Apprentice training, youth organisation and trade unionism

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Outline

1. Context
2. Apprentice strike movements
3. Organisational status of movements
4. Interpretation: effects of movements
5. Interpretation: sources of movements
6. Comparable situations, different outcomes?
1. Context

- Craft training in engineering and shipbuilding through 1930s
- Setting of apprentices’ terms and conditions
- Pay rates
- Content of training
- Apprentice numbers
Age-Wage Scale Rates for Apprentices, Federated Engineering Firms, 1935-71
2. Apprentices’ strike movements

- Scope
- Timing
- Scale
- Location
- Demands
- Outcomes
Apprentice Strikers, Taylor Bros. Ltd., Manchester, 1960
## Manual Male Youth Strike Movements: Timing and Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strike</th>
<th>Strikers</th>
<th>Days Lost</th>
<th>Rank (DL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>14,600</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>32,500</td>
<td>406,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>25,100</td>
<td>220,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>16,400</td>
<td>194,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>36,900</td>
<td>347,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>17,500</td>
<td>187,000</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Manual Male Youth Share of Principal Disputes, Engineering and Shipbuilding (%)
Strike Movements and Change in Age-Wage Scale Rates, Manual Male Youth, Engineering, 1935-70
3. Organisational status

• Unofficial bodies, unconstitutional methods?
• Apprentice strikers’ stance towards trade unions
• Trade unions’ stance towards apprentice strikers
  – By level in union hierarchy
  – By motive
4. Effects of collective action

• Real industrial disputes?

• Employers’ motives for work-based learning
  1. Investment-oriented training
  2. Production-oriented training

• Evidence from the strike movements
Strike by Adults at Roberts Arundel, Stockport, 1966-68
Student Demonstration, US, 1970s
Fun: Shrove Tuesday street ball game, Atherstone, 1930s
COMMUNISTS AND THE FACTORIES

The speech of Frank Stanley, chairman of the Communist Party, to the Communist Party's factories branch conference held in London, June 11th-12th, 1966

[Text content of the speech]
Motives for employer training

1. Investment-oriented
   Goal: ensure future skill supply
   Method: training is expensive for employer
           high retention after training

2. Production-oriented
   Goal: reduce cost of current production
   Method: cheap labour
           training is immediately profitable
           low retention after training

3. Mixed cases and subsidies
5. Sources of collective action

• Discontent
  – Pay during training
  – Content of training
  – Career prospects

• Methods
  – Individual
  – Collective
6. Comparable situations, different outcomes?

1. Apprenticeship in Germany and Switzerland
2. Teaching Assistants, US universities
3. Trainees and Apprentices in modern Britain
Teaching Assistants’ Association strike, University of Wisconsin 2004

http://www.taa-madison.org/about/history.html
TAs and unions: Univ. of California

Welcome!
UAW Local 2865 is the Union representing over 12,000 Academic Student Employees (ASEs) -- Readers, Tutors, TAs, and others -- at the 9 teaching campuses of the University of California.

As they are for all employees, wages, benefits, workload, grievance procedures, and fair hiring processes are important issues of concern. The Union gives us the ability to bargain with UC on these and other issues, allowing us to have a real say in our lives as student employees. Read more about our current contract which was ratified in October 2007.
## Trainee organisation: Teaching Assistants, selected US universities, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Bargaining Agent</th>
<th>Collective agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. California</td>
<td>UAW</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Mass</td>
<td>UAW</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Michigan</td>
<td>AFT</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Wisconsin</td>
<td>AFT</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York (NYU)</td>
<td>UAW</td>
<td>Yes (to 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>UAW</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>UAW</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yale</td>
<td>HERE</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Julius, D. and P. Gumport (2002), ‘Graduate student unionisation …’, *Review of Higher Education*, 26(2), Table 1
Trainee discontent and activism in modern Britain

• Engineering apprentices, YTS trainees, Modern Apprentices

• Factors affecting collective action
  – Training standards and strike threat
  – Trainee pay
  – Decline of collective regulation and ‘national’ bargaining
  – Unemployment
  – Government policy
Union policies towards YTS, 1983-88

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Share of all members (%)</th>
<th>Larger unions in category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oppose with strikes</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>CPSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose with boycott</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>UCW, COHSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose without action</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>GMBATU, NATFHE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to executive</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>TASS, ASTMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept with employee status</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>AUEW, NALGO, NUPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept with other restrictions</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>APEX, USDAW, BIFU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept unconditionally</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>IPCS, ISTC, NAS/UWT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strongest opposition during period by formal policy making body, 35 unions (8.8m members) with a formal policy toward YTS
In conclusion

• Where trainees are exploited, unions may be able to organise discontent and improve outcomes
• Relations between unions and discontented young people can be complex
• In the UK, unions have changed from critics (YTS) to cheerleaders (Apprenticeship)
• Why?
  – Training quality and terms and conditions have improved
  – National politics have changed
  – Narrow view of training quality?
  – Forgetful of own past?
References


