

Richard Croucher: **Trade union education in agricultural unions in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus**, or ‘Without education there would be no real union’.

Abstract: The educational activities of agricultural unions in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus since 1990 are described and analysed. These large and important unions have allocated a major role to education as a tool in institutional transformation from Soviet-style unions, to a more campaigning and collective bargaining model. The relevant Global Union Federation, the IUF, has assisted union leaderships in this effort. Participative educational methods have been imported and cascaded down through unions to stimulate activity close to the membership. Two different approaches by trade union activists to educational work are identified, and a contribution made to the theory of union education. This top-down and externally-facilitated programme is perceived by union leaders as a way of diminishing problems caused by inverted financial structures and acute disarticulation. These problems have in fact been diminished. There have also been unforeseen and negative consequences as well as limitations which throw light on wider issues.

Introduction

This paper discusses agricultural trade unions’ educational activities in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus on the basis of the author’s involvement over the last six years. Since 1989, very considerable educational efforts have been launched to assist union development in Central and Eastern Europe, but relatively little academic analysis has been undertaken of its results; important studies give it at best only cursory treatment. (Thirkell, Petkov and Vickerstaff, 1988; Ashwin and Clarke, 2003) Union educational processes and their outcomes and limitations in relation to union reform are analysed here. In the process, union education is theorised in ways that may have wider application. We discuss the largest unions in countries which, although large, are inadequately treated in ‘European’ or ‘Russian’ discussions.

There was an immediate and strong demand from activists for new kinds of union education during Ukrainian *Perestroika*. (Kuzio, 2000: 111-112)

Since the mid-1990s, Moldovan agricultural unions have used union education as a key tool in transforming themselves from Soviet-style organisations designed to distribute benefits to workers and control them, to more campaigning, bargaining and representative bodies. The importance of education is reflected in the sub-title of this paper. Institutional reform and stimulation of workplace activity have been central themes. A key aim has been creation of a cadre of tutors to cascade education down to stimulate activity at workplace level. In the late 1990s, the Moldovans extended their own work and included their Ukrainian counterparts. In 2000, Belarus, where activists had already started to adopt the educational emphasis, joined these two countries in a co-ordinated international effort. The whole operation has been facilitated and supported by the Moscow office of the International Union of Food and Agricultural Unions (IUF), the relevant Global Union Federation (GUF).

The underlying issues are fundamental to institutional survival and are seen as such. They are the same as those identified by Parker (2002) from Hyman's (1994) description of key union features in connection with western Europe:

- (1) How far can unions redefine interests?
- (2) Can unions reconstruct new structures and forms of democracy?
- (3) Are union agendas being reconstructed?
- (4) Can unions recast their internal power arrangements and ways of operating?
- (5) Can unions rediscover their role?

The similarity of the fundamental questions, despite the manifest differences, suggests that there may be two-way lessons to be learned between Eastern and Western Europe.

The paper is structured in the following way. First, the different national contexts are discussed. Second, the unions are introduced. Next, their educational projects are described and analysed. Fourth, project outcomes are discussed. Finally, some conclusions are drawn.

Contexts

The agricultural unions of all three countries discussed here exist in specific political, economic and social contexts with certain common features.

The agricultural industries consist of collective farms and food-processing plants. Agriculture is a site of high levels of 'black', informal and child labour. No clear distinction exists between formal and informal labour (ICFTU, 2003). Standards of living are remarkably low especially in the countryside. Clarke (2002:176) argues from Russian evidence that agricultural workers private plots of land often cited as assisting in maintaining subsistence make little or no contribution to the relief of poverty. Wage arrears have been a problem, and impact unions through reduced and uncertain income. Health and safety is a major problem.

Politics is conditioned by relatively weak links with the European Union and no immediate possibility of entry. There is therefore relatively little pressure on governments to adopt political practices acceptable to the EU. There is an increasing tendency towards centralisation of power. This has been most apparent in Belarus, where independent trade unionism has been for some years under serious governmental attack and the subject of complaints to the ILO. The ILO has condemned Belarus for its infringements of elementary labour rights, and suspended its ILO membership. Nationalist politics have been one reason for attacks on unions, which have strong international links. In Belarus, social standards in terms of the level of pensions and health provision are high relative to the other countries. This is an aspect of the dictatorial President Lukashenko's policies, which have centred on wooing older collective farm workers as a basis of support (Garnett and Legvold, 1999) and made their union a site of conflict between Lukashenko's supporters and his opponents. In Belarus, unions' institutional position nevertheless remains in some senses buttressed by the law, which does not extend the provisions of collective agreements to non-unionists, unlike in Ukraine. This is combined with a policy of gross interference in internal union affairs. In 2002, Lukashenko replaced the leadership of the agricultural workers' union with his own appointee. In the Ukraine, government attempted to destroy the independent miners' union with the tacit consent of the old-style unions in the late 1990s. Although they failed, they have since turned their attention to restricting union rights more generally. Their attitude is summarised by the Ukrainian Professor Postolatiy, who argues that the Ukrainian government has consistently narrowed union and worker rights to the point of acting unconstitutionally. (Postolatiy, 200:79) In Moldova, serious disillusionment with the privatisation policies followed in the 1990s led to the election of the Communist Party (CP) in the elections of February 2001. The CP

encouraged a minority breakaway union federation, *Solidaritate*, to stall reform in the national union confederation CNSR. The immediate cause of the split was adoption of a new, expanded, educational policy on Agroindsynd's initiative. Ominously, the new Moldovan government's stated top priorities are to transform institutions that are a serious impediment to economic growth (CNSR trade unions may well be defined in this way) and to solve the Transnistria conflict in order to develop closer ties with the CIS. In each case, therefore, unions are engaged in battles for freedom of association and basic union rights, which require an increased capacity to mobilise members politically.

Privatisation in agriculture varies considerably in formal terms. In Moldova, 'voucher' privatisation has taken place, but de facto the land remains in the hands of the state and agricultural managers. In Belarus, land privatisation has been rejected. In the Ukraine, there has been little move towards land privatisation. Union leaders advocate reform and are well aware of its importance both to the state and their unions. As Simon points out, referring to Russia and the Ukraine, which economic sectors begin to emerge as dynamic economic forces will impact union power in several respects (Simon, 2000: 182-3).

Government therefore remains unions' central bargaining interlocutors. There has been some small-scale incursion of foreign companies in the sector in all three countries, notably in brewing and to a lesser extent in food processing. In Moldova, this is relatively advanced, but it also exists in the Ukraine. The Russian/Scandinavian firm Baltika has invested in Belarus. This has given rise to a requirement for collective bargaining with the foreign companies concerned.

There have therefore been contextual impelling unions towards re-definition of their purposes and associated institutional change.

Agricultural unions

A generic picture of Soviet-style unions by 1989 has often been painted. They were designed to transmit party policies and to suppress rather than reflect workers' interests. Managers were able to stand for election to union office and, although a minority, have continued to be elected. Appointments

to important positions such as regional officers' jobs were made directly by the party. Union functions were mainly distributive, with privileges such as better housing going to favoured workers. Funds were concentrated in workplace units. This gave rise to the current situation in the former Soviet Union, whereby resources are concentrated at the bottom of trade union structures (Ashwin and Clarke, 2003). The practice whereby lower committees reported upwards to regional and national committees persists. As Thirkell, Petkov and Vickerstaff (1998) point out, many of the habits of the past survive even in other CEE unions where structures have changed.

These structures have been subject to some change in Russian unions, but they remain largely intact in agricultural unions both there and in our countries. Stability in the industry has acted as a strong force for continuity. They face little competition from 'independent' unions. 'Independent' unions with post-1990 structures remain very much a minority force in general. In Moldova and Belarus, 'independent' unions did not appear. There is rather more competition from company-initiated 'yellow unions', generating some concern from the mainstream union leaders to position their organisations as genuine representative and campaigning organisations. We expand on this below.

The project unions are formally among Europe's largest. 'Formally', because membership is largely formal, with passive members whose subscriptions (when paid) are deducted by check-off. They are also the largest unions in their respective countries and have considerable weight in their national union movements. In addition, they are the largest voluntary organisations and key components of 'civil society'. Their memberships are generally represented as 'unconscious'. In fact, members retain a general conception of unions as having their old functions, are aware that these are less delivered than previously but have little experience of involvement in union business. Activists often therefore stress that whereas some West European unions emphasise recruitment, their unions need to 'motivate' existing members. The unions and their memberships are given below in table 1.

Table 1: Unions involved in IUF project

Country	Name	Membership (claimed)
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		nominal, 2001) Number of women in italics
Moldova	AGROINDSIND	313,723; <i>141,175</i>
Moldova	MOLDSINDCOOPCOMMERCERCE	23,210; <i>19,030</i>
Ukraine	Agrocomplex workers' union	3,639,490; <i>1,419,400</i>
Ukraine	Commerce and catering Workers' union	233,648; <i>186,918</i>
Ukraine	Fishing Industry Workers' union	45,151; <i>13,545</i>
Belarus	Agrocomplex workers' union	1,084,815; <i>440,220</i>

Total nominal union membership at this point was thus over five million workers, equivalent to double the paid membership of IUF affiliates (2.6 million), and nearly a half of the IUF's nominal membership globally (12 million) both measured at the same point. These figures underline their importance to the IUF. These unions have sizeable staffs. The Ukrainian AWU has 37 regional offices, 480 district offices, 25,000 branch offices and 40,000 staff, to service its 3.6 million members. All of the unions involved have an ageing cadre largely inherited from pre-1989. Many paid officers in all these unions are over 60, a situation replicated among lay officers. They still have some managers elected to union congresses. There is therefore a large perceived need to attract young officers and activists and education is seen as very relevant to these tasks.

The unions' key functions remain substantially as under the soviet regime. Distribution remains central. This is despite removal in Moldova and Ukraine of the crucial function of distributing social benefits. The 'method of mutual insurance' (Webb and Webb, 1902) operates instead since the only funds to be distributed derive from subscription income. This is important to members not merely because it corresponds to their conception of the trade union's purpose. It is also vital given extremely low incomes and members' proximity to starvation. It is often referred to as a source of 'consumerism' in members' relationship to their unions. Impending loss of this function in the second half of the 1990s provided a vital impetus for Ukrainian participation in the international educational project. Legal and

political functions remain important. Collective bargaining exists largely in relation to foreign enterprises. Elsewhere, 'collective agreements' exist but are rarely reached by any process approximating to 'bargaining' (for Ukraine, see UCEPS, 2001:17).

Union structures reflect their historic roles. Most subscription income is retained at local level. Few resources are available to the national level, although they may attract foreign funds. The regional level is important partly because it has access to greater resources. Regions have more subscription income than national offices and fewer responsibilities than workplace unions. Their officials are in general organisationally conservative. Regional secretaries were party appointees under Communism and most remain in place today. They control the election of delegates to congress, which in turn elects national leaders, who are subject to regular re-election. National leaders habitually spend much of their time in the year before elections are due lobbying regional secretaries.

Unions have what would be seen in Western Europe as inverted financial structures. In 1999, ACWU collected 37,476,600 Gryvna (approx. 6,246,100 USD) in membership subscriptions, equivalent to 1.56 USD per member per year). There are difficulties of subscription arrears in all unions, reflecting members' problems (further details are given in Croucher, 2000). Over half of the amount (over 25 million Gryvna) was paid out as social benefits or used to finance social activities. Of the remainder, 70% remained at branch level. Most of this was used to finance kindergartens, libraries, sanatoria, health care and festivities. 19% went to district bodies, 10% to regions and 1% to the central committee. Of the last amount (36,083 USD) fees to international and national bodies, salaries, congresses, publications take a high proportion. Between 1994 and 1999, the national office lost forty of its fifty staff. These unions therefore operate directly contrary to the Webb's (Webb and Webb, 1902) principle of 'centralised finance', which their leaderships are attempting to adopt.

Unions' decentralised finances reflect and reinforce acutely weak articulation. As few services flow down to workplace level, activists become increasingly dissatisfied and concentrate on their workplace organisations. This generates the possibility of employers, especially MNCs, stepping into the vacuum between them and their extra-workplace union. This fits with foreign employers' preferences. MNCs greatly prefer

company-based unions (Cooke, 1997). They can, where there is no real alternative, suggest company-initiated unions as, for example, Interbrew did in one of its three Ukrainian plants. Alternatively, where this is impractical, they can exert increased pressure on existing unions. Multi-national companies may make foreign travel to their Western European plants, together with other benefits, available. These trips, since they are to the same company's plants, are highly relevant and attractive to workplace representatives. In Ukraine, where the law provides that collective agreements may be signed by bodies other than unions, local managers sometimes seek to use the Council of the Working Collective as signatory, arguing that there is little to distinguish the local union from the other body. The clear danger is the disintegration of unions as national institutions and the spread of company unionism. Despite its manifest importance, this subject has received little neither practical nor academic attention partly because unions are reticent on the subject. Nevertheless, it remains a vital issue.

Unions' positions have therefore changed and are likely to change more in the future. Increasingly, they have been forced towards defending freedom of association. Their small role in collective bargaining has increased and may further develop with foreign investment. Eventual privatisation of agriculture would clearly bring massive changes and place enormous demands on them which at present they are poorly placed to respond to. Already having to carry out more tasks with less income, activists are aware that the situation will worsen.

How change can be achieved has been the subject of much discussion as it is central to institutional survival. Education has been designated the main tool. It has several important advantages: it can be funded externally, it is a service that the national union can provide for lower levels, and it offers the prospect of identifying and developing a cadre of activists who can compensate for fewer paid officers.

Projects' Origins

The Moldovan agricultural workers were first to adopt education as a major tool of reform in the early 1990s. Agroindsynd was then led by a group of 'reform communists' who had attended the Higher Party School together. This rapidly expanded into a slightly larger but politically coherent body of

articulate and determined advocates of union reform through education. They gained exposure to Active Learning Methods (ALMs: see below) through contact with the Romanian Agrostar union and via them with the French CFDT. Moldova is a relatively small country, therefore the union does not have a strong regional structure and there was little opposition at this level. The union was also the first in the region to affiliate to the IUF, in 1997, encouraging the international to establish a Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the same year. Agroindsynd continues to play a leading role in educational work in Moldova and the region. They have established education not only in their own union, but also throughout Moldovan unions by their involvement in the national confederation CSRSM. They requested support from the IUF and brought behind them another union, the commercial workers Molsyndcoopcommerce. However, the Molsyndcoopcommerce General Secretary's politics were not those of the Agroindsynd leadership. This union's white-collar membership is more conservative than that of Agroindsynd and the leadership's politics more friendly to the state.

On the IUF's suggestion, the Ukrainians soon joined their immediate neighbours. The Ukrainian General Secretaries, like their Moldovan equivalents, recognised a need for the projects but had neither the tight network nor the relatively clear political perspective of their Moldovan counterparts. They were also constrained by the scepticism of powerful networks of regional secretaries. Leaders saw in the project a way of increasing their own weight in relation to them by building links direct to the membership, by-passing the powerful regional level. Regional secretaries have financial flexibility as they have more funds than national offices and less financial responsibilities than workplace unions. Regions are in general conservative however, for reasons touched on above. Regional secretaries are in a relatively strong position, but are mindful of its fragility since there is no immediately apparent reason for workplace unions to affiliate to regional organisations other than inertia. Education is a service that they can provide for activists at workplace level. Regional secretaries do not form an entirely cohesive bloc, and some (predominantly those with foreign companies in their region who saw a need to improve collective bargaining capacity) agreed to participate. One Ukrainian union, the Fisheries union, participated through delegates from a major fish processing plant with sizeable factory funds as regional secretaries were insufficiently interested.

In 2001, the IUF suggested the inclusion of the Belarussian agricultural workers union. Educational work along ALM lines had already been undertaken there although on a relatively small scale. The move was both an act of solidarity with a union under attack from the state and an attempt to assist reformers. The union had recently elected a significant oppositional figure from within the elite, Aleksandr Yaroschuk, as General Secretary. Regional Secretaries, locked into strong relationships with government officials, were generally in favour of the project, though one refused to participate apparently because of pressure from the regional governor.

The IUF won resources for the projects from funders and organised the courses. The unions have generally had little bi-lateral contact with western unions. This was because western agricultural workers usually form small parts of larger unions who therefore see little compelling reason to assist. It was also because the eastern unions were not considered independent. In the early 90s, under IUF General Secretary Dan Gallin, they were not admitted to membership, as they were not considered free trade unions. The IUF did not have a tool equivalent to the ICEM's provisional membership through which pressure could be exerted for change. Nevertheless, these unions were under external pressure from the IUF to reform; Western unions involved in bi-lateral links hardly ever exert such pressure. The link with the Rumanian Gallin was important as he spoke their language (Moldovan/Rumanian) and worked to reform them. The IUF had long had an emphasis on education in its work. The Moldovans, who share the Rumanian language with Rumanians, forged a link with their Rumanian colleagues in Agrostar. Agroindsynd began its educational work and affiliated to the IUF as a reforming union. A number of other affiliations followed. As a result of these, a Moscow office was created even though the main agricultural union in the region, the Russian agricultural workers, was not an affiliate and was not likely to become one in the near future.

A long-term activist and two colleagues led the IUF Moscow office with strong experience in the international union movement. Their motivation was to reform the unions to make them into active campaigners on members' behalf. The IUF also wished to develop their regional strategy of surrounding Davidoff's Russian agricultural union with the aim of removing a key support both for Russian nationalism and WFTU. The profile of the region within the IUF has gradually developed, with these unions' delegates playing an increasing role in IUF affairs.

Funders' roles and perceptions are important research issues for further work. GUFs are almost completely dependent on funders or on intermediary bodies who raise funds for them for projects. The degree and nature of funder intervention is an important issue requiring systematic research before the actual functioning of GUFs can be understood.

There were varying motives and degrees of commitment to the reform project championed by the IUF. However, education provided a lowest common denominator, which many could support. It was a service which higher levels could offer to voluntary activists, helping to combat disarticulation. For some, the prospect it offered of stimulating members' self-activity was attractive. For others this was a development to be kept within bounds however as it could threaten existing relationships with government and employers.

Educational projects

Educational projects were run from 1998 in Moldova and Ukraine with support from the major Dutch international union project funder FNV Mondiaal. From 1999 to 2001 a further project was run with British National Lotteries Charity Fund support. In 2002 a larger-scale four-year project again funded by FNV was begun to consolidate developments in Moldova and Ukraine, and extend them to Belarus. Participants were selected by unions and the IUF according to age, gender, position in the union and their personal motivation. One issue emerged at the outset of the Ukraine-Moldova project when unions put forward a small number of supervisors for training. They were rejected by the IUF and non-management substitutes found. Participants were trained in using ALMs. They in turn organised local workshops both to train further educators and to deal with substantive issues such as membership retention, negotiating and, organisational skills and other subjects.

Education in CEE unions generally had been conducted in a 'traditional' fashion, with lectures from outside experts on the law, the role of trade unionists at different levels and so on. In the early 1990s, IUF education in these countries was methodologically similar but the initial content was on western unions and their ways of operating. This phase allowed the IUF to learn about the unions it was dealing with and established contact before its

international competitors, but did not address the complex problems of transformation.

Agroindsynd had developed a printed course entitled *The union, past, present and future, which* addressed fundamental questions of unions' nature. It sought to change participants' attitudes towards their union in a more independent, campaigning and bargaining direction. The IUF was able to build on this. In short, it learned from its own affiliate and generalised Moldovan experience.

The first Moldova-Ukraine project used this course as one of its starting points. Existing Moldovan tutors with some experience of teaching these courses were mixed with Ukrainian union officers and activists from workplace level. The first aim was to transfer tutorial expertise from the Moldovans to the Ukrainians, consolidating the Moldovans' tutor-training skills in the process. The second aim was to prepare all those involved to run courses directly for regional and workplace activists and to run tutor-training courses in ALMs. In 1998-9, Agroindsynd provided education to some 2,000 workplace representatives; the equivalent figure for the Ukrainian ACWU was 1,000. (further details in Croucher, 2000: 163)

Union Educational Theory

The nature and purposes of trade union education in general have long been debated, particularly among practitioners, though there has been a limited examination of its links to industrial relations (see, for example, Munro and Rainbird, 2000). The main theoretical debates on pedagogy, androgogy, content and approaches have been in German. Debates on the appropriate methods for specific purposes arose in the Weimar Republic with the election of the first generation of Betriebsräte in the 1920s. Hildegaard Feidel-März (1962) examined the competing ideological stances, pointing out that some Weimar theorists advocated representatives' self-definition of problems and criticised approaches that emphasised 'union advertising' to the new representatives. A tendency to foreground procedural and legal training was also noted as part of the 'professionalisation' of representatives' roles. Sharp controversy developed in the late 1960s and 1970s, with Oskar Negt insisting on the importance of participants' activity and following an agenda set by them rather than the tutor (for alternative emphases, see Brammerts, Gerlach and Trautwein, 1977). Negt theorised and established

the basis of the 'Active Learning Methods' (ALMs) approach now widely used in trade union education in Western Europe. These methods can strongly emphasise participants' experiential learning, establish firm connections to workplace activity and stress worker self-activity to solve them. This has largely set the terms of debate ever since: methods are discussed in terms of ALMs and traditional methods or, as Ashwin and Clarke put it in the Russian context, 'ILO' methods and lecturing (Ashwin and Clarke, 2003).

Bridgford and Stirling (2000: 22) suggest that there has been a long-term shift towards these methods in Western Europe. However, they and their contributors also show that the espoused purposes of education there are predominantly to service established structures of workplace representation or to stimulate involvement in union machinery. Organisational change is not a main aim. Limited reports on Russian trade union education show that the predominant teaching method remains largely indistinguishable from its form in Soviet times. This means that the emphasis is on instruction by experts rather than on ALMs, although there have been important initiatives attempting to bring content and methods more into line with the ALMs approach (Metalina, 2001; Ashwin and Clarke, 2003). In general, this is also the case in our countries.

In short, union educational method has long been discussed in Western Europe, where 'ALMs' predominate; the dangers of 'union advertising' and 'professionalisation' were recognised early in union education's development. In the countries under discussion, traditional soviet methods have until recently predominated.

Intensive discussions proceeded in tutor workshops on how to adopt what participants called 'the new educational methods'. The Moldovans advocated ALMs, although there were those who accepted these but also argued for a more directional role on the part of the tutor and pointed out the deficiencies of simply building on participants' experience. These latter voices find supporters in the Former Soviet Union from those who argue that participants' expectations have been shaped by the Soviet instructional system. The latter approach accommodates more to the status quo and participant expectations. This debate is also related to positions on union reform, though not in a direct or mechanical way. Some emphasise that the methods of union education are directly linked to union activity in its desired form, i.e. it emphasises participant activity in defining and solving problems.

Others see these methods as pedagogically effective as a way of ‘selling’ existing union activities.

Our analysis proceeds in two stages. In the first stage, the differences between traditional union educational work and ALM practice, are elaborated. The distinctions are derived from observation in this case but may have wider application. In the second stage, we distinguish between two modes of ALM application.

In the first stage, five key dimensions of tutor behaviour are identified: content definition, participant numbers, tutor role, activity emphasis, evaluation.

Table 2: ALMs and ‘Traditional’ trade union education. Tutor Behaviours.

ALMs	Trad TU Ed	Dimension
Fixed programme of activity <i>or</i> provisional outline of general subject and topics for discussion negotiated with participants	Fixed programme of activity	Content defini
Tutor advocates numbers limited to around 20 per group	Numbers only limited by accomodation capacity	Participant nu
Tutor as facilitator/chairperson/resource; may also be expert on substantive union issues	Tutor as main expert/arbitrator on substantive union issues	Tutor role
Emphasises participant activity (especially group work). Interactive lectures used sparingly	Emphasises tutor activity. Main activity lectures.	Activity emph
Evaluation in terms of impact on practice. Examinations not permissible	Evaluation in terms of participant performance. Examinations permissible	Evaluation

In our second stage of analysis, we distinguish between different ALM practices. The ‘traditional-ALM’ distinction, although significant, is inadequate. There are also distinctions within the participants in this project, all of whom practice ALMs. The differences exist in relation to stimulating participants' activities and, by extension, the workplace representatives

involved in their educational work. Tutors' behaviours are designated type 1 and type 2: type 1 is more oriented towards stimulating participation and type 2 more oriented towards the 'union advertising' approach. A small minority of tutors does not always fall entirely clearly into either category partly because they are still involved in a conscious process of determining their educational philosophies. Nevertheless, the categorisation is accurate for at least 80% of tutors.

The 9 key dimensions sub-dividing different ALM approaches are: content definition (programme aims and syllabus, definition of problems for solution, locus of problems for solution) problem-solving outcomes, method definition, change to programmed topics, tutor role (in relation to participants; in relation to union), priorities in interpreting evaluation.

Table 3: Two types of ALM practice

Type 1	Type 2	Dimension
Aims and syllabus agreed by tutor, union and participant	Aims and syllabus agreed by tutor with union	Content definition (programme aims and syllabus)
Problems for solution defined by participants	Problems for solution defined by tutors	Content definition (locus of problems for solution)
Employee-centred problem identification encouraged	Union-centred problem identification encouraged	Content definition (locus of problems for solution)
Tutor does not seek specific outcomes to problem-solving	Tutor steers towards specific outcomes to problem-solving	Problem-solving outcomes
Participant activity in method (e.g. task definition) encouraged	Participant activity in method (e.g. task definition) permissible	Method definition
Changes programmed topics by agreement with participants	Defends programmed topics	Change to programmed topics
Tutor as facilitator/chairperson/resource	Tutor as main expert on substantive union issues	Tutor role in relation to participants
Tutor as learner and conduit of information from participants to union	Tutor as conveyor of union policy to participants	Tutor role in relation to union
Participant evaluation prioritised in interpretation	Tutor evaluation prioritised in interpretation	Priorities in interpreting evaluation

The distinction crystallises not only tutor approaches, but *also* different ways of conceptualising change mechanisms in the unions. With the possible exception of Agroindsynd, union leaders take a type 2 view. Among the participants, the majority of type 1 tutors are workplace activists. The majority of these tutors are women, though the majority of participants in the programme overall is also women. Ashwin and Clarke's argument that ALMs appeal to the young rather than the older officials ('Who would rather sleep through a lecture than be involved in a role-play'; Ashwin and Clarke: 188) is not confirmed in our context, where the gender division is much more relevant.

The distinction between the two types is significant for two main reasons. Firstly, all participants have had extensive exposure to detailed arguments for a type 1 approach, including advocacy by their peers. All participants were carefully screened for their predisposition to changing their unions' natures. They nevertheless maintain their position. It therefore illustrates the extremely small size of cadre available for stimulating a type 1 approach within the participant unions.

The second reason is related to the first. The distinction between type 1 and type 2 reflects different approaches to reform and also has consequences in terms of the outcomes of their educational activity in unions and workplaces, as we outline below. As might be expected, tutors' educational work has had different impacts.

Type 1 tutors take a 'bottom-up' approach to reform. They argue that the main need is to stimulate activity at unions' bases and in particular to strengthen representatives' capacities to make unions more relevant to workers' needs. Associated with this is a view that representatives can and should define problems for themselves, but need appropriate tools. Type 2 tutors place more emphasis on the importance of informing members what unions already do for them and that existing structures can be used to improve these services. They also stress the importance of speed in carrying out these tasks, which they argue dictates gaining rapid control of the union machinery to implement change. These reflect two strands of reform and not simply two strands of educator.

Project Results

The educational initiatives, outside Moldova, are generally small in relation to unions' memberships. Metalina's rule in the Russian context, that the further down the union the activist is, the less likely they are to receive union education of any kind, continues to hold good. Nevertheless, the results have been significant both in terms of the organisations and industrial relations.

The results for the IUF have been considerable, with the affiliation of the three Ukrainian unions to the IUF. More importantly, change has been initiated in these unions. The aim was to build a cadre of educationalists in each union capable of 'cascading' education down the structure. In several Moldovan unions (Agroindsynd, Moldsyndcoopcommerce, Sindindcomserviche), educational departments have been established for the first time. The Ukrainian Agrocomplex workers union appointed the (English-speaking) assistant to the General Secretary as education co-ordinator in 2000, and this was soon followed by similar action in the Belarus union when the German-speaking assistant was appointed as Yaroschuk's assistant. Education has become embedded in these unions. It has been given a higher priority and allocated more resources.

These activities have developed the tutors' own network, a form of horizontal, associative and participative democracy. The network has strong internal ties. The project has stimulated them (partly through the use of the very limited IT facilities available in these unions) to communicate between different levels of union hierarchies and between unions. This is in some ways analogous to the activities of women's groups in western unions (Parker, 2002). As noted above, most of the women (and therefore most of those directly involved in the tutor group) are type 1 tutors. They therefore operate in collective problem-solving and relatively participative ways. The women have advocated and carried out women's courses, and they have advocated and carried out youth courses to try to change unions' age profile, perceived as vital to the future of trade unionism. Their strong ties mean they exchange information regularly on a whole range of issues. They are no longer isolated within union 'silos' and have wider terms of reference. Despite the type 1-type 2 differences outlined above, the tutors' network has itself been an important force for change beyond the tutors' direct educational work with officers and activists, functioning as an information, advice and support network of active trade unionists.

The Ukraine Fishing Union shows an outcome related to tutors' network participation. One large workplace with sound finances and its own strong educational provision for workplace representatives provided the base for a project participant in a union in financial and organisational crisis to stand as General Secretary. His presence on the course was in itself an advantage because it gave him the space and contacts to develop his policies with other union activists. This tutor fell clearly into the type 2 category. It may be that his emerging self-definition as an expert on substantive union issues helped him to project himself in the union and to be elected. Within the union, it was taken as a sign of his commitment to reform. He has embarked on a programme of change in the union. One major plank in this is expanded educational provision and a second is reform or abolition of the regional secretaries. This shows how the network's alternative reference points and power bases can operate to support individuals pressing for reform. In addition, it shows how type 2 tutors have themselves succeeded in using existing structures and are pursuing union reform, albeit by different means than type 1 tutors.

There has been some change in the distribution of subscription income in the two largest unions, Agroindsind and their Ukrainian equivalent ACWU. In 2001, the ACWU Congress reduced the amount left in branches to 50% and redistributed the funds to other levels. This is largely the result of the educational projects, which have generated a demand from below for more educational work that could not otherwise be funded by the national and regional levels. The development has encouraged activists in the other, smaller unions in both countries. However, opposition to this policy remains and a number of branches have refused to abide by the resolution. These changes are nevertheless very significant as they provide the resources to national offices to extend educational provision.

In Moldova, education has played a major part in bringing type 1-type 2 differences to a head. Tutors have demanded increased resources from unions to pursue these projects, as a key issue is how far unions can continue to fund these programmes themselves, either to supplement existing work or at the end of projects. In Moldyndcoopcommerce, the union's General Secretary (who took a type 2 view of education) refused his women tutors extra resources. This played a part in leading to a breakaway union. Two women type 1 tutors founded the new union as a direct rival to Moldyndcoopcommerce. It has attracted at least one more type-1 tutor (a

senior official in Moldsyndcoopcommerce) in the year since its foundation. The educational issue was closely intertwined with Moldsyndcoopcommerce's affiliation to *Solidaritate*, which takes a traditional view of education. This in turn was a factor in the third woman tutor joining the new union. The new union is actively and materially supported by Agroindsynd and is growing quickly. It is placing educational activity at the centre of its appeal as a democratic, bargaining union.

The programmes have encouraged and supported union external political activities. In 2001-2, Agroindsynd and ACWU both ran major public campaigns involving demonstrations, meetings, courses and lobbying to push their respective governments to adopt ILO Convention 184 on agricultural health and safety. Both were successful and Moldova was the first government in the world to sign the convention. In Belarus, Alexander Yaroschuk, the progressive General Secretary of the agricultural workers' union, stood as presidential candidate against Lukashenko. This in turn led that union playing a greater role in the IUF project and strengthened the growing tendency of the union to emphasise mobilisation as in the regular and successful demonstration activities of Agroindsynd. However, this brought negative reactions from the state in both Belarus and Moldova. In Belarus, Yaroschuk's already high profile was emphasised by his Presidential candidacy and the strong support he obtained from some regions, notably from officials involved in the educational project. Foreign involvement was a further factor in causing the extreme nationalist Lukashenko to intervene in the Belarussian union to impose his own leadership at national and regional level. In Belarus, therefore, the political challenge to Lukashenko brought severe state retribution and the end of the Belarussian union as an independent force.

In Moldova, the state is not as strong in relation to society and the democratic changes there are irreversible. *Solidaritate*'s formation was a direct result of state intervention, and was given greater impetus by the election of a Communist government in Moldova. One unintended project consequence has therefore been the emergence of competitive unionism. In the Ukraine, the state has neither been as hostile to free trade unionism as in Belarus, nor has it been confronted by as active and independent a union as Agroindsynd.

The effects have transcended the union apparatus and the political dimension of union activity. In the Ukraine, the educational methods played an

important role in a rare case of mobilisation. In that case, a type 1 tutor transposed the educational methods directly into the workplace. At Belgian-based Interbrew's Chernigev plant, one of three plants it owns in the country, the company's HR manager attempted to equalise non-wage benefits between the three plants, one of which has an enterprise union initiated by management. This involved removing significant bonus payments only paid at Chernigev, and an additional payment made to the plant's pensioners. The trade union committee had not previously contemplated taking industrial action. Its members were already skilled in using participative educational methods. They held discussion meetings throughout the plant and built a broad base of support for industrial action if the changes were not withdrawn. The changes were withdrawn and the HR manager dismissed. The union committee stressed the importance of their participative methods in achieving this result. These methods constituted a repertoire of familiar and apparently useful techniques in an unfamiliar situation. They perceived that they allowed them both to establish and to solidify support for their stance.

On the other hand, the union committee also pointed out that three key factors set limits to their ability to resist change. These were: high levels of pay and benefits at their plant, the existence of a 'yellow' union at one of the two other plants, and their regional secretary's strong links to regional government for whom the plant has a 'beacon' role in economic development.

The case may be an isolated one though this is uncertain since more research is needed on the workplace-level effects of the educational work. It does not fit with Ashwin and Clarke's generalisation concerning industrial action in Russia, which they characterise as having a pattern of workforce eruptions and bureaucratic, legalistic, demobilising action by unions (Ashwin and Clarke, 2003: 269). However, action was not taken as the mobilisation had the required effect. It is possible that action would not have been taken if the mobilisation had been unsuccessful and that this was the limit beyond which the activists would not have gone. Members of the workplace union committee denied this, but also regarded it as questionable whether action will be taken in the future for the reasons given above. In this sense the Chernigev case confirms the importance of the regional level's mediating role in the Ukrainian union. It also shows the relevance of Ashwin and Clarke's argument that federal and regional state influences are more critical to enterprise prospects than the extent and nature of enterprise reform in

Russia (Ashwin and Clarke, 2003: chapter 8). In part, therefore, the case re-poses the question of union organisational change, albeit at a higher level than previously.

Discussion and Conclusions

It has been argued that education has been a central issue in the unions under discussion, rather than a marginal one as in West European unions. Differences in educational approaches reflect and condition actors' approaches to union reform. It has played a central role in bringing about significant changes. It is seen by union leaders as of great importance in improving articulation, and therefore essential in avoiding organisational disintegration. It has brought unions and some of their members demonstrable benefits.

The role of the IUF has been rather different from that envisaged in many discussions of GUFs as bargaining agents. Here, it acted as an educational agent. It generalised Moldovan experience to other agricultural unions. In the process, it has itself learned and has become recognised as a major source of expertise on union education. A region of the Russian agricultural workers' union has recently approached it to develop a programme of education.

Union education has established an international network of tutors at different levels in unions. A cadre active in effecting change has been established. The network diffuses information both internally and, through its educational activities, externally. This international and multi-level network constitutes the only alternative model to an otherwise strictly hierarchical *modus operandi*. A new form of participation has been created.

Education has been a key factor in developing unions' capacities in relation to the state. It has increased their ability to conduct effective political activity, and raised unions' political profile. This in turn brought a negative reaction in Belarus and Moldova, and serious unintended consequences. The sensitivity of the Belarussian state, and the strength of its reaction, were remarkable. The principal result of the project in Belarus was to make a contribution to the removal of the countries' largest union as an independent

union. In Moldova, state reaction was much more restrained but the consequences in terms of union fragmentation were nevertheless serious.

Union educational theory was also discussed. The distinction between 'ALM' tutors and traditional union educational methods was elaborated. But reference simply to a dichotomous set of behaviours (ALMs versus traditional methods) is inadequate, particularly in assessing the relationship between educational and union change. The distinction had a gender dimension, raising wider issues about the relationship between women's and educational activity. 'Type 1' tutors had important direct effects on workplace activity and in developing new educational activities such as those among women and young people in Moldova. They stimulated activity among union members. 'Type 2' tutors' approaches are more top-down and institutional, but may be relevant to the reform process in different ways that are expressed within the union bureaucracy. These differences reflect and themselves condition different approaches to reform.

A combination of external and internal initiatives from the top down initiated change in these unions. This change is mediated by contexts and there are strict brakes on and boundaries to it. These are set by seven key factors. Three are external: increasingly dictatorial states, the capacity of the GUF to raise funds from donors and stasis in the agricultural industries. Four are internal: the limited cadre available, union bureaucracies withdrawing when consequences concern them, the persistence of regional secretary reticence and diminishing union resources. These factors all have the potential to slow or end the change process. Speed of change is a relevant consideration in view of the increasingly hostile climate in these countries.

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