

SOCIAL UNIONISM AND MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION: WHAT ROLE FOR UNION DEMOCRACY?

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Since the 1980s, labour movements, particularly in North America, have been on the defensive, seeking to protect hard-won economic gains, social entitlements, and political influence from attacks by employers and politicians intent on dismantling the institutional bases of the postwar Keynesian compromise. The juggernauts of economic globalization and neoliberal policy have so thoroughly challenged unions' organizational, economic, and political effectiveness that a reexamination of their purposes, structures, and strategies has consumed academic and activist debate for the better part of the last 20 years. In the United States, the crisis was initially experienced and interpreted as one of membership numbers, leading the AFL-CIO and several of its affiliates to promote the organizing model and to reorient union resources towards new membership recruitment as the means for reversing declining union density and therefore reinforcing workers' economic and political power.¹ In the years since, the organizing model has been thoroughly critiqued not only for its failure to produce major and sustainable organizing breakthroughs and to stabilize union membership numbers, but also for its narrow definition of the crisis itself.² As Paul Johnson has argued, while it has finally sunk in that the US labour movement must "organize or die," the adoption of the organizing model has not answered the question "Organize for what?"³ In other words, the purpose of the labour movement is also part of the crisis.

It is in this context that social unionism has been held up as a better alternative to union renewal. According to Pradeep Kumar and Gregor Murray, social unionism has been "the dominant union mode in Canada,"⁴

and remains an important motivating philosophy for many Canadian union leaders.⁵ Kumar and Murray define social unionism as a particular configuration of ideas and practices in which workers are seen as having interests as both wage earners and citizens. Unions therefore engage in forms of collective action that are both economic and political in nature and include union members as well as members of the broader community, including “working in coalition with women or community groups; engaging in political action to change public policy or effect social economic change; prioritizing an involvement in the community; taking specific action to promote gender or racial equality; and promoting membership understanding of their union.”⁶ In the early 1990s, research on the durability and effectiveness of Canadian unions relative to their US counterparts pointed to the importance of not only a more supportive legislative and social rights framework, but also an orientation towards coalition politics, independent electoral struggle, and membership mobilization.⁷ The Canadian labour movement’s comparative success at sustaining a broader vision of union purpose, whose goal is the defence of working-class interests in general as well as those of a dues-paying union membership, along with a greater capacity to mobilize in the face of neoliberal globalization, has been credited with preventing the kind of precipitous decline in membership and union density experienced by US unions and has led some to embrace social unionism as an effective union renewal strategy.⁸

However, I will argue that social unionism as such is not necessarily a sufficient basis for a renewed labour movement capable of engaging existing memberships and expanding its appeal to non-union workers and the broader public. Because of the secondary role that democratization often plays in social unionist strategies, these practices do not necessarily address one of the main reasons for continued membership apathy and reluctance of unorganized workers to join unions, which is lack of membership control over their organizations. Most academics and activists assume that social unionism is integrally linked to greater membership participation, but an examination of both historical and contemporary practices shows that there is no guarantee that unions always combine social unionist commitments with democratic organizational practices. There are three main aspects to this

argument. First, in many unions, social unionist commitments are still separate from what remains the core of union activity — collective bargaining and day-to-day servicing — and are often sacrificed when they conflict with the membership's sectional economic interests. Second, a commitment to a progressive politics of broader social change has neither guaranteed more participatory processes to carry them out nor transformed the heavy reliance on “experts” acting in the place of the membership. Finally, even where membership participation is emphasized in social unionist practices, that participation is not necessarily democratic in that members are mobilized for purposes and in conditions over which they have little control. As such, progressive policy positions held by much of the Canadian labour movement can substitute for a more substantial union revitalization project, which involves democratization and the deepening of membership control.

Defining Social Unionism There is a great deal of confusion about the definition of social unionism, and a wide variety of terms and practices are associated with it in both labour movement documents and academic literature. In particular, “social unionism,” “social movement unionism,” “community unionism,” and the “organizing model” are often used interchangeably to refer to a common set of North American union orientations and revitalization strategies. To identify the specificity of social unionism, I will use the social movement literature that seeks to classify and categorize different types of movements. This task of clarification is complicated both by the fact that unions adopt these terms in ways that sometimes mischaracterize their own activity, and by the reality that there are significant amounts of variation within each category of union practice.

In comparing and distinguishing union approaches, it is helpful to identify a number of key axes on which they vary. The social movement literature suggests three important such elements. First, unions develop and adopt an ethos or “collective action frame” that provides a legitimating rationale for the pursuit of strategic objectives. Such frames provide a sense of collective meaning and purpose by defining workers' interests and identities, the nature of the problems faced, the kinds of solutions required, and the reasons why people should involve themselves in union activity.⁹ Second, unions take

up a particular repertoire, a series of means or strategies for acting on its ethical claims and pursuing common interests.¹⁰ Finally, union frames and strategic repertoires are defined, shaped, and implemented via a variety of “internal organizational practices” and power relations within union structures, which define who decides what and who does what. These organizational structures and relationships involve the roles, relative importance of, and division of labour between elected leaders, appointed staff, and member activists and general membership in both decisionmaking and implementation.¹¹ Actual patterns of union ideology and practice are the complex products of historical struggle both within organizations and with other social forces, and, rather than being ideal types, are contingent combinations of collective action frames, repertoires, and internal organizational practices.¹²

Social Unionist Collective Action Frames In North America, social unionism is first and foremost a collective action frame, providing a set of answers to the questions of union purpose, and workers’ interests and identities different from that of its major alternative, business unionism. As Robert Hoxie described long ago, business unionism involves a fairly narrow definition of workers’ interests, concerning the “here and now” of “higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions” and whatever factors may increase the bargaining power of the union to achieve such purposes. As well, business unionism posits a narrow community of interest served by the union, generally focusing exclusively on the immediate, dues-paying membership rather than the working class more generally. Both of these are attached to a fairly conservative interpretation of workers’ relationship to the capitalist economy, accepting private property and the wage system but attempting to improve the economic lot of union members within that framework.¹³

In contrast, social unionism presents a broader view of both workers’ interests and unions’ role in achieving them. In addition to the immediate economic interests of union members, social unionism also concerns itself with the longer-term interests of workers beyond the workplace. As Kumar and Murray point out, social unionism frames workers as also being citizens,

and therefore with interests in public and social policies that shape the distribution of rights, entitlements, and responsibilities, not to mention levels of general economic and social equality.¹⁴ Because workplace relations are shaped by the structures of power outside of them, and because workers' lives are lived in realms besides the workplace, they and their unions must concern themselves with those other arenas.¹⁵

This anti-economistic definition of workers' interests has also tended to produce anti-sectionalist definitions of the community that unions serve. As Ian Robinson argues, both "the scope of [social unionism's] ambitions and sense of obligation" are more expansive, and include the desire "to change the entire society and to advance the interests of many who are not union members" on the basis of a "moral critique of the existing order."¹⁶ This explains in part why the Canadian Labour Congress includes a focus on non-bargaining activities such as "promoting equality for women, campaigning to ban imports made by child labour or in sweatshops, fighting to stop racism and lobbying to increase social spending on health and education."¹⁷ For social unionists, the labour movement is a base from which broader social change — "a more equitable society" in the interests of the working-class majority — is made.¹⁸ However, there is scope for variation within the social unionist collective action frame. While social unionism constitutes a commitment to social change beyond the workplace and beyond the unionized working class, the nature of the social injustices being fought (the diagnostic frame), the type of social change being pursued (the prognostic frame), and the particular content of workers' broader interests and identities can result in many different ideological approaches.¹⁹

Social unionism as a general ethos of union activity is not a recent invention. Rather, throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s, the exclusivity and narrow agenda of business unionism was challenged by competing organizations that promoted more expansive views of workers' interests and solidarities. Despite very important differences in goals, strategy, social base, and internal practices, the Knights of Labor, the Industrial Workers of the World, and the One Big Union all expressed elements of the social unionist ethos insofar as they understood that all workers shared interests that were rooted in but extended beyond the workplace, and sought to construct

organizational forms that could express and fight effectively for this broader vision. In the post-war period, social unionism in Canada found its strongest roots in the industrial unions associated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which emerged in the 1930s. This project of unionizing semiskilled factory workers was about establishing collective bargaining rights for those hitherto excluded from unionism, but also politicized workers around a struggle for a social wage, for inclusion in political and social institutions, and for economic and social equality. The “exceptionally hostile terrain” of organizing in 1930s United States and Canada also promoted in the CIO forms of struggle based on a broad alliance of the working class community, and many of their tactics, like the sit-down strike, relied upon class-conscious community action as much as union members’ commitment.²⁰ In the postwar United States, social unionism was associated with Walter Reuther of the United Auto, Aircraft, and Agricultural Implements Workers of America (UAW) and his vision of an alliance of the organized working class with other progressive social forces in the struggle to redistribute postwar material gains on a mass scale.²¹ This orientation coloured the UAW in Canada, who were joined by the Steelworkers, who expressed their social unionism through their commitment to social democratic party politics.

From the 1960s onwards, the social unionist current represented by these industrial unions was strengthened by the dramatic growth of public sector unions. Unions like the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and the Public Service Alliance of Canada have all become identified with the social unionist ethos, particularly given their record on fighting for broader legislation on pay and employment equity, maternity leave, and same-sex benefits, as well as their well-known anti-privatization campaigns. Paul Johnston argues that public sector unions have a tendency towards social unionism because the satisfaction of their sectional economic interests is inherently tied to the outcome of public policy debates that necessarily involve other citizens (this also promotes certain repertoire choices; more on this later).²² However, the content of many public sector jobs also brings many union members into regular contact with members of the broader community, highlights the challenges faced by those they

serve, and promotes a sense of shared interest in the quality of public services. The massive growth of Canadian public sector unions since the 1960s and 1970s led to a “shift [in] the balance of power from international to national unions,” from private sector to public sector unions, and from craft unions to industrial and general unions, creating a much stronger coalition for social unionism in the Canadian labour movement.²³

So, the social unionist frame used in Canadian unions emphasizes both unions’ broader responsibility to working people more generally and to operate on terrains outside of the workplace. Within this shared idea, one can see reformist and radical variants, based on the depth of the critique of capitalism or other social inequalities, the definitions of the contours of the community of solidarity of which workers are a part, and the boundary between that community and other social forces. Those ideological-discursive variations are also evident in the particular ways in which different unions practise social unionism, in other words, in the particular elements of the social unionist repertoire that they adopt and deploy.

Social Unionist Repertoires Given its more expansive definition of workers’ interests and their connection to processes outside the immediate workplace, social unionism tends to adopt a repertoire of action that goes beyond collective bargaining. While Canadian unions with this orientation cannot eschew bargaining (due to its central role in defining a legally established union with representation rights), they have supplemented it with a wide range of strategies that operationalize their broader commitments. This repertoire includes nonpartisan lobbying, union-community coalitions, extraparliamentary mobilizations like demonstrations or political strikes, international solidarity actions, community volunteerism, and charitable fundraising.

In the Canadian context, the dominant social unionist repertoire up until the early 1990s has been social democratic electoral politics.²⁴ In the 1940s, the CIO in Canada (organized as the Canadian Congress of Labour) was an important battleground on which the conflict between communism and social democracy was played out, and by the end of that decade social democrats (then partisans of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation) occupied

important strategic leadership and organizing positions within these unions (such as the Steel Workers Organizing Committee).²⁵ With this base in the union leadership, CCF partisans such as Charles Millard of the Steelworkers set about building an infrastructure within unions designed to facilitate union members' engagement in electoral politics and encouraging locals to affiliate directly to the party. These organizational linkages were further consolidated by the Canadian Labour Congress's 1961 decision to participate in the formation of the CCF's successor, the New Democratic Party. Christopher Schenk and Elaine Bernard have argued that this political coalition between organized labour and social democracy has been the expression of Canadian unions' social unionist impulses — by winning political reforms that foster greater economic and social equality in general — and has encouraged their broader perspective even further. For them, the NDP is itself:

A political coalition that provides a structure for labor and other progressive groups — the women's movement, social justice groups, environmentalists, students, the peace movement, and others — to work together... [W]hile Canadian unions are leery of and occasionally even hostile to the new social movements, through the NDP, movement activists and trade unionists work together, building the trust and experience necessary to work in coalition.²⁶

In concrete terms, labour's social democratic electoral strategies have tended to involve the following: national and/or local union affiliation to the NDP; a formal and constitutionally guaranteed role for union leaders in the decisionmaking structures of the party; a significant amount of union financial support for party campaigns; local political action committees whose role is fundraising and political education among the union membership, particularly at election time; donation of union activist labour to work in electoral campaigns; and union leaders and activists occasionally running for office under the NDP banner.²⁷ However, like all electoralist strategies, this approach hasn't always resulted in any direct union involvement in the community, or even ongoing political work with the union membership between elections.²⁸

Public sector unions have tended to concentrate on a somewhat different subset of the social unionist repertoire, and their greater prominence in the

Canadian labour movement since the 1970s has led to a reconfiguration of social unionism. Because many of their members were either direct government employees or were sometimes negatively affected by the NDP's policies when they achieved provincial power, public sector unions' partisan affiliation with the NDP has always been somewhat more fraught.²⁹ However, given the more obvious interpenetration of the economic and political in public sector negotiations, and the way that their strikes involve citizens as recipients of services, many public sector unions turned to political mobilization and coalition building around visions of what the state should do for the public, as a way to build support for their vision of public services and block state employers from mobilizing the public against them. This trend has been further enhanced by the ongoing politicization of public sector workers in the face of employer attacks on their wages and collective bargaining rights, and they have reached out to the publics they serve to form an opposition bloc against neoliberal restraint policies. We should not underestimate the effect that "permanent exceptionalism" — the government practice of restricting their employees' rights to bargain and strike via ad hoc measures and without altering the formal industrial relations framework³⁰ — has had on the consciousness and strategies of public sector workers and their unions.

Although not exclusive to them, many public sector unions have taken up the repertoire associated with community unionism, namely union-community coalitions. Steven Tufts defines community unionism as "the formation of coalitions between unions and non-labor groups in order to achieve common goals."³¹ Ideally, such coalitions go beyond mere community support for organized labour; they also entail "significant power [for community groups] in determining the direction and organizational efforts of the coalition."³² Labour movement mobilization of the community was practised in Canada long before the consolidation of postwar unionism and the rise of public sector unions. Important struggles, such as the Knights of Labor's "people's strikes," the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, and the 1946 Stelco strike in Hamilton, involved significant participation of community allies, and not only in the service of organized labour's "narrow" aims. It might be argued that the dominance of social democratic electoralism as

the expression of social unionism in the immediate postwar period, along with the winning of legal rights that made union work relatively more stable and secure, resulted in a de-emphasis on the role of coalition work and on extraparliamentary action in general. However, union-community coalitions have reemerged as an important expression of social unionism since the late 1970s and early 1980s, with almost 48 percent of unions surveyed indicating that they participate in community coalitions.³³ Prominent contemporary examples of this strategy include opposition to the United States-Canada Free Trade Agreement via the Action Canada Network, Operation Solidarity in British Columbia, the Ontario Days of Action, mobilization around the Quebec City Summit of the Americas protests, the Ontario Health Coalition, the Equal Pay Coalition, and the Toronto District Labour Council's Million Reasons campaign to raise the minimum wage.

The flourishing of feminist and then equity activism in the unions also played a major role in promoting the social unionist coalition repertoire, as these groups sought allies outside an initially hostile labour movement, fought for legislative solutions to inequality that went beyond collective bargaining, and spoke to non-union constituencies as well. All of the central issues of the union or working-class feminist agenda of the 1970s onwards — i.e., pay and employment equity, maternity leave, child care, changes to human rights codes and unemployment insurance rules — involved coalitions between union women and feminist organizations, which allowed for gains to be made on both the collective bargaining and legislative fronts.³⁴ Indeed, as Jan Kainer argues, feminist coalition work is in fact the model upon which contemporary social unionist community unionism is based, even though this debt is rarely acknowledged in the union renewal literature.³⁵

In sum, social unionist collective action frames are brought to life through specific repertoires, which can have varying implications. In the contemporary Canadian context, the two primary strategic expressions of social unionism are social democratic electoralism and community unionism, each with very different effects on the unions themselves as well as the broader constituencies they are meant to serve. This variation is also compounded by the fact that both social unionist frames and strategic repertoires are decided upon and implemented through different internal structures and politics.

Internal Organizational Practices In terms of its internal organizational practices, social unionism is generally — if only implicitly — counterposed to the service model of unionism in which “expert,” full-time, elected, or appointed leaders act on behalf of and in the place of members, in top-down and bureaucratic union structures, and limit their engagement to legalistic processes and the narrowly defined material interests of the membership. These practices both rely upon and perpetuate a passive membership whose sense of the union is of an insurance policy rather than a social movement or agency for collective social change.³⁶ In these leadership-focused unions, elected and appointed leaders are primarily responsible for framing, repertoire choices, and implementation of union decisions. The rise and consequences of the service model of unionism in both Canada and the United States in the postwar period have been well documented.³⁷

However, the juxtaposition of social unionism and the service model is based on a confusion of ethos and repertoire with organizational practices. While the service model has long been attached to business unionism as a particular constellation of union praxis, it is not exclusive to that vision of union purpose, nor is it necessary to carry out business unionist goals via a service model. Indeed, even though many Canadian unions have adhered to social unionism in the postwar period, this has always been in conjunction with service model organizational practices that have also been the dominant means by which union goals and strategies have been implemented. In fact, it isn't clear that the social unionist ethos as such can be clearly identified with either bureaucratic or democratic internal politics (more on this later).

That said, the rise of the organizing model in the United States is more clearly a concrete alternative to the service model of unionism. In its 1988 organizing manual *Numbers that Count*, the AFL-CIO characterized the organizing model as “involving members in solutions” rather than “trying to help people by solving problems for them.”³⁸ From this very general statement, two faces of the organizing model have evolved: one focused on external organizing to increase membership numbers (organizing the unorganized) and the other aimed at internal organizing to regenerate membership participation in already-existing unions (organizing the organized); two

faces of a strategy to (re)build the union membership base, strengthen union bargaining power, and (re)generate capacity for broader political change.³⁹ Many (but not all) unions take up the organizing model because of a commitment to anti-sectionalist elements of the social unionist ethos: extending the benefits of collective bargaining, moving beyond a history of exclusionary membership practices, and linking up workplace struggles with those for “civil rights, immigrant rights and economic justice for non-members.”⁴⁰

Both the external and internal variants of the organizing model also involve what Kim Voss and Rachel Sherman call a “social movement repertoire” of tactics.⁴¹ For external organizing, these tactics are centred around a “rank-and-file intensive strategy ... focussed on person-to-person contact, house calls, and small-group meetings,” as well as membership “participation in and responsibility for the organizing campaign.”⁴² Also important is the attention to organizing historically underrepresented groups such as “women, minorities and immigrants.”⁴³ Internal organizing tactics include confrontational actions against the employer on the shop floor and in the community (through corporate campaigns, direct action, and use of media), coalition work and lobbying, and transformation of unions’ traditional representational functions through cultivation of greater rank-and-file participation, responsibility, and leadership.⁴⁴ Similarly, in Canada, shifts towards social unionist repertoires, namely coalition work, community involvement, and political action, have tended to correlate with greater emphasis on membership involvement.⁴⁵ In other words, the organizing model seeks to modify both what the union does and who does it and, unlike the servicing model, uses a membership-focused mobilization strategy.

So to review, by clarifying the distinction between unions’ collective action frames, repertoires, and internal organizational practices, we can begin to disentangle the confusing mass of union renewal strategies and understand social unionism more precisely. Social unionism, in this view, represents a broad anti-sectionalist, anti-economistic ethos. This ethos can vary according to its analysis of the problems of workers and their solutions, can be taken up with different repertoire, and can be defined and implemented via different organizational practices. From this, we can identify a

number of social unionist variants and therefore compare their effectiveness at reaching union goals and transforming internal union relationships and movement capacity. For the present moment, however, let us turn to some general assessments of the impact social unionism has, particularly on the public's evaluation of the labour movement's role in Canadian society.

Evaluating the Influence and Impact of Social Unionism One way to begin to assess the impact social unionism has as a union revitalization strategy is through examination of the broader public's perceptions of the labour movement's involvement in broader social justice struggles as well as their views on the issues unions have taken action on. In August 2003, the Canadian Labour Congress polled Canadians about their perceptions of unions' effectiveness and relevance and issued the findings in a document entitled *Canadians Talk About Unions*.⁴⁶ The poll was designed in part to assess how successful Canadian unions have been at resuscitating social unionism, using it to transform themselves and demonstrate their continuing relevance to both union members and Canadian workers more generally. On the one hand, the public was much less supportive of increasing global competition, free trade agreements, and the reduction and privatization of public services than it was in 2000, indicating that union campaigns have had some impact on people's political views. As well, unions were seen to help segments of the population beyond their immediate membership. Moreover, 75 percent of Canadians said they wanted unions to be even more involved in broader struggles for social justice. As such, the poll demonstrated that perception of the labour movement as the servant of "narrow" or "special interests" is waning, and the public accepts that unions have both the capacity and responsibility to advocate for broader social justice.⁴⁷

However, other aspects of the CLC survey reveal a level of cynicism about the labour movement, in terms of its motivations and internal functioning. A majority of all respondents believe that the labour movement's commitment to social unionism is instrumental, designed only to serve union members or to foster positive publicity.⁴⁸ A significant proportion (43 percent) of the two-thirds of unorganized workers who said they were unlikely to vote for a union also give the lack of internal democracy as a

major or minor reason for their reluctance. Furthermore, a significant number (45 percent) of existing union members feel they have “no say in how their union operates.”⁴⁹

The CLC’s interpretation of these findings led them to conclude that cynicism about labour’s motives and level of internal democracy is something to be overcome through “major internal education on the democratic basis of local union structures and leadership,” and for “building more membership support for their union and its leadership.”⁵⁰ In other words, instead of examining the quality of union campaigns and internal practices, union members and nonmembers need to be educated about how genuinely democratic unions actually are. While ignorance about or prejudice against unions undoubtedly colours some people’s responses to such a poll, the CLC’s conclusion that the problem lies not with the motivations behind the labour movement’s social justice work, nor the quality of union democracy, isn’t entirely warranted either. Instead, these contradictory results raise questions about the actual practices of social unionism and the extent to which they are revitalizing the labour movement.

Social Unionism versus “Real” Union Activity The CLC poll indicates some suspicion that the Canadian labour movement’s commitment to social unionism is instrumental, which reflects the fear that social unionist priorities and practices do not necessarily penetrate what remains the core of union activity: collective bargaining, servicing, and the labour-management relationship. Indeed, the adoption of a social unionist ethos or repertoire does not necessarily displace the priority placed on economic and sectionalist priorities. Because social unionism goes beyond the traditional bread-and-butter agenda of unions, it is often framed as what takes place outside of bargaining and is counterposed to, or at least separated from, it. Indeed, this dichotomy reflects the long-standing and dominant pattern of social unionism in Canada: social democratic electoralism. As Kumar and Murray note:

The notion of fighting for the improvement of working conditions and wages has historically entailed a twofold agenda of collective bargaining and political action. The former typically involved some combination of contractually

based job control and pattern bargaining for semi-skilled and unskilled workers, while the latter involved the pursuit of a social and political agenda which addressed the conditions of workers in general, as both wage-earners and citizens, notably through support for a social democratic party and its policies.⁵¹

In practice, however, this twofold strategy evolved into a bifurcated division of labour between the union and the party in which responsibility for the interests of the broader working class is contracted out to a related yet separate organization. The CLC's definition of social unionism as nonbargaining activity is thus very telling: social unionism is what goes on away from the bargaining table, while the bargaining agenda itself — protection of wages, benefits, and job security for existing members — remains much the same.⁵² Perhaps the clearest indication of the coexistence of business unionism with anti-sectionalist elements of social unionist philosophy is the relatively weak bargaining record on a variety of equity issues. In surveys done in 1997 and 2001, Kumar and Murray found that a cluster of issues concerning “gender, family, and working-time issues,” including child care, harassment, employment equity, and flexible working time, were least likely to be given a high priority by unions in collective bargaining. Even though almost 67 percent of unions in their survey indicated they were committed to equity or had “taken specific action to promote racial or gender equality,” the priority placed on these issues in the very sphere where unions have the most power to make direct gains, collective bargaining, remains quite low.⁵³ Kumar and Murray suggest one explanation: that because equity issues are perceived as “social-policy issues,” they are “considered to be part of a public-policy agenda, as opposed to a bargaining agenda,” reflecting the ongoing attachment to both business unionism and social unionism, each in their separate spheres.

One could argue that this approach is positive insofar as it prevents unions from building an equitable oasis for their members while abandoning the broader working class to a desert of deepening inequities. Additionally, one could also say that this division of labour is not necessarily problematic: many social justice issues can't be worked out at the level of bargaining, and Canadian unions can still place significant effort and real resources into

fighting for transformations in social policy and broader social justice while defending their membership's economic interests. Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) funding of the Winnipeg Workers' Organizing and Resource Centre, which provides a space for community-based organizing of unemployed and unorganized workers, is a positive case in point.⁵⁴ However, when union members' collective bargaining interests are not reframed in social unionist terms, it becomes difficult to sustain support for social unionist campaigns in other spheres of action. Even unions with significant social unionist commitments can see these programs walled off from what the majority of the union is involved in and concerned about, limiting the impact social activism has on the union's internal life and the way it conceives of its own collective bargaining issues. In a time of profound economic uncertainty, retrenchment into the well-worn habits of business unionism is quite easy, and social unionist campaigns become vulnerable as "luxuries we can't afford" when they are not seen as central to success in collective bargaining.⁵⁵ In other words, the failure to reframe collective bargaining issues in social unionist terms can result in the reinforcement of workers' sectionalist identities and prioritization of economic over political struggle.

When social unionism remains an add-on to bargaining rather than a vision that permeates the way unions see themselves and orients all their activity, the public cynicism documented in *Canadians Talk About Unions* is not that surprising. As Robinson points out, most organizations will attempt to place their concerns in moral terms, and connect them up to broader interests "whatever their real motives. Knowing this, most people are quite reasonably sceptical of such claims. Only when unions and their leaders prove that they stand behind their principles, even when they work to their disadvantage, are people inclined to take such appeals seriously."⁵⁶ While it would be difficult for unions to decentre collective bargaining entirely, given the legal framework in which Canadian unions operate, collective bargaining would need to be transformed and more clearly connected to the interests of those beyond the bargaining unit.

Progressive Policies, Top-Down Methods Despite broadening their activities beyond their collective bargaining repertoire and adding other substantive

commitments to their collective action frame, unions have not necessarily examined and rethought the internal organizational practices via which they carry out their activity. Even where labour organizations have adopted social unionism as an ethos, they have not always done so in ways that guarantee the democratization of union structures or widen the scope of who participates and makes decisions about union goals and activities. Instead, social unionism, understood as progressive policies on a broader set of social justice issues, can be made to substitute for a democratic process of struggling over, defining, and carrying out action on these issues. It is an open question whether social unionist commitments have been translated into strategies that transform the hierarchical relationship between elected and appointed leaders and the membership typical of the service model of unionism, and there is no guarantee that they will do so. An examination of some concrete historical examples of social unionism in action shall illustrate.

As the most prominent postwar advocate of social unionism, Walter Reuther combined the material gains of collective bargaining with a “broader progressive New Deal agenda” by purging the communist Left from the UAW and consolidating the power of the Administration caucus, such that the rank-and-file challenges “could only be marginally effective and certainly couldn’t be sustained without a coordinated opposition or alternative mechanisms to give them weight.”⁵⁷ Similarly, CCF social democrats fought communists by any means necessary in the 1940s to ensure they gained control over the CCL/CLC, entrenching a suspicion of dissent and grassroots activism that would later inform the response to the Waffle in the early 1970s.⁵⁸

Even community unionist endeavours are often affairs that link together the leaders of different movements, rather than creating and fostering organic connections among different sections of the working class. Recent research on community coalitions in other contexts has shown that the quality of coalitions varies according to the way common interests are defined, the structure and character of participation, their duration, and the type and quality of organizational buy-in. Nissen, Tattersall, and Frege, Heery, and Turner all identify coalitions that are ad hoc or “vanguard,” in which alliances are temporary, instrumental, and remain at the level of a small group of

leaders.⁵⁹ Even though there is a burgeoning literature on union-community coalitions in Canada, none of it has applied such a comparative analysis to its cases. As of now, there is no good evidence to support the claim that, overall, unions' coalition work involves the membership in any significant or sustained way.

Moreover, Kumar and Murray have shown that, despite the adoption of social unionism as a key orientation, the vast majority of Canadian unions have not significantly changed either the way collective bargaining and servicing is done or who is engaged in it. Even though 84 percent of unions offer educational programs for training local leaders and activists, only 32 percent of them use activists as paid organizers, and even fewer — 16 percent — have shifted responsibility for contract administration from staff to local stewards or officers.⁶⁰

In other words, social unionism as either a frame for action or a set of repertoires on its own is an insufficient model for union revitalization as it does not guarantee that the means by which progressive goals are sought are themselves participatory. As Voss and Sherman point out, it is entirely possible to use “radical tactics to achieve conservative goals” and vice versa.⁶¹ Mark Leier also echoes this insight, arguing that it is important to disentangle ideology from process, and not to assume that progressiveness in one ensures its presence in the other.⁶²

Participation Is Not Enough Some might argue that the introduction of the social movement repertoire and membership-mobilizing internal strategies typically highlighted in the organizing model literature would address the above concerns. However, despite the emphasis on participation, it has become increasingly evident that these practices do not necessarily develop grassroots democratic functioning either.⁶³ There are many indications of this. First, locals which have adopted the organizing model have done so through a top-down process in which a program mandated at the national level of the union is implemented in the locals, rather than being a product of “‘bottom-up,’ local innovation.”⁶⁴ While Voss and Sherman characterize this as a positive challenge to Michels' iron law of oligarchy, and a sign of hope that union leaders and staff can be vehicles of internal transforma-

tion, others, like Vanessa Tait and Michael Eisenscher, are less comfortable with a model whose strategy and priorities were determined by leadership and staff, and which was imposed through local trusteeships, forced mergers of locals, and centrally bargained master contracts.⁶⁵ Second, in many locals, the organizing model has resulted in increases in full-time servicing and specialist staff rather than a shift of responsibilities to local activists.⁶⁶ The SEIU's Justice for Janitors campaign, for instance, employed 110 paid organizers in 1995, and is widely known as "one of the most heavily staffed and highly centralized unions."⁶⁷ Third, in other cases, membership participation is merely a tactic to be used selectively, rather than part of an overall shift in methods of doing union work. For instance, Bronfenbrenner's extensive research on the relative effectiveness of strategies to organize non-union workers has shown that, in the 1990s, only six percent of unions used a "comprehensive union-building strategy" in their organizing campaigns, even though it clearly resulted in significantly higher win rates. Instead, unions were selectively ordering from a menu of organizing tactics, none of which on its own guaranteed success, even if the tactic involved some kind of rank-and-file involvement.⁶⁸ In other words, many unions are reluctant to provide new members with "the same activist and democratic organization it was during the organizing campaign through the first contract and beyond."⁶⁹ Indeed, Richard Hurd argues that the organizing model's focus on grassroots democracy was quickly pushed to the side as the pressures of declining union density continued to be felt:

In most unions the call for dramatic budget reallocation prompted only modest shifts, and (other than the marginally increased attention to organizing) life continued as before — there was no soul searching, no engagement, and no organizing momentum to inspire progressive staff and militant members. From its inception, a notable weakness in the AFL-CIO's Changing to Organize program was that the objective of achieving grassroots activism and member mobilization as the key to injecting social movement zeal was abandoned at the alter [sic] of quantitative recruitment goals.⁷⁰

As a result, much membership participation still takes place under conditions set and controlled by leaders. As Bruce Nissen has pointed out, "[e]ven unions attempting the mobilizational approach often want 'push-button'

activism bureaucratically controlled by leaders, thus stifling lasting change.”⁷¹ Therefore, the organizing model as it is being practised in many places does not depart significantly from C. Wright Mills’ characterization of postwar unionism as the “management of discontent.”⁷² In this phase, union leaders may be eliciting rather than tamping down expressions of discontent, but they still want to ensure they are in a position to manage and direct it. All of this points to the crucial difference between membership participation and mobilization, on the one hand, and democratic control on the other. In the organizing model, whether inflected by social unionist goals or not, membership participation often remains highly constrained by most unions’ very durable bureaucratic structures, relationships, and cultural expectations and therefore isn’t an unproblematic revitalization model.

What Is to Be Done? Democracy and Union Renewal I have argued here that social unionism as is now being practised by most Canadian unions is a necessary but insufficient basis for a revitalized labour movement capable of making lasting social change. Both the expanded vision of the social unionism ethos and the adoption of multiple elements in its repertoire are key if unions are to ensure their relevance to both their members and the public at large. However, the potential of this union orientation will not be realized if it remains trapped within the inequalities of power and expertise that characterize relationships within the labour movement. The connection between social unionist goals, activist strategies, and internal union democracy is a contingent rather than an inherent one, and in practice there is no guarantee that social unionist projects, even participatory ones, attain their goals on the basis of active, democratic membership control.

Union revitalization requires both stronger forms of democratic accountability in the way that Lipset conceived of them, but must go beyond this. The case for prioritizing deep union democracy in the form of rank-and-file participation and empowerment is instrumental, developmental, and prefigurative. Contemporary social movement research has shown that, in more narrow pragmatic terms, unions (and social movements more generally) whose members feel they have real control participate more and open up the organization to more and potentially innovative solutions to unfore-

seen problems.⁷³ As Rosa Luxemburg once argued, the “unending pressure,” the “active, untrammelled, energetic political life of the broadest mass of the people” acts as a corrective for “all the innate shortcomings of social institutions.”⁷⁴ Such involvement also creates stronger bonds of solidarity and mutual commitment that come from ownership of decisions and the experience of working together.⁷⁵ Developing such processes also enhances legitimacy, particularly in the eyes of outsiders, which, as research presented here has shown, is an important problem faced by unions. In developmental terms, union members are themselves transformed through the experiences of participatory democracy in that they develop the organizational and critical capacities, forms of collective consciousness, and individual attitudes needed for full and equal participation in a self-governing society. As Gindin has put it, workers need to develop, in their own organizations, “the kind of capacities and potentials which are absolutely fundamental to one day building a different kind of society: the capacities for doing, creating, planning, executing.”⁷⁶ Finally, and related to this, deepening union democracy also begins to construct the very democratic institutions many would like to see developed in the rest of society, and in that sense prefigures the future in the present. In other words, “if the ultimate goal is to create a society in which all people are able to participate fully and equally in decision-making and management of human affairs, then the process by which this is achieved must itself be participatory; [o]therwise, the end itself is distorted.”⁷⁷

What would a more substantive form of union democracy require of both union leaders and members? Who will fight for such changes within the labour movement? It is important to avoid simplistic formulae claiming that union leaders will always block progressive or democratizing changes, which members will always support and fight for. In the Canadian context, union leadership has, at times, been as or more socially progressive than the members it represents. However, leaders, whether elected or appointed, and even those with social unionist leanings, do constitute a distinct social layer within the labour movement, whose material positions can be threatened by a more thorough democratization of union structures. For their part, sections of the membership can sometimes be vocal advocates of a return

to business unionism and the service model in the face of radical policy changes or shifts to internal processes.⁷⁸ Such reactions reflect a lack of self-confidence experienced by many working-class people, the very narrow experiences of democracy offered by our political and economic system, and a real, if short-term, interest in having someone else take care of union affairs. In other words, we must face the fact that both leaders and members are ensnared within bureaucratic relationships and socialized to accept the rightness or naturalness of a situation in which elite experts take care of or service the members, and that building a constituency for deeper union democracy will require a shift in both leadership and membership circles.

In other words, a coalition among like-minded leaders and members must be forged to fight not only for socially progressive policies but also for a richer experience of union democracy that will raise the expectations workers have of their own and other institutions. Such a coalition requires leaders willing to create the conditions in which members become “engaged in everyday struggles,”⁷⁹ develop the organizational and democratic skills that are so atrophied in liberal capitalist society, and perhaps come to question and challenge those very leaders. In her examination of 1960s social movements in the United States, Francesca Polletta identifies a set of relations that recognized the challenges of democratically building capacities in conditions where people start out from different skill levels. In these contexts, “developing people’s leadership capacities usually requires a complex equality in which some within the group are permitted more authority than others in areas in which they have special expertise — provided that they progressively cede that authority by training others, and provided that their authority in one area does not spill over into other areas.”⁸⁰ Therefore, one basis of such a coalition would be a focus on encouraging and developing workers’ abilities to make interventions within their own organizations. In other words, we must begin with the aim of “disalienating” power. Concretely, this would involve membership empowerment based on both a democracy of deciding — the election of representatives, the making and evaluation of policy decisions, strategies, and tactics — and a democracy of doing — of implementing those decisions. As Hilary Wainwright argues, a democracy of doing is the only way people can “exercise [their] capacities,” understand

and develop their full potential for self- and collective management, break down monopolies over expertise, and redistribute knowledge and power within unions.⁸¹ Additionally, this requires a focus on developing workers' capacities for critical thinking, planning, and analysis — the kinds of skills necessary for the management of complex organizations, and the kind that are systematically underdeveloped by capitalist work and education. This implies a different approach to union education, which includes but goes beyond teaching “tools courses” or technical skills. Instead, a democratizing education would place such skills in the context of a transformative politics by developing workers' “understanding of the relationships and structures in which they participate.”⁸² Finally, such educational processes must also be connected to providing spaces in which workers can act on that knowledge in ways that are not predetermined by leadership.

In other words, this coalition must struggle not for social unionism in general, but one of its more specific variants: “social movement unionism.” This orientation brings together a highly inclusive and class-conscious definition of workers' identity, a broader agenda at the bargaining table and in the wider political economy, a more radical critique of capitalism and the limits of liberal democracy, a social movement repertoire, and an explicit concern with the democratic transformation of workers' organizations. Sam Gindin, Kim Moody, Christopher Schenk, Ian Robinson, and Michael Eisenscher all emphasize that social movement unionism involves, among other things, organizational practices in which workers do more than participate: they come to lead and have democratic control over their own movement.⁸³ This particular combination of a radical diagnostic frame, a social movement repertoire, and a membership-focused democratizing internal politics would allow the labour movement to become a “movement for itself,” more clearly conscious of its interests, its relationship to the broader socioeconomic structure, and its goals.⁸⁴

That said, there are pitfalls in this direction since, like all union strategies, social movement unionism is subject to variation, and different elements of its agenda are more or less emphasized in concrete circumstances. In practice, it is fairly common for social movement unionism to be interpreted as a mobilization of union members to support other workers or

political struggles; in exhorting workers to abandon their sectionalism, the traditional union tasks of collective bargaining and servicing are de-emphasized. While such ties are crucial, it is possible to bend the stick too far in the other direction. An exclusive focus on external politics can lead to one of two negative outcomes: first, a transfer of activism to the community while bargaining and servicing continue to be conducted in top-down and bureaucratic ways, or second, a backlash from members who feel their needs and interests are not being met. To avoid both problems, a social movement unionist analysis needs to be brought to bear on the least glamorous of union activities: grievances, dealing with management, and collective bargaining. These activities should be infused with participatory democratic processes, and the analysis that guides these activities should contain a broader social vision and the need to foster conditions for expanded participation. This would mean membership mobilization around grievances and defending the collective agreement in ways that draw on pre-war unions' direct action tradition, shaping bargaining demands in ways that serve both immediate and broader interests and politicize union struggles, and fighting for provisions that would make greater membership participation possible.

Finally, this analysis implies a new research focus on the impact that social unionist practices have, their variations, and their outcomes in the Canadian context. In particular, while some (although not enough) research has documented the adoption of these methods and their policy results, little has been written on whether or how new union strategies have changed internal relationships within unions. New research needs to address the following key questions: in new union strategies, what importance is placed on members' active role in determining and carrying out union priorities? Is independent and self-directed rank-and-file activity encouraged, or are there still powerful attempts to manage activism from above? Are improved communication links unidirectional, or are members able and empowered to communicate their needs and priorities to union leaders? Is rank-and-file empowerment per se one of the goals of social unionist leaders, or a means to an end? In other words, the place of democratization of union structures and practices in social unionist strategies needs to be more systematically explored.

These are difficult and sensitive issues, particularly in a political and media context hostile to unions and keen to perpetuate the myth of the all-powerful and dictatorial union boss. However, challenging such stereotypes cannot lead to the promulgation of an equally problematic myth — that unions are actually paragons of democratic process and accountability and merely misunderstood. Even if we accept the need for democratization, this itself is a contradictory process, bringing with it the potential for both enhanced membership engagement in, ownership of, and commitment to the union's activities,⁸⁵ and increased debate, conflict, factionalism, and the challenge of managing and expressing the sometimes conflicting interests of diverse memberships.⁸⁶ In other words, the very strategies that unions need to pursue to expand, reengage, and empower memberships may not always lead to direct enhancement of internal solidarity and cohesion, and hence effective goal attainment. Even so, while democratization is no simple process and does not necessarily lead to greater instrumental success in the short term, unions ignore internal democracy at their peril. It is the responsibility of both unionists and sympathetic intellectuals to face the challenge of democratizing working-class organizations so that we can confidently claim a place at the head of the struggle for a more egalitarian society, and prepare citizens for life in such a society.

Notes

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2. R. Hurd, "The Failure of Organizing, the New Unity Partnership, and the Future of the Labor Movement," *WorkingUSA* 8/1 (2004), pp. 12–13.
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4. P. Kumar and G. Murray, "Innovation in Canadian Unions: Patterns, Causes and

- Consequences,” in P. Kumar and C. Schenk, (eds.), *Paths to Union Renewal: Canadian Experiences* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2006), p. 82.
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 7. C. Schenk and E. Bernard, “Social Unionism: Labor as a Political Force,” *Social Policy* 23/1 (Summer 1992), p. 40; J. Jenson and R. Mahon, (eds.), *The Challenge of Restructuring: North American Labor Movements Respond* (Philadelphia: Temple U. P., 1993); J. Rose and G. Chaison, “Unionism in Canada and the United States in the 21st Century,” *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations* 51/1 (2001), pp. 34–62.
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 9. R.D. Benford and D.A. Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000), pp. 611–639; D.A. Snow and R.D. Benford, “Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization,” *International Social Movement Research* 1 (1988), pp. 197–217; E. Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (London: Harper & Row, 1974). Ian Robinson breaks the collection action frame into two elements — union moral economy and union collective identity — but these refer to the same issues and processes as the social movement framing literature. See I. Robinson, “Does Neoliberal Restructuring Promote Social Movement Unionism? US Developments in Comparative Perspective,” in B. Nissen, (ed.), *Unions in a Globalized Environment: Changing Borders, Organizational Boundaries and Social Roles* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), p. 192.
 10. F.F. Piven and R. Cloward, “Power Repertoires and Globalization,” *Politics and Society* 28/3 (2000), pp. 413–430; S. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
 11. For a more detailed discussion of these concepts and their use in an analysis of variation within social unionism, see S. Ross, “Varieties of Social Unionism: Towards a Framework for Comparison,” *Just Labour* 11 (Fall 2007), pp. 16–34.
 12. The question of how particular patterns of social unionist praxis have come to be negotiated and reproduced is beyond the scope of this paper, but will be the subject of future research.
 13. R. Hoxie, “Trade Unionism in the United States,” *Journal of Political Economy* 22/3, p. 212.
 14. Kumar and Murray, “Innovation in Canadian Unions,” p. 82.
 15. For instance, as Sam Gindin explains in his history of the Canadian Auto Workers, “[t]he UAW (and then the CAW) always rejected business unionism — a unionism that limited itself to the price its members got for their labour. In contrast, the union espoused social unionism — a unionism that considered workers as more than just sellers of labour, that was sensitive to broader concerns, and that contributed to those in need in the community and internationally.” S. Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers: The Birth and Transformation of a Union* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1995), p. 266.
 16. Robinson, “Economistic Unionism,” p. 21. In his more recent work, Ian Robinson defines social unions as those which are “not critical of existing economic and political institutions” because they pursue social reform via “support for one of the existing political parties, which sometimes means support for the government.” He therefore makes a sharper distinction between social unionism and social *movement* unionism than previously, the latter defined as having an “inclusive union collective identity, combined with commitment to a project of fundamental social change” that rejects the existing political and economic order. While social unionism and social movement unionism do need to be distinguished, it isn’t because social unionism is uncritical of the existing social order. See I. Robinson, “Neoliberal Restructuring and US Unions: Towards Social Movement Unionism?” *Critical Sociology* 26/1&2 (2000), p. 114; Robinson, “Does Neoliberal Restructuring Promote Social Movement Unionism?” p. 191.
 17. Canadian Labour Congress/Vector Research, *Canadians Talk About Unions*. Prepared for the

- 2003 CLC Mid-Term Conference (2003), p. iii.
18. Schenk and Bernard, "Social Unionism," p. 44.
 19. For instance, compare the CLC's definition of social unionism with that of CUPW, which frames its commitment to political action and the Winnipeg Workers' Organizing and Resource Centre in terms of the need to organize workers as a class-conscious force in opposition to capitalism. See WORC on the Web, "About WORC," <<http://www.mts.net/~worc/>>.
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 21. Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers*, pp. 116–118.
 22. P. Johnson, *Success While Others Fail: Social Movement Unionism and the Public Workplace* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1994), pp. 31, 40–41; Robinson, "Economistic Unionism," p. 32.
 23. Robinson, "Economistic Unionism," pp. 31–32.
 24. Kumar and Murray, "Innovation in Canadian Unions," p. 82.
 25. G. Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), pp. 67–68.
 26. Schenk and Bernard, "Social Unionism," pp. 42, 44.
 27. H. Jansen and L. Young, "Solidarity Forever? The NDP, Organized Labour, and the Changing Face of Party Finance in Canada." Paper presented at the Canadian Political Science Association annual conference, University of Western Ontario (June 2005), pp. 7–8, 10. It should be noted that changes to the *Canada Elections Act* in 2003, banning financial and in-kind union contributions to political parties of over \$1,000, will potentially usher in changes to the social democratic repertoire, although it is too soon to determine what these might be.
 28. M. Cooke, "The CCF-NDP: From Mass Party to Electoral-Professional Party." Paper presented at the Canadian Political Science Association annual conference, York University (June 2006), pp. 14–15.
 29. Kumar and Murray, "Innovation in Canadian Unions," pp. 83, 87.
 30. L. Panitch and D. Swartz, *From Consent to Coercion: The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms* (Toronto: Garamond, 2003).
 31. S. Tufts, "Community Unionism in Canada and Labor's (Re)Organization of Space," *Antipode* 30/3 (1998), p. 228.
 32. *Ibid.*, p. 232. See also A. Banks, "The Power and Promise of Community Unionism," *Labor Research Review* 10/Fall-Winter (1991–92); J. Brecher and T. Costello, (eds.), *Building Bridges: The Emerging Grassroots Coalition of Labor and Community* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990).
 33. Kumar and Murray, "Innovation in Canadian Unions," p. 84.
 34. Meg Luxton, "Feminism as a Class Act: Working Class Feminism and the Women's Movement in Canada," *Labour/Le Travail* 48, pp. 63–88.
 35. Jan Kainer, "Gendering Union Renewal: Women's Contributions to Labour Movement Revitalization," *Gender and Work Database*, <http://www.genderwork.ca/Kainer_Gendering_Union_Renewal.pdf>.
 36. G. Ross and J. Jenson, "Post-war Class Struggle and the Crisis of Left Politics," in R. Miliband, J. Saville, M. Liebman, and L. Panitch, (eds.), *Socialist Register 1985/86* (London: Merlin, 1986); Diamond, *Numbers that Count*; A. Banks and J. Metzgar, "Participating in Management: Union Organizing on a New Terrain," *Labor Research Review* 14 (1989), pp. 1–55; C. Schenk, "Social Movement Unionism: Beyond the Organizing Model," in Fairbrother and Yates, (eds.), *Trade Unions in Renewal*, p. 246.
 37. Moody, *Workers in a Lean World*; D. Wells, "Origins of Canada's Wagner Model of Industrial Relations: The United Auto Workers in Canada and the Suppression of 'Rank and File' Unionism, 1936–1953," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 20/2 (1995), pp. 193–225.
 38. Diamond, *Numbers that Count*, p. 6.
 39. B. Fletcher and R. Hurd, "Beyond the Organizing Model: The Transformation Process in Local Unions," in K. Bronfenbrenner, S. Friedman, R.W. Hurd, R.A. Oswald, and R.L. Seeber, (eds.), *Organizing to Win: New Research on Union Strategies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U. P., 1998), pp. 38–39; Hurd, "The Failure of Organizing," pp. 7–8.
 40. K. Voss and R. Sherman, "Breaking the Iron Law of Oligarchy: Union Revitalization in the American Labor Movement," *American Journal of Sociology* 106/2 (2000), pp. 303–349.

41. K. Voss and R. Sherman, "You Just Can't Do It Automatically: The Transition to Social Movement Unionism in the United States," in Fairbrother and Yates, (eds.), *Trade Unions in Renewal*, p. 58.
42. K. Bronfenbrenner, "The American Labour Movement and the Resurgence in Union Organizing," in Fairbrother and Yates, (eds.), *Trade Unions in Renewal*, pp. 41–42.
43. Voss and Sherman, "Breaking the Iron Law," p. 311.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 312; Fletcher and Hurd, "Beyond the Organizing Model," p. 39.
45. Kumar and Murray, "Innovation in Canadian Unions," pp. 97–98.
46. CLC/Vector Research, *Canadians Talk About Unions*.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. ii–iii.
48. *Ibid.*, p. iv.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. vi, 41.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. iv, vi, viii.
51. Kumar and Murray, "Innovation in Canadian Unions," p. 82.
52. Kumar and Murray, *Innovation and Change*, p. 19; P. Kumar and G. Murray, "Canadian Union Strategies in the Context of Change," *Labor Studies Journal* 26/4 (2002), pp. 8–9.
53. Kumar and Murray, "Innovation in Canadian Unions," p. 85; Kumar and Murray, "Canadian Union Strategies," pp. 13–14.
54. Geoff Bickerton and Catherine Stearns, "The Workers' Organizing and Resource Centre in Winnipeg," in Kumar and Schenk, (eds.), *Paths to Union Renewal*, pp. 251–260. Unfortunately, CUPW was unable to convince other unions to support WORC, and, in Canada, ongoing union support for community-based organizing centres such as WORC is quite rare. It should also be noted that, despite its close identification with business unionism, collective bargaining can be part of the social unionist repertoire when reframed as such. For instance, provisions that distribute gains outside of the bargaining unit have been bargained, such as employer-funded social justice funds and employment creation initiatives linked to reduced working time. CUPW in particular has used the bargaining process (and a great deal of its own money) rather than the traditional certification process, to win union recognition for rural route carriers; see G. Bickerton and D. Bourque, "Stepping out of the Legal Framework: Organizing Rural Route Carriers." Paper presented at the Canadian Political Science Association annual conference, University of Manitoba (June 2004). However, these exceptions prove the rule: in practice, social unionism remains outside the realm of bargaining.
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56. Robinson, "Economistic Unionism," p. 22.
57. Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers*, pp. 121–122.
58. I. Abella, *Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour: The CIO, the Communist Party, and the Canadian Congress of Labour, 1935–1956* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973); Bryan Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800–1991* 2nd ed. (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1992), pp. 290–298.
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68. Bronfenbrenner, "The American Labour Movement," p. 45.
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74. R. Luxemburg, "The Russian Revolution," in M.A. Waters, (ed.), *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), pp. 386–387.
75. Polletta, *Freedom Is an Endless Meeting*, p. 8.
76. S. Gindin, "Socialism with Sober Senses: Developing Workers' Capacities," in L. Panitch and C. Leys, (eds.), *Socialist Register 1998: The Communist Manifesto Now* (London: Merlin, 1998), p. 79.
77. N. Geras, *Literatures of Revolution* (London: Verso, 1986), p. 172.
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81. H. Wainwright, *Arguments for a New Left: Answering the Free Market Right* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 128, 119.
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83. Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers*, pp. 266, 268; Moody, *Workers in a Lean World*, pp. 276, 290; Schenk, "Social Movement Unionism," pp. 248–251; Robinson, "Does Neoliberal Restructuring Promote Social Movement Unionism?" p. 190; Eisenscher, "Critical Juncture," pp. 218–219.
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