

Trade Unions: Innovative Strategies

I. Introduction

The reemphasis in unionism or particularly workers or trade union on organizing provides a distinctive opportunity to carry out a very important investigation of which strategies in organizing are most effective in swiftly and significantly repealing the dwindling membership and power of trade unions. Up till now, there is still a dearth of academic research that trade unions could consult or make use of to guide them in their attempts to achieve effective and successful outcomes (Martin et al. 1999). Through dramatically enriching this area of research and through motivating research of a fine quality in both processes and relevance, this paper presents union leaders with analysis and information to somehow assist them in their present organizing attempts, simultaneously, constructs the groundwork for future research.

European trade union leaders, along with their 'London Declaration', studied the financial crisis and appeal for fair dealing and rigorous action. Practical suggestions were as well made to prevent this situation from happening again: successful measures should be taken to guarantee that the economy carries on enjoying capital investments, also to put a stop to disgraceful financial forecast. The addition of public funds into the economy should correspond to public regulation, whereas the control of financial markets at global and European levels should be enhanced (Satre 2005, 804).

This paper's objective is merely a wake up call. While trade unions determinedly expand their organizing attempts and ideas, there remains a noticeable need for constant research on effective strategies and techniques.

Trade Unions: Innovative Strategies

II. Transformations in the economic, political and social context of the employment relationship and trade unionism

It is essential to acknowledge nowadays that organizing has turned out to be increasingly complex. Under the pressing burden of feeble and incompetently enforced labour laws, aggressive employers harbouring antiunion sentiments, and a progressively intimidating political and economic atmosphere, it is not fascinating that hardly any workers surmount the threats, anxieties and hindrances and continue to in fact organize a union and negotiate an initial agreement. Problems are only worsened when labor leaders are informed repeatedly by their believed allies in government and the academe that workers are not interested anymore in unions but perceive a more workable and less intimidating option in management-offered participation activities.

Confronted with an increasingly unfriendly climate, the labour movement has started to concentrate its energy on the single component of the organizing mechanism that it has power over, union strategies and techniques.

This part focuses on the means by which workers, whether unionized or non-unionized, are adequately represented at work, and by which they gain differing extents of voice in the decision making of the top management or employers. Apart from collective bargaining exercised by trade unions, it emphasizes the means of information dissemination and collaborative consultation contained within an employment relationship. One premise is that an interpretation of the interaction of these systems of representation is fundamental for a positive reception of the current and potentially future trends of worker representation in the United Kingdom. In particular, it proposes

Trade Unions: Innovative Strategies

that types of representation aside from collective bargaining may prospectively establish more mainstream voice systems, with employers and employees alike, than what they actually have previously (Wigley 2002).

In the past, employers single-handedly made majority of decisions on issue regarding work. In a number of circumstances, typically job-related matters, expert or strategically positioned employees could single-handedly control particular features of their working lifestyles. From the latter part of the nineteenth century up until the present, collective bargaining steadily developed. In a number of incidences, to defend against collective bargaining, a few employers put up collaborative consultative agreements of different forms. Though, unions were against or doubtful of consultative bodies, which they regarded as likely to weaken their appeal to employees and their capability to stand for members (Wigley 2002, 57).

Since the 1970s, various forces influenced representation in Britain. Primarily, government intervention gradually improved. Some of this was at first supplementary to collective bargaining, such as the prerequisites for union acknowledgment and for information revelation opened up in the 1970s. A number of directed forms of representation regarding particular matters, such as health and security and, subsequent to the membership to the European Union, collective idleness and shifting of tasks. These mechanisms originally provided legal precedence to union representatives, though in their nonappearance permitted for non-union representation. Second, both the political and legal environment that preferred unions transformed with the regime of the Thatcher administration in 1979 (Martin 1999). Through the following years, exemptions were taken out and constraints were given on unions and their

Trade Unions: Innovative Strategies

programmes for collective bargaining. Also, union membership and the scope or reach of collective bargaining started to decline. Explanations for this are placed on the increasingly antagonistic legal and political climate (Martin 1999, 104).

Since the 1980s, employers progressively searched for alternative voice systems, on the basis partly of indirect representation through collaborative consultation, though more on direct interaction, communication and involvement through direct workforce conventions, briefing teams and problem-solving divisions. In these scenarios, unions confronted a problem regarding approval of new types of consultation instituted by employers or established under the directives of the European Union. Gradually and irregularly, they started to merge themselves to events-motivated and multi-channel embodiment. Nevertheless, employment relationship and unionism transformation remains fragmentary (Taylor 2004).

III. Trade Union Renewal Strategies

It is no twist of fate that several of the innovative frameworks have been initiated in the Anglo-Saxon nations wherein anti-union government regulations have been primarily rigorous. As stated by an international assessment, unions will only transform if they sense a pressing need to do so. Membership decline may not be adequate to pose a feeling of exigency, as long as the labour movement remains to have an institutional status to anchor itself into. Only if that is removed is it probable that genuine transformation will take place.

Moreover, researchers have discovered it takes a particular kind of leaders who are decisively ready and trained to transform and adapt to innovative strategies. In the

Trade Unions: Innovative Strategies

United States, scholars have discovered that union leaders with a considerable experience in social movement are priceless. In Australia and the United Kingdom, union leaders have likewise been discovered to be an important element of organizational transformation in unions. However, other has as well discovered that while leadership is very important, it is not enough; member recognition, involvement and concern in the transformation process are essential for long-term effective outcomes (Allen 1954).

Whereas external developments may wield a remarkable persuasion on trade union renewal, internal forces fulfil vital role as well. Successful improvements frequently originate from an integration of mass mobilization and top-down approach. Organizing workers is very important in establishing a status of influence and power, but the idealized idea that innovations come out naturally from below does not appear to be relevant to trade unions. As in majority of large organizations, there is typically opposition to change. It requires top-down approach to sever that resistance. A great example is the campaign by the Justice for Janitors, which was compelled on a number of locals by the national union (Wigler 2002).

Mobilizing campaigns may at times take more than ten years before paying off with regard to enhanced competitive or strategic leverage. This waiting time may place union leaders in an insecure position. They have to persuade union personnel and members to devote in adjustments, even if the fruits may be time-consuming in realization (Minkin 1991).

Trade Unions: Innovative Strategies

Meanwhile, adjustment of trade union to a globalized economy is as well problematic and still commonly portrayed as work-in-progress. However, as a relevant compendium of articles makes exceptionally definite, there are a number of important developments occurring, with regard to theory and practice alike (Hogan 2007).

A primary dilemma for trade unions in mobilizing, it is maintained, is the indecisive character of multinational venture, equipped to transfer evidently at will to new locations providing lower overheads or government financial supports. Moreover, related to this, as is commonly known, migrant workers are in general at threat of confronting meagre employment conditions and oppression at work; in a number of instances, the existence of unorganized overseas workers in a nation's labour force can as well put negative complexities on the state of affairs enjoyed by domestic employees (Martin et al. 1999).

Hence, if the demand for greater transnational alliances through unions is one obvious solution to these global difficulties, another persistent solution is the necessity for unions to expand to establish collaborations with other organizations, particularly NGOs. There has been an explosion of political spaces in which the concerns of labour extend beyond the other movements and with support organizations interested with labour laws and rights and improvement. One strategy, therefore, is for unions to address globalization through designing mechanisms and working lifestyles which motivate workers and union members (Martin et al. 1999, 112).

Aside from practical justifications for vigorously involving members, this as well contributes to the liberating potentials of the trade union. A union that put emphasis on

Trade Unions: Innovative Strategies

offering professional services, in opposite, can achieve the contrary: this can generate a sentiment of reliance and helplessness among members. This negative outcome increase when all difficulties are understood as individual dilemmas, and when they are addressed through prolonged legal procedures (Minkin 1991).

Indeed, organizing is a systematic framework. Primary components involve determining campaign matters; determining and developing leaders and plotting the workplace. Campaign issues must address four principles. They should be popularly felt and not merely an individual dilemma; profoundly sensed; winnable and evident. Effective open communication should be practiced and significant emphasis should be placed on posing questions in order that relevant issues will be identified.

The period before bargaining a collective agreement may present opportunities for organizing workers. Nonetheless, mobilizing campaign should not be restricted to periods of collective bargaining. Due to the fact that organizing campaigns primarily depend on lay militants, leaders who are able to manage the campaign at the place of work have to be recognized. Leaders do not have to be the workers with the most significant say in the campaign; they are the individuals who are relied upon by their collaborators. Open communication and one to one conversations are employed to motivate future leaders to participate. Prospective leaders will be examined through giving them negligible duties, for instance to contact an associate regarding the campaign, and determining whether they can be trusted to do as they have assured them. Assemblies of leaders will compose the organizing bodies which are to develop into more or less self-sustaining committees (Satre 2005).

Trade Unions: Innovative Strategies

Organizing is apparently not an objective in itself, but as a way to build power and get hold of outcomes from employers. One means of putting strain on employers is the strike, though other mechanisms are employed too, frequently in combination (Colgan et al. 2002).

IV. Marx and Trade Unionism

The comprehensive literature on the theories of worker organization emphasizes the philosophy that a society regulated by organized workers is more favourable than the structure of dominance by owners or according to Marx, the bourgeoisie. For Karl Marx, the existence of trade unions is not merely to unite workers for everyday struggles and global collaboration. The trade unions, apparently, attained key importance since they embodied the direct class movement of the working class or the proletariats. The genuine objective was to collaborate for the political confederacy of the global proletariat movement in the effort to attain social emancipation, political association of the working class (Lapides 1987).

Capital is orientated towards a social force, whereas the proletariat has merely to dispose of his labour. The agreement between capital and labour can hence never be perceived on unbiased regard, just even in the logic of a society which puts the ownership of the physical or material resources of human existence and labour on one side and the important productive efforts on the other side. The single social force of the proletariat is their population; the power of numbers, though harmed by disorganization. The disorganization of the proletariats is generated and enabled by their indispensable competition among themselves. Trade unions initially emerged from the natural efforts

Trade Unions: Innovative Strategies

of the proletariats at eliminating or at least monitoring that competition, so as to prevail over such conditions of agreement as might elevate them barely above the circumstances of slaves. However, too entirely inclined upon the domestic and abrupt resistance with capital, the Trade Unions have not yet completely grasp their rule in acting in opposition to the structure of wages for slavery (Lapides 1987, 46).

According to Karl Marx, aside from the original objective of trade unions, they should now learn to take action intentionally as organizing catalysts of the working class in the wider concern of its absolute emancipation. They should assist every political and social movement that is following that path. Regarding themselves and taking response as the defenders and representatives of the entire working class, they should not fail to sign up the non-society people into their status. They should look vigilantly after the concerns of the badly paid proletariats, such as farmers or agricultural workers, considered defenceless and powerless by special conditions (Lapides 1987, 47). They should persuade the world that their attempts, far from being limited and self-centred, intended at the liberation of the underprivileged millions.

V. Conclusions

As trade unions in majority of Western nations confront critical challenges, there is as well a massive variety of new initiatives to address effectively these challenges. These new initiatives have not yet shifted the wave for the union movement in general. However, a number of prominent successes have been realized by individual unions and by domestic alliances. Nowadays, it is hard to say what type of paradigm will be effective under a particular scenario. It remains an issue of trial and error. In particular,

Trade Unions: Innovative Strategies

there do appear a number of common features that can be determined in several effective initiatives.

Several initiatives put emphasis on organizing new organizations, which are poorly represented among the membership of the union such as the young generation, ethnic groups, and employees in the developing service industries. Organizing these organizations is fundamental if the trade union movement is to hang about as one of the foremost social players in the future.

New initiatives have to be grassroots in approach so as to have genuine grassroots advocacy and to mirror the issue that are of great interest to the public. Nevertheless, they as well necessitate a well-built dedication from the top, so as to surmount resistance to change and to possess the extent of harmony and coordination that is required to be able to assume grand corporations and to have a say on government regulations.

At the domestic level, unions establish community advocacy and validate innovative frameworks. Simultaneously, global sets of arrangement are imperative to address the outcomes of a globalizing economy.

A number of important campaigns have waited more than ten years before reaping the benefits. It is imperative to persuade union members and personnel of the essentiality of investing quality time and resources in continuing goals.

Cooperation and working together with employers and with the political administration generate important outcomes, given that unions do so from a status of force and rigorously integrate their membership in their activities.

Trade Unions: Innovative Strategies

In several nations, unions have to deal with a political environment that is antagonistic to workers and their groups or organizations. Some unions have effectively established specialist or professional groups and collaborated with research institutes to recover the initiative and amass support for other economic and social ideas.

References

Allen, V. (1954), *Power in Trade Unions: A Study of Their Organization in Great Britain*. London: Longmans, Green.

Blyton, P. and Turnbull, P. (2004), *The Dynamics of Employee Relations*, Macmillan, see chapter 3. Voyager, Electronic Resource.

Colgan, F. et al. (2002), *Gender, Diversity and Trade Unions: International Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Heery, E. (2005), *Trade Unionism under New Labour*, The Shirley Lerner Memorial Lecture 2005, Manchester Industrial Relations Society. See studynet.

Hendy, J. and Gall, G. (2006), 'Workers' Rights Today and the Trade Union Freedom Bill', in K. D. Ewing (ed.), *The Right to Strike: From the Trade Disputes Act 1906 to a Trade Union Freedom Bill*, Liverpool: The Institute of Employment Rights. See studynet.

Hogan, J. (2007), Unionism in Clegg, S. & Bailey, J. (Eds.) *International Encyclopedia of Organization Studies*, Sage. See studynet.

Hollinshead, G., Nicholls, P. and Tailby, S. (1999), *Employee Relations*, See chapters 2 and 5. Voyager, Electronic Resource.

Trade Unions: Innovative Strategies

Kersley, B. et al. (2004), *Inside the Workplace*, First Findings from the 2004 Workplace Employment Relations Survey, WERS. See studynet.

Lapides, K. (1987), *Marx and Engels on the Trade Unions*. New York: Praeger.

Martin, A. et al. (1999), *The Brave New World of European Labor: European Trade Unions*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Minkin, L. (1991), *The Contentious Alliance: Trade Unions and the Labour Party*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University.

Nolan, P. (2004), *Back to the Future of Work*, ESRC Future of Work Research Programme. See studynet.

Satre, L. (2005), United We Stand: A History of Britain's Trade Unions. *The Historian* , 803+.

Taylor, R. (2004), *Britain's World of Work – Myths and Realities*, ESRC Future of Work Commentary Series, 3. See studynet.

Wigley, C. (2002), *British Trade Unions since 1933*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.