

CONTEMPORARY INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

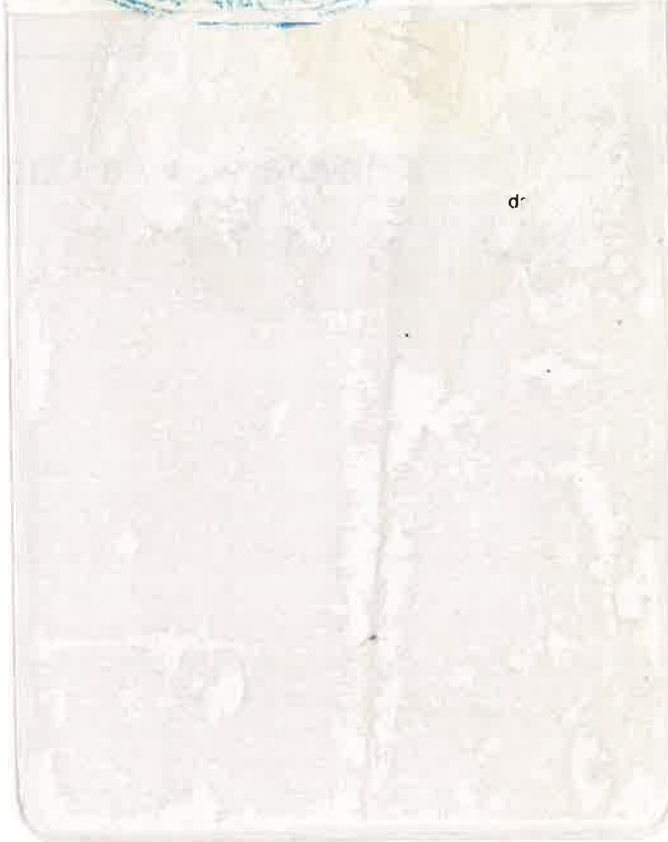


EDITED BY

IAN J. BEARDWELL



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Oxford University Press
1996

Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP
Oxford New York
Athens Auckland Bangkok Bombay
Calcutta Cape Town Dar es Salaam Delhi
Florence Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madras Madrid Melbourne
Mexico City Nairobi Paris Singapore
Taipei Tokyo Toronto
and associated companies in
Berlin Ibadan

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Published in the United States
by Oxford University Press Inc., New York
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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data
Contemporary industrial relations: a critical analysis/edited by Ian Beardwell.
Includes index.

1. Industrial relations—Great Britain. I. Beardwell, Ian.
HD8391.C618 1996 96-421
331'.0941-dc20
ISBN 0-19-877388-9 (Pbk.)
ISBN 0-19-877387-0

Typeset by J&L Composition Ltd., Filey, North Yorkshire
Printed in Great Britain
on acid-free paper by
Bookcraft (Bath) Ltd., Midsomer Norton, Avon

Record No:	15794
Dewey No:	331.0941
Date Input:	22/7/96
Price:	£14.99



PREFACE

In recent years industrial relations in Britain has been at the centre of a series of competing prescriptions and analyses concerning its substance and its future. The legislative reforms of the 1980s have tied unions into a complex web of controls which impose heavy obligations and penalties on many forms of previously lawful action; the labour-market has undergone major restructuring as product markets have come under heavy international competition; management as a function has been afforded greater discretion at a time when managers as individuals have lost a great deal of their security and status; new manufacturing processes from economies such as Japan have combined with an emphasis on quality and the customer to impose new disciplines on work organization; the public sector has been exposed to the presumed benefits of competitive tendering and wholesale privatization.

Across a wide range of industrial relations activity there has been adaption and innovation as the prescriptions for change have flowed in. There can have been few decades in which so much has happened to, and in the name of, industrial relations reform in so active and fundamental a manner.

The questions which are posed by this agenda go to the heart of the collectivized employment relationship in Britain. The decline in union membership, the erosion of collectively determined pay, the growth of the non-union organization, all attest to the shift in priorities in British industrial relations. Assumptions concerning the desire to act collectively on the part of employees are now actively questioned. The support of the State in sustaining a collective industrial relations process is now no longer automatically taken for granted, regardless of political party. In these circumstances, it seems appropriate to bring together a series of analyses which seek to explore these themes in a systematic and extended manner.

The contributions which follow exemplify the range of high quality industrial relations analysis which is being undertaken in British universities at the present time. Each of the contributors has written on a topic on which they have both an expertise and an argument to present; in this sense there is no single ideological or analytical stance that has bound the contributors. What does come through from the range of material presented here is the strength of the analysis being offered and a proper scepticism in dealing with the popular myths of contemporary industrial relations.

The book opens with a discussion by the Editor on the theme of the 'New Industrial Relations', in which the difficulties of establishing what is happening

are located in a broader discussion concerning the collapse of the old orthodoxy of 'voluntarism'. David Guest and Kim Hoque examine the issue of whether HRM and trade-unionism are compatible in the specific circumstances of greenfield sites; they argue that single union deals are compatible but that multi-unionism is not and pose the question as to why any employer might want to recognize a union at a new establishment. Stephen Dunn and David Metcalf examine the impact of the law since 1979 to establish whether it played so vital a part in the reshaping of trade unions in circumstances where market conditions had weakened them already. Peter Nolan argues that linkages between industrial relations and economic performance in the 1980s were tenuous and that the basic weaknesses of the British economy remain, despite considerable Government effort to reform trade unions. Ian Clark analyses the role of the State in industrial relations and argues that one consequence of the State's actions in the post-war period has been the relegation of industrial relations to the status of an input problem to the management of the economy to which subsequent reform has failed to find a satisfactory answer. Ed Heery argues that unions have experienced two significant waves of innovation over the past three decades, which have represented a sharp break with pre-existing approaches to members, union government, and union management. Tim Claydon develops further his original and innovative study of derecognition and examines how far and in what ways derecognition has continued in Britain. Rachel Bailey analyses the impact of the profound changes to employment, bargaining, and management in the public sector. David Grant uses a case study to critically examine one of the most important aspects of recent industrial relations, the impact of Japanization.

I am particularly grateful to all the contributors for having written at a time of competing pressures and for their forbearance while the book was put together editorially. As Editor I remain responsible for the final product, but I have been wholly dependent upon the goodwill and high quality of my fellow contributors' chapters which have permitted the book to be accepted by the Delegates of the Oxford University Press. In that respect I have been fortunate in working with David Musson of OUP who has been an unfailing source of support and encouragement as the project unfolded. My final thanks must go to a range of professional colleagues within BUIRA who discussed many of these issues with me, and, in particular, to my Departmental colleagues Ian Clark, Tim Claydon, Damien O'Doherty, Sue Marlow, and Julie Storey who have variously commented on conference papers and other drafts and discussed many of the themes that formed my own ideas for the book.

I.B.

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July 1995*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Automobile Association	GMB	General Municipal and Boilermakers' Union
ACAS	Advisory, Conciliation, and Arbitration Service	GMWU	General and Municipal Workers' Union
AEEU	Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union	HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
AEU	Amalgamated Engineering Union	IBM	International Business Machines
AFL	American Federation of Labor	ICI	Imperial Chemical Industries
AJEI	Anglo-Japanese Economic Institute	IDS	Incomes Data Services
APEX	Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical, and Computer Staff	IFS	Institute of Fiscal Studies
APT and C	Local government Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical [staff]	IPM	Institute of Personnel Management
ASTMS	Association of Scientific, Technical, and Managerial Staff	IPMS	Institute of Professional and Managerial Staff
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers	IRS	Industrial Relations Services
AUCL	Association of University and College Lecturers	IRSF	Inland Revenue Staff Federation
AUT	Association of University Teachers	IRRR	<i>Industrial Relations Review and Report</i>
BGSU	Barclay's Group Staff Union	ISTC	Iron and Steel Trades Confederation
BIFU	Bank, Insurance, and Finance Union	LEA	Local Education Authority
BR	British Rail	LGU	Ladies' Golf Union
BS	British Steel	LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science
BUIRA	British Universities' Industrial Relations Association	MBA	Master of Business Administration
CBI	Confederation of British Industry	MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering	MORI	Market and Opinion Research International
CEP	Centre for Economic Performance (LSE)	MSF	Manufacturing, Science, and Finance Union
CIO	Confederation of Industrial Organizations	NALGO	National and Local Government Officers' Association
CLIRS	Company Level Industrial Relations Survey (followed by no. of survey if appropriate)	NATFHE	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
COHSE	Confederation of Health Service Employees	NCU	National Communications Union
CPSA	Civil and Public Services Association	NGA	National Graphical Association
CROTUM	Commissioner for the Rights of Trade Union Members	NHS	National Health Service
DEC	Digital Equipment Corporation	NIESR	National Institute of Economic and Social Research
DFE	Department of Education	NJAC	National Joint Advisory Council
EETPU	Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications, and Plumbing Union	NUPE	National Union of Public Employees
EFTA	European Free Trade Association	NUT	National Union of Teachers
EMC	Executive Management Committee	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council	PAT	Professional Association of Teachers
FLARE	Fair Laws and Rights in Employment (a GMB campaign)	PO	Post Office
GCHQ	Government Communications Headquarters	P&O	Peninsular and Oriental Shipping Company
		PSI	Policy Studies Institute
		RCN	Royal College of Nursing
		RMT	National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers
		ROPA	Registration of Procedural Agreements
		SERTUC	South East Regional Trades Union Congress Women's Committee
		STRB	School Teachers' Review Body
		TGWU	Transport and General Workers' Union
		TQM	Total Quality Management
		TSSA	Transport Salaried Staffs Association
		TUC	Trade Union Congress

xii List of Acronyms

TULRA	Trade Union and Labour Relations Act
TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) legislation
UCATT	Union of Construction, Allied Trades, and Technicians
UNISON	Name given to merged NUPE, NALGO, and COHSE
USDAW	Union of Shop, Distributive, and Allied Workers
WIRS	Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (followed by no. of survey where appropriate)

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Industrial relations has undergone significant and extensive change over the last fifteen years. The combined impact of government legislation, international competition, and organizational restructuring has affected union organization and membership; the scope and content of collective bargaining; and the organization, objectives, and nature of work.

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ISBN 0-19-877388-9



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OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS