Beyond 'Social Movement Unionism'? Understanding and Assessing New Wave Labour Movement Organising

Anthony Ince

Changing to Win?

"Change to Win is dedicated to the single most important task for restoring broad hope and prosperity to the American people — uniting by industry the tens of millions of workers who are now without a voice on the job and in our nation's political life. Change to Win and its affiliates believe unionisation and collective bargaining are the foundation on which a fair and balanced economy can develop." (Change to Win Coalition, 2006).

What is peculiar about this statement? It simply iterates the usual union rhetoric of uniting workers for a better life. The reality, however, is that it represents a tiny part of a much bigger shift in union strategies that has taken place, to greater or lesser extent, over the last decade or so. What is crucial in the statement is its context: it has been issued by a group that split from the main US trade union body in response to the massive decline in union membership over the last thirty years, and unions' apparent inability to do anything about it. Thus where this statement may have seemed perfectly innocuous forty years ago, it is a radical call to arms today, representing one of the many ways that unions and other workers' advocates have looked to reinvigorate the labour movement all over the globe in recent years.

This paper will investigate these new labour strategies, and attempts to analyse them at both conceptual and practical levels. It seems a fairly straightforward point, but no matter how clever a campaign is, it still may not be successful at achieving its aims. Thus the paper

has a dual purpose. How do these new campaigns and strategies organise workers? How can they be seen as 'new'? What relation do they have with contemporary thought on the nature of work? Ultimately, however, it must be asked '*to what extent do they actually succeed?*'

The paper will also consider the global dimension. Much work has been conducted on US and UK union renewal, but in this paper I will attempt to delve into some of the countries and regions that have rarely been addressed in anglophone literature. It may seem that the newly industrialising or post-"communist" countries are likely to have a far higher unionised workforce, but in many of these countries, union rates are also falling. As such, it is important to understand the global dimension as much as possible. There is insufficient space here to consider the position and power of the labour movement in all countries, but I will attempt to provide as comprehensive coverage as possible. In several cases, however, concentration on campaigns in anglophone countries will be unavoidable, since many of the new initiatives stem from such areas.

The information has been collected through a variety of means, deliberately so that there is space for a variety of views. Predominantly, I have used textual sources from academics and activists, but also I have utilised several contacts with labour movement organising experience in the UK, USA and Australia. Due to these contacts 'on the ground', many of the points made in the following sections are not referenced since they arose from conversations.

The Contemporary Union Climate and Its Genesis

The current economic climate is at best tricky, and at worst hostile, for those working to rebuild the labour movement. It is not at all a coincidence that the 1980s and 1990s saw massive economic changes taking place throughout the world at all scales, and simultaneously a rapid decline in union power, membership and efficacy. This was a shift of

colossal proportions from the post-war politics of economic and national protectionism, large-scale industry and broadly corporatist agendas to flexible, decentred and increasingly service-oriented capital and labour markets, with capital and information networks and flows breaking – or simply ignoring – national and cultural boundaries. Since labour is intimately tied to capital, with hindsight it was inevitable that the structures and strategies of the old labour movement would struggle to continue the growth that it had experienced in the previous fifty years. This shift – from national to global emphasis; from stable to mobile capital; from production-oriented to consumption-oriented economics; from grudging co-operation to all-out class war (certainly in the 1980s) in which the workers had virtually all the odds stacked against them – has negatively affected labour's ability to organise in numerous ways. Some (e.g. Ebbinghaus and Visser, 1999) have attempted to conceptualise these factors into broader themes, however I prefer to address them more straightforwardly as a number of changes in their own right which very often interact with one another in the same workplaces, usually to the detriment of worker unity and power.

Firstly, although casual work has been present throughout history, recent years have seen a proliferation of casual jobs, precarious working conditions, and a general trend towards casualisation and job insecurity (e.g. Vandenheuvel and Wooden, 1999; Burgess and Strachan, 1999). Even in historically stable industries such as education and healthcare, the restructuring of businesses and workplaces in the face of ever more competitive and specialised markets has led to an increasing reliance on casual, agency and temporary work (e.g. Chitnis and Williams, 2005). This has at once been an attack on the working conditions of these casualised workers, and a major difficulty for their organisation into unions. Unions have struggled to deal with this flexible and decentred labour market, unable to use the traditional method of having permanent staff in large workplaces from which to build a presence.

Similarly, the major trend towards subcontracting of workers (Warren, 2005; Wills, forthcoming), particularly in service and manufacturing industries such as cleaning and textile manufacture, has led to difficulties in dealing with the multiple and constantly shifting sites of work for subcontracted workers. More generally, what could be seen as a post-Fordist turn towards service and consumption industries has led to a concomitant deindustrialisation in 'First World' countries. This deindustrialisation has resulted in a significant reduction of large-scale industrial workplaces that were once the mainstay of the labour movement (Martin, *et al.*, 1994). Some remain, but in far fewer numbers than in previous decades.

Institutional factors have also had an important part to play. Alongside private businesses subcontracting workers out to other employers, laissez-faire public sector governance has led to the privatisation of large swathes of what previously were unionised public sector workplaces. This privatisation and fragmentation of the public sector – the other of the two traditional bastions of the unions – has broken up union branches and also further complicated employer/employee and public/private sector relationships. It is increasingly difficult, for example, for unions to seek out key pieces of information on a workplace, especially since some workplaces might have several public and private employers covering the various job roles.

The state and judiciary also have an important part to play in the decline of unions. Their legal apparatus – and employer avoidance thereof – has proved time and again to be a great tool for employers, and the increasingly anti-union legislation initiated in the 1980s by neoliberal free-market leaders such as Reagan and Thatcher have made things even more difficult for unions (Lalonde and Meltzer, 1991; Farber and Western, 2002). The legal loopholes through which employers are able to frequently squeeze exaggerate the effects of the strict legal hoops through which unions and workers must jump in order to gain union recognition or exercise their rights.

As well as powerful anti-union sentiment within government, there has been an increasingly prevalent 'partnership' agenda within many enterprises, claiming that unions are not needed in well-run workplaces. Indeed, many businesses posing as liberal, or even left-leaning, use progressive-sounding rhetoric as devastatingly effective anti-union measures (e.g. Whole Foods Market, 2000). This potentially has a profound effect on workers' images of unions by portraying them as divisive or antagonistic, rather than unifying and communitarian, and only very recently have unions begun to break down this partnership rhetoric[1].

What further complicates the terrain on which unions now have to fight is the interplay between these factors. These shifts, stemming as they do from similar or related phenomena, often combine to create much more potent forces against workers. Furthermore, the blurring of class boundaries through the proliferation of new levels of middle management in many workplaces has had the effect of reducing the image of a single, white, male manager as a representative of the interests of the employer. A multiplicity of 'team leaders', 'supervisors' and 'co-ordinators' not only can confuse the class-awareness of workers, but also makes it hard for unions to differentiate between who ought and ought not to be a member.

All these trends have had the ultimate effect of significantly reducing union power. There are several possible ways of measuring the power of unions, including measuring union density (percentage of the population who are members), union recognition (proportion of workplaces with a recognised union presence), union coverage (percentage of the population whose pay and conditions are set through collective bargaining procedures), access to media and government, and ability to effect positive change for workers. The latter two means of measurement are somewhat qualitative and there have been few studies using

---

[1] In particular, the organising efforts at Starbucks stores of Unite in New Zealand and IWW in the USA were particularly important campaigns with regards breaking through employee partnership rhetoric.

such methods, however it is fair to suggest that in most cases these variables correlate moderately well.

Union Trends since the 1980s

Ebbinghaus and Visser (1999: 137) proclaim that in Western Europe, "[t]he 1980s undid most of the gains of the previous decade", seeing a six percent drop in union density from 40% in 1980 to 34% in 1990. Although some countries in Europe, such as Finland, Sweden and Denmark, saw union membership grow modestly since the 1980s, countries like Germany (see Berndt, 2007) and the UK saw membership plummet. In the UK, membership density fell from 51% in 1999 to 33% in 1995 (Ebbinghaus and Visser, 1999). Indeed union membership in the UK in 2003 was just over 35% lower than it was in 1970, a decade *before* the British labour movement peaked (Visser, 2006). In Eastern Europe, union membership fell by a significant amount after the fall of the USSR with a 36% drop in membership between 1985 and 1995 (Waterman and Timms, 2005) and now tends to have a fairly low union coverage of around 10-40% (Armingeon, 2006; cf. Anon., 2005; Vinokurova, 2005).

In Asia, although experiences differ according to country, a similar decline of unions has been seen. Countries such as Japan, Singapore and Korea have experienced a steady decline since the mid-to-late 1970s of between 10 and 15 percent. China has maintained a very high union density, although it dropped just over 8% in the four years between 1995 and 1999, and Taiwan's union movement flourished after the end of military rule in the mid-1980s, before losing some momentum in recent years (Kuruvilla, *et al.*, 2002).

South African unions remain a force to be reckoned with, particularly as a result of the industrial[2] – rather than trade – organisation of several key unions, rather than their size. Contrary to global trends, private sector unions in mining and manufacturing industries made

---

[2] Industrial unionism operates under a 'one industry, one union' structure, which means that industrial action is often highly effective since it is effected throughout all sectors of an entire industry simultaneously.

significant gains in membership and influence in the early-to-mid 1990s (Wood, 2001), and although estimates vary, at the turn of this millennium membership density was around 30% (e.g. Butcher and Rouse, 2001). In other Southern, Central or West African countries, which do not have significant industrial or urban bases and where a sizeable proportion of the population are subsistence farmers, union membership remains relatively low. In Ghana, for example, union membership between 1985 and 1998 dropped by 58,245 from 630,843 to 572,598 (Anyemedu, 2000). For a country of almost twenty million people (Adlakha, 1996) these figures seem minimal, but this decline in union membership of 10.8% is roughly comparable to European changes during the same time frame. On another note, Niger is typical of some young democracies in Africa. Having installed a liberal democratic regime in 1991, the labour movement received significant repression from the state due to pressures of Structural Adjustment Programmes implemented to enforce market liberalisation. Ironically, the union movement that had risen to fight the previous regime in Niger crumbled once the regime had been defeated. As such, union density in Niger is, as in Ghana, very low (Adji, 2000).

Some African countries such as Swaziland and Eritrea are witnessing a massive boom in union activity due to political liberalisation and expansion of urban areas. Swaziland's unions, for example, increased their membership by 975% between 1985 and 1995 (ILO, 1999). North African unions have witnessed healthy growth, with Egypt's unions, for instance, growing by 21.8% in that same ten-year period. The Middle East, however, has for a long time had a very small labour movement. Recent upsurges by Iranian and Iraqi unions aside, the largest labour movement in the region is in Israel which has seen a significant decline in union membership, falling to less than half of its 1981 size by 1998 (Nathanson, 1999).

Following repressive dictatorships in some Latin American countries during the 1970s and 1980s, it is not surprising that the years following their downfall the labour movement rose to new strengths. In Chile, for example, following the instatement of a liberal democratic regime in 1989, union membership had almost doubled by 1998. What is interesting here, however, is that membership actually peaked in 1992, and has steadily declined since then due to state and market pressures similar to those on the European and North American labour movements (Campero, 2001).

The union movement in the USA had been declining ever since the 1960s, where private sector union density – usually much lower than in the public sector – was a very respectable 37% (Demographia, 2000). To put things into a more appropriate timescale for the present study, in 1981 over all union density was 20.1%, whereas density in 2006 was 12% (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2007a). On another, perhaps more depressing note, the number of work stoppages involving over a thousand workers has decreased rapidly from 235 in 1979 to 20 in 2006 (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2007b). The Canadian story is similar, with union density falling from 38% in 1981 to 31% in 2004. This 7% drop does not represent as much of a decline as experienced in many other countries, but its causes are concomitant with those outlined above (Morissette, *et al*., 2005).

A Change in Fortunes?

This is indeed a bleak picture for labour movements in most parts of the world. However, recent years have arguably seen a slowing of membership decline in many countries, and some signs of rejuvenation (Hall-Jones, 2006). In the UK, union density decline has slowed sharply since 1998, membership having dropped almost the same amount in the seven year period between 1998 and 2005 as in the three years preceding 1998 (Grainger, 2006). Furthermore, recognition agreements at workplaces have increased

significantly since 1997 (Blanden, *et al.*, 2006). Similarly in the US and Australia, density decline noticeably began to slow in the late 1990s, along with sporadic bursts of growth in some areas (Frege and Kelly, 2003; Griffin and Moors, 2004). Unions are still, on the whole, in decline, but recent years have seen a sometimes significant slowing of this decline in many other countries, such as Italy (Frege and Kelly, 2003), New Zealand (Walsh and Crawford, 2003), Canada (Yates, 2003) and Slovenia[3] (Meardi, 2005). In some cases, this slowing has been a general change of fortunes for the labour movement as a whole; in others – particularly the USA – it has been the result of the growth of certain key unions using new strategies for organisation.

What we would, no doubt, want to know is why this slowing of union shrinkage has occurred. The following sections attempt to unravel the new organisational structures, campaigns and initiatives that have underpinned this small but important revitalisation of the labour movement in some parts of the world. What is interesting here is not only these new structures, but also their efficacy, future potential, and relations to ultimate goals of worker self-empowerment and industrial democracy. Indeed, as we shall see, some of the most innovative work has been undertaken outside of the traditional union movement altogether. The word 'movement' is very much at the fore of these new initiatives, but I will argue that the emphasis on the monolithic terms 'movement', 'unionism', and the phrase 'social movement unionism', do not express sufficiently the variety of strategies undertaken in recent years. It is true in many cases that the term could be applied, but there are sufficient differences to suggest that the use of the word is somewhat of a misnomer when trying to analyse the various strands of new worker mobilisation and organisation. An alternative conceptualisation of the different strands will be proposed in terms of relative proximity to traditional union organising and internality or externality to unions in general.

---

[3] Although, as Meardi (2005) points out, Slovenia is very much the exception rather than the rule in the context of Central and Eastern Europe.

I will first give a brief overview of each of the main categories of new forms of labour movement organisation, before discussing the various issues involved in it. Following this, I will endeavour to draw out general issues, problems and dilemmas that these new forms bring to the fore.

New Union Organising

Organising Unionism – New meets Old

Arguably the most common of the strategies considered here is the 'Organising Model'. Its influence in union discourse in the US, in particular, even led to a split from the AFL-CIO in 1995, in order to create the *Change to Win* coalition, mentioned at the beginning of this piece. Some (e.g. Heery, *et al.*, 2000a; de Turbeville, 2004) have seen this as looking back to a 'golden era' of unionism, and a rediscovery of the movemental roots of unions. In the Organising Model, there is a "desire to recreate labour as a social movement" (*ibid*: 38) that is rooted in a profound distaste for the so-called 'service unionism' that many see to be in part the root of union stagnation and decline. Bob Muehlenkamp (1991, quoted in Carter, 2000: 121), a key proponent of the Organising Model in the USA, once stated that in a service union model,

> "instead of constantly developing new rank-and-file leaders, we act like
> they have all the information and skills they will ever need. Instead of
> recruiting more leaders, we act like who already came forward as leaders
> at that point are the union's permanent leaders. Instead of targeting active
> workers to become more active, we abandon them. Instead of mobilising
> workers… around issues, we write letters and file grievance forms. Instead

of recruiting new workers to be good union members, we are satisfied just

to get their dues."

Thus, rather than servicing a passive membership who rely on the union to be a sort of workplace insurance company, proponents of the Organising Model see unions as potential forces of mobilisation; as means through which the workers themselves can actively channel their combined energies to make a difference to their – and others' – working conditions. In other words, the Organising Model is an attempt to turn unions into vehicles for their members, as opposed to having the membership dictated to from above.

So what actually *is* the Organising Model? As with all abstract models, its application varies both in terms of structure and achievement. However, Heery *et al.* (2000a) have identified several key elements of Organising Model good practice:

- Planned organising campaigns with clear objectives.

- Worker involvement in planning and execution of campaigns.

- Paid 'lead organisers' to encourage worker participation and oversee campaigns.

- Use of mapping techniques to identify and recruit key contacts in new areas or for 'in-fill' in areas that have low union density.

- Use of actions to mobilise and energise workers.

- One-to-one recruitment at work or through house calls.

- "Like recruits like", in other words, people from different demographics (particularly gender and ethnicity) are used to recruit similar people.

- Strategic publication of successes in campaigns that demonstrate effectiveness and power.

- Strategic identification of levers, pressure points and allies which can be used in the campaign.

Not all of these elements are exclusive to the Organising Model, but it is important to note that the Organising Model is not radically different to traditional 'service' unionism. Indeed some (e.g. Waddington and Kerr, 2000) have seen the two to be mutually reliant and interdependent. Where it differs is its identification of certain priorities that its advocates believe to be crucial factors in the recruitment and retention of members. These factors – most notably greater power at the grassroots, greater commitment to overt political action and a rejection of *recruitment* in favour of *organisation* – suggest a nod towards unions' more militant past, as well as their much smaller syndicalist contemporaries such as Inicjatywa Pracownicza[4] (IP) in Poland and Sverige Arbaretares Centralorganisation (SAC) in Sweden.

The Organising Model so far has been relatively successful in the unions in which it has been most forcefully implemented such as SEIU and UNITE-HERE in the USA (Bronfenbrenner and Hickey, 2004), GPMU – now part of AMICUS – (Gall, 2005) and Community (Findlay and McKinlay, 2003) in the UK, LHMU and TWU in Australia (Ellem, 2001), and Unite in New Zealand (Toby, 2006). Unions that have adopted the model have generally been more successful than those that have not in recent years, however many have struggled with the transition from service unionism to the Organising Model (see for example Carter, 2000; Heery *et al.*, 200b; Griffin and Moors, 2004). This is often due to the arrival of organisers with radical new ideas causing friction in branches and often not receiving sufficient support from union leadership and bureaucracy.

Nevertheless the Organising Model seems to have a broad appeal in most places where it is implemented. Although, of course, its implementation is highly contextual from place to place, it has been noted (de Turbeville, 2004) that it appeals to three key membership groups:

---

[4] Although, interestingly, IP were set up by anarchist-communists, who are generally very sceptical of unions, even revolutionary syndicalist ones.

a radical urge to return to a more militant form of unionism, a conservative *laissez-faire* desire to reduce costs, and a liberal rejection of the passivity of service unionism. As such, the ambiguity of the model ensures that it is not always well received but that, where successful, it can serve to galvanise a wide range of members and would-be members.

There are, however, several other issues that require more critical consideration, despite initial gains. First of all, having been perceived as somewhat *laissez-faire* regarding the funds needed for organising (due to lay organisers recruiting on the job and fewer paid organisers being needed), it has arisen that the Organising Model has become highly time- and resource-intensive and organisers have often felt over-worked and under-paid. This is a result of the fact that organisers must continue to provide a servicing role at the same level as previously, with that added pressure of implementing the Organising Model. In response to this, one Australian union has experimented with setting up a call centre manned by trained union officers who conduct the 'servicing' role over the telephone! In terms of economics, however, the model has proved relatively successful at reducing cost relative to organising successes. Nevertheless it remains more expensive than service unionism.

Related to this is the relationship between the organisers, their bosses and the membership. As mentioned above, there has been some tension at branch level when the Organising Model has been adopted. In situations where elected branch officers are undermining the organiser's efforts, or where organisers are trying to impose themselves upon officers, this tension increasingly becomes represented as a choice between 'democracy' and 'efficiency'. In turn, greater pressure has been put onto organisers by union leaders to push the Organising Model more forcefully, which has reinforced this tension. This is ironic since the Organising model advocates greater power at the grassroots. It seems that the Organising Model is premised upon the assumption that the membership will automatically be in favour of such a fundamental change.

This brings up a range of issues regarding democracy and accountability. Throughout the history of the labour movement, unions on the radical fringe such as the IWW have criticised mainstream unions of being undemocratic, unaccountable and of stifling militancy and confrontation. The Organising Model, however, bases itself upon democracy, accountability and confrontation. In practice this is not always the case. Even in what are usually considered to be progressive unions there have been reports of antidemocratic practices and bullying by leadership that in one case cost the SEIU 2,300 members in one go (Wulkan, N.D). Similarly, in the UK, TGWU – a union that in some areas has been highly effective in using confrontational and innovative Organising Model activity[5] – arguably stifled wildcat action by its own members during a dispute with airline food supplier Gate Gourmet in 2005. On the other hand, other unions adopting the Organising Model such as Community have often supported unlawful or legally ambiguous rank-and-file initiatives despite legal pressures on union leadership to desist (Community, 2007; Younge, 2003). Thus the extent to which the Organising Model has been implemented varies not only between unions, but also between union branches. Indeed, the organisers spoken to for this paper all gave different interpretations of the Organising Model, in particular expressing differences in terms of militancy.

What further complicate the picture are the extra layers of structure the Organising Model creates. With the institutionalisation of lay organisers from workplaces, in particular, it has become increasingly hard to grapple with the differences between organising for the workers and organising for the union. Of course this does not necessarily involve an either/or choice, but the added complexity of the Organising Model has meant that these issues are increasingly blurred and there is a greater capacity for member dissatisfaction due to expectations of militancy or democracy not being met. Furthermore the structures of the organising model are necessarily hierarchical and directed largely from the leadership or, at

---

[5] Most notably in their current Justice for Cleaners campaign.

best, the paid organisers. Of all the mainstream unions claiming to be democratic and driven by the rank-and-file, the closest one gets to such a union is perhaps UE in the United States. However their membership base is comparable to some syndicalist unions, and their influence is relatively small.

Consequently, it is hard to label the Organising Model as entirely 'good' or entirely 'bad'. Its theoretical commitment to rank-and-file control, confrontational tactics and democratic practices is commendable, particularly in such a hostile union climate, and it has been at least moderately successful in the cases where it has been implemented. Nevertheless, it has been rightly criticised for unions' inability to translate rhetoric into action, particularly in terms of democracy and decentralisation of power to the shop floor. Furthermore it is yet to break far out of the anglophone world as yet. Some organisers from the SEIU have recently taken up employment in the Netherlands, and organisers have visited numerous unions around the world to spread the word about its potential benefits, which may represent the beginnings of an expansion from its anglophone niche, a niche which it has not yet fully stabilised. It will be very interesting to see how more corporatist states such as those on mainland Europe deal with the fairly radical ideas of the Organising Model.

Partnership and Bargaining to Organise

Although the idea of partnership between unions and employers has been around for a long time, recently unions have been attempting to reformulate this agenda to ensure greater capacity for future organising. What has become known as the 'Bargain to Organise' model in particular has gained an increasingly high profile, not only with those on the right of the union movement who believe in partnership unionism, but also with more progressive elements, seeing it as an addendum to other union strategies, including the Organising Model. Bargaining to Organise – favoured particularly by the CWA in America and USDAW in the

UK – has several different variants, but usually takes place where the union already has a presence in one workplace in a chain or group of workplaces under a single employer. In this situation, the union would bargain for union representation in all workplaces in exchange for giving concessions (such as business deals or less confrontational demands) to the employer. Usually these sorts of contracts are only year-long affairs, which give the union time to gain a decent presence in all workplaces and return to the negotiating table with a more demanding agenda (see Feinstein, 2006).

Other forms of Bargain to Organise involve making agreements with employers that do not come into force until a certain number of other businesses agree to the same contract, and employer neutralising tactics, such as offering business incentives to employers who co-operate. There is much variation around this sort of strategy, but the general goal is threefold: to minimise employer opposition, to find and 'open up' new organising targets, and to maximise the number of workers who fall under the collective bargaining agreement. This highly public and quite risky approach is quite the opposite of more covert strategies for workplace organisation, particularly newly emergent forms of organising that are similar in some respects to the Organising Model but are conducted in *complete* secrecy for a period of up to two years[6].

Bargain to Organise – in any one of its various guises – has sometimes been used as a follow-up strategy to initial greenfield Organising Model successes, as a means of furthering or adding to industry-wide organising campaigns (Hurd, *et al.*, 2003). As such it can be seen as a potential part of a more hybrid campaign involving both mass grassroots mobilisation and high-powered, closed negotiations. Although it is not always effective (e.g. Eaton and Kriesky, 2001), it can have a significant effect by facilitating the smoother running or expansion of organising campaigns. As a less confrontational means of exposing workers to

---

[6] This is a very new strategy that has not yet been used sufficiently to comment upon its success or failure. Secrecy in this case is so great that members are not allowed to declare their membership or participate in other political action during the very long period before 'going public'.

unions, there is an argument that it can help create space for wavering or fearful workers to join.

As an organising strategy Bargain to Organise does not sufficiently *organise* workers on its own, as it is necessarily hierarchical, exclusive and elitist. Concomitantly, although the two have been used in the same campaigns, it ought to lie uncomfortably with the Organising Model, which is premised on mass democratic participation. Bargain to Organise could also be dangerous because it can encourage a service unionism mentality with the bargaining process often hinging on a passive and non-confrontational membership in order to maintain friendly relations with the employer. This risks alienating union activists with a more radical outlook, many of whom are lay and paid organisers within mainstream unions[7].

Other forms of partnership unionism have arguably proven even more dangerous to the health of the unions. The recent rise of the Chavez government in Venezuela has given rise to an increasingly close relationship between the state and unions. The union movement in Venezuela has for a long time been heavily involved in party politics, but the rise of Chavez and his pro-union MVR party has led simultaneously to greater power afforded to unions, and an increasingly large split in the union movement between pro- and anti-Chavista unionists (Ellner 2005). This has led in turn to the splitting and disintegration of some branches and endangers an even greater sense of disunity within and between unions. Although this is bad for workplace organisation, participation remains high, since activity operates on two axes: work and Party.

Network Unionism

I choose the title 'Network Unionism' since the below strategies go beyond the boundaries of the union. They look to branch out to a wider community or activist base and

---

[7] Unions such as the IWW in the UK and Australia, and non-union workers' groups such as CSR in France are often prominent activists and organisers within mainstream unions. This 'dual-card' strategy is discussed in more depth in Lincoln (2006).

utilise and mobilise multiple networks of activity around the campaigns. As such, they certainly remain union-centric, but are outward-looking and collaborative with non-union groups and non-workplace issues. This has resulted, as we shall see, in some exciting and innovative campaigns and initiatives, but also some tricky problems to overcome. Many of the more radical or syndicalist unions also utilise such strategies, and their recent spurt of growth in many countries suggests a correlation between their radical network unionism and more mainstream forms.

Social and Community Organising Unionism

This form of unionism is at once new and old, and cuts across the long-standing boundary between workplace and community or social activism. It has echoes of the UK miners' union, the NUM, at its height (e.g. Benyon and Austrin, 1994; Douglass, 2004), by attempting to unite the aims, campaigns and aspirations of the union with broader community or social interests, while reconfiguring this alliance-form to a more contemporary agenda. This remains a tactic of unions designed for union growth, but is also outward looking in terms of scope and attitude to non-workplace issues (Tufts, 1998). It must be stressed that, as the above section has showed, many of the forms of worker organising discussed in this paper – appearing here, perhaps too simplistically, as somehow separate and independent – are in fact utilised as interdependent fragments of larger campaigns and initiatives. As such, there are several key aspects of Social and Community Organising Unionism (SCOU[8]) that all to an extent interweave with one another and other worker and community organising campaigns and strategies.

Firstly, SCOU is envisaged as a mutually beneficial form of campaign that seeks to attain goals set by the union and partner organisations both separately as particular

---

[8] It must be noted here, that I use this acronym as a useful shortening of what is a rather long phrase, rather than as some sort of 'official', set-in-stone title.

organisations with particular interests, and together as a single coalition. In other words, between and within the organisations involved in any sort of SCOU there is an explicit understanding that they are separate organisations, often with very different functions. In turn, it is accepted that both convergent (as a coalition) and separate (as discrete organisations) goals may be achieved simultaneously in co-operation with each other. In a lot of small-scale cases, the union is the more powerful coalition member, since it sometimes has far greater economic, material and human resources than the other partner organisation(s). However, in others (London Citizens, for example), unions have had a relatively low profile as a result of the vast numbers of other organisations being involved. As it happens, relatively marginal union participation in London Citizens has actually resulted in far greater capabilities for mobilisation than the unions involved (particularly TGWU) would otherwise have hoped for. Thus it is important to recognise that although I am considering such coalitions from a union perspective, they are part of a much bigger picture with many different actors in many different networks bringing to campaigns different resources, ideas, agendas and expected outcomes (see, e.g. Wills, 2001).

Linked to this first point is the fact that these coalitions disrupt – or certainly transgress – the division between workplace and community. Since workers are necessarily members of communities or some sort of social grouping, there is no difference, in essence, between a labour activist, a social justice activist and a community activist. Indeed, in many cases these three may well be the same person in different spaces or guises. This follows from a recognition of new configurations of workplace organisation – particularly where certain sections of entire communities are employed by the same or similar employers in the same or similar jobs, yet are separated and isolated – and that unions must not only reflect these new configurations but also *appropriate* them (Cranford and Wilton, ****). Thus

SCOU tends to operate – knowingly or otherwise – through redrawing the boundaries of labour activism in order to maximise power through resource mobilisation.

Thirdly, SCOU usually operates on a far-longer timescale than conventional union organising drives. Its key element is often the forging of positive, active and productive relationships between the union, community, and organisations involved in the coalition or alliance, in which the union is working within a long-term project for union sustainability in the area. Sometimes, as in the case of London Citizens (see below), unions utilise their membership of broad-based community organisations, not only as a means of working towards common goals that might otherwise be outside of the traditional remit of a union but also as a means of building an already-present power-base from which they can launch ambitious organising campaigns. This groundwork is essential for high-risk campaigns, since without a mass support-base, campaigns can lack conviction and popular support. Alliances and coalition-building are therefore tactically very sound.

Following from this, SCOU involves an active membership. This allows SCOU to involve not only gaining victories for the coalition or union, but also empowerment for the workers involved inside and outside of traditional union milieux (see LAANE, N.D.). Not only does SCOU utilise existing activists who are already prepared to take action, but it also encourages others to become more actively engaged with political issues through action, education and training (Labour Council of New South Wales, 2003; Osterman, 2006). As with the Organising Model, SCOU looks to encourage leadership from the rank-and-file and mass ownership of campaigns.

Since SCOU has such broad parameters, there is a huge number of groups and organisations that can fall under its remit. Furthermore, these operate in many countries and at all scales of activity. International SCOU initiatives, such as Women Working Worldwide (Hale and Wills [eds], 2005) and HomeNet (e.g. HomeNet, 1999a; European Homeworking

Group, N.D.) attempt to link multiple scales of action, from the welfare of workers on an individual level to international labour legislation (HomeNet, 1999b).

Although internationalism in the labour movement has been highly revered as a key response to globalised labour and capital markets (Waterman 1996), there has been a far greater proliferation of SCOU at national and local levels. Local campaigns have by far seen the largest growth in recent years, have tended to use fewer resources, and have often seen quicker gains. Examples are so numerous that it is hard to list them. Particularly interesting is the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (see CIW, N.D.) in Florida which has not only involved numerous campaigning groups, worker centres (see below), unions and unattached activists, but has also been integral in the creation of other national SCOU-related initiatives such as the Student Farmworker Alliance. CIW's campaigns have been confrontational and imaginative, and have won both better working conditions and a significant rise in union density in the industry. Moreover, this campaign is peculiar since it is agricultural, and therefore more difficult due to its rural focus. CIW is particularly interesting since it encourages action both at the point of production (worker organising) and consumption (e.g. consumer boycotts) in a dual strategy to attack unfair employers at multiple levels simultaneously.

Another powerful organisation, as mentioned above, is London Citizens[9]. It is a broad coalition of social and community groups across London, and has several union branches as members (see Jamoul, 2006). Although it campaigns on a range of issues, many of the key campaigns are work-based and serve as excellent organising grounds for the unions involved. In particular, its involvement in what is now a somewhat global campaign – the Living Wage campaign – has attracted a wide range of political and community activists and organisations to support it in organising workers to make such demands (see, e.g. Evans *et al.*, 2005). On a more union-centric note, the TGWU ongoing 'Justice for Cleaners' campaign can be seen as

---

[9] A similar organisation elsewhere is the Industrial Areas Foundation in the US (see Osterman, 2006).

a campaign that has directly benefited from the large and stable activist base that London Citizens has provided. The Justice for Cleaners campaign is very much an Organising Model campaign that seeks to maximise the movement characteristics of union campaigns and encourages participation from both inside and outside union ranks. As well as London Citizens, organisers have called for support from a wide variety of activists, community groups and political persuasions as a means of manufacturing a broad support base and accessing other networks of activity.

Unlike most local or international SCOU projects, national SCOU initiatives sometimes manifest themselves as campaigning groups *per se*, alongside partner unions that maintain an official distance from the actual campaigns. This has been a particularly important organisational method in consumer-oriented campaigns such as the anti-sweatshop group No Sweat in the UK who work with RMT and TGWU unions. No Sweat's 2006 Conference, entitled "Sweatshops, Workers and International Solidarity", cut across several key activist networks including students (the conference was deliberately held at SOAS, one of the more politically progressive colleges in London), unions and alter-globalisation activists in order to maximise appeal and campaigning effectiveness.

In India, the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) is an initiative set up by the SEWA union to unite informal street vendors into a campaigning body. NASVI is of particular interest since although SEWA set up the organisation, other unions have been invited to join. Thus it somewhat confuses the idea that unions only partake in SCOU activities in order to organise workers into their own union. As a result, the combined forces of several large unions in tandem, along with numerous other organisations has led to a formidable organisation that formally represents around 1.5 million vendors but whose remit extends in effect across the whole street vending sector in India through, among other things, forcing national policy changes (Singh, N.D.).

More traditional SCOU initiatives on a national level have had some success, particularly in the USA. The Jobs with Justice campaign[10] has proved particularly effective at not only campaigning for workers' rights but also exposing non-union workers to the types of issues with which unions deal. The Jobs with Justice Pledge – to "Be there at least five times a year for someone else's struggles as well as [one's] own" (Jobs with Justice, N.D.a) – has also gently introduced previously inactive people to the idea of political action. Furthermore, Jobs with Justice act at multiple different community organising and legislative decision-making levels, thus maximising exposure and efficacy in campaigns (see Early and Cohen, 1997).

Partly since it is organised in a way that does not usually specify the presence of unions, SCOU is a powerful tool in reaching out to traditionally marginalised communities and the informal sector. People's involvement in such campaigns can open up large social and cultural networks that unions can utilise to organise throughout communities rather than just workplaces. This way the union has access to more workplaces and has a broader support base. Thus SCOU seems very much a win-win form of unionisation, whereby all parties work together for mutual benefit.

There are, however, some difficulties with this model of organising despite its obvious tactical benefits. Firstly, there must be a balance maintained between the union's goals and the coalition's goals, which can be hard. Too much concentration on union organising goals could lead to resentment from other parties involved, whereas excessive commitment to the campaign would undermine the union's primary aims (of organising workers) and drain resources.

Furthermore the distanciation between the coalition or alliance and the workplace means that the organisation process is slower and harder despite the initial inroads and

---

[10] Jobs with Justice, incidentally, has been particularly active in disseminating information on the struggles of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to a wider audience outside Florida (Leary, 2005).

contacts having been made through the coalition. Not only does it risk a subsuming of workplace struggle in the interests of non-workplace campaigns, but slow progress also makes it hard to evaluate success of union-specific campaigns in the short term. Thus SCOU initiatives can be high-risk ventures that require a great deal of work and planning. Furthermore, depending on the nature and composition of the coalition, there is always a danger of stifling autonomous rank-and-file action. As with the Organising Model, although power is decentralised towards the grassroots there remain fairly strict parameters outside of which activists must not step. An example of this is the highly managed activism of the Justice for Cleaners campaign in which there has been alleged watering-down of actions against the wishes of some of the rank and file. Nevertheless in areas or industries with low union density, they can be excellent means to break into particular markets and raise the union's profile.

Radical Organising Unionism

Many of the criticisms expressed within this paper regarding a lack of militancy and grassroots democracy in campaigns stem from the left of the mainstream unions. However there is a small group of radical or revolutionary unions which – although remaining very small in relative terms – have risen in prominence over the past few years, and whose critiques of mainstream unions are akin to these. These predominantly (anarcho-)syndicalist unions, such as the IWW in the anglophone world, SAC in Sweden, FAU in Germany and the very new ASI in Serbia, have arguably risen in part due to the shifting discourses of the mainstream unions towards the democratic and confrontational stances that these radical unions have been expressing for a long time. Of course their rise has differed from place to place – for example the popularity of SAC is also in part due to the rapid disintegration of the social-democratic consensus in Sweden – but it is not surprising that it has come at a time

when mainstream unions have undergone a great deal of soul-searching. Of course unions such as the German FAU and the Spanish and, to a lesser extent, French CNT and CGT have for a long time been popular, but this new generation of syndicalist and syndicalist-leaning unions has brought with it imaginative movement-based union strategies that have proved relatively successful given that they have no paid organisers and minuscule financial resources.

There are a few key areas in which these unions differ from the mainstream. Firstly, they are directly democratic and are all but autonomous at branch level. Branches can initiate and undertake their own campaigns on their own terms while being accountable to the entire membership, rather than an executive body or union bureaucracy. Secondly, they are industrially organised, rather than organised by trade or craft. The rationale behind this – as expressed above when discussing South African unions – is that industrial unions maximise the power of the workers by uniting them within a single union per industry. Thirdly they are explicitly anti-capitalist. However they very often accept new members provided that they work within the bounds of this ideological framework, rather than adhere to it explicitly. Following from this, they are against becoming employers, since their politics rest upon a fundamentally irreconcilable class struggle between employers and employees. Nevertheless they tend to employ a small handful of (directly elected) members in order to maintain administrative functioning. Finally, due to the class-based political stance that they hold, they are often picky over whom they allow into their ranks. Whereas mainstream unions allow some fairly high-level managers to become members, the radical unions do not allow this if they believe that the individual's position aligns with the interests of the employer rather than the workers. As such, they also do not organise in the police or armed forces.

For some time the IWW in particular has advocated 'dual-card' strategies – that is, dual membership of the IWW and a recognised mainstream union – as a response to their

relatively tiny size, but recent campaigns such as the Starbucks Workers' Union[11] and the Ottawa Panhandlers' Union (see Trew, 2004; cf. CBC, 2003) have pushed the boundaries of SCOU-type organising. The SWU, in particular, has been highly publicised and relatively successful in organising numerous shops despite often highly unlawful anti-union practices by Starbucks. In 2006, the SWU launched its ambitious *Justice from Bean to Cup* campaign (see Starbucks Workers' Union, 2006), in which it attempts to forge links of solidarity and mutual aid throughout the production chain, literally from the growing of the coffee beans to the serving of the cup of coffee. It has so far proved relatively successful, with SWU representatives from New York already having been invited to roundtable discussions with Starbucks and large NGOs such as Oxfam. This is despite the fact that the SWU does not have a membership of more than about two hundred Baristas, and the international IWW as a whole numbering somewhere around two thousand. What is notable here is that the IWW, predominantly through its members rather than through formal networking as an organisation, has access to many activist networks outside the union. As such, the IWW is able to muster a wide range of networks in support of its campaigns, from anarchists to students[12] to sympathetic mainstream unionists[13].

In the relatively union-sparse Polish labour market, the anarcho-syndicalist Inicjatywa Pracownicza (literally meaning "Workers' Initiative") has shot up dramatically since its inception in 2002. Indeed, such has been its rise in membership and effectiveness at organising, IP has shared a table with the likes of the UK's TGWU at union conferences (e.g. Anon., 2006). On the other end of the scale, the traditionally strong Swedish labour movement has seen the syndicalist SAC rise to new heights of around 10,000 members to

---

[11] This initiative has been followed in recent months by a UK equivalent, *Baristas United*.
[12] In the US, the IWW's Education Workers' Industrial Union has a close relationship with Students for a Democratic Society, possibly the largest and best organised radical student group in North America.
[13] In the US, the IWW has a long and well-known history, including its lively, humorous and musical culture, and more concrete achievements such as being the first union to win the eight-hour day (see Thompson and Bekken, 2006).

become second only to the Spanish CGT (with around 60,000 members, see Gambone, 2004) in terms of the largest anarcho-syndicalist unions in the world. At the same time the French CNT has increased from around 500 to 5000 members in a decade (*ibid.*). These figures suggest that syndicalist unions are increasing their power and membership considerably while the mainstream unions are struggling to halt their decline.

The problems with these radical unions, however, often stifle what might otherwise be very successful campaigns. Firstly – and most obviously – their explicitly radical political orientation alienates them from the majority of workers who are often put off by such politics. Similarly, outside of periods of mass struggle, they are unlikely to gain a great deal more power or coverage. This said, the CGT's slick new brand of anarcho-syndicalism that tries at all costs to avoid the dated rhetoric of much of the anarcho-syndicalist movement has made significant inroads into the Spanish labour movement (Freedom, 1998). The shift in rhetoric of the CGT may have significantly increased its appeal, but the criticisms it sustained as a result expose the fact that their constant barrage of criticism from anarchist, Marxist and activist movements has significantly impeded the growth of all syndicalist unions. The balancing act between their adherence to certain principles and networks of activism and creating and running a fully-functioning union is one that is perilous and potentially very costly.

New Worker Organising

This section considers what I term 'New Worker Organising' (NWO), as a term to denote worker organising external to the unions. Partly as a reaction to failing union strategies in recent decades, and partly as an attempt to address new issues faced by workers that do not fall under the remit of unions, there has been a proliferation of such projects around the world. This does not necessarily mean that the projects and campaigns are entirely

separate from unions. On the contrary, many of the NWO campaigns that will be considered below involve connections and co-operation with unions. Others, however, expose the potential dangers of unions and NWO campaigns rubbing awkwardly against each other.

Such is the potentially broad scope of this section, I will discuss only the main strategies that have arisen in recent years. There have, no doubt, been many other configurations of NWO that have been used, and this suggests that outside the remit of unions there may well be other new forms of worker organising that are waiting to be found. So far, there are several NWO strategies that have become particularly prevalent which will be discussed below.

Worker Centres

Worker Centres are by far the most popular NWO initiatives in the anglophone world. Predominantly situated in the USA[14], they are over a hundred spaces that facilitate workers' education, organising and socialising. There have been several waves of worker centres, each one bigger than the last, and centred on different issues and groups (Fine, 2006). In this most recent wave of worker centres, the overwhelming focus has been on certain oppressed ethic groups, particularly black, Chinese and Latino/a groups whose working and living conditions are predominantly worse than their white counterparts.

According to Fine (*ibid.*: 11),

"Worker centres are community-based mediating institutions that provide

support to and organise among communities of low-wage workers. As

work is the primary focus of life for many newly arriving immigrants, it is

also the locus of many of the problems they experience."

---

[14] Although there are some equivalent centres dotted around various parts of the world, as far from the US as Seoul, Korea (see Youm, 2004).

There is no single specific organisational model for worker centres, although many are linked through loose networks and organisations, and activist and advocacy groups. These networks sometimes even stretch across national borders to link up with similar struggles elsewhere, especially Mexico (Narro, 2006). As with Network Unionism, discussed above, these networks also help worker centres deal with the economic restructuring that in many cases caused much of the poverty that they now fight. Some worker centres, on the other hand, prefer to remain locally focused in order to concentrate on immediate needs of the community of which they are a part.

Fine (2006) has identified several key characteristics shared by worker centres:

- Hybrid organisation, with elements of different forms of organisation utilised in campaigns.

- Service provision, such as legal aid, networking and meeting space.

- Conduction of advocacy, research and lobbying.

- Ongoing organising and leadership development, including education and training.

- Place-based (often more specifically community-based) rather than sites of work.

- Strong identification with particular ethnic groups and communities.

- Democratic decision-making processes utilised in order to emphasise and nurture grassroots power.

- Sense of solidarity with struggles elsewhere.

- Broad agenda, with a wide variety of issues addressed.

- Emphasis on seeking alliances for mutual benefit (cf. SCOU above).

- Small and highly active membership base, in which membership must be earned through commitment and experience.

These characteristics are not hard-and-fast, and worker centres not only change from one place to another, but they are also temporally contingent since membership interests at any given time drive campaigns. Thus context is a key factor in the nature of a worker centre and its campaigns: where one worker centre may exceed definitions of what a worker centre 'is' or 'does', another may choose to focus on a specific set of strategic priorities that do not fulfil all the above criteria. Strategic identities of worker centres are therefore somewhat fluid and hard to hold down to one particular ideal-type of a worker centre.

The primary elements in the organisation of worker centres are probably threefold: grassroots, community-based and development-focused. Development here means personal and campaigning development, as well as legal and advocacy skills (Narro, 2006). Indeed, some worker centres, such as the *Workplace Project* in New York, have created formal educational courses that stretch over a number of weeks and combine legal and historical knowledge with organisational skills that can both empower the participants as activists, and teach them new skills for elsewhere (Stein, 2006). Thus, in contrast to many (although not all) unions, the worker centres place a great deal of emphasis on education as part of a more general extra-workplace empowerment programme. This education and development then feeds back into the development of new lead activists to continue the growth and success of the centre in general (Anon., 2004).

These hundreds of worker centres are all somewhat different, with different campaigns and different emphases, and so it is hard to assess their effectiveness as a whole. However it must be said that there has been very little negative said about the success of these worker centres in achieving their goals and supporting workers, and a great deal of evidence to suggest that they do their job – on the whole – extremely well (e.g. Gordon, 1999; Anon., 2004; Chen, 2005; Jepson, 2005; Fine, 2006; Narro, 2006; Ten Eyck, 2007).

An area of particular difficulty for worker centres and labour activism in the US in general is the relations between worker centres and unions. The vast majority of worker centres have at least *some* contact with unions but, as Fine (2006: 124) notes, "[t]here is a dramatic culture clash between many unions and worker centres. Worker centres experience many local unions as top-down, undemocratic and disconnected from the community; unions view many worker centres as undisciplined and unrealistic about what it takes to win". It must be noted that Fine does over-generalise here, since numerous worker centres and unions have successfully worked together on campaigns and in some cases, such as the Vermont Worker Centre's involvement in setting up a branch of the UE union, worker centres have sometimes been integral to union campaigns, and vice versa. Unions can also aid worker centres by adding political clout to campaigns, widen the activist base, and give the centres access to key political decision makers where necessary.

Nevertheless, there remain some difficult problems that are exhibited on a more general note between worker centres and unions. In some cases, for example, the demographic make-up of unions and worker centres affects their relationships. This is particularly prevalent in cases where the union has organised full-time contract workers in an industry, and the worker centre is supporting the casual (and often immigrant) workers in that same industry, thus supporting one set of workers to be pitted against another in wage wars (e.g. Turnbull, 2004). This can aggravate latent ethnic tensions and causes difficulties in nurturing solidarity between the two groups whose interests, ultimately, are the same.

As well as this perceptual issue, there are other problematic areas here, identified by Ten Eyck (2007). Firstly, there is the issue of jurisdictional conflict. This is where there is ambiguity over whether a certain issue, workplace or individual falls under the remit of a worker centre or a union. Since there is some overlap between the two, this can foster a sense of competitiveness and distrust. Also where worker centres work alongside unions, there is

the fear that they may lose their autonomy. Since autonomy and local specificity is important to worker centres, this is a particularly contentious point. This is a particularly important factor when considering funding arrangements.

On the subject of funding, there are more general issues to be addressed for the sustainability and autonomy of worker centres. Since they largely rely on charitable donations and short-term funding from NGOs and unions, and even the government, they are very much financially insecure, despite many worker centres taking small dues payments from members (Fine, 2006). Where a worker centre is subject to the whim of a certain organisation, that centre must adhere to the contractual requirements *and political allegiances* of the funder. If it does not, then it risks financial crisis or closure altogether. Thus there is a balancing act to be achieved here between autonomy and financial viability that essentially comes from a compromise between the interests of the workers who participate in the centre, and the interests of the funders. As such, the question must be asked: to what extent are worker centres as democratic and grassroots as they appear to be? It is hard to tell for certain, but they are somewhat more democratic than the vast majority of unions.

As they grow in size and influence, worker centres also come across greater hurdles. Following from the above issue of funding, as a greater number of people look to worker centres for support the financial precariousness of the centres becomes more visible. Failure to secure sufficient funding to run the centre might prove disastrous if it occurs during a large campaign in which workers' jobs are at stake. Furthermore, the ethnic homogeneity of many centres can be somewhat exclusionary, and as they grow, or as the demographics of the community change, the greater inclusion of other ethnic groups must be accommodated for. Failure to do so may exclude and inadvertently victimise minority groups within communities or industries.

Beyond the traditional union boundaries, worker centres are increasingly making a name for themselves as an alternative model of worker organisation, education and mobilisation. Despite the above criticisms worker centres have succeeded in mobilising large numbers of often-marginalised workers to take action and win. What worker centres need to do now is consolidate these gains, particularly in terms of stabilising their finances and diverging from the realm of unions. Without a clear demarcation between unions and worker centres there is a strong that divisions between the two caused by their overlapping could become yet another cause of worker disunity and a fragmentation of workers' power. This is not to suggest that they should not co-operate. On the contrary, unions and worker centres working together and co-operating through carefully-planned and clearly demarcated joint campaigns could be a formidable force for the future that is in fact organisationally quite similar to SCOU strategies discussed above. Furthermore, it is a strategy that would no doubt be welcome in many countries outside the US.

Solidarity Networks and 'Cyber-Unionism'

Just as network unionism is networked both inside and outside of unions, solidarity networks function in a similar way, insofar as they mobilise union members and non-members outside of the traditional bureaucracy over workplace or labour issues. Furthermore, they are often able to mobilise non-union workers around specific unions' struggles, thus looking to get non-union workers engaged at first from a safe 'distance' as supporters of the union cause. In turn, this may help to not only win campaigns in the short term, but also bring about a greater chance of recruiting previously non-union participants into the union effectively as fully-fledged union activists.

These networks vary considerably, but all have several common characteristics that identify them as solidarity networks for the purposes of this study. Firstly, they engage with

workers' struggles that concern both unions and autonomous workers' action. Many networks solely focus on union activity, but what differentiates these solidarity networks is that they are not union-specific and can mobilise around activities and organisations such as wildcat strikes, worker centres and consumer campaigning. Secondly they do not necessarily have formal structure. Many, as will be discussed below, organise and mobilise in virtual space on email lists and Internet forums. Others do have structure but structures range from somewhat *ad hoc* and fluid to formal constitutional arrangements. Thirdly, these solidarity networks tend not to claim allegiance to any specific party or organisation. Some of the more radical networks do have explicit political angles, but they are usually very happy to work with organisations and groups that do not adhere to those principles provided that they do not clash severely. This brings us to the final characteristic, which is a reciprocal willingness of different networks to support and disseminate information regarding virtually any workers' struggles within reason. As such these networks often overlap and intermingle, with information passing through numerous different networks in relatively short periods of time.

There are many groups and networks that might fall into this category, for example the International Federation of Bicycle Messengers' Associations, StreetNet (South Africa), Union Solidarity Network (Australia), and San Diego Maquiladora Workers' Solidarity Network, to name but a few. Furthermore, non-worker focused solidarity networks, such as the UK anti-deportation campaign No-One is Illegal, have worker-based campaigns that feed into their broader non-labour activity (NOII, 2006). One of the more organisationally formalised examples of a solidarity network is Jobs with Justice, mentioned above when discussing SCOU strategies. In this case, we are looking from the outside in, as it were, from the perspective of non-union labour activism. Here, Jobs with Justice, as well as focussing on broadening unions' struggles into the non-union population, looks to network different struggles amongst others who might not have heard about them due to geographical location

or non-union membership. This creates a solidarity network that circles multiple different struggles, unions and issues without placing pressure on members of the network to join a union. Indeed, in many cases, activists within solidarity networks such as these work in massively different industries anyway, reflected in the lack of industry specificity of Jobs with Justice (e.g. Jobs with Justice, N.D.b).

Less explicitly associated with unions are the more radical forms of solidarity network. Groups such as Zabalaza in Southern Africa, the anarcho-syndicalist Solidarity Federation and Haringey Solidarity Group in the UK, and autonomist Marxist networks such as Disobbedienti in Italy, have all to an extent served as highly effective solidarity networks, helping to support and spread workers' struggles whilst predominantly not being active within unions. Although these groups have tended to retain a critical distance from the mainstream unions, their access to still broader activist networks beyond their own have further increased their effectiveness at mobilising support for workplace struggles.

What is notable about many solidarity networks is their mode of organisation. Increasingly, the Internet is being utilised by unions as an organisational and information dissemination tool (e.g. Lee, 1997; 2000). However, in many respects the Internet has been utilised better and more imaginatively as a resource for the creation and mobilisation of non-union solidarity networks. As well as groups such as the Iranian Workers' Solidarity Network (exiled Iranian labour activists in the UK), The Worker (newspaper collective of the Zimbabwean labour movement) and the Maquila Solidarity Network (US-based women workers' solidarity initiative), all of whom conduct both conventional and virtual activism, there are groups whose activity centres specifically around labour movement campaigning online. The most notable of the online 'cyber-unionism'[15] websites is Labourstart.org. This internationally-renowned website seeks to serve as a hub to which unions and labour

---

[15] It must be noted here that when I refer to 'cyber-unionism' I do not allude to the somewhat utopian form of cyber-unionism that is discussed by people such as Vandenberg (2005/2006). Instead it merely refers to the utilisation of the Internet as an organisational tool.

movements submit news and calls to action, which is then distributed back to the network in the form of internet petitions, email write-ins and website blockades. Recent campaigns on relatively localised issues have received thousands of responses from those in the Labourstart network. Just as other networked forms of information dissemination, Labourstart emails are often sent on to other individuals and related networks, thus broadening the scope even further.

Of course these cyber-networks do not attempt to provide some sort of alternative to unionism in the same way as worker centres, for example, do. They are, nonetheless, important features of the new unionism, as reflecting new spaces of everyday praxis for many workers and activists. The proliferation of participatory spaces on the Internet in the last few years[16], furthermore, allows unions and other members of the labour movement to interact with and distribute widely-available and easily-accessible information, calls to action and news to a massive range of people, many of whom are young and increasingly politicised (Lee, 2006).

Solidarity networks, including cyber-unionism, do seem to have a significant effect on the success of some campaigns, although it would be extremely difficult to measure their impact. Their open networked structures allow maximum exposure for issues and call-outs to demonstrations, and their self-organised nature means that they can be flexible and interact with one another easily. Their activity does tend to falter when organisation comes into play, however, since they exist to support already-existing struggles rather than organise workers themselves. Thus there is always a relatively passive element to solidarity networks that maintains a distance between the issue and the network. Some solidarity networks do organise their own events, but on the whole they are in essence rapid-*reaction* forces of potentially quite significant power. There remains the issue, therefore, of how effective they are at

---

[16] In particular, I am thinking here about websites such as Myspace and YouTube, which allow users to create their own web pages and share textual and visual media for free, and with very little restriction.

bringing people into labour movement struggles and activism, since it is easy to remain comfortable on the margins rather than involve oneself more wholeheartedly. It is an issue that is not easy to deal with, since part of their effectiveness is due to their distance from the unions. Nevertheless, their presence builds solidarity and spreads struggles far and wide. Therefore if nothing else, they are extremely effective at these tasks, and can potentially make a significant difference.

Bringing Together the Threads

The previous sections have attempted to identify and discuss what I consider to be the main currents in new labour organising that have been involved in the partial recovery of the international labour movement. In these concluding sections I attempt to make sense of these many strategies and the issues that accompany them, and look to posit some questions for the future of labour organising and research thereon.

'Social Movement Unionism'? What is New about the New Wave?

The majority of the strategies involved might well be considered movemental strategies of sorts. They demonstrate a propensity to mass grassroots action with a political goal beyond immediate material goals, such as 'dignity' or 'justice' in mind. However they do so in very different ways and through very different organisations and channels of action. This raises the question of whether it is productive to consider such strategies, as it is easy to do, as something like 'Social Movement Unionism'. In doing so, one risks creating a sense of homogeneity to a broad group of strategies and ideas that are heterogeneous and fluid. Indeed, the very heterogeneity of this group of strategies is a key characteristic of it. Furthermore it can be argued that some key strategies and initiatives such as worker centres and solidarity

networks are not, in fact, unionism at all. 'Unionism' suggests a path that has boundaries and a predominantly fixed agenda, which, although unions remain central to the labour movement, is not concomitant with some of these new forms of labour movement organising.

As such, whereas it may be plausible to use a term such as 'New Labour Organising' as an umbrella term when relating these strategies to traditional service unionism, it is problematic to, on the one hand make the assumption that the strategies are all forms of unionism, and on the other imply that they are somehow similar enough to be classified as one. A term such as New Labour Organising is by no means perfect, but does suggest openness and rejects an automatic adherence to traditional union strategies that is implied in the term 'unionism'. Another question, however, is how relevant it is to suggest that New Labour Organising is actually *new*. As well as many new ideas, methods from the heyday of the labour movement have been re-ignited, and this point cannot be overlooked. Perhaps its newness lies in the new configurations of methods of struggle old and new and their interplay in the various strategies discussed.

What is key to note here is that despite the heterogeneity, we can identify several key characteristics – some from the past, and some relatively recent – that run throughout almost all of these strategies. Firstly, there is a greater emphasis on agitation at the grassroots. In some cases this is largely rhetoric accompanied by very little substance, but many examples show at least some degree of movement towards grassroots, rank-and-file activity. Secondly, and consequently, most of these new strategies necessarily involve a more active membership base than traditional service unionism. This activism, far from deterring workers from participating, has often contributed to a boost in morale and a greater community spirit between the workers.

A third development that is, again, related to the previous two, is a greater sense of confrontation in campaigns. Although there remain some strong elements of partnership

unionism (particularly on mainland Europe), unions and workers' groups are increasingly turning towards fighting talk and the use of direct action in campaigns. The demands remain predominantly reformist and piecemeal, but the attitude has become in places openly antagonistic.

Fourthly, and arguably the key aspect concerning the strategic planning aspect of these new strategies, is a greater emphasis on campaigning intelligence and tactical planning of campaigns, particularly with regards union organising. Greenfield organising is more focussed and planned both in terms of identification of specific organising sites or industries, and execution of those organising drives. Finally, a point that follows from this is the flexible and hybrid nature of many campaigns. Unions and groups that adopt New Labour Organising techniques tend not to focus solely on one form, rather, their campaigns often involve several different modes of engagement and mobilisation. A union organising drive might incorporate the Organising Model, SCOU and Solidarity Networks into their campaign strategy. Thus this flexibility with campaigns can serve to maximise the terrains of struggle and chances of victory. On the other hand, this is not always planned, as Solidarity Networks in particular sometimes have a tendency – for better or worse – to mobilise on their own accord, rather than as part of a planned strategy.

The reasons for the promising early successes of these new strategies appear largely down to these aspects that set new strategies apart from service unionism. The political climate in many countries has not changed dramatically in the last decade, nor has labour legislation, nor even the economy. What is noticeable in this shift is the relation between the increase in membership of the more radical unions such as SAC, IWW and CGT and the dramatic rise of worker centres, and some of the mainstream unions' shift towards a more rank-and-file, militant outlook. Even in cases where this rhetorical shift is not really matched by a practical shift, it seems that the notion that even *some* of the power ought to reside at the

grassroots tends to increase chances of successful organising. Added to this is a greater sense within the rank-and-file of campaign ownership and leadership, which not only gives the rank-and-file an element of pride in campaigns that are not necessarily related to their own workplace, but also can give them a sense of collective responsibility, community and mutuality. One can only guess at what might happen if the mainstream unions took rank-and-file power seriously in a similar way to that which the radical unions do. Perhaps it would be an organisational nightmare at first, but I suspect that membership and workers' power and morale in general would increase significantly.

Problems and Pitfalls

Despite promising signs, there are nonetheless difficulties that must be engaged with and overcome if New Labour Organising strategies are to be sustainable, viable, and productive for workers' causes. One of the main problems with New Labour Organising, particularly with the unions, is with the extent of their commitment to grassroots, democratic organisational formats. Although we have seen a decentralisation of power towards the grassroots, many union leaderships remain fearful of allowing too much power to go to the membership. Thus the rhetoric of participation and democracy that is used by unions utilising SCOU and Organising Model strategies tends not to be fully reflected in reality. There is a danger, therefore, of increasing rank-and-file disillusionment with union leadership failing to enact such democratisation. Very few mainstream unions – a notable exception being the UE in the USA – genuinely enact rank-and-file control in the day-to-day running of the union. As a result, the more militant or 'old-style' unionists in the mainstream unions may become disillusioned, and, as mentioned above, they are often some of the most active and committed members. Indeed there have been numerous cases of small-scale defection from a mainstream union to a radical one in the last few years. Sometimes this has been the result of the break-up

of branches, and others it has been in response to the union only paying 'lip service' to the interests of its members. Nevertheless, in order to ensure that these events do not continue, mainstream unions must be prepared to meet their rhetoric with concrete action.

Although it may be a problem with linguistic differences in general, there is a definite problem with many of these strategies – particularly the Organising Model and worker centres – remaining in an anglophone ghetto. Although the SEIU in particular has recently begun efforts to create greater co-ordination between different unions around the globe organising in the service industry (Wills, 2007), there is little evidence to suggest that the strategies are being implemented in more than a handful of countries. In an era of increasingly globalised labour and capital markets, it is important that strategic co-ordination should reflect this. As such, unions and organisations that believe in New Labour Organising strategies need to assert this on the world stage, lest they remain isolated from the majority. There is a significant amount of already-existing labour internationalism, but this must move beyond statements of solidarity towards a more concrete sense of mutualism and skill sharing. Bodies such as the ILO and ICFTU may hold the key to this.

On a more local or national scale, the issue of co-ordination is also important. There have been examples (e.g. Burns, 2006) in which unions have fought each other over the right to organise in a particular industry or area, which has had the result of dividing the workers and interfering with the good work that unions can do. Contrary to the beliefs of some 'free-market' union scholars (e.g. Pawlenko, 2006), whose emphasis is on market coverage rather than workers' empowerment, if labour movement groups and unions are to maximise the effectiveness of campaigns they must be prepared to co-operate.

In an important respect, the success of several key South African unions in maintaining a relatively high membership density and effectiveness in struggles has been the fact that they are industrially organised. The 'one union, one industry' strategy, as mentioned

before, avoids the dangers of union competition and can serve to maximise impact and therefore bargaining power. This is a strategy that has been advocated by the more radical unions since their inception and, whether or not one adheres to the radical syndicalist line, the practical benefits are obvious.

The issue of greater co-ordination and co-operation extends beyond the unions, however. Particularly where unions and worker centres have operated in similar geographical or industrial areas there has been friction between the two, largely due to a lack of co-operation and understanding. As suggested above, without the clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities that can only really come about through close co-operation, this friction will continue and may increase as worker centres continue to be set up all over the USA.

Finally, many of the strategies discussed have been shown to have difficulties concerning resource management and sourcing. The problem lies in the fact that these often highly effective strategies require a greater level of resources in all areas, in particular, time, money and human resources. Furthermore, the likes of worker centres and some forms of SCOU receive relatively little and short-term funding that, in turn, places greater pressure on the people involved. Thus there are three elements of resource problems that need to be addressed: longevity of funding, human effects (e.g. fatigue and burnout) and over all resource availability. Failure to address these problems may result in the winding-down of such strategies due to unsustainability in terms of resource availability and use. Thus we must ask seriously how groups and unions practising New Labour Organising strategies can invest time money and other resources into resource-intensive organising without endangering the health of the organisation or the participants.

Future Prospects

It is hard to say definitively how these New Labour Organising strategies will fare in the future. Unforeseen events and shifts in economic and political climates may affect the labour movement in unforeseen ways. However, it is important to emphasise how the initial successes of strategies like these demonstrate that the labour movement is not, as is commonly assumed, something that expands and contracts according to external variables. On the contrary, these strategies are emblematic of the fact that the labour movement has considerable power over its own future independent of external factors. This, at least, is something to take solace in. Similarly, this slowing of union decline that is, in part, down to these new strategies is of some comfort, and suggests that growth may be possible in a greater number of countries in the near future.

Despite these positive moves, the next decade or so may prove crucial in terms of proving the sustainability of these strategies. In many cases the shift from one form of organising to another, especially in unions, has brought with it internal tensions that seem immovable from such a radical transformation of such massive bureaucracies. As noted in a previous section, the Organising Model, for example, is not a separate model of organising, rather it is something that must be used in addition to traditional service unionism. As such, there may be scope for gradual realignment over longer periods of time in order to soften the shock of such an overhaul.

Further transition towards more imaginative and participatory campaigns may well prove difficult, and it is imperative that the several important issues outlined in the above section must also be addressed. In particular, a continued emphasis on democratisation, worker empowerment and the encouragement and training of lay activists at the grassroots is critical in my opinion. Without a knowledgeable and active rank-and-file who feel their union genuinely wishes to further their interests, rather than acting as mediators between themselves and their bosses to stifle struggles, it will be hard to capitalise on recent progress. This may

well involve a continuation and escalation of confrontational attitudes and actions that have so far proved productive in many campaigns, such as ongoing (rather than one-day) strikes, occupations and unofficial action.

Outside the realm of unions, the proliferation of worker centres has shown massive potential for further re-acquainting the labour movement with its movemental roots. Their brand of grassroots self-help and networked mobilisation of often highly excluded groups shows genuine potential as a parallel to union organising. However, remaining in an uneasy relationship with unions will not aid either group, and it is imperative for the two to co-operate more proactively on mutual campaigns. Holding in common a commitment to reawakening class politics may go some way to beginning that process. Following from this, there is a gap in the market for US-style worker centres in other parts of the world, particularly in areas such as Western Europe and Oceania where there is a similar trend of entire communities – including, let us not forget, the *white* working class – being alienated from the rest of society.

Fifteen years on from the first signs of change in organising strategies, and there has been a notable change of fortunes in some areas. A turn-around in fortunes for the labour movement is proving to be an incredible task, but the strategies and ideas of New Labour Organising seem to be moving slowly in the right direction. Union membership seems for now to have passed its lowest ebb in some places and workers are increasingly rediscovering their voice in many different countries. Worker militancy is far from its height, and official union militancy remains, aside from the 'usual suspects' of the radical unions, very minimal indeed. Nevertheless, it seems that both are slowly beginning to re-learn that the only way to win is to actually fight: fight *hard*, but also fight *clever*. The latter is the majority of what has been discussed in this paper, and the increasing sophistication present in New Labour

Organising remains nucleic and uneven in many respects but nonetheless shows genuine promise.

The New Labour Organising strategies discussed here do not represent the full scope of possibilities for new (or rediscovered) forms of worker mobilisation, and they do display some significant problems that need to be overcome. The next decade will be pivotal for the long-term future of the labour movement, since these new ideas have brought with them new challenges and difficulties that need to be addressed if they are to be successful and sustainable. What is imperative now is to consolidate the moderate gains that have been made, and build upon them positively without losing sight of the ultimate goal. This goal should be ambitious, not simply recruiting workers, nor empowering them, but *the facilitation of our collective self-empowerment* as a whole, accompanied by the recognition that every struggle is intimately connected to every other. A strong labour movement is built upon such connectivity, democracy and solidarity, and the strategies considered in this paper may, hopefully, contribute the first difficult and tentative steps in that direction.

<u>Bibliography</u>

Adju, S (2000) *Globalisation and Union Strategies in Niger*. Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies.

Adlakha, A (1996) *Population Trends: Ghana*. US Bureau of the Census International Programs Centre.

Anon. (2004) 'Worker Centres – A New Organising Model?' [Online] *This Tuesday: Logs on Migration, Labour, Transnational Organising*. Available from http://www.thistuesday.org/node/15 [Accessed 20th February 2007].

Anon. (2005) 'The Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan (FPK)'. [Online] Paper presented to *INTAS Workshop, April 14th-16th 2005*. Available from http://www.warwick.ac.uk/russia/Intas/Kyrgyzstan.doc. Moscow: INTAS. [Accessed 6th March 2007].

Anon. (2006) '(Late) Report from the 3rd All-Poland Workers' Conference, 6th-7th November 2004, Lodz'. [Online] *Abolishing Borders from Below*, 19. Available from http://www.abb.hardcore.lt/archive/abb19/19_3rd_all_pol_workers_con.htm [Accessed 12th March 2007].

Anyemedu, K (2000) *Trade Union Responses to Globalisation: Case Study on Ghana*. Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies.

Armingeon, K (2006) 'Trade Unions and Industrial Relations in Post-Communist Nations. A Comparison with Established Democracies' Paper presented at the *Council for European Studies' Sixteenth International Conference*, 5th-8th March 2007. Chicago: Colombia University.

Benyon, H and Austrin, T (1994) *Masters and Servants: Class and Patronage in the Making of a Labour Organisation*. London: Rivers Oram Press.

Berndt, C (2007) 'Methodological Nationalism and Territorial Capitalism: Mobile Labour and the Challenges to the German Model.' Paper presented 28th February 2007. Queen Mary, University of London.

Blanden, J, Machin, S and Van Reenen, J (2006) 'Have Unions Turned the Corner? New Evidence on recent trends in Union Recognition in UK Firms' *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. 44(2), pp. 169-90.

Bronfenbrenner, K and Hickey, R (2004) 'Changing to Organise: A National Assessment of Union Strategies' in Milkman, R and Voss, K [eds.] *Rebuilding Labour: Organising and Organisers in the New Union Movement*. Ithaca, NY and London: ILR Press.

Bureau of Labour Statistics (2007a) *Union Members in 2006.* Washington, DC: Bureau of Labour Statistics.

Bureau of Labour Statistics (2007b) *Work Stoppage Data 1979-2007.* [Online] Available from http://data.bls.gov/PDQ/servlet/SurveyOutputServlet [Accessed 3rd March, 2007].

Burgess, J and Strachan, G (1999) 'The Expansion of Non-Standard Employment in Australia and the Extension of Employer's Control'. In Felstead, A and Jewson, N [eds.] *Global Trends in Flexible Labour*. London: Macmillan Business.

Burns, S (2006) 'Turf War: Two Unions Squabble over Pima County Employees' [Online] *Tucson Weekly*, 26th January. Available from http://www.tucsonweekly.com/gbase/Currents/Content?oid=oid%3A77710 [Accessed 20th March 2007].

Butcher, KF and Rouse, CE (2001) 'Wage Effects of Unions and Industrial Councils in South Africa' *Industrial and Labour Relations Review*. 54(2), pp. 349-374.

Campero, G (2001) *Trade Union Responses to Globalisation: Chile*. Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies.

Carter, B (2000) 'Adoption of the Organising Model in British Trade Unions: Some Evidence from Manufacturing, Science and Finance' *Work, Employment and Society*. 14(1), pp. 117-136.

CBC (2003) 'Vancouver 'Squeegie Kids' Band Together' [Online] *CBC News*, 11th October. Available from http://www.cbc.ca/news/story/2003/10/11/squeegee031011.html [Accessed 12th March 2007].

Change to Win Coalition (2006) *Change to Win: Full Pledge*. [Online] Available from http://www.changetowin.org/about-us/our-pledge/full-pledge.html [Accessed 5th March 2007].

Chitnis, A and Williams, G (2005) *Casualisation and Quality: A Study of the Issues for Quality in Teaching and Research Raised by Employment of Part Time and Fixed Term Staff in UK Higher Education*. London: NATFHE.

Coalition of Immolakee Workers (N.D.) *About CIW* [Online] Available from http://www.ciw-online.org/about.html [Accessed 4th March 2007].

Community (2007) 'Simclair Workers Occupy Killwinning Factory' [online] Available from http://www.community-tu.org/templates/news.asp?nodeid=90225&Mode=Display [Accessed 1st March 2007].

Cranford, C and Wilton, R (****) 'Lessons in Power and Resistance: Restructuring and Community Unionism at the University of Southern California' **************

Demographia (2000) *US Private Sector Trade Union Market Share Loss Continues 40 Years Uninterrupted*. [Online] Available from http://www.demographia.com/lm-unn99.htm [Accessed 13th February 2007].

Douglass, D (2004) 'Forgive and Forget? What should the attitude of militants to the strikebreakers of 1984-85?' *Weekly Worker*, March 25th. 523.

Early, S and Cohen, L (1997) 'Jobs with Justice: Mobilising Labour-Community Relations' *WorkingUSA*. November – December, pp. 49-57.

Eaton, AE and Kriesky, J (2001) 'Union Organising Under Neutrality and Card-Check Agreements' *Industrial and Labour Relations Review*. 55(1), pp. 42-59.

Ebbinghaus, B and Visser, J (1999) 'When Institutions Matter: Union Growth and Decline in Western Europe, 1950-1995' *European Sociological Review*. 15(2), pp. 135-158.

Ellem, B (2001) 'Trade Unionism in 2000' *Journal of Industrial Relations*. 43(2), pp. 196-218.

Ellner, S (2005a) 'The Emergence of a New Trade Unionism in Venezuela with Vestiges of the Past' *Latin American Perspectives*. 32, pp. 51-71.

European Homeworking Group (N.D.) *Homeworkers in Europe*. Leeds: HomeNet.

Evans, Y, Herbert, J, Datta, K, May, J, McIlwaine, C and Wills, J (2005) *Making the City Work: Low Paid Employment in London*. London: Queen Mary, University of London.

Farber, HS and Western, B (2002) 'Ronald Reagan and the Politics of Declining Union Organisation' *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. 40(3), pp. 385-401.

Feinstein, F (2006) 'Renewing and Maintaining Union Vitality: New Approaches to Union Growth' *New York Law School Law Review*. 50(2), pp. 337-353.

Findlay, P and McKinlay, A (2003) 'Union Organising in 'Big Blue's Back Yard' *Industrial Relations Journal*. 34(1), pp. 52-66.

Fine, J (2006) *Worker Centres: Organising Communities on the Edge of the Dream*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Freedom (1998) 'Interview with a CGT Member about the Union' [Online] *Freedom*, Spring 1998. Available from http://libcom.org/library/cgt-union-interview-cnt-split-freedom [Accessed 12th March 2007].

Frege, CM and Kelly, J (2003) 'Union Revitalisation Strategies in Comparative Perspective' *European Journal of Industrial Relations*. 9(1), pp. 7-24.

Gall, G (2005) 'Union Organising in the 'New Economy' in Britain' *Employee Relations*. 27(2), pp. 208-225.

Gambone, L (2004) 'The Spanish CGT: The New Anarcho-Syndicalism' [Online] *Infoshop*, 11th November. Available from http://www.infoshop.org/inews/article.php?story=04/11/11/9459137 [Accessed 13th March 2007].

Gordon, J (1999) 'The Campaign for the Unpaid Wages Prohibition Act: Latino Immigrants Change New York Wage Law' *International Migration Policy Programme Working Papers*, 4. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Grainger, H (2006) *Trade Union Membership 2005*. London: Department of Trade and Industry.

Griffin, G and Moors, R (2004) 'The Fall and Rise of Organising in a Blue Collar Union' *Journal of Industrial Relations*. 46(1), pp. 39-52.

Hale, A and Wills, J [eds.] (2005) *Threads of Labour: Women Working Worldwide*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hall-Jones, P (2006) 'State of the Unions' [Online] *New Unionism*. Available from http://www.newunionism.net/library/organizing/Hall-Jones%20-%20State%20of%20the%20Unions%20-%202007.htm [Accessed 9th March 2007].

Heery, E, Simms, M, Delbridge, R, Salmon, R, and Simpson, D (2000a) 'Organising Unionism Comes to the UK' *Employee Relations*. 22(1), pp. 38-57.

Heery, E, Simms, M, Delbridge, R, Salmon, R, and Simpson, D (2000b) 'The TUC's Organising Academy: An Assessment' *Industrial Relations Journal*. 31(5), pp. 400-415.

HomeNet (1999a) *New Ways of Organising in the Informal Sector: Four Case Studies on Trade Union Activity*. Bhadra and Leeds: HomeNet.

HomeNet (1999b) *Using the ILO Convention on Home Work*. Leeds: HomeNet.

Hurd, R, Milkman, R and Turner, L (2003) 'Reviving the American Labour Movement: Institutions and Mobilisation' *European Journal of Industrial Relations*. 9(1), pp. 99-117.

Jamoul, L (2006) *The Art of Politics: Broad-Based Organising in Britain*. PhD Thesis: Queen Mary, University of London.

Jepson, W (2005) 'Spaces of Labour Activism, Mexican-American and the Farm Worker Movement in South Texas since 1966' *Antipode*. 37(4), pp. 697-702.

Jobs with Justice (N.D.a) *Take the Pledge* [Online] Available from http://www.jwj.org/pledge.html [Accessed 11th March 2007].

Jobs with Justice (N.D.b) *Friends and Allies* [Online] Available from http://www.jwj.org/about/friends.html [Accessed 18th March 2007].

Kuruvilla, S, Das, S, Kwon H and Kwon S (2002) 'Trade Union Growth and Decline in Asia' *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. 40(3), pp. 431-461.

LAANE (N.D.) *Power in Numbers: A New Model for Supporting Workers' Rights through Community/Labour Partnerships*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy.

Labour Council of New South Wales (2003) *Community Campaigning Strategy*. Sydney: Labour Council of New South Wales.

Lalonde, RJ and Meltzer BD (1991) 'Hard Times for Unions: Another look at the Significance of Employer Illegalities' *University of Chicago Law Review*. 58, pp. 953-1014.

Leary, E (2005) 'Immokalee Workers Take Down Taco Bell' [Online] *Monthly Review*. 57(5) Available from http://www.monthlyreview.org/1005leary.htm [Accessed 11th March 2007].

Lee, EH (1997) *The Labour Movement and the Internet: The New Internationalism*. London: Pluto Press.

Lee, EH (2000) 'How the Internet is Changing Unions' *WorkingUSA*. 4(2), pp. 56-72.

Lee, EH (2006) 'The New Web and the Unions' [Online] *Industrial Worker*. Available from http://www.ericlee.info/2006/11/the_new_web_and_the_unions.html [Accessed 16th March 2007].

Lincoln, A (2006) 'The IWW and Trade Unions' *Bread and Roses* 8, pp. 10-11.

Martin, R, Sunley, P and Wills, J (1994) 'Unions and the Politics of Deindustrialisation: Some Comments on how Geography Complicates Class Analysis' *Antipode*. 26(1), pp. 59-76.

Meardi, G (2005) 'Post-Communist Trade Unions: Comparative Questions and Frameworks'. [Online] Paper presented to *INTAS Workshop, April 14th-16th 2005.* Available from http://www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/complabstuds/russia/Intas/Moscowworkshop.doc Moscow: INTAS. [Accessed 6th March 2007].

Morissette, R, Schellenberg, G and Johnson, A (2005) 'Diverging Trends in Unionisation' *Perspectives on Labour and Income*. 6(4), pp. 5-12.

Narro, V (2006) 'Impacting Next Wave Organising: Creative Campaign Strategies of the Los Angeles Worker Centres' *New York Law School Review*, pp. 465-513.

Nathanson, R (1999) *Union Responses to a Changing Environment: The* New Histadrut – *The General federation of Labour in Israel*. Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies.

NOII (2006) *Workers' Control Not Immigration Controls: A Programme for Trade Unions proposed by No-One is Illegal*. Bolton: NOII.

Osterman, P (2006) 'Community Organising and Employee Representation' *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. 44(4), pp. 629-649.

Powlenko, KD (2006) 'Reevaluating Inter-Union Competition: A Proposal to Resurrect Rival Unionism' *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Labour and Employment Law*. 8.

Singh, A (N.D.) *Cities for All: A Note on Globalisation and the Women Street Vendors*. [Online] Available from http://www.nasvinet.org/articles/articles_2.htm [Accessed 20th February 2007]. NASVI.

Starbucks Workers' Union (2006) *Justice from Bean to Cup: Starbucks 2006 Corporate Irresponsibility Report*. New York: IWW.

Stein, E (2004) 'The Workplace Project' *New York Law School Review*, pp. 607-614.

Ten Eyck, T (2007) 'Worker Centres and AFL-CIO: Worker Centres are Increasingly Forging Alliances with Unions' [Online] *Enlace*. Available from http://www.enlaceintl.org/wa/enlace/ei/1312 [Accessed 20th February 2007].

Thompson, FW and Bekken, J (2006) *The Industrial Workers of the World: Its First Hundred Years*. Cincinnati: IWW.

Toby [No Surname] (2006) ' "Supersize My Pay": Fast Food Workers in Aotearoa (New Zealand) Organise for Improved Wages and Conditions' [Online] *Direct Action*. December 2006, pp. 4-7. Available from http://iww.org.au/files/iww/December%202006.pdf [Accessed 7th March 2007].

Trew, S (2004) 'Handle with Care: Union Backing Emerges to Help the Helpless Navigate the Safe Streets Act' [Online] *Hour*, 11th March. Available from http://www.hour.ca/news/news.aspx?iIDArticle=955 [Accessed 12th March 2007].

Tufts, S (1998) 'Community Unionism in Canada and Labour's (Re)Organisation of Space' *Antipode*. 30(3), pp. 227-250.

de Turbeville, S (2004) 'Does the 'Organising Model' represent a credible Union Renewal Strategy?' *Work, Employment and Society*. 18(4), pp. 775-794.

Turnbull, MH (2004) 'Informal Struggles: Unionising Day Labourers, a Case Study of Day Labour Organising in Santa Cruz, California'. Paper presented at *Institute for Labour and Employment Graduate Research Conference*. Marshall, CA: University of California.

Vandenberg, A (2005/2006) 'Social Movement Unionism and Networked Technology' *International Journal of Technology, Knowledge and Society*. 1(4), pp. 45-51.

Vandenheuvel, A and Wooden, M (1999) *Casualisation and Outsourcing: trends and Implications for Work-Related Training*. Adelaide: NCVER.

Vinokurova, O (2005) 'Passport of the Russian Trade Union Movement'. [Online] Paper presented to *INTAS Workshop, April 14th-16th 2005*. Available from http://www.warwick.ac.uk/russia/Intas/RussianReport.doc. Moscow: INTAS. [Accessed 5th March 2007].

Visser, J (2006) 'Union Membership Statistics in 24 Countries' *Digital Commons @ ILR* [Online] Available from http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi? article=1276&context=key_workplace [Accessed 6th March 2007].

Waddington, J and Kerr, A (2000) 'Towards and Organising Model in UNISON? A Trade Union Membership Strategy in Transition' in Terry, M [ed.] *Redefining Public Sector Unionism: UNISON and the Future of Trade Unions*. London: Routledge.

Walsh, P and Crawford, A (2003) 'From Organisational Breadth to Depth? New Zealand's Trade Unions under the Employment Contracts Act' in Yates, CAB and Fairbrother P [eds.] *Trade Unions in Renewal: A Comparative Study*. London: Routledge.

Warren, C (2005) 'Coming Undone: The Implications of Garment Industry Subcontracting for UK Workers' *Threads of Labour: Garment Industry Supply Chains from the Workers' Perspective*. London: Blackwell.

Waterman, P (1996) 'A New Global Solidarity Praxis for a World in which 'the future is not what it used to be' *Transnational Associations* 3, pp, 163-180.

Waterman, P and Timms, J (2005) 'Trade Union Internationalism and a Gloal Civil Society in the Making' in Anheier, HK, Kaldor, MH and Glasius, M [eds.] *Global Civil Society 2004/5*. Beverley Hills and London; Sage.

Whole Foods Market (2000) *Declaration of Interdependence*. [Online] Available from http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/company/declaration.html [Accessed 2nd March 2007].

Wills, J (2001) 'Community Unionism and Trade Union Renewal in the UK: Moving Beyond the Fragments at Last?' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. 26(4), pp. 465-483.

Wills, J (2007) 'Making Class Politics Possible: Organising Contract Cleaners in London'. Paper presented 20th March 2007. London: Queen Mary, University of London.

Wills, J (forthcoming) 'Subcontracting, Low Waged Urban Labour Markets and New Forms of Trade Union Organisation' *Labour Studies Journal*, ed. Buttigieg, D.

Wood, G (2001) 'South African Trade Unions in a Time of Adjustment' *Labour / Le Travail*. 47 [Online] Available from http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/llt/47/06wood.html [Accessed 24th February 2007].

Wulcan, F (N.D.) 'How and Why the SEIU Lost 2,300 Members at the University of Massachusetts' [Online] *Labournotes*. Available from http://labornotes.org/files/pdfs/888.pdf [Accessed 26th February 2007].

Yates, CAB (2003) 'The Revival of Industrial Unions in Canada: The Extension and Adaptation of Industrial Union Practices to the New Economy' in Yates, CAB and Fairbrother P [eds.] *Trade Unions in Renewal: A Comparative Study*. London: Routledge.

Youm, KS (2004) 'The Korean and Bangladeshi Governments' Lack of Responsibility for the Conditions of Bangladeshi Migrant Workers' [Online] Available from http://www.ais-

dhaka.net/School_Library/Senior%20Projects/04_Youm_migrants.pdf. Dhaka: American

International School. [Accessed 14th March 2007].

Younge, G (2003) 'Strike Exposes Poverty Behind Scenes at Yale' *The Guardian* September

15th, p. 14.