

Labour Unionism in the Financial Services Sector

Fighting for Rights and Representation

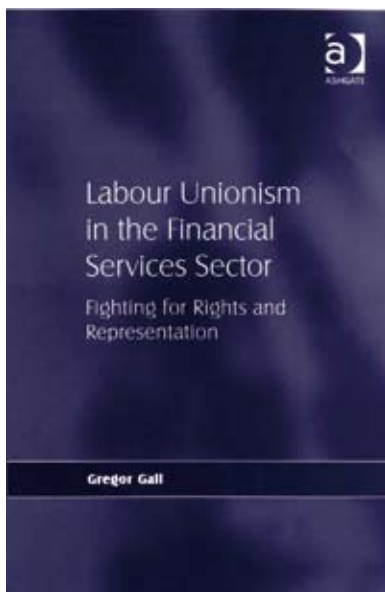
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In recent years, there has been an acute crisis of worker representation in the finance sector in Britain. Labour union and staff association membership and density has fallen, collective organisation has experienced dislocation and disorganisation and worker self-confidence has been sapped. Prior to this, there was a sense of an identifiable trajectory towards greater 'unionateness' by labour unions and staff associations, with the sector moving towards associations with the wider union movement, growing self-identification of employees as 'workers' and the use of traditional tools of collective bargaining such as threats of strikes and strikes themselves. The former set of outcomes have resulted from a particular type of labour unionism being overwhelmed by challenges from employers pursuing policies based on HRM, partnership and union exclusion on the one hand, and on the other, significant restructuring of the sector in terms of service providers and means of service/product delivery.

But the key explanation for this outcome has been the inability-cum-unwillingness of labour unionism, particularly independent labour unionism, to develop workplace unionism as a non-dependent resource, which would have, in turn, allowed labour unionism to be less susceptible to overtures and pressures from employers. This study documents and explains this trajectory in wider historical terms, providing invaluable insights reading both for those interested in the future of both the labour movement and the finance sector in particular.

Contents: Preface; Labour unionism in the financial services sector: struggling for rights and representation; Historical genesis and development of labour unionism and staff associations; Development of labour union presence and organisation, 1970–1989; Weathering storms: stimuli, opportunities and challenges, 1990–1999; Blown asunder: dissolution, disorganisation and dislocation of collective organisation, 2000–2007; Putting historical processes into perspective and prospects for the future; References; Index.



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