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## **Strike Waves, Union Growth and the Rank-and-File/Bureaucracy Interplay:**

**Britain 1889-90, 1910-13 and 1919-20**

Ralph Darlington

### **Introduction**

Gerald Friedman's *Reigniting the Labor Movement*<sup>1</sup> was a highly ambitious, unashamedly partisan, historical and transnational comparative analysis of the rise and demise of the labour movement, which identified the way in which rank-and-file workers' spontaneous and innovative strike militancy represents an 'incipient rebellion against the capitalist system' (p. 26). In the process, the book made a compelling case for the restoration of past militant worker action as an essential means of 'reigniting' the contemporary labour movement. While I find myself in considerable sympathy and agreement with much of the overall analysis, there are distinct but related features of Friedman's thesis that are critically explored in this article. These concern the nature of the relationship between strike movements and union membership growth, and the process by which the unions that emerge from periods of radical labour unrest then seek to dampen down worker militancy in order to bargain with employers/state within the confines of capitalism. My reassessment of Friedman's analysis, framed specifically within the national context of the UK during the historical window of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (specifically 1889-1920), aims to illustrate what I regard as five of the main problematic features of the study.

## Strike Waves and Union Growth

The first aspect of Friedman's analysis that I want to explore is the contention that strike waves hold the key to understanding the historical rise and decline of the labour movement in the advanced capitalist world, with the growth of trade unions (or 'labour unions' as they are termed in the US) closely tied to waves of mass strike mobilisation. Of course, in some respects, this particular thesis is not entirely original. Hobsbawm, Shorter and Tilly, Cronin, Tarrow, Kelly and Clawson,<sup>2</sup> amongst others, have all previously in different national and/or international contexts, drawn similar attention to the association between union membership growth cycles and popular upsurges. For example, Cronin identified 'three great 'leaps' or recurring turbulent explosions of mass strike activity in the UK between 1889-90, 1910-13 and 1919-20 which coincided with waves of unionisation, and Clawson drew attention to the way in which union growth in the US, most notably in the dozen years from 1934 to 1945, has also usually been associated with an explosive upsurge of strike activity driven from below. However, Friedman's examination of such trends across no less than 16 different countries and over the entire historical period of the twentieth century not only provides a more detailed and sophisticated exposition of the way in which strike frequency and union membership changes go hand in hand – both up *and* down together - drawn from statistical data as well as social analysis, but also a more transnational and overarching analysis.

Yet while there is undoubtedly a close association between strike waves and union growth, this does not mean that the direction of causation is necessarily as simple as Friedman has suggested, namely that strikes 'precede the union' (p. 115) and lead to their growth, with effectively unions playing no role in contributing to workers' militancy. In fact,

at least as far as the UK is concerned, the picture is rather more mixed, with evidence that during the strike waves of 1889-92, 1910-13 and 1919-20 not only did completely new unions emerge as a direct result of strike activity but also established (often fairly conservative) trade unions in some sectors, amidst the wave of unrest and union growth taking place generally, took the initiative to mobilise their members into strike activity, and as a result also became a beneficiary of an upsurge in union membership. This can be explored with reference to each of the three strike waves.

In 1888 not only was total trade union membership in Britain only 750,000, merely 10 per cent of adult male manual workers,<sup>3</sup> but these 'old' unions were dominated by the narrow and exclusive associations of skilled craftsmen that showed little concern for the mass of unskilled and unorganised workers. Their industrial policy was to a large extent based on collaboration with the employers and they took no interest in demands for reforms which might improve the general position of the working class within the capitalist system. Well might Engels<sup>4</sup> comment in 1885: 'The great trades unions...form an aristocracy among the working class; they have succeeded in enforcing for themselves a relatively comfortable position, and they accept it as final...They are very nice people nowadays to deal with, for any sensible capitalist in particular and for the whole capitalist class in general').

It took the wave of industrial unrest that swept the country in 1889-92 to transform the situation. The number of strikes more than doubled from 517 in 1888 to 1,211 in 1889, and remained at comparable levels for the next two years; the number of workers involved in these disputes rose from around 120,000 in 1888 to above 337,000 in 1889 and over 393,000 in 1890, dipping to 267,000 in 1891 but rebounding to 357,000 in 1892. Strikes for

wage increases were consistently predominant, often accompanied by demands for shorter hours or trade union recognition. In the process, strikers were extremely successful in achieving their stated aims with employers forced to make important concessions. Only 27 per cent of all conflicts were lost outright, involving less than 23 per cent of all strikers.<sup>5</sup> This wave of industrial militancy brought with it breakthroughs in union organisation, such that between 1888 and 1892 trade union membership roughly doubled, reaching 1.5 million, with an explosive growth of 'new' unions, general organisations that made the first successful attempts to form lasting unions among the unskilled, involving the substantial recruitment of women, young people and migrant workers. Groups of workers who had been totally unorganised now rushed to unionise, including dockers, seamen, road transport workers, engineering and building labourers, and many others.

Often there was a common pattern: one section of workers would stage a strike, organise a union, and gain concessions, with the formation of a union taking place after the strike was underway; other groups would then follow their example and take the same route. The source of the revival was wholly unexpected: the Bryant and May match girls' strike of 1889 in East London, led by 700 young women with an average age of 13, many of them Irish immigrants.<sup>6</sup> Their success, reflected in a new Matchmakers' Union, 'was the small spark that ignited the blaze of revolt and the wildfire spread of trade unionism among the unskilled'.<sup>7</sup> In other cases though, *an embryonic union organisation helped to kick-start the action*. For example, in March 1889, Will Thorne launched a new union for gas workers in London, and within two weeks over 3,000 had signed up, rallying behind the demand for an eight-hour day. The threat of strike action was enough to force the employers to retreat, and following its success new branches of the National Union of Gasworkers and General

Labourers (forerunner of today's GMB union) were rapidly formed across the country, embracing rubber, woollen and metal trades' workers, and with a total membership of 60,000 by the end of the year.<sup>8</sup>

At the centre of the New Unionist upsurge was the dramatic five-week London dock strike of 1889. Despite the fact the great mass of dockers had long been seen as unorganisable because they were employed on a casual basis, competing for each other for work, 10,000 walked out on strike. The strike quickly grew to 100,000 and 15,000 flying pickets virtually shut down the whole Port of London for a month. Yet though the strike began spontaneously, *a tiny union already existed*, founded two years earlier by Ben Tillett, *and it successfully drew up a list of demands and organised the strike*. Despite not winning the sought for sixpence-an-hour pay rise (the 'dockers' tanner'), the union extracted considerable improvements in their working conditions, as well as union recognition and a virtual closed shop. Thus the dockers' union, the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers' Union (forerunner of today's Unite union), grew from an initial membership of 800 to 60,000.<sup>9</sup> Likewise elsewhere workers took up the drive to go out on strike, build unions (whether new *or* existing organisations) and win better conditions.

Significantly several of the new unions expanded to take in workers beyond the industries in which they originated, partly out of a desire of the some of their leaders to unite workers on a class, rather than sectional basis, but also because the successful unions found themselves besieged by other workers demanding to be admitted.<sup>10</sup> On top of the new unions being 'open' in their membership policy, there were other significant differences from the traditional 'closed' unions. Catering for largely unskilled and poorly-paid workers, the new unions tended to charge much lower entrance and subscription fees,

and instead of being dependent on friendly benefits (such as sickness and unemployment benefit) and unilateral union regulation to control pay and working conditions they resorted to aggressive strike tactics in order to win concessions from employers.<sup>11</sup> The new mood of optimism was summed up by Engels in 1890: ‘...these new Trade Unions of unskilled men and women are totally different from the old organisations and cannot fall into the same conservative ways.’<sup>12</sup>

But despite the fact most attention has been focused on the dramatic upsurge of strike activity and new union organisation among the unskilled and unorganised, most of the increased strike activity that took place during this period was actually concentrated *among the traditionally unionised trades* of building, mining, metals and textiles - which provided almost two-thirds of recorded stoppages in the peak years of 1889 and 1890 - and much of the total expansion of trade union membership was also located *where it was already established within the ‘old’ unions*. In this sense, the ‘New Unionism’ was only one specific element in a far broader process.<sup>13</sup> For example, membership of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers rose from 53,740 members at the end of 1888 to 71,221 by the end of 1891;<sup>14</sup> membership of the Miners’ Federation of Great Britain, which in 1888-9 made provision for coordinated strike action over the demand for a legal 8-hour day, increased by three or four times; and from 1888 the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, which had never authorised a single strike since its foundation, rapidly transformed itself into a militant union, with a national campaign for the 10-hour day, resulting in a tripling of membership.<sup>15</sup> No doubt, in part, the success of the ‘new’ unions stimulated workers to join the ‘old’ unions. But in addition it seems clear there were other more immediate precipitating causes related to the attempts made by the existing unions to defend and

improve workers' position within the employment relationship, as well as the appeal and strength of their own organisations. By altering their rules and admitting members from the ranks of the semi-skilled, the old unions experienced not only substantial growth, but also recruited many younger members, less wedded to traditional ways than many existing members and more willing to contemplate change.<sup>16</sup>

There was a similar mixed picture during the (pre-First World War) 1910-13 strike wave. The so-called 'Labour Unrest' began in 1910, when 385,000 workers took part in 531 strikes. The number of strikes rose to 903 in 1911 (more than twice the level of 1909), then dropped minimally to 857 in 1912 before jumping again to 1,497 in 1913. The number of strikers followed a somewhat different pattern: increasing to 831,000 in 1911 and still further to 1.2 million in 1912, then falling to a modest 516,000 in 1913, to be explained by a year of large confrontations in major industries being followed by (and probably stimulating) more widespread but limited action in less important parts of the economy. In the four years 1910-1914 somewhere between 25-30 per cent of the British workforce went on strike. It was a strike wave dominated by semi-skilled or unskilled labour organised (or just organised) in industrial or general unions (miners, textile operatives, dockers and railwaymen). But as White<sup>17</sup> has explained, there were in fact two concurrent unrests during the period: an upsurge of the hitherto unorganised and unrecognised as well as of workers who were already members of established and recognised trade unions.

To begin with there were bitter, largely unofficial, strikes in the South Wales coalfields in 1910-11, followed in the summer of 1911 by fierce seafarers' and dockers' strikes in a number of cities which spread to a Liverpool general transport strike, and then a national railway strike. These were followed by a national miners' strike in the winter of



1911-12 and in 1913 more and more workers with little previous experience of trade unionism were drawn in, with a rash of strikes among unskilled workers in the Midlands engineering industry. The most notable feature of this new mass strike wave was the high degree of aggressive, sometimes violent and often unofficial industrial militancy, with the strikers again and again clashing with both the forces of the state and their own established trade union officials. Indeed national union officials at times seemed totally unresponsive to their members' intense but often ill-articulated discontents.<sup>18</sup> The demands which surfaced concerned mainly wages, although the issue of union recognition was also important in many strikes. Again the strikers enjoyed considerable success, with less than 14 per cent of all strikers experiencing defeat. As Kelly<sup>19</sup> has commented:

...it appears that unions became the beneficiaries of a virtuous circle of effectiveness and membership. As the scale of strike activity increased, so did the win rate, and as the win rate increased, bargaining coverage rose, more workers perceived unions to be effective and joined them, which in turn enabled more strikes to be called...and so on.

Trade union organisation in Britain was completely transformed by this 'Labour Unrest' with a massive increase in membership which surpassed (in absolute if not relative terms) the achievements of 1888-9; membership grew from 2.4 million at the end of 1909 to 4.1 million by the end of 1913. By 1914 union density had risen to 23 per cent. As Hyman<sup>20</sup> noted: 'Qualitatively, these years were viewed as involving a transformation as profound as that conventionally attributed to "New Unionism"'. Moreover during the 'Labour Unrest' the 'New Unionism' of a quarter of a century earlier really came into its own as almost every existing union shared in the massive growth in aggregate membership. This was most notable in transport and general labour, building, metals and printing. Most spectacularly on the railways union membership leapt from only about a third in 1910 to

three quarters in 1914, and the general union, the Workers' Union, increased from 5,000 members in 1910 to almost 160,000 by the end of 1914. Such developments led to the founding or consolidation of massive general unions straddling a multiplicity of industrial and occupational boundaries<sup>21</sup> and aimed at overcoming the traditions of craft exclusiveness and sectionalism that had often prevented united action in the past. In 1913 this included the amalgamation of three existing rail workers' organisations into the National Union of Railwaymen, a 'triumph of industrial unionism'<sup>22</sup> and a formal attempt to link the action of 1.5 million union members in the miners', transport and railway workers' unions into a 'Triple Alliance'.

The problem for the trade union leaders during this period was that their restraint in the years that had followed the 1892 economic downturn and collapse of the 'New Unionism' had clearly not paid off, either in obtaining higher wages or increased respect from employers. Although there were employers who tried to avoid disputes by building up the authority of the unions through regular negotiations and written agreements, the majority were still hostile to collective bargaining. They insisted on their right to hire non-union as well as union labour, and to strike individual bargains when they wished. Some employers, like the railway companies, refused to recognise the unions or have any dealings with them. As a result, many younger radical unionists were naturally impatient with the state of affairs and were ready for militant action, if necessary in defiance of the official leadership.<sup>23</sup> But as Smith<sup>24</sup> has explained, the existing union leaderships were confronted with both a threat *and an opportunity*. The new movement from below threatened many of the bureaucratic habits they had developed over the years, and there was for them always the alarming prospect of it boiling over into something more radical than a strike wave. At

the same time, however, it offered them the opportunity of establishing the authority of both their unions generally and their own bargaining role specifically vis-à-vis the employers and government more powerfully than any of them had previously dreamt possible. So while often it was not the established trade union leaders who initiated the strikes of 1910-13, some officials nonetheless seized the opportunity to expand their influence by identifying with and giving official support to the struggles. Furthermore, the mushrooming of organisation meant that many new personnel, much more associated with the wage militancy than the old, were pushed up into the ranks of union officialdom.

Likewise in the strike wave of 1919-20 there was another massive growth in working class organisation, combativity and confidence, with the level of strike activity surpassing even that of the pre-war 'Labour Unrest'. Workers used the advantages of a brief post-war boom to build up their forces, and in a series of massive confrontations squeezed concession after concession from the government. At the same time, the trade unions once again underwent enormous growth, enjoying a four-fold expansion to reach a level of 8.3 million by 1920. While this increase undoubtedly came, in part, from the strike wave, it had also resulted from the necessity of the state to mobilise labour's support for the war effort. Under the stress of war it had been essential for the state to invoke the aid of the trade unions, to collaborate with them in a bid to avoid disruptive labour disputes, and in the process to make very substantial concessions to them, particularly in the matter of trade union status: the recognition of trade unions as an indispensable part of the state's war machinery. As Cockburn<sup>25</sup> explained: 'in a sense the unions had racketeered on the war, had taken advantage of the nation's peril to advance themselves'. But in the process of union

growth many of the old leaders resigned or were swept out of office, for example in the building trades.<sup>26</sup>

Notable about the militancy during this period is the extent to which it now *took an official turn*. Indeed during 1919 some union leaders, riding the massive post-war wave of workers' militancy and political radicalisation, moved significantly to the left and began to talk the language of 'Direct Action', of the political general strike to force Parliament to respond to union demands. Thus several unions threatened to take direct action to enforce the nationalization of the mines, the ending of conscription and the withdrawal of troops from Russia and Ireland. The renewed emphasis placed on the dormant 'Triple Alliance' and the direct action rhetoric generally encouraged a wide layer of militants to look to the leaders of the Triple Alliance to initiate a general strike and final confrontation with the power of capital.

In other words then, while the UK strike waves of 1889-92, 1910-13 and 1919-20 undoubtedly confirm Friedman's overall argument that there is direct association between mass strike movements and union growth, there appears to have been a more dynamic interaction between the two than merely a simple one-way causation. Although there was explosive growth and organisation taking place outside of the existing union movement, there was also a significant level of strike activity organised by the existing unions, which both arose from and further contributed to overall union growth, and although the most significant impetus in the three key periods of union growth was struggle *from below*, not the top of the movement – some union officials also played an important contributory role in the virtuous circle of strike effectiveness and the expansion of union membership and organisation.

## Contradictory Nature of Trade Unionism

This brings me to a second aspect of Friedman's analysis, namely the claim that, although historically trade unions have developed and expanded because of labour militancy and employer/state concessions, they then inevitably proceed to dampen down this labour militancy as the price to be paid for collective bargaining rights and the unions' continuing support by employers and government. In effect, there is a 'Faustian bargain' (p. 72) in which in exchange for demobilising the movement unions obtain negotiating gains in wages and working conditions via an orderly, regularised and consensual system of collective bargaining and social reform within the framework of the existing capitalist system. Strike movements and the democratic hopes they express for a change in the social order end up setting in motion a process that ultimately ends in business unionism, organisational hierarchy and bureaucracy.<sup>27</sup>

At the heart of Friedman's analysis is the distinction made between 'labor and Labor' (p. 30), the 'popular labor movement' created by militant spontaneous rank-and-file workers through upsurges, mass action and bursts of creative energy, on the one hand, and the 'Labor Movement', the bureaucratic trade union organisations which emerge out of these strike waves and which become committed to controlling union militancy in exchange for collective bargaining and social reform, on the other (p. 72). Although not acknowledged by Friedman, such a distinction is broadly similar to the universal tension that has been identified within trade unionism between the contradictory elements of 'movement' and 'organisation'.<sup>28</sup> On the one hand, trade unionism *as an organisation* enshrined in formal, official and often bureaucratic 'representative' structures that prioritise collective bargaining and institutional survival related to bricks and mortar and financial assets. On the

other hand, trade unionism *as a movement*, an organisational form that prioritises workplace resistance, direct democracy, membership mobilisation and radical economic and political aspirations.

Significantly, Friedman argues that unlike many labour radicals over the past century for whom the problems of the trade union movement have essentially been reduced to that of self-serving bureaucratic leaders who act as a brake on popular militancy and fail to deliver revolutionary change (p. 116; 131), one has to go beyond personal failings to the endemic problem of social movements. 'Domestication...is the natural path of social movements like unions...because it...is part of the agreement, the deal, that leads to the establishment and institutionalisation of the movement' (p. 116). By their nature 'unions are not organs for social conflict...instead of continued conflict, the union represents by its very nature social pacification, an *agreement* between the classes' (p. 116). It is in the nature of the union to discourage strikes and to substitute centralised negotiation, by bureaucrats and officials, for rank-and-file participation. He argues that 'almost without exception, *every* union (and *every* socialist party) has followed the same trajectory from shopfloor militancy to organisation, collective bargaining, and the establishment of union hierarchy' (p. 131).

Arguably whilst in general terms there is an important element of truth in this thesis, by drawing such a sharp distinction between unions and workers Friedman does not really adequately conceptualise or describe a number of important features of trade unionism. To begin with, there is the inherent dualism of trade unionism *itself* within capitalist society, namely the contradictory pressures between *conflict* and *accommodation*,<sup>29</sup> and the way in which the balance between these contradictory elements can differ markedly between unions and may shift substantially over time, with the level of workers' collective

mobilisation the determining factor affecting it.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately Friedman's account is too one-dimensional, fatalistic and pessimistic – 'heads labour loses, tails capital wins' (p. 83). In fact, as we have seen, trade unions are not merely organs of restraint and containment of workers' militancy – they can also provide an effective means by which workers can mobilise *resistance* to employers and governments.

Indeed, it was Marx and Engels, who were close observers and frequent commentators on the development and struggles of British trade unionism over 50 years during its formative period of the nineteenth century, who drew attention to the highly contradictory nature of trade unionism, which both *expressed* and *contained* working class resistance to capitalism, such that the unions were at one and the same time agencies of working class *conflict* and *accommodation* with the power of capital. On the one hand, they mobilise the collective strength which workers have in the workplace, and through the battles fought over wages, jobs, conditions and hours, workers can gain the organisation, confidence and class consciousness to challenge and ultimately overthrow the capitalist system; as 'schools of war' trade unions can make workers aware of their ability to completely transform society.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, trade unions tend to operate within the framework of capitalism; they seek not to overthrow it, but merely to improve workers' position within the context of the existing system; their aim is not to end exploitation but to re-negotiate the terms on which workers are exploited. As Marx<sup>32</sup> put it 'They are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects'.

In other words, at the same time as they provide the means and instrument through workers' resistance to capitalism can be organized, they are also under enormous pressure to preserve the tolerance of employers and government by establishing a stable and co-

operative bargaining relationship, and therefore to restrain workers' resistance by settling for concessions that are compatible with labour discipline and capitalist authority. Their dual character' means that at one and the same time they resist capitalist exploitation and function as a source of social order which helps stabilize capitalist society.<sup>33</sup>

Yet significantly this dual nature of trade unionism is not always equally balanced. Hyman<sup>34</sup> drew attention to the way that Marx and Engels' attitude towards the trade unions appeared to change dramatically between the 1840s and 1860s; at an initial 'optimistic' stage adhering to the view that capitalist economic development would of itself inexorably drive trade unions down the road to revolutionary politics; at a later 'pessimistic' stage seeming almost in despair of the British unions with their narrow craft mentality and conservative leaderships. Yet as other commentators<sup>35</sup> have argued, and Hyman<sup>36</sup> has subsequently acknowledged, the explanation for this varying emphasis was not Marx and Engels' 'mood' but the dramatic changes in the class struggle and in the consciousness and fighting strength of the working class at different periods. It is this which determines the nature of trade unions. Thus, those trade unions which grew in a period of social crisis and revolution (for example, during the Chartist period up to 1848, which included the 1842 general strike) were viewed as being qualitatively different from those that rose in more 'normal' stable capitalist times (for example, during the 1860s with a change in the nature of trade unionism towards craftism and bureaucracy) when they tended to merely defend workers interests within the terrain of capitalist relations of production. In other words, the relative weight of conflict and accommodation within capitalism was deeply affected by the situation in which the unions operated and it was this which affected Marx and Engels' apparent contradictory assessments of the nature of trade unionism.



Such observations on the limits and potential of trade unions as anti-capitalist forms of organisation underline the extent to which Friedman's one-sided emphasis – which can be interpreted as a form of obituary of an apparently defunct contemporary trade union movement<sup>37</sup> - effectively throws the baby out with the bathwater. However, to his credit in a later reflection on his book, Friedman has acknowledged he understated 'the positive contribution of the old labour movement' and that while 'some unions did demobilise the working class...others...used the process of collective bargaining...to promote an alternative, working class political economy'.<sup>38</sup> He says he was wrong 'to discount the revolutionary potential of unions. Ultimately the place of unions in a polity is not fixed'.<sup>39</sup>

As we have seen, if there is a radical tension in the nature of trade unionism between powerful tendencies within capitalist society which push in opposite and mutually incompatible directions - between *conflict* and *accommodation* - the different elements are not always of the same weight. Moreover, each polar opposite must be understood not as a fixed proposition in terms of an 'either/or' logic, but constantly in motion reflecting and at the same time changing the social condition of which it is part. The result is a continuum of possible and overlapping trade union responses, each dominant to a greater or lesser degree at particular points in time. As Antonio Gramsci,<sup>40</sup> the Italian revolutionary Marxist, wrote:

The trade union is not a predetermined phenomenon. It becomes a determinate institution; it takes on a definite historical form to the extent that the strength and will of the workers who are its members impress a policy and propose an aim that defines it.

The key point here is that it is the changing balance of class forces between capital and labour that has a profound impact on the nature of trade unionism and its role and ability to mount resistance to capitalism, in terms of which side is more confident, stronger and successfully pushing the frontier of control to their advantage within the workplace and society more broadly. It is strike action which is the principal weapon of a fighting working class. As Friedman's study has convincingly shown, trade unions grow when workers are fighting back and winning victories: fighting unions involve participation and activity and generate a culture of commitment, solidarity and loyalty. But an army which neither trains nor fights ceases to be an army; unions stagnate or decline when the level of struggle is low, with passive unions encouraging bureaucratisation and ossification. Thus the contrast between the militancy (combined with important continuing elements of conservatism) of unions in the periods 1889-92, 1910-13 and 1919-20 and the periods in-between when accommodative tendencies (combined with important elements of militancy) predominated.

Significantly Friedman's thesis that unions inevitably end up compromising rather than fighting has a substantial flaw – it cannot adequately account for the historical pattern of industrial conflict that has taken place in the UK (or elsewhere), the fact that mass strikes have come in waves, in big, broad explosions of creative militancy, occurring fitfully and unexpectedly. For example, in the UK there was the 1926 General Strike and the strike waves of 1934-39, 1968-1974 and 1978-9; and in 2011 there was a strike by 2.5 million public sector workers. Such an uneven path does not fit in with the notion of labour history which stresses the defensive, reactive, corporate mentality of the trade unions and their gradual historical integration into society. The argument of incorporation misses or

minimises the profoundly discontinuous path of working class evolution and the way in which the working class is being made, unmade, and remade incessantly as new stages of economic and social development undermine the basis of old habits and beliefs, even if some elements persist.<sup>41</sup>

### **Trade Union Bureaucracy**

A related problem with Friedman's analysis is an inadequate conceptualisation and exploration of the absolutely central role played by a distinct trade union bureaucracy – a permanent apparatus of full-time union officials who occupy a unique social position with interests, perspectives and resources different from, and sometimes in antagonism to, the bulk of the rank-and-file members they represent. Of course, it was the Webbs in *History of Trade Unionism*<sup>42</sup> who were the first to draw attention to an important change in the still very weak British trade union movement in the last half of the nineteenth century: the growth of a layer of full-time officials:

During these years we watch a shifting of the leadership in the Trade Union world from the casual enthusiast and irresponsible agitator to a class of permanent salaried officers expressly chosen out of the rank-and-file of Trade Unionists for their superior business capacity.<sup>43</sup>

The Webbs quoted the observations of an anonymous 'skilled craftsmen' who described for them how the union official 'is courted and flattered by the middle class' (in the language of those days, this meant the capitalists), comes to admire and envy them, and 'insensibl[y] adopts more and more [of] their ideas' and, in the end, finds himself looking down on common workmen. And when a 'great strike threatens to involve the Society in

desperate war...he finds himself in small sympathy with the men's demands, and eventually arranges a compromise on terms distasteful to a large section of his members' (Webbs, 1920: 469-70).<sup>44</sup>

Yet all this was first written about the British trade unions, the first institutionalised labour movement, when it was still dominated by craft societies which typically had a low ratio of full-time officials to members, and in which the election and regular re-election of all officials, was still the norm. However in the early years of the twentieth century there was to be a considerable expansion and consolidation of this trade union bureaucracy. A number of factors encouraged the rise of bureaucratic control inside the unions.<sup>45</sup> There was the massive growth in union membership and the extensive movement towards amalgamation in the years from 1910-1924, such that if at the end of the nineteenth century the largest union with centralised control, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, had less than 100,000 members, by 1920 there were a dozen unions larger than this, many substantially. The increased size of such national unions rendered them particularly prone to a centralisation of authority and consolidation of officialdom. The number of full-time union officials expanded at an equally fast rate in many of the most important industries (such as engineering, mining and the railways). If by 1892 there had been some 600–700 full-time officials, by 1920 there were some 3,000–4,000,<sup>46</sup> with an increasing proportion of officials being appointed rather than elected into office.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile there was the growth of national collective bargaining (and often detailed national agreements), arbitration and conciliation machinery and, after the war, Joint Industrial Councils in some industries, with full-time officials in many unions acquiring an increasingly important role in centralised negotiations with employers and the state.<sup>48</sup>

Such officials rapidly displayed a commitment to the smooth operation of national bargaining procedures and sought increased discipline over union branches and districts, with concern for financial stability providing an additional incentive to impose central authority over the initiation of strikes and over the pursuit of local demands which might result in conflict. In assessing the significance of this growing centralisation of authority within national trade unions during the early twentieth century, Hyman<sup>49</sup> noted:

...in these years it became possible for the first time to view the position of trade union official as a distinctive career, and to associate with the position a set of social perspectives and material interests divergent from – and even antagonistic to – those of the membership. Significantly, it was in this period that the notion of the ‘rank-and-file’ came to be regularly counterposed to that of ‘officials’.

The importance of the period under review (1889-1920) is because it is during this time that many of the distinctive traits of the trade union bureaucracy were consolidated. Ironically it became increasingly apparent to some employers, faced with the spread of trade union membership and the demand for union recognition, that unions were double-edged. While unions might challenge employers’ prerogatives, the spread of formal collective bargaining machinery and the growth of trade union officialdom could also hold back and discipline workers. On this basis some employers were prepared to work with union officials if the balance could be swung in their favour. The ‘responsible’ official, who was willing to negotiate and act in the ‘interests of the industry as a whole’ was increasingly seen to be the conduit through which employers believed they could exercise some control over workers, enforcing a systematic framework of dispute resolution. At the same time the 1910–14 strike wave saw the rapid extension of collective-bargaining machinery frequently

promoted during strikes by the Board of Trade conciliators as the best way of avoiding future conflicts. Similarly, conciliation and arbitration machinery set up as a means of resolving disputes, and encouraged by the state throughout much of industry after 1896, also aimed to channel workers' anger from action into negotiation, where their demands could be shaped and modified.<sup>50</sup>

However, although union officials were often opposed, or reluctant, to call strikes, the fact that they sometimes *did* was a reflection of the significant counter-pressures to which they were subject both from *above* (employers and governments) and *below* (their own union members). On the one hand, the danger was that by collaborating too closely with the employers/state the union officials' power could become totally undermined - because the only reason they were taken seriously was that they represented social forces that posed the potential for resistance. Hence, as we have seen, particularly when workers' conditions were being drastically undermined, or a 'big stick' was being wielded as a means of enforcement (including the use of troops during a number of disputes), or severe constraints were placed on union recognition and representation, or when they found themselves completely ignored at the negotiating table, even right-wing union officials sometimes felt obliged to threaten or organise strike action. On the other hand, officials were also subject to counter-pressures from their own rank-and-file members. If they failed to articulate their members' grievances or sometimes lead strike action that delivered some improvements in pay and conditions, there was the danger they would lose support in the union. The rank-and-file might bypass them by acting unofficially, mounting an internal challenge to their position, or even relinquishing their membership of the union. As a consequence they could not ignore entirely their members' interests and aspirations.<sup>51</sup>

Therefore, full-time union officials were not simply ‘fire extinguishers of the revolution’,<sup>52</sup> always playing the ‘Brutus caricature’,<sup>53</sup> as levelled by some commentators and implied by Friedman’s analysis. Depending on the pressures on them, from employers and government on the one hand, and their own members on the other, union officials were prepared to mobilise workers for strike activity on occasions, if only sometimes in a bid to better control their members’ militancy. But in the process it then opened up possibilities for the rank-and-file to draw in much larger numbers and escalate the action outside of the officials’ control. The central problem was that whilst the rank-and-file of the union had a direct interest in fighting against the exploitation of employers and government, and indeed had everything to gain by fighting for the success of militant strikes, full-time officials had a vested interest in the continued existence of a system upon which their livelihood and position depended, and so ended up trying to reconcile the interests of labour and capital, which usually led them to temper workers’ resistance.

Friedman is mistaken to assume employers and governments only accepted unions as a means of pacifying labour. In fact, they accepted them much to their chagrin - unions infringed on their right to manage, pushed up wage rates, undermined managerial prerogative, and mobilised strike activity. So it is not *the unions* which they saw as pacifying labour – it was the *union officials* who they hoped would play that role, but this was by no means a foregone conclusion.

### **Rank-and-File Challenge**

It follows from what has been said so far that Friedman's analysis is also undermined somewhat by the way in which he tends to downplay the ability of rank-and-file members to present a counter-challenge to the union bureaucracy that can put pressure on it (officially) and/or act independently (unofficially) depending on the circumstances. It is true that he acknowledges the extent to which each strike wave witnesses internecine battles inside the unions with the emergence of a new generation of young militants more ready to challenge the incumbent leaderships and develop strategic and ideological innovations to revitalise labour. As Harrison<sup>54</sup> has commented, every 'serious student of the Labour Movement knows that internal conflict is as much the law of its development as is the struggle against the enemies'. Unfortunately Friedman left unspecified how the forces involved in these intra-union conflicts are arrayed against one another and how the battles are actually conducted. Moreover the practical implication of his analysis that all unions inevitably dampen down workers' struggles is that little can be done by union members to change the situation even if they wanted to, a view that presents an over-determined model of oligarchic development which *neglects important democratic countervailing pressures that originate from rank-and-file organisation and struggle*.

We can explore this in the UK during 1889-1920 with reference to the ambiguity of the increased use of bargaining and conciliation procedures which, although introduced in part to control workers' militancy could also have the opposite effect. It required an increase in professional full-time union officials to staff the newly-formed negotiating and mediating bodies. But such union officials increasingly became physically removed from the discipline of the workforce and the conflicts of the workers, and their own conditions became secure from both particular workplace pressures and the general ups and down of



the economy as a whole. At the same time the developing relationship between the unions and the state was expanded and institutionalised by the movement of officials into full or part-time posts in government departments to administer the embryonic social welfare services introduced by the Liberal government. By 1912, one estimate suggested that some 374 posts had been provided for union officials in the factory inspectorate, Home Office, Board of Trade and National Insurance administration.<sup>55</sup> Members of this growing bureaucracy, enamoured by their new-found status, took on conservative attitudes. They became reluctant to call strike action, or even support disputes in which their members became involved, on the basis that this might jeopardize bargaining procedures and their good relations with employers. The goal of ensuring union recognition and maintaining negotiating rights became an end in itself.

As a result, union officials often came to be viewed with growing hostility by a wide layer of ordinary union members. They appeared remote, cut off from the shopfloor, unresponsive to their members' discontent, and seemed to lose any sense of militancy the deeper they become embroiled in bargaining structures. As wages continued to fall, anger among workers grew due to the ineffectiveness of bargaining machinery and the restraints on their freedom of action which formal agreements between unions and employers imposed. Thus, during the pre-war 'Labour Unrest' much of the strike action that took place was local, unofficial and hostile to the existing official leadership. This was especially evident in the 1910 South Wales miners' and 1911 national waterside and railwaymen's strikes over pay and conditions, the 1913 railway strike action taken in support of the Dublin lockout, and the 1914 London building workers' reaction to the employers' lock-out. Indeed, what most disturbed employers about the unrest was the failure of union officials to channel

industrial grievances through the increasingly acceptable institutions of collective bargaining and conciliation.

The government's leading advisers on industrial relations, including George Askwith (the Board of Trade's chief industrial commissioner), warned in 1909 that the older generation of conciliatory union leaders were rapidly losing their authority to younger, more militant men. They suggested the spirit of compromise fostered within collective-bargaining mechanisms was being challenged by unofficial action which transcended the defensive mentality associated with earlier forms of British trade-unionism. 'Official leaders could not maintain their authority. Often there was more difference between the men and their leaders than between the latter and the employers'.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, Austen Chamberlain, a Conservative Party leader, told the House of Commons on 16 August 1911 when industrial turmoil was at its height: 'I think the most prominent feature of the present unrest is the extent to which agreements made under the arbitration of the Board of Trade have failed to obtain acceptance by the men after their leaders have signed them'.<sup>57</sup> Revolutionary syndicalism was to provide an organised expression for this rank-and-file revolt.<sup>58</sup>

Then, during the First World War, the attempt by union leaders to secure industrial peace by introducing 'dilution of labour', combined with concerns over wages and conditions, radicalised many workers and was fiercely resisted. In the South Wales and Scottish coalfields Miners' Reform Committees developed, and on the railways unofficial 'vigilance' committees became of growing importance. In engineering, where the production of vital munitions gave workers real bargaining power, a militant Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committee Movement arose in a number of industrial centres, including the

Clyde, Sheffield and elsewhere.<sup>59</sup> This was a rank-and-file movement that brought together shopfloor representatives from different workplaces and unions to co-ordinate their struggles, and at its height was able to launch major strikes against dilution and the conscription of skilled labour, the largest of which in 1917 involved 200,000 engineers working in 48 towns. Operating both *within* and *outside* official union structures it concentrated on developing rank-and-file organisations capable of fighting independently of the trade union bureaucracy. As the Clyde Workers' Committee declared in 1915: 'We will support the officials just so long as they rightly represent the workers, but will act independently immediately they misrepresent them'.

Likewise in 1919-20 what worried politicians most was the near total loss of control by union bureaucrats over their members. Thus *The Times* (28 January 1919) commented on the fact that many strikes were unauthorised by the governing bodies of the union, and in some cases were emphatically repudiated, with the instigators of the revolts having almost 'as bitter a distrust and hatred of those trade union officials as they have of the "bosses" or the Government'. Although the government tried to bolster the authority of trade union leaders it was a difficult task. As a memo to the Prime Minister Lloyd George pointed out: 'The Government's decision to stand by the accredited leaders is the only possible policy, but it does not get over the fact that the leaders no longer represent the more active and agitating minds in the labour movement'.<sup>60</sup> It was only with the demise of such independent shop-floor organisation in the 1920s, amidst the changed economic climate of high unemployment and employers' lock-outs, that the previous rank-and-file self-assertiveness was checked, leading to a new relationship of dependence on the union officials. Such bureaucratic consolidation involved not only individual unions but also the central

organisation of the trade union movement, with the replacement in 1921 of the TUC's Parliamentary Committee by a General Council which increasingly played the role of mediator between individual unions and the government in some of the post-war disputes that followed. As a consequence, the role of the 'union bureaucracy' became even more central to industrial relations than in any other period of British labour history (Hyman, 1972: 16-17).<sup>61</sup>

The implication of such an overview is that the crucial distinction which needs to be drawn is not so much that between *the unions and workers*, as Friedman emphasises, as the dichotomy *within trade unions between the union bureaucracy and the rank-and-file*. It underlines the extent to which strong rank-and-file organisations within the unions are crucial to building effective resistance inside the working class movement. For example, during an upturn in the level of workers' militancy in Britain in the early late 1960s and early 1970s, strong independent workplace union organisations, often in the form of the shop stewards' system of lay representation of rank-and-file members, acted as an important counteracting tendency against the bureaucratisation and accommodation of official union leaderships.<sup>62</sup> While they were not immune from similar pressures towards accommodation and bureaucracy affecting full-time union officials, and their confidence to organise independently of officials from below was considerably undermined in the wake of the massive strike defeats that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, shop stewards and other lay workplace union reps have generally continued to remain *qualitatively different* from officials in their potential responsiveness to rank-and-file pressure.<sup>63</sup>

### **Left-Wing Political Intervention**

The final aspect of Friedman's analysis I want to pick up on is the insufficient attention given to the important role often played during strike waves by *left-wing political forces* within trade unions. It is true he stresses the importance of what unions do themselves, as opposed to broader structural features, affecting their ability to increase membership levels, and he also acknowledges the crucial role that activist organisers have played in every major union-organising drive (p. 59). But Friedman devotes comparatively little attention to the *political* character of the leadership of the mass strikes,<sup>64</sup> despite the fact that in the UK in the period 1889-1920 a crucial political ingredient of the strikes and unionisation drive was the role of left-wing socialists and revolutionary syndicalists who, despite forming only a small minority of union activists, were able to extend struggles beyond the issues espoused by the trade union officials.

The 'New Unionism' was effectively led by socialists, members of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF). This was a small organisation of perhaps no more than 10,000 at its height, although it attracted a huge turnover of many tens of thousands of members. Even though it was a propaganda party, whose leader denounced strikes as a 'a waste of energy', it was also a respected organisation in working class districts and many SDF activists played leadership roles in union struggles, notably in the match girls', gas workers', and dockers' strikers, as well as in the leadership of strikes by print workers, shoemakers and London carpenters. They included people like Annie Besant (journalist), William Morris (writer and artist), Eleanor Marx (Karl Marx's youngest daughter, who was a member of the national committee of the gas workers' union and acted as secretary of the London dockers' strike committee), Edward Aveling (Eleanor Marx's husband), Will Thorne (leader of the gas workers' union), Ben Tillett (leader of the dockers' union), John Burns (also led the dockers'

strike), and Tom Mann (engineering union leader, president of the gasworkers' union). They had been putting socialist arguments for years and in the period 1889-92 suddenly found themselves leading tens of thousands of workers in struggle. Such socialists fed, accommodated and deployed pickets, organised processions, ran offices, collected money, spoke on street corners and relayed the strikers' story through their papers and leaflets. One of the reasons for the socialists' success in the 'New Unionism' was that they filled the vacuum where trade unions were weak or non-existent (a vacuum partly caused because of the close relationship that existed between the entrenched trade union old guard and the Liberal Party), enabling them to display their energy, enthusiasm and ability to identify with workers' needs.<sup>65</sup>

Similarly the organisers of the strike waves of 1910-13 and 1919-20 in a number of important sectors were inspired by revolutionary syndicalist and socialist ideas and organisation.<sup>66</sup> Thus, with its emphasis on 'direct action' that bypassed the orthodox bargaining machinery and 'class collaboration' of official labour leaders, the syndicalist message of Tom Mann's Industrial Syndicalist Education League fell on fertile ground as rank-and-file dissatisfaction led to an increasing incidence of unofficial strikes and activity. As with their counterparts elsewhere, British syndicalists believed the existing unions could be transformed into militant organizations dedicated to fighting for the entire working class, with the objective of overthrowing capitalism and establishing a new society. In looking to mobilize the power of the working class through the trade unions, they advocated their reconstruction on a class and revolutionary basis; existing unions were 'too sectional in their structure, too collaborationist in their policy and too oligarchic in their government to act as agencies of revolutionary transition'.<sup>67</sup>

The pre-war syndicalists highlighted the existence of a conservative social stratum of full-time union officials and the fundamental conflict of interest between the interests of this bureaucracy and rank-and-file workers. They criticised the way in which union officials acted as a brake on workers' struggles, 'betrayed' their members in strikes and prevented a decisive challenge to the employers and the capitalist class. They accused union officials of subordinating the interests of the wider working class to organised craft or sectional interests within it. They drew attention to the collaborationist logic of formalised collective bargaining which encouraged union officials to concentrate on improving workers' material conditions within the framework of capitalist society, rather than to seeking to transform society through revolution and thereby undermining their *raison d'être*.<sup>68</sup> A connection was made between the structural features of trade-union consolidation (for example, recognition by employers and the state, achievement of social prestige, and acquisition of organisational assets) and the adoption of conciliatory and bureaucratic policies. Viewing union officials as being completely unrepresentative, the syndicalists also drew attention to the personal and organisational means by which they attempted to maintain their power over rank-and-file members.<sup>69</sup>

Yet although they believed that the existing unions were bogged down by years of conciliation and bureaucratic domination, the syndicalists also proposed practical measures, notably mass action and control from below, to overcome the official stranglehold. In the process, they were confident it would be possible to transform the structures and procedures of union organisation (towards industrial unionism) as a means to wrest effective control away from bureaucratic officialdom and encourage unions to adopt revolutionary objectives. This pre-war syndicalist tradition was to remain highly influential

inside the wartime engineering Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committee movement, as well as during the post-war labour militancy of 1919–21, albeit no longer manifest within formal syndicalist organisation. Significantly the shop stewards' leaders developed the critique of union officialdom that had been made a few years earlier in the pamphlet *The Miners' Next Step*, published by the Unofficial Reform Committee within the South Wales Miners Federation in 1912. This advocated the theory of independent rank-and-file organisation as an effective counter to the bureaucratisation of trade-unionism. The most sophisticated exposition of this theory was contained in J.T. Murphy's pamphlet, *The Workers' Committee* which advocated the development within official structures of rank-and-file organisations that were capable of fighting independently of the bureaucracy if necessary; a rank-and-file movement that walked on two legs, official and unofficial. Although often ignored by many historians, including Friedman, the British syndicalist tradition not only made a pioneering attempt to understand the problem of union officialdom, but also to devise the practical means of overcoming its influence. Arguably, almost a century later, this remains a useful guide to both contemporary analysis and practice.<sup>70</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the transformation of the militant new unions of the late 1890s into the bureaucratic and more conciliatory general unions of the 1920s illustrates in sharp relief the way in which, because of their very function of negotiation and accommodation with capitalism, the anti-capitalist and revolutionary potential of trade unionism can be severely constrained. As Hyman explained, trade unions operate in an environment of hostile forces which condition and distort their character and dynamics. Bureaucracy, collaboration,



sectionalism and economism are all reflections of powerful and often overwhelming tendencies, albeit they are not uncontradictory and irresistible forces as Friedman's account suggests: 'Trade unions are at one and the same time part of the problem and part of the solution, a form of resistance to capitalism and a form of integration within capitalism'.<sup>71</sup> The limits to what unions can achieve are set by the basic realities of the capitalism system, and the history of British trade unionism during the period surveyed (as elsewhere and within other time frames) points to their inbuilt limitations.

But as White<sup>72</sup> has argued, notwithstanding the fact that the pressures upon unions towards moderation, integration and the 'management of discontent' are immense and probably permanent, this does not prove the validity of the 'Iron Law of Oligarchy'. On the contrary, countervailing responses, such as syndicalism, suggest 'an equally tough and nervy Law of Working Class Democracy'. While trade union bureaucracies (and social-democratic parties) are essential shock-absorbers for capitalism and its states, because of their capacity to smooth out and contain opposition, at various times different balances are struck between conflict and accommodation in trade unionism and workers' action and consciousness, and given that the seedbed of class conflict is re-sown and re-fertilised by the everyday experience of exploitation, the containment of workers' and trade union resistance to capitalism is anything but a simple and automatic process, even in quiet times.<sup>73</sup>

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Friedman, *Reigniting the Labor Movement*.

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<sup>2</sup> Hobsbawm, 'General Labour Unions'; Shorter and Tilly, *Strikes in France*; Cronin, *Industrial Conflict in Modern Britain*; Tarrow, *Power in Movement*; Kelly, *Trade Unions and Socialist Politics*; Clawson, *The Next Upsurge*.

<sup>3</sup> Clegg et al, *History of British Trade Unionism*, 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> Marx and Engels, *Articles on Britain*, 392.

<sup>5</sup> Cronin, *Industrial Conflict in Modern Britain*, 49-50.

<sup>6</sup> Raw, *Striking a Light*.

<sup>7</sup> Knapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 270.

<sup>8</sup> Knapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 382.

<sup>9</sup> McCarthy, *The Great Dock Strike 1889*.

<sup>10</sup> Hinton, *Labour and Socialism*, 49.

<sup>11</sup> Pelling, *History of British Trade Unionism*.

<sup>12</sup> Bambery, 'Marx and Engels and the Unions', 89.

<sup>13</sup> Hyman, 'Mass Organisation and Militancy', 251-3.

<sup>14</sup> Laybourn, *History of British Trade Unionism*, 75.

<sup>15</sup> Hinton, *Labour and Socialism*, 46.

<sup>16</sup> Hunt, *British Labour History*, 311.

<sup>17</sup> White, '1910-1914 Reconsidered', 80.

<sup>18</sup> Phelps Brown, *Growth of British Industrial Relations*, 229-34.

<sup>19</sup> Kelly, *Rethinking Industrial Relations*, 101.

<sup>20</sup> Hyman, 'Mass Organisation and Militancy', 258.

<sup>21</sup> Hyman, 'Mass Organisation and Militancy', 262.

<sup>22</sup> Knowles, *Strikes*, 177.

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- <sup>23</sup> Gard, *British Trade Unions*.
- <sup>24</sup> Smith, 'Years of Revolt', 19.
- <sup>25</sup> Cockburn, 30.
- <sup>26</sup> Postgate, *Builders' History*, 435-5.
- <sup>27</sup> Fox Piven, 'Comments', 438.
- <sup>28</sup> Herberg, *Bureaucracy and Democracy*; Hyman, *Understanding European Trade Unionism*; Cohen, *Ramparts of Resistance*.
- <sup>29</sup> Hyman, *Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism*.
- <sup>30</sup> Darlington, *Dynamics of Workplace Unionism*, 26-41.
- <sup>31</sup> Engels, *Condition of the Working Class*, 251.
- <sup>32</sup> Marx, 'Wages, Price and Profit', 225.
- <sup>33</sup> Zoll, *Der Doppelcharakter*.
- <sup>34</sup> Hyman, *Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism*.
- <sup>35</sup> Cliff and Gluckstein, *Marxism and the Trade Unions*, 26-34; Kelly, *Trade Unions and Socialist Politics*, 11.
- <sup>36</sup> Hyman, *Understanding European Trade Unionism*, 18.
- <sup>37</sup> Collomp, 'Labor's Dilemma', 441.
- <sup>38</sup> Friedman, 'What Would a Reignited Labor Movement Look Like?', 460.
- <sup>39</sup> *ibid*, 460-1.
- <sup>40</sup> Gramsci, *Selections*, 265.
- <sup>41</sup> Cronin, *Industrial Conflict*, 194-5.
- <sup>42</sup> Webb and Webb, *History of British Trade Unionism*.
- <sup>43</sup> *ibid*, 204.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 469-70.

<sup>45</sup> Hyman, 'Communist Industrial Policy', 15; 'Rank-and-File Movements', 130.

<sup>46</sup> Webb and Webb, *History of British Trade Unionism*, 486; 586.

<sup>47</sup> Clegg, et al, *History of British Trade Unionism*, 478.

<sup>48</sup> Burgess, *Origins of British Industrial Relations*, 229-34; Hyman, 'Birth of the Trade Union Bureaucracy', 23-4.

<sup>49</sup> Hyman, 'Mass Organisation and Militancy', 258.

<sup>50</sup> Burgess, *Origins of British Industrial Relations*, 229-34.

<sup>51</sup> Cliff and Gluckstein, *Marxism and the Trade Unions*, 27-8.

<sup>52</sup> Anderson, 'Limits and Possibilities of Trade Union Action', 277.

<sup>53</sup> McIlroy, *Trade Unions in Britain Today*, 145.

<sup>54</sup> Harrison, *Before the Socialists*, 42.

<sup>55</sup> Halevy, *History of the English People*, 446-7.

<sup>56</sup> Askwith, *Industrial Problems and Disputes*, 177.

<sup>57</sup> Rubenstein, 'Trade Unions, Politicians and Public Opinion', 53.

<sup>58</sup> Holton, *British Syndicalism*; Darlington, *Radical Unionism*.

<sup>59</sup> Hinton, *First Shop Stewards' Movement*.

<sup>60</sup> Jones, *Whitehall Diary*, 73.

<sup>61</sup> Hyman, 'Communist Industrial Policy', 16-17.

<sup>62</sup> Darlington and Lyddon, *Glorious Summer*.

<sup>63</sup> Darlington, 'State of Workplace Organisation'; Darlington and Upchurch, 'Reappraisal of Rank-and-File/Bureaucracy'.

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<sup>64</sup> Hanagan, 'What Does a Labor-Union Leadership Do When it Leads?,' 459.

<sup>65</sup> Charlton, '*It Just Went Like Tinder*', 75-6.

<sup>66</sup> Holton, *British Syndicalism*; Darlington, *Radical Unionism*.

<sup>67</sup> Hinton, *First Shop Stewards' Movement*, 91.

<sup>68</sup> Michels, *Political Parties*; Gramsci, *Selections*; Luxemburg, *Mass Strike*.

<sup>69</sup> Darlington, 'British Syndicalism and Trade Union Officialdom', 117-8.

<sup>70</sup> Darlington, *Political Trajectory of JT Murphy and Radical Unionism*.

<sup>71</sup> Hyman, 'Class Struggle and the Trade Union Movement', 250-1.

<sup>72</sup> White, '1910-1914 Reconsidered', 90.

<sup>73</sup> Barker, 'Perspectives', 222.

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