

OUR HISTORY

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Rank and File Movements In Building 1910-1920



by PETER LATHAM

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The next issue will be a study by Michael Power of the struggle against fascism and war in Britain 1931-39.

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The front cover reproduces the masthead of the *New Builders Leader*, a successor to the rank and file papers of the 1910s and one in which Frank Jackson also played a leading role.

PREFACE

IN INTRODUCING this history of an episode in the development of trade unionism in the building industry, two points strike me.

The first is the appropriateness of this publication in the light of the present great debate on the unity of the working people. This article shows clearly how splits and divisions hold back advancement in the great struggle for a better life.

The other point I would like to raise derives from an axiom of Karl Marx in his preface to **The Critique of Political Economy**. He wrote 'the mode of production in material life determines the social, political and intellectual life processes'. How profound this is!

I was apprenticed as a carpenter and joiner in 1902. I broke my apprenticeship in 1906, and took on my first job for a contractor building a terrance row of some twenty houses. I had to hire a pony cart to carry my box of tools to the site, and there found some fourteen carpenters at work under the spread of a large canvas tarpaulin making frames for doors and windows, morticing and trimming joints. The foreman was busy with a stack of drawings of stairs, sashes, doors and cupboards, all to be made on the job, with one machine, a circular saw powered by a gas engine.

By the time of this story of struggle for unity in the industry at the beginning of the 20th century, concrete and steel-frame building had created a new industry with new skills. Machines were taking over from crafts in sashes, doors, stairs. New materials were taking over from crafts in sashes, doors, stairs

were just coming into play like copper, plastics, stick and rag plaster which demanded for the first time a trade union with its own education to train its members in the mysteries of these materials. The old craft unions, with their vested interests in benefits-sick, tool, unemployment and pension-together with officials in well-paid jobs and a general aim of collaboration with the boss, resisted all attempts to enrol these new skills into their unions.

Hence this story about those of us who saw a way to a better life by bringing the old and the new into one united organisation. It has taken over seventy years of struggle to achieve this in the industry. The next step is to obtain a broad unity embracing both industrial and political activities.

As our story shows, the mode of production will in due course produce those factors needed to bring this into being, and to obtain that age-old desire, the end of exploitation of man by man, the creation of a new order in which the slogan shall be 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.'

FRANK JACKSON
August 1977

ABBREVIATIONS

ASC&J	—	Amalgamated society of Carpenters and Joiners
ASSM	—	Aircraft Shop Stewards' Movement
ASW	-	Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers
AUBTW	-	Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers
BSP	-	British Socialist Party
BWIU	-	Building Workers' Industrial Union
CPGB	-	Communist Party of Great Britain
EC	-	Executive Council
LBIF	—	London Building Industries Federation
LCC	-	London County Council
LMBA	—	London Master Builders' Association
NABTC	-	National Association Building Trades Council
NFBTE	-	National Federation of Building Trade Employers
NFBTO	-	National Federation of Building Trade Operatives
NW&CC	-	National Wages and Conditions Council
OBS	-	Operative Bricklayers' Society
UCATT	-	Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians
TUC	-	Trades Union Congress.
WRA	-	Working Rule Agreement

RANK-AND-FILE MOVEMENTS IN BUILDING 1910-1920

Peter Latham

"The past has seen various forms of Left expression within the trade unions. The official machine has frequently been challenged by unofficial movements. The term "unofficial" is usually associated with the Left viewpoint. Strictly speaking, this is not accurate, because many officials, and some unions as a whole, take the Left viewpoint, while lay members support the Right. But an "unofficial" movement is the traditional way in which the advanced membership, and sometimes the majority, protest against the refusal of the officials to meet their wishes. Unofficial movements are a long-standing feature of British trade union life, traditionally arising around practical issues rather than on theoretical differences, and growing in particular unions rather than throughout the movement (John Mahon, **Trade Unionism**, 1938)¹."

Such movements, often condemned as "unofficial", perform a most useful function within the trade union movement at times when the gulf separating the official leadership from the ordinary members has become so great and the need for concerted action so urgent that unless such a movement is developed the consequences can be disastrous (Jim Arnison, **The Shrewsbury Three**, 1974, referring to the present Building Workers' Charter Movement launched at a conference in Manchester on April 25, 1970)²."

INTRODUCTION

This study concentrates on rank-and-file movements in building in the period 1910—1920—mainly in the London region. It therefore amplifies the above **general** statements of John Mahon and Jim Arnison and should be of interest to militants in the industry today as well as historians. For the period 1910-20 saw the **second abortive attempt at industrial syndicalism by building workers**.³ Thus there is a need to show how and why communism displaced syndicalism as the basic mediating ideological influence upon militants in specific industries.⁴ Moreover, as E J Hobsbawm says of trade union historiography: 'A few works of scholarship, like R W Postgate's **Builders' History**..... stand out among a mass of jubilee and souvenir volumes or pamphlets, mainly written by elderly officials or sympathetic publicists with a greater sense of union piety and retrospective self-satisfaction than scholarly competence or critical sense'.⁵ Yet even 'useful histories' such as Postgate's are 'now rather ancient ones'.⁶ And the latter-to some extent-exhibits the defects of 'official' trade union histories which ignore or de-emphasise rank-and-file activities.⁷ Hence, though this study benefits from existing accounts it aims to provide fresh insights into a decisive period of British labour history by the use of unpublished rank-and-file primary documents.⁸

2. THE LOCATION OF BUILDING IN THE LARGER SOCIAL FORMATION

Between 1900 and 1913 the growth of industrial output was well under 2% per annum.⁹ In 1870 Britain produced 32% of the world output of manufactured goods but the proportion had fallen to only 14% by 1913.¹⁰ This growing international competition 'acted as an externally imposed constraint upon any given wage negotiation' and employer resistance to claims 'varied with the ability of their foreign competitors to undersell'.¹¹ Overseas investment, moreover, increased from an average of under £50 millions per annum for 1901-1905 to £200 millions by 1911.¹² Indeed from 1907 annual investment abroad exceeded the total net investment at home.¹³ Thus: 'for the whole of the period 1902-12, real wages were well below the levels reached in 1899-1901, and in some years, especially 1909-11, they were less than 90% of the earlier figures'.¹⁴ The fall in real wages, therefore, was one of the causes of the general industrial militancy and an influence on nearly all the struggles of the period.

Such broad economic influences acted as a crucial constraint on building activity. For building¹⁵ was to be a much more important sector of the economy between the wars than before 1914: from 1870-79 building accounted for 38% of gross domestic capital formation but only 29.5% of GDCF from 1905-14.¹⁶ Conversely, from 1920-28 building investment ranged from 37.7%¹⁷ to 57.6% of total GDCF.¹⁸

Reinforced concrete was first used to construct a wharf near Southampton in 1899. The first steel framed building-the Ritz Hotel, London, started in 1904-had all sign of the frame concealed by external masonry. Not until 1907 was a factory completed in Sheffield 'demonstrating the advantages of the frame system in minimising masonry work'.¹⁹ Yet Bowley's management orientation misses the site reality articulated in a 1912 lecture syllabus on 'Industrial Unionism' issued by the OBS Consolidation Committee. These notes included among the factors making for lower wages and increased profits:

1. Development of Machinery: Such as Mortising and Moulding Machines, Diamond Cutters, Scotch Cranes, Concrete Mixers, etc.
2. Development of New Material: Such as Steel Construction, Concrete Casing with Asphalt Roofing, Partition Slabs cast with Finished Face, etc.²⁰

Moreover, as Frank Jackson says:

The application of Concrete **created** new skills—displacing old skills, creating **new-without** a corresponding organisation in the trade union field for them to fit into. As concrete took hold the need for specialists became chronic and extra higher wages became an attraction. This particularly affected craft unions in woodworking and painting. The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners refused to organise these. In the Decorating the London Society of Painters refused to organise Spray Painters. The Plasterers' Union refused to organise Plaster Board workers and Shutterers took the place of carpenters. Bricklayers became just brick panellers between concrete pillars. Painters lost the colour mixers—a very highly skilled person—with the introduction of mixed colour in tins, etc. While concrete **created a new trade**, the Steel Fixers.... Plastic and New Tubes took the place of iron, etc. Hence as concrete developed and grew, it also developed its own grievances and caused new antagonisms. This is why the Building Workers' Industrial Union was possible in plumbing the introduction of copper in place of lead caused the Plumbing trade union to open up schools for retraining its members, one of the few unions to openly recognise new processes.²¹

The ebb in building activity coincided with falling building trade union membership: at 253 412 in 1900 it fell every year until 1911 and did not reach the 1900 level until 1917.²² Conversely, overall trade union membership—particularly among miners, engineers and transport workers—increased from 1900 to 1914.²³ Similarly, strike statistics²⁴ show that the **general** militancy between 1908 and 1912 by-passed building workers: the number of strikes reported in building between 1893 and 1901 averaged 157 annually, but fell to 29 for 1902-12; though they rose to 192 in 1913 and 177 in 1914. Between 1893 and 1900 the reported number of strikers averaged 19,000 annually in building, falling to 4,000 for 1901-12; though they rose to 40,000 in 1913 and 177,000 in 1914. Total striker days reported for building between 1893 and 1900 averaged 586,000 annually, falling to 47,000 for 1906-11; though they rose to 814,000 in 1913 and 3,184,000 in 1914. For **most** building craftsmen—as an older 'aristocracy of labour'—were more concerned with preserving their craft interests against other crafts and the unskilled; whom they saw as the 'enemy' as much as the employer. Hence, though new materials and techniques in the early 1900s were breaking down the lines of demarcation between skilled and unskilled—developments in the wider labour movement **preceded** change within building unions.

3. SYNDICALISM AND THE PRE-WAR AMALGAMATION COMMITTEE MOVEMENT IN BUILDING

As Kendall shows, British syndicalism combined the French stress on direct action with 'the new elements of a continual drive for unionization and a steady pressure for the amalgamation of existing unions'.²⁵

The first overt organisation expression of syndicalism in building occurred at the end of 1910 when the Walthamstow Branch of the OBS adjourned to the Bricklayers' Hall for a general meeting addressed by George Hicks.²⁶ From this meeting arose the

Provisional Committee for the Consolidation of the Building Industries Trades' Unions into One Industrial Organisation established February 12, 1911. Its members—mostly OBS-held public meetings in the Bricklayers' Hall but were never delegates of any union. No letters were sent to officials and only rank-and-file meetings were called. No one was paid and they had the support of syndicalists in the general movement. Most prominent were the trades affected by 'skill-displacing technological change'²⁷—bricklaying and masonry—though the Committee contained plumbers, painters, joiners, plasterers and labourers. Hicks and Jack Wills—both bricklayers—were successively secretaries of the Committee and F Bowers and J Hamilton of the Operative Stone-masons were two of the most active speakers. Calls for speakers exceeded supply in the provinces and went to every metropolitan branch. Letters in union journals argued the merits of amalgamation and this rank-and-file activity resulted in better attended lodge meetings. The Committee's twin slogans: "There are 72 unions in the Building Trade -We want one" and "More Unity and less unions"—were soon common.

The Committee secured an 'official' base and funds when the OBS Annual Moveable General Council instructed its Executive to appoint an Amalgamation Committee. At the 1911 TUC OBS delegates successfully moved a motion in favour of amalgamation. Then in 1912—after a delay—the TUC convened a conference to implement the resolution. But in anticipation of indirect 'official' opposition, however, a complete scheme of amalgamation was not submitted.²⁸ The latter was adopted but at the end of the conference 21 unions declined to take part in the ballot. The results of the first ballot showed that the industrial unionists had failed to move the 'insurance' members.²⁹ At which point the ASC&J decided to take no further votes on amalgamation. In 1913 a second ballot resulted in a 2,794 majority in favour of amalgamation. Yet later in the year the OBS Annual Conference rejected the Consolidation Committee's proposal that they should be open to all building workers. Wills then succeeded Hicks as Secretary of the Committee when Hicks was appointed an OBS organiser. Meanwhile, the agitation continued but was overshadowed by the 1914 London Lock-Out.

4. THE 1914 LONDON LOCK-OUT

In 1912 and 1913 there were unnumberable lightning strikes to eliminate non-unionists, supported and organised by local federations—especially the London Building Industries Federation.³⁰ Such direct action threatened 'official' negotiation of agreements with employers.³¹ Hence the influence of the militants stemmed from the slowness of the Conciliation Boards and the great efforts by union executives to enforce agreements.³²

On the Pearl Assurance Company building in Holborn a strike arose over the employment of non-union carpenters. The London Master Builders' Association then issued a five-point memorandum requiring a reply by January 5, 1914.³³ After no reply, on January 7, the employers announced that the WRA was no longer in force. They also submitted the Document³⁴ to individual building workers to 'enforce their prerogative to employ non-union men at will' and 'precipitate a fight, at the worst time of the year for the men, when they felt they could administer a short sharp lesson, leading to much greater discipline on the sites'.³⁵

The LMBA gave each worker until mid-day on January 24 to sign—by which time nearly 20,000 London building workers were locked-out. Thus as Frank Jackson says: 'when the lock-out came into being the militants in all Trade Unions came into the

forefront; they being known to one another through the Amalgamation Committee'.³⁶ The latter then issued 'the call ... to resist' and union officials 'had to respond to the demands of the rank-and-file: before the officials issued instructions not to sign the document strike action had already taken place and this spread like wildfire'.³⁷ By the time Executive meetings had been held 'all the members were on the streets and Strike Committees had been formed during the first weeks.... the strike centres.... in operation were in most cases under the leadership of members of the Amalgamation Committee'.³⁸ Since the Committees were 'elected by the strikers themselves and in the most part were new members and not the old Trade Union hands-the Secretary and officers-though in some cases these were elected'.³⁹

In February conflict 'developed over the conduct of the strike by the various District Committees of the Unions ...'.⁴⁰ For work permits were issued by the official trade union machinery and it was alleged that the London District Management Committee of the ASC&J had received '£50 from a firm on the South Coast to carry on fixing joinery on a job at Grosvenor Square'.⁴¹ Ultimately 'a fight broke out in the London District office of the ASC&J and S Stennet the London District Secretary was roughly handled by the strikers'.⁴² Thus on Monday, February 23, the following circular was issued by members of Bermondsey Branch of the ASC&J:

1. The London BT Federation delegate meeting to appoint a Strike Committee representing all Trades and Crafts.
2. That the Strike Committee be instructed that no settlement will be considered that does not:-
 - (a) Include a uniform agreement for all unions.
 - (b) Remove the disability and conciliation clauses.
 - (c) Guarantee that no settlement be come to except by ballot of members.
3. That programme of demands be drawn up: to include demands of increased pay and shorter hours.
4. That arrangements be made for a national conference of all Building Trade Unions.
5. That arrangements be made to secure the support of the Transport Workers.
6. That arrangements be made for regular weekly meetings of the joint delegate conference.
7. That arrangements be made for an immediate national appeal for Funds.⁴³

As Frank Jackson notes: 'It was no accident that this appeal should come from Bermondsey' since it was 'in this district that the Central Committee of the Amalgamation Committee met'.⁴⁴ Indeed this 'circular was a direct result of a meeting of this Committee' and it was 'well received by the rank-and-file', though 'with some hesitation by some of the officials'.⁴⁵ However, after 'some pressure ... a meeting of delegates was called and a central strike committee came into being' which 'organised united local strikes in which a committee was appointed which met daily and consisted of a series of sub-committees dealing with:

1. Census of jobs in the area and appointment of pickets.
2. Registration of all strikers organised and unorganised.
3. Organising collections and dealing with finance.
4. Social events committee; which also dealt with publicity and gave out press notices.

A weekly meeting of all the strikers were held at which detailed reports were given

of all the items during the preceding week'.⁴⁶ The Finance Committee was vital—since The Labourers' Unions broke during the first month' and one 'union was not able to pay any strike pay from the first'.⁴⁷ Collections were held at big public functions—football matches, etc.—for 'the whole of the lock-out' and 'bands of Barrel Organ grinders' were deployed.⁴⁸ Also, each 'Strike Centre was used as a collecting station, and they in turn sent their moneys to the Centre who disbursed them to the Strike Centres as the cases required alleviation'.⁴⁹

Conversely, accounts of the Lock-Out in 'official' union histories differ crucially—in several respects—from those by rank-and-file participants. Thus Hilton merely says that: 'After nearly two months of being out on the streets hardly any union member had defected' and that negotiations 'took place during March and April'.⁵⁰ Yet he says nothing about what happened **between** January 24 and March. Similarly, Postgate jumps from January 24 to April 16 and therefore also compresses treatment of the strike itself. Moreover, though 'division between officials and rank-and-file'⁵¹ is acknowledged—this is seen by Postgate only to date from April. That is, from the date of the employers' first offer to withdraw the document. Hence Hilton and Postgate, who concentrate on 'official' negotiations, either were unaware or chose to ignore data such as the Bermondsey circular and evidence of sophisticated rank-and-file organisation of the strike.

Hilton is completely silent about such aspects of the dispute. Postgate, however, notes that the officials 'wished merely to get the withdrawal of the document and the return of the members under the old conditions for each craft'.⁵² Furthermore, he conceded that the '**LBIF**, though often unceremoniously thrust aside by the EC's, did represent far more nearly the London rank-and-file' which 'desired not merely the withdrawal of the document, but also the freedom to deal with non-unionists'.⁵³ Yet in brackets Postgate then says: 'Later suggestions were made of higher wages and better conditions, but these were not generally adopted'.⁵⁴ An allusion which he fails to elaborate any further. Only Frank Jackson specifically dates 'conflict between the two groups'⁵⁵ (of officials and rank-and-file) from the outset of the dispute—not just from April 16 as does Postgate. Indeed both Postgate and Hilton assume rank-and-file action to be **only** in response to official-employer negotiations—their unstated assumption being that the rank-and-file are incapable of acting independently. For though Postgate recognises that the rank-and-file **did** have ends independent from the officials, his account relegates discussion of these—literally—into brackets without further analysis.⁵⁶

Conversely, Frank Jackson shows that the fight for control of the strike between 'the two groups' was explicit **throughout** the dispute and that official activity was in **response** to rank-and-file initiatives:

For instance in the Kingsway on the new buildings for the public trustee it was reported that 150 blacklegs were working. The central strike committee organised a mass demonstration to the job which was invaded and in spite of the police, who were helpless in face of the thousands who surrounded the job, persuaded these men to down tools. They came out in a body and at the head of a procession marched down the Kingsway calling on other jobs, which again was added to, and the whole mass marched on the Strike Centre.

Again at the Wesback House in Grays Inn Road, a mass picket took place. The general foreman here was a particularly offensive individual who openly jeered at the pickets, shouting to them that he had so many on the job and that they could not get them out. The strikers armed with red ochre, soot, yellow ochre,

flour, **etc.**, pelted the general foreman and the blacklegs so successfully that the job was stopped for days after. This general foreman spoke to the crowd that was underneath the gantry telling them what fools they were to listen to the Trade Union. He was a stout fellow and the spectacle he presented when showers of the many coloured ochres, soot and flour hit him was a sight to be remembered.⁵⁷

Frank Jackson also points to the role of the police and women in the dispute:

It must be remembered that the police were not inactive during these struggles and many of the strikers were brought before the local courts. In connection with the above incident four men were convicted to 21 days' imprisonment and when they were released from Pentonville prison a huge crowd from Islington Strike Centre met them. It was noticeable that among the leaders of this demonstration the women were foremost. The men paid for the upkeep of the families of the imprisoned men in all instances.⁵⁸

Yet of the estimated 25,000 men on strike: '... over 10,000 were unskilled and labourers drawing no strike pay. It was estimated that at least 20,000 men, women and children were dependent on finance drawn from other sources than the Union Funds. In the meantime funds were mounting up so that by April a special fund was reported to have reached £1,049.16s. This of course was not sufficient to feed all who were in need so that Strike Committees organised drives to the local Guardians⁵⁹ and severe fights took place round the giving of relief. Huge demonstrations were organised round the Boroughs; deputations were sent in ... all these ... supported by huge demonstrations ... outside holding public meetings, marching round the area and rousing tremendous support.⁶⁰

Finally, Frank Jackson indicates the part in the dispute played by the TUC newspaper—over and above hostile mass press reaction:

The Press was used to its full weight against the strikers. The **Daily Citizen** had been started in opposition to the **Herald**.⁶¹ How did this paper—the official organ of the TUC—present the men's case? In all their articles dealing with the strike it threw all its weight in the direction of conciliation with the employers. In one of the critical months of the dispute, on March 11, there appeared the following headline—"Builders Offer Conciliation, Significant Change of Front"—then went on to explain that the employers' decision of conciliation was a sign of weakening of the employers' front and meant that the men could now get by a conference what they wanted, without continuance of the disastrous strike. It went on to speak about a Peace with Honour, **etc., etc.** Big prominence was given to the Free Churches offer for mediation in the dispute. On March 19 it announced "BigStrike Developments", "Settlements in Sight", etc., and this was followed by a plea that Lord Peel the Chairman of the LCC should be brought in as mediator.⁶²

The declaration of war terminated the dispute on August 4, 1914, though the employers were preparing for a **national** lock-out on August 15 and the union officials had: 'tried their hardest to get the London men to agree to terms favourable to the employers but on each of the four occasions⁶³ it was turned down and in many cases the officials were hounded out of London. Especially was this so in the case of ASC&J. The Chairman of that Union, C Jackson, was given a very hot reception when on one occasion in June he appealed to the men to go back to work. But the power of the

rank-and-file committee was successful in beating back this attempt to betray the men.⁶⁴

Hence for the rank-and file activist, the struggle had raised: 'Such questions as control by the Workers, election of rank-and-file committees, refusing to allow the paid official to control⁶⁵ Likewise, for the officials and employers the dispute had also been a question of 'control'-but directed in both their cases at the men. The model of self-activity elaborated during the Lock-Out, moreover, was to be a formative influence in the sense that it led to an attempt at breakaway unionism.⁶⁶

5. THE BUILDING WORKERS' INDUSTRIAL UNION

A The Origin of the BWIU

'During the closing months' of the Lock-Out 'the continued struggle for control between the leadership of the Union and the rank-and-file, forced to the front the question of union organisation, and the breakaway of the Masons gave added impetus to these discussions'.⁶⁷ Accordingly, when the Building Trades Amalgamation Committee issued a call for delegates for a National Conference to be held at Birmingham on August 2 and 3, a very large response was assured'.⁶⁸ For 'the men who were primarily responsible for this conference were the leaders of the strike and the Amalgamation Committees', such as 'Ingram of the ASC&J, H Adams of the OBS, Beauchamp of the Painters, J Wills of the OBS, Banfield and Ince of the Labourers'.⁶⁹ George Hicks, however, who had 'just secured a post of organiser in the OBS' was 'conspicuous by his absence'.⁷⁰ And as the Conference minutes show four letters from Hicks were read, the third of which—to Wills and dated 31.7.14—said: 'I feel certain that to start another union would not be the best thing to do at the present time'.⁷¹ Yet according to Wills: '... our men in London spent nine hours in discussing the Agenda last week, G Hicks was there, and acquiesced in everything'.⁷² Thus John Hamilton⁷³—also a full-time union official whose position would cease if the Conference decided on the formation of a new union—concluded that 'Hicks had not his heart in the work and that the personal side has got the better of him'.⁷⁴

The following resolution was moved and carried:

That seeing that every attempt that had been made to Consolidate the unions in the Building Industry by the process of Amalgamation has been met with unscrupulous opposition of the official element, which opposition has magnified out of all proportions the difficulties confronting the movement; grossly misrepresenting the proposals, and juggling with the votes; and seeing that in spite of the bitter and painful experience of the London Lock-Out that there is no genuine desire amongst the officials to move in the direction of consolidation:- It be resolved; that we herewith form a Building Workers' Industrial Union, capable of embracing all the workers in the industry in one organisation.

John Batchelor typified 'official' union response when he said at the close of the Lock-Out:

The battle was won, but it is regrettable to find at the moment of victory that a few of our members and of other societies were so lost to their duty as to endeavour to start a rival society to, as they no⁷⁵ doubt fondly hoped, complete the disintegration that the builders had started.

Conversely, to BWIU foundation members such as Adams the outcome of the Lock-Out constituted a 'tragedy': 'I had to witness the spectacle of the Trade Union leaders tumbling over themselves to the employers'.⁷⁶ Instead of the chaos predicted by Batchelor, according to Adams: the new union—with increasing membership—would 'make those who are left behind in the old craft unions realise that it will be impossible to maintain their craft unions or their craft benefits'.⁷⁷

B The Theory of the BWIU

Ironically, at the moment when the BWIU had passed its zenith **Industrial Unionism** (1917) articulated the theory of industrial unionism in building and was explicitly concerned to extend this model over the total social formation.

IU was based on the premise that: 'There can be no peace between the working-class and the employing class while the employing class own and control all the means of life, the state, press and platform ...'.⁷⁸ The labour theory of value was applied to the 1907 Census of Production Returns to show that approximate net profit per head was £84 in the building industry: that is, 'the difference between what the worker **receives** (wages), and what the worker actually **produces** ...'.⁷⁹ Since unemployment, moreover, varied from 6% during booms to 24% or worse in slumps, workers were 'thus compelled to fight among themselves for an opportunity to live'.⁸⁰ **The Futility of Craft and Sectional Unions'**: Craft and sectional unionism was 'unable to cope with modern capitalism' because 'ever increasing specialisation' divided 'up jobs into almost every one of their component parts, so that every individual of average intelligence' could 'learn in a very short time ...'.⁸¹ Hence 'the craftsmanship which was a great factor in the former power' of trade unionism had 'to a large extent broken down'.⁸² The latter was shown by 'endless demarcation disputes' between unions which 'further helped to consolidate the forces of the employers'.⁸³ In particular, craft unions aimed 'not at benefiting labour as a whole, but the chosen few' who could 'ill-afford to pay the high entrance fees and contributions'.⁸⁴ The emphasis on 'hoarding reserve funds', moreover, was based on the erroneous belief that craft unions could 'beat capitalists at the capitalistic game'.⁸⁵ Furthermore, centralisation destroyed 'all spirit of independence and initiative in the members' and 'frequently' led them to 'detest

the Unions and their officials more than the employers'.⁸⁷ 'One Union for all' would have avoided the 'chaos' of 'over 60 competing, overlapping and section' unions with 'varying rates of dispute pay', 'separate meeting places' and 'separate Executive Councils to influence the men'.⁸⁸

The Lure of Conciliation': Building union leaders had welcomed the formation of Conciliation Boards as 'an alternative to the fighting policy they were incapable of practising'.⁸⁹ Similarly, the employer welcomed such machinery because when 'production ceases profits likewise ceases'.⁹⁰ Yet the result of conciliation 'after considerable delay', even if an advance, was 'in all cases a compromise of the original demands': the employers obtained 'some concession such as weakening some working Rule, or Rules, because the Boards' were 'supposed to act fair to both sides'.⁹¹ Hence workers only got 'a fraction of what they could get by a strong Industrial Union'.⁹² Indeed in cases of infringement of working Rules 'the jobs in question' were 'usually finished before a decision' was 'arrived at owing to the cumbrous procedure of the Boards'.⁹³

"As to the State" and Politics': IU opposed the notion of the 'Socialist State' running 'the nation and its industries for the benefit of the workers' because 'a socialist majority in any country' was 'remote' and 'the capitalists' would 'find means to nullify' it even

if it did occur'.⁹⁴ Such syndicalist formulations pre-dated the Russian Revolution and publication of Lenin's **State and Revolution**⁹⁵ which were to be crucial influences on militants such as Frank Jackson. Thus in terms of the BWIU model—which gave primacy to the industrial struggle and saw the political as secondary and derivative—'the economic revolution' would be accomplished 'by the "direct action" of organised labour... instead of entrusting future control to the State' it would 'make the Industrial Union the unit of organisation in the new order'.⁹⁶

'Capitalism-The New Phase': Anticipating the nature of post-war relations between labour and capital, IU gave examples of 'arguments, proposals, and crafty schemes' for 'the perpetuation of capitalism'.⁹⁷ These included **The Times** New Charter for Industry⁹⁸ and Dudley Docker's presiding statement at the first meeting of the **FBI** warning that: it would be '**necessary to speak plainly to labour in future, not to be afraid to ask what we want, and not to be afraid to give what we ought to give for fear of something more being demanded**'.⁹⁹ Also, the Chairman of Swan, Hunter Shipbuilders had proposed that 'all restrictive trade union rules... must never again be revived'.¹⁰⁰ Whereas Sir W Lever argued for better wages and conditions 'as part of scientific management and administration ... because **it will pay** ...'.¹⁰¹ And there were 'various specious schemes of profit sharing and co-partnership'.¹⁰²

Conversely, for the **BWIU**: 'Any system' that perpetuated 'a relationship as between employer and employed' was 'immoral and unjust'.¹⁰³ For all the above proposals—even if they increased wages and the security of employment—still assumed a system of 'wage slaves subject to the oligarchy that controls industry'.¹⁰⁴

'Industrial Unionism the "Only Way"': Given the above diagnosis of capitalism and its consequences, the **GIU** proposed to transfer 'the control now functioned by Capitalism' to 'the various organised groups of the various industries'. Hence, the '**product produced would then become the property of the whole community**'.¹⁰⁵ Organised by industries workers would 'present a united front to the employers'.¹⁰⁶ thereby obtaining reduced hours, abolition of child labour and unemployment. 'A gradual expropriation of capital' would then ensue: without riots, street fighting and barricades—which would be 'hopeless with the capitalist class in full possession of the military machine'.¹⁰⁷ Industrial solidarity¹⁰⁸ would 'force the unconditional surrender of the capitalist class... without any interval of disorganisation'.¹⁰⁹ Thus if the **BWIU** was involved in a dispute, the 'Federation of Industrial Unions' would call out all other industries in sympathy within forty-eight hours unless a settlement to the satisfaction of the Building Workers' 110 was made. Moreover, as Industrial Unions developed they would be divided into 'District Industrial Councils'—for London, Liverpool, Glasgow, etc. These Industrial Councils would 'supersede' local authorities and give 'Labour the full control and management of affairs that affect the whole community, but do not come under the control of one industry'.¹¹¹ Representation on administrative bodies would be 'occupational not geographical'.¹¹² Educational provision would foster classes for 'the study of social science taught from the working-class standpoint'.¹¹³ Ultimately, this 'organisation of all the trades and crafts, regardless of age, sex, or race, engaged in the production of a given commodity' 114 would be 'linked up nationally and internationally'.¹¹⁵

C The Structure of the BWIU

The **BWIU** was initially divided into five groups and subsequently recruited members into a sixth group.¹¹⁶ This division was for 'the purpose of administration and election of General Officers'; it comprised the following:

- GROUP 1 - Carpenters and Joiners, Wood-Cutting Machinists, Wood-Block Floor Layers, Cabinet Makers, Wood Carvers.
- GROUP 2 - Bricklayers, Masons, Tilers, Stone Carvers, Plasterers, Mosaic Workers, Stone Machinists, Slaters, Paviments, Asphalt Workers.
- GROUP 3 - Painters, Decorators, Upholsterers, French Polishers, Paper-Hangers, Glaziers, Sign-Writers.
- GROUP 4 - Plumbers, Zinc Workers, Electricians, Fitters, Blacksmiths, and other Metal Workers allied to Building Industry.
- GROUP 5 - Scaffolders, Labourers, Navvies, Timbermen, Crane Drivers, Hoist Attendants, Steel Erectors.
- GROUP 6 - Quarry Workers, Brick and Tile Makers, Cement Workers, Concrete Workers, and all persons engaged in the manufacture of materials exclusively for building and construction work.

All Aircraft Workers, Estimating Clerks, Quantity Clerks, etc., to be included in their respective groups.¹¹⁷

The relationship of sectional groups to branch, district and national structures-regarding incidence of meetings, composition, powers and officials-was as follows:

Branch Meeting	Branch Committee	District Committee	Executive Council	Conference	Head Office
Weekly	Weekly	Monthly	Monthly	Annually	Daily
COMPOSITION					
All Groups	6 One per group	2 Delegates per branch	2 Representatives per Group elected annually by all members	2	General Secretary and National Organiser elected bi-annually by all members.
POWERS					
To initiate strikes. benefits. rule changes and referenda ¹¹⁹	To transmit business referred by branch and secure observance of Rules	Coordination	Interpretation of Rules and conduct of the Union. Decisions subject to appeal by referendum to all members	'Full powers' to make policy decide appeals and suggest changes ¹²⁰	To conduct the business of the Union in accord with the Rules and 'act under the instructions of the Executive Council'
OFFICIALS					
Chairman Secretary, Auditors and Collectors	Chairman and two Committee 121		Chairman and Executive Councillors		- - -
FULL-TIME OFFICIALS¹²²					

Branch and full-time district organisers optional. The General Secretary was 'allowed such assistance at the Head Office as ... necessary' and 'remuneration as... decided from time to time by the members'.

D The Practice of the BWIU

While the usual arguments against dual unionism in British conditions apply equally well to the BWIU as to earlier do Leonist campaigns, there is no doubt that the new builders' union stood a far greater chance of survival. Instead of being started from scratch on the de Leonist model, it was only founded after a long period of unrest and disaffection among building workers against sectional bargaining methods and the conciliatory policies of trade union leaders. The momentum of rank-and-file disaffection was still growing, and four small local building unions actually joined the BWIU at the outset.¹²³ Provided discontent could be channelled into the BWIU, there was clearly a better chance of success than with dual unions set up in period of less intense unrest.

The BWIU was nevertheless undermined from the start by the outbreak of the First World War.... Although membership was recruited on a significant scale during the next few months, the coverage was limited mainly to the militant centres of London and Liverpool. In spite of state opposition to its anti-war line, and craft union hostility to its very existence, the BWIU struggled on to 1917.¹²⁴

Postgate says the BWIU's 'figures of membership were not published'¹²⁵ though Frank Jackson estimates "peak" membership at between 25 and 30,000.¹²⁶ Both, however, concur in seeing August 1914—June 1916 as the "peak" period of BWIU membership. For the BWIU General Secretary and National Organiser 'were never allowed to turn their attention to building up the union' because all 'their efforts were taken up by fighting persecution'.¹²⁷

Typical of the inter-union conflicts in which the BWIU was involved from its inception were the events covered in the following extract from the Master Builders' Handbook (1916):

IMPORTANT. CONCILIATION BOARD PROCEEDINGS, October 19, 1915.

The matter under consideration was a complaint of the OBS against a bricklayer in the employ of Messrs.....
The Chairman submitted the view that the complaint contained in the communication of October 15, 1915, from the OBS embodied three counts-viz.: (1) That the Bricklayer is a member of a rival Union; (2) and (3) that by his statements and attitude he had made himself specifically objectionable.

The Chairman submitted in respect of count (1) that the fact of membership of another Union is not a subject for dispute or for the consideration of a Joint Local Trade Committee, and the Employers' side agreed.

The Chairman then invited the representatives of the OBS to state their views with respect to counts (2) and (3), and Mr..... reported that Mr..... had expressed the opinion that the OBS was a ".....goose club", & c, and that his attitude generally was threatening, and in consequence he was specially objectionable to its members. Ultimately the following resolution was put:-

After hearing the arguments of the members of the OBS it is resolved that the matter in question is not one for the consideration of the Joint Local Trade Committee.

The voting was equal.

The case was brought before the Local Conciliation Board on November 17, 1915. Objection was taken by certain members of the Board to Mr....., of the BWIU, as a witness within the meaning of Regulation (f), as it was impossible for him to give personal evidence in the case under consideration, and asked he should withdraw.

The Chairman ruled that this claim could not be sustained, as the Board could not be in a position to know what evidence was to be given until they heard such witness, and objection could be raised to any evidence at the time it was given.

Mr....., who attended as witness for the OBS, thereupon declined to give evidence.

The Chairman therefore declared the Board dissolved.¹²⁸

Wills was the BWIU witness and at the October meeting all the union representatives were OBS members. Whereas the November meeting was 'composed of delegates from all the Unions comprising the Local Conciliation Board (about twenty in all), to which nearly every Craft Union in the Building Industry' was 'attached'¹²⁹. The case therefore illustrates the depth of craft hostility to the BWIU. Yet at the time the OBS allowed its members to belong to the BWIU. Moreover, when ASC&J leaders attempted to get endorsement¹³⁰ for 'the policy of the EC in fighting the BWIU' instead the following resolution was carried:

That this meeting recommends that the policy of persuasion be carried out with regard to the better class of artisans belonging to the BWIU as far as our trade is concerned.¹³¹

Hence the BWIU concluded that craft union officials had no 'mandate' to attack its organisation. For though 'occasionally' they met 'some Craft Unionists... prepared to follow and do the dirty work of their leaders', there was 'a keen resentment amongst the genuine members against such methods being used against' the BWIU.¹³²

E The Demise of the BWIU

Meanwhile within the union 'dissension had become so acute'¹³³ that at the Annual Conference in June 1916 Wills was forced to resign. And though in 1917, C W Truran¹³⁴ was still General Secretary, Wills eventually 'resumed office on the request of the Conference'¹³⁵ and occupied the position in 1920 when revised rules were issued. Hence although in 1923 there were still 'a number of London members' of the BWIU: 'as a national society it was stamped out in the first years of the war'.¹³⁶ Moreover, compounding the internicine conflict with craft unions, conscription drove the BWIU's 'most active members into the Army, prison, or hiding'.¹³⁷ Thus assessed from perspective of the building workers' rank-and-file movement in 1941:

The breakaway of the most class-conscious to form the BWIU isolated the mass of the militants from the mass of building workers by removing from the craft unions the rebel core which alone was capable of giving militant leadership. As

a result, the domination of the old Craft leaders was for a time more firmly established, for the reason that they were left free from effective opposition from within the unions against their policy of class collaboration, which, during 1914—1918, took on the special form of subordinating the unions to the imperialist war. Throughout the war the reformist leaders of the old unions devoted their utmost efforts to kill the new union. They ultimately succeeded, but to achieve their 'victory' they had to create a common front against the BWIU which led eventually to the formation of the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives.¹³⁸

Frank Jackson's¹³⁹ own experiences during the period substantiate and amplify such general estimates. Throughout the First World War he worked in the aircraft industry having been rejected for military service on medical grounds and put in a "reserved occupation". Indeed towards the end of the war he suffered a perforated ulcer and was hospitalised.¹⁴⁰ He worked on the building of the first military aircraft for the British Army and was expelled from the ASC&J at the end of 1915 because it would not allow dual membership. Between 1914 and 1916 he was also a member of the Trade Union Rights Committee whose activities led S Stennet¹⁴¹ to issue a circular in 1916 saying:

... if any member is reported to have assisted in the propaganda of the BWIU through the medium of this unauthorised body, they are liable to be dealt with under Rule 48 for working against the interest of our society.¹⁴²

By 1920, however, Frank Jackson had left the BWIU because of 'the dubious methods of Wills-who 'not only broke faith but followed in the steps of his friend Hicks, and left behind a feeling of disgust and despair' that took Years to eradicate from the minds of the militants in the Building Trades'.¹⁴³

In a recent and more detailed account of the decline of Wills and his withdrawal from the BWIU, Frank Jackson further brings out the fragmentation of the union:

Wills ... died somewhere in the late 20s; he was buried from Jamaica Road, Bermondsey.

I was laid up at the time of his death.

He suffered from a kidney complaint, and right from his taking office was for ever trying all the patent medicines going. The actual cause of the dispute was over financial matters of the Union's money, coupled with disruption of his family life and his connection with a female secretary employed by the Union. In 1920 I was working on the construction of an Aircraft Camp and we had organised the site with some other sites near Oxford which resulted in an agreement for the London Building Wage Rates to be paid on all these sites. Arising from this a movement was made in other districts and when while in the middle of this Wills demanded a slow down and an organiser was summarily sacked by Wills without any consultation with the EC and he took this up with the Branches and Liverpool supported the organiser against Wills who refused to call a Conference on the grounds of no cash. This led to an examination of the Union accounts which revealed the deficiencies which could not be explained by Wills. He tried to excuse this on health grounds and expenses in a Cure hostel. It's from this date that the Union began to disintegrate by reason of its financial position I withdrew from all contacts with the Union at this period.¹⁴⁴

Nevertheless in 1919, when Frank Jackson had gone to Aylesbury 'to get a (BWIU) branch going', he had become involved in the "Hands off Russia" movement.¹⁴⁵ Also his disengagement from the BWIU coincided with the preparations and negotiations leading to the formation of the British Communist Party and foundation of the Third (Communist) International in March 1919.¹⁴⁶ Thus a non-syndicalist revolutionary model of militant theory and practice was in the process of elaboration-based on the Marxist notion of the need for a revolutionary party.

6. THE FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF BUILDING TRADE OPERATIVES

Significantly, during the same month as the Treasury Conference¹⁴⁷ with the main union leaders, the building trade union executives met on February 25, 1915, at the Cross Keys Hotel in Theobalds Road, London. They formed the National Association Building Trades Council with 'the primary aim of associating on a narrow front against the threat of opposition'.¹⁴⁸ The main resolution passed said:

We recommend to the ECs of this affiliated Society the necessity of refusing the cards of membership of newly formed unions which are in conflict with this Council and if necessary, to be prepared to support each other's members in sustaining this action.¹⁴⁹

Subsequently, on October 17 and 18, 1916, the NABTC met in Liverpool and resolved to form a Federation¹⁵⁰ because:

while all the unions recognised the urgent need for closer unity most of them were not prepared to sacrifice their individual identity to achieve it.¹⁵¹

Conversely, Frank Jackson saw the NFBTO as the 'consequence' of 'reformist officials acting as recruiting officers for the Bosses Army' and using their 'influence against the militants' in the BWIU.¹⁵² Hilton and Jackson also differ about the reason for the introduction of 'composite' branches. Thus according to Frank Jackson the NFBTO was:

built on a complete bureaucracy, its leading officials being the full-time officials of the old unions, with a new idea in the country districts where separate union branches were impossible, by linking up in one local branch the various trades; these were described as composite branches and were a direct challenge to the Unity movement of the BWIU.¹⁵³

Whereas Hilton sees the 'new industrial union named the Composite Section of the NFBTO' as simply the only way to organise the rural areas.¹⁵⁴

Similarly, fundamentally divergent verdicts regarding the early post-war development of the NFBTO are reached by the 'official' historian and rank-and-file militant. Since, according to Hilton, the NABTC was to 'evolve into an invaluable organisation with a positive approach to the problems of the industry'.¹⁵⁵ In contrast, Frank Jackson

says:

the close of the war began a new period in the history of the Building Trade—previous to this wages and conditions had been settled on a district basis, but with the formation of the Federation, with its more or less compact machinery, it gave the officials the opportunity of proceeding to approach the employers on the basis of collaboration, and the first agreements of the Federation were in the direction of making these agreements legally binding and national in effect. The thing the LMBA had fought the London Unions on for seven months in 1914, and failed to get, the Federation achieved for the employers in 1919.¹⁵⁶

Frank Jackson's reference to 1919 relates to meetings of the National Board of Conciliation comprising the employers and unions in July and September 1919.¹⁵⁷ The latter resulted in the introduction of the 44-hour week from May 1, 1920 and the creation of the National Wages and Conditions Council.¹⁵⁸ Hilton, moreover, says that the 44-hour week was 'the first major achievement to have been gained without a long struggle on the sites' and that with the NW&CC:

... for the first time, wages were to be decided on a national basis. Operatives were to be paid according to the particular graded area in which they worked. There were 17 grades in all with Grade "A", the "Standard Rate", being 2s.4d. per hour. To try and eliminate wage disputes the Council also evolved a scheme which provided for the automatic adjustment of wages, linked to the cost-of-living The Sliding Scale Agreement.¹⁵⁹

Hence the features that to the officials and 'official' historian commended these agreements: viz. the emphasis on peace, recognition of their statemanship, prospects for the elimination of 'struggle on the sites' etc., at the same time condemned such agreements in the eyes of militants. Thus Frank Jackson dismissed such agreements as the 'bunk of co-partnership' and saw them as evidence of the way in which 'the Federation proved so useful an ally to the employers'.¹⁶⁰

7. CO-PARTNERSHIP- 'OFFICIAL' AND RANK-AND-FILE RESPONSES

In 1906 the London building employer Malcolm Sparkes instituted a profit-sharing scheme for his employees; during the 1914 Lock-Out he hired blackleg labour.¹⁶¹ On March 9, 1916 he wrote to Stennet proposing that the unions consider his scheme for a Federal Parliament of Industry—drawn from all trades 'with no class divisions'. Hence Matthews says: 'It was obvious that hostility to' Sparkes 'as an employer would vitiate any objective consideration of the proposals if he were to make them himself.'¹⁶³ He therefore suggested to Stennet that 'the unions should consider the scheme and, if it were acceptable, should themselves propose its adoption to the employers'.¹⁶⁴ The tactic worked and within 'a week the London Committee of the ASC&J' acceded, to be followed within the month by the NFBTE, the scheme having been presented by the Building Trades Council and signed by representatives of the larger unions'.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, adds Matthews: 'the employers were enthusiastic and Sparkes's proposals ran into four editions because of the NFBTE demand alone'.¹⁶⁶

For two years during the First War Sparkes was in prison for his pacifist views—so the 'idealism' attributed to him by Matthews cannot be denied. The latter's partial analysis,

however, obfuscated the situation by taking for granted the ready response to Sparkes among union officials and employers which he never attempts to explain. Nevertheless Matthews' data does illuminate **why** the term 'co-partnership'-to rank-and-file militants such as Frank Jackson-had such pejorative connotations, the mere mention of which evoked contempt without the need for further analysis. For union officials-such as Stennet-who so readily embraced Sparkes proposals were at the same time expelling members of the BWIU¹⁶⁷ 'a rank-and-file and not an employers' scheme for re-organisation. Indeed the absence of the militant core from the established building unions helps to explain the ease with which the officials got the Sparkes proposals accepted within their own organisation.

Thus Matthews fails to situate responses to 'co-partnership' and his reference to 'objective consideration' of the Sparkes scheme smacks of reification. In addition he compounds a spurious account by implying¹⁶⁸ that the officials who set up the Building Guild in January 1920 not only were inspired by Sparkes initial plan; but also were the heirs to Mann's syndicalism:

... the National Guilds League was, in effect, the culmination of an international movement.... subsequently popularised among the unions in Britain largely through the efforts of Tom Mann.¹⁶⁹

Yet on the contrary, communism was the heir to Mann's syndicalism and Matthews ignores the point that Tom Mann was a foundation member of the British Communist Party formed¹⁷⁰ in the same year as the establishment of the abortive Building Guild. Similarly, that the infant Communist Party attracted ex-BWIU activists such as John Hamilton¹⁷¹ and Frank Jackson is further evidence invalidating the Matthews thesis.

8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Prior to 1914, there was a both relative and absolute fall in building activity—compared with the inter-war years. Skill-displacing technological change, moreover, mainly affected masonry and bricklaying. Falling building union membership and the failure of building workers to participate in the **general** militancy from 1908-12, however, is inexplicable in terms of their material conditions of existence alone¹⁷² That is, the sectionalism of most building craftsmen—who were an 'older aristocracy' of labour—meant mediating ideological developments in the wider labour movement **preceded** change within the building unions. Hence the campaign, from 1910, by syndicalists to amalgamate existing building unions was thwarted by 'official' opposition and the passivity of 'insurance' members. And not until the beginning of 1913 were the syndicalists able to unite **both** the skilled and unskilled around the issue of non-unionism in London.

'Official' histories of the 1914 Lock-Out-based on union centre records-focus primarily upon negotiations between union executives and employers organisations. Consequently, such accounts compress other aspects of the dispute, and begin, virtually, where Frank Jackson's participant account finishes. Substantively, therefore, Frank

Jackson provides insights into aspects of the dispute missed by Hilton-and only hinted at by Postgate: viz. the evidence of sophisticated rank-and-file organisation: direct action tactics; and the depth of rank-and-file alienation from the officials.¹⁷³

The Lock-Out was the catalyst for the establishment of the BWIU. However, inter-union conflict from the outset and the absence of the militants from the established unions—due to expulsions—lead to the fragmentation of the new union. Thus Frank Jackson's break with the BWIU typified the genesis of the collapse of the BWIU-offered an alternative option to the National Building Guild eulogised by Matthews. For militant rank-and-file opposition to 'co-partnership' was rooted in their experience of victimisation by the very officials who so enthusiastically took up Sparkes' proposals. Conversely, 'co-partnership' provided a means of countering the militant rank-and-file—consistent with the incorporation of officials during the war-culminating in building with the establishment of the NFBTO. To the officials this process signified a 'positive' approach and 'achievement' **without** struggle. To the militant rank-and-file, such quietism—despite the sop of industrial unionism in the countryside—denoted centralisation for collaboration.

Furthermore, the emergence of rank-and-file movements in specific socio-historical conjunctures presupposes the existence of a stratum of "organic" working-class intellectuals¹⁷⁴ Thus John Foster's work on early industrial capitalism—though not theorised in Gramscian terms—demonstrates the existence of "organic" working-class intellectuals in Oldham during the Chartist period.¹⁷⁵ Also, Robert Tressell's novel **The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists** depicts an "organic" working-class intellectual—the socialist house-painter Frank Owen—in a non-hegemonic situation in Hastings pre-1910.¹⁷⁶ Bob Holton's data for building from 1910-14, moreover, is also amenable to a Gramscian reading: **viz.** his focus on the hegemonic activity of syndicalist "organic" working-class intellectuals such as Jack Wills, George Hicks, John Hamilton and Fred Bower. In particular, he conveys the dynamic aspect to the political formation of "organic" working-class intellectuals in this conjuncture. Thus he notes that some members of the building trades consolidation committee (established early in 1911)—such as A G Tufton (carpenters' union) and A Webb (housepainters' union)—were 'syndicalists from the outset'.¹⁷⁷ Whereas:

Others like Hicks and Jack Wills of the Bermondsey bricklayers became convinced supporters soon after its establishment, as the labour unrest brought syndicalist ideas to the fore.¹⁷⁸

The formation of the British Communist Party (in 1920-21), however, indicated a new conjuncture in which communism was displacing syndicalism as the mediating ideological influence upon the "organic" working-class intellectuals typified by Frank Jackson¹⁷⁹ Indeed, communists have been hegemonic in all the rank-and-file movements in building since 1920¹⁸⁰ For Labourism has been central to the British social formation since 1918, which as Dan Finn et al., says:

... rested ... not upon an active ideological recruitment but upon a type of class support similar to the loyalties of a fully formed trade unionism. This essentially passive relationship to its class was hardly adapted to the production of Gramsci's organic working-class intellectuals.¹⁸¹

But emphasising the ephemeral nature of specific rank-and-file movements **and** the continuity of a stratum of "organic" intellectuals in building, is not to imply that the

latter is a fixed or free-floating entity. On the contrary, this stratum has constantly been reconstituted: as new militants have emerged to augment existing militants and replace ex-militants¹⁸². Nor can the form of left alliances be specified in advance-as implied in conspiratorial Marxist analysis¹⁸³ -since they are dependent upon the concrete circumstances.

Nevertheless, precise evaluations of past struggles are relevant to present day political practice; if as Lukacs, we consider the 'present a historical problem'.¹⁸⁴ Thus the present strategy of the Socialist Workers' Party is to build a **national** rank-and-file movement, which-as in the case of the BWIU-would isolate militants from the existing unions¹⁸⁵. The SWP, therefore, ignores the fact that in British conditions trade union and political breakways have always failed.¹⁸⁶

FOOTNOTES

1. John A Mahon, **Trade Unionism**, (London, 1938), p.73.
2. Jim Arnison, **The Shrewsbury Three/Strikes, Pickets and 'Conspiracy'**, (London, 1974), p.19.
Referring to the first attempt and the argument that 'organisation by industry' was 'a reproduction of the "Builders' Union" of 1832, and must likewise fail', the BWIU maintained that: the latter 'experiment' was 'only a **federation** of more or less local Craft Unions' and that 'the cause of the collapse lay in the "**unripeness of economic development**". **Industrial Unionism/What it is and What it isn't**, (London, 1917), p.6, emphases as in original.
For as E J Hobsbawm says: "... there are still too few studies of local working-classes or occupational/industrial groups of workers'. 'Forward' to John Foster's **Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution/Early industrial capitalism**, (London, 1974), p.xi. Also, the issue of why communism displaced syndicalism—as the mediating influence upon militants—is **not** raised in the most recently published study of syndicalism. See Bob Holton, **British Syndicalism 1900-1914/Myths and Realities**, (London, 1976).
5. E J Hobsbawm, 'Trade Union Historiography', **Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History**, No. 8, Spring 1964, p.31.
6. **Ibid.**
7. The **silences** of 'official' trade union histories concerning rank-and-file movements stem from the ideology and location of the writer: retired trade union officials are the typical authors of such histories which concentrate on central negotiations because they are based on union centre records. In this connection, therefore, the work of Pierre Macherey on 'decentred' form—which applies the Marxist theory of Louis Althusser to literary criticism—is suggestive for the development of a methodology for work on texts in general. See P Macherey, **Pour Une Theorie de la Production Litteraire**, (Paris, 1970) and Terry Eagleton, **Marxism and Literary Criticism**, (London, 1976), pp.34-36 for a summary in English of Mecherey's approach.
8. I am particularly indebted to Frank Jackson for allowing me to photocopy the various documents referred to in the text and footnotes.
9. See T M Ridley, 'Industrial Production in the UK, 1900-1935', **Economics**, New Series Vol. 22, 1955, pp. 22-85 and W G Hoffman, **British Industry 1700-1950**. (Oxford, 1955).
10. See A Glyn and B Sutcliffe, **British Capitalism, Workers and the Profits Squeeze** (London 1972), Table 2.1, p.17.
11. EH Phelps Brown and M Browne, **A Century of Pay** (London 1968), pp.130-40.
12. See S Pollard, **The Development of the British Economy 1914-1960** (London 1962), p.19.
13. **Ibid.**
14. **Ibid.**, p.25.
15. Even though a few large firms operated overseas-such as Holland, Hannen and Cubitts who established a subsidiary in South Africa in 1913.
16. H W Richardson and D H Aldcroft, **Building in the British Economy between the War*** (London 1968), p.26.
17. In 1923.
18. In 1933; Richardson and Aldcroft, **op. cit.**, p.67.
19. M Bowley, **The British Building Industry/Four Studies in Response and Resistance to Change** (Cambridge 1966), p.12.
20. Quoted by R W Postgate, **The Builders' History**, NFBTO (London 1923), p.475.
21. Letter to the author dated 8.4.1973.
22. See S and B Webb, **The History of Trade Unionism** (London 1950), p.750; the 1911 Insurance Act and consequent admission of labourers gave a fillip to membership.
23. **Ibid.**
24. Despite their limitations: see R Hyman, **Strikes** (London 1972), pp.17-19; the strike data in the rest of this paragraph is based on the figures in **Annual Abstract of Labour Statistics** published annually by the then Board of Trade (Labour Department).
25. W Kendall, **The Revolutionary Movement in Britain 1900-1921/The Origins of British Communism** (London 1969), P.45.
26. See Postgate, **op. cit.**, pp. 393-422 on which this section draws heavily.
27. Holton, **op. cit.**, p.154.
28. See Postgate, **op. cit.**, p.409 for the actual wording.
29. 117, 370 voting papers were supplied, but only 43,697 voted with a majority in favour of the scheme of 19,385. Postgate, **op. cit.**, p.411.
30. The local federations were advisory bodies in which militants were influential.
31. Since in most cases such agreements required six months' notice for their termination. Postgate, **op. cit.**, p.415.
32. The number of such boards increased from 64 in 1894 to 325 in 1913. H Pelling, **A History of British Trade Unions** (London 1963), p.143. In the building industry 'the National Conciliation Board set up in 1908, followed the creation of local conciliation boards four years earlier'. WS Hilton, **Foes to Tyranny**, AUBTW (London 1963),p.225. EG. the 1913 meeting of the ASC&J General Council ordered the EC never to grant 'trade privilege' (i.e. permission to strike for improvement) until after 'exhausting all methods' provided by the conciliation boards and stipulated that whenever a board gave any decision 'the EC give immediate effect to same'. These orders were not changed for three years. Quoted in Postgate, **op. cit.**, p.415.
33. Hilton, **op. cit.**, p.201 gives the complete text of the memorandum.
34. Postgate, **op. cit.**, p.416 gives the complete text of the document.
35. Hilton, **op. cit.**, p.201.
36. Frank Jackson, **Events Leading to 1914 Lock-Out in the Building Trade** (unpublished notes made in the 1920s).
37. Frank Jackson, **Story of the Building Workers since 1914** (unpublished typewritten manuscript compiled in 1932), p.2.
38. **Ibid.**, p.3.
39. Frank Jackson, **Events Leading to 1914 Lock-Out**.
40. Frank Jackson, **Story of the Building Workers**, p.3.
41. Frank Jackson, **Events Leading to 1914 Lock-Out**.
42. **Ibid.**
43. Quoted by Frank Jackson, **Story of the Building Workers**, pp.3-4.
44. **Ibid.**
45. **Ibid.**
46. **Ibid.**
47. Frank Jackson, **Event! Leading to 1914 Lock-Out**.
48. **Ibid.**

49. **Ibid.**
50. Hilton, op. ch., p.204.
51. Postgate, op. eh., p.417.
52. **Ibid.**
53. **Ibid.**
54. **Ibid.**
55. **Ibid.**, my emphasis.
56. The 'taken-for-granted' assumption underlying the Hilton and Postgate accounts is that the rank-and-file are incapable of self-activity.
57. Frank Jackson, *Story of the Building Workers*, pp.5-6.
58. **Ibid.**, p.6.
59. i.e. means-tested poor relief for those without union/state insurance benefit.
60. Frank Jackson, *Story of the Building Workers*, p.6.
61. For the origins of the Daily Herald M January 1911 as a strike sheet and its appearance as a daily from April 1912 see Holton, op. cit., pp.180-186; for its subsequent history after it was taken over by Odhams in 1930 during the year of the birth of the Daily Worker see W Rust, *The Story of the Daily Worker*, (London 1949). The Daily Citizen was started on November 8, 1912 and stopped on June 5, 1915 according to the Webbs, op. cit., p.689, footnote.
62. Frank Jackson, *Story of the Building Workers*, p.6.
63. See Postgate, op. cit., p.419 for details of the voting.
64. Frank Jackson, *Story of the Building Workers*, p.7.
65. **Ibid.**
66. In the long-term the Lock-Out was to provide a reference point for evaluation of the 1924 Building Strike and 'Peace in Industry' policy. For details see my *Theories of the Labour Movement: A Critique of Existing Theories in the context of an empirical study of Building Trade Unionism*, pp. 206-225 (Ph.D. thesis London University 1977)
67. Frank Jackson, *Story of the Building Workers*, p.8.
68. **Ibid.**
69. **Ibid.**
70. **Ibid.**
71. As far as I know Frank Jackson has the only surviving copy of these minutes which I was able to photocopy.
72. Frank Jackson, *Story of the Building Workers*, p.8.
73. Following the demise of the BWIU Hamilton became secretary of the Liverpool Council for Independent Working-Class Education and 'also helped in the formation of the Communist Party in Liverpool along with Bessie and Jack Braddock, and, like them, he joined the Labour Party and became a Liverpool Councillor and Alderman'. E and R Frow, 'Educating Marxists—Study of the Early Days of the Plebs League in the North-West', *Marxism Today*, Vol. 12, No. 10, October 1968, p.306.
74. BWIU formation conference Minutes, p.3.
75. Quoted in Hilton, op. cit., p.211.
76. BWIU formation conference Minutes, p.1.
77. **Ibid.**
78. *Industrial Unionism*, op. cit., p.2.
79. **Ibid.**, p.4., emphases as in original.
80. **Ibid.**
81. **Ibid.**, pp. 4-5.
82. **Ibid.**, p.5.
83. **Ibid.**
84. **Ibid.**
85. **Ibid.**
86. **Ibid.**
87. **Ibid.**
88. **Ibid.**
89. **Ibid.**, p.6.
90. **Ibid.**
91. **Ibid.**, p.7.
92. **Ibid.**
93. **Ibid.**
94. **Ibid.**, p.8.
95. 'Theodore Rothstein initiated the joint translation and publication by the BSP and SLP the ideological effect of which was extremely important during the period from the autumn of 1918, and helped to clear the way for Communist unity'. J Klugmann, *History of the CPGB/Formation and Early Years* (London 1968), p.17, footnote 2.
96. *Industrial Unionism*, op. cit., p.10.
97. **Ibid.**, p.12.
98. The Charter contained five points: '(1) Prevention of Unemployment; (2) Maintenance of Standard Rates; (3) The Abolition of Autocracy in Industry; (4) No limitation of Output; and (5) Freedom for every worker, male or female, skilled or unskilled, adult or adolescent, to work any machine, to go on any job, to do the work of any craft'. Quoted in *Industrial Unionism*, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
99. Quoted in *Industrial Unionism*, op. cit., p.12, emphasis as in original.
100. *Industrial Unionism*, op. cit., p.10.
101. **Ibid.**, p.11, emphasis as in original.
102. **Ibid.**, p.12.
103. **Ibid.**, p.13.
104. **Ibid.**
105. **Ibid.**, emphasis as in original.
106. **Ibid.**: the 'half-time' system of child labour was not abolished until the Education Act 1918. See B Simon, *Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1920*, London 1965).
107. *Industrial Unionism*, op. cit., p.14.
108. That is, 'the power of an educated working-class to fold their arms in such numbers as to paralyse industry' (**ibid.**).
109. **Ibid.**
110. **Ibid.**
111. **Ibid.**
112. **Ibid.**, p. 15.
113. **Ibid.**
114. **Ibid.**, p.1.
115. **Ibid.**, p.15.
116. All references are to RULES of the Building Workers' Industrial Union (Revised Rules 1920), What is the BWIU ? /A Statement and a Refutation/The Fight for Industrial Unionism Inodate, but probably published at the end of 1917 or early in 1918) said the BWIU 'has an Executive Council of ten members and a Referee—two Carpenters and Joiners, two Bricklayers, two Painters, two Plumbers, and two Labourers' (p.3). AH of which indicates that there were only five groups prior to 1920.

117. Rule 11, pp. 17-19.
118. The place, rent and district' of the Head Office was 'ballotted on every three years after the Annual Conference ...' (Rule 1, p.5).
119. A fee of 1/- was levied per new member (Rule 4, p.7) with contributions at 6d a week per member—5d. going to the General Fund and 1d. to the Local Fund to meet branch and district expenses (Rule 5, p.7). Though unemployed and sick members were exempt (Rule 7, Clause B, pp.9-10). Dispute (and sick pay) was 15/- a week (Rule 8, Clause B, p. 10) if a strike had been sanctioned by the Branch or District Committee (p.11) and when a strike occurred 'the strike committee' had to be 'elected by the members engaged in the dispute ...' (ibid.). Victimisation pay was 6/- per day: 'If any member is victimised whilst in any official capacity, by imprisonment for propaganda or other militant action in connection with this Society, the wife or other dependents of such members shall be entitled to receive victimisation pay' (Rule 8, Clause B, pp.12-13). Travelling benefit up to £2 a year was paid 'to members in dispute ... leaving one district to go to another ...' (Rule 8, Clause C, p.13) plus legal assistance, accident benefit and optional tool benefit from 10/- to £30 for those 'paying 2/- entrance and an additional 1/- per quarter ...' (Rule 8, Clause E, p.14). Referenda were taken at the request of a third of the total number of branches (Rule 28, p.30).
120. Rules could 'only be altered by the Executive Council after such amendment' had 'been asked for and sent in by the Branches'; amended rules had to be 'finally voted on by the members' (Rule 4U, p.35).
121. Branches held weekly meetings 'of all members in the Building Industry' with 'facilities' for dealing with 'sectional business by members of the section affected' (Rule 14, p.19). Branch Committees were elected with not less than six members and 'each group in the branch ... entitled to at least one representative' (Rule 17, p.20). Branch Officers: i.e. Chairman (who was also Treasurer), Secretary and two auditors were elected at a Quarterly General Meeting and held office for six months. The Secretary got 5% of the total branch contributions (p.24) and the Chairman 6d. for every branch meeting attended (p.25) where membership was over 30. Branch Collectors got 2/3% of the amount they collected (ibid.) and Auditors 1/- for the first 100 members and 6d. for each additional 100 members per audit (p.26).
122. The General Secretary and National Organiser were both elected every two years (Rule 30, 31, pp.31-2). 'No full-time paid official' could 'vote on any Council, Conference or Committee of the Union, nor move resolutions' (Rule 33, p.32). At the request of a third of the total number of branches, the EC had to issue voting papers for 'the recall of a paid officer of the Union, and in the event of a majority of the votes of the members deciding against the official, the Executive Council' had 'to conduct an election to fill the vacancy' (ibid., pp. 32-3).
123. The Amalgamated Society of Glaziers and Glass Cutters of the UK and the Liverpool and District Glass Decorators' and Signwriters' Association amalgamated with the BWIU (see inside back-cover of Industrial Unionism). According to Holten (op. cit., p. 223, footnote 36) affiliated unions also included the London Society of Plumbers and the London and Provincial Federation of Painters.
124. Holton.op. cit., p.163.
125. Postgate, op. cit., p.428.
126. Letter to the author, dated 8.4.1973.
127. Postgate, op. cit., p.430.
128. Quoted in What is the BWIU ?, op. cit., pp.10-11.
129. Ibid., p.11.
130. At a delegate conference of London lodges.
131. Extract from the Conference Minutes quoted in **What is the BWIU ?**, p.12.
132. ibid.
133. Postgate, op. cit., p.430.
134. According to the inside back-cover of Industrial Unionism.
135. Postgate, op. cit., p.430.
136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
138. Problems of the Building Industry, prepared by Marx House in association with the New Builders' Leader, Lawrence and Wishart, (London 1941), p.21, emphasis as in original.
139. A formation member of the BWIU and for some time on the Executive.
140. Conversation with the author dated 20.6.1971.
141. Secretary of the London District Management Committee of the ASC&J.
142. Extract from my photocopy of Frank Jackson's original.
143. Frank Jackson, Story of the Building Workers, p.11.
144. Letter to the author dated 24.5.1973.
145. Conversation with the author, dated 20.6.1971; see also Klugmann, op. cit., p.79.
146. Ibid., pp.13-74.
147. See Note 157.
148. Hilton, op. cit., p.212.
149. Quoted in Hilton, op. cit., p.212.
150. What was established on February 5, 1918, with the title NFBTO.
151. Hilton, op. cit., p.217.
152. Frank Jackson, Story of the Building Workers, p.10.
153. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
154. Hilton, op. cit., p.56.
155. Ibid., P.211.
156. Frank Jackson, Story of the Building Workers, p.11.
157. See Hilton, op. cit., p.225.
158. Ibid.
159. Ibid., pp.225-6.
160. Frank Jackson, Story of the Building Workers, p.11.
161. According to F Matthews, 'The Building Guilds', in Essays in Labour History 1886-1923 (ed.), A Briggs and J Saville (London 1971), pp.288-89.
162. Quoted in Matthews, op. cit., p.291.
163. Ibid., p.292.
164. Ibid.
165. Ibid.
166. Ibid.
167. See pp.19-20 above for details of Frank Jackson's expulsion from the ASC&J in 1915 and Stennet's circular on the Trade Union Rights Committee.
168. In the first paragraph of his exegesis.
169. Matthews, op. cit., p.284.
170. 1.8.1920: see Klugmann, op. cit., p.79.
171. See Note 73 above.
172. For as Gramsci-in his polemic against the theory of ideology as a simple reflection of the economic base—says: 'the economy is only the mainspring of history "in the last analysis" and economic crises 'simply create a tension more favourable to the dissemination of certain modes of thought ...' A Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks I (London 1971), p.162 and p.184. Or, in Althusserian terms, the superstructures-ideological and political—have a "relative autonomy" with respect to the base; even though the economy determines in the last instance. See also, Stuart Hall, Bob Lumley and Gregor McLennan, 'Politics and Ideology: Gramsci's Working Papers in Cultural Studies 10/On Ideology, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1977, pp. 45-76. The latter paper is significant because of its contention that: 'Gramsci's concepts lie behind some of the main points of the Althusserians' analyses' (p.46) and that it 'is a contribution which should be openly acknowledged' (p.73).

173. For as Robert Turner suggests:
Labour historians may ... gain insights into particular strikes through the memories—often vivid—of those at a grass-roots situation whose significance has been disregarded Oral evidence from this ... category of informants seems most likely to change received historical opinions of the British labour movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (The Contribution of Oral Evidence to Labour History', **Oral History/The Journal of the Oral History Society**, Vol. 4, No. 1, Spring 1976, p.31).
- 174.. For, as Q Hoare and G Nowell Smith say: Gramsci's position was that the 'working-class, like the bourgeoisie before it, is capable of developing from within its own ranks its own organic intellectuals...' (**Prison Notebooks**, p.4). The Gramscian concepts of "hegemony" and the "intellectuals"—when used to 'analyse the balance of forces within specific conjunctures'—also 'cut across the simple topographical model of base and superstructure' (Stuart Hall, at al., 'Politics and Ideology: Gramsci', p.47 and p.71)
175. E.g. John Foster gives the occupations and campaign associations of 57 'involved—from a radical standpoint—in three of the main struggles between 1830 and 1850' in Oldham (**Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution**, p.137). The breakdown shows that the 'great bulk' of these leaders 'were manual workers'; and 'even those listed as shopkeepers and beerhouse keepers were often ... victimized industrial militants' (**ibid.**).
176. See Robert Tressell, **The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists** (London 1965).
177. Holton, **British Syndicalism, 1900-1914**, p.155.
178. **Ibid.**
179. For, as Richard Hyman and James Hinton say:
... the Party should be viewed as an attempt to bring together and organise effectively the new stratum of working-class 'rank-and-file' leadership thrown up by the industrial upheavals of the 1910-20 decade (**Trade Unions and Revolution: The Industrial Politics of the Early British Communist Party**) (London 1975) p.12.
180. **Viz.** The Building Workers' Minority Movement: The Builders' Forward Movement 1931-32; The New Builders' Leader Movement 1935-56; The Building Workers' Charter Movement 1970 to date. For concrete analyses of the latter, see P Latham, **Theories of the Labour Movement**, **op. cit.**
181. Dan Finn, Neil Grant and Richard Johnson, 'Social Democracy, Education and the Crisis', **Working Papers in Cultural Studies** 10/On **Ideology**, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1977, p.154.
182. For, as Eric Hobsbawm says: the 'union moderate is more often than not an ossified or emasculated ex-militant' (Trade Union Historiography', p.33). During this century, moreover, subsequent leaders of the 'official' building unions frequently first came into prominence through their participation in 'unofficial' movements. Thus George Hicks was a leading syndicalist until the formation of the **BWIU**; later he became General Secretary of the AUBTW and a Labour MP. Also, as Chairman of the 1927 TUC, he successfully urged discussions with the powerful group of industrialists headed by Sir Alfred Mond. In the January 1936 issue of the **New Builders' Leader** he predicted that the paper would collapse in six months. Similarly, Sir Harry Weaver—who became General Secretary of the NFBTO and was on the Editorial Board of the **New Builders' Leader** from **1940-44**—gave the policy report at the Ninth Annual Conference of the **NBL** in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, on April 23, 1944 (Frank Jackson, **18 Years of Struggle/The History of the New Builders' Leader**, issued by the **New Builders' Leader/Independent Paper for Building Workers** (London 1953), p.15). Indeed, George Smith—the present General Secretary of UCATT—is an ex-Communist.
183. Thus recent 'ultra-left' historiography shows 'a cavalier disregard for genuine historical investigation' (Hinton and Human, **Trade Unions and Revolution**, P.91. Hinton and Hyman are referring to the 'orthodox Trotskyist' approach—with its 'ritual assertion of missed revolutionary opportunity ...' (**ibid.**): exemplified by the Workers' Revolutionary Party. See M Woodhouse and B Pearce, **Essays on the History of Communism in Britain**, (London 1975). However, **Trade Unions and Revolution** ends up subordinating its whole project to the exigencies of the current politics of the International Socialists Group (now Socialist Workers Party): **viz.** 'there are few lessons of direct relevance to our present position that we can learn from the 1920s We are starting from scratch' when 'we talk of a national rank-and-file movement ...' (p.74). Hinton and Hyman, moreover, are unable to distinguish and situate past and present trends within the labour movement: because the "trade union bureaucracy" model—which posits an undifferentiated trade union leadership versus a spontaneous rank and file—underpins their analyses! They therefore jettison the Lukacsian notion of the 'present as a historical problem'. G Lukacs, **History and Class Consciousness**, (London 1971), p.157, his emphasis. Conversely, as Geoff Roberts—in an extended critique of the "trade union bureaucracy" thesis of the SWP—says:
If one accepts that the problem of change in the trade union movement is not primarily one of treacherous leadership but of political consciousness, then it follows that unity must be forged between those progressive political forces, whether they be rank and file members of trade union leaders, striving to give a left direction to the movement ... (The Strategy of Rank and File', **Marxism Today**, Vol. 20, No. 12, December 1976, p.379).
184. See Note 183 above.
185. For as Roberts notes, despite the fact that the SWP 'emphatically denies that it aims to build an organisational alternative to the trade unions ... we find statements such as that the NRFM will 'untrammelled by a reformist bureaucracy ... be capable of challenging capitalism itself' (The Strategy of Rank and File', p.376).
186. **Viz.** the now fragmenting Scottish Labour Party—no longer able to pay its full-time worker (Sunday Times, 16.10.1977); the multiplicity of competing 'ultra-left' groups dissipating their energies; and the miniscule Stalinist breakaway from the CPGB—in July 1977—the New Communist Party. For a history of breakaways: see Shirley Lerner, **Breakaway Unions and the Small Trade Union** (London 1961) and also Tony Lane and Kenneth Roberts, **Strike at Pilkingtons**, (London 1971), pp. 220-22.

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