

NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE HISTORICAL STUDY OF
TEACHER UNIONISM**Wayne J. Urban*

The topic of the history of teacher unionism is one that has occupied much of my time and effort for the last twenty years. Even while working diligently recently on a biography of the noted black educator, Horace Mann Bond, I continued to pay attention to teacher unions.¹ As the Bond work drew to a close, I decided to return to some aspect of teacher union history for my next major project. My reasons for this decision are at least twofold. First, the topic still interests me as significant for the fields of educational history and labour history. Second, so many interesting (and to me threatening) things are currently happening in the USA in teachers' employment and working conditions and the reactions of teacher organizations to them, that study of the historical actors and organizations that are antecedent to the contemporary situation seems warranted. This paper, then, is an attempt to organize the reading I have done for the last several years and to conceptualize the field of teacher union history in a way that seems helpful to further work in the area.

Of particular interest to me is the work that has been published in the field since 1982, the year in which my *Why Teachers Organized* appeared. The reviews of *Why Teachers Organized* were almost unremittingly kind, generally favourable, and too often short on hard-hitting, critical analysis. Five or six years after most of the reviews were published, I am quite interested in any critical reaction to my work that did appear.

Before examining the criticism that *Why Teachers Organized* did receive, a brief look at its contents and major arguments may be helpful. The eight chapters of the book cover developments in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The first and the seventh chapters deal with teachers and organizational reform of the schools in the 1890s and 1920s respectively. The 1890s organizational reform discussed is centralization. The 1920s change is the bureaucratization of urban school systems achieved under increasingly powerful superintendents. The point in both chapters is that teachers usually opposed the reforms. In between those chapters are five case studies of organizational activity by teachers: three examinations of local organizing in Atlanta, Chicago, and New York, and two treatments of organizational activity at the national level in the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) respectively. The final chapter is a brief discussion of events since the 1920s.

Why Teachers Organized gives two answers to the question raised in its title. The first is that teachers organized to win and maintain salary increases and other benefits; the second is that they sought to maintain seniority as the criterion for salary increments and promotions in the schools. In the main, these points seem unremarkable. These were the goals of many, if not most, trade unionists, particularly those belonging to locals of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), in that and subsequent periods. Neil Betten in a review of the book in *Educational Studies* put his finger on why I stressed these points:

Although the teachers examined differed little from AFL unionists, the educators, on the whole, would have been aghast at including them within an organized labor framework.....Just as today when teachers strike for the ultimate benefit of the student, social workers to bring higher level service to clients, nurses to better care for patients, and police to increase protection for the public, teachers in 1900 felt it necessary to stress politically more saleable objectives than simply earning a reasonable living.²

My experiences in the state of Florida interviewing teachers in the late 1960s, after their unsuccessful statewide walkout in 1968, brought home to me the truth of Betten's characterization and motivated me to try and get teachers to discard the occupational blinkers that distorted their own understanding of their work situation. Since Betten teaches at Florida State University and is active in the faculty union there, and I have spent the last twenty years of my life teaching in Florida and Georgia, our similar views of the unreality of teachers' occupational orientations may be a result of our own circumstances.

The matter of my working in the American South raises in turn the relationship between that and the argument in my book. The first city in which I studied extensively the history of teacher unionism was Atlanta, Georgia. This work was what led to my two-pronged thesis. Moving to studies of Chicago and New York City seemed to be a rigorous test of the thesis, since these places were quite distinct cities from Atlanta and were likely to produce teacher organizations with orientations different from those in Atlanta. My description of New York, which contrasted the conservatism of the single-issue equal pay organization, the Interborough Association of Women Teachers, with the Teachers' League (antecedent of the Teachers' Union), the prototypical reformist union in most New York educational histories, has gone unchallenged (or unnoticed) by reviewers.

My treatment of Chicago, however, sparked substantial critical reaction from scholars, including Marvin Lazerson, Marjorie Murphy, and David Hogan. All three of these scholars zeroed in on my treatment of Margaret Haley and the Chicago Teachers' Federation (CTF), the individual and group who were the most difficult to encompass within my two-pronged thesis. The reason for the difficulty was that Haley was an avowed suffragist, single taxer, and advocate of many other reforms of the period. Further, in support of her activities, her

teachers' federation became quite involved in the rough and tumble of Chicago politics during the early twentieth century.

My way of acknowledging the reality of Haley's activism without discarding my own interpretation was to distinguish between Haley and her members. I argued that Haley indeed was the activist and reformer that she claimed and was reputed to be. The point was, however, that she had to deal with a membership that was not nearly as prone to radicalism as she was and that this had a great deal to do with the ultimate lack of success of her organizational endeavours. Marvin Lazerson argues that my analysis of Haley and the CTF ignored the larger political and social context within which the leader and her group functioned.³ Implacable opposition to Haley and her group came from business interests, and from politicians and judges who were responsive to those interests. For Lazerson, these groups had more to do with Haley's defeat than her members. I am inclined to accept his major point, but without agreeing totally with his argument. I did not emphasize the external forces which affected the teachers' union and its leader, not because they were unimportant, but because I wanted to concentrate on the ways in which the members of the organization related to their leaders. Yet it does seem to me plausible that the external forces opposed to the CTF were powerful enough that they would have defeated Haley even if her members had been fully behind her programme.

Marjorie Murphy stresses a point related to that made by Lazerson, but comes at my Chicago analysis from a different direction.⁴ Murphy zeroes in on the treatment of Haley as a "labor bureaucrat," one who used the governance of her organization as a way to manipulate her members to accede to her programme. Murphy questions the applicability of the term "labor bureaucrat" to Haley and her circumstances. She also argues that there was much more democracy in the CTF than what I described and that Haley was much more in touch with her members than I depicted. While I am persuaded in part by each of Murphy's criticisms, I also think that they do not contradict my contention that there was at least a tension, if not more of a conflict, between the political and social activist Margaret Haley and the schoolteacher members of the CTF. Both Murphy and Lazerson, however, lead me to the conclusion that my treatment of leader and led in Chicago would need substantial elaboration and refinement for it to be convincing.

David Hogan, without addressing my book directly, presents a most interesting challenge to my analysis of Haley and the Chicago teachers.⁵ In *Class and Reform*, he sees the early activities of Haley and the CTF as analogous to the Knights of Labor brand of reform unionism that pervaded segments of the labour movement in the late nineteenth century. Haley's early successes embodied the strength of this Knights-like approach in turn-of-the-century Chicago. The CTF activities were closely related to her alliance with the Chicago Federation of Labor and its noted reformist leader, John Fitzpatrick. The CTF's eventual defeat was part of the larger struggle between Chicago's working classes and the administrative reformers who won control over the schools, as well as other

public agencies in the city. For Hogan, however, Haley's failures were also related to changes in the makeup of her members. Hogan sees the teaching force in Chicago in 1916, when passage of the "Loeb" rule forced the CTF from the labour movement, as "probably [having] become middle class in character, and after 1916, middle class in outlook."⁶ Thus Hogan combines Lazerson's external political analysis with a different analysis than my own of the internal dynamics of the CTF.

Hogan's hypothesis of a change in the class background of the CTF membership is intriguing, if not completely convincing. The point of significance here is that it is extremely important for historians interested in teacher organizations or any other aspect of teachers' lives to know just exactly who the teachers were. This is the first "new direction" alluded to in the title of this paper that I want to mention.

Fortunately, there are some existing studies that help to cast even more light on the significance of this issue. Hogan himself mentions Marjorie Murphy's doctoral dissertation as one work that contains quantitative data on the Chicago teachers' socioeconomic backgrounds.⁷ Careful study of Murphy's dissertation, as well as of several articles she has drawn from it, is certainly warranted.⁸ Murphy cannot provide a convincing test of Hogan's hypothesis, however, since she describes teacher background in 1880 and 1900, but not in the 1910s when Hogan suggests that it changed. Another limitation of Murphy's formulation of teacher background is that it appears to focus mainly on issues of class (as does Hogan's) and gender. There are other aspects of the question of who were the teachers, however, which provide a broader conceptual answer to the question and which provide, as well, for a longer time span and wider geographic range in which to ask and answer the question.

Joel Perlmann and Robert Margo provide a prime example of this more inclusive work. They are currently involved in a massive quantitative study of the social history of American teachers.⁹ They are in the process of collecting (and plan to make available) data on a national sample of teachers in the years 1860, 1880, 1900, 1910, and 1940. They also are engaged in a similar kind of analysis, based on local and state school reports, of teachers in Grand Rapids, Michigan; Paterson, New Jersey; Portland, Oregon; and Houston, Texas. In addition to social class origins and gender, Perlmann and Margo are paying attention to teachers' age and marital status, family structure, ethnicity, educational attainment and earnings, and career lines (years of service and promotion or non-promotion).

A recent study by Alison Prentice of an Ontario women teachers' group adds still another category to the descriptors relevant to teachers' backgrounds. Prentice notes the importance of the religion of teachers alongside of factors such as age, ethnicity, social background, educational attainment, etc.¹⁰ Religion is a factor that has been largely ignored by most educational historians in the USA,

even sophisticated practitioners of techniques of the new social history like Hogan, Murphy, and Perlmann and Margo. The reasons for this neglect seem related to the characteristic form of public education in the United States as an ostensibly nonsectarian enterprise and the tendency of educational historians to favour nonsectarianism as the proper ideological mode for their own work.

What Prentice's discussion of Canadian teachers can highlight for Americans is what we should know about ourselves: the experience of most Americans in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was heavily influenced by their religion. Herbert Gutman's studies of American working-class life in the nineteenth century illustrate ways in which religion is important for an understanding of how those classes confronted industrialization.¹¹ Religion may also be a significant factor in understanding early teacher unionism. How Margaret Haley's Catholicism influenced (or did not influence) her union activities and whether or not Catholicism was characteristic of her members and related to their militance are questions that deserve to be answered. Work on the New York teacher organizations has shown that religion was a major identifier of two teacher organizations in the early twentieth century—the Interborough Association of Women Teachers was predominantly Catholic (Irish) while the Teachers' League was heavily Jewish.¹²

One final characteristic that should be relevant to answering the question of who were the teachers deserves mention: that is, the racial background of the teaching force. Educational development in the USA presents historians with a situation in which one race was denied education for three centuries and then presented with a racially separate system of schools that foisted inferiority on the teachers and students who worked in them. In reaction to these inequities black teachers formed their own organizations in many cities and states in the twentieth century. The comparative backgrounds of white and black teachers as well as the interactions, or lack of the same, between their respective associations are subjects that should interest historians of teachers and their unions. Issues of particular significance here include the attempt of black teachers to obtain equal pay with whites, which took place mainly in the 1940s, as well as the movement to integrate the national teacher organizations, the AFT in the 1950s and the NEA in the 1960s.¹³

To return to the general topic of who were the teachers, the relationship of this question to the history of teacher unions themselves is an issue that deserves attention. We have already seen the significance of Hogan's hypothesized change in the background of teachers from working class to middle class as a way of explaining why the Chicago Teachers' Federation took a more conservative stance when confronted by a committed anti-teacher union board. An obvious additional use of this kind of social history material is in attempting to differentiate between those teachers who joined unions and those who did not. Salary and years of experience may be relevant variables here, in addition to gender, class, race, and ethnicity. Pay and longevity are important to test my own argument that early teacher organizations were devoted to the protection of

pensions, seniority rights, and other objectives particularly important to high-salaried, high-seniority teachers.¹⁴

Of all the social background factors discussed above, none has received as much attention from historians as gender has in the last decade. Keeping in mind that this essay covers mainly material published since 1982, the work of Geraldine Clifford, Nancy Hoffman, and Polly Welts Kaufman deserves initial mention.¹⁵ Also to be noted, however, is the relatively exceptional nature of the attention these authors pay to women teachers as well as the almost total lack of work on women teachers' organizations. Marjorie Murphy's work on Haley and the Chicago group, discussed earlier in this review, is the exception that appears to confirm the generalization.¹⁶ Feminist (and other) historians of women's experience have been slow to examine women teacher unions, even though these groups often existed alongside of similar organizations for men. This was the case in the separate high school teachers' federations or associations for men and women that existed in Chicago and many other American cities until well into the twentieth century. Surely a close look at these groups would illuminate some corners of feminist history as well as contribute to teacher union history.

One article by Richard Quantz touches somewhat on these matters. Quantz uses four metaphors to describe the synthesis of oral history interview data that he has devised to help answer the question of why women teachers failed to respond to unions as a solution to their very real economic problems in the Great Depression of the 1930s.¹⁷ Quantz's imaginative use of oral history presents a promising new methodological direction that can be followed in compiling the more recent history of teachers and their unions, one that can be placed alongside of both the quantitative techniques used to answer the question of who were the teachers, and documentary research in teacher union records.

To return directly to the issue of gender, I would argue that feminists and other historians of women who study teachers in non-American settings have been somewhat more willing than their American colleagues to look at women teachers' unions and the problems that led women teachers to organize. Canadian educational historians have done especially well in this regard.¹⁸ Among the relatively large number of relevant Canadian studies, I would highlight the already mentioned article by Alison Prentice on the Women Teachers' Association of Ontario.¹⁹ In that article, in addition to dealing with who were the women teachers' association leaders and members, Prentice offers three other topics as relevant to her study: the work and working conditions of the women teachers, the relations between the women teachers' association and other women's organizations, and the internal organizational style and development of the association. The topic of teacher work will be addressed later in this paper. In her last two categories Prentice confronts issues that might be uncomfortable for committed contemporary feminists, such as the social relations between women teachers and other women's clubs or groups as well as the social role that the

teachers' association played for its women members. These are interesting dimensions on which to compare working-class with middle-class women in teacher groups, in Canada, the USA, or any other national setting.

Work on women teachers and their organizations in Britain is also quite substantial. Sarah King has studied the National Association of Women Teachers from the 1920s to the 1940s, while Martin Lawn has looked at the shifting position of women (and men) teachers in the National Union of Teachers (NUT) in the first three decades of the twentieth century. The interaction in Britain of gendered teacher groups with the larger union is a particularly important topic for historians of teacher unionism in the USA to study, since, as already mentioned, we too often had separate groups for men and women teachers at the local level.²⁰

In Australia, also, the history of women teachers and other gender issues in education has flourished in the past decade. Particularly relevant for Australian teacher union history is Marjorie Theobald's essay on the women teachers' association which sought equal pay for women in the private schools of Victoria. Theobald alludes to the relationship between the activities of this group and similar campaigns by organizations that represented men and women teachers in government (public) schools.²¹

For a final discussion of gender issues, let me return to the United States and the relationship of maleness to teacher union activities.²² Differences in the leadership, membership, attitudes, and programmes of men and women teachers' federations in the early twentieth century, as suggested earlier, are unexplored phenomena. Information in this area might help evaluate work like Stephen Cole's *The Unionization of Teachers*. Cole suggests that part of the explanation for the founding and early militancy of the United Federation of Teachers in New York City in the 1960s was the anger of some male junior high and high school teachers over the 1940s move to pay elementary teachers (largely women) at the same rate as secondary teachers.²³ The obvious sexism in these actions is not a reason to ignore them; rather it needs to be confronted and explained if we are fully to understand the mid-twentieth century phenomenon of teachers' organizational militance. Ronald Corwin's sociological study of teacher militance in the 1960s indicates that the maleness of the activists was not a phenomenon restricted to New York City.²⁴ While Cole and Corwin should not simply be swallowed whole by historians of twentieth-century teacher unionism, they certainly raise issues which are deserving of detailed study.

Another topic that seems worthy of the attention of teacher union historians is also one that has been more extensively discussed by historians outside of the USA. This is the role of the state in relations with teachers and their organizations, or what we in the USA refer to as teacher-government relations. Two recent works on American teacher unionism, neither of which qualifies as a scholarly history, delineate some relevant issues as seen from our national perspective.

David Selden and Maurice Berube have each produced books on teacher unionism that focus in large part on the significance of shifts in teacher-government relations. Selden has written an extended memoir of his own days as an organizer, officer, and, finally, president of the American Federation of Teachers.²⁵ Maurice Berube, a former New York City teacher, unionist, AFT editor, and currently a professor of Political Science at Old Dominion University, has written about the political role of the two major teacher associations, the AFT and the NEA, in the last two or three decades.²⁶

Both of these books are critical of the AFT and its contemporary leader, Albert Shanker. Selden, who was defeated for the AFT presidency by then vice-president Shanker in 1974, bemoans what he considers the shift to the right that Shanker followed in New York City, starting with the actions of the New York local of the AFT (the UFT) in the Ocean Hill Brownsville teachers' strike in 1968. Depicting Shanker's implacable opposition to black-controlled community school boards as a retreat from earlier pro-civil rights activities by the union, Selden goes on to focus on the AFT's increasing conservatism on race-related and foreign policy issues as Shanker took on more and more influence in the national union. Berube follows a similar line in his discussion of the AFT, contrasting the union's conservative position on race and foreign policy with what he considers the more liberal stances taken by the NEA in the past decade.

The judgement that one reaches on Albert Shanker and the AFT is less interesting for this paper than the other issue that Selden and Berube raise in their books: the shift that they see taking place in the relations between teacher unions and government. Both argue that the three decades which have elapsed since the first substantial teachers' strike and the subsequent adoption of collective bargaining in New York City may well be a period which is now drawing to a close. Further, the most significant aspect of teacher union activity in that period, local collective bargaining, will likely be diminished as an effective strategy for teachers' unions.

For Selden and Berube, major decisions on teacher contracts and work are less likely to be made definitively in the local arena through collective bargaining between a school board and a teachers' union. Instead, more and more decisions about teacher contracts and work will be made at the level of the individual states. The exhaustion of tax revenues in many if not most American cities is one indication that Selden and Berube may be right. Another sign is the tendency for more educational decisions to be made at the state level and not in the local districts. This is due at least in part to movements for across-district funding equalization that started in California with the *Serrano v. Priest* decision.²⁷ The significance of the states in educational governance and finance is also being intensified by the current push for educational "reform" which has interested many governors and legislatures. The historical weakness of the NEA as both a local force in big cities and collective bargainer for teachers was a phenomenon which was accompanied by a relatively strong presence of NEA affiliates as political lobbies in the nation's statehouses. The AFT, while substantially

stronger at the local level and much more sophisticated as a collective bargaining agent, was also significantly weaker as an organization at the state level.

The relations between teacher unions and local, state, and national government is a fruitful area for historians to study if the contemporary shifts are to be put in perspective. It is in this area, however, that teacher union history in the USA seems particularly weak. By and large, historians have failed to depict the relations of teachers and their unions to governmental entities in ways that enable them to deal with shifts in those relations that may occur or are occurring and to isolate the factors that account for the shifts. For example, the NEA moving its headquarters to Washington, D.C. in 1917 and setting the achievement of a federal Department of Education and substantial federal funding for education as its goals have attracted little critical notice in the literature on the history of teacher organizations. Similarly, the NEA's eventual achievement of the objective of the federal department, if not of the funding, in 1979, have also escaped the attention of historians.²⁸

A history of the NEA from 1917 to 1979 which would focus on this pursuit of an increased federal role as a major orienter for the entire project would be a welcome addition to the literature. Important for this work would be an account of the relations between the national NEA and various of its state affiliates. This seems a strange perspective to anyone familiar with the existing historiography of American teacher organizations, since the studies of unions that do exist often concentrate on activist locals (usually AFT) in large cities²⁹ while existing studies of state associations are largely confined to narrow, hagiographic dissertations which cast little critical light on the organizations which they describe. Because of this lack of relevant historiographical work, histories of teacher unionism in Canada, Britain, and Australia can be consulted for insight on the relation between teacher organizations and government that might cast light on the American experience.

This work is helpful in many ways. First off, it points to the significance of the NEA in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as in more recent years. Since 1960, when the NEA moved ever so haltingly but eventually successfully to emulate the militance of the AFT, students of the educational scene have had little difficulty seeing both groups as competing teacher unions. In the fifty years after its 1857 founding, however, when the NEA was first a debating society where the leading "friends" of education aired their views and then an organization where emerging superintendents flexed their muscles, it is difficult to take this organization seriously as one that was linked meaningfully to teachers and their concerns.

When one compares the NEA in its earliest years with organizations in other countries, however, a different light is cast on its experience. In the Canadian province of Ontario, for example, as shown in the dissertation of Harry Smaller, the teacher organization in the late nineteenth century was an integral part of the

apparatus of the provincial education department.³⁰ The state affiliates of the NEA which emerged in the early twentieth century were not, literally, owned by their state departments of education, but the interactions and overlap between the personnel of the two groups was usually quite substantial. Comparatively speaking, then, the state affiliates of the NEA seem much like the Canadian group, though somewhat more independent of their government.

Several provocative analyses of the relations between teachers and government in Great Britain are also important. A major example of this type of work is found in a recent work by Martin Lawn on a British teachers' union. Lawn's book, *Servants of the State*, raises the issue of the role of government for teachers in its title.³¹ In the text, Lawn shows how during the years from 1900 to 1930 the specific relation that the British government would adopt in regard to its elementary teachers was a major issue. Teachers began this period as employees of various local agencies, secular or religious (Church of England parishes). As a number of strikes and other agitations by teachers took place to protest their salaries and working conditions, teachers began to consider the educational ideas of socialist intellectuals such as G.D.H. Cole and Sidney and Beatrice Webb, as well as the socialist programmes of militant unions such as the coalminers.

The British government, unresponsive to the interests of working people in the period, realized the potential danger of militant teachers allying with the labouring classes which their schools served and embracing the socialism that the trade unions and labour intellectuals advocated. In response to this threat, the national government considered the idea of making civil servants of the teachers along with offering them a substantial improvement in their material rewards and their occupational status. Government chose not to pursue the civil service aspect of this plan, however, apparently because the conservatives who dominated feared the consequences of civil servant teachers employed by a future Labour government.

The British government did move on the other aspect of its plan, however. It set up a series of salary scales which substantially improved the remuneration of most elementary teachers. Also, instead of abolishing the local education authorities, the bodies which it had established to be directly responsible for systematic administration of elementary education, the central government chose to make sure in a variety of ways that it would be able to intervene "indirectly" with the local authorities to maintain significant control over teacher working conditions.³²

While this manoeuvring was taking place, teachers, as part of their flirtation with socialist ideas, hesitantly entertained the notion that they themselves might be the best arbiters of their own working conditions. Such a radical outcome was not to be, however, as teachers succumbed to the economic incentive of increased salaries and a rhetorical commitment by national government that teachers would be consulted on educational issues. This consultation was proffered in discussions which stressed the "professional" responsibilities of the teacher. Yet, as Lawn has demonstrated elsewhere, and discusses in this book, "professional" is

an elastic term which can be used to sustain a strong teacher control argument just as it was used to instill a sense of respect, decorum, and polite action among teachers.³³ What one takes away from Lawn is the understanding that national and local government are not always in concert in their relations with teachers and that the national government will take steps to insure its influence, whatever the formal provisions for school governance.

A second point of significance in Lawn's study is the area of teacher work and the teachers' workplace as an arena in which teachers can come into conflict with government. The issue of workplace control is one that Lawn has considered in several other forums. They include the volume he coedited with Gerald Grace, *Teachers: The Culture and Politics of Work*, and the international newsletter he has started with Jenny Ozga, *Schoolwork*.³⁴ Also, as mentioned earlier, Alison Prentice viewed teacher work as important in her study of Ontario's women teachers' group.³⁵ All in all, teachers' work and teachers' workplace are topics that should interest the historian of teachers and their organizations in the USA.

But to return to the area of the government and teachers, it must be said that the State with a capital S, Lawn's formulation of the issue, is a relatively strange way to look at the situation, at least for historians in the USA. Lawn's formulation derives from recent neo-Marxist analyses of advanced capitalist societies. Its use allows historians to escape the economism inherent in more orthodox formulations of school society relations such as that in Bowles and Gintis's *Schooling in Capitalist America*.³⁶ The state is a major factor in several of the chapters in Lawn's recent edited volume on teacher organizations in different western countries, *The Politics of Teacher Unionism*.³⁷

This is not the place for an extended discourse on the theory of the State. It is, however, appropriate to say that formulations of the role of the state in the educational sphere are important as possible lenses from which to view the interaction between teacher unions and government in the USA as well as in Britain. Of course, we should remember that relations between teachers and government are more varied in the USA where we have three governmental levels, local, state, and national, than they are in Britain where there are only local and national levels and where the size of the entire enterprise is significantly smaller in scale.

If we look to Australia, however, we find a nation of comparable geographic size with a system of educational governance that is constitutionally similar to that in the United States—a federal system in which formal control over education is left residually to the state governments. Australian education, however, is completely a state-governed enterprise, rather than one in which authority is shared between a state and local agency. The history of Australian teacher unions, therefore, which largely involves the development of unions at the level of the individual states, is a literature from which educational historians in the USA, who are interested in state-level organizations, have much to learn.

Andrew Spaul is the leading interpreter of Australia's teacher union history. He has written extensively on topics such as the formation of teacher unions in the nineteenth century, the development of teacher unions in the state of Victoria and nationally in the twentieth century, as well as on the recent development of Australia's national teacher union.³⁸ Most recently, he has published, with Martin Sullivan, a history of the teachers' union in the state of Queensland. In addition to his historical work, Spaul has also co-authored a book on industrial relations in Australian education³⁹ and contributed three chapters to a recently edited book on the current state of teacher unions in Australia. In that volume, his own work on the state teachers' organization in Victoria and on the national organization appears alongside essays on teacher unions in the states of New South Wales and South Australia.⁴⁰ Though in this collection Spaul's work is not directly oriented to theoretical concerns such as the role of the state, his studies are comprehensive and detailed enough that one can use them to advance the study of state-teacher relations. He has also published other work which deals pointedly with the relations between the state and teacher unions.⁴¹

One historical study by an Australian has couched the recent history of teacher unionism in the Australian state of New South Wales more directly in terms of the issue of teacher-state relations. That work, John O'Brien's *A Divided Unity*, looks at the militancy of New South Wales teachers since 1945.⁴² O'Brien interprets much of the activity of the New South Wales Teachers' Federation in this period as centring around the major goal of obtaining federal funding for the state's schools in place of existing, and increasingly limited, state funds.

O'Brien's focus thus brings us back full circle to the issue of federal-state relations in education in the USA, with the additional point that the federal-state nexus here must also be seen in its relationship to local funding. This entire set of political relationships in education in the USA is significant for the historian of teacher organizations, particularly in the twentieth century. It is a set of relationships which, as has just been shown, can be viewed in quite interesting ways when seen comparatively from the point of view of teacher organizations and federations in other countries.

In conclusion, a brief summary of the major points made in this paper seems in order. The exciting new directions in teacher union history are topical and methodological. Methodologically, the use of quantitative techniques as well as oral histories can and should be profitably employed to supplement traditional documentary analysis. Topically, studies of teachers and their organizations which are alive to issues of the interaction of factors such as gender, class, race, and other relevant variables seem to be exceptionally promising. For historians interested in more recent eras and issues of teacher organization-government relations, the issue of the state and its impact on education seems particularly important. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, historians of teacher unions

in the USA have much to learn from our colleagues in Canada, Britain, and Australia.⁴³

NOTES

- * An earlier version of this paper was given as the AERA Vice-Presidential Address, Division F (History and Historiography), in San Francisco, March 1989.
1. Wayne J. Urban, "Merit Pay and Organized Teachers in the U.S.A.," in *The Politics of Teacher Unionism: International Perspectives*, ed. Martin Lawn (London: Croom Helm, 1985), and Urban, "Teacher Activism," in *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work*, ed. Donald R. Warren (New York: Macmillan, 1989).
 2. Neil Betten, review of *Why Teachers Organized* by Wayne J. Urban, *Educational Studies* 14 (Winter 1983): 352.
 3. Marvin Lazerson, "Teachers Organize: What Margaret Haley Lost," *History of Education Quarterly* 24 (Summer 1984).
 4. Marjorie Murphy, review of *Why Teachers Organized* by Wayne J. Urban, *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 67 (Summer 1983).
 5. David Hogan, *Class and Reform: School and Society in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).
 6. *Ibid.*, 225.
 7. *Ibid.*, 315-16.
 8. Marjorie Murphy, "From Artisan to Semi-Professional: Chicago School Teachers" (Ph. D. diss., University of California, Davis, 1981). See also Murphy, "The Aristocracy of Women's Labor in America," *History Workshop Journal* 22 (Autumn 1986).
 9. Joel Perlmann and Robert Margo, "Who Were America's Teachers? Toward a Social History and a Data Archive," *Historical Methods*, in press.
 10. Alison Prentice, "Themes in the Early History of the Women Teachers' Association," in *Women's Paid and Unpaid Work*, ed. Paula Bourne (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1985). See also Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, "Teachers, Gender, and Bureaucratizing School Systems in Nineteenth Century Montreal and Toronto," *History of Education Quarterly* 24 (Spring 1984), and Danylewycz, Beth Light, and Prentice, "The Evolution of the Sexual Division of Labour in Teaching: A Nineteenth Century Ontario and Quebec Case Study," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 16 (May 1983). I am indebted to Alison Prentice for making me aware of much of the material on gender that I cite in this essay.
 11. Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working Class History* (New York: Knopf, 1976).
 12. Urban, *Why Teachers Organized*, chap. 4. On Jewishness and the Teachers' Union in New York City, see Lana Muraskin, "The Interests of the Teachers Union, 1913-1935," in *Educating an Urban People: The New York City Experience*, ed. Diane Ravitch and Ronald K. Goodenow (New York: Teachers College Press, 1981).
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17. Richard A. Quantz, "The Complex Vision of Female Teachers and the Failure of Unionization in the 1930s: An Oral History," *History of Education Quarterly* 25 (Winter 1985).
18. Appolonija Maria Kojder, "In Union There is Strength: The Saskatoon Women Teachers' Association," *Canadian Woman Studies/Les cahiers de la femme* 7 (Fall 1986); Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, "Teachers' Work: Changing Patterns and Perceptions in the Emerging School Systems of Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Central Canada," *Labour/Le Travail* 17 (Spring 1986); John Abbott, "Accomplishing 'A Man's Task': Rural Women Teachers, Male Culture, and the School Inspectorate in Turn-of-the-Century Ontario," *Ontario History* 88 (Dec. 1986); and J. Donald Wilson and Paul J. Stortz, "'May the Lord Have Mercy on You': The Rural School Problem in British Columbia in the 1920s," *BC Studies* 79 (Autumn 1988).
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22. Urban, *Why Teachers Organized*, chap. 8, and Urban, "Teacher Activism."
23. Stephen Cole, *The Unionization of Teachers: A Case Study of the UFT* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969).
24. Ronald G. Corwin, *Militant Professionalism: A Study of Organizational Conflict in High Schools* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970).
25. David Selden, *The Teacher Rebellion* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1985).
26. Maurice R. Berube, *Teacher Politics: The Influence of Unions* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).
27. Serrano v. Priest 487 P. 2d 124 (1971), 423 U.S. 907 (1977). This decision found disparities in financial support between school districts that were related to the wealth of the districts to be unconstitutional.
28. The connection has been studied by non-historians; for example, see David Stephens, "President Carter, the Congress, and NEA: Creating the Department of Education," *Political Science Quarterly* 98 (Winter 1983-84).

29. William Edward Eaton, *The American Federation of Teachers, 1916-1961: A History of the Movement* (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975) is the obvious exception.
30. Harry John Smaller, "Teachers' Protective Associations, Professionalism, and the 'State' in Nineteenth Century Ontario" (Ph. D. diss., University of Toronto, 1988).
31. Lawn, *Servants of the State*.
32. Martin Lawn and Jenny Ozga, "Unequal Partners: Teachers Under Indirect Rule," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 7 (1986).
33. Jenny Ozga and Martin Lawn, *Teachers, Professionalism and Class* (Lewes, England: Falmer Press, 1981).
34. Martin Lawn and Jenny Ozga, eds., *Schoolwork: An International Newsletter on Teachers' Work* 1 (available from Lawn [Westhill College] or Ozga [The Open University]). Ozga has also recently edited a relevant volume, *Schoolwork: Approaches to the Labour Processes of Teaching* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988).
35. Prentice, "Themes in the...Ontario Women Teachers' Association," and Danylewycz and Prentice, "Teachers' Work: Changing Patterns and Perceptions."
36. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (New York: Basic Books, 1978).
37. Lawn, *The Politics of Teacher Unionism*. A recent work in the USA which addresses the relations between teachers and the state is Martin Carnoy and Henry S. Levin, *Schooling and Work in the Democratic State* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).
38. Andrew Spaul, "The Orgins and Formation of Teachers' Unions in Nineteenth Century Australia," in *Melbourne Studies in Education, 1984*, ed. Imelda Palmer (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1984); Spaul, *The Australian Teachers Federation: A National and International Voice for Australian Teachers* (Melbourne: World Conference of the Teaching Professions, 1988); and Spaul and Martin Sullivan, *A History of the Queensland Teachers' Union* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989).
39. Andrew Spaul and Kevin Hince, *Industrial Relations and State Education in Australia* (Melbourne: AE Press, 1986).
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41. Andrew Spaul, "The State and the Formation and Growth of Australian Teachers' Unions," *History of Education Review* 15 (1986), and Spaul, "The Establishment of a National Teacher's Union in Australia: 1921-1937," *History of Education Review* 18 (1989).
42. John O'Brien, *A Divided Unity! Politics of NSW Teacher Militancy since 1945* (Sidney: Allen and Unwin, 1987).
43. This paper has limited itself to work in English-speaking countries. There is other relevant and important work done, however, in English and in other languages, on teacher unions in non-English-speaking countries.