was not strictly automotive. Despite not being involved in automotive production, GM Diesel workers felt that their voices were heard at GM Inter-Corporation meetings and at the bargaining table. Participating in negotiations along with other GM locals had the potential to bring the clear advantage of enjoying the economic rewards that such large-scale collective bargaining could accomplish.⁵⁹ Legal strikes occurred primarily over monetary issues or because the employer was continuing to resist unionization after certification, which was the case with Kelvinator, Wolverine, and AWL Steego. For instance, workers at Spartan of

Canada went out for five months in 1981 in a dispute over a COLA clause.⁶⁰ Similarly, the local conducted its only strike against 3M for a two-month period in 1974 over wages, COLA, and vacation entitlements.⁶¹ London Motor Products workers also struck for ten weeks in 1987 over economic issues, as did Northern Telecom workers in 1988 for twenty days, in that case over COLA.⁶² COLA was thus not only a major bargaining issue for the entire UAW, but also a central strike issue for the local.⁶³

Strikes took on different forms depending on the workplace in question. Every strike was both a personal and collective experience for the local's membership. Jim Wilkes, who was involved both with initially organizing London Motor Products and with the 1987 strike, remembered how he and his co-workers developed a strong sense of solidarity among themselves and with other UAW workers in the London area.⁶⁴ Strike appeals were made at places like the Talbotville Ford plant, and Wilkes was amazed at the money that rank-and-file workers took from their own wallets to support the London Motor Products strike.⁶⁵ On the other hand, a prolonged strike could be a disheartening experience for workers, as was the case at Wolverine Tube.

Before a strike could commence, written approval had to be given by someone like UAW Canadian Region Vice-President George Burt or Dennis McDermott. Most strikes were officially sanctioned by the UAW Canadian office, especially since broader union bargaining objectives were the impetus for some strikes. Staff rep Bob Nickerson, for example, pursued the national office's objective of obtaining pattern bargaining through a Northern Electric strike in 1973, having already led a strike there in 1971.⁶⁶ Strike activity peaked in the late 1960s and early 1970s: Local 27 units either officially or unofficially went on strike seven times between 1966 and 1971.⁶⁷ The local's activity mirrored national and provincial trends. The number of strikes in Canada increased from 582 in 1968 to 724 in 1973.⁶⁸ Ontario experienced similar increases, with 204 strikes in 1968 and 286 in 1973.⁶⁹

Some of Local 27's strikes were short, such as an afternoon walkout at Eaton Auto in 1966, while others, like the twenty-five day strike at Northern Electric in 1971, were longer.⁷⁰ The rest of the 1970s was a period

of heightened strike activity for the local, with twenty-two conducted across fifteen bargaining units.⁷¹ On occasion, particularly in the early 1970s at Firestone, workers went on brief wildcat strikes over conditions in the plant.⁷² The local and national response was not to sanction workers but to encourage them to go back into the plant and operate within the framework of industrial legality and to use the collective bargaining and grievance processes to challenge their employers.

The local's strike pattern consequently involved obtaining strike permission from the national office, which was never refused, and following the process of industrial legality established in the post-World War II years. This should not suggest that strikes were merely bureaucratic events that served to regulate worker militancy. As the foregoing discussion shows, strikes could be long and personally tumultuous events for workers as well as for staff reps. As noted earlier, Bob Nickerson led many strikes in his early years servicing Local 27, and failure could have perhaps circumscribed his career in the UAW. Al Seymour was incarcerated during the Fleck strike.⁷³

So for all parties — both on the national staff and in the rank and file — strikes were moments fraught with both peril and opportunity. Staff representatives such as Nickerson saw the usefulness of strikes when pursuing objectives like pattern bargaining. On the other hand, strikes could also have negative consequences for both a local union and the national office: as noted in chapter 3, the Wolverine Tube strike was a failure for Local 27 and the Canadian UAW. The staff representatives and other national union leaders appear to have preferred not to go on strike, but they nonetheless recognized that strikes could be a useful method of pursuing certain bargaining objectives. Interaction between the local and management was thus more than a process of negotiating collective agreements and arbitrating grievances through the post-World War II labour relations system. Strikes were also an important element of the system. They were influenced not only by the personalities of the parties involved, but also by worker agency at the plant level. Overall, Local 27 observed the boundaries of industrial legality and expected and encouraged its members to do the same.

Making Gains

Were Local 27 members and their union successful in the labour relations process? The protests that occurred in the various plants, including the grievances filed and strikes waged, were mostly driven by local priorities. Struggles over issues such as pattern bargaining were less about what Local 27's rank and file wanted than what the national and international union offices hoped to achieve. Wildcat strikes at Firestone and Kelvinator were symptomatic of broader issues in the workplace, which in turn fuelled worker discontent and drove issues into collective bargaining.

The diverse workplaces, reflecting a range of experiences, did not necessarily conform to what may have been considered universal manufacturing working conditions. As Don Wells notes, the post-World War II Fordist manufacturing environment was not always a pleasant one. In the workplace that Wells studied, Ford's Oakville assembly facility, workers were forced to adapt to "Ford Time," which meant a closely regimented and monitored working environment governed by strict rules. He suggests that the union was brought into the plant at management's behest, implying that this method of entry compromised it from the start. According to his analysis, the grievance procedure masked management power behind seemingly legitimate workplace rules. However, the lure of well-paid employment tied workers to their jobs regardless of their dislike of working conditions in the plant.⁷⁴ Wells also identified a pattern he refers to as "little victories and big defeats."⁷⁵ His analysis includes a very negative interpretation of the grievance and arbitration process.⁷⁶

Although the collective bargaining process, a central part of the post-war settlement, imparted authority to management, Local 27's experience with the process has been one of both agency and response. Without question, as Wells argues, the grievance process enabled management to set work rules until an arbitrator ultimately forced change.⁷⁷ The process was still enthusiastically embraced by rank-and-file workers, as evidenced by the fact that they continually filed grievances that challenged managerial authority. Local union officers and staff representatives may have

channelled discontent into the collective bargaining dispute-resolution process, but they did not prevent challenges to management rights as delineated in collective agreements. Don Wells and Wayne Lewchuk argue that acceptance of management rights made it difficult for workers to resist management control over work processes and job design.⁷⁸ While this may be true, Local 27 members and activists still mounted repeated challenges to management, even though these efforts did not yield many results. Furthermore, they did so with the support of staff representatives and national officers. The fact that they did not always succeed did not diminish their efforts.

Management was not monolithic despite being generally hostile toward the union. Union members differentiated between distant executives like Bob Woxman at Kelvinator and the succession of Americans who came north of the forty-ninth parallel to run 3M, and the frontline supervisors and managers who may well have been Local 27 members at some point in their working lives. Employers likewise saw differences within the union's ranks. Staff reps were treated with some respect, and national officers were invited to visit plants from time to time. Individual workers found themselves treated much less deferentially and sometimes were even the targets of management aggression.

In some ways, the development of collective bargaining in Local 27 workplaces was guided by broader factors that were beyond the control of rank-and-file members or local leaders and staff. Pradeep Kumar and Stephanie Ross note that the Canadian labour movement showed increasing interest in social unionism during the period under examination, 1950 to 1990.⁷⁹ Local 27's experience with collective bargaining also happened during years of heightened labour militancy across Canada, peaking in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁸⁰ While the state never became directly involved in bargaining between Local 27 and employers, the local was part of a broader labour relations climate in which the state was less accepting of organized labour than it had been in the immediate post-World War II years.

Local 27's post-World War II collective bargaining system does not entirely reflect the positions taken by authors like Peter McInnis and

Nelson Lichtenstein on the subject. Returning to Wells and Lewchuk's analysis illustrates what was perhaps the main challenge to Local 27 and the rest of the Canadian labour movement: the reality that the success of unions in economic terms was linked to the overall success of the firms with which they bargained.⁸¹ The union could be very successful at places like Kelvinator or Eaton Automotive, plants that seemed economically viable, yet could see those plants close because of strategic business decisions taken by management. Similarly, because Canadian unions did not have an ownership stake in the businesses that they organized, they could not influence what products would be produced. For example, Local 27 members were certainly pleased that GM put a successive collection of products in the Diesel Division plant, but they could not dictate production methods for those products.

Local 27's experience with collective bargaining took place in an area — the shop floor — that was the employer's property. But the local and its members still considered the workplace their domain. Their workplace agenda was rooted in their workplace struggles: it did not originate in a national or international union office. Virtually every employer that Local 27 encountered mounted some form of resistance to the local, whether by doing everything possible to avoid unionization in the first place or by refusing to address grievances prior to arbitration, by confrontations during strikes, or by outright intimidation. While Grant Wilson's hostile behaviour was obviously not normally found among managers, E.S. Brent telling the union that workers were to blame for lineups at the time clock illustrates that something as routine as clocking in at work could be a contentious issue. The same was true of the union having to ask GM to put doors on the toilet stalls. This pattern, which began in 1950 and continued until the late 1980s, illustrates that despite the seeming institutionalization of workplace conflict through the post-World War II labour relations system, employers wanted to run their workplaces without the union interfering.

The important role of a core group of activists in the local's operations is evidence of how Local 27 operated through collective bargaining. However, the willingness of rank-and-file members to go out on strike,

file grievances, and otherwise support their local union in the workplace was also critical to the local's success. Their use of a variety of means to challenge management, including using the grievance and arbitration process and continually bringing issues to labour-management meetings, shows that Local 27's members felt more empowered than constrained in the workplace.

THE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY AGENDA

Organizing workplaces, engaging in struggles with employers, and pursuing the other activities described in the last chapter were methods used by Local 27 activists to represent its members in the workplace. But the local also wanted to promote itself in the community. How did the local's activists rally rank-and-file members around a social sphere rooted in the union hall? What kind of information about the local was conveyed to the community? What role did women and immigrants play in the social agenda? And, finally, how successfully did local activists draw rank-and-file members into union activities beyond the workplace, and how visible were those efforts in the wider community?

Local 27 decided early in its existence to attempt to move beyond its workplaces and become a forceful voice for all workers in London. In its efforts to create a public presence and a working-class identity among workers, the local demonstrated its interest in promoting a program that Local 27 activists felt would help working-class families. This public agenda was shaped by the local's most active members, the same core of local activists who tended to lead the local's bargaining units and engage in political activity. But moving beyond the walls of the union hall did not necessarily guarantee the successful establishment of a social presence within London: the local faced the problem of broader received culture. Understanding Local 27's aspirations in the community thus entails considering how the local and its members lived within the city and how Local 27 went about trying to establish a public presence. Building a union hall and creating an internal communication network through which to reach Local 27's large membership were two essential elements of that process.

Creating a Sense of Community: The Hall

Constructing a hall was a challenging but necessary step for Local 27. As the preceding chapter illustrates, the shop floor was heavily contested terrain on which the union strove to establish its place as the workers' representative. The hall was also contested terrain but with decidedly different topography. Here local members could think about and discuss what the union meant to them and where it should go in the future; they could also use it for such activities as celebrating birthdays and commemorating union members who had died. In addition, the hall was a symbol of success to workers contemplating union membership. Its construction thus became a major objective for the local soon after its founding in 1950.

Local 27 meetings and administrative matters were initially handled at a common CIO hall, the London Labour Temple, on Kent Street, where Local 27 officers and UAW staff shared an office. They soon found the small space cramped. Although they belonged to the same labour federation, the CIO unions were hardly a unified bloc and would probably have preferred to have their own offices. A dedicated Local 27 hall would provide needed administrative relief. The local's desire to have a hall reflected a broader pattern of larger autoworkers' locals building halls, as they did in St. Catharines and Oshawa. Building a large hall therefore signified that Local 27's stature in the Canadian UAW was equal to that of the other major autoworkers' locals.

Construction was complicated from the start by funding issues. The parsimonious spending policies of both the Detroit and Windsor UAW offices compelled the local to finance the hall by itself. This was an enormous undertaking, but it also meant that it was something that members achieved locally and that the national and international offices could not claim to have shaped. In 1960, the local appealed directly to UAW Secretary-Treasurer Emil Mazey for financial assistance. His response was "that it is not possible for the International Union to loan money to local unions for this purpose" but then advised that a "competent attorney" be hired by the local to assist with creating a building corporation. Mazey then asked that plans for the proposed corporate structure be forwarded

to his office for review and approval by the international union.¹ No money was forthcoming, but patronizing oversight was readily available. Mazey seemed to ignore the fact that the acronym “UAW” would be clearly displayed on the Local 27 hall, serving as a symbol of the international union’s industrial presence even though the local owned the hall. On the other hand, he may also have reasoned that if he granted money to Local 27, he could well have faced a deluge of similar requests from other locals.

Construction of the hall was made possible through a dedicated building fund, which was financed largely through various fundraising activities. In 1960, discussions focused on where to build, what property was available, and how the \$16,000 that had been accumulated should be spent.² The final location, on First Street, was identified in 1966, and, after years of planning and collecting funds, work began on the building, which would cost a total of \$70,000.³ While not intended to be an architectural marvel, its design included offices, a large meeting room, a kitchen, and a licensed “lounge,” as Local 27 called it, in the lower level. The lounge, which was open only to local members and their families, was not intended to be a major source of profit.⁴ Its main purpose was to allow rank-and-file members to enjoy a beer in a space that they could consider their own.

Craig Heron notes that post–World War II drinking establishments were divided into beer parlours and lounges.⁵ Local 27 called its bar a lounge. Whereas beer parlours featured an entrance for men only and another for ladies and escorts, the Local 27 lounge did not have separate entrances for men and women. This may have been an acknowledgement of the growing importance of women in the local by the end of the 1960s. The hall’s design was similar to that of the ubiquitous Royal Canadian Legion Halls, Lion’s Clubs, and other community centres that appeared across Canada in the post–World War II decades. But while it was meant to be a symbol of civic participation, it was only open to UAW members. The local soon found itself confined by the size of the hall, and in 1974, it contacted the UAW international office in Detroit for advice and assistance on expanding it.⁶

The hall’s location had enormous symbolic significance, even if Local 27’s leaders may have been unaware of it at the time. First Street, which

runs north-south between two major arteries, Dundas and Oxford, had a combined industrial-residential streetscape: it was lined with small industrial buildings and small working-class homes. 3M was only about two kilometres east down Oxford Street, and GM was a kilometre farther. More significantly, London's community college, Fanshawe, was less than half a block north of the hall.⁷ In many ways, the hall's proximity to major bargaining units, working-class neighbourhoods, and a large vocational training institute represented a pattern of working-class life. A person could enroll in post-secondary vocational training at Fanshawe, find employment in a plant represented by Local 27, buy a modest home in an east-end neighbourhood, and participate in a range of activities at the union hall. A Local 27 member could commence this pattern as a child growing up in a working-class London neighbourhood, and see her own children be a part of the same milieu through their lifetime.

Social Life

Al Campbell, one of the chief architects of the local's activities, believed that the focus of those activities should be on families.⁸ The local's social life was therefore deliberately shaped around family-oriented activities, committees, and team sports. Bowling, a sport that gradually lost favour as an organized pastime in Local 27 in the 1970s and 1980s, was clearly popular in the local's early years. The UAW sponsored a ten-pin bowling league that involved Local 27 teams travelling to Detroit to participate in tournaments.⁹ The travelling team was composed entirely of men, but women participated locally. A lack of bowling prowess did not prevent a person from participating in team activities since dart and table tennis leagues involving men and women were also operating in the late 1950s. In fact, women were encouraged to join the table tennis team on an equal basis, having been exhorted by the *Local 27 News*, "Come on girls, now is your chance to beat the men."¹⁰ Sports like baseball, at that time considered more suitable for men, involved a greater degree of physicality. The local was not alone in promoting athletics — other organizations, such as the Royal Canadian Legion, offered even more sophisticated sporting activities

— but Local 27's promotion of sports offered additional recreational choices for members who may have belonged to more than one organization.¹¹

Some athletic activities reflected an overtly masculine orientation, despite obvious efforts to make other activities open to both men and women. For instance, the local sponsored a boy's bantam baseball team in the late 1950s — the Local 27 Cardinals. The team won the 1959 championship, an event celebrated at a father-son banquet held at a prominent London restaurant.¹² Staff representative George Specht, in a *Local 27 News* article, linked organized labour's progress with the ability of young people to participate in sporting activities:

A study of union history would show the struggle that labour unions had to abolish child labour. The success we had in this regard makes it possible for so many young people to take part in sports today. We certainly believe that sports is a wonderful thing, and for you young people being good sportsmen is most important.¹³

Sporting activities were thus venues through which virtues like fair play and being a good team member were celebrated. Specht's comments also suggest that sports inculcates behaviour that forms good union men. Young men could express masculinity in a positive manner through union sport leagues while also being reminded that their good fortune to participate in such activities was directly related to the historic struggles waged by the union. Although sporting activities abated as the decades progressed, with the 1950s and early 1960s being the most active periods, a notable event in the 1980s was the local sponsoring a men's hockey team that competed in London's industrial league.¹⁴

Other local unions operated sporting teams of various types that also played an important role in workers' lives, but Local 27 stood out for one main reason: it made a deliberate effort to appeal to both men and women. In contrast, workers at REO in Michigan were heavily involved in hunting and fishing — overwhelmingly male pursuits.¹⁵ Christine McLaughlin's research on Oshawa's UAW Local 222 also points to the importance of fishing in a local union's social life.¹⁶ While not a team sport, a pursuit like fishing fostered social bonds between men.

Research on Canadian working-class leisure illustrates the central role of organized sports. Thomas Dunk observes that sporting events offer people a chance to actually participate in the event whereas other forms of entertainment, such as theatre, do not.¹⁷ Athletics — participatory or passive — also helped foster camaraderie among those Local 27 members who engaged in them.¹⁸ Even viewing television broadcasts like the ubiquitous Hockey Night in Canada, which became part of working-class rituals, brought workers together in a social setting. The particular athletic choices that were offered to local members reflected the broader leisure interests of post-World War II Canadian society. Hockey, which looms large in the Canadian psyche, was a clear choice for the local.¹⁹ But a social event at the union hall was not particularly unique compared to functions run by other civic associations: a person who chose to belong to a civic organization would probably have been able to participate in a euchre or ping-pong tournament at a place like a Legion Hall just as easily as at the union hall.

Athletic pursuits, popular though they may have been, were not the choice of all union members. The local ensured that there was an activity for everyone, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s. For example, the local's family orientation was evident in the fostering of children's activities: children's skating parties were held during the first half of the 1960s, and attendees were promised "the most hilarious and enjoyable afternoon."²⁰ Although organized athletic activities for children did not persist into the 1970s and 1980s, perhaps because of the demands of coordinating them, the local continued to sponsor colouring contests, offering cash rewards to the winners such as a \$25 First Prize in 1983.²¹

Local 27 Auxiliary and Committees

The various committees formed over the years provided a ready outlet for anyone not interested in table tennis or bowling. The Ladies Auxiliary was one of the most important of these committees. The UAW chartered auxiliary locals within their broader locals, and the group within Local 27 was Auxiliary Local 360. Initially formed in 1959, its intention was

to provide a way for workers' wives to participate in union activity. Its first anniversary in 1960 was noted in the local's newspaper with the headline "Baby Is One Year Old!!" The successful establishment of the auxiliary was celebrated in terms usually associated with domesticity rather than labour radicalism. The article began, "One year ago the UAW brought an infant to the family, how has it grown, and has it been well nurtured?"²²

The Ladies Auxiliary was initially led by Mary Campbell, Al Campbell's wife and a fellow leftist. Auxiliary social events such as the bowling tournaments of the early 1960s were organized separately from Local 27. Guest speakers were invited to speak at the auxiliary's meetings, and auxiliary delegates had the chance to attend Canadian Labour Congress education sessions. Regardless, the auxiliary was clearly meant to be a beacon of maternal domesticity within the local while providing family members with separate links to the union. When other committees held meetings and needed a meal supplied, the Ladies Auxiliary took care of it.²³

The auxiliary played a crucial symbolic role in the local's history since it formally established a place within the local for women, a venue through which women could show not only that they had a stake in how the union operated but also that they wished to make themselves heard independent of their husbands. The women who joined the auxiliary had their own opinions about the union and its public role. Mary Campbell, for example, may have overseen the preparation of meals for union meetings, but she was also intellectually forceful. She was so committed to social justice that a co-operative housing project in London was posthumously named after her in 1984.²⁴

The women's auxiliary may have been an appropriate vehicle for participation by the wives of male Local 27 members, but by the early 1970s, female members of the local wanted a better form of representation. Julie White, who would become responsible for all CAW women's programs later in her activist career, described an evolution in how women were involved in the local's committees:

The auxiliary was, really, I think replaced by the women's committee. The auxiliary was active in a different way. They provided incredible resources to the local union. Sometimes they did picket line support. They would do fundraising, which was a big thing, but not so much in terms of political activism. That's where the shift really came, where women were getting involved. They were demanding changes around equality issues. It [the women's committee] really became active [around the mid-1970s]. It speaks to having women at the top of our national union pushing, and building and organizing local women's committees. Local women's committees were getting information around important equality issues, around child care, around violence, around pay equity issues.

The replacement of the Ladies Auxiliary by a women's committee was thus driven by women who used the national union's resources and the local hall as a forum for discussing and furthering issues of concern to them as workers and activists, not just as supporters of their husbands' union activism.²⁵

By the early 1960s, education had become a local priority, and a Local 27 committee was formed to deal with education programs. Open to members and their families, this committee coordinated both formal union training and general interest sessions. For instance, a committee meeting might involve viewing one or two short films on a topic such as technological change in the workplace or UNICEF efforts in Africa.²⁶ Formal union training courses covered diverse topics, including parliamentary procedure, steward training, and labour movement history.²⁷ The education committee thus provided practical advice on how to function in a unionized environment while also expressing a social agenda.

By 1963, there were Local 27 groups dealing with the local's newspaper, recreation, political action, bylaws, community service, and Labour Day. The latter committee was busy during the entire year, already deliberating over Labour Day preparations in March. This holiday provided an opportunity for the local to forge, through the London Labour Council, a public message that focused on workers and their families. The political action committee focused not only on election preparation but also on coordinating local members' attendance at meetings in the community.

While all of the local's groups and committees were intended to be outlets for any local members who wanted to become involved in the union beyond the workplace, they tended to attract the core group of activists who were already involved in union business.²⁸

Union social functions, committees, and other activities in the local hall also seem to have been attended primarily by Canadian-born workers or immigrants with good English-language skills. Some non-English-speaking immigrants participated in a limited fashion in the local's social activities, but their main social sphere was within their own immigrant group. For instance, John Groenewegen, who emigrated from Holland and found work at Kelvinator, recalled that his participation in the local's social life was limited to his children enjoying the local's annual Christmas party.²⁹ Reliance on English as a form of communication facilitated the involvement of immigrants from the United Kingdom; the ease with which they adapted to the local was noted earlier. Rank-and-file workers were generally portrayed in a homogeneous manner in the *Local 27 News*. Images, both photographic and cartoon, showed white workers, who appeared to share a common ethnicity, at work and social functions: little racial diversity was evident in any images, reflecting the reality of the racial homogeneity across the local's bargaining units.

Examining London's postwar Italian community reveals some of the challenges involved with attracting rank-and-file immigrant union members. Italian-Canadian life in post-World War II London revolved around the Marconi Club, founded by the city's early Italian community in 1900.³⁰ It offered a rich choice of activities to its members and their families. Dances were held two or three times a year during the immediate postwar decades, and people often met their future spouses there.³¹ A large soccer club was founded in 1963.³² A folk dance troupe was formed, and a Miss Marconi pageant created.³³ Club members found work in London's industrial plants such as GM, but after work, they were more likely to participate in the social life of the Italian community than in the union's social sphere.³⁴ The fact that the Local 27 hall and the activities that it offered seemed more Anglo-oriented probably encouraged non-English-speaking immigrants to attend functions at halls operated by their own communities.

The *Local 27 News*

Local 27's main method of creating a sense of community among members, aside from the hall and the committees, was the monthly newsletter that began in 1957. Initially a simple typewritten and handwritten document, it had grown into a more sophisticated publication by the 1970s. Largely Al Campbell's creation, the newspaper was another example of the important contribution of the Left caucus within the local. Campbell edited and published it in its early years; he also drew many of the editorial cartoons. But the newsletter did not always overtly reflect Campbell's personal political orientation; it discussed a wide range of topics, some of which were not at all related to the work process or collective bargaining.³⁵

From 1957 to 1990, the newsletter always included reports on the local's various bargaining units, including comments on the progress of negotiations, strikes and lockouts, and the overall working conditions in the plants. At times, however, commentary on broader social issues outweighed coverage of the workplace. For instance, a 1959 edition began with a warning about the presence of Strontium-90 in the nation's milk supply.³⁶ Since the local was founded and grew during the Cold War decades, issues relating to that ideological struggle were covered. Concerns about nuclear war occasionally appeared, such as a 1962 editorial that discussed a Canadian Peace Research Institute.³⁷ A similar article appeared in 1964, extolling the virtues of a Swedish effort at the United Nations to create a non-nuclear club of countries.³⁸ These two articles may have quietly revealed the political sympathies of activists like Al Campbell. As Reg Whittaker and Gary Marcuse note, the anti-nuclear movement in Canada began with efforts by Communists, of which Al Campbell was one.³⁹

The value of trade unionism was also a frequent theme in the *Local 27 News*. For instance, a 1982 issue quoted Pope John Paul II's encyclical *On Human Work*.⁴⁰ Religion was scarcely mentioned in union literature, but the newspaper's editors, who by the 1980s did not include any Communists, clearly felt that quoting the pope was worthwhile if he supported labour. Noting the encyclical may have also appealed to Catholic members of the local and may have been a way of reaching immigrants who belonged to the church.

The *Local 27 News* frequently supported initiatives promoted by the UAW national office and the broader Canadian labour movement. Its 1950s and 1960s editions often advocated the expansion of public health care in Ontario and Canada — a principal labour movement objective. Public health care, while not yet a universal social program across Canada, loomed large on the local's agenda in those decades. Discussions of various social issues in the newspaper also revealed a consistent current of Canadian nationalism. This became particularly evident in the 1970s in response to Trudeau-era wage and price controls, and in the 1980s with the emergence of free trade during the Mulroney years. For example, the local called for Canadian content in manufacturing and raised concerns about the influx of Japanese autos into the country.⁴¹ Politicians who supported trade liberalization were excoriated in the newspaper. The local held a mock retirement party for Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in 1990, during which a person wearing a Mulroney mask was presented with a cheque for five dollars, the daily wage paid to a Mexican worker at the time.⁴²

The newspaper commentary reflected the agency of union activists in the face of ongoing social and economic change. For example, the newspaper's editors, notably Al Campbell, felt that the issue of nuclear proliferation was of sufficient importance that workers needed to be informed about it. Indeed, many of the editorial positions expressed during the 1950s and the 1960s could be construed as responses to broader Cold War issues. The UAW adopted a liberal policy agenda, but it was not avowedly anti-war until 1970, when Walter Reuther began to publicly oppose the Vietnam conflict.⁴³ The local, however, adopted an anti-Vietnam War stance before Reuther did, saying that Canada had "blood on her hands" for selling weapons and napalm.⁴⁴ Although the editorial views expressed in the *Local 27 News* appear to have originated with the local's activists, the newspaper nonetheless expressed positions that were at least somewhat in accordance with the union's broader national and international public policies.

Pamela Sugiman and others note the egregious sexual discrimination encountered by women in auto assembly plants, and the concomitant

imagery.⁴⁵ The post–World War II labour movement may have indeed featured women for their bodies, as Joan Sangster suggests, but Local 27 did not hold any beauty contests or other similar events.⁴⁶ If anything, women were portrayed exhibiting agency over the domestic sphere and on the job. Overtly sexualized imagery may well have been found in workplaces organized by Local 27, but it was not present in the *Local 27 News*. The sole exception appears to be the cartoon shown in figure 1.2 in chapter 1, where two women are seen discussing a pin-up of one of them. Women were, however, described in idealized terms in the local’s newspaper. For instance, a 1968 notice described Eaton Auto worker Fay Gardiner as a “Scottish lass with a delightful Glasgow brogue.” Gardiner was taking flying lessons and was quoted as saying, “I’ve always wanted to fly, but gee, it’s tough . . . but I’m determined.”⁴⁷

Some men in leadership roles, such as Al Campbell, valued the role of women in the local and would not have condoned inappropriate editorial content in a publication like the *Local 27 News*. However, the main reason for the lack of degrading imagery was that women activists would not have tolerated it. Julie White described the presence of sexualized images at 3M in the 1970s. Activists like Beulah Harrison did not work to advance women’s rights in the workplace only to watch while women were objectified in the local’s newspaper.⁴⁸

Women were officially portrayed as benefiting from union membership for several reasons. Women in the 1950s and early 1960s were primarily involved in union affairs to support their husbands, despite having played an important role in Local 27’s initial founding, but by the late 1960s, and certainly into the 1970s, they had assumed local leadership roles. Since women were by then joining the paid workforce in increasing numbers in Canada, depicting them solely as supporters of their husband’s workplace struggles was no longer appropriate. In addition to being portrayed as workers and union members in their own right, they were depicted as using the economic advantages gained through union membership to pursue personal goals: a unionized woman having the resources to obtain a pilot’s licence clearly showed the economic benefits of membership.

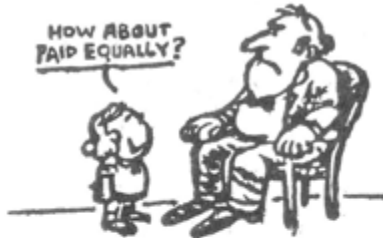
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP? GIRLS CAN BE ANYTHING THEY WANT TO BE THESE DAYS



...BRAIN SURGEON...COLLEGE PROFESSOR
...PRESIDENT...YOU SHOULD DREAM
THE IMPOSSIBLE
DREAM...



HOW ABOUT
PAID EQUALLY?



YOU'VE GOTTA BE REALISTIC...



ETNA
MORNING NEWS - NORTH OREGON TELEGRAM - 12/24/83

FIG 6.1 Pay equity. Source: Local 27 Archive, *Local 27 News*, December 1983, 3.

Despite these gains for women, images and messages in the *Local 27 News* illustrated the challenges they continued to face in the 1970s and 1980s. The image in figure 6.1, for example, shows an older man telling a young girl that she can be anything she wants. She responds by asking whether she can be equally paid, to which he replies that she needs to be realistic. The message seems to be that some men still placed limits on a woman's capacity to achieve equality. Women were free to do the same jobs as men, but they should not expect to receive the same financial recognition. As noted in chapter 1, women activists in *Local 27* knew what it meant to have access to the same industrial employment as men while having to struggle for the same rewards. They would have seen some of their own experiences reflected in images such as that in figure 6.1.

Depictions and narratives of women changed, but those dealing with men remained fairly constant, tending to emphasize their roles as breadwinners. Commentary in the *Local 27 News* in the mid-1970s, years dominated by the furor over the Trudeau government's implementation of wage and price controls, particularly reinforced breadwinner imagery. *Local 27*, and other unions in the London area, produced a series of publications that cautioned workers against the possible effects of wage and price restraint. These newsletters, such as one produced by the London and St. Thomas labour councils, prominently featured photos and personal accounts from male workers facing economic turmoil. A photo caption described a "worried man: with 529,000 Canadian workers jobless, this worker has a right to be worried . . . he may be Trudeau's next victim!"⁴⁹ The worker in the photo stares bleakly into the camera, his lunch pail held firmly under his arm. The message is clear: men faithfully trudged to work, but their role as economic provider was threatened by the machinations of the federal government.

Unions in general and the local in particular were always portrayed positively in written materials. As mentioned previously, the *Local 27 News* contained monthly reports from the various bargaining units about the progress of negotiations, layoffs, and other routine matters. The fact that grievances were in progress was noted in those reports, but details

were not included. The local was invariably portrayed as succeeding at the bargaining table and successfully executing its function as worker representative. The occasionally tense relations between the national office and the local, noted in chapter 2, were never mentioned in the newsletter, and neither was the local's political split between Left and Right caucuses referred to within the printed material distributed to rank-and-file members. Instead, the local was portrayed as working in concert with the national and international offices. For example, in 1960, the *Local 27 News* published a front-page transcript of a speech given in Chicago by Emil Mazey, who held forth on "Labour's Stake in Peace" and went on to detail the effects of nuclear fallout and the potential casualties that could result from a nuclear war.⁵⁰ National officers were portrayed as labour statesmen (and they were all men) in whom the rank and file could place their faith. Negative comments about other unions never appeared: positive coverage of the national union and the wider labour movement helped build solidarity.

In contrast to coverage of the labour movement, corporations were almost universal objects of derision. Employers were the topic of frequent discussion in the *Local 27 News*. Strike commentaries, in particular, condemned employer behaviour while portraying workers as victims of corporate aggression. The debate over wage and price controls in the mid-1970s most clearly demonstrates this trend. A special publication issued by the local said that wage rollbacks went "to the corporation profits, and they really need it . . . companies like Minnesota Mining, Northern Telecom, Unfin, General Motors, Globe Envelope, International Harvester."⁵¹ A 1983 editorial on a strike at Tecumseh Products made the accusation that "personnel directors, newspaper editors, politicians, almost everyone who makes fifty thousand a year tells us to take concessions."⁵² Similar messages were conveyed about corporations through images in the local's newspaper. One such cartoon from 1983 depicts a manager threatening to lay off a robot, with the man cautioning the robot, "No more complaining . . . remember, you can be replaced by twenty workers."⁵³

The messages conveyed about corporations and those who ran them were consistent from the 1950s to the end of the 1980s. Corporations and

their leaders were greedy, dishonest, and utterly lacking in any respect for workers and their unions. Managers were depicted as white males wearing suits and fixated on technology and profits. In some instances, inept male managers were portrayed dealing with challenges from empowered women workers, such as the manager depicted in figure 6.2. While the cartoon does not explicitly say that corporations cannot be trusted, the evident subtext is that workers should have faith in their union.



FIG 6.2 Depicting management. Source: Local 27 Archive, *Local 27 News* October 1988, 9.

Discussions of government attitudes and policy had a similar tone. Governments — generally regarded as corporate lackeys who likewise could not be trusted — were admonished to support workers through public policy and not act against workers' interests. This message grew in intensity as the local entered the 1970s and 1980s. The local's reaction to wage and price controls most clearly demonstrated its views on government policy: the federal government was considered the sole cause

of high inflation. In fact, one local publication argued that “Canadian Government monetary and fiscal policies contribute more to inflation than even the gouging price policies of management.”⁵⁴ Pierre Trudeau was considered the embodiment of anti-worker economic policy in Canada. A poem included in a 1976 publication on wage and price controls clearly illustrates, in sonorous terms, the disdain felt for the Liberal prime minister:

One year ago, on this very date,
A happening, an act of fate,
Pierre Trudeau, on National T.V.,
Had a Thanksgiving Message for you and me.
He said that something must be done
So that Canada can survive.
And Pierre told us, we must repent!
The worker, He proclaimed,
He is to blame!
He wants too much money,
Shame, shame, shame.⁵⁵

The *Local 27 News* became more technically sophisticated as Al Campbell’s cartoons from the 1950s and 1960s and simply formatted articles gave way to photographs and more professional print layouts in the 1970s and 1980s. A dedicated committee remained in place to produce the newspaper, which continued to be distributed to workers through their bargaining units. The newspaper’s principal accomplishments were its long-running production and its coverage of such a broad range of issues. Moving beyond the workplace reflected the local’s desire to pursue a social agenda. The newspaper became a social forum even if it did not always reflect the full realities of collective bargaining or dealing with the UAW national and international offices: for instance, problems such as Emil Mazey’s refusal of loans, the complexities of the labour relations system, the need to continually lobby government, and growing interest in the 1970s in an independent Canadian autoworkers’ union were not covered in the *Local 27 News*.

Trying to provide comprehensive coverage of all issues facing the local would have been difficult. With dozens of bargaining units, it would have been very simple to fill the entire paper with nothing but local reports and discussions of workplace issues. The local could also have chosen to use the newspaper more fully as a forum for educating members about how collective bargaining functioned. As it was, Local 27 chose to use its main written communication tool to build solidarity and to create a sense of union culture among rank-and-file members. In addition, coverage of workplace and union issues was clearly meant not only to portray the union in the best possible terms but also to show its role in wider labour movement struggles.

Local 27 in Print Media

Local 27's leaders had specific messages that they wanted to convey to rank-and-file members and to their families, and they did this principally through the *Local 27 News*. However, the union's public image, beyond the hall and the workplace, was largely communicated through the London media. The messages they conveyed about organized labour shaped both external perceptions of Local 27 and the views held by its rank-and-file members. The local's leaders thus took a keen interest in popular media coverage; for many years, every *London Free Press* article that mentioned Local 27 was cut out, dated, and saved. (The local's archival holdings contain hundreds of such clippings.)

The issues discussed in the *Local 27 News* — from the union's interest in nuclear disarmament to its position on trade policy — were not the focus of the coverage that the union received in local publications. Instead, articles about Local 27 focused on its members' affiliation with their workplaces. The local therefore acquired a public identity that tied it closely to the employers with whom it bargained. The union's social unionism agenda was not nearly as evident in this coverage as was its interest in protecting and advancing the economic interests of its members. Business unionism — with an emphasis on the economic rewards of collective bargaining — therefore occupied centre stage in local coverage of the union.

The media environment in London was shaped by the fact that between 1950 and 1990, the period in the union's history under consideration here, the main media outlets in London were owned by one family — the Blackburns. The *London Free Press* had been operated by that same family since the mid-nineteenth century, and they later added to their assets an AM radio station and an independent television station.⁵⁶ The Blackburns were ideologically conservative and did not like unions. Most *Free Press* employees belonged to an employee association rather than a union. Walter Blackburn made a point of attending each association meeting, ostensibly to monitor any concerns among his employees.⁵⁷ The implied threat that his presence represented would certainly have been on the minds of those attending the meetings. The paper's only major labour dispute during Walter Blackburn's tenure as publisher was a brief strike by the International Printing and Pressmen's Assistants Union in 1955, which occurred just after the printing and pressmen's union had organized a small number of print workers. Blackburn commented: "I believe in a man's right to work. I see men on the picket line. It's a pathetic sight. They have not been pushed around by us. It is their own decision."⁵⁸



FIG 6.3 3M strike. This image of a strike was typical of the type of coverage that Local 27's relations with employers received in the *London Free Press*. Source: Archives and Research Collections Centre, London Free Press Negative Collection, *London Free Press*, 5 July 1974.

Free Press coverage of workplaces organized by Local 27 focused on the initial founding of individual factories and their eventual expansions, strikes, and layoffs. On occasion, the paper did mention social issues, or the products associated with a specific workplace, or the senior managers who ran the factories. But strikes and workplace closures were most prominently featured (as in figure 6.3), with the workers generally portrayed as employees and union members.

The 1964 Wolverine Tube strike illustrates clearly the local media's interest in industrial conflict and in trying to communicate the reasons for the strike to readers. The strike was the subject of more than thirty *Free Press* articles over its six-month duration.⁵⁹ The newspaper noted the UAW's impetus for going on strike, an aborted 1962 organizing drive, and discussed the union's major objective — to be recognized by the company.⁶⁰ The unwillingness, or perhaps inability, of the provincial government, personified by Premier John Robarts, to do anything about Wolverine was also duly noted: the London Labour Council unanimously voted to condemn Robarts for what delegates believed to be his inaction in the face of management hostility, and every word of their motion was printed in the *Free Press* for London citizens to read.⁶¹ Why did the ostensibly anti-union Blackburn family approve such comprehensive coverage of the Wolverine strike? Most likely because it was compelling news that sold papers.

The Wolverine strike became violent at one point, and twelve striking workers were charged following an incident in which two cars were set on fire and stones were thrown.⁶² The strike had, by this point, become a cause for the labour movement beyond London. David Lewis, a future leader of the NDP, served as counsel for the twelve accused workers.⁶³ Three of them were eventually convicted of contempt of court and sentenced to between five and seven days in jail.⁶⁴ London Mayor Gordon Stronach criticized Wolverine management, suggesting that they had squandered an opportunity to explain their behaviour during the strike.⁶⁵

The Wolverine strike, which ended in decertification, was followed by other strikes waged by Local 27, many of which were portrayed in the *Free Press* as essentially economic conflicts. A 1974 strike at Tecumseh

Products was principally about a “six cent an hour increase in each year of a three year contract.”⁶⁶ Similarly, a 1981 strike at Sparton of Canada, which was in its nineteenth week by the end of that year, was primarily about company demands to withdraw cost-of-living allowance (COLA) provisions from the collective agreement.⁶⁷ Strike votes held in 1986 at Fruehauf Trailer of Canada and Sparton of Canada were also principally about wage and benefit increases.⁶⁸ Labour-management conflicts that did not result in strikes were also covered by the *Free Press*, such as Local 27’s 1984 assertion that Sparton of Canada was in violation of labour law because it did not pay statutory holiday pay one Christmas is an example.⁶⁹

Although media reports highlighted workplace conflict and monetary issues, employer resistance to unionization, which characterized the 1950s and 1960s, also occasionally appeared in the London media. The long-running conflict between the UAW and Wilco described in chapter 3 is an example, as is the resistance mounted by AWL Steego over the prospect of its automotive warehousing operation being unionized. London media also covered the Fleck Industries strike in 1979, in which Local 27 was peripherally involved and which symbolized continued employer intransigence. Media messages frequently showed local government interest in industrial relations, as was the case with Mayor Stronach. Public officials were not reported as overtly hostile to union concerns or to the overall plight of workers. Instead, they were often portrayed as sympathetic while also endeavouring not to antagonize the businesses on which the community depended for economic growth.

Media discussions of strikes and labour-management disagreements contrasted considerably with reports of the contributions that industrial employers made to London and, by extension, to their workers. For instance, a 1971 article on Sparton of Canada — which was not a home of amiable labour relations — depicted the firm as being on the leading edge of anti-submarine sonar technology.⁷⁰ A 1983 article on Northern Telecom proclaimed that “Harmony is expected to ensure about 1,350 jobs at the London plant of Northern Telecom Canada Ltd.,” and then went on to note that Harmony was the name of a new phone going into production.⁷¹ The company had invested \$50 million in the London plant

in order to “sharpen our competitiveness in the telephone market at a time when there were widespread concerns about the ability of Canadian companies to compete.”⁷² This article was accompanied by a photograph that contrasted the new Harmony phone, complete with a push-button key pad, with a cumbersome rotary dial model.

General Motors garnered by far the most frequent attention in the *Free Press*. The plant’s new, massive Terex dump truck was profiled in a 1971 article that opened by asking, “What else can you say about something that weighs over a quarter-million pounds and can carry 150 tons for a gross weight of more than a half-million pounds?”⁷³ This description, penned by a reviewer of new cars, was a ringing endorsement of the new truck’s mechanical might, and it could well have been written by a GM staff writer, such were the glowing comments contained therein. GM Diesel’s changing product mix also made for good newspaper copy. The introduction of bus chassis production in 1977 was duly noted, with the addition of new jobs to the London plant prominently mentioned.⁷⁴

But buses and dump trucks of vast proportions, important though they may have been to protecting jobs and conveying an image of corporate innovation, were less central to GM Diesel’s image than its main products: locomotives and light armoured vehicles (LAVs). The LAV became synonymous with the GM Diesel plant. The message that GM obviously wished to convey through the London media was that the plant’s products were important to its workers and, by extension, to the city. In a 1985 “special report” in the *Free Press* discussing the LAV’s importance, the presence of both Canadian and US military personnel was noted: both militaries maintained offices that tracked production in the plant. Some workers were said to wear ball caps and T-shirts emblazoned with images of the LAV, while a few others were reported to have declined to work in LAV production out of religious convictions or anti-war sentiment.⁷⁵

The views of workers who objected to military production were noted in the media but were usually dismissed. GM Diesel worker and activist Roland Parris (shown in figure 6.4) told the *Free Press*: “I feel good about the work I do in the locomotive division. I’m helping make a useful product. I don’t feel the same about armoured vehicles. This military stuff is

a damn waste of time as far as I'm concerned." He went on to say that he did not like the GM Diesel facility being turned into a military production unit.⁷⁶ The paper did not refer to the fact that Parris knew something about the nature of the military, having served in the Royal Air Force prior to immigrating to Canada.⁷⁷ Although his personal views clearly ran contrary to Local 27's official position on LAV production, Parris recalled that the local supported his pacifism.⁷⁸



FIG 6.4 Roland Parris. This photograph was taken during Parris's protest against the building of light armoured vehicles by GM Diesel. Source: Archives and Research Collections Centre, London Free Press Negative Collection, *London Free Press*, 18 October 1985.

The media stories on workplaces represented by Local 27 provided some insights into what the local did, how it and its members viewed the products that its workers made, and how labour relations were conducted. In some cases, such as Globe Envelopes, the primary public image was of a workplace with comparatively few workers who were frequently on strike. Conversely, larger units — principally, GM Diesel — became the public face of Local 27. Here was a large workplace that produced big, impressive vehicles: indeed, its workers supported national security by assembling military equipment used by Canada's American neighbour. Northern Telecom was presented as being on the leading edge of the Canadian telecommunication industry. The *Free Press* always positively

commented on the products that were produced in workplaces organized by Local 27; this aspect of its coverage made the paper a faithful advocate for London's industrial employers.

The industrial progress shown in the coverage of plant production was not always mirrored in discussions of labour-management relations. The internal debates that occurred within the union were not recounted in the popular media, but the complexities of collective bargaining were sometimes revealed. At other times, somewhat contradictory messages were conveyed: Local 27 members seemed to be frequently on strike, yet they also often supported the business decisions made by management. Archie Baillie, who led the GM Diesel bargaining unit, told the *Free Press*: “No one wants wars, but they're going on all over. Somebody has to make these things [light armoured vehicles] and it might as well be us. On the whole, the military vehicles are the best thing that has happened to the plant in years.”⁷⁹

The local was not a passive participant in the news-making process; Local 27's leaders attempted, with mixed results, to shape the media message. Bob Nickerson and Al Seymour, both former staff representatives, recalled George Specht, the first staff representative assigned to Local 27, taking time to hold press conferences at the London Press Club.⁸⁰ Specht also found his way onto news reports for CFPL television. A 1961 segment on unemployment in London saw Specht and Al Campbell address an audience at the London Labour Temple composed entirely of white men — most likely, all union members.⁸¹ Seymour and Nickerson also cultivated ties with local media. Julian Hayashi, the *Free Press*'s dedicated labour reporter in the 1960s and 1970s, was a frequent visitor to the offices at the Local 27 hall.⁸² Hayashi's reporting on Local 27, and indeed on the UAW, did not favour employers and in fact called management behaviour into question. His four articles on Local 27's conflict with Wilco clearly illustrate this perspective.⁸³

The union was able to go beyond the usual rhetoric that surrounded strikes and lockouts, and communicate through the public media some of the challenges it faced in collective bargaining, which was shown to be a long, demanding process. For instance, a 1984 article in the *Free*

Press discussed the challenges of negotiating new collective agreements. Seymour and Baillie were part of the UAW master bargaining committee that was facing General Motors of Canada during a strike. Baillie told the paper that “one hotel is the same as another,” even though he was staying at the Royal York in Toronto, and Seymour expressed similar sentiments: “It’s crappy . . . I like those home cooked meals.” Seymour said he walked up to five kilometres per day, frequently with Baillie, to get exercise while also attending six daily meetings.

Clearly, then, Local 27 received considerable attention in the *London Free Press* and was able to present information about the union to the readers of the paper. Coverage of the local and its struggles was often favourable but limited: the local was usually discussed in terms that closely linked it to the employers with whom it negotiated and with the products that those employers manufactured.⁸⁴

Limitations on the Social Sphere

The various Local 27 committees and social events provided opportunities for all members who wished to participate. Moreover, activities were meant to appeal to both men and women and, more importantly, were intended to be family oriented. The activities that were promoted were not unlike those offered through other union locals in the United States and Canada. The inclusion of a lounge in the hall was also typical of other civic groups in Canadian society. The local’s social life was thus shaped in such a way that it would be familiar and inviting to rank-and-file members.

The many efforts to engage workers’ families, well intentioned though they were, conceptualized women primarily as occupants of the domestic sphere and secondly as workers. Issues of race and ethnicity also confronted Local 27 in the postwar decades, but the local was largely unresponsive to these changes. Despite the increasing numbers of non-English-speaking immigrants streaming into workplaces represented by Local 27, the voluminous newsletters and other communications disseminated throughout the local were always in English, immediately limiting which immigrant groups could participate actively in the local.

Women and immigrants responded quite differently to the local's invitations to get involved. Women workers wanted to be active in the local. They responded favourably to entreaties to become activists and expressed their agency by consciously deciding that they wished to shape the local's bargaining agenda. Immigrants other than those who spoke English well did not actively try to shape the local's agenda. This was not because immigrant workers in Canada lacked militancy in the postwar period. As Franca Iacovetta shows in her study of postwar Italian immigration, immigrants were capable of engaging in lengthy strikes.⁸⁵ But immigrant life was tightly bound to family and kinships ties, which were considered extremely important. Those ties also involved institutions with which immigrants could readily identify.⁸⁶ Thus, immigrants had other opportunities for solidarity and social interaction that were inevitably in competition with the local's invitation to become involved in its activities.

The local strove to create a place for its members to call their own when it gathered bricks and mortar, and constructed its hall on First Street, but immigrants assembled bricks and mortar of their own. In the east end of London, where the Local 27 hall was located, two Italian clubs (a club smaller than Marconi also operated), a Portuguese club, a Dutch-Canadian club, and even a club for English immigrants (the St. George's Society) were constructed in the postwar decades.⁸⁷ Constructing physical spaces with a visible public presence was obviously a priority for immigrant groups, one that could take precedence over other communal pursuits.

Rank-and-file workers also formed social bonds through union membership that expressed themselves in activities organized outside of the union hall. Joe Laporte, a charter member of the local and a former employee of both Eaton Auto and General Motors, remembered attending and hosting parties with co-workers. His recollections reveal an active social life among Local 27 workers in his former workplaces, but it was organized outside of the hall. Those ties were strong: "It was just like a family." Why did Laporte and his co-workers choose not to organize social life around the hall? It was not due to dissatisfaction with the union, but rather because the notion of unionism with which rank-and-file members

identified was rooted in their own bargaining unit, or even within the department where they worked within a factory.⁸⁸

One of the principal obstacles to Local 27's social agenda was therefore the community in which it existed. Regardless of where in Canada workers lived, belonging to a union in the postwar years involved certain commonalities. For example, the Wagner-based labour relations system was found across the country, and workers belonged to both national and international unions. The communities in which unions organized and operated, however, were far from uniform; belonging to a union in city like Hamilton, which was overwhelmingly associated with the steel industry, was different from belonging to one in London.⁸⁹ Some communities, such as Oshawa, were even more completely dominated by one industry and employer: a massive General Motors plant and a local union of equal proportions wielded enormous influence over the community. London, though, was not dominated by one industry or employer.⁹⁰

The local's social life and community agenda were complicated by another aspect of postwar life over which Local 27 had little control: consumerism. Lizabeth Cohen persuasively argues that it became a fundamental aspect of identity, and of citizenship, in postwar America.⁹¹ According to her analysis, consumerism involved living in an "economy, culture, and politics built around the promises of mass consumption."⁹² Joy Parr makes similar observations about postwar Canada.⁹³ Consumerism, a theme that forms a central part of the next chapter, is also germane to the current discussion as it relates to the formation of postwar London. The nature of postwar consumer culture in North America was such that in many ways, national boundaries were virtually invisible barriers. Fordism was an essential part of this process since it was the system that organized postwar industrial work. Well-paid unionized industrial jobs such as those in which Local 27 members worked enabled people to participate in consumer culture.

In terms of the role of the local in the community, consumerism gave Local 27 members the ability to enjoy leisure pursuits and social life beyond the workplace. As hard as the union tried, it simply could not counteract the immense influence of this broader received culture. Social

life outside of the home in 1950s London centred on recreation outlets in the city's core, including movie theatres and places to dine, imbibe alcohol, and shop. Even though many workers did not own cars at this time, they found their way to these venues: Peter Hensels remembered relying on public transit despite limited service to the city's periphery where his workplace, Kelvinator, was located.⁹⁴

As the city grew, automobile ownership increased, as did the range of available social outlets. Newer workplaces organized by Local 27 in the 1960s and 1970s — particularly Northern Telecom — were not accessible by public transit, so workers needed cars. By the 1970s, they were also able to cash their paycheques and spend their money at London's new shopping malls. London also had a wide array of sports leagues, particularly for children, and spectator sport events. For example, an Ontario Hockey League team, the London Knights, was established in the city in 1965.⁹⁵ The arena in which the team played for many years was less than a kilometre from the Northern Telecom plant, which surely made it easy for Local 27 members working there to head over to a game after work.

London was also home to a range of bars and restaurants by the mid-1970s. One example is Campbell's, where live music was commonly heard. It was owned for a few years by musician Ronny Hawkins, who played there and who relocated it to part of London's old city hall in 1971.⁹⁶ Clearly, there were plenty of leisure pursuits available to Local 27 members other than those offered by the union, and those options altered and expanded over time. For instance, in 1970, interested Londoners could visit the Belvedere Hotel to watch "Topless Margie A Go-Go," a type of entertainment new to the city at that time.⁹⁷ The local's collective bargaining success rewarded workers with higher incomes, but also gave them access to a range of leisure activities that they may have preferred over social life in the union hall. The activities and functions provided by the local were comparatively limited.

The foregoing discussion should not suggest that Local 27 members were only interested in recreation pursuits that cost money. The London city government created a twenty-year development plan in 1970 that encompassed twenty-one different planning districts within the city's

boundaries (see figure 6.5). Those districts formed the basis for a subsequent analysis of how social services should be delivered. The districts that included or were close to Local 27 bargaining units and where many Local 27 residents probably lived — Huron Heights, Argyle, Carling, East London, Hamilton Road, Jackson, Westminster, White Oaks, and Glen Cairn — will be referred to as the Local 27 districts in this discussion. The city’s plan revealed much about working-class recreation in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁹⁸



FIG 6.5 London planning districts, 1971. Huron Heights, Argyle, Carling, East London, Hamilton Road, Jackson, Westminster, White Oaks, and Glen Cairn were the districts closest to workplaces organized by Local 27. Source: Family and Children’s Services of London and Middlesex, “Social Profiles of the Twenty-one Planning Districts in the City of London” (London: Family and Children’s Services 1972), ii.

Residents of Local 27 districts were quite reliant on city recreation services. Carling residents reported that 75 percent of their children used park and recreation facilities.⁹⁹ Argyle residents liked using public

recreation facilities but found them inadequate, and often travelled outside of their district for recreation. Demand for public recreation services must indeed have been high since Argyle included a swimming complex, five tennis courts, two wading pools, and a community centre. The city also laid plans in the early 1970s to build an arena in Argyle.¹⁰⁰ Residents of the Local 27 districts were also reliant on services provided by various agencies and levels of government. Indeed, six of those districts were among the seven highest in the London study in terms of reliance on services such as home care, the Ontario Hearing Society, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the Children's Psychiatric Research Institute, and the Canadian Arthritis and Rheumatism Society.¹⁰¹ However, they were less reliant on services provided by Manpower Canada than their fellow citizens in west and south London.¹⁰²

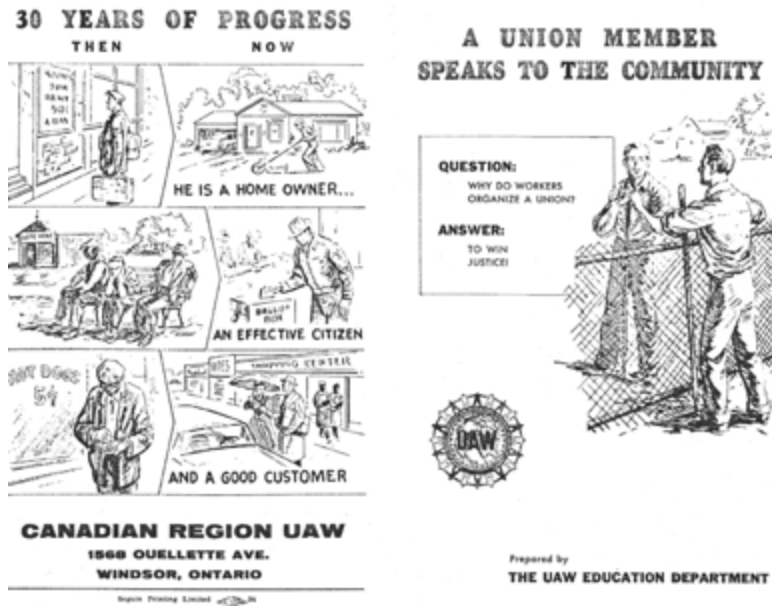


FIG 6.6 Homeowner, citizen, consumer, and union member. Source: Local 27 Archive, file: Miscellaneous UAW/CAW Documents, UAW organizing brochure, circa early 1970s.

The union, at both the local and national levels, was aware of the need for public services and sent clear messages to members about their role in the community. They encouraged workers to be engaged in different social spheres. Collective bargaining was used to extract greater economic rewards, but these rewards were also intended to give workers the resources that would allow them to be active in their communities. The theme of community engagement was also evident in the overt messages that the union sent out to its members. An organizing brochure from the early 1970s, shown in figure 6.6, sends the clear message that the union had improved the material circumstances of its members, made them better citizens, and helped them participate fully in society. While the identities of consumer, property owner, and good citizen are presented individually in the brochure, many workers may nonetheless have felt that the message conveyed a collective sense of what union membership meant.

Local unions that formed in the immediate postwar decades, essentially from the late 1940s to the early 1960s, were founded by workers who had experienced either the Depression or World War II. People like Bill Froude knew economic hardship, which led some people to describe him as “funny” because of his frugality.¹⁰³ On the other hand, as Doug Owrans suggests, the generation of workers who began to work in factories organized by Local 27 had grown up in comparatively more affluent circumstances.¹⁰⁴ Images of Local 27 workers in the 1950s and 1960s generally portray men with short hair and neat clothes, and women wearing dresses and carefully styled hair. Things began to change in the 1970s; the photo in figure 6.7, taken in 1970, shows a generational shift occurring in the local. The baby boom generation, which moved into union leadership roles, had a marked impact on Canada in the postwar decades, significantly shaping the postwar labour movement.¹⁰⁵

The rise of baby boomers within Local 27's ranks brought both advantages and challenges. There were no labour actions such as the famed 1973 strike at the General Motors plant in Lordstown, Ohio — in which baby boomer workers played a key role — but the local still clearly changed as baby boomers joined its ranks.¹⁰⁶ One clear advantage was

that the number of workplaces organized by Local 27 expanded, owing to increased economic activity that was fueled in part by demographic change and by the growth of the Canadian and American populations. The most obvious challenge for the local was that the baby boomers who joined its ranks had not experienced many of the pivotal moments that had defined the labour movement. Born, according to Ooram, between 1946 and 1962, the baby boomer cohort entered the world just as the Rand Formula was introduced, and the last of them were born twelve years after Local 27 was founded. The oldest baby boomers in the London area might have found work at Northern Electric during the tumultuous process when it was organized by Local 27, but the last of this generation would have been in their early teenage years when the local and the rest of the Canadian labour movement challenged the Trudeau government over wage and price controls. The Local 27 that they joined was a large, established local in a high-profile international industrial union.¹⁰⁷

For a generation that created a counterculture and frequently expressed mistrust of their parents, Local 27's social agenda may well have been something to avoid. Indeed, national and international union leaders were well aware that a generational change was underway in workplaces in the early 1970s. Events like the strike at Lordstown led Walter Reuther to conclude that "a new breed of workers" was now entering factories.¹⁰⁸ Although Reuther was referring to worker attitudes in the workplace, collecting their union-negotiated wages every week would have enabled someone in his or her late teens or early twenties in the 1970s and 1980s — when all of the baby-boomers were old enough to be in the workforce — to engage in a range of leisure activities. Attending a dart tournament at the union hall was only one of many available pursuits. Some baby boomer union members, like 3M worker and activist Jim Ashton, chose to become active and attend functions at the hall. However, people like him adapted to the existing social and organizational structure of the local in order to become activists. They adapted themselves to the union hall and its activities rather than the union changing its social agenda to attract newer workers.



FIG 6.7 Generational change. Al Campbell and a group of Local 27 members in front of the Local 27 hall, 1970. Source: Local 27 Archive, file: Miscellaneous UAW/CAW Documents.

Beyond the Hall and Workplace

Did Local 27 succeed in moving beyond the workplace and in creating a social agenda? *Success* is perhaps a relative term. Activists saw crucial aspirations accomplished. A large hall — complete with offices, meetings rooms, and a lounge — was built without assistance from the UAW national and international offices. It was used for a range of activities and became a physical representation of the local's place in London and within the UAW, and later, the CAW. The local thus strove to be more than a collective bargaining agent in its members' lives. On the other hand, the hall and the many policy positions formulated within its walls became the domain of a core group of volunteer activists. In Tim Carrie's words, the union was a way of life for activists.¹⁰⁹ Those activists did not seek to create an exclusivist structure — they wanted to see as many rank-and-file members participate as possible. However, building the hall did not lead to more rank-and-file participation in social activities. In fact, the range of social activities offered to members, such as events for children, appear to have actually narrowed in the years after the hall was constructed. Ultimately, the extent to which a person was already an activist in the workplace appears to have governed how often he or she chose to participate in the local's social life. The union hall became the theatre, tavern, and recreation room for local activists more than it did for rank-and-file members.

Within the internal communication system rooted in the *Local 27 News*, articles on a wide range of social issues were provided to members. At times, those discussions eclipsed narratives on collective bargaining. The paper, initially a crudely produced publication, became more technically and culturally sophisticated as time passed. Coverage of women gradually underwent a transformation as they went from inhabiting a domestic sphere to becoming unionized workers who also faced discrimination on the job. The *Local 27 News* was also used to educate workers on a wide array of issues. For instance, it aligned with the entire Canadian labour movement in railing against wage and price controls in the 1970s, their objections culminating in a national day of protest on 14 October 1976.¹¹⁰

Local 27 strove to communicate a public image, often relying on the London media to do so. Regardless, it could not easily separate its identity from the employers with whom it bargained, in part because of the nature of media coverage in London, specifically the *London Free Press*, but also because of the nature of industrial unionization. The local was invariably associated with the products that its members made and the factories in which they worked. Thus, it had little success conveying a social agenda through the media. Instead, the narrative presented to both union and non-union consumers of London media concentrated on industrial strife and the economic progress made by employers. The full social life of the union would only have been revealed to its members and their families: indeed, only to those who chose to engage in the local's social sphere. In the public eye, the local remained more of an active participant in collective bargaining than an agent for social change.

But for a full picture of Local 27, its social agenda must be considered along with its workplace bargaining efforts. Existing literature on unions in the post-World War II decades — such as the work compiled by Cy Gonick, Paul Phillips, Leo Panitch, and Don Swartz — tends to focus on the challenges that labour faced from employers and the difficulties that they had with governments.¹¹¹ It seems obvious, however, that, in order to determine the extent of a union's activities, the union's place within its community must also be considered. Some research, such as David Halle's analysis of workers at a chemical plant in New Jersey, has examined aspects of social and family life outside of the workplace.¹¹² However, the union that Halle studied does not appear to have aspired to a wider social role outside of the workplace.

Local 27's ultimate success with creating a social presence cannot be measured simply in terms of how many people attended picnics or union dances. London offered an array of other social activities that attracted the interest of rank-and-file members. The local was trying to build a public presence and a sense of union identity during a time of comparative affluence. Local 27 members did not experience the economic privations suffered by workers described by Lizabeth Cohen in her study of Depression-era Chicago.¹¹³ However, while it is important to emphasize

that Local 27 members participated in a broader working-class culture in London, they were still members of the city's working class, which was bigger than Local 27.

The local hall and the policy objectives created therein became important to the local's working-class activists, but they also influenced the wider community. Legion halls, hockey arenas, and ethnic halls were all part of working-class culture in London, a culture that was not solely shaped by the local but that unionized workers helped create. Significantly, this was accomplished in a city that preferred to point to a university and to corporate offices rather than to factories as symbols of success.

Local activists wanted to convince both workers and the surrounding community that there could be more to a local union than simply arguing over economic rewards and other workplace issues. The union thus encouraged its members to be good consumers and to be active in the community — to pursue interests beyond those of the union itself. At the same time, members were also encouraged to rely on the union and participate in its social activities and political agenda. The UAW national and international leadership probably intended these two spheres of activity to complement each other, but many union members may have seen them as unrelated.

Local 27's activists attempted to pursue a social unionism agenda through social events and by articulating policy positions on a range of issues. They hoped to make the local an integral part of its members' lives and sought to struggle on behalf of all workers. This agenda ultimately bore limited results, however: it loomed larger in the lives of the activists than in the lives of most rank-and-file members. Rather than seeing union membership as part of a struggle on behalf of workers everywhere, rank-and-file members instead used their association with the union to build a working-class identity that incorporated only certain aspects of union membership. The hall, and the social agendas that developed within its walls, constituted some part, but not the sum, of how Local 27 members viewed union membership and the role of the local in their lives. It is perhaps not surprising that, as time progressed, many of the activists most deeply committed to social unionism, such as Al Campbell, gradually left the local and moved on.

COMMUNITY POLITICS AND ACTIVISM

Local 27 activists and leaders decided early in the organization's development that the local should be involved in community politics and should take a stand on social issues. Those efforts were enthusiastically pursued. The local became involved in electoral politics, and some activists ran for office. While local activists had high hopes for making a difference in the London community, however, making actual progress was often difficult. This chapter explores the social and political objectives that the local pursued, how it attempted to fulfill them, and how successful the local was in its political pursuits. Examining the local's involvement with the London Labour Council and the electoral process is central to this discussion.

Local 27 did not rely solely on contact with the London media to promote its members' interests. For example, as early as 1963, the local pursued a human rights issue through its association with the labour council and London Alderman Andy Grant, who was also a Local 27 activist. A married couple had applied to rent a house, and their rental application had initially been accepted. The husband had made the application, but when the landlord discovered that the husband's wife was a person of colour, he denied the couple access to the house. Grant wrote a letter to MPP Thomas Eberlee saying that this was a human rights issue.¹ In this instance, local activists responded to racial discrimination in the wider community, even though the local's membership was not racially and ethnically diverse.

Local 27's principal outlet for activism beyond the UAW was the London Labour Council. Because the council was chartered by the Canadian

Labour Congress (CLC), affiliation with it essentially meant co-operation with the national federation's agenda. Although, as noted in chapter 1, the local competed against other CLC affiliates for new members, Local 27 appears to have officially adhered to CLC policy, particularly during the wage and price control protests in the mid-1970s.² The UAW appears to have had a policy of encouraging locals to join local labour councils: George Specht was president of the London Labour Council immediately prior to its amalgamation with the London Trades and Labour Council in 1956.³ The fact that Specht became council president, even though he was already burdened with other duties as a staff representative, illustrates the importance that the UAW placed on labour council participation. He was not the last person associated with Local 27 to lead the council. Bill Harrington from Eaton Auto was president in the late 1960s; Bob Sexsmith from the Proto Tools unit, in the early 1980s; and Jim Ashton, from the Phillips Electronics unit, in the late 1980s.

The London Labour Council was a venue through which Local 27 activists could co-operate with other union members in the city. It was also an opportunity to achieve social agenda objectives that could not be pursued through the national or international union. The Twin Pines Housing Co-op — a joint effort involving labour, community, and religious organizations that was initiated in 1970 — was one of the council's most notable achievements. The co-op included eighty-four apartment units, and rent was geared to income. Local 27 activists Bob Sexsmith and Tom McSwiggan were both involved in its construction.⁴

In August 1970, McSwiggan wrote to the UAW international office to ask for financial assistance for the project. He indicated that the federal government had promised \$2.3 million but that the co-op needed to find an additional \$25,000 in order to commence construction and begin drawing on government money.⁵ Canadian Region Vice-President Dennis McDermott responded on behalf of the UAW. "While your efforts in London are very commendable," he wrote, "and I certainly wish you every success, the financial situation of the International Union is such that we are not advancing monies to anyone at this particular time either in the form of loans or deductions."⁶ McDermott's correspondence was more agreeable

than the usual responses from UAW Treasurer Emil Mazey, but it also meant that the local was on its own when it came to pursuing community activism. Earlier that same year, Al Campbell and Edith Welch had tried to convince the union to buy Greenhills Golf and Country Club, a few kilometres southwest of London, and McDermott may have been weary of receiving requests for financial assistance.⁷ As unrealistic as the golf club request may have been, it certainly showed that local activists had high aspirations for the types of leisure outlets that could be provided for union members. They may have also felt that Greenhills was a good investment for the local.

The labour council was also a forum in which people could express views that they would not discuss within their local unions. As mentioned previously, Al Campbell, who felt free to express himself at council meetings more fully than he did within Local 27, drew criticism for his political beliefs from other council affiliates. Staff representatives from all affiliated unions attended labour council meetings in the 1960s and 1970s, and the council was a forum for informed policy debates.⁸ For instance, although the labour movement became a major supporter of the United Way in the 1970s and 1980s, a serious debate occurred within the council in the 1960s over union support for charities.⁹ Left-leaning delegates argued that the state should provide a sufficient standard of living for all citizens and that unions should therefore not fund charities, while those on the Right argued that charities should be supported. The latter view eventually prevailed.

As already noted, the local utilized training offered through the national and international union. It also relied on training offered through the labour council and the CLC, which earmarked an average of 10 percent of its spending toward worker education between the late 1950s and early 1970s.¹⁰ Worker education, also available to Local 27 members, was a significant council activity. As an example, courses offered in 1973 and held at the University of Western Ontario focused on several topics related to basic steward training and labour movement activism: Steward's Training, Collective Bargaining, Union Administration, Labour Law, Citizen and the Law, Regional Government, and Psychology and Human Relations.

The 1973 training session also included a banquet and dance at the UAW Local 1520 hall.¹¹ The names of the instructors who conducted the training are not available, but it is likely that they had participated in some form of formal training themselves. Indeed, by 1966 the CLC had initiated a national training program for potential instructors.¹²

The number of Local 27 members who attended the 1973 training session is not recorded in the council minutes, but the UAW must have been involved since the Local 1520 hall was a social venue for training participants. The CLC, the program host, hoped for fairly high enrolment and wanted a minimum of twenty-five people enrolled in both the Regional Government and the Psychology and Human Relations courses.¹³ The training and education programs offered though the UAW would likely have been of more interest to Local 27 members. On the other hand, some UAW members from the London area would have certainly attended CLC training courses, or those courses would not have been mentioned in the *Local 27 News*.

While Local 27 delegates were active participants in labour council meetings, they were not numerically dominant. Council minutes reveal that among the thirty-four delegates from nineteen unions attending the meeting on 28 November 1973, Local 27's five delegates were the only representatives from the UAW. They were the single largest delegation, closely followed by the USWA, which sent four. Votes were apportioned to delegate unions based on their membership numbers. Local 27 delegates could not dominate, despite their membership numbers, but exerted significant influence over council decisions.¹⁴

The local's delegates at the November 1973 meeting spoke on a range of issues relating to local politics. In fact, Local 27 delegates either moved or seconded nineteen of twenty motions dealing with municipal election endorsements and donations. Bob Nickerson was particularly active in making motions to use the labour council's resources to influence municipal elections; he participated in fourteen of the motions. Local 27 and the UAW national office clearly worked to shape the labour council's political agenda.¹⁵ The labour council also operated a wide array of committees that dealt with various issues, including the following:

- City Council and PUC (Public Utilities Commission)
- Conservation and Pollution
- Consumer Affairs and Union Label, Education, Human Rights, Labour Day and Social
- Memorial Park and Western Fair
- Political Action
- Social Welfare and Community Service
- Labour Studies Advisory Committee at King's College
- Ontario Heart Foundation
- Mission Services of London
- Women's Committee¹⁶

The council clearly felt a need to articulate policy positions on a range of social topics. Local 27 members were involved on seven of those committees, and that was also a year when the council president was a member of the local. This list of committees is striking in that it illustrates the extent to which the labour council felt itself to be important to the community and the efforts that it made to promote a social agenda. Local 27 delegates clearly recognized that involvement with the council helped raise the local's profile while providing another outlet through which it could pursue an agenda beyond the workplace.

The late 1970s appear to have been a high point of labour council activism. Al Campbell was still involved with the council at that time, albeit through another union, and a large number of unions sent delegates. But while involvement with the labour council benefited the local, it also presented some perils. Bob Sexsmith, who was heavily involved in labour activism at the time that Proto Tools closed in 1984 and was labour council president, was blacklisted by London employers when he tried to find another job. He was certain that his public profile as labour council president caused him to suffer discrimination. He remained involved in labour activism for the rest of the 1980s despite the challenges that he faced in the job market.¹⁷

As tables 7.1 and 7.2 show, the local was in a position to have a major influence on London's labour movement because of its size. It represented

approximately 8 percent of the city's AFL-CIO/CLC-affiliated union membership in the early 1960s. This percentage grew to almost 20 percent by the mid-1970s and to almost 30 percent by the mid-1980s. The city was home to a large number of local unions, yet Local 27 was clearly ascendant. GM Diesel worker and activist Roland Parris felt that the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) was dominant in the city in the 1960s.¹⁸ However, former CLC rep Raymond Murray suggested that the UAW was ascendant by the mid-1970s.¹⁹

TABLE 7.1 Union Membership (AFL-CIO/CLC Affiliates) in London, 1966–84

	Number of AFL-CIO/CLC affiliates	Total membership
1966	79	18,389
1971	166	19,523
1981	77	20,785
1984	152	19,262

SOURCES: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Corporations and Labour Unions Return Act, 1966, Part II*, 61; Statistics Canada, *Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act, 1971, Part II*, 45; *Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act, 1981, Part II*, 42; *Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act, 1984, Part II*, 47.

TABLE 7.2 Local 27 Membership, 1960, 1975, and 1990

	Total membership
1960	1,500
1975	4,270
1990	5,800

SOURCES: For 1960, Local 27 Archive, *Twenty-fifth Anniversary Album*; for 1975, Local 27 Archive, *Fortieth Anniversary Album*; for 1990, Local 27, *Fiftieth Anniversary Album*.

The local participated in public demonstrations along with other CLC-affiliated unions. For instance, the 1976 Garage Restaurant strike was one of the higher-profile labour disputes that occurred in London in the 1970s. There was violence on the picket line that, for the most part, involved the London police using force against strikers.²⁰ Staff reps Bob Nickerson and Al Seymour protested on the picket with other Local 27 members.²¹ This strike aroused bitter feelings among London labour activists. Al Campbell had a confrontation with a person entering the restaurant when he recognized the man as a descendant of one of the Tolpuddle Martyrs.²² Campbell harangued the man, telling him that his ancestor would be turning in his grave if he knew that his descendant was crossing a picket line.²³

The principal issue with Local 27's involvement with the labour council was the same one that arose with activism within the local itself: labour council was clearly a vibrant forum for policy debates and social activism, but it tended to attract the same activists who were working on similar issues within the local. Local 27 was probably not alone in facing this problem; the USWA delegates who attended labour council meetings were probably also the same ones who were active in local unions and workplaces. Labour council meetings were not open to the members of affiliated locals. Instead, each local that chose to affiliate was allotted delegates based on their total membership. These delegates were, in turn, elected by their locals. Becoming a council activist was thus part of an overall pattern of activism that was not common to all union members.

As seen in figure 7.1, the labour council sponsored family-oriented social events such as picnics, but those events were also attended by a minority of unionized workers in London. The exact number of people who came to events such as Labour Day picnics is unclear, but changes in the type of events that were held speaks to their relative lack of popularity among London union members. The picnics of the 1970s and 1980s had been preceded by annual Labour Day parades, events that were part of a broader post-World War II processional culture.²⁴ But Labour Day parades were just one of many public processions; rather than spending time on a holiday weekend attending a union-sponsored parade, workers

may have chosen to wait for the Santa Claus parade in November, which may have seemed like a better occasion for a family outing. Switching to picnics may have seemed to the labour council to be a good decision, but for the same reasons that parades fell out of favour, picnics could not draw vast numbers of union members.



FIG 7.1 Labour Day picnic. Source: Archives and Research Collections Centre, London Free Press Negative Collection, *London Free Press*, 4 September 1972.

Local 27's involvement with the London and District Labour Council was nonetheless significant. The local clearly felt that affiliating with the council was part of an overall policy agenda that focused on political activism. It was also a forum in which both the local and the UAW could take a leadership role within the London labour movement. The fact that the local's delegates did not numerically dominate meetings did not stop their efforts to make motions, run for office, and generally become the public face of the labour council. However, as seen in chapter 1, the local would not tolerate criticism of its delegates by delegates from other unions. The first allegiance for activists was to the local, then to the national and international offices, and then to the labour council and the CLC. Some

activists felt that they could better pursue their policy objectives through the local and through the rest of the UAW and CAW. This was notably true of women activists. For example, when it came to links with the women's movement both locally and nationally, Julie White stated:

Back then [1970s and 1980s] although we were involved [with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (N.A.C.)], we were much more involved on a national than a local level. There seemed to be a disconnect between the women's labour movement and kind of the local [London area] women's movement. But on a national level, we were connected. I'd been to N.A.C. conferences. We had some input into the decisions that were going on at that time, such as pay equity. At the local level, there wasn't that much. The local N.A.C. chapter seemed to be pretty small. We were really active internally within our own union, and it took up a lot of time just doing the work of the union.

White's recollection underscores that women in Local 27 saw value in the broader Canadian women's movement but that local activists, who were often pressed for time, chose to involve themselves with organizations outside of the local or national union structure only if doing so was going to be worthwhile.²⁵

Electoral Politics

Organized labour in Canada is widely known to have participated in the political process in the post-World War II decades. Affiliation with the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and its successor, the New Democratic Party (NDP), was central to that effort. Members of the local also sought elected office, their efforts made within the context of a lively internal political culture. In addition, Local 27 activists consistently tried to shape London politics, although with somewhat mixed results. Reviewing Local 27's participation in electoral politics raises the question of what constituted political success.

The UAW's post-World War II political program has been well documented by several authors, including Sam Gindin and Charlotte Yates.

Gindin argues that the UAW adopted a political program that was not confined to electoral politics but also maintained an active interest in political lobbying.²⁶ Yates suggests that the UAW failed to embrace social democracy as a strategic option in the 1950s and into the 1960s, and that the union struggled to influence the CCF and its NDP successor.²⁷ Local 27's experience with electoral politics did not exactly follow those patterns. The local had a significant left-leaning caucus and officially supported the NDP, but it also worked with both Liberal and Progressive Conservative elected politicians.

The local's attention turned to the CCF in the early 1960s as some large industrial unions moved toward the creation of the NDP. When NDP leader Tommy Douglas visited London in 1962, the banquet in his honour was promoted in the *Local 27 News* although visits by leaders from other political parties were never mentioned.²⁸ New Party forums were promoted within the local to inform rank-and-file members of the need for a new political movement. The local thus attempted to convey messages that reinforced the need for greater citizen engagement, as did the wider labour movement: a 1960 session at the London Labour Temple included presentations from labour council president William Reader, Ontario Federation of Labour president David Archer, New Party coordinator Lyle Tate, CCF MPP Ken Bryden, and CCF parliamentary house leader Hazen Argue. The apparent apathy of Canadians toward "world affairs" was decried by Bryden, who noted that people seemed more interested in "which soap gives the whitest wash."²⁹ Argue sought to illustrate the benefits of a CCF government in Saskatchewan, particularly the public investment that had resulted from shares in oil production. The message in these sessions was clear: supporting the New Party initiative was important for working people. Bryden's comments suggested public fixation on consumerism, and presumably supporting the NDP would help redirect people's attention away from it. But some supporters of the New Party were not enamoured with the close relationship between the party and labour unions: Hazen Argue quit the NDP over what he perceived as labour union control of the party, including the UAW. This action drew the following poem from Local 27 President Bill Froude:

Brazen Hazen jumped the gun
For which he should be libel
The political Judas of the age,
Like the bad one in the Bible.
He ate our bread and drank our wine
The cause swore to defend!
Then, just when least expected,
He said, "This is the end."
He then joined with "Uncle Mike"
(with this we all agree)
We have no room for traitors
In the N.D.P.³⁰

The message here was that the party would receive union support, but the local would not react well to criticism of organized labour's role within it.

Positive communication in the *Local 27 News* about the NDP was matched by financial contributions. By the 1980s, Local 27 listed in its financial statements specific funds that were earmarked for political activity. But the funds were not explicitly designated as political: the word *citizenship* was used instead. A 1985 financial statement that was produced after the provincial election that year showed that the citizenship fund was \$1,100 in arrears.³¹ The fund had risen to \$16,000 by 1989 but was then designated for "political education."³² Why the need to add an ambiguous title to a political action fund? Perhaps it was because some rank-and-file members objected to the local's political program. A 1961 letter to George Burt from F.J. Parfrey, a GM Diesel worker, objected to the local donating \$500 to the NDP and requested that his dues not be used for political purposes.³³ Burt responded that Parfrey had the right to make the request and that an amount of money would be refunded to him.³⁴ Objections such as this seem to have been isolated, but the local's leaders were mindful of them.

TABLE 7.3 Provincial Election Results for London Ridings, 1963–90

		(by percent of vote)		
	Riding	Liberal	NDP	Conservative
1963	London North	23	8	69
	London South	27	11	63
1967	London North	34	17	43
	London South	29	17	54
1971	London North	28	29	43
	London South	27	23	51
1975	London North	45	18	37
	London South	41	20	39
	London Centre	41	28	31
1977	London North	43	19	33
	London South	37	21	42
	London Centre	46	32	22
1981	London North	50	12	38
	London South	31	14	55
	London Centre	52	13	35
1985	London North	46	17	37
	London South	52	11	38
	London Centre	61	10	29
1987	London North	59	21	19
	London South	58	20	22
	London Centre	58	30	12
1990	London North	24	33	43
	London South	30	45	26
	London Centre	29	54	16

SOURCES: Chief Electoral Officer, *Ontario Election Returns, 1963*, 59; *Ontario Election Returns, 1967*, 55; *Ontario Election Returns, 1971*, 26; *Ontario Election Returns, 1975*, 38; *Ontario Election Returns, 1975*, 37–38; *Ontario Election Returns, 1977*, 18–19; *Ontario Election Returns, 1981*, xviii; *Ontario Election Returns, 1987*, xix–xx; *Ontario Election Returns, 1981*, xviii; *Ontario Election Returns, 1985*, xviii–xix; *Ontario Election Returns, 1985*, xix; *Ontario Election Returns, 1987*, xix–xx; *Ontario Election Returns, 1990*, xxi–xxii.

TABLE 7.4 *Federal Election Results for London Ridings, 1963–90*

		(by percent of vote)		
	Riding	Liberal	NDP	Conservative
1963	London	43	10	47
1965	London	39	16	45
1968	London East	75	14	11
	London West	75	13	11
1972	London East	38	28	35
	London West	50	15	35
1974	London East	51	25	25
	London West	56	12	31
1979	London East	43	22	35
	London West	43	16	42
1980	London East	48	22	30
	London West	44	16	42
1984	London East	26	27	47
	London West	32	16	51
1988	London East	39	25	38
	London West	41	17	42

SOURCES: Chief Electoral Officer, *Federal Election Results, 1963*, 124; *Federal Election Results, 1965*, 127; *Federal Election Results, 1968*, 89–95; *Federal Election Results, 1972*, 112–17; *Federal Election Results, 1974*, 123–29; *Federal Election Results, 1979*, 164–76; *Federal Election Results, 1980*, 164–76; *Federal Election Results, 1984*, 157–68; *Federal Election Results, 1988*, 156–65.

Some Local 27 activists ran for political office, and NDP candidates and other politicians who were friendly toward labour were prominently featured in the *Local 27 News*. The November 1969 issue urged members to vote for social progressive Jane Bigelow for Board of Control. Two members of the local, Bill Froude and Joe Abela, sought seats on city council and on the public utilities commission.³⁵ Andy Grant, a member

of the local, managed to serve twenty-three years on London City Council, beginning in 1959. City council members did not always clearly convey their political affiliations, but Grant's would have been clear to anyone voting for or against him. Grant worked at Eaton Automotive for fourteen years before taking early retirement to concentrate on municipal politics. He ran as a CCF candidate both provincially and federally during his years as an alderman, and he felt that his campaigns had been successful considering that he ran in "Conservative London."³⁶

Grant's electoral success was easy to measure since he actually won civic elections. The effectiveness of the campaigns run by other Local 27 members is somewhat more difficult to gauge since they did not win but nonetheless performed well considering the political environment, the number of votes they received, and their party affiliation. The effectiveness of the support given to candidates who were not Local 27 members is also difficult to determine, but some patterns can be discerned from the electoral returns from the 1960s to 1980s. Since the local turned its attention to electing social democrats with the advent of the New Party Initiative, I focus here on the elections that were held after the NDP's creation.

The federal and provincial elections results shown in tables 7.3 and 7.4 suggest that if London was not ideologically conservative — as Andy Grant asserted — its citizens certainly preferred to send both Conservatives and Liberals to Ottawa and Queen's Park. Conservatives won the federal London riding in 1963 and 1965; Liberals ran second in both elections. In 1968, the city was divided into two ridings, and the Liberals won both.³⁷ This vote distribution pattern endured in 1979 and 1980: in both elections, the Liberals won in both London East and London West.³⁸ The NDP achieved somewhat of an upset in London East in the 1984 federal election, when its candidate ran second to the Conservative.³⁹ London West was more predictable, with the NDP winning 16 percent of the vote and the Conservatives winning the riding.⁴⁰ The 1988 election witnessed NDP strength in London East, with the party's candidate winning 25 percent of votes cast, although she ran in third place.⁴¹ The Liberal candidate regained the riding. London West was again won by the Conservatives, and the NDP won 17 percent of the ballots.⁴²

Provincial election results mirrored what happened federally, despite the contrary manner in which the city's ridings were organized. Provincial ridings were divided between north and south, unlike federal ones, which divided the city into east and west. London North and London South were won in 1963 by Conservative candidates. The NDP fared better in both London ridings in 1967, when its candidates took 17 percent of the vote in each one.⁴³ The 1971 election brought the NDP to second place in London North.⁴⁴ In 1975, the party won placed third in all three London ridings. The new riding of London Centre was created in time for the 1975 election. In 1977, the party won 19 percent of votes in London North 21 percent in London South, and 22 percent in London Centre.⁴⁵ The NDP did not fare as well in 1981 as it had in 1977, winning 12 percent of votes in London North, 14 percent in London South, and 13 percent in London Centre.⁴⁶ The party's fortunes were similar in 1985, when its candidates won 9 percent of votes in London Centre, 17 percent in London North, and 11 percent in London South.⁴⁷ Conditions improved as the 1980s drew to a close. In 1987, NDP candidates won 30 percent of London Centre ballots, 20 percent in London North, and 20 percent in London South.⁴⁸ The party's greatest triumph finally came in 1990, when it won two of London's ridings and helped to usher in Ontario's first NDP government.

Neither Local 27 nor the entire London labour movement was able to guarantee electoral success for the NDP, but it is possible to infer the extent of the local's potential political impact. In 1976, London's labour force totaled 131,770 people.⁴⁹ At the time of its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1975, Local 27 had 4,300 members.⁵⁰ As of the mid-1970s, then, Local 27 members represented about 3.25 percent of the city's labour force. Even though the percentage is rather small, 4,300 is considerable number of voters, especially considering that each member probably conveyed the local's political message to family and friends. This process of spreading the word might well have doubled the number of voters sympathetic to the union's politics. By 1990, the union had, moreover, grown to 5,800 members.⁵¹

Most workplaces organized by the local were in the London East riding. Former members of the local and available archival data indicate that many members chose to live in the city's east end in order to be closer to

work.⁵² The local's membership numbers illustrate that if enough people had been mobilized, the outcome of an election could have been swayed by their votes. Local leaders and activists favoured the NDP from the time of the party's inception until 1990. This was evident in the one instance when a Local 27 member, Bernie MacDonald, ran for London city council: the local did not endorse him because of his Liberal affiliation. Despite lacking support from the local, however, MacDonald was elected in 1980 and went on to serve beyond 1990.⁵³

The Local 27 members who ran in provincial elections — Edith Welch, Bill Harrington, and Sam Saumur — would have certainly drawn votes from people in their local. Harrington, who had been a London Labour Council president, probably enjoyed broad union activist support.⁵⁴ What is perhaps most noteworthy about the Local 27 members who ran for provincial or municipal office is the platforms that they promoted. According to a report in the *Local 27 News* on the 1969 elections for city council, candidate Bill Froude advocated better recreation services and improved schools, air and water pollution control, tax reform, and better utilization of the “Canadian National Railways” as a means of transportation. Joe Abela, another candidate for city council, wanted to get a “labour voice” on the Public Utilities Commission but also talked about the need for better recreation services, particularly during the summer. Jane Bigelow, who was not an avowedly labour candidate but was involved with the NDP, focused on municipal governance issues and city planning problems.⁵⁵ These were socially progressive public policy positions that were not meant to specifically appeal to union members.

Activists within Local 27 felt that they had made a substantial impact on London politics, even though the NDP did not actually win any elections in London until 1990.⁵⁶ The most successful NDP politician in the city until that point, Jane Bigelow, felt that the local had some success in working with other progressive groups but not in shaping electoral results.⁵⁷ Bigelow was first elected to London's Board of Control in 1968 and unexpectedly became mayor in the early 1970s when the incumbent, Fred Gosnell, Sr., resigned due to health problems. She was subsequently elected mayor through a vote by city council members. The ascension of

Bigelow, London's first woman mayor, to the mayor's office was a surprise to local politicians.

Bigelow remembered social groups in London trying to deal with governance and development issues; there was virtually no public consultation, and developers were very influential in the community. Bigelow was influenced by Jane Jacob's work on urbanization and by community activist work being done in the United States in the late 1960s. London had little public transit, and recreational programs were lacking. Although labour, including Local 27, did not initiate the process of changing municipal politics, it was nonetheless amenable to helping those who did. Bigelow felt that the formation of social coalitions in the 1970s, which included labour support, helped strengthen the NDP in the city.⁵⁸

While the foregoing analysis of electoral returns and campaign efforts by local activists supports Gindin's view that the UAW indeed pursued an active political program, finding actual electoral success is more difficult. The NDP enjoyed support in London, and this was certainly shaped by labour's efforts. Furthermore, the political program that Local 27 supported concentrated on broad social issues rather than on topics specific to organized labour. This is not to suggest that the local was not concerned about public issues that pertained specifically to unions, but the emphasis was placed on issues like pollution that concerned all working people regardless of whether they belonged to a union. With its inclusive platform, the local strove to communicate to the London community that it was interested in more than simply acquiring economic gains through collective bargaining.

The problem that bedeviled the local's political program was that the candidates whom it supported did not win elections. Even in London East, where the Local 27 vote was concentrated, the NDP failed to win. By this measure, Bigelow's observation was correct: the local's political program did not achieve its ultimate aim of winning elections. Making a strong showing was certainly important, but winning elections put candidates into a position to shape legislation and government policy. For many reasons, the NDP in London simply did not have the strength necessary to win. As Keith Archer argues, membership in a local union affiliated with the NDP made people more inclined to vote for the party.⁵⁹

However, Archer goes on to note that voter intentions were shaped by different variables, including party leadership and how closely people identified with party platforms.⁶⁰ Rank-and-file members would have also noted how expeditiously elected officials reacted to issues that concerned them, regardless of party affiliation.

Why would Local 27 members, in particular, have voted Liberal or Conservative? Archer's theories can certainly be applied to London. The city was the home of two provincial premiers: Conservative John Robarts in the 1960s and Liberal David Peterson in the 1980s. Thus, some Local 27 members may have voted based on the expectation that electing a premier from London would help the city, regardless of party. The success that federal Liberal candidates had with attracting votes from Local 27 members might be explained by the manner in which one of them, Charles Turner, responded to the Kelvinator closure in 1968. The closure also reveals why, to a lesser extent, Local 27 members would have even valued having ties to the Conservatives.

Charles Turner was the Liberal MP for London East from 1968 to 1980, winning five consecutive elections before his eventual appointment to the Senate. His employment background suggests that he could just as easily have been a New Democrat. A railway engineer before entering politics, Turner was supportive of Local 27 regarding jobs and local economic issues.⁶¹ This was quite obvious when the Kelvinator plant closed. Local 27 president Bill Froude sent several letters to Turner, many of them relating to unemployment insurance benefits, and the MP readily responded. Turner and London West MP Judd Buchanan — also a Liberal — met with the Local 27 executive board concerning the closure. As a member of the Liberal government, Turner forwarded correspondence to ministers in the Trudeau cabinet, adding his own thoughts on Kelvinator's closure. In a July 1969 letter to Labour Minister Bryce Mackasey, Industry Minister Jean-Luc Pepin, and Manpower and Immigration Minister Allan MacEachen, he detailed the transfer of work out of the plant and Kelvinator management's lack of interest in a Manpower Retraining program that had been offered. He also mentioned the need for 51 percent Canadian ownership in Canadian companies and offered to the ministers his opinion on portable pensions:

My own personal opinion in a situation like this brings to mind that all industrial pensions should be portable from coast to coast. . . . If pensions were portable, this problem would be eliminated, and if the Canada Pension Plan was stacked on top of all industrial pensions, this would also eliminate all of our problems when a person becomes 65 years of age. It is our hope that, in the near future, legislation will be enacted which will cause companies like White Industries of Cleveland to show just cause why moves of this nature are necessary.⁶²

A New Democrat could hardly have conveyed more effectively what was on the minds of Local 27's leaders and rank-and-file members.

The ministers who were the recipients of Turner's detailed letter may not have agreed with what he wrote, but since he was a member of their caucus, they were obliged to respond to him and to look into the closure. MacEachen's office replied with a detailed commentary, assuring the London East MP that "the closure of the Kelvinator plant and the consequent displacement of its labour force is of serious concern to this department. The whole range of manpower programs and services have [*sic*] been made available and no effort will be spared to ensure satisfactory individual adjustments."⁶³ Bryce Mackasey's office also responded to Turner with a lengthy letter that discussed supplementary unemployment benefits and the desirability of making private pensions more portable.⁶⁴

The local also lobbied elected officials other than Liberals. NDP MPP Cliff Pilkey's assistance was sought in another 1969 letter.⁶⁵ Premier John Robarts, Mayor Herb McClure, a city council special committee, and two area Members of Provincial Parliament who were also cabinet ministers met with a union delegation led by Bill Froude on 22 February 1969.⁶⁶ The city council committee included Andy Grant. Although Robarts and McClure did not attempt to block the closure of the plant, they expressed a willingness to try to resolve the dilemmas facing Kelvinator workers.⁶⁷ Robarts, while certainly not a social democrat, saw the political value of meeting with the local's delegation. Kelvinator workers, doomed though their jobs may have been, would have noted that their local union leaders

had enough influence to get Robarts to meet with their delegation, even though he was Conservative and did not stop the closure.

There was also a more fundamental issue of how potential voters identified with political candidates. Because Charles Turner had a working-class background, blue-collar voters identified with him. In contrast, the NDP often nominated candidates who were not working class. For instance, the party's nominee in London East in 1974 was an instructor at Fanshawe College who had attended university and ran his own electronics business. The candidate in London West was also a university-educated Fanshawe College instructor. Since they were not blue-collar, working-class candidates, Local 27 members did not see someone like themselves. In contrast, when they looked at Charles Turner, they saw a middle-aged, white, working-class man who had worked in a job with which they could identify.⁶⁸

Plant closures were obviously events that prompted the local to lobby whoever could possibly help the situation. Turner's efforts during the Kelvinator closure reveal what was likely a political conundrum for Local 27: the local never endorsed him, yet he responded to a dire situation confronting its members with language that could have been written by the union. The local was thus faced with a situation in which it devoted resources to promoting NDP candidates in London East — arguably the party's most fertile electoral ground in the city — while dealing with a Liberal candidate who had helped Local 27 members.

Local 27 was not the only UAW, and later CAW, local facing this problem. Windsor, which one would think should have elected a succession of New Democrats due to the support received by the party from the city's strong local unions, still elected Liberals — notably Paul Martin, Sr., whose relations with the UAW were such that Walter Reuther once described Martin as a “strong proponent of trade unionism.”⁶⁹ A similar situation existed in Hamilton, where a group within USWA Local 1005 worked with Liberal MP John Munro.⁷⁰

Since the local had two methods of acquiring new members — organizing and the expansion of existing bargaining units — efforts by local politicians to attract and hold jobs were crucial to its existence, even if

those politicians were Conservatives, such as Robarts. This essentially meant adopting a lobbying strategy that encompassed all three main parties. The municipal government, which Jane Bigelow noted did little to attract industry in the 1960s and early 1970s, was quite concerned with industrial employment by the 1980s.⁷¹ For instance, in 1986, the federal government — then led by Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney — was criticized by Mayor Tom Gosnell, Jr., for CN Rail’s decision to purchase locomotives from General Electric rather than GM Diesel.⁷² Gosnell was reportedly “visibly upset” at the prospect that seven hundred jobs could be lost because of the purchasing decision.⁷³ GM Diesel representatives and Local 27 spokesperson Archie Baillie joined with Gosnell in criticizing the Mulroney government.⁷⁴ This was particularly interesting since Gosnell and his family were well-known Conservative supporters. Two London Conservative MPs, Jim Jepson and Tom Hockin, had also vowed to persuade their caucus that the city should not be economically disadvantaged by the locomotive decision.⁷⁵

Local 27 had little choice but to work in conjunction with Liberal and Conservative politicians at the municipal and federal levels, despite working against them during elections. Those elected politicians were in a position to shape public policy. The local supported NDP candidates by promoting them in union publications and offering volunteer support, but those people did not win. Local 27’s political agenda was thus a mix of electoral politics and lobbying, but both involved definite challenges. The local created an active political culture, and even saw some of its members run for office. While it played a role in bringing votes to the NDP in London, it could not help the party win elections. Despite Local 27 activists’ high hopes for political success, electoral reality curbed their progress. Local leaders ensured that their members received a deluge of information on the union’s affiliation with the NDP. Regardless, they also continued to rely on Liberal politicians — such as Charles Turner — to protect their interests. This pattern of both opposing and appealing to the government was not clearly relayed in the *Local 27 News*. Instead, the relationship with the NDP was emphasized, and its value was never publicly called into question.⁷⁶

Success and Failure

Measuring the success of Local 27 and its activists in electoral politics and in influencing the London Labour Council is in many ways dependent on how success is defined. The local successfully formulated a political program and moved to support it, ably disseminating information on the union's political position to its members. Rank-and-file activists ran for office, but unfortunately, Andy Grant was the only local activist elected to any sort of office. That being said, Local 27 could not have single-handedly brought NDP candidates to power, even though it could have delivered a large number of votes. Although NDP candidates won office in London in 1990, that was part of a larger electoral wave across Ontario. The local was also obliged to maintain contact with politicians from other parties, such as Charles Turner, since they were in power and working with them helped protect workers' interests.

The local maintained strong ties with the London Labour Council and actively sought to lead it. However, it could not dominate the council's agenda. Nonetheless, activists viewed council membership as an effective way of pursuing social policy objectives beyond those the UAW was willing to pursue, such as the construction of public housing. Local activists viewed the council as a forum for discourse beyond the Local 27 hall. The local promoted the education programs offered by the CLC through the labour council and was an active participant in broader CLC policy objectives, such as opposition to wage and price controls.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of pursuing policy change through the NDP and the labour council was the difficulty of attracting the involvement of rank-and-file members. Activities related to the local's political agenda attracted the activists who were most interested in union policy — people like Andy Grant and Bill Harrington, who were involved in all aspects of union activism. Indeed, the labour council was entirely composed of activists. The local successfully devised a political agenda but found its aspirations limited when it moved into electoral politics. On the other hand, it helped make the London Labour Council a vibrant forum for policy discussion and worker advocacy.

“IT WAS ALL ABOUT FAMILIES”

In 1969, five hundred families collectively peered into an empty Kelvinator refrigerator. The cartoon shown in figure 8.1, published in the *London Free Press* against the backdrop of the Kelvinator plant closure, condemned company management. The Mother Hubbard figure clearly represented domesticity and the working-class families whose breadwinners lost their jobs, and the empty appliance symbolized lost income. The image highlighted the importance of regular wages to unionized Local 27 workers and their families. What did Local 27 do for its members’ families, and did the efforts of local leaders and activists bear tangible results? From this question flow two more: Did the local give workers and their families what they wanted? What did family members think of the union’s role in their lives?

Unions did not explicitly say that they were organizing working-class families and bargaining collective agreements for them, but this is what often happened. As the image in figure 8.1 illustrates, workers’ families came to the fore when plants closed and collective agreements were negotiated. Male workers’ wives, in many ways the economic decision makers in their families, had opinions about how the local should approach collective bargaining. Rank-and-file members hoped that the union would pursue policies that would help family life. The union could often bring what its leaders considered favourable solutions to workers’ challenges, but they could not solve all of the problems that workers and their families faced.

Representing workers in the post-World War II decades meant doing so within the framework of the Fordist industrial relations system, which was largely in place in both Canada and the United States by the early 1950s. The

existing research on the economics of post-World War II collective bargaining all points to a common conclusion: unions were able to win higher incomes for their members and, in fact, were able to provide them with the means to obtain higher incomes through working-class employment. The literature focuses on how union leaders, governments, and corporations have operated in the Fordist system, which brought economic rewards to workers; it does not generally approach the issues from the perspective of rank-and-file workers. Consequently, this chapter centres upon the benefits that unionism brought to working-class families. Understanding the role of the union in working-class families requires moving beyond economic analyses rooted in collective bargaining. It involves considering how unionized workers and their families lived in the postwar decades.¹



FIG 8.1 Kelvinator closure. Displaced Kelvinator workers, all of whom belonged to Local 27, are collectively depicted as a latter-day Mother Hubbard peering into her bare Kelvinator fridge along with a forlorn family dog. Source: Simone Cornelus Collection, *London Free Press* editorial cartoon, 8 February 1969.

Examining what Local 27 did for its members requires considering what it did not do for them, and what it could not have been able to do. To fully understand what it was like belonging to Local 27, we must examine how members felt about the union. Workers interviewed for this study were willing to discuss their experiences at work, politics within the local, and the wider community. Some were also willing to talk in some detail about their marriages and interaction with their children. Their memories, combined with other data on postwar working-class life in London, reveal much about workers' personal lives from the 1950s to the late 1980s. Exploring the local's place within its members' families also involves an examination of postwar working-class life in North America in order to see how the Local 27 experience fits into broader society.

Family Composition and Needs

Al Campbell felt that the local's social and policy agenda was all about families. Some of the literature on working-class life in the post-World War II decades suggests that family life was not always idyllic and could in fact be challenging in many ways. The family in those years, in its many forms, has been the subject of intense study. Much of the work has been done by American sociologists who scrutinized white working-class life. While working-class life in Canada was not entirely the same as in the United States, the porous nature of the border between the two countries and the fact that workers were frequently employed by the same corporations regardless of their nationality meant that there was some commonality.²

Working-class family life in post-World War II North America, as portrayed in much of the literature, was highly gendered. The nuclear family model, with two parents and at least an equal number of children, predominated. This was linked to the standard employment relationship (SER) discussed by Mark Thomas. The SER was characterized primarily by secure employment for male breadwinners, regular working hours, and a wage rate that could support a family. Male Local 27 members aspired to this type of work arrangement and formed families that conformed to the existing social norm.³

All of the former Local 27 members interviewed for this study explained that they had been married at least once.⁴ Some of them also had children. Various studies on working-class family life confirm that this was entirely normal, indeed expected, behaviour. For instance, Mirra Komarovsky's 1962 case study and Lillian B. Rubin's study of working-class life between 1972 and 1992 found that most respondents were married.⁵ Both studies were based in the United States, but James Lorimer and Myfanwy Phillips explored similar themes in Canada.⁶ Family composition altered in London between 1950 and 1990, but it is clear that most people living in London in the postwar decades chose to marry despite the challenges that marriage could bring.

TABLE 8.1 *Population of London by Marital Status, 1951–91*

	Total population	Married	Single (age 15 and over)	Divorced
1951	121,516	60,710 (50)*	24,141 (20)	509 (0.4)
1961	181,283	86,510 (48)	29,510 (16)	929 (0.5)
1966	194,416	90,359 (46)	34,291 (18)	1,114 (0.6)
1971	223,225	106,720 (48)	41,425 (19)	2,700 (1.2)
1976	270,383	132,385 (49)	55,520 (21)	4,515 (1.7)
1981	283,668	142,840 (50)	60,620 (21)	6,615 (2.3)
1986	342,302	173,815 (51)	72,215 (21)	9,635 (2.8)
1991	381,522	166,570 (44)	88,390 (23)	18,600 (4.9)

* Figures in parentheses are percentages.

SOURCES: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada, 1951*, table 30.1; *Census of Canada, 1961*, table 32.3; *Census of Canada, 1966*, table 31.6; Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1976, London Population and Housing Characteristics*, 1; *Census of Canada, 1981, London Census Tract Population, Occupied Dwellings, Private Households (Series A)*, table 1.1; *Census of Canada, 1986, London Community Profile, Part 1*, table 1.1; *Census of Canada, 1991, Profile of Census Tracts in London, Sarnia-Clearwater and Windsor, Part A*, 10.

As table 8.1 shows, divorce was fairly rare in the 1950s and early 1960s. By 1971, however, the number of people who were divorced in London had jumped to 2,700 — almost double the number in 1966 — even though the city’s population had not grown in similar proportions. Divorce rates continued to rise through the early 1980s and on to 1991. Some people responded to the introduction of the 1969 *Divorce Act* by ending unrewarding marriages, but despite a gradual rise in divorces, most Londoners still planned more weddings than separations. However, the nature of marriages changed during Local 27’s first forty years, even if marriage as a social institution remained a constant influence. As table 8.2 illustrates, the number of families in the city grew from 1951 to 1991, as did the total number of people living in families, but the number of persons per family stayed more or less the same. What principally altered was who was working within those families.

TABLE 8.2 *London Families, 1951–91*

	Total number of families	Total persons living in families	Average family size
1951	24,679	77,348	3.1
1961	41,076	143,959	3.1
1966	44,665	167,911	3.6
1971	70,710	246,260	3.5
1976	68,735	226,740	3.3
1986	92,145	290,880	3.1
1991	104,160	319,945	3.1

SOURCES: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada, 1961*, vol. 2, table 32.3; Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1976, London Population and Housing Characteristics*, 2–3; *Census of Canada, 1986, London Community Profile, Part 1*, tables 1.3 and 1.5.

The family as an economic unit in the 1950s and 1960s was built around a male wage earner and a female spouse who performed crucial domestic work. Gradually, however, the male breadwinner model was supplanted by a two-income-earner model. As Tables 8.2 and 8.3 show, during the post-war years, as the number of families in London increased, so did women's participation in the labour force. By 1971, nearly half (47 percent) of women over the age of fifteen were working either full or part-time; this had increased to 64 percent by 1991. The influx of women into the workforce was partly driven by economic needs, but it also reflected social changes that were working to alter traditional family structures.

TABLE 8.3 *Women in the London Labour Force, 1971–91*

	Percentage
1971	47
1976	51
1986	61
1991	64

SOURCES: Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1971*, vol. 3, table 16.1; *Census of Canada, 1976*, vol. 5, table 3.2; *Census of Canada, 1986, London Community Profile, Part 1*, table 1.3; *Census of Canada, 1991, Profile of Census Tracts in London, Sarnia–Clearwater and Windsor, Part A*, 12.

Over the second half of the twentieth century, not only did the divorce rate rise rapidly, but it also became more acceptable for a woman who gave birth to a child out of wedlock to choose to raise the child herself, rather than giving it up for adoption. These changes naturally had their impact on London families. In 1951, only 18 percent of London households were headed by women, according to the census taken that year. Although it is difficult to compare census figures, as the categories used in the census changed over time, fifteen years later the 1966 census revealed that 75 percent of divorced households in London were headed by women. That figure dropped slightly, to 70 percent, in 1971. The 1981 census looked at lone-parent families, 86 percent of which were headed by women. As of 1986, the figure stood at 85 percent, where it remained in 1991.⁷



FIG 8.2 The negotiating committee. This cartoon, most likely drawn by Al Campbell, suggests the potential power of women in the union. Source: Local 27 Archive, *Local 27 News*, October 1958, 8.

What do these various family statistics reveal about what families needed from a union? One-income families were dependent on one wage, and holding on to it was a concern for both spouses. Married women who headed households or made financial contributions to their families needed steady wages. Lone-parent families, especially those headed by women, needed decent wages. A woman who was not working but whose spouse was a union member was as much a breadwinner as her spouse. She took an understandable interest in what a local union planned to pursue through collective bargaining. In figure 8.2, we see a wife determined to see her husband address, through the union, the economic

challenges facing their family. The image, almost certainly drawn by Al Campbell, offers insights into how workers' families thought about the union. Although humorous, the cartoon shows that economic challenges, such as providing for children and paying rent, were a source of tension for working-class families and that both spouses recognized the impact the union could have on their economic security.

Male workers' wives were well aware of the importance and challenges of collective bargaining. For example, Tim Carrie remembered having to assure his wife that he would not lose his job for lodging a health and safety work refusal at Firestone.⁸ Jim Wilkes, who was part of a bitter strike at London Motor Products in 1987, recounted how he told his wife about the union's resolve to wage a hard struggle against management:

My wife was always worried — worried to death — about bargaining. I loved to bargain in the days I was in the workplace. The bargaining is like, every three years, and you say, "Let's get at it," and there's a lot of pressure on you and company. . . . You get so caught up in the rhetoric of the things that you are saying to the company — "We're going to be here till I don't care, everyone else can quit. I'll still be there; I'll be picketing the place ten years from now if that's what it takes." You get caught up in that, and that's fine to give that to other people but when you get too caught up in that, and you're saying that stuff at home, it starts to affect your life. My wife started taking it seriously. [She would say:] "I've got a life here, too, and we've got a little kid," or "Are we going to be in a life of poverty because he is on some crazy mission here, that he doesn't care what anyone else thinks?" You've got to save the rhetoric for other people. Overall, my wife understood how much pressure there was.⁹

Such exchanges suggest that crucial decisions pertaining to union activity were often debated during private talks with spouses and partners. They indicate that men and women could be equal partners in working-class families. The image in figure 8.3, which depicts a son teasing his father for washing dishes, shows that men and women in Local 27 were aware of their domestic roles. Discussions like the one between Jim Wilkes and his wife were at the heart of a family's economic survival; indeed, women have

historically been central players in managing their families' economies.¹⁰ Family discussions such as the one depicted in figure 8.2 were probably not uncommon in Local 27 households. Evidently, workers' spouses expected the union to press for better economic gains at the bargaining table but not to the extent that their family's economic survival was imperiled.



"This sure would make a good grievance in the shop, 'eh Pop?"

FIG 8.3 Washing dishes. Another cartoon probably drawn by Al Campbell, one that illustrates shifting gender roles. Source: Local 27 Archive, *Local 27 News*, April 1958.

The lives of Local 27 members were undoubtedly reflected in statistics on family life. Changes in family structure in London — such as more lone-parent families headed by women — occurred during years when personal relationships altered across Canada. Although married men

and women used various forms of contraception before the 1960s, the introduction of the birth control pill in Canada in 1961 had a marked effect on reproduction.¹¹ Changes to the Criminal Code in 1969 decriminalized the advertising and sale of contraceptives, which helped fuel a growing debate on the legality of abortion.¹² Policy changes such as these altered family dynamics: although marriage still predominated in a city like London, people who married could choose not to have children or to have less children than they would have without access to contraception.

Local 27, although not racially or socio-economically diverse, included members from a variety of backgrounds. Immigrants from England or Scotland — such as Roland Parris, Hector McLellan, and Tom McSwiggan — came from working-class families but not necessarily from families that included union activists.¹³ The same was true of Dutch immigrants Peter Hensels and John Groenewegen.¹⁴ Like their immigrant co-workers, most other Local 27 members did not necessarily come from unionized backgrounds either. Georgina Anderson was one of the few past or present members of the local who came from a unionized family. Her father had been president of a local union and she attended meetings with him when she was a child.¹⁵

Many Local 27 members had backgrounds like those of Jim Wilkes, Julie White, and Tim Carrie. Wilkes grew up in a working-class household in London and attended a public elementary school in the heart of the city's working-class east end. He then attended H.B. Beal Secondary School, a large public institution founded in 1912 that was almost synonymous with working-class London.¹⁶ Created by an eponymous academic, it was frequently known as Beal Tech. London Motor Products regularly hired the top graduate from Beal's autobody repair program; Wilkes, graduating at the top of his class, found his way into the dealership and ultimately into Local 27. Julie White was also raised in London and described herself as an "army brat" since her father had been in the military.¹⁷ She too attended H.B. Beal and found work at 3M shortly after completing grade 12. Tim Carrie was in the army and met his future wife when stationed in London; he returned to the city after leaving the military to be with her.¹⁸

Beal Tech enrolled 50 percent of the city's students who pursued vocational training in the decades immediately following World War II.¹⁹ In 1962, it enrolled 6,181 students in its daytime and evening training programs.²⁰ The school offered programs in trades like machine shop, woodworking, electrical, printing, automotive and welding, sheet metal and refrigeration, and drafting.²¹ Wilkes and White were probably only two of thousands of Beal graduates who found their way into Local 27 bargaining units. Hence, working-class children in London generally moved from elementary school into vocational high schools, and then into the skilled blue-collar workforce. Fanshawe College, part of the Ontario community college system created in 1966, was the final destination in the vocational training process.²² Community college training included a range of curriculum options beyond traditional skilled-trade work such as auto mechanics, but even these programs had an emphasis on preparing students for paid work. For instance, by the 1970s, Fanshawe College's fine arts program included subjects like architectural art, photography, and hotel and restaurant management.²³

The post-World War II education system was, like virtually all aspects of public life, the subject of considerable policy scrutiny. For instance, in 1961, the Conservative Robarts government in Ontario formed a committee dominated by bureaucrats and business representatives that created three secondary school learning streams: Arts and Science; Business and Commerce; and Science, Technology and Trades.²⁴ In contrast to the Arts and Science stream, the education offered in the other two streams at vocational secondary schools emphasized applied training. But education was also a method of social conditioning intended to inculcate an appropriate work ethic and acceptable social skills.²⁵ The education system through which Local 27 members passed as children and adolescents was part of an industrial economy.²⁶ Like other Ontario children, children from working-class families were schooled to enter occupations that would benefit that economy.

The success of the educational system as a tool for socialization — its ability to shape working-class kids into responsible, hard-working citizens — makes an interesting contrast with other research into working-class

life. Paul Willis's 1977 study of English working-class youth revealed a culture characterized by a general disdain for schooling, one that valued a certain rough humour — “having a laff” — and opposition to authority.²⁷ Perhaps some of the working-class children in London, Ontario, who eventually found their way into Local 27 through blue-collar employment harboured similar attitudes. But other Local 27 members adopted different values. Wilkes, who did not come from a union background, recalled that his father

expected fairly high standards of us, and so did my mom, in a lot of different ways. I think that they were really happy [with us]. [They felt that] if you're not being treated right, then you can make it better for yourself, but for everybody else [as well]. That's the way they felt about it, but I think that's why I felt that way about it.²⁸

Wilkes's family did not want him simply to “have a laff” but to approach life and work in a purposeful manner. Local 27 members who grew up in London received an education that was intended to equip them with the vocational skills they would need in the industrial workplace. It was an education that many working-class parents would have valued. Some Local 27 members — those who had arrived in Canada with few material possessions or who came from very modest economic backgrounds, for example — entered unionized employment in difficult financial circumstances. Wilkes's experience growing up in a working-class family was probably representative of many Local 27 members:

I grew up right here in the east end of London, down on Hamilton Road on East Street. I grew up four houses down from the corner of a garbage dump. Down at the river . . . on the other side of Highbury [Avenue]. I went to Ealing Public School, down by the river. We weren't poor; we were working class.²⁹

Industrial employment appealed to people like Julie White. “3M was hiring,” she recalled, and “it looked like a decent place to work. It paid good wages compared to the rest of the places out there. I got hired at age nineteen.³⁰ White was not alone: she remembered many young women

her age going into factory work. The work at 3M, while industrial, may have seemed more appealing than some of the other jobs advertised in London in the early 1970s. For example, a 1970 job ad for a “Gal Friday” in the *London Free Press* stated that a “swinging downtown law firm wants a machine minded miss with experience in NCR; some typing and clerical.”³¹ The position paid \$90 per week, which was less than the wages at a place like 3M. Many women like White, just embarking on their working lives, may have been “machine minded” but uninterested in being called “Gal Friday.”

It appears from the union’s social agenda that local activists and leaders assumed that most members came from white, English-speaking families. Photographs of social events organized by the union, as well as various archival documents, suggest that most Local 27 members were indeed white and English-speaking. Clearly, though, as tables 8.4 and 8.5 show, London included a range of linguistic and ethnic groups from the time of the local’s founding, even though the native language of most Londoners was English. The local could have reached out to other ethnic and linguistic groups. Local leaders must not have seen a need to broaden the union’s appeal. The correspondence sent to the local from both the American and Canadian union offices was always in English — it was not even in both of Canada’s two official languages in the 1970s and 1980s — and there is no documented evidence of a desire to more fully engage non-English-speaking union members. The white anglophone majority in the union, who probably most readily felt themselves benefiting from the local’s agenda, perhaps felt that there was sufficient outreach to rank-and-file members.

Interestingly, despite the fact that London was surrounded by agricultural communities, no current or former local members interviewed for this study reported coming from farming backgrounds. Instead, Local 27 members came from working-class families — although not necessarily from unionized working-class families. Some were immigrants, many of whom would have had union experience in their country of origin. Many who entered the workforce in the 1960s and 1970s were women, who came from both unionized and non-unionized working-class families. Some

members had never previously belonged to a union, and, for someone like Wilkes, who went straight into the union after high school, non-union employment was unknown. What did he and others like him hope to gain when they entered working-class employment and joined Local 27? Some of their main expectations and hopes were wages and benefits that increased over time, and some job security.

TABLE 8.4 *Population of London by Ancestry, 1951*

British	99,596
French	2,312
German	3,296
Italian	1,165
Dutch	634
Polish	1,456

SOURCE: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada*, vol. 3, table 36.1.

TABLE 8.5 *Languages Spoken in London, 1986*

English	297,250
French	3,370
German	4,480
Dutch	4,285
Italian	3,945
Portuguese	3,270
Polish	2,640
Other languages	14,640

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1986, London Community Profile, Part 1*, table 1.1.

Consumption

Local 27 members wanted to earn wages and benefits, and collect pensions and SUB benefits so their families could afford to live in London. On what did Londoners, and Local 27 members in particular, spend their money? Homes were central to postwar consumer society and Londoners avidly purchased them (see table 8.6). Homeowners outnumbered renters throughout the postwar decades. Whereas people had once thought it appropriate to save for an item before paying for it, the postwar years brought the notion that something could be purchased and then paid for later through installments. Lizabeth Cohen argues, within the context of the United States, that suburban home ownership enabled someone to become a person “of property.”³² Being able to own a home was important, even if it had to be financed with debt. Cohen’s observation also applied to postwar Canadian homebuyers. In fact, the possibility of owning a home was enough to induce some people to come to Canada. GM Diesel worker and activist Hector McLellan was one of those:

General Motors is the longest job that I’ve had. [I had] quite varied work over in Britain. At that time [when we emigrated] I was working three days a week. We wanted to buy a house, but we couldn’t buy a house in Scotland because we didn’t have enough money. Take a chance, and came here. It’s worked out for the best.³³

Within a broad pattern of suburbanization across North America, the postwar state facilitated home ownership by deliberately planning wartime housing as an affordable living option. The federal government created the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in 1945 to administer loan guarantees for housing.³⁴ Indeed, one CMHC housing design — the “Type C” unit — has been described as a “quintessential Canadian house.”³⁵ Provincial governments also considered measures to facilitate home ownership. In 1950, the Conservative government of Ontario Premier Leslie Frost briefly considered a measure for home financing that did not require a down payment.³⁶ The *London Free Press* reported in the same year that a new home could be built for approximately \$5,800 and purchased under existing mortgage rules with a \$500 down payment.³⁷

TABLE 8.6 Home Ownership in London, 1951–91

Year	Owned	Rented
1951	15,895 (60)*	10,490 (40)
1966	34,298 (61)	22,070 (39)
1976	53,005 (58)	38,760 (42)
1981	59,465 (53)	46,135 (47)
1986	74,830 (57)	54,555 (43)
1991	80,495 (56)	62,305 (44)

* Figures in parentheses are percentages.

SOURCES: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada, 1951*, vol. 3, table 87.8; *Census of Canada, 1966*, vol. 2, table 5.9; Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1976, London Population and Housing Characteristics*, 1; *Census of Canada, 1981, London Census Tract Population, Occupied Dwellings, Private Households (Series B)*, tables 1.7 and 1.1; *Census of Canada, 1986, London Community Profile, Part 1*, table 1.4; *Census of Canada, 1991, Profile of Census Tracts in London, Sarnia-Clearwater and Windsor, Part B*, 16.

In addition to state assistance, home ownership was influenced by practical considerations. Former members, such as Bob Sexsmith, indicated that many members chose to live near their workplace. Most of those workplaces were in the east end of London or on the city's southern perimeter. The same postwar planning zeal found at higher levels of government apparently inspired municipal administrators and politician, and London's municipal government devoted considerable thought to how the city should develop. Its deliberations were quite detailed in the 1960s and 1970s, and the planning process would have had a marked impact on the lives of Local 27 members.

Municipal census surveys commented on the size of dwellings and their amenities. Detached homes, which had more amenities, were preferred by London buyers from the 1950s until the late 1980s. In 1981, slightly over half of London homes had two bathrooms.³⁸ These homes

would have been larger than those commonly inhabited in the 1950s or 1960s. In 1971, of the 38,475 detached and owned dwellings in London, only 11,815 did not have mortgages attached to them.³⁹ Of the mortgaged homes, 4,710 had more than one mortgage.⁴⁰ The owners of those doubly mortgaged homes either had to refinance and add a second mortgage, or engaged in extraordinary financing to purchase their homes in the first place.

Anticipating a need for more residential home construction, the city annexed land to the south and west in 1961, notably adding the village of Byron. City planning studies and census data reveal some important aspects of how London developed, such as home ownership rates and infrastructure planning, but do not always clearly comment on the public policy interests of average citizens. Of the twenty-one districts identified in the 1970 city planning report introduced in chapter 6, nine were identified as Local 27 districts: Huron Heights, Carling, Argyle, East London, Hamilton Road, Glen Cairn, Jackson, Westminster, and White Oaks. Most Local 27 members seem to have lived on the east side of city, in one of those nine districts, so that they could be closer to work.⁴¹

East London and Hamilton Road were pre-war areas, but the other seven districts were principally developed during the postwar decades. Demographically, the newer areas were younger. In Huron Heights, which was very close to both 3M and GM (and to Fanshawe College), 26 percent of the population comprised residents between the ages of five and fourteen years, and a further 17 percent were people between the ages of twenty-six and thirty-five.⁴² The study did not divide this neighbourhood further demographically, but it is fairly clear that a significant portion of its population was young. Many people in the twenty-six to thirty-five year age group may well have been the parents of the five- to fourteen-year age group.

The Carling district encompassed both the former Eaton Automotive and Kelvinator plants, and had the highest percentage of young families in any of the twenty-one planning districts. Most Carling residents rented their dwellings, as did most Huron Heights residents.⁴³ Most of the planning districts close to or encompassing Local 27 bargaining units had

high numbers of young families, with many of them renting. Glen Cairn appears to have been an exception, since most of its residents owned their homes.⁴⁴ Argyle, close to two of the main Local 27 units, was also home to a high number of young families who owned their homes.⁴⁵ Residents of all of the districts identified problems in the areas where they lived. Some issues, such as the fact that East London had the highest number of people seeking help from Alcoholics Anonymous, were not clearly related to working life.⁴⁶ Virtually all of the issues were related to family social services and other efforts to improve the quality of life in an expanding city in postwar Canada.

London not only provided industrial employment in the postwar decades, but it also grew geographically. Being a member of a Local 27 unit meant earning enough money to rent or purchase housing in one of the planning districts close to the main bargaining units. But living in London's increasingly suburbanized neighbourhoods also required automobile ownership — another central postwar consumer ambition. Cars were something that people both desired and needed. The need was especially apparent in areas like White Oaks and Huron Heights, both of which were far from London's core. Dimitry Anastakis persuasively shows the important role of the automobile in post-World War II Canada, and London was certainly part of that transformation.⁴⁷

City planners knew that residential development had to accommodate the needs of working families. This awareness was evident in the planning of the White Oaks subdivision, which was at the south end of the city, in the early 1970s. The city envisioned a “balanced community in terms of population, age groupings and household sizes” that would also provide for a “wide choice of housing types within lower and middle price ranges.” White Oaks would also include community services, parks, and schools. In other words, it would come equipped with affordable housing and the amenities sought by working families in the Local 27 districts. White Oaks was a community in which a family earning union wages — like those earned by Local 27 members — could move into a house and enjoy a reasonable standard of living, but with the understanding that owning a car was a necessity.⁴⁸

Passenger vehicle registrations in London increased rapidly from 1950 to 1990. Approximately 10,000 new vehicles were registered in 1950, and this number grew to 59,000 in 1983.⁴⁹ In fact, the number of new vehicles registered in the city grew at a faster rate than overall employment or population. Personal vehicle registration continued to grow after 1983. The number of personal vehicles on the road increased from 158,386 in 1983 to 204,796 in 1987.⁵⁰ How did vehicle ownership relate to Local 27 and its members? The ability to purchase a vehicle, along with a home, was both a symbol of personal achievement for a unionized worker and a representation of the local's ability to bargain better wages for its members. Furthermore, as Christopher Dummit suggests, cars and masculine identity were intertwined in the postwar decades.⁵¹ For a male unionized worker, then, owning a car may have represented manhood and financial success. A car was the conveyance in which friends were driven to arenas and road racing took place. Perhaps most importantly, it expedited courtship and marriage. The type of vehicle purchased may have changed over time, but earning union wages made it easier.

How were major purchases financed? Consumer debt and purchasing power in Canada was the subject of public policy scrutiny in the immediate postwar years; governments in the 1950s debated the merits of limiting access to credit for household goods.⁵² Subsequently, a marked expansion of leisure spending and consumer credit occurred in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s. Personal spending more than doubled from \$25 billion to nearly \$70 billion between 1961 and 1971.⁵³ During the same period, consumer credit in Canada increased from \$4.3 billion to \$14.7 billion.⁵⁴

The fact that most people in London sought to own major consumer items is clearly evident both through the percentage of homes that were owned by their occupants and the number of registered vehicles on the city's roads, but also through the size of and amenities in homes. It is also clear that consumer credit played a role in this process, but so too did wage increases bargained by the union. Charles Wilson may have refuted the notion that COLA increased inflation, but union wages helped fuel consumer spending. Many consumer items were related to home ownership. The 1951 census accounted for household items like powered

washing machines, electric vacuums, telephones, radios, and automobiles. Almost 55 percent of London homes had automobiles, while 95 percent of them possessed radios.⁵⁵ Powered washing machines were found in 79 percent of homes and 70 percent had electric vacuums.⁵⁶ London households busily acquired the wide range of consumer goods that became available in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1950, London retailers like London Furniture sold washing machines and three-piece sofa sets.⁵⁷ By 1960, they had expanded inventories to include television sets.⁵⁸ The increased range of available consumer goods showed that there were people in the community earning enough wages to buy them.

What do these statistics reveal about what it may have meant to be a member of Local 27 who lived in one of the planning districts close to his or her workplace? It is clear that many local members were young and that a considerable number had young families. The dominant groups in their districts, they faced the challenge of providing for their children — particularly in terms of recreation and child care. These were communities where people knew their neighbours and where streets and parks were full of children playing. Bob Sexsmith remembered that working-class women watched each other's children, and men helped each other with tasks like home and car repair.⁵⁹ Informal supports like these would have been important. However, the clear interest that residents of the Local 27 districts showed in services for children — including care and recreation — reveals that more women were entering full-time employment and could no longer rely solely on their friends and neighbours for help.⁶⁰

What possible patterns of consumerism do we see for Local 27 members in the postwar decades? Although current and former members of the local discussed some aspects of consumer behaviour, such as purchasing a home, they did not comprehensively describe what they purchased in the postwar years. Regardless, it is possible to surmise what two fictional members of the local may have done with the material benefits of their unionized employment. The lives of these two characters, Pat McLean and Tracy Reilly, illustrate how people joined Local 27, what their family lives were like, and the aspirations that they had as consumers.⁶¹

Pat McLean

Pat McLean walked slowly and breathed with a slight wheeze as he climbed out of his new 1990 Chevy Cavalier. He had just bought the car as a retirement gift for himself and his wife, Lorraine, after working at GM Diesel for thirty-eight years. He and Lorraine, both from London, were in the parking lot of the Local 27 hall and were on their way to a retirement party for Pat and other GM workers. Pat grew up in the city's core and attended Lord Roberts public school. He then went to Beal Tech and took mostly shop courses. GM opened its London plant two years before Pat graduated from high school. He put his name in at the GM office right after collecting his diploma and was hired shortly thereafter.

Pat and Lorraine started dating a couple of years after they both finished high school. By that point, with Pat's savings from his GM employment, he and Lorraine were able to marry and buy their own home. They were only in their early twenties at the time. The house was a newer place in Argyle — Pat and Lorraine knew other GM workers who lived in the area. The house had cost \$5,800, which was a stretch at the time. The good news was that Pat was making around \$2,400 per year when they bought the house, and he managed to save the necessary \$500 down payment. He also had a good chance of working a couple of hundred hours of overtime every year, at time and a half, so he and Lorraine were able to carry the house without too much trouble.

Their first child, a daughter, was born in 1960. Lorraine stayed at home once their kids started to arrive. Pat, ever mindful of the cost of raising a family, had planned to buy a brand new Chevy in 1960. Happy to have a child on the way, he instead made his way downtown to London Motor Products and bought a seven-year-old Pontiac for \$495.⁶² Sitting in the Local 27 hall in 1990, he figured that buying that older Pontiac had been a good idea since his son was born two years after he bought it, and his wages had to go farther than before.

Pat and Lorraine's family soon outgrew the little house in Argyle. In 1970, they moved to a brand-new house near the community college. It cost them \$18,500.⁶³ It was in a good neighbourhood and close to work.

The city, although run by business types, had done a pretty good job of making sure that there were lot of public parks and pools in which kids could play. Pat's son liked hockey, and the two of them starting going to London Knights games in the early 1970s.

Working at GM meant going on strike sometimes, but otherwise the money kept coming in every week. But things changed a bit in the mid-1970s. There were some layoffs as GM management changed the products built in the plant. Pat had to take a couple of brief layoffs, even though he had been around a long time. But he and Lorraine had been all right. He got SUB while on layoff, and he was always recalled because of his seniority. Things at the plant got much better in the 1980s. Pat had thirty-three years of seniority in 1985, and GM Diesel was doing very well with LAV production. Pat and Lorraine's children went to Clarke Road Secondary School, which was a lot like Beal Tech, and then to Fanshawe. Their son became an apprentice tool and die maker at 3M, and their daughter took a course in restaurant management and went to work for a major hotel chain.

Pat walked a bit slowly when his name was called out by Jim Ashton, the president of Local 27. He was being recognized for his years of membership in the union. He thought that his laboured breathing was a result of working around welding fumes in his early years at GM. The union had even managed to fix that problem. A determined guy from Scotland was the plant health and safety rep, and he never let up on management.

Overall, GM had been good to a local guy from London who needed a good job after high school. Thanks to inflation, the house that Pat and Lorraine had bought in 1970 was worth a little over \$72,000 in 1990.⁶⁴ Pat and Lorraine were looking forward to collecting his GM pension and to the medical benefits provided to retirees. OHIP was sufficient, but it was nice to be able to stay in a semi-private room when in the hospital, as Lorraine had done when both of their children were born. Pat and Lorraine finished their evening at the Local 27 hall by having a drink down in the lounge. It wasn't a fancy place, but they had spent a lot of time in it over the years, and it felt a bit like home.

Tracy Reilly

Tracy Reilly's eyes and hands moved in unison as Harmony telephones moved down the line in front of her at Northern Telecom. It was a Friday afternoon in the late summer of 1990, and Tracy was looking forward to getting off work to pick up her son after his soccer game. She had just turned thirty-eight, and for many years, she had faced the challenges of being a single mom. Her ex, who used to work at the Ford plant in Talbotville, lost his job because he showed up drunk for work too many times. He took off and moved out to British Columbia. The child support cheques began bouncing shortly afterward.

This had all happened in 1977, and Tracy had been desperate to find good-paying work. She had worked for a temp agency that placed her in various jobs, but the pay was very low, barely more than minimum wage. She had met a friend of her mother's, a woman named Beulah, who encouraged her to fill out an application at Northern Telecom. She considered herself lucky to get a job at the telephone plant.

Work at the plant was not easy. The line moved fast, and it could be loud. There were a lot of other women in the plant, and they all seemed to know what was going on. They showed Tracy the ropes. She was amazed at how things worked. A couple of the guys in the plant were chewed out by one of the women stewards for bringing in a motorcycle calendar that included photos of women in bikinis. This was shortly after Tracy started. When working as a temp, she had been in an accounting office where one of the male employees had a Snap-On Tool calendar on his office wall. That calendar was full of women in bikinis, but nobody had said anything. The calendar guy had a habit of calling the women in the office "gals." Tracy wondered who he thought he was, calling anyone "gal."

Tracy did not plan on trying to raise a second kid on her own, but she knew that if she did contemplate it, she could get maternity leave. The local union was pushing women's issues in the workplace, and things were starting to be done to address harassment issues. A lot of guys didn't like it, but there were women in the union who pushed for change. Women

who got pregnant were given lighter-duty work, and efforts were made to identify health and safety hazards that could harm a fetus.

Tracy's wages enabled her to make some major purchases. In 1980, she bought a small house off of Trafalgar Street for \$37,500.⁶⁵ That was a big financial leap, but Tracy made about \$20,000 that year, including overtime. Interest rates were high, but she was covered by a COLA clause at work and received regular wage increases on top of that. Northern Telecom also had a lot fewer layoffs than places like GM Diesel, so Tracy felt confident that she could carry the house. The house was really hot in the summer, so she installed a central air unit from Eaton's that cost her \$759.⁶⁶ It was worth it as the house was much nicer after the unit was installed.

She made it out of the plant at the end of her shift and over to east London in time to pick up her son. Kids always seem to want something new, and her son figured that he needed a computer. She knew that he would take care of it, and besides, she could try using it as well. An Epson desktop computer could be purchased for \$918, a worthwhile investment.⁶⁷ Tracy felt confident making major purchases. Her house was already worth almost \$66,000.⁶⁸ She could draw on the equity in it if she lost her job. Tracy sometimes compared her work to the jobs that her sister, Ann, had found. Ann had spent most of her working life doing clerical and administrative work that did not pay very well. She recently got a non-union job working for the Ontario Ministry of Industry that paid \$449 per week.⁶⁹ Tracy made almost that much money ten years ago. Ann had always worked in non-union jobs. She had only ever earned minimum wage, so the government job was a step up for her. She had also only ever had two weeks of vacation, the minimum according to the *Employment Standards Act*.

Tracy felt like she had done pretty well as a single mom working under a collective agreement. Even though she was not involved in union activities, she was still glad to belong to Local 27. She only had to look at her sister to see that the union brought wages, benefits, and job security that non-union workers did not enjoy. Tracy had been able to build some economic security for her small family because of her unionized job, and she sure didn't need that deadbeat in British Columbia to help her.

These fictional narratives, based on data found in the *London Free*

Press and other sources cited in this study, show that wages, job security, and overall working conditions enjoyed by Local 27 members enabled them to have life choices. They could purchase homes, pay for their children to go to school, and toil in workplaces where some efforts were made to promote equity between men and women. Local 27 members were not solely dependent on government social programs to protect them in case of illness or when they retired. Instead, many of them enjoyed additional benefits that helped them when they were sick and took care of them when they retired.

Home, Family, and a Local Union

What did Local 27 do for its members and their families? Were the benefits brought to Local 27 members by the union part of a compromise, an uneasy truce, or a method of inaugurating a republic of consumption? Did the local bring what its members wanted? The most obvious challenge with conclusively answering these questions is that there was no such thing as a typical Local 27 member or family. Instead, there were GM Diesel families, Northern Telecom families, and families specific to the other various bargaining units. There was further variation of family type and experience within each bargaining unit. All of the families benefited from the union, but not uniformly. The workers and families relied on the local to bring them the best, but not necessarily equal, bargaining outcomes.

A rank-and-file member looking back from 1990 over his or her working years would have seen that those benefits were often quite tangible, particularly if they were provided in a collective agreement covering a larger bargaining unit. He or she might have reflected on improved wages, possibly increased along with the CPI, and health and insurance benefits. Many Local 27 members who were looking forward to retirement after decades of toil in the industrial workplace could also look forward to collecting a pension that would be augmented by state retirement plans. It was through accomplishments like those that Local 27 also achieved a loose form of pattern bargaining that brought tangible benefits to workers and their families.

The enthusiasm shown by union members for the gains made by Local 27, and by the entire UAW and later CAW, leads to the conclusion that workers and their families wanted the material gains pursued by the union. The UAW's decision to pursue primarily economic gains at the bargaining table was made by the time Local 27 was founded, and it is highly unlikely that anyone from the national or international union offices ever asked Local 27 members if they were willing to trade wage and benefit increases for more control over the work process. Workers gladly accepted the economics of Fordism and the employment that it created. Furthermore, the loss of Fordist employment was frequently framed within the context of how it harmed domesticity and family life. A rank-and file member in the 1990s, anticipating his or her retirement from the local after twenty or thirty years of employment, may not have understood Fordism in academic terms but would have recognized the material benefits that it brought to workers' families. This was especially true of women who had spent their working lives as members of a Local 27 bargaining unit. They earned wages that were much better than the average female wage in London and were therefore able to make important economic contributions to their families as partners in relationships or as lone-parent heads of families.

Furthermore, as shown in the case of Steve Van Eldick in the late 1980s, the changing nature of workers' families shaped changes in bargaining priorities. Local activists and leaders recognized those changes and responded to them. Van Eldick worked with other gays and lesbians at 3M, and he knew of gay men working at the Ford Talbotville plant who were run off the road by their co-workers because of their sexual orientation. So the local's decision to take up a cause for Van Eldick had special meaning.⁷⁰

Layoffs and being compelled to accept work away from home were events with which the union could help rank-and-file members, but it could not stop them and their families from feeling under duress. Holding on to full-time jobs instead of considering job sharing or elimination of overtime was a priority for the union. Robert Rutherford shows that male workers in postwar Canada conformed to a gendered breadwinner

role.⁷¹ However, Thomas Dunk argues that the breadwinner stereotype broke down somewhat in the face of women's resistance in the workplace.⁷² Although in more recent years, men may not have been formally trained to adhere to this image in the education system, it was clearly a major subtext of the lives of male Local 27 members. Men were raised to learn skills and attitudes that would serve them well in the industrial workplace. Women also became breadwinners and desired the economic rewards that unionized job could bring. They married, had children, established households, and then sought to maintain what they had achieved.

Growing up in a unionized household did not necessarily lead to securing unionized employment. Since London offered a range of employment prospects, children from Local 27 households need not have automatically gone into a factory after finishing school. Indeed, local members were aware of the employment diversity in their city. One worker who went to Oshawa when laid off at GM Diesel, Mark Smithson, told the *Free Press*, "Oshawa is no comparison to London. All it is is G.M."⁷³ Local 27 members recognized that they lived in a city with a significant industrial sector, but the concept of the "company town" was alien to them.

London changed in the postwar decades. The city developed an education infrastructure designed to supply industrial employers with a regular stream of new workers. New working-class neighbourhoods were planned to house those workers and their families. In turn, working families relied on city services like parks and recreation and hoped for further service expansion. Local 27 members thus expected the state to be a participant in their lives and may have considered social and recreational services to be part of their overall livelihoods, along with the economic gains made through collective bargaining. The local articulated a bargaining agenda that placed as much importance on government intervention in workers' lives as it did on employer wages. Life for Local 27 members was a mosaic of vocational training, marriage, parenthood, union industrial work, and some material acquisition.

The local could shape some aspects of working-class family life, but it could not ameliorate all of the challenges confronting workers. This was true regardless of whether a person was a local activist or a rank-and-file

member. The people who went to Oshawa to work when facing layoffs at GM in London were rank-and-file members. Alternatively, someone like Al Campbell, who was at the epicentre of local union activism, was as impacted by the 1971 closure of the Eaton Auto plant as any other person who worked there. Families were all equally shaped by events like closures, strikes, and layoffs.

Working-class marriages could be difficult, and spouses struggled to get along with each other. These marriages may have at times been as difficult as those described by Komarovskiy and by Rubin. But working-class men and women in Local 27, such as Jim Wilkes, often formed supportive marriages and relied upon those relationships during times of workplace turmoil. Although the union could not shape the life choices made by workers, it could provide the means to solve the economic problems facing families. If they wished, Local 27 members could squander the benefits that the union had won for them. Or they could use their unionized wages and benefits to acquire homes, pay for their children's education, and plan for retirement. Local 27 was able to provide its members with a way of collectively pursuing better lives for their families, a way that might not otherwise have been open to them. Like the woman in figure 8.2, whose husband nominates her to the union's negotiating committee, members and their families looked to the union to help them, and Local 27's activists and leaders did their best to make sure it did.⁷⁴

CONCLUSION

LOOKING BACK

Anyone who had belonged to Local 27 in 1950 and looked back at the local's progress in 1990 would have quickly noted that much had changed about the local since George Specht chased Eaton Auto from Windsor to London in 1950. Local 27 grew from one medium-sized bargaining unit when it was founded to include a diversity of units, both in size and type. What does this story tell us about how local unions developed in the four decades after World War II and the place that they occupied in the lives of their members? In the case of Local 27, the influences on its development included local activists, employers, and rank-and-file workers. The bargaining agenda that it sought to shape was in part the creation of the UAW and CAW leadership, but it was also formed by the hopes and aspirations of rank-and-file members and activists.

While not racially diverse, the local included an array of workers from an assortment of ethnic backgrounds. Their family roots lay in various European countries or in other areas of Canada. Most members of Local 27 grew up in the London area, however. They invariably came from working-class, although not necessarily union, backgrounds, and thus they shared similar life experiences. Many of them lived in London's industrial east end, attended schools that offered some form of vocational training, and sought industrial employment when they entered the workforce. Joining Local 27 became a part of their process of leaving school and finding work.

Because of its composite form, Local 27 was unlike many other large local unions in Canada, but despite its uniqueness, its history reveals much about what a local union did in the postwar years and the influences

that shaped it. In terms of its founding, Local 27 was a creation of both the UAW Canadian office and of rank-and-file workers. George Burt did not want to lose a plant to another union, nor did he want an employer avoiding unionization. Eaton Auto management invited Windsor workers to work in the new London plant, and they formed the nucleus of Local 27's original membership.

The local was built around a core group of activists, who became one of the primary influences on its progress from 1950 to 1990. The Eaton Auto workers were the first to engage in activism, even though few of them stayed involved in union affairs after the local was founded. Later activists, such as Al Campbell, built the local's internal structure. They helped organize new bargaining units, wrote and printed the *Local 27 News*, worked on political campaigns, and performed all of the other big and small tasks that go into building an organization based on membership. They built a financially autonomous local that did not rely on the national and international union offices for assistance. It was because of them that an effective local structure was built.

Part of wider political and policy discussions that took place in UAW Region 7 in the decades after World War II, Local 27 was an inherently political organization. While it contained a dedicated Left caucus, its activists covered the political spectrum; these politically diverse activists were the ones most passionately engaged in discussions over what the local should do for its members, a debate that unquestionably strengthened the local and made it more of a grassroots organization. The UAW leadership anguished over how to control the Local 27 Left and went to great lengths to identify who was pro- and anti-administration, but the local's membership supported local leftists. They may not have always agreed with Al Campbell's politics, but they knew that he was an effective union activist who would tirelessly defend them.

Rather than submit Local 27 to a dramatic purge, the Canadian UAW leadership sought to identify and control pro- and anti-administration groups. They gradually aligned the local's political agenda with wider UAW policies. This closer association with the national union administration coincided with more Local 27 activists joining the UAW staff.

Furthermore, local activists closed ranks around any of their members who were criticized by either the UAW leadership or by people in other unions. Nonetheless, staff representatives, who were part of the UAW administration and chose to support many of the decisions of local activists, occupied a space between the national office and the local. Despite the different agendas of the local and the national leadership, Local 27 actively supported broader national union policy goals: its members marched against wage and price controls, rallied in opposition to free trade, and ardently supported the creation of an independent Canadian autoworkers' union.

These observations are not intended to refute the views expressed by historians like Steven Meyer or Don Wells.¹ Severe purges did occur elsewhere in the UAW in the postwar decades, and some UAW locals, such as Local 707, were creations of the UAW national office. My point is rather that the interaction between Local 27 and the UAW administration reveals that relations between locals and the national office were not uniform. Relations could be complex and often depended on the personalities of the people involved.

The loss of the Left had a marked impact on discourse within the local. The Left caucus gradually disappeared because of a combination of job loss, the deaths of leftist activists, or a conscious decision to become politically silent. But although the nature of activism in the local changed in the 1970s, this did not mean that activism disappeared. Women streamed into many Local 27 bargaining units in the 1960s and 1970s and became the new core of activists, taking up the cause of grassroots representation. They suffered from gender discrimination, were aware of the issues found by academics like Pamela Sugiman, and showed enormous agency in their response to workplace challenges.² Women like Edith Johnston, Beulah Harrison, Georgina Anderson, and Julie White agitated for greater involvement in running the local and in determining bargaining priorities. They were supported by the Left in Local 27, which suggests that women in other local unions were similarly supported.

Debating the local's structure and policies was a common occurrence among union activists. The local built a hall that served as a forum for

debate, an administrative hub, and a place where social activities could take place. Although the hall attracted some rank-and-file members, it was more commonly the home of the same activists who had built and ran it. The importance of activists in building a local union has also been found in other studies of unions in the postwar period. This history of Local 27 thus adds to work done by Peter Friedlander, Lisa Fine, Bill Freeman, and David Sobel and Susan Meurer by showing the range of activities in which activists engaged and the way in which they shaped so many aspects of a local union's agenda and operation. In particular, it shows how activists operated in a large, composite local union that represented a broad range of bargaining units.

The local was as much the product of interaction with employers as it was the result of deliberation among people within the union. People became members of industrial unions through being hired by a unionized employer or through choosing to sign membership cards during an organizing drive. The collective bargaining process in which unions and employers interacted was central to the postwar labour relations system. Local 27 bargained dozens of collective agreements between 1950 and 1990, thus gaining much more experience with contract negotiation than locals that only bargained with one employer during the same years. The importance of interaction between local unions and employers is crucial to understanding how the post-World War II labour relations process functioned. Analyzing interaction between people like Charles Wilson and Walter Reuther is important, but so too is listening to the voices of local activists and exploring how staff reps like George Specht negotiated with company managers like E.S. Brent.

The wide range of private companies with which Local 27 bargained from 1950 to 1990 ranged in size from less than twenty workers at London Generator Service to over a thousand at Northern Telecom. The size of a bargaining unit in many ways determined the influence that it had within the local's composite structure. Virtually all of the employers with which the local bargained resisted unionization to some extent. If a treaty of any type was concluded in the postwar years, it was one that many employers violated to varying degrees. General Motors accepted Local 27 after an

abortive organizing drive by an AFL federal affiliate but firmly stood by management's right to run the plant without undue union interference. Kelvinator and Northern Telecom operated employee associations that were eventually replaced by Local 27. AWL Steego forced a strike when the local organized its workers, and Grant Wilson threatened his staff over unionization. Only the first owner of Universal Engineering and the family that founded London Generator Service actually advised their workers to approach Local 27 about organizing. Most employers would have preferred not to deal with unions.

Local 27's history provides important insights into postwar labour-management relations, particularly with respect to the postwar settlement. The local clearly operated through the official labour relations framework created by the state, thus adhering to industrial legality when negotiating collective agreements and arbitrating grievances. But local activists and rank-and-file members continually challenged management through methods outside of the labour relations framework. Those unofficial methods were as central to the workplace as formalized collective bargaining. Local 27 officers attended labour-management meetings at which they pressed employers over a range of issues from health and safety, to workplace amenities, to job posting. Rank-and-file members and activists also occasionally posted notices like the Turkey of the Month Award at Northern Telecom and enraged at least one company president to the point that he punched a refrigerator housing across a room.

As both John Barnard and Sam Gindin have shown, the terms of the collective bargaining process across the UAW were already established by the time Local 27 was founded and began to organize other bargaining units.³ Many studies of unions in the postwar decades, such as David Sobel and Susan Meurer's *Working at Inglis*, emphasize the importance of strikes, lockouts, and plant closures. This is understandable, given that a strike or lockout at a workplace can be a defining moment in a union's history. In contrast to a local like UAW Local 222 in Oshawa or Local 199 in St. Catharines, Local 27 did not have one *single* defining strike, lockout, or closure. Instead, it had important strikes like the one at Wolverine Tube and notable closures such as those at Eaton Auto and

Kelvinator. On the other hand, it added new units as other ones closed. Local 27 learned important lessons from these major events and crises; as former staff rep Bob Nickerson said, “We were ready” for another closure after Kelvinator.⁴

The local did not feel particularly constrained by the labour relations framework associated with the postwar settlement; instead, it chose to operate within it. Local 27 respected the *Ontario Labour Relations Act* and expected employers to do the same. Labour relations varied across bargaining units, though; relations with employers like 3M were better than those with units such as Wilco. Local 27 leaders and members continually challenged a central part of every collective agreement: management rights clauses. They grieved job assignments, discipline, dismissal, and other issues. They were often successful when they pursued grievances to arbitration, although even a successful arbitration could have mixed results. For example, arbitrators did not change collective agreement wording; they could, however, alter the meaning of agreement clauses. Relations between Local 27 and employers thus took two routes: one was through the collective bargaining process and the apparatus established by the state, and the second was through continual contact in meetings, conversations in the workplace, and occasional deliberate worker protests about management behaviour. Organizing new workplaces, negotiating collective agreements, and going on strike were important events in the local’s history, but they did not constitute the bulk of what happened when the local dealt with employers. As noted in the introduction to this study, the postwar settlement has been called a “Faustian bargain.” But if Local 27’s activists and leaders felt that they were suffering from such an arrangement, they certainly did not show it through their relations with employers. They exhibited considerable agency when dealing with management.

The local’s relations with the state were not as intertwined as they were with employers. The local only rarely called on the state to intervene in the labour relations process. It railed against state efforts to regulate wages and demanded that governments at all levels provide good social programs and services. Most of these interactions with the state occurred through contact with London politicians such as Liberal MP Charles Turner.

Local 27 brought tangible economic rewards to its members, even if those rewards were not always equal. Contrary to Wells's description of UAW/CAW Local 707, the Local 27's experience was not one of "little victories and big defeats."⁵ Local 27 members did not inhabit a "republic of consumption," but they had aspirations for a decent standard of living that were realized through union membership. Wages generally increased, and many workers had access to pensions and other benefits. Indeed, they were in many ways privileged compared to non-unionized workers: their employment terms exceeded the minimum legislated standards of Ontario's *Employment Standards Act*, which were intended to protect non-unionized employees. Being covered by a Local 27 collective agreement brought better economic rewards and working conditions.

Comparisons between unionized and non-unionized workers are often difficult to make. It is in many ways easier to study the lives of unionized workers than those of non-unionized workers in the decades after World War II. The former have archives that hold documents about them, union halls in which they can gather, leaders who try to maintain some sense of institutional memory, academics who study them, and news reporters who solicit their opinions about issues relating to their workplaces. Non-union workers are mostly found in government statistics. One of the curiosities of reading forty years' worth of *London Free Press* articles is that the paper concentrated on issues that pertained to unionized workplaces. Content about non-unionized workers is rare. For instance, even though seven hundred workers lost their jobs at Kelvinator, figure 8.1 shows that the *London Free Press* only counted the five hundred unionized families. This suggests that a person who wants his or her workplace experience to be remembered should work in a unionized job. To be non-unionized is to be virtually lost to posterity. Thus, this study has attempted to show what it meant to be a Local 27 member in London in the postwar period rather than to compare unionized and non-unionized workers in the city.

While economic rewards were important, membership in the local also gave people a sense of having some control over their working lives. Workers at Kelvinator, London Motor Products, and Northern Electric

joined the local because they did not feel that they had been treated fairly by management. This was surely a common feeling in every bargaining unit that was organized. Being able to express themselves in the workplace was a great gain for workers. It made it possible for women like Julie White to speak out in favour of workplace equity and to advance issues that concerned them.

Local 27 successfully built a durable organizational structure that attracted successive generations of activists. Members enjoyed economic gains and had a voice in their workplaces. Moreover, the local did not simply focus on the workplace and the bread-and-butter issues associated with business unionism. Instead, activists hoped to build an institution that would move into the wider London community, pursuing the type of social unionism agenda described by Pradeep Kumar and Stephanie Ross. The hall on First Street was intended to be a home away from home for rank-and-file members, and the venue from which the local would portray itself in the city. Local activists supported the UAW's objective of electing the NDP, lobbied politicians at all levels of government, hosted social events, and participated in the London Labour Council.

The union's social agenda brought only some of the results for which activists had hoped. The hall attracted some rank-and-file participation, but the same activists who were busy in various areas of the local's operations were the people who were often found at the hall. It became their recreation space. Although they may have noticed this lack of involvement of other members, they may not have been fully aware of its consequences. They may have looked around the hall and seen people attending events without noticing that they were mostly other activists like themselves.

The difficulties that Local 27 encountered were most evident in the progress of its political program. Despite the fact that NDP candidates were continually promoted in the *Local 27 News* and local members were encouraged to support the party, the NDP won no elections in London until 1990, when the provincial party unexpectedly came to power. London remained an ideologically conservative city that preferred to vote Liberal or Conservative. In fact, Charles Turner — one of the politicians

who did the most to represent the local's interests and whose background was similar to that of many rank-and-file members — was a Liberal. The local's experience with trying to promote to the NDP to its members was not unusual. Keith Archer notes that the members of a union that was affiliated with the NDP were more likely to vote for the party than members of a union that was not. Yet being part of a large national union that supported the NDP was not enough to bring it electoral success.⁶

Local 27 did not call itself “London's One Big Union,” but it could have been described as such. It gradually grew to constitute a large percentage of overall union membership in the city that was affiliated with the AFL-CIO and the Canadian Labour Congress. Many Local 27 activists, such as those working on behalf of women's rights, felt that they could better achieve their objectives through their union than through involvement with a group like the London Labour Council. Other activists, however, felt that an organization like the London Labour Council offered another important forum in which to pursue their agenda.

Why did the local grow in terms of membership and have success in the workplace, yet have difficulty promoting a social agenda? Part of the answer lies in the wider community. With London's growth in the post-war decades, rank-and-file union members had access to a range of social activities that may have been more convenient or enticing than events at the union hall. Local 27 members lived in a North American consumer culture that afforded a wide range of experiences, provided that a person had the income to purchase them. Local 27 members earned incomes that enabled them to participate in consumerism, but they did not live to accumulate goods. Services provided by the state were important to them. The union, perhaps without fully considering the effect of its policies, encouraged its members to participate in society as consumers and citizens beyond the workplace and union hall. Rank-and-file membership was thus not only about the union and the workplace; it was about using the union's help to get the most from work and to participate more fully in society.

The local's structure was a source of weakness as well as strength. While it was able to grow and organize new bargaining units, and to

nurture successive generations of committed activists, the diversity of Local 27 membership, spread as it was across a large number of bargaining units, created challenges for the local. Rank-and-file members, like Joe Laporte, often identified with the local as it operated in their individual workplaces before they considered the local in terms of all of its bargaining units. The local experienced major strikes, organizing victories, and plant closures; however, these were not events in which all local members participated. It was consequently difficult to rally a large number of rank-and-file workers in a wide number of bargaining units around a common struggle.

Local 27 members did, however, have common experiences. They all had some contact with the collective bargaining process and labour-management relations since they were all covered by collective agreements. They all feared the loss of unionized jobs and the upheaval caused by the loss of regular incomes. Most of them lived in the same area of London, many of them went to the same schools, and they had similar working-class family backgrounds. Those were the ties that bound them together more than strikes, plant closures, and organizing drives.

After 1990, the local enjoyed successes but also faced some challenges. Some bargaining units closed — notably Northern Telecom in 1994 — while new ones were organized. Free trade and economic turmoil had an impact on London, but Local 27 continued to hold onto its major bargaining units. For instance, GM Diesel was sold and split between two new owners: General Dynamics Land Systems and Electromotive Canada. Both companies continued to operate in the city. Most importantly, by 2011, the local had seven units of workers employed in health care, including workers at all of London's major hospitals.⁷ This marked a major shift in the local's membership from manufacturing to service sector work. The Local 27 members interviewed for or discussed in this book took different paths. Many local activists who had come out of bargaining units like 3M, Northern Telecom, and Firestone went on to significant leadership positions in the local. Julie White and Tim Carrie both eventually became president. They also assumed prominent leadership roles in the broader CAW. White went on to head the women's

program for the union in 2001.⁸ Carrie became president of the CAW Council in 2008, and Peter Kennedy was elected CAW national secretary-treasurer in 2009.⁹

Hector McLellan and Bob Sexsmith maintained their commitment to activism through the labour council. Georgina Anderson left Local 27 when Bendix closed but joined another CAW local when she found work at a factory in Stratford, Ontario. Joe Laporte enjoyed a long retirement after working at both Eaton Automotive and General Motors. Jim Ashton passed away suddenly in 1994, just as he was commencing a new role as staff rep. Bob Nickerson and Al Seymour retired after years of service to the union. Gord Wilson became president of the Ontario Federation of Labour from 1986 to 1997, a tenure that coincided with the tumultuous first term of Ontario Premier Mike Harris. Edith Johnston returned to London to retire. Al Campbell eventually retired to Cape Breton and passed away in 1995. Roland Parris and Rene Montague died in 2008.

All of the local's activists had an impact on its development after 1990, and those who assumed CAW leadership roles enhanced Local 27's profile in the national union. Membership in Local 27 was also fondly remembered by people who were no longer associated with it. Past members who had long ago moved into new jobs, like John Groenewegen, Peter Hensels, and George Medland, all felt that belonging to Local 27 had been beneficial for them. In Joe Laporte's words, the local continued to try and be "real good" for its members in the closing years of the twentieth century and beyond.

The local played a key role in organizing and leading the London Days of Action organized in 1995 in response to the policy agenda of the Harris government in Ontario. It continued to play an important role on the London Labour Council beyond 1990. Tim Carrie served as its president for two years. Although nationally the CAW shifted its political orientation away from solely supporting the NDP in the years following the turn of the century, Local 27 contributed to the party's most important federal electoral victory in London when Irene Mathysen was elected as MP for London-Fanshawe in 2006. As always, Local 27 took a keen interest in politics and activism in the community.

Local 27, from its inception onward, was built around a core group of activists and was subsequently shaped by interaction with the national and international union offices, employers, and the community. Rather than a social institution that wanted to be involved in the workplace, it was an institution rooted in workplace struggle that wanted to have a place in wider social discourse. This was the principal reason why it was successful in the workplace and why its agenda faltered the farther it moved from its core mission and from rank-and-file issues on the job. This local union, started in one auto parts plant, became an effective representative for workers across many bargaining units. It was not simply the product of national or international union offices; instead, it was the manifestation of working-class aspirations and agency for a voice at work and economic progress at home. Local 27 was not always perfect, but it was a working-class institution about which its members could rightly say that it was “our union.”

APPENDIX A

LOCAL 27 BARGAINING UNITS

Eaton Rich Automotive	1950
General Motors	1950
Minnesota Mining and Manufacture (3M)	1952
Kelvinator	1953
Proto Tools	1953
Central Chevrolet Oldsmobile	1956
London Generator Service	1959
Fruehauf Trailer Company of Canada	1963
Tecumseh Products	1963
Keeprite Unifin	1967
Bendix	1968
Northern Electric/Telecom	1968
Eagle Machine Tool	1969
International Harvester	1969
Firestone	1970
Globe Envelopes	1970
Universal Engineering	1971
ITT Lighting	1972
Alcan	1973
AWL Steego	1974
Phillips Electronics	1974
Mastic Manufacturing	1976
Forest City International Truck	1979
Carmor Manufacturing	1980
London Motor Products	1980
Waugh and Mackewn	1980
Sparton of Canada	1981
Wide-Lite	1985
Form-Rite	1988
Highbury Ford	1988
Burgess Wholesale	1990
Eastown Chevrolet Oldmobile	1990

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEWS

Georgina Anderson	16 November 2006	Bendix
Stan Ashworth	19 April 2006	Kelvinator
Archie Baillie	18 July 2006	General Motors
Jane Bigelow	14 September 2006	Former London mayor
Jeanie Campbell	1 April 2007	Spouse of Al Campbell
Tim Carrie	15 December 2006	Firestone/Accuride
John Groenewegen	18 April 2006	Kelvinator
Beulah Harrison	16 November 2006	Northern Telecom
Peter Hensels	10 April 2006	Kelvinator
Rose Hurt	12 April 2006	Kelvinator office staff
Edith Johnston	21 June 2006	Minnesota Mining (3M)
René (Joe) Laporte	21 December 2006	Eaton Rich Automotive
Shirley Martin	7 July 2006	Local 27 office staff
Frank May	20 April 2006	Kelvinator and Minnesota Mining (3M)
Hector McLellan	12 June 2006	General Motors
Tom and Sheila McSwiggan	19 June 2006	Northern Telecom
Charles Medland and Russell Mackinson	26 April 2006	Kelvinator
George Medland	6 April 2006	Kelvinator
Maida Miners	21 April 2006	Kelvinator office staff
Rene Montague	18 September 2006	Northern Telecom
Raymond Murray	26 September 2006	Canadian Labour Congress staff
Roland Parris	28 January 2006	General Motors
Albert Plumb	14 April 2006	Kelvinator
Bob Sexsmith	13 January 2006	Proto Tool
Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson	22 June and 3 October 2006	UAW/CAW staff
Julie White	1 November 2006 20 January 2010	Minnesota Mining (3M)
Jim Wilkes	3 February 2006	London Motor Products
Gord Wilson	15 August 2006	Minnesota Mining (3M)
Steve Van Eldick	12 November 2006	Minnesota Mining (3M)

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

- 1 On the broader UAW and CAW political programs in Canada and on national union economic policy, see Charlotte A.B Yates, *From Plant to Politics: The Autoworkers Union in Postwar Canada*; and Sam Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers: The Birth and Transformation of a Union*. In her analysis of the UAW's political program in Canada and the ideological debates that raged in the union in the immediate post-World War II decades, Yates persuasively argues that in the postwar period unions played a key role in shaping and identifying political and economic stability.
- 2 Yates, *From Plant to Politics*, 5.
- 3 The importance and size of the Left caucuses in American-based unions is discussed in Judith Stepan-Norris and Maurice Zeitlin, *Left Out: Reds and America's Industrial Unions*; Roger Keeran, *The Communist Party and the Auto Workers Union*; and Steven Meyer, "Stalin over Wisconsin": *The Making and Unmaking of Militant Unionism, 1900–1950*. Purges of the Left are central to these analyses.
- 4 Walter Reuther is a central figure in every analysis of the autoworkers' union, including those of Yates and Gindin. He is especially prominent in studies of the US labour movement. See, for example, Nelson Lichtenstein's *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor*.
- 5 Yates, *From Plant to Politics*, 66–67.
- 6 John Barnard, *American Vanguard: The United Auto Workers During the Reuther Years, 1935–1970*, 261. This book, though in many ways a definitive history of the autoworkers' union in the United States, makes scant reference to the UAW in Canada.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 274.
- 8 Yates, *From Plant to Politics*, 71.
- 9 On this new approach to Fordism and the postwar compromise or accord, see Jane D. Poulson, "An Uneasy Stability: 'Unpacking' the Postwar Labor-Management Accord." For an industrial-relations perspective on the postwar period, see Bruce Nissen, "A Post-World War II Social Accord," in *U.S. Labor Relations, 1945–1989: Accommodation and Conflict*, ed. Bruce Nissen; and Clark Kerr, John T. Dunlop, Frederick Harbison, and Charles A. Myers, *Industrialism and Industrial Man*.

- 10 Bryan Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800–1991*, 231.
- 11 Julie Guard, “Womanly Innocence and Manly Self-Respect: Gendered Challenges to Labour’s Postwar Compromise,” in *Labour Pains, Labour Gains: Fifty Years of PC1003*, ed. Cy Gonick, Paul Phillips, and Jesse Vorst, 119.
- 12 Peter McInnis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation: Shaping the Postwar Settlement in Canada, 1943–1950*, 7.
- 13 Leo Panitch and Don Swartz, *From Consent to Coercion: The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms*, 3, 21.
- 14 See Michael Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labour Process Under Monopoly Capitalism*, 113, 180.
- 15 For a discussion of the introduction and impact of the Auto Pact, see Dimitri Anastakis, *Auto Pact: Creating a Borderless North American Auto Industry, 1960–1971*.
- 16 See Melvyn Dubofsky, *The State and Labor in Modern America*, 205.
- 17 This last observation was famously made by C. Wright Mills in *The New Men of Power: America’s Labor Leaders*, 9. However, this quote is also frequently taken out of context. Mills goes on to argue that “the labour leader is an army general, and a parliamentary debater, a political boss and an entrepreneur, a rebel and a disciplinarian.” Labor leaders — whom Mills studied at the national, state, and local levels — played a more complex role than the simple straightforward management of discontent.
- 18 Examples of this debate include Don Wells, “The Impact of the Postwar Compromise on Canadian Unionism: The Formation of an Autoworker Local in the 1950s”; and Barnard, *American Vanguard*. In Wells’s analysis, the local union was a creation of the UAW bureaucracy that mitigated worker militancy. In contrast, while Barnard notes the influence of the international union’s leadership, he essentially concludes that rank-and-file workers and their leaders approved of Fordist bargaining objectives.
- 19 Peter Friedlander, *The Emergence of a UAW Local, 1936–1939: A Study in Class and Culture*.
- 20 Steven Meyer’s work on UAW 248, “Stalin over Wisconsin”: *The Making and Unmaking of Militant Unionism, 1900–1950*, demonstrates the way in which the UAW international office was able to systematically purge leftists, while Jonathan Cutler, in *Labor’s Time: Shorter Hours, the UAW, and the Struggle for American Unionism*, chronicles UAW Local 600’s efforts to secure a shorter work week and challenge established UAW policy. Neither

- local was, however, able to change the UAW leadership's views, whether on leftists or on standard working hours.
- 21 Bill Freeman argues in *1005: Political Life in a Local Union* that workers were still politically active at the local level and that observers of the labour movement should not succumb to perceptions of political apathy among rank-and-file union members. In fact, political discourse was a vibrant part of working-class life.
 - 22 In *Madison's Battery Workers, 1934–1952*, Robert Zieger reviews the role of a federal labour union in the workplace, while David Sobel and Susan Meurer discuss a steelworkers' local in their broader study of the John Inglis Company, *Working at Inglis: The Life and Death of a Canadian Factory*.
 - 23 Stephanie Ross, "The Making of CUPE: Structure, Democracy and Class Formation," 9.
 - 24 Pradeep Kumar, *From Uniformity to Divergence: Industrial Relations in Canada and the United States*, 156–57.
 - 25 Stephanie Ross, "Varieties of Social Unionism: Toward a Framework for Comparison," 17.
 - 26 Examples of analyses that incorporate social and institutional methodologies include Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788–1850*; Bryan Palmer and Greg Kealey, *Dreaming of What Might Be: The Knights of Labour in Ontario, 1880–1900*; and Craig Heron, ed., *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917–1925*.
 - 27 For revealing analyses of women's experience in the UAW and in the Canadian labour movement during the postwar years, see Pamela Sugiman, *Labour's Dilemma: The Gender Politics of Auto Workers in Canada, 1937–1979*; Linda Briskin and Patricia McDermott, eds., *Women Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy, and Militancy*; and Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz, eds., *Union Sisters: Women in the Labour Movement*.
 - 28 Consumerism has been the subject of several studies in recent years, with research focusing on Canada and the United States. In *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, Liz Cohen argues that notions of citizenship became tied to a person's ability to participate in consumer culture. She also notes how increased incomes enabled working-class families to participate more fully as consumers in postwar America. Joy Parr cites changes in consumer behaviour in Canada in the postwar years in *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years*.
 - 29 On the role that alcohol played in postwar working-class leisure, see Craig Heron, *Booze: A Distilled History*.

- 30 For many immigrants, family bonds took on an almost sacred significance. These ties were closely followed by support networks formed through marriage, church, and other familiar bonds. Franca Iacovetta discusses examples of these ties in *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto*.
- 31 A radical labour movement that operated largely in western Canada, the One Big Union reached its peak between 1919 and 1922. For a full examination of the union's history, see David Bercuson, *Fools and Wise Men: The Rise and Fall of the One Big Union*.
- 32 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 33 The most insightful studies on the role of local activists and the routine operations of unions were completed in the 1950s and 1960s. Sidney M. Peck, in *The Rank-and-File Leader*, and Leonard R. Sayles and George Strauss, in *The Local Union: Its Place in the Industrial Plant*, describe local unions and rank-and-file members whose interest in union affairs ebbed and flowed over time. Indeed, Peck characterized the union steward, who represented the grassroots level of union activism, as a "social person who experiences the everyday conditions of work both as a worker and leader" (33).
- 34 On the role of amateur athletics in working-class life, see Thomas Dunk, *It's A Working Man's Town: Male Working-Class Culture*. For the importance of sports in Canadian culture, particularly hockey, see Colin D. Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Modern Canada*. Athletic pastimes were clearly important in working-class culture, although, as Dunk shows, women were passive participants in essentially male pursuits.
- 35 On the development of postwar housing, see Michael Doucet and John Weaver, *Housing the North American City*.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 119.
- 37 For more on the subjectivity of oral history, see Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different," in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perkins and Alistair Thomson, 38.
- 38 At the time of writing, I hold the interview recordings privately, but they will be donated to an archive as the interviewees pass away.

CHAPTER I Built to Last

- 1 On the founding and expansion of the UAW in the 1930s and 1940s, see Sam Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers: The Birth and Transformation of a Union*.

- 2 On the purging of Local 248, see Steven Meyer, “*Stalin over Wisconsin*”: *The Making and Unmaking of Militant Unionism, 1900–1950*.
- 3 Charlotte A.B. Yates, *From Plant to Politics: The Autoworkers Union in Post-war Canada*, 29.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 31.
- 5 Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers*, 127.
- 6 Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (hereafter ALUA), UAW Region 7 Collection, box 128, file: Eaton, Wilcox, Rich Windsor, 1939–1948, letter from George Burt to James S. Allan, Crown Attorney, 13 September 1939.
- 7 René (Joe) Laporte interview, 21 December 2006.
- 8 For example, see Don Wells, “The Impact of the Postwar Compromise on Canadian Unionism: The Formation of an Autoworker Local in the 1950s.”
- 9 London Public Library (hereafter LPL), Business and Industry Vertical File: Eaton Automotive, *London Free Press*, 22 February 1950.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 1, box 28, file: Eaton Automotive Products London, 1948–1950, letter from George Specht to Eaton Auto workers, 27 June 1950.
- 12 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, box 28, file: Eaton Automotive Products London, 1948–1950, Ontario Labour Relations Board decision, 13 July 1950.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: Eaton Automotive, *London Free Press*, 22 February 1950; LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: Minnesota Mining and Manufacture, *London Free Press* 8 May 1951; ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 1, box 144, file: General Motors Diesel London, 1950–1953; ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 5, box 152, file: Kelvinator of Canada London, 1951–1953, certification documents.
- 15 Peter Friedlander, *The Emergence of a UAW Local, 1936–1939: A Study in Class and Culture*; and Lisa Fine, *The Story of REO Joe: Work, Kin, and Community in Autotown USA*.
- 16 See Robert H. Zieger, *Madison’s Battery Workers, 1934–1952*.
- 17 Don Wells, “Holding the Line: Autoworkers’ Resistance and the Limits of Class Struggle.”
- 18 See Lisa Fine, *The Story of REO Joe: Work, Kin and Community in Autotown, USA*.
- 19 George Medland interview, 6 April 2006.

- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Tom and Sheila McSwiggan interview, 19 June 2006.
- 22 On the development of the United Electrical Workers, see Cy Gonick, *A Very Red Life: The Story of Bill Walsh*; and Doug Smith, *Cold Warrior: C.S. Jackson and the United Electrical Workers*.
- 23 Bob Nickerson and Al Seymour interview, 3 October 2006. In the same interview, Nickerson referred again to the UE's suspected Communist links when describing his trip to the Soviet Union. For additional discussion, see Judith Stepan-Morris and Maurice Zeitlin's discussion of Communists in the UE and other unions in *Left Out: Reds and America's Industrial Unions*.
- 24 Tom and Sheila McSwiggan interview, 19 June 2006.
- 25 Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers*, 121.
- 26 Raymond Murray interview, 26 September 2006.
- 27 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 28 Tom and Sheila McSwiggan interview, 19 June 2006.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 31 For a discussion of the introduction and impact of the Auto Pact, see Dimitri Anastakis, *Auto Pact: Creating a Borderless North American Auto Industry, 1960-1971*.
- 32 Local 27, *Fiftieth Anniversary Album*, 20.
- 33 The Ontario Federation of Labour published a major study of plant closures in 1971 that referred to both Kelvinator and Eaton Automotive. See John W. Eleen and Ashley G. Bernardine, *Shutdown: The Impact of Plant Shutdown, Extensive Unemployment Terminations and Layoffs on the Workers and the Community*.
- 34 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 35 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: Sparton of Canada, *London Free Press*, 1 December 1975.
- 36 Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006.
- 37 Local 27 Archive (hereafter L27A), file: Miscellaneous Local 27 Documents, *Fortieth Anniversary Album*.
- 38 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 4, box 81, file: Local 27 London, 1951-1954, inter-office communication from Emil Mazey to George Burt, 22 February 1951.

- 39 See CAW Local 222, www.cawlocal.ca/222/units.asp, and CAW Local 199, <http://www.caw199.com/caw199units.html>.
- 40 On UAW Local 211, see <http://www.uaw.org/page/local-211>.
- 41 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 1, box 1, file: Minutes of General Motors Diesel Shop Committee, 1957–1960.
- 42 Jim Wilkes interview, 3 February 2006.
- 43 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 4, box 82, file: Local 27 London, 1962–1963, letter from Bill Froude to George Specht, 11 November 1963.
- 44 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 1, box 81, file: Local 27 London, 1951–1954, handwritten note from George Specht to unknown recipient.
- 45 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 1, box 1, file: Minutes General Motors Diesel 1951–1956. In this case, Specht’s attendance at a GM Diesel unit meeting is mentioned.
- 46 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, box 82, file: Local 27 London, Audit Reports, 1961–1965, Audit Report Ending February 28, 1961.
- 47 L27A, *Local 27 News*, October 1990. The 1958 equivalents were calculated using the Bank of Canada’s inflation calculator, http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/rates/inflation_calc.html.
- 48 L27A, *Local 27 News*, October 1990.
- 49 ALUA, UAW Constitutions and Bylaws, box 1, bylaws of Local 27–UAW-CIO, 1961.
- 50 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: General Motors Diesel, *London Free Press*, 15 January 1988. The GM Diesel unit had one thousand members in 1988, almost a sixth of the local’s total membership.
- 51 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 52 Archie Baillie interview, 18 July 2006.
- 53 Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO), RG7-33, box 131830, item C323-021, General Motors master agreement, 1973.
- 54 Hector McLellan interview, 12 June 2006.
- 55 Jim Wilkes interview, 3 February 2006.
- 56 Rene Montague interview, 18 September 2006.
- 57 For example, Archie Baillie was on the GM Council (Archie Baillie interview, 18 July 2006).
- 58 On the importance of stewards, see Sidney M. Peck, *The Rank-and-File Leader*; and Leonard R. Sayles and George Strauss, *The Local Union: Its*

- Place in the Industrial Plant*. Both studies examine industrial workplaces during the same years in which Local 27 was established and underwent its first waves of expansion.
- 59 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 3, box 3, file: Election 1963.
- 60 L27A, *Local 27 News*, May 1969.
- 61 Sayles and Strauss, *The Local Union*, 83.
- 62 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 63 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 3, box 3, file: Election 1963. The 3M unit had 250 members turn out to vote. This certainly indicates a high level of interest in voting but also reveals a problem with getting a sufficient number of stewards, particularly since some candidates could perhaps have been found from among the membership present at the meeting.
- 64 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006; Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006.
- 65 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 66 On the debate between Left and Right caucuses within the broader Canadian UAW, see Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers*, and Yates, *From Plant to Politics*.
- 67 Bill Freeman, *1005: Political Life in a Union Local*.
- 68 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: Eaton Automotive, *London Free Press*, 8 April 1971.
- 69 Local 27, *Fiftieth Anniversary Album*, 3.
- 70 AO, RG7-33, box 22, item 335-021, Northern Electric Company collective agreement, 1973. Northern Electric employed 3,016 workers across three locals (including Local 27), 1,178 of whom were women. Women therefore constituted about 40 percent of the membership. See AO, RG7-33, box 118565, item 325-024, Bendix collective agreement 1977. Bendix employed thirty-five workers at its London plant, of whom nineteen were women. Women thus constituted a majority of the unionized workforce.
- 71 Shirley Martin interview, 7 July 2006.
- 72 Rose Hurt interview, 12 April 2006.
- 73 Maida Miners interview, 21 April 2006.
- 74 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 2, box 3, Executive Board Minutes to July 1966.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 Shirley Martin interview, 7 July 2006.

- 77 See Kevin Boyle, “The Kiss: Racial and Gender Conflict in a 1950s Automobile Factory.”
- 78 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 79 See Pamela Sugiman, *Labour’s Dilemma: The Gender Politics of Auto Workers in Canada, 1937–1979*.
- 80 Peck, *The Rank-and-File Leader*, 194.
- 81 Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006; Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 82 John Groenewegen interview, 18 April 2006; Peter Hensels interview, 10 April 2006.
- 83 Beulah Harrison interview, 16 November 2006.
- 84 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 4, box 81, file: Local 27 London, 1951–1954, lists of the union’s officers for 1951 and 1954.
- 85 René (Joe) Laporte interview, 21 December 2006.
- 86 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 4, box 81, file: Local 27 London, 1951–1954, list of officers for 1954.
- 87 Edith Johnston interview, 21 June 2006. Johnston’s work appears to have formed the basis of the creation of the women’s committee. The last mention of the Women’s Auxiliary in the *Local 27 News* was in the January–February 1970 issue. Johnston promoted International Women’s Year in the January 1975 issue and was clearly at the centre of women’s activism in the local.
- 88 Edith Johnston interview, 21 June 2006.
- 89 Georgina Anderson interview, 16 November 2006; Beulah Harrison interview, 16 November 2006.
- 90 Sugiman, *Labour’s Dilemma*, 150.
- 91 Edith Johnston interview, 21 June 2006.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 Julie White interview, 20 January 2010.
- 94 Edith Johnston interview, 21 June 2006.
- 95 Sugiman, *Labour’s Dilemma*, 98. Sugiman notes how groups of women began appealing directly to George Burt for redress of their issues as they became more “union wise.”
- 96 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 97 Shirley Martin interview, 7 July 2007; Hector McLellan interview, 12 June 2006.

- 98 Edith Johnston interview, 21 June 2006.
- 99 Georgina Anderson interview, 16 November 2006.
- 100 Steve Val Eldick interview, 12 November 2006. On broader lesbian and gay struggles in the labour movement, see Susan Genge, “Lesbians and Gays in the Union Movement,” in *Union Sisters: Women in the Labour Movement*, ed. Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz.
- 101 Beulah Harrison interview, 16 November 2006; Georgina Anderson interview, 16 November 2006; Julie White interview, 1 November 2006.
- 102 Jane Stinson and Penni Richmond, “Women Working for Unions: Female Staff and the Politics of Transformation,” in *Women Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy, and Militancy*, ed. Linda Briskin and Patricia McDermott, 145.
- 103 The importance of family and ethnic support networks has been noted by several authors, notably Franca Iacovetta in *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto*.
- 104 Peter Hensels interview, 10 April 2006; John Groenewegen interview, 18 April 2006.
- 105 On the creation of the Christian Labour Association of Canada, see Ed Grootenboer, *In Pursuit of Justice: So Far, So Good — The First Fifty Years of the Christian Labour Association of Canada, 1952–2002*.
- 106 Georgina Anderson interview, 16 November 2006.
- 107 See Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*.
- 108 Archie Baillie interview, 18 July 2006.
- 109 Hector McLellan interview, 12 June 2006; Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 110 Hector McLellan interview, 12 June 2006.
- 111 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 112 Archie Baillie interview, 18 July 2006.
- 113 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 114 Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006.
- 115 Bob Nickerson and Al Seymour interview, 21 June 2006.
- 116 On the founding of UAW Local 229, see Friedlander, *The Emergence of a UAW Local, 1936–1939*.
- 117 René (Joe) Laporte interview, 21 December 2006.
- 118 L27A, file: Miscellaneous Local 27 Documents, *Fortieth Anniversary Album*.

CHAPTER 2 The National Union

- 1 Local 27 Archive (hereafter L27A), *Local 27 Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Album, 1950–1975*.
- 2 Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (hereafter ALUA), UAW Region 7 Collection, series 2, box 65, file: Specht, George: 1966–68.
- 3 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 2, box 65, file: Specht, George: 1962–65, letter from G. Specht to Shirley O’Brien, 29 January 1962.
- 4 Ibid., letter from G. Specht to George Burt, 9 October 1963.
- 5 Ibid., letter from G. Specht to George Burt, 25 May 1965.
- 6 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 7 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Archie Baillie interview, 18 July 2006.
- 10 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Library and Archives Canada, National Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers Union of Canada fonds, R3341-0-8-E (hereafter LAC, CAW fonds), vol. 291, file 13, letter from Bob White to Dennis McDermott, 15 October 1974.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 See Bob White, *Hard Bargains: My Life on the Line*, for a discussion of the change in Canadian UAW leadership in the late 1970s.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 17 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 262, file 10, transcript of Al Seymour’s trial, 6 March 1979.
- 18 René Montague interview, 18 September 2006. For a detailed discussion of the Fleck strike, see White, *Hard Bargains*.
- 19 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 262, file 11. There are several documents relating to vacation and other personal matters.
- 20 Jim Wilkes interview, 3 February 2006.
- 21 Julie White interview, 1 November 2006.
- 22 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, box 82, file: Local 27 London, 1962–1963, letter from A. Simpson to Walter Reuther, 26 January 1963.

- 23 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, box 82, file: Local 27, London 1962–1963, letter from Walter Reuther to A. Simpson, 6 February 1963.
- 24 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 378, file 8, Petition.
- 25 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 164, file 11, letter from Leonard Woodcock to Rene Montague, 27 April 1973.
- 26 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 165, file 2, letter from Bob White to Sam Saumur, 17 January 1975.
- 27 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 3 October 2006.
- 28 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 291, file 13, letter from Bob White to Dennis McDermott, 15 October 1974.
- 29 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 4, box 81, file: Local 27 London, 1957.
- 30 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 164, file 14, UAW Canadian Council Delegates, Election Results, 1969.
- 31 Bob Nickerson and Al Seymour interview, 3 October 2006.
- 32 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 165, file 2, letter from Jerry Flynn to Dennis McDermott, 15 July 1975.
- 33 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 165, file 2: Local 27 London, Ont. Correspondence 1975, open letter from Gord Wilson to Local 27 members, 18 June 1975.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Charlotte A.B. Yates, *From Plant to Politics: The Autoworkers Union in Post-war Canada*, 178.
- 36 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 164, file 15, letter from Casper Vanderhelm to Emil Mazey, 1 December 1970.
- 37 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 164, file 15, letter from Emil Mazey to Dennis McDermott, 19 December 1970.
- 38 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 164, file 15, letter from Bob Nickerson to Dennis McDermott, 25 February 1971.
- 39 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 3 October 2006.
- 40 Gord Wilson interview, 15 August 2006.
- 41 Roland Parris, perhaps unknowingly, clearly made this distinction; Bob Sexsmith made similar comments (Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006; Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006).
- 42 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 3, box 4, file: Burt, George, July–Dec. 1964 Canadian Reg Director, letter from George Burt to all Canadian Region locals, 27 November 1964.

- 43 Sam Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers: The Birth and Transformation of a Union*, 159.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 162.
- 45 For Local 248, see Steven Meyer, “Stalin Over Wisconsin”: *The Making and Unmaking of Militant Unionism, 1900–1950*; for Local 600, see Jonathan Cutler, *Labor’s Time: Shorter Hours, the UAW, and the Struggle for American Unionism*.
- 46 Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers*, 126.
- 47 Jeanie Campbell interview, 1 April 2007.
- 48 On the impact of Stalinism on Canadian Communists, see Norman Penner, *Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond*.
- 49 See Merrily Weisbord, *The Strangest Dream: Canadian Communists, the Spy Trials, and the Cold War*.
- 50 Jeanie Campbell interview, 1 April 2007. See Cy Gonick, *A Very Red Life: The Story of Bill Walsh*, for a full account of Bill Walsh’s life and career; see Laurel Sefton-McDowell, *I Remember Kirkland Lake: The Gold Miners’ Strike of 1941–42*, for a discussion of the development of the Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers’ Union.
- 51 Meyer, “Stalin over Wisconsin.”
- 52 See Roger Keeran, *The Communist Party and the Auto Workers Union*, and Judith Stepan-Morris and Maurice Zeitlin, *Left Out: Reds and America’s Industrial Unions*.
- 53 Jeanie Campbell interview, 1 April 2007.
- 54 *Ibid.*
- 55 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 1, box 1, file: Minutes General Motors Diesel, 1958–1964.
- 56 Jeanie Campbell interview, 1 April 2007.
- 57 Yates, *From Plant to Politics*, 153.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 167–69.
- 59 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006. Bill Harrington also worked at Eaton Rich and was closely associated with Campbell and the Left caucus in the local.
- 60 Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006.
- 61 Jeanie Campbell interview, 1 April 2007.
- 62 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.

- 63 L27A, *Local 27 News*, July 1963.
- 64 Gord Wilson interview, 15 August 2006.
- 65 Shirley Martin interview, 7 July 2006.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Gord Wilson interview, 15 August 2006.
- 68 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 3, box 65, file: Specht, George, 1958–61, letter from George Burt to George Specht, 4 May 1960.
- 69 Ibid., letter from A. Simpson to George Burt, 22 April 1960.
- 70 Ibid., letter from George Burt to George Specht, 10 May 1960.
- 71 Yates, *From Plant to Politics*, 70–72.
- 72 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 73 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 1, box 3, file: Local 27 UAW General Membership Minutes, July 1966 to June 29, 1969.
- 74 Bob Nickerson and Al Seymour interview, 3 October 2006.
- 75 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 4, box 82, file: Local 27 London, 1967, letter from Joe Abela to George Burt, 4 November 1966.
- 76 Ibid., letter from George Burt to Joe Abela, 5 December 1966.
- 77 Ibid., letter from Joe Abela to Walter Reuther, 18 February 1967.
- 78 *London Free Press*, 8 April 1971.
- 79 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 165, file 1, letter from Sam Saumur to Emil Mazey, 1 April 1974.
- 80 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 165, file 1, letter from Emil Mazey to Sam Saumur, 18 April 1974.
- 81 Ibid., letter from Donald Rand to Sam Saumur, 8 May 1974.
- 82 Ibid., letter from Emil Mazy Edith Welch (Johnston), 5 June 1971.
- 83 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 3 October 2006.
- 84 Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers*, 159.
- 85 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 86 Archie Baillie interview, 18 July 2006.
- 87 L27A, *Local 27 Special Bulletin*, 14 October 1976.
- 88 L27A, *Local 27 News*, December 1987.
- 89 See White, *Hard Bargains*, for a full discussion of the creation of the CAW.
- 90 Archie Baillie interview, 18 July 2006.

- 91 Local 27, *Fiftieth Anniversary Album*, 30.
- 92 Beulah Harrison interview, 16 November 2006.
- 93 Interviewees Beulah Harrison, Jim Wilkes, and Archie Baillie expressed this sentiment.
- 94 Jeff Taylor, *Union Learning: Canadian Labour Education in the Twentieth Century*, 50.
- 95 Taylor, *Union Learning*, 74.
- 96 *Ibid.*, 117.
- 97 Barnard, *American Vanguard*, 230.
- 98 Taylor, *Union Learning*, 118.
- 99 Gord Wilson interview, 15 August 2006.
- 100 Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006.
- 101 Edith Johnston interview, 21 June 2006.
- 102 Hector McLellan interview, 12 June 2006.
- 103 Tim Carrie interview, 15 December 2006.
- 104 Jim Wilkes interview, 3 February 2006.
- 105 Hector McLellan interview, 12 June 2006.
- 106 Beulah Harrison interview, 16 November 2006.
- 107 Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006.
- 108 Taylor, *Union Learning*, 170.
- 109 Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers*, 188–89.
- 110 See Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers*, for a broad discussion of the union’s policies on these issues.
- 111 On bureaucratization, see Peter McInnis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation: Shaping the Postwar Settlement in Canada, 1943–1950*; and Paul Buhle, *Taking Care of Business: Samuel Gompers, George Meany, Lane Kirkland and the Tragedy of American Labor*.
- 112 See Don Wells, “The Impact of the Postwar Compromise on Canadian Unionism: The Formation of an Autoworker Local in the 1950s.”
- 113 Shirley Martin interview, 7 July 2006.
- 114 AO, RG7-33, box B118591, item 891-046, collective agreement between United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America Local 27 and Office and Professional Employee International Union Local 343. This agreement, covering five workers, was nine pages long and was

- representative of the length of agreements concluded by the local with its employees.
- 115 Shirley Martin interview, 7 July 2006.
- 116 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 117 Jeanie Campbell interview, 1 April 2007.
- 118 See Cutler, *Labor's Time*, for an examination of conflict between pro- and anti-administration groups and how they responded to the issue of shorter working hours.
- 119 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 164, file 14, Local 27 London, Ont. Correspondence, 1969, letter from Dennis McDermott to Bill Froude.
- 120 Julie White interview, 20 January 2010.
- 121 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 122 C. Wright Mills, *The New Men of Power: America's Labor Leaders*, 9.

CHAPTER 3 Employers and Bargaining Units

- 1 On the development of labour relations law in Canada in the first half of the twentieth century, see Eric Tucker and Judy Fudge, *Labour Before the Law: The Regulation of Workers' Collective Action in Canada, 1900–1948*, 211.
- 2 Tucker and Fudge, *Labour Before the Law*, 271.
- 3 London Public Library (hereafter LPL), Business and Industry Vertical File: Eaton Automotive, *London Free Press*, 22 February 1950.
- 4 *Ibid.*, *London Free Press*, 27 January 1966.
- 5 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: General Motors Diesel, *London Free Press*, 13 August 1990.
- 6 *Ibid.*, *London Free Press*, 27 October 1983.
- 7 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing, *London Free Press*, 5 May 1952.
- 8 George Medland Collection (hereafter GMC), Kelvinator of Canada brochure from the 1960s.
- 9 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: Northern Telecom.
- 10 London Motor Products and Central Chevrolet are examples.
- 11 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 12 On Fordism, see James W. Rinehart, *The Tyranny of Work: Alienation and the Labour Process*.

- 13 See Don Wells, "Holding the Line: Autoworkers' Resistance and the Limits of Class Struggle."
- 14 Georgina Anderson interview, 16 November 2006; Tom and Sheila McSwiggan interview, 19 June 2006; Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006; and George Medland interview, 6 April 2006.
- 15 On degradation, see Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, and James Rinehart, *The Tyranny of Work*.
- 16 Jim Wilkes interview, 3 February 2006.
- 17 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 18 Ibid.; Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006.
- 19 Tom and Sheila McSwiggan interview, 19 June 2006.
- 20 René (Joe) Laporte interview, 21 December 2006.
- 21 Hector McLellan interview, 12 June 2006.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Tim Carrie interview, 15 December 2006.
- 24 To review the origins of the Ham Commission report, see James M. Ham, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Health and Safety of Workers in Mines*.
- 25 Vivienne Walters, "Occupational Health and Safety Legislation in Ontario: An Analysis of Its Origins and Content," 429.
- 26 Province of Ontario, "Bill 70: An Act Respecting the Occupational Health and Occupational Safety of Workers," sections 7, 8, 14, 15, 16, and 24.
- 27 Walters, "Occupational Health and Safety Legislation in Ontario," 416.
- 28 *Globe and Mail*, 22 June 1967, 29.
- 29 Local 27 Archive (hereafter L27A), *London Free Press*, 8 February 1969.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: Eaton Automotive; *London Free Press*, 9 September 1970.
- 32 Ibid.; *London Free Press*, 7 July 1971.
- 33 Government of Ontario, *Ontario Statistics 1975*, vol. 2, *Economic Series*, table 10.12, 413.
- 34 On the immediate impact of the closures, see John W. Eleen and Ashley G. Bernardine, *Shutdown: The Impact of Plant Shutdown, Extensive Employment Terminations and Layoffs on the Workers and the Community*; Bernard Portis and Michael Suys, *The Effect of Advance Notice in a Plant Shutdown: A*

- Study of the Closing of the Kelvinator Plant in London, Ontario*; and Francis O'Connor, "Plant Shutdown and Worker Attitudes: The Case of Kelvinator."
- 35 See Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor*.
- 36 Peter McInnis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation: Shaping the Postwar Settlement in Canada, 1943-1950*, 3.
- 37 Lichtenstein, *State of the Union*, 99.
- 38 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 39 See John Barnard, *American Vanguard: The United Auto Workers During the Reuther Years, 1935-1970*, for a discussion of the interaction between General Motors and the UAW in the 1930s and 1940s.
- 40 On the uses and failures of workplace paternalism, see Liz Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*; and Sanford Jacoby, *Modern Manors: Welfare Capitalism Since the New Deal*.
- 41 Robert Storey, "Unionization Versus Corporate Welfare: The Dofasco Way"; Joan Sangster, "The Softball Solution: Female Workers, Male Managers and the Operation of Paternalism at Westclox, 1923-1960."
- 42 Stan Ashworth interview, 19 April 2006.
- 43 George Medland interview, 6 April 2006.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 On wartime militancy, see Tucker and Fudge, *Labour Before the Law*.
- 46 Albert Plumb interview, 14 April 2006.
- 47 George Medland interview, 6 April 2006.
- 48 *Globe and Mail*, 22 July 1954.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Local 27, *Fiftieth Anniversary Album*, 4.
- 51 Stan Ashworth interview, 19 April 2006.
- 52 Stan Ashworth Collection (hereafter SAC), agreement between Kelvinator of Canada Limited and International Union, United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), 1958.
- 53 Maida Miners interview, 21 April 2006.
- 54 Stan Ashworth interview, 19 April 2006.
- 55 SAC, letter from A.M. Brunskill, Ontario Labour Relations Board Registrar, to Stan Ashworth, Mr. H.M. Payette of the Central Ontario Industrial Relations Institute, Mr. Webster Cornwall of the UAW, and Mr. George Specht of the UAW, 8 June 1959.

- 56 Stan Ashworth interview, 19 April 2006.
- 57 SAC, *The Outlook*, June 1959.
- 58 Stan Ashworth interview, 19 April 2006.
- 59 SAC, letter from Webster Cornwall, UAW International Representative, to Kelvinator office workers, 7 November 1958.
- 60 Stan Ashworth interview, 19 April 2006.
- 61 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: Wolverine Tube, *London Free Press*, 24 January 1958.
- 62 The union had initially tried to organize Wolverine in 1962 but had lost the certification election by one vote. ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 1, box 65, file: Specht, George: 1962-65, letter from George Specht to Bard Young, 8 January 1964.
- 63 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: Wolverine Tube, *London Free Press*, 11 March 1965.
- 64 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 20 October 1964.
- 65 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 25 November 1964.
- 66 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 8 October 1964.
- 67 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 25 November 1964.
- 68 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 19 July 1965.
- 69 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 3, box 4, file: Burt, George, July-Dec. 1964, letter from Bill McGuffin and Ian Wilson to George Burt, 12 December 1964.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Bob Nickerson and Al Seymour interview, 21 June 2006.
- 72 Tom and Sheila McSwiggan interview, 19 June 2006, and Beulah Harrison interview, 16 November 2006.
- 73 LAC, Department of Labour microfilm strike and lockout reports, RG27, reel T3422.
- 74 Tom and Sheila McSwiggan interview, 19 June 2006.
- 75 Ibid., and Beulah Harrison interview, 16 November 2006.
- 76 L27A, Miscellaneous file, Northern Electric Employees Association notice, February 1970.
- 77 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 78 Tim Carrie interview, 15 December 2006.

- 79 L27A, Miscellaneous file, *London Free Press*, 14 March 1974.
- 80 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 2 April 1974.
- 81 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 29 March 1974.
- 82 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 31 May 1974.
- 83 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 28 February 1974.
- 84 Ibid., correspondence between the Ontario Department of Labour and Richard H. Chapman, 9 June 1972.
- 85 L27A, file: Wilco, transcript of Grant Wilson address, taped 3:39 p.m., 25 May 1982.
- 86 Ibid., complaint to the Ontario Labour Relations Board under section 89 of Ontario's *Labour Relations Act*, 13 April 1983.
- 87 L27A, Miscellaneous file, *London Free Press*, 15 April 1983.
- 88 Ontario Labour Relations Board, *Ontario Labour Relations Board Decisions June 1983*, 0454-83-OH Robert Zizek, complainant v. Wilco Canada.
- 89 Ontario Labour Relations Board, *Ontario Labour Relations Board Decisions June 1983*, 0471-82-R; 0436-82-U; 0511-82U1 1279-82-U, International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, applicant/complainant v. Wilco Canada.
- 90 L27A, Miscellaneous file, *London Free Press*, 8 June 1983.
- 91 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 Ibid.
- 94 Al Seymour also experienced organizing and negotiating with Versatile Tractor in Manitoba. See Doug Smith, *Stickin' to the Union: Local 2224 Versus John Buhler*.

CHAPTER 4 Collective Bargaining

- 1 See Stephanie Ross, "The Making of CUPE: Structure, Democracy and Class Formation"; and Pradeep Kumar, *From Uniformity to Divergence: Industrial Relations in Canada and the United States*.
- 2 On pattern bargaining see Bob White, *Hard Bargains: My Life on the Line*.
- 3 Province of Ontario, "The Collective Bargaining Act, 1943."
- 4 Ibid., sec. 6.

- 5 Province of Ontario, “The Labour Relations Act, 1948.”
- 6 This figure is based on collective agreements held in private collections and public archives.
- 7 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 8 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006, and Archie Baillie interview, 18 July 2006.
- 9 Daniel Benedict, “Collective Bargaining Is Far from Dead,” in *Labour Gains, Labour Pains: Fifty Years of PC 1003*, ed. Cy Gonick, Paul Phillips, and Jesse Vorst, 241.
- 10 Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (hereafter ALUA), UAW Region 7 Collection, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 2, box 1, Memorandum of Agreement between General Motors Diesel and UAW Local 27, 18 January 1951.
- 11 The “Big Three” was a term universally used in the union to describe bargaining with General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler.
- 12 AO, RG7-33, box B171830, item 323-021, UAW and General Motors, master agreement, 1973–1976.
- 13 AO, RG7-33, box B318007, item 316-007, UAW Local 27 and Tecumseh Products, 1973–1976.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 AO, RG7-33, box B301443, item 274-028, DRG Globe Envelopes and UAW Local 27, 10; box B317972, item 303-015, Alcan Building Products and UAW Local 27, 16; box B347127, item 325-024, Bendix Heavy Vehicle Systems Limited and UAW Local 27, 1977–1980.
- 16 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 2, box 1, Memorandum of Agreement between General Motors Diesel and UAW Local 27, 18 January 1951.
- 17 AO, RG7-33, box B347127, item 325-024, Bendix Heavy Vehicle Systems Limited and UAW Local 27, 1977–1980, Article 8. (The shift from “he” to “he/she” is in the original.)
- 18 David Millar, “Shapes of Power: the Ontario Labour Relations Board, 1944 to 1950,” 246.
- 19 Province of Ontario, “An Act to Amend the Labour Relations Act.”
- 20 AO, RG7-33, box B301443, item 274-028, DRG Globe Envelopes and UAW Local 27, 3–4.
- 21 E.E. Palmer, *Collective Agreement Arbitration in Canada*, 172.
- 22 AO, RG7-33, box B255974, item 325-065, London Generator Service Limited and UAW Local 27, 3.

- 23 AO, RG7-33, box B707444, item 339-023, Philips Electronics Ltd. and UAW Local 27, 1978–1980, 10.
- 24 Ibid., 4; AO, RG7-33, box B317972, item 517018, Alcan Building Products and UAW Local 27, 1978–1980, Article 10.
- 25 AO, RG7-33, box B261587, item 619-016; London Generator Service Ltd. and UAW Local 27, 1977–1978, 3.
- 26 Ibid., 7.
- 27 AO, RG7-33, box B301443, item 274-028, DRG Globe Envelopes and UAW Local 27, 1981–1982, 21–26.
- 28 AO, RG7-33, box B324546, item 656-009, London Motor Products Limited and UAW Local 27, 1980–1983, Schedule D.
- 29 AO, RG7-33, box B330917, item 335-021, Master agreement: Northern Telecom and the UAW 1979–1982, Article 38.
- 30 Palmer, *Collective Agreement Arbitration*, 471.
- 31 AO, RG7-33, box B324546, item 656-009, London Motor Products Limited and UAW Local 27, 1980–1983, Schedule D.
- 32 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006; Archie Baillie interview, 18 July 2006.
- 33 LAC, CAW fonds, R3341-0-8-E, vol. 90, file 11, Northern Telecom and UAW Local 27, 1979–1982.
- 34 AO, RG7-33, box B309115, item 656-014, UAW Local 27 and Forest City International Truck, 1980–1982.
- 35 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 2, box 1, UAW Local 27 and General Motors Diesel, 1951, Appendix B.
- 36 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 90, file 11, Northern Telecom and UAW Local 27, 1979–1982; AO, RG7-33, box B358025, item 325-106, UAW Local 27 and Firestone Steel Products of Canada, 1979–1982.
- 37 The centrality of COLA in UAW bargaining in Canada was confirmed by Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson (interview, 21 June 2006) and is also discussed in Sam Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Worker*, and in Bob White, *Hard Bargains*. In an American context, see John Barnard, *American Vanguard: The United Auto Workers During the Reuther Years*.
- 38 For a discussion of the ECWU position on COLA clauses, see Wayne Roberts, *Cracking the Canadian Formula: The Making of the Energy and Chemical Workers Union*.
- 39 Barnard, *American Vanguard*, 273.

- 40 Ibid.
- 41 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 2, no. 1, UAW Local 27 and General Motors Diesel, 1951. The table is reproduced as shown in the 1951 GM Diesel collective agreement.
- 42 Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Price Movements, January 1951," 2 February 1951.
- 43 Dominion Bureau of Statistics, "Price Movements, January 1952," 4 February 1952.
- 44 *London Free Press*, 3 March 1950.
- 45 Per the Bank of Canada's inflation calculator, http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/rates/inflation_calc.html.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 AO, RG7-33, box 1, item 325-024, UAW Local 27 and Bendix, 1977-1980.
- 48 *London Free Press*, 9 June 1983.
- 49 Simone Cornelus Collection (hereafter SCC), *London Free Press*, 21 February 1969.
- 50 SCC, *London Free Press*, 5 September 1970.
- 51 LPL, *London Free Press*, 10 December 1970.
- 52 LPL, *London Free Press*, 14 January 1988.
- 53 The total number of layoffs and recalls was calculated on the basis of numerous *London Free Press* articles on job loss.
- 54 Barnard, *American Vanguard*, 281.
- 55 Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers*, 113.
- 56 AO, RG7-33, Box B330939, Item 325-016, UAW Local 27 and Firestone, 1971-1973.
- 57 London Public Library (hereafter LPL), Business and Industry Vertical File: General Motors Diesel, *London Free Press*, 3 March 1983.
- 58 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 26 March 1983.
- 59 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 13 February 1984.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 See Jonathan Cutler, *Labor's Time: Shorter Hours, the UAW, and the Struggle for American Unionism*.
- 63 Local 27 Archive (hereafter L27A), *Local 27 News*, April 1961, 2.

- 64 See Kenneth Bryden, *Old Age Pensions and Policy Making in Canada*, 104.
- 65 See Alvin Finkel, *Social Policy and Practice in Canada, A History*, 161–62.
- 66 On the development of state policy toward the elderly in Canada, see James G. Snell, *The Citizen's Wage: The State and the Elderly in Canada, 1900–1951*, 7.
- 67 On the evolution of social policy in Canada, see Finkel, *Social Policy and Practice in Canada*.
- 68 *Ibid.*, 154–55.
- 69 Barnard, *American Vanguard*, 274.
- 70 *Ibid.*, 275.
- 71 *Ibid.*
- 72 *Ibid.*, 276.
- 73 *Ibid.*, 280.
- 74 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006 and Archie Baillie interview, 18 July 2006.
- 75 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 2, no. 1, UAW Local 27 and General Motors Diesel, 1951.
- 76 GMC, UAW Local 27 and Kelvinator Canada, 1958–1960.
- 77 L27A, *Local 27 News*, September 1963.
- 78 See Finkel, *Social Policy and Practice in Canada*.
- 79 AO, RG7-33, box B330939, item 325-106, UAW Local 27 and Firestone, 1971–1973.
- 80 See Mark Thomas, “Setting the Minimum: Ontario’s Employment Standards in the Postwar Years, 1944–1968.”
- 81 Province of Ontario, “Bill 130: The Employment Standards Act, 1968.”
- 82 *Ibid.*, part 3, sec. 14, parts 4, 5, 6.
- 83 See Thomas, “Setting the Minimum,” 81.
- 84 See Judy Fudge, *Labour Law’s Little Sister: The Employment Standards Act and the Feminization of Labour*.
- 85 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 2, box 1, file: UAW Local 27 and General Motors Diesel, 1951.
- 86 *Ibid.*
- 87 GMC, Kelvinator Collective Agreement 1956–1958, 27.
- 88 AO, RG7-33, box 1, item 325-024, UAW Local 27 and Bendix, 1977–1980.

- 89 AO, RG7-33, box B707433, item 656-004, CAW Local 27 and Central Chevrolet Oldsmobile.
- 90 AO, RG7-33, UAW Local 27 and DRG Globe Envelope, 1981–1982.
- 91 Julie White interview, 1 November 2006.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 Julie White, *Sisters and Solidarity: Women and Unions in Canada*, 64. (This author should not be confused with the Julie White interviewed for this study.)
- 94 Carl J. Cuneo, “Sexism and Affirmative Action,” in *Women Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy, and Militancy*, ed. Linda Briskin and Patricia McDermott.
- 95 Steve Van Eldick interview, 12 November 2006.
- 96 LAC, CAW fonds, R3341-0-8-E, vol. 91, file 1, CAW Local 27 and Phillips Electronics, 1985–1988.
- 97 Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1986, London Community Profile, Part 1*, table 1.9.
- 98 See Carl J. Cuneo, *Pay Equity: The Labour-Feminist Challenge*. Cuneo analyzed a series of jobs, some of which were typically performed by men and some by women. Using four measures — skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions — to identify jobs that were roughly similar, he then compared the wages earned in each position.
- 99 On the importance of this legislation, see Shirley Tillotson, “Human Rights Law as Prism: Women’s Organizations, Unions, and Ontario’s Female Employees Fair Remuneration Act, 1951.”
- 100 United Way of Greater London, “Day Care Services London, 1981,” 2.
- 101 LAC, CAW fonds, R3341-0-8-E, vol. 378, file 9, Northern Electric Local 27, London Works and Union Business, Correspondence, Minutes, Holograph Notes, part 2 of 2, 1968–1971; Northern Electric Committee notes, 3 October 1969.
- 102 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson, 21 June 2006.
- 103 Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2005, and Archie Baillie interview, 18 July 2006.
- 104 Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2005.
- 105 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 106 Jim Wilkes interview, 3 February 2006.

CHAPTER 5 Labour Relations

- 1 For example, see John Barnard, *American Vanguard: The United Auto Workers During the Reuther Years, 1935–1970*, 262–63.
- 2 On the impact of the postwar labour relations system, see Leo Panitch and Don Swartz, *From Consent to Coercion: The Assault on Trade Union Freedom*; Bryan Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800–1991*; and Peter McNinnis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation: Shaping the Postwar Settlement in Canada, 1943–1950*.
- 3 Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (hereafter ALUA), UAW Region 7 Collection, series 1, box 3, Executive Board Minutes, 16 June 1966.
- 4 Archie Baillie interview, 18 July 2006.
- 5 Peter Hensels interview, 10 April 2006.
- 6 See Sanford Jacoby, *Modern Manors: Welfare Capitalism Since the New Deal*.
- 7 Charles Medland and Russell Mackison interview, 26 April 2006.
- 8 Frank May interview, 20 April 2006.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Library and Archives Canada, National Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers Union of Canada fonds, R3341-0-8-E (hereafter LAC, CAW fonds), vol. 378, file 8, Northern Electric Local 27, London Works and Union Business Correspondence, Minutes, Holograph Notes, part 1 of 2, 1968–1971; letter from Jim Kennedy to G. Millar, 30 April 1970.
- 11 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 378, file 8, Northern Electric Local 27, London Works and Union Business Correspondence, Minutes, Holograph Notes, part 1 of 2, 1968–1971; “London Works Council Report,” 26 April 1971; LAC, vol. 378, file 8, Northern Electric Local 27, London Works and Union Business Correspondence, Minutes, Holograph Notes, part 1 of 2, 1968–1971; letter from Jim Kennedy to G. Millar, 30 April 1970.
- 12 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 378, file 8, Northern Electric Local 27, London Works and Union Business Correspondence, Minutes, Holograph Notes, part 1 of 2, 1968–1971; “London Works Council Report,” 26 April 1971.
- 13 George Medland interview, 6 April 2006.
- 14 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 383, file 1, “Turkey of the Month Award.”
- 15 Ibid., vol. 382, file 12, letter from D. Pogson, Industrial Relations Director at Northern Telecom to Bob Nickerson, 18 July 1977.
- 16 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 3 October 2006.

- 17 Rene Montague interview, 18 September 2006.
- 18 London Public Library (hereafter LPL), Business and Industry Vertical File: Minnesota Mining and Manufacture, *London Free Press*, 7 April 1988.
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- 20 Local 27 Archive (hereafter L27A), *Local 27 News*, January 1967, 6.
- 21 Ibid., 7.
- 22 L27A, *Local 27 News*, November 1967, 1.
- 23 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
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- 25 See C. Wright Mills, *The New Men of Power: America's Labor Leaders*.
- 26 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 1, box 1, Minutes of General Motors Diesel Shop Committee, 1957–1960, 2 April 1958.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, series 3, box 1, Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1959–1960, letter from E.S. Brent to All Committeemen, 8 April 1959.
- 29 Ibid., 13 April 1960.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 382, file 12, Correspondence, Election Leaflets, Holograph Notes, 1976–1978.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid., vol. 379, file 2, Northern Electric Contract Negotiations, Negotiations, Program Reports, Request for Appointment of Conciliation Officer, Holograph Notes, 1972–1973.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 E.E. Palmer, *Collective Bargaining Arbitration in Canada*, 117, 172.
- 36 A study conducted in 1992 concluded that only 16 percent of grievances filed at first step actually made it to arbitration. See Jeanette A. Davy and George W. Bohlander, “Recent Findings and Practices in Grievance Arbitration Procedures,” 187.
- 37 See H.W. Arthurs, “Re United Steelworkers of America and Russelsteel Ltd. (1966).”
- 38 The arbitration decisions recounted here are found in the Archives of Ontario RG7-40 and *Labour Arbitration Cases*.

- 39 These statistics are compiled from arbitration decisions found in Library and Archives Canada, the Archives of Ontario, and the Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University.
- 40 These statistics are compiled from arbitration decisions found in Library and Archives Canada, the Archives of Ontario, and the Archives of Labour and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University.
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- 42 See Philip Girard, *Bora Laskin: Bringing Law to Life*, for a discussion of the emergence and evolution of the labour arbitrator's role in the postwar era.
- 43 These statistics are compiled from arbitration decisions found in both Library and Archives Canada and the Archives of Ontario.
- 44 United Automobile Workers, Local 27, and Eaton Automotive Canada Ltd, 24 June 1963, *Labour Arbitration Cases*, 14:61, 62.
- 45 AO, RG7-40, box B275835, Minnesota Mining and Manufacture of Canada Limited and UAW Local 27 (grievance of Mr. James Hord), 19 April 1973.
- 46 AO, RG7-40, box B367344, Minnesota Mining and Manufacture of Canada Limited and UAW Local 27, 6 June 1979.
- 47 AO, RG7-40, box B365196, Sparton of Canada Limited and UAW Local 27 (Dolena Robichaud), 19 September 1980.
- 48 Palmer, *Collective Bargaining Arbitration in Canada*, 117.
- 49 Arthurs, "Re United Steelworkers of America and Russelsteel Ltd. (1966)."
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- 51 OLRB, *Ontario Labour Relations Board Decisions, October 1978*, 0450-78-M: London Generator Service v. International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers (UAW) and its Local 27.
- 52 OLRB, *Ontario Labour Relations Board Decisions, October 1983*, 0179-83-R; 0178-83-R International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers (UAW) and Its Local 27 v. Central Chev. Olds Inc., and 533556 Ontario Inc. carrying on business as the Complete Car Care Centre, Respondents, v. Pat-Har Holdings Ltd., Intervener.
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- 57 Province of Ontario, “The Labour Relations Act, 1948.”
- 58 McInnis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation*, 110–11.
- 59 Archie Baillie interview, 18 July 2006.
- 60 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: Sparton of Canada, *London Free Press*, 16 January 1982.
- 61 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: Minnesota, Mining and Manufacture, *London Free Press*, 4 July 1974.
- 62 Local 27, *Fiftieth Anniversary Album*, 32.
- 63 On the importance of COLA in UAW bargaining in Canada and the United States, see Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers*, and Barnard, *American Vanguard*.
- 64 Jim Wilkes interview, 3 February 2006.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Local 27, *Fiftieth Anniversary Album*, 22.
- 67 LAC, Microfilm Department of Labour Strike and Lockout Reports, reels T3420, T3422, T3440, T3446, T3447, T3451, T3481, and T6174.
- 68 Canada Department of Labour, *Strikes and Lockouts in Canada, 1968*, 22; Labour Canada, *Strikes and Lockouts, 1973*, 20.
- 69 Ibid.
- 70 LAC, Microfilm Department of Labour Strike and Lockout Reports, reels T3451 and T3422.
- 71 Local 27, *Fiftieth Anniversary Album*, 19.
- 72 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006; Tim Carrie interview, 15 December 2006.
- 73 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 74 See Don Wells, “Holding the Line: Autoworkers’ Resistance and the Limits of Class Struggle,” xiv, 79, 92, and 356.
- 75 Don Wells, “Autoworkers on the Firing Line,” in *On the Job: Confronting the Labour Process in Canada*, ed. Craig Heron and Robert Storey, 337.

- 76 Ibid., 339.
- 77 Ibid.
- 78 Don Wells and Wayne Lewchuk, “Workplace Cohesion and the Fragmentation of Solidarity: The Magna Model,” in *Solidarity First: Canadian Workers and Social Cohesion*, ed. Robert O’Brien, 67.
- 79 See Pradeep Kumar, *From Uniformity to Divergence*; and Stephanie Ross, “The Making of CUPE: Structure, Democracy and Class Formation.”
- 80 Panitch and Swartz, *From Consent to Coercion*, 25.
- 81 Wells and Lewchuk, “Workplace Cohesion and the Fragmentation of Solidarity,” 66.

CHAPTER 6 The Social and Community Agenda

- 1 Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (hereafter ALUA), UAW Region 7 Collection, UAW Region 7 Collection, box 81, file: Local 27, Toronto, 1960–1961, letter from Emil Mazey to Henry Welch, 25 February 1960.
- 2 Local 27 Archive (hereafter L27A), *Local 27 News*, November 1960, 4.
- 3 Library and Archives Canada, National Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers Union of Canada fonds, R3341-0-8-E (hereafter LAC, CAW fonds), vol. 165, file 1, London, Ontario Correspondence Nov. 1973–Nov. 1976, letter from Donald E. Rand to R.J. Saumur, 8 May 1974.
- 4 Bar revenues were never particularly high. For instance, in 1990, when membership peaked in the context of this study, bar revenues represented 20 percent of total local income over a ten-month period. However, the bar represented 16 percent of expenditures over the same period, so only a relatively small net profit was earned. L27A, *Local 27 News*, December 1990, 16. At best, the lounge was likely self-sustaining.
- 5 Craig Heron, *Booze: A Distilled History*, 323. As Heron notes, beer parlours and lounges were places where people were welcome to dress in casual attire (including work clothes), although they were expected to observe some measure of social decorum (326).
- 6 LAC, CAW fonds, vol. 165, file 1, London, Ontario Correspondence Nov. 1973–Nov. 1976, letter from Donald E. Rand to R.J. Saumur, 8 May 1974.
- 7 Fanshawe College was initially founded in 1963 and was initially called the Ontario Vocational Centre. See Richard Bain, *Fanshawe College*, 111.
- 8 Jeanie Campbell interview, 1 April 2007.

- 9 L27A, *Local 27 News*, January 1962, 3.
- 10 L27A, *Local 27 News*, October 1959, 3.
- 11 The Royal Canadian Legion was a veterans' organization that sought to play a broad role in the community. It numbered 280,000 members by 1966. By the end of the 1960s, it operated a thriving amateur track-and-field organization that had, in one decade, trained 1,300 coaches and 60,000 youths. See James Hale, *Branching Out: The Story of the Royal Canadian Legion, 177–205*.
- 12 L27A, *Local 27 News*, November 1959, 6.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 L27A, *Local 27 News*, February 1983, 11.
- 15 See Lisa Fine, *The Story of REO Joe: Work, Kin, and Community in Autotown, U.S.A.*
- 16 See Christine McLaughlin, "The McLaughlin Legacy and the Struggle for Labour Organization: Community, Class, and Oshawa's UAW Local 222, 1944–1949," 98.
- 17 See Thomas Dunk, *It's a Working Man's Town: Male Working-Class Culture*, 88–89.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 On the importance of hockey in Canadian sporting life, see Colin D. Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Modern Canada*.
- 20 L27A, *Local 27 News*, February 1962, 2.
- 21 L27A, *Local 27 News*, December 1983, 9.
- 22 L27A, *Local 27 News*, December 1960, 2.
- 23 L27A, *Local 27 News* 5, no. 1 (January 1961): 4.
- 24 Mary Campbell Co-op, <http://mc.lweb.net/history.htm>.
- 25 Julie White interview, 20 January 2010.
- 26 L27A, *Local 27 News*, January 1961, 4.
- 27 L27A, *Local 27 News*, September 1968, 2.
- 28 ALUA, UAW Region 7 Collection, series 3, box 3, file: Specht, George International Rep 1963, Local 27, UAW General Membership Minutes, 28 March 1963.
- 29 John Groenewegen interview, 18 April 2006.
- 30 See Carla Brizzolari, *La nostra storia: Cento anni assieme*, 8.
- 31 Ibid., 29.
- 32 Ibid., 41.

- 33 Ibid., 130–41.
- 34 Ibid., 28.
- 35 Jeanie Campbell interview, 1 April 2007.
- 36 L27A, *Local 27 News*, November 1959, 5.
- 37 L27A, *Local 27 News*, January 1962, 5. The Canadian Peace Research Institute was founded by a physicist named Norman Z. Alcock. Supporters of this organization seem to have been more motivated by pacifism than leftist politics, as they included a former United Church moderator and a former head of the World Health Organization. See *The Ubyyssey* 44, no. 57, http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/ubyssey/UBYSSEY_1962_02_21.pdf.
- 38 L27A, *Local 27 News*, November 1962, 6.
- 39 On the origins of the Cold War in Canada, see Reg Whittaker and Gary Marcuse, *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945–1957*, 365.
- 40 L27A, *Local 27 News*, October 1982, 11. For a full analysis of this encyclical, see Gregory Baum, *The Priority of Labour*.
- 41 L27A, *Local 27 News*, September 1983, 6.
- 42 L27A, *Local 27 News*, December 1990, 1.
- 43 See Sam Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers: The Birth and Transformation of a Union*, 154.
- 44 L27A, *Local 27 News*, November 1969: 3.
- 45 See Pamela Sugiman, *Labour's Dilemma: The Gender Politics of Auto Workers in Canada, 1937–1979*.
- 46 See Joan Sangster, “Queen of the Picket Line: Beauty Contests in the Post-World War II Canadian Labour Movement, 1945–1970.”
- 47 L27A, *Local 27 News*, March 1968, 8.
- 48 Julie White interview, 1 November 2006.
- 49 L27A, box: Miscellaneous News clippings, 1970–1997, “Labour Presents the Truth About Guidelines and Inflation.”
- 50 L27A, *Local 27 News*, September 1960, 1.
- 51 L27A, *Local 27 Special Bulletin*, 14 October 1976.
- 52 L27A, *Local 27 News*, February 1983, 2.
- 53 L27A, *Local 27 News*, September 1983, 8.
- 54 L27A, *Local 27 Special Bulletin*, 14 October 1976.

- 55 Ibid.
- 56 See Michael Nolan, *Walter J. Blackburn: A Man for All Media*, for an account of the Blackburn family's media holdings.
- 57 Nolan, *Walter J. Blackburn*, 100.
- 58 Ibid., 101.
- 59 This figure was determined by examining the *London Free Press* articles contained in the Wolverine Tube Vertical File at the London Public Library.
- 60 London Public Library (hereafter LPL), Business and Industry Vertical File: Wolverine Tube, *London Free Press*, 15 June 1965.
- 61 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 14 January 1965.
- 62 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: Wolverine Tube, *London Free Press*, 10 December 1964.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 8 January 1965.
- 65 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 18 January 1965.
- 66 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 9 March 1974.
- 67 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 19 December 1981.
- 68 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 23 December 1986.
- 69 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 1 October 1985.
- 70 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 3 May 1971.
- 71 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 28 October 1983.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: General Motors Diesel. *London Free Press*, 26 June 1971.
- 74 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 15 January 1977.
- 75 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 21 October 1985.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 78 Roland Parris email message, 26 May 2007.
- 79 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: General Motors Diesel. *London Free Press*, 21 October 1985.
- 80 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 81 AO, CFPL F4396-1-1-1624, CFPL news short, 21 April 1961.

- 82 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 83 Local 27A, *London Free Press*, 19 June 1982, 22 July 1982, 12 August 1982, and 2 September 1982.
- 84 LPL, Business and Industry Vertical File: General Motors Diesel, *London Free Press*, 18 October 1984.
- 85 See Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto*, particularly chapter 7, on immigrant strikes.
- 86 Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 13.
- 87 The St. George's Society was founded as an elite charitable organization in the late nineteenth century. See Todd Stubbs, "Visions of the Common Good: Britishness, Citizenship, and the Public Sphere in Nineteenth-Century Toronto." By the post-World War 11 years, the London branch of the organization appears to have been primarily concerned with rugby football (London St. George's Rugby Football Club, <http://www.londonrugbyclub.com>).
- 88 René (Joe) Laporte interview, 21 December 2006.
- 89 See Bill Freeman *1005: Political Life in a Local Union*.
- 90 See McLaughlin, "The McLaughlin Legacy."
- 91 See Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: the Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, for a full discussion of postwar consumerism in the United States.
- 92 Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic*, 7.
- 93 See Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years*, for an analysis of postwar consumerism in Canada.
- 94 Peter Hensels interview, 10 April 2006.
- 95 For a popular history of the London Knights, see Burt Dowsett and Herb Shoveller, *Branks: A Life on the Bench*.
- 96 Ronnie Hawkins and Peter Goddard, *Ronnie Hawkins: Last of the Good Old Boys*, 221.
- 97 *London Free Press*, 2 March 1970.
- 98 Family and Children's Services of London and Middlesex, "Social Profiles of the Twenty-one Planning Districts in the City of London," 3.
- 99 *Ibid.*, 11.
- 100 *Ibid.*, 8.
- 101 *Ibid.*, 43.

- 102 Ibid., 42.
- 103 Shirley Martin interview, 7 July 2006.
- 104 On the baby boom generation in Canada, see Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation*, particularly 84–111.
- 105 Owram, *Born at the Right Time*.
- 106 The Lordstown strike has been discussed by several commentators. For example, John Barnard suggests that the strike was a response to high production-line speeds despite having been portrayed as a “rebellion of youthful, 1960s counterculturalists.” See Barnard, *American Vanguard*, 482.
- 107 Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, xiii.
- 108 Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers*, 143.
- 109 Tim Carrie interview, 15 December 2006.
- 110 See Craig Heron, *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Short History*, 110.
- 111 On the nature of the postwar labour relations framework in Canada, see Cy Gonick, Paul Phillips, and Jesse Vorst, eds., *Labour Pains, Labour Gains: Fifty Years of PC 1003*, and Leo Panitch and Don Swartz, *From Consent to Coercion: The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms*.
- 112 See David Halle, *America’s Working Man: Work, Home, and Politics Among Blue-Collar Property Owners*, 34–52.
- 113 See Liz Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*.

CHAPTER 7 Community Politics and Activism

- 1 Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, UAW Region 7 Collection (hereafter ALUA), series 3, box 3, file: Specht, George, 1963.
- 2 Local 27 Archive (hereafter L27A), *Local 27 Special Bulletin*, 14 October 1976.
- 3 London and District Labour Council, *London and District Labour Council: Celebrating Fifty Years*, 28.
- 4 Ibid., 32.
- 5 Library and Archives Canada, National Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers Union of Canada fonds, R3341-0-8-E (hereafter LAC, CAW fonds), vol. 164, file 15, Local 27, London, Ont. Correspondence, 1970–1971, letter from Tom McSwiggan to Emil Mazey, 20 August 1970.

- 6 Ibid., letter from Dennis McDermott to Tom McSwiggan, 4 September 1970.
- 7 Ibid., letter from Andy Paulick to Dennis McDermott, 8 May 1970.
- 8 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006; Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006.
- 9 Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006.
- 10 Jeff Taylor, *Union Learning: Canadian Labour Education in the Twentieth Century*, 102.
- 11 Archives and Research Collections Centre, London Labour Temple Collection (hereafter ARCC), box A07-015-008, Joint Education Committee Report, 11 October 1973.
- 12 Taylor, *Union Learning*, 108.
- 13 ARCC, box A07-015-008, Joint Education Committee Report, 11 October 1973.
- 14 Ibid., General Membership Meeting Minutes, 28 November 1973, 5.
- 15 Ibid., 1–2.
- 16 Ibid., October 1979 (exact date not specified), 2.
- 17 Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006.
- 18 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006.
- 19 Raymond Murray interview, 26 September 2006.
- 20 Local 27 Archive (hereafter L27A), *Perspectives*, June 1976, 14. This publication was produced by some London labour activists during the 1970s.
- 21 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 3 October 2006.
- 22 The Tolpuddle Martyrs were a group of six farm labourers who met to form a union in 1834. They were convicted of conspiracy and transported to Australia for seven years. Five of them settled just north of London, Ontario, after their release in 1844. See the Tolpuddle Martyrs Museum, http://www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk/mus_frms.html. Also see London and District Labour Council, *London and District Labour Council: Celebrating Fifty Years*, 12.
- 23 Jeanie Campbell interview, 1 April 2007.
- 24 On the evolution of Labour Day in Canada, see Craig Heron and Steve Penfold, *The Workers' Festival: A History of Labour Day in Canada*. The *London Free Press* coverage of Labour Day festivities focused on London and surrounding communities such as St. Thomas and Woodstock. It is therefore unclear exactly when the London Labour Council elected to start holding picnics rather than parades, but it is clear that picnics were held by the early 1970s.

- 25 Julie White interview, 20 January 2010.
- 26 Sam Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers: The Birth and Transformation of a Union*, 136.
- 27 Charlotte B. Yates, *From Plant to Politics: The Autoworkers Union in Postwar Canada*, 127–28.
- 28 L27A, *Local 27 News*, January 1962, 8.
- 29 L27A, *Local 27 News*, March 1960, 4.
- 30 L27A, *Local 27 News*, February 1962, 2.
- 31 L27A, *Local 27 News*, December 1985, 12.
- 32 L27A, *Local 27 News*, December 1989, 12.
- 33 ALUA, UAW Local 27 Collection, box 81, file: Local 27 London, 1960–1961, letter from F.J. Parfrey to George Burt, 24 April 1961.
- 34 *Ibid.*, letter from George Burt to F.J. Parfrey, 9 May 1961.
- 35 L27A, *Local 27 News*, November 1969, 2, 6.
- 36 L27A, *Local 27 News*, February 1983, 8.
- 37 Chief Electoral Officer, *Federal Election Results, 1968*, 91–95.
- 38 Chief Electoral Officer, *Federal Election Results, 1980*, 164–76.
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 Chief Electoral Officer, *Federal Election Results, 1988*, 156–65.
- 42 *Ibid.*
- 43 Chief Electoral Officer, *Ontario Election Returns, 1967*, 55.
- 44 Chief Electoral Officer, *Ontario Election Returns, 1971*, 26.
- 45 Chief Electoral Officer, *Ontario Election Returns, 1977*, 18–19.
- 46 Chief Electoral Officer, *Ontario Election Returns, 1981*, xviii.
- 47 Chief Electoral Officer, *Ontario Election Returns, 1985*, xviii–xix.
- 48 Chief Electoral Officer, *Ontario Election Returns, 1987*, xix–xx.
- 49 Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1976*.
- 50 L27A, Local 27 Twenty-fifth Anniversary dinner program.
- 51 L27A, Local 27 Fortieth Anniversary dinner program.
- 52 Interviewees commented that they and other Local 27 members were interested in living close to work, and address lists of local officers indicate that many also lived in London East.

- 53 Bernie MacDonald biography, *London Free Press*, 3 October 2006.
- 54 Harrington ran provincially in 1967 (London South), Welch ran in 1975 (London South), and Saumur ran in 1981 (London North).
- 55 L27A, *Local 27 News*, November 1969, 6.
- 56 This was a view expressed by several interviewees.
- 57 Jane Bigelow interview, 14 September 2006.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Keith Archer, *Political Choices and Electoral Consequences: A Study of Organized Labour and the New Democratic Party*, 72.
- 60 Ibid., 90.
- 61 Parliament of Canada, the Hon. Charles Turner, record of service, <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/parlinfo/Files/Parliamentarian.aspx?Item=7b05cff5-c307-4e05-ad7d-0efc4do65bee&Language=E>.
- 62 L27A, file: 1960–1969, letter from Charles Turner to Bryce Mackasey, Jean-Luc Pepin, and Allan MacEachen, 14 July 1969.
- 63 Ibid., letter from Allan MacEachen to Charles Turner, 31 July 1969.
- 64 Ibid., letter from Arnold E. Masters to Charles Turner, 25 August 1969.
- 65 Ibid., letter from William Froude to Cliff Pilkey, 29 May 1969.
- 66 Simone Cornelus Collection (hereafter SCC), *London Free Press*, 22 February 1969. “McClure, Robarts to discuss Kelvinator.”
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 L27A, *Local 27 News*, July 1974.
- 69 Paul Martin, *A Very Public Life*, vol. 2, 249.
- 70 See Bill Freeman, *1005: Political Life in Union Local*, 111.
- 71 Jane Bigelow interview, 14 September 2006.
- 72 London Public Library (hereafter LPL), Business and Industry Vertical File: General Motors Diesel, *London Free Press*, 10 September 1986.
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Ibid., *London Free Press*, 30 August 1986.
- 76 L27A, *Local 27 News*, July 1974, biographies of candidates Funk, Crook, and Wright.

CHAPTER 8 “It Was All About Families”

- 1 Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years*. As noted in the introduction to this study, the nature of the postwar labour relations system is discussed in Bryan Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour 1800–1991*; Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor*; Julie Guard, “Womanly Innocence and Manly Self-Respect: Gendered Challenges to Labour’s Postwar Compromise,” in *Labour Pains, Labour Gains: Fifty Years of PC1003*, ed. Cy Gonick, Paul Phillips, and Jesse Vorst; Peter McInnis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation: Shaping the Postwar Settlement in Canada, 1943–1950*; Melvyn Dubofsky, *The State and Labor in Modern America*; and David Brody, “Labour History, Industrial Relations, and the Crisis of American Labour.”
- 2 Jeanie Campbell interview, 1 April 2007.
- 3 Mark Thomas, *Regulating Flexibility: The Political Economy of Employment Standards*, 22.
- 4 Some interviewees were forthcoming about details of their personal lives, including their marital status and whether they had children.
- 5 Mirra Komarovsky, *Blue-Collar Marriage*; Lillian B. Rubin, *Life in a Working-Class Family*.
- 6 James Lorimer and Myfanwy Phillips, *Working People: Life in a Downtown Neighbourhood*.
- 7 See Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada 1951*, vol. 3, table 90.8; Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada 1966*, vol. 2, table 38.6; Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1971*, vol. 2, pt. 1, table 59.7; Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1981, Occupied Private Dwellings*, table 45.3; *Census of Canada, 1986, London Community Profile, Part 1*, Table 1.3; and *Census of Canada, 1991, Profile of Census Tracts in London, Sarnia–Clearwater, and Windsor, Part A*, 12.
- 8 Tim Carrie interview, 15 December 2006.
- 9 Jim Wilkes interview, 3 February 2006.
- 10 See Meg Luxton, *More Than a Labour of Love: Three Generations of Women’s Work in the Home*.
- 11 On birth control policy in Canada, see Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880–1980*, 133.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 136.

- 13 Roland Parris interview, 28 January 2006; Hector McLellan interview, 12 June 2006; and Tom and Sheila McSwiggan interview, 19 June 2006.
- 14 Peter Hensels interview, 10 April 2006; John Groenewegen interview, 18 April 2006.
- 15 Georgina Anderson interview, 16 November 2006.
- 16 H.B. Beal Technical and Commercial High School, *H.B. Beal Technical and Commercial High School: Fiftieth Anniversary, 1912–1962*, 11.
- 17 Julie White interview, 1 November 2006.
- 18 Tim Carrie interview, 15 December 2006.
- 19 Fantus Area Research Incorporated, “Report to Mayor F. Gordon Stronach and City Council,” 10 February 1964.
- 20 H.B. Beal Technical and Commercial High School, *H.B. Beal Technical and Commercial High School*, 11.
- 21 76Ibid., 18–21.
- 22 Bruce Curtis, D.W. Livingtone, and Harry Smaller, *Stacking the Deck: The Streaming of Working-Class Kids in Ontario Schools*, 47.
- 23 London Regional Art and Historical Museum, *Catalyst: Celebrating Twenty-five Years of Fanshawe College Fine Art*, 7.
- 24 Curtis, Livingtone, and Smaller, *Stacking the Deck*, 47.
- 25 Ibid., 91.
- 26 Ibid., 43.
- 27 See Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working-Class Kids Get Working-Class Jobs*, 9–47, especially 29–31.
- 28 Jim Wilkes interview, 3 February 2006.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Julie White interview, 1 November 2006.
- 31 *London Free Press*, 2 March 1970. Job ads for “Gal Friday” positions were not uncommon in the *London Free Press* in the late 1960s and early 1970s.
- 32 Liz Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, 196.
- 33 Hector McLellan interview, 12 June 2006.
- 34 See Michael Doucet and John Weaver, *Housing the North American City*, 129.
- 35 78Ibid., 130.
- 36 *London Free Press*, 3 March 1950.

- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1981*, table 12.1.
- 39 Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1971*, vol. 2, pt. 3, table 41.2.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 George Medland interview, 6 April 2006; Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006; Maida Miners interview, 21 April 2006.
- 42 Family and Children's Services of London and Middlesex, "Social Profiles of the Twenty-one Planning Districts in the City of London," 19.
- 43 Ibid., 10, 20.
- 44 Ibid., 15.
- 45 Ibid., 8.
- 46 Ibid., 14.
- 47 On the importance of the automobile, see Dimitry Anastakis, *Car Nation: An Illustrated History of Canada's Transformation Behind the Wheel*.
- 48 City of London, "The Official Plan for the City of London Planning Area, 1971," sec. 28.
- 49 A.D. Margison and Associates, *The Corporation of the City of London, Ontario: Traffic Planning Study Report*.
- 50 City of London, "City of London Transportation Needs."
- 51 See Christopher Dummit, "Modern Men: Taking Risks and Making Masculinity in the Postwar Years," for a full discussion of the role of automobiles in postwar male gender identity. Dummit's study focuses on Vancouver.
- 52 See Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years*, 79–81.
- 53 Canadian Consumer Loan Association, *1974 Canadian Consumer Factbook*, 24.
- 54 Ibid., 39.
- 55 Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada, 1951*, table 43.1.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 *London Free Press*, 3 March 1950.
- 58 *London Free Press*, 2 March 1960.
- 59 Bob Sexsmith interview, 13 January 2006.
- 60 See Family and Children's Services of London and Middlesex, "Social Profiles of the Twenty-one Planning Districts in the City of London."

- 61 Understandably, interviewees were not always forthcoming about details of their personal lives, such as the cost of their homes. These fictionalized accounts are based on the experiences of actual members of Local 27, such as Jim Ashton, as well as on commonplace historical knowledge. (For example, many working-class London residents in the 1960s and 1970s attended Beal Tech.) The lives of these characters are also based on information from the *London Free Press* and on statistical sources, including the Consumer Price Index and Local 27 collective agreements.
- 62 *London Free Press*, 2 March 1960.
- 63 *London Free Press*, 2 March 1970.
- 64 According to the Bank of Canada's inflation calculator (http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/rates/inflation_calc.html), by 1990 a home purchased for \$18,500 in 1970 would have increased in value by a factor of 3.9. In addition, Multiple Listing Service data from the London and St. Thomas Real Estate Board are available for house sales between 1978 and 1991 (although not for 1970). A comparison of the 1978 sale of 38 Hawkesbury Avenue — located in the area of London in which the fictional Pat and Lorraine supposedly lived — and the sale of 26 Hawkesbury Avenue in 1990 suggests that the Bank of Canada's inflation factor is reliable.
- 65 *London Free Press*, 24 March 1980.
- 66 *London Free Press*, 16 March 1990.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 Again, this number was derived using the Bank of Canada's inflation calculator (http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/rates/inflation_calc.html).
- 69 *London Free Press*, 16 March 1990.
- 70 Steve Van Eldick interview, 12 November 2006.
- 71 See Robert Rutherford, "Fatherhood and the Social Construction of Memory: Breadwinning and Male Parenting on a Job Frontier, 1945–1966," in *Gender and History in Canada*, ed. Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfeld.
- 72 Thomas Dunk, *It's a Working Man's Town: Male Working-Class Culture*, 97.
- 73 London Public Library, Business and Industry Vertical File: General Motors Diesel, *London Free Press*, 13 February 1984.
- 74 See Mirra Komarovsky, *Blue-Collar Marriage*; Lillian B. Rubin, *Life in a Working-Class Family*.

CONCLUSION

- 1 See Steven Meyer, “Stalin over Wisconsin”: *The Making and Unmaking of Militant Unionism, 1900–1950*, and Don Wells, “The Impact of the Postwar Compromise on Canadian Unionism: The Formation of an Autoworker Local in the 1950s.”
- 2 See Pamela Sugiman, *Labour’s Dilemma: The Gender Politics of Auto Workers in Canada, 1937–1979*.
- 3 See Sam Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers: The Birth and Transformation of a Union*, and John Barnard, *American Vanguard: The United Auto Workers During the Reuther Years, 1935–1970*.
- 4 Al Seymour and Bob Nickerson interview, 22 June 2006.
- 5 See Don Wells, “Autoworkers on the Firing Line,” in *On the Job: Confronting the Labour Process in Canada*, ed. Craig Heron and Robert Storey.
- 6 Keith Archer, *Political Choices and Electoral Consequences: A Study of Organized Labour and the New Democratic Party*, 6.
- 7 CAW Local 27, <http://www.cawlocal.ca/27/units.asp>.
- 8 CAW National, <http://www.caw.ca/en/3620.htm>.
- 9 See CAW National, <http://www.caw.ca/en/media-centre-biographies.htm>, for a list of national leader biographies.

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- Archives of Ontario (AO), RG7-33, Collective Agreements.
- Archives of Ontario (AO), RG7-40, Arbitration Decisions.
- Library and Archives Canada (LAC), National Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers Union of Canada fonds, R3341-0-8-E.
- London Public Library (LPL), Ivey Family London Room (limited circulation books and vertical files).

Private Collections

- George Medland Collection. Documents privately held by George Medland, a former Kelvinator employee, at his home in Strathroy, Ontario.
- Simone Cornelus Collection. A scrapbook of newspaper clippings and other documents pertaining to the 1969 closure of the Kelvinator of Canada plant in London, Ontario. Simone Cornelus's husband, Albert, worked at the plant. The collection was given to the author by Simone Cornelus.
- Stan Ashworth Collection. Documents relating to Kelvinator of Canada in London, Ontario, as well as items such as a time clock from the Kelvinator plant. Stan Ashworth was a non-unionized employee at Kelvinator. This collection is privately held by Stan Ashworth at his home in London, Ontario.
- Local 27 Archive. Several boxes of documents pertaining to the history of UAW/CAW Local 27. The collection, which is held at the Local 27 hall in London, Ontario, includes editions of the *Local 27 News*, commemorative collections, internal correspondence, photographs, and newspaper articles.

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