

Labor Court archives as a research source

Acervos da Justiça do Trabalho como fonte de pesquisa

Alexandre Veiga*

RESUMO

O artigo descreve a trajetória do Memorial da Justiça do Trabalho no Rio Grande do Sul, relatando suas experiências de atuação na área da preservação e divulgação do patrimônio documental e museológico da Justiça do Trabalho no estado, discorrendo também sobre a questão dos acervos como patrimônio da sociedade, relacionando-o com as práticas de memória e pesquisa histórica do mundo do trabalho e dos trabalhadores.

Palavras-chave: acervos; Judiciário; Justiça do Trabalho.

ABSTRACT

The article describes the history of the Memorial Archive of the Labor Court of Rio Grande do Sul, and looks at experiences of working with the preservation and dissemination of the documentary and museum heritage of the Labor Court in that state, as well as discussing the issue of collections as social heritage, linking this with practices of memory and historical research in the world of work and workers.

Keywords: Collections; Judiciary; Labor Court.

During his speech opening the IV National Meeting of the Labor Court Memorial Archives, held in Belo Horizonte in 2009, Professor Ulpiano Bezerra de Menezes, finished by discussing his expectations that the policies related to the memorial archives of the labor courts would be guided by a spirit of searching for solutions for the present and the future as strategies for the production of 'memorialistic' production.¹ This concept, which to a certain extent inverts the logic of the work in memorial archives, whose expectation is the preservation of the past, seems to have been effective when we discuss the actions of the Labor Court Memorial Archive of Rio Grande do Sul.

*Master's Degree in Communication and Information (UFRGS). Memorial da Justiça do Trabalho – Tribunal Regional do Trabalho da 4ª Região/RS. Rua General João Telles, 369, 2º andar, Bairro Bom Fim. 90035-121 Porto Alegre – RS – Brasil. alexandre.veiga@trt4.jus.br

During its almost ten years of existence, the Memorial Archive has tried to fulfill this task. During this period a number of exhibitions have been held – various of them itinerant, being presented in the labor courts elsewhere in the state – and it has also held or participated in events which propose to debate the function of history, memory, and research in labor court collections and documents.

Above all, these activities have sought to reinforce the specificity of the collection of law cases as privileged sources for the production of knowledge, not just about the labor courts, but for all of society. Law cases, generally speaking, are a product of disputes between litigants, who seek to construct versions of a determined episode, trying to convince the mediator of this dispute – the judge or the appeals court judge – to grant their requests, making them victorious in the law case.

This results in the bringing together in the same set of documents of a significant set of records, initially concerned with the points in dispute, but which can be used for other purposes as they can allow a comprehension of the social dynamics involved. Brought together in a law case are the initial submission of the plaintiff, the defendants reply, and the magistrate's decision. The arguments presented by the parties includes, in order to be credible, evidence, consisting of administrative documents, the interrogation of witnesses, and any other elements which can be used to convince the judge about a particular argument.

A series of records thus exists which having been included in law cases allow new and various readings of these, which can serve for reflection in various areas of knowledge. The various readings of the judicial process serve as an argument for historic knowledge, the social sciences, and researchers in the areas of law and economics, who can observe phenomenon related to their areas of study based on legal documents.

Due to this impressive capacity, law cases need to be worked with properly to become the subject of analysis in various areas of knowledge. This has been the perspective, alongside other proposals for the preservation of memory, adopted by the Labor Court Memorial Archive during the decade of its existence. In this article, it is intended to discuss this work, demonstrating its relevance and its fundamental relevance for the history of labor and workers in our country.

Last year the Labor Court completed 70 years of existence. It is a specialized branch of the Brazilian judiciary, and its existence in Brazil resulted from a singular historic trajectory, in spite of similarities with other episodes found around the world. In this period it has faced important challenges, having been the object of various manifestations. There were moments when it was proposed to merge it with the common judicial system, however, due to its significant presence among the population in general, and for the working class specifically – as it ensures these citizen workers access to the justice system –, its existence was guaranteed, and its activities were even redesigned. This trajectory also has to be highlighted, to the extent that the proper treatment of its collections is proposed.

ARCHIVES, HISTORIES AND MEMORIES

As a space of work, an archive cannot be understood, from the archivist perspective, as a ‘place of memory,’ in the way Pierre Nora² uses this expression. This is because the archival documents follow a specific logic, seeking initially to meet institutional demands, defined by their administrative trajectory. As a result they are established as instruments of institutional action, aiming only to register administrative movements of a determined unit, recording its actions and identifying activities, persons and work procedures. In Archival Studies rare documents in an archive are born with the label of ‘historic’ – irrespective of the meaning given to this term.

However, this does not signify that an archive cannot become a place of memory. Whether due to the collection it houses or its presence as a social institution, or even because it is an architectural space which is recognized by the population, the archive is a place where considerations are woven about the journey of time, registering it in a way to permit its recovery and use in the future. Thus, the multiplicity of the meanings of the term allows various readings, pointing to a relevant presence in the panorama of social studies.

In the case of Judicial archives, various questions have to be considered when creating an archive. A collection of law cases consists, at the same time, of documents of an administrative type and with a finalistic function, in the sense that the instrument of the law case and its results are the actual records. A law case finishes both the facts that originated its production and the

definition of the procedure. To the contrary of an administrative process, whose function is to resolve a determined administrative activity – called in Archival Studies the activity-means –, the law case is the means through which an end is reached, which the majority of times becomes a unique phenomenon, without any other reference.

Exemplifying this, we can note that the administrative process which orders the acquisition of goods for a determined sector almost always consists of identical documents: the purchase request, its authorization, the estimates, the choice of the supplier, the records of acquisition and delivery, and its conclusion. The same procedure will be repeated whenever the same acquisition is necessary, or even those which change the object, but not its task.

In a law case the situation is different, even though similar procedures are necessary. A law case always has an initial petition, a reply by the defendant, the evidence collected for both arguments and the sentence or agreement – depending on its level of jurisdiction – which is the final decision of that court. However, this formula encompasses a great diversity to the extent that it brings to an end various histories, all linked to specific episodes in the life of those involved in that dispute.

In the labor area, this phenomenon is even more forceful, since there is a specific link to the trajectory of the litigants, principally the worker, who is normally the plaintiff in this field of law. This means that when cases were taken by various workers from the same company, their different individual trajectories (entrance to the company, holidays, medical certificates, etc.) makes each worker different from the others, with the company being the only common link among the plaintiffs.

For this reason, labor related law cases have to be understood in an individualized form, taking into account their specific aspects in establishing their archival configuration. To the contrary of what occurs in other branches of the Judiciary – Federal and State – where there exist cases which are exactly identical, in the Labor Court this possibility is quite reduced, imposing singular organizational mechanisms, since although the demands are identical, the way they are accepted under labor legislation personalizes each case, providing diverse results.

To the extent that a large quantity of paper based records are involved, this characteristic only amplifies the challenge of their preservation and availability.

Thinking about the archive of labor court cases signifies proposing the composition of a large number of records, which are used to define the instruments of evaluation and administration of this documentary mass. This is because all the processes can individually be the object of study, considering their specificity and their details.

These circumstances incisively collaborate with the production of knowledge, principally in the areas of history and sociology, which have found in the labor court archives a representative mural of historically constituted human relations. The production of meaning in these collections, based on the documentary records gathered there allows reflection on the socio-economic profiles of the working class, as well as understanding its process of organization as a class, and even as individuals who sought to guarantee their rights.

Furthermore, this proposition constitutes the driving force of research in labor court archives. The production of knowledge originating in these documentary sets has a great capacity to unveil phenomenon which otherwise would have remained unknown, restricted to memorialistic reports, possessing specific meanings which dispute the social comprehension with variables that are not always appropriate, to the extent that the memories of the various actors in these episodes are structured. Their cross-checking with documentary records, nonetheless, configures a mutual enrichment, making both profoundly significant as places of memory.

RESEARCH IN THE JUDICIAL ARCHIVES

In the first years of the last century, research with documentary sources originating from judicial activities had an erratic and weak trajectory. To a great extent it was used to understand the phenomena linked to what was called political history, by which was meant studies of the so-called 'official' history.³ Most often it served as a process of knowledge for law students in their first years of study, afterwards being relegated to nowhere during the years of their education.

The changes which resulted from the conceptions of history which emerged from the banner of the *Annales* School in Post-War France, which later had a decisive impact in other countries – having been introduced in Brazil in the 1970s –, brought new energy to studies related to the judicial

dynamic. Now no longer towed by propaedeutic interpretations, but in search of social relations described in the records, history professionals began to share this object of study with their colleagues from law.

With this growth in the search for information, judicial archives came to be the object of organization of those who possessed them. To a great extent these documents were obtained from the respective local public archives, which until then had been almost exclusively used for the remittance of state documents. The National Archive in Rio de Janeiro, for example, obtained hundreds of documents from the Courts of Appeal, which were in charge of the application of justice in the colonial period. In the Public Archive of the State of Rio Grande do Sul another 27,000 boxes of documents were obtained from the judiciary of that state, including those which escaped the criminal fire in the Court House in 1948, which destroyed a large part of the documents from the Porto Alegre judicial district.

This reality demanded a new perspective following the exponential growth in the number of court cases after the enactment of the 1988 Constitution. To have an idea of this growth, in the Labor Court 4th Region (Rio Grande do Sul) the number of law cases rose from 440,000 between 1971-1980 to more than one million in the last decade of the 20th century. There are various explanations for this phenomenon, which will not be explored in this article, but it can be stressed that by expanding the possibilities for the intervention of the judiciary in society, the demand for rights expanded the demand in the courts for citizenship.

Another mark in the intensification of the use of legal sources was research about the question of slavery. This theme, little explored until the middle of the last century, became central in the historiography, also following a change in the dominant paradigm. The growing interest in the subordinated classes, until then relegated to a footnote of history, makes these sources very relevant as few records of the slave trajectory had been left. The identification of the social profile of slaves, as well as their social trajectories, reported in criminal law cases or in inventories, made judicial archives an enormous success among researchers from the area.

Based on this perception that there was much more history than can be supposed in judicial archives, research groups concerned with the themes dealt with in these documents expanded. Questions of family, social behavior,

bohemia, intra and inter-group relationships, commercial and religious aspects, amongst various others, came to demonstrate the enormous potential of the records left by the different branches of the judiciary, leading to various works, not just in history, but also in sociology, political science and anthropology.

A search in the Capes Dissertation Database using the terms justice, judiciary, and judicial document, located 6943, 3304, and 123 occurrences respectively. Various areas of knowledge used this proposal, constructing interpretations of judicial procedures.⁴ In this research there can be observed a fruitful capacity to understand the world, consubstantiated in judicial documents. We will examine in greater detail some of these productions in order to better understand the phenomenon.

In the area of Anthropology, Laura Lowenkron studied *Sexualidade e (menor)idade: estratégias de controle social em diferentes escalas* (Sexuality and Minority: strategies of social control in different scales). In the area of Political Science, Felipe Roquete discussed *Os dilemas judiciais e escolhas de políticas: o caso das políticas públicas de assistência farmacêutica* (Judicial dilemmas and political choices: the case of public policies for pharmaceutical assistance). Paulo Roberto de Andrade Castro and Silvia Keller Villas Boas, in the field of Social Sciences looked at questions related to the *Construção social do delinquente menor de idade na esfera jurídica* (Social construction of delinquent minors in the judicial sphere) and the crime of defloration, respectively.

In the fields where these documents are mostly used – Law and History– the themes explored include *Prova documental no Processo Civil* (Documentary proof in civil proceedings) by Antonio Américo, *Controle Social do Judiciário* (Social control of the judiciary) by Daniel Alves Pessoa, *Controle da Constitucionalidade das Leis* (Control of the constitutionality of laws), by Eduardo Alves Pinho, and *Aproximação entre o processo judicial e administrativo* (Approximation between judicial and administrative processes) by Fernão Borba Franco. In the historiographic area the works included concubinage in the Bishopric of Rio de Janeiro, medical professionalization in criminal law cases in the capital of Minas and the recognition of the territorial rights of the Krahô-Kanela indigenous community, by Alessandra Silveira, Gabriela Dias de Oliveira and Victor Ferri Mauro, respectively.

In addition to this more recent production, certain texts that are already classics should be mentioned, such as that by the renowned Brazilian historian, Sidney Chalhoub, *Trabalho, lar e botequim: o cotidiano dos trabalhadores no Rio de Janeiro da belle époque*, (*Work, home and the bar: the daily life of workers in Rio de Janeiro in the belle époque*) in which the author investigated aspects of the daily life of the Carioca working class in the first decades of the twentieth century, covering questions such as survival strategies, ethnic conflicts and amorous relations, using for this a documentary base of 140 criminal law cases ‘apparently without importance.’ His methodology was as follows:

What was fundamental in each history covered was not to discover ‘what really happened’ – despite the fact that... this is possible to an extent – but rather to try to understand how the different versions produced by the various social agents involved for each case were produced and explained. The different versions are seen in this context as symbols or interpretations whose significance has to be unveiled.⁵

This points to another instigating characteristic – even though it is full of procedural complexity –, the use of judicial documents as a research source. These records, notwithstanding their profound value as a tool for interpreting the world, as we have stated, never should be de-contextualized from their specific production. In other words, they were not put together to produce analyzes, but as an instrument for a determined judicial and administrative procedure, which has a sole objective: producing justice.

In function of this, it is necessary to establish some premises to help researchers in the use of judicial sources. It is fundamental to always bear in mind that none of these documents is neutral, since they have symbolisms resulting for their objective, within the deed. A petition, for example, will always ‘carry in the ink’ the accusation, making the episode much more serious that it really must have been. The response to the accusation obviously uses the same artifice, just inverting it. And also the decision of the magistrate, which is supposed to be produced with equidistance from the fact, also demonstrates a vision of the world and an understanding that are conditioned. It is questions such as these, or which are related to administrative processes

required for procedural instruction – as reported by Keila Grinberg⁶ –, which have to be observed when dealing with documents from the courts.

LABOR COURT ARCHIVES

The trajectory of labor court archives does not differ much from the other branches of the judiciary. However, since it is a specialized court, its documentary production has met strong resistance over the years, before becoming part of the ‘granary of history’ of which Bellotto speaks.⁷ The use of labor court cases in research, whose characteristics are different from those produced in the other parts of the court system, is based on the perspective that they ‘only’ deal with questions linked to the world of work.

Once again the historiographic dynamic is present, and at the end of the 1990s, with the expansion of memorialistic events, the Labor Court started to discuss the importance of its archives, considering them as historical documents of great relevance for the production of knowledge. It is from this period that there dates the creation of the memorial archives of the judiciary in the 3rd Region (Minas Gerais, 1997), Ceará, and Rio Grande do Norte, in 2000. Shortly afterwards the creation of the memorial archive for the 4th Region was proposed, which became effective in December 2003.

One of the great problems faced by the Labor Court in the organization of its documents was the legislation. A law signed on 10 November 1987 by President José Sarney authorizes the Labor Court to discard its records after five years. Widely used – and still in force – this legal order still haunts the equipment involved in the difficult battle to preserve archives.

Another related question was the proposal defined by the National Program for the Memory of the Judicial Power (*Programa Nacional de Memória do Poder Judiciário* – Proname), created by the National Council for the Judiciary (Conselho Nacional do Judiciário – CNJ) in 2008, which intended to unify the guidelines for preserving access to judicial records all over the country. Although it was prepared with the premise of qualifying the actions of documentary management, the definitions of Proname often actually allowed this possibility of destruction. In relation to this, it is sufficient to observe the Temporal Table suggested by the Program Working Group which

established for the Labor Court the same five year period for the destruction of the majority of the cases filed.

In the attempt to preserve these collections, one of the strategies adopted was the implementation of a policy of partnerships with teaching institutions, which could house collections and at the same time carry out research activities with their students involving the analysis of these sets of documents. This strategy resulted from the perception by researchers of the important informative nature of the collections, which could allow the visualization of aspects of Brazilian society which would otherwise remain unknown.

Based on this perception, for example, the Regional Court of Pernambuco produced a proposal for its Memorial Center. Mobilized by the news of a donation of a significant collection of law cases to be discarded as old paper, professors from Department of History in Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE) managed to prevent this from occurring, alerting the scientific community and Pernambuco society to the serious risks that this destruction would cause. To revert this situation a partnership agreement was signed by the TRT and the UFPE proposing the complete preservation of the archive, in order to allow researchers access to it. Thanks to this agreement more than 200,000 labor court records were preserved, which are helping to provide important reflections on the trajectory of the labor court of that state.

This has resulted in works such as that of Vera Acioli (*A Justiça e o Direito como estratégias de Resistência ao trabalho escravo em Pernambuco, da Colônia à República* – Justice and law as resistance strategies to slave labor in Pernambuco, from colony to the republic), in which she studies labor related court cases, seeing disputes as an element of the alteration of the dynamic of the world of labor in that historic context; Diego Carvalho da Silva examined questions related to the actions of the labor courts in rural disputes, when he analyzed the Rural Worker Statutes in *A Justiça entra em campo: a atuação da Justiça do Trabalho em Jaboatão no Processo de decadência da Usina Muribeca* (Justice in the countryside: Labor Court activities in Jaboatão during the decline of Muribeca mill); also related to rural labor in Jaboatão, but focusing on Miguel Arraes' policy in this area called the Countryside Agreement, Valéria Santos wrote *De avulso a estável, o voo oblíquo do trabalhador do campo por Justiça, Direito e Cidadania* (From casual to permanent, the oblique flight of rural laborers for justice, law and citizenship).

This brief report has permitted the identification of some of the specificities related to labor court collections. The first is about the judicial connection from which these documents originate. As they are specialized, the labor courts deal with questions linked to the world of work, processing claims related to the economic activities of society. For this reason its research perspectives involve aspects connected to this social relationship, imposing a scope of action concerned with these questions. Nevertheless, the documents collected in the judicial records show aspects of significant relevance, due to the centrality of the question of work in our social organization.

These circumstances mean that these records should be preserved for posterity. Their reading, availability and interpretation allow an understanding of social phenomenon which has marked their historical time, to the extent that they allow access to the actors involved in these episodes, propelling their effective dimension. As a result, a strike in the legal records appears not only as an almost abstraction – as it could be understood in the reading of academic texts – but an episode which marked the trajectory of many lives, telling its details, through its suffering and the efforts to obtain its demands. Thus, we can see with notable clarity how a determined historical period (for example, the neoliberal decade) impacts on workers' lives, through the reports collected in labor court documents.

THE ARCHIVES OF THE 4TH REGION OF THE LABOR COURT (TRT) AND HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE

The Labor Court Memorial Archive of Rio Grande do Sul was created by Administrative Resolution 22, on 11 December 2003, and aimed to prepare and propose institutional policies for the preservation and access to historical records from the labor courts of that state. Its genesis arose out of the perspective that these informational records, like the rest of those related to the judiciary, are a social asset and important for allowing the expansion of knowledge about the past and its development in the present and future.

During its ten years of existence, the Memorial Archive had carried out various activities reflecting on the questions of justice, citizenship, human and labor rights and the history and memory of work and workers. Dozens of exhibitions, seminars and conferences have been held with the objective of

discussing the need to preserve archives held by the Labor Court, seeking to demonstrate the relevance and pertinence of investment in the preservation of these judicial records, both to guarantee the individual rights of citizens as well as to permit the comprehension of the collective phenomena registered there.

To understand this work, we will next present a succinct report of some of these experiences, discussing the events which produced the greatest impact on its staff and the wider public. These activities always aimed at expanding the understanding of the grandeur of this documentation which registers in detail significant episodes related to disputes between social actors over the theme of work and economic activity.

One of the first activities of the Memorial Archive was the analysis of the process of the constitution of labor law and justice in Brazil. Held in November 2004 and consisting of a seminar and exhibition, this activity portrayed the initial configuration of the labor courts in panels with replicas of law cases from the 1940s from the cities of Rio Grande and São Jerônimo. The images were shown in a video at the same time that objects prepared using origami were presented, which had texts written by magistrates and lawyers, as well as phrases extracted from the diaries of Getúlio Vargas and the play *Lisístrata*.

Also in this period intense research was carried out in the records obtained by the Labor Court Memorial Archive, which resulted in the Doctoral Dissertation of the Appeals Court Judge Magda Biavaschi about the early year of the labor courts. In this text, prepared on the basis of documentary sources from the archive, it was possible to relate the social, political, economic and cultural context in which this system was created and institutionalized.

On another occasion the question of the work of coal miners in the region of Charqueadas and Arroio dos Ratos was presented in exhibitions and the compilation of archives from other supports, making them accessible to interested researchers. This proposal gained relevance due to the function of the collection of law cases collected in the region – one of the Memorial Archives first actions in the area –, which reported the judicial disputes caused by the terrible conditions of the miners, forced to work in perverse labor conditions. An example of the relevance of this is that the São Jerônimo Labor Court was the second to be established in the state, on 25 June 1944, being preceded only by the one in the state capital.

Dealing with a more recent question, the trajectory of the Labor Court was discussed, which has recently commemorated 70 years of existence. It was created by Getúlio Vargas on 1 May 1942, the Labor Court had a significant trajectory during this period, as can be evaluated in the studies carried out about it and about its special importance. The fact that Brazil is one of the few countries in the world where a specialized court of this kind exists – and although its dismantling has already been cogitated, with the pressure of workers being one of the factors which has guaranteed its continuity – has made these archives even more relevant.

Another theme always present in the Memorial Archive was that of procedures related to the documentary archive. For this reason, it was sought to locate, together with the judicial units in the different parts of the state, records of law cases which could be collected, thereby allowing the creation of set of labor court records in Rio Grande do Sul. To a great extent these legal records were stored in inadequate conditions, in danger of being lost due to the degradation of support. There was also a constant concern with the legal precepts related to this documentation, since the importance of these records for the history of the country was always understood.

As an alternative proposal for administrative necessities, it was also decided to establish a policy of partnership with teaching institutions, which were willing to support the preservation of these archives. These partnerships were established due to the lack of physical space in judicial units, and it was also in these locations where the archives were transferred to other buildings, administered by the partner universities. In one specific case, in the city of Santa Maria, the partnership had a different format, since there was only a partnership agreement between the local court and the courses of archive studies and history from the federal university of that city, while the records remained in the building of the judicial unit, in order to allow the preparation of a proposal for a Regional Center for the Labor Court Memorial Archive.

The other partnerships established – in Pelotas and Passo Fundo – included, apart from the transfer of the law cases to spaces within the institutions in question, a proposal for action involving both the latter and the Labor Court Memorial Archive, with the aim of creating archival research programs. The idea is to project in these sets of documents concerns outlined in the form of general questions, whose regional specificities were to be analyzed

by work groups in each location. As a result, in addition to permitting facilitated access to researchers who propose to study the Labor Courts collection, there also exists a line of action that advocates the integrality of these various research spaces, maintaining the internal coherence of the work with the sources.

Research is also being carried out by the partner institutions. In Pelotas, a historic city close to the coast, the Labor Court archive has already allowed questions about trades which no longer exist to be analyzed, such as shoemakers, tailors, etc. In the city of Passo Fundo, in the northeast of the state, the themes of the research carried out has been concerned with the countryside – the main socio-economic vocation of that geographic areas –, focusing on judicial and historic aspects of employment in the period 1998-2008, and labor demands in that part of the state.

As can be concluded the possibilities of the production of knowledge are extremely diverse, even if, at first sight, the Labor Court archives are only concerned with work related questions. What is needed is an increase in the incentives for researchers, whose vocation for historical analysis has been present in an effectively important manner over time. This research serves as a small example of the potential which these archives possess and which can also demonstrate the importance of their maintenance in an organized and planned manner, with the proper guarantees of preservation and access. Its presence in the region in which it originated also demonstrated a policy that has been proved correct to that extent that this reduces the cost of transferring the collection to the state capital, as well as avoiding the overload of documents in a single space, also ensuring that local researchers can access the documentation in a an easier manner.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The world of work is being completely modified by new technologies. At the same time we continue to observe the continuity of deleterious practices of the submission of man, such as child labor, low pay, precarious work and slave labor. These ills were, and from what it seems continue to be, a constant in the actual world of work, notwithstanding the fact that this is an absolute

condition for the maintenance of survival in a responsible and respectful practice.

These important questions are portrayed in the Labor Court archives. It is possible to discover in these records that the problems described there reveal aspects of profound significance about the profile of humanity, through the demands analyzed by labor court judges during the twentieth century. They are reflections of a model of organization of work, but also a social configuration. These documents allow questions to be perceived which otherwise would have been lost in the mists of time.

All these records, therefore, need to be made available for public access, since they are the property of everyone. The judicial archives, like all documents produced by the state, are the cultural heritage of society, since this is where they originate. During its existence the Labor Court Memorial Archive in Rio Grande do Sul has made efforts to make this idea a reality through the various events already held, such as exhibitions, talks and scientific work.

Another world is unveiled, overcoming the barriers of the century. Humanity prepares to face new challenges, trying to overcome questions that remain, despite all efforts. There is still much to be done to prevent the continuity of the exploitation of man by man, though advances in this sense can be seen. Thinking about this dynamic, understanding the facts that have occurred and reflecting on our possibilities of action in the world are initiatives which demand that these episodes be known, whether through academic reflection, or aesthetic fruition. They just cannot continue to be ignored. For its part, the Labor Court Memorial Archive of the 4th Region intends to continue to fight this ignorance, producing ever more events which can permit everyone to know the past, understand the present and influence the future.

NOTES

¹ CAIXETA, Maria Cristina Diniz; DINIZ, Ana Maria Matta Machado; CUNHA, Maria Aparecida Carvalhais; CAMPANTE, Rubens Goyatá (Org.). ENCONTRO NACIONAL DA MEMÓRIA DA JUSTIÇA DO TRABALHO, 4. Cidadania: o trabalho da memória. Belo Horizonte (MG), 2009. *Anais...* São Paulo: LTr, 2010. p.15.

² NORA, Pierre. Entre história e memória: a problemática dos lugares. *Projeto História*, São Paulo, v.10, p.7-28, 1993.

³ LARA, S. apud SCHMIDT, Benito (Org.). *Trabalho, justiça e direitos no Brasil: pesquisa histórica e preservação das fontes*. São Leopoldo (RS): Oikos, 2010. p.106.

⁴ Just by way of information, among the 123 productions located using the term judicial document, 68 of these were produced by researchers from the area of Law; another 10 from the area of History, with the others being from areas as disparate as Bioethics, Accounting, Transport Engineering, Pharmacy and Social Services. Source: Capes Dissertation Database. Accessed on 1 Aug. 2012.

⁵ CHALHOUB, Sidney. *Trabalho, lar e botequim: o cotidiano dos trabalhadores no Rio de Janeiro da belle époque*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1986. p.22-23.

⁶ GRINBERG, Keila. *Liberata: a lei da ambiguidade. As ações de liberdade da Corte de Apelação do Rio de Janeiro no Século XIX*. Rio de Janeiro: Centro Edelstein de Pesquisa Sociais, 2008. p.10.

⁷ BELLOTTO, Heloisa Liberalli. *Arquivos permanentes: tratamento documental*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. FGV, 2007.