INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LIBRARIES: AN OVERVIEW

1. General Discussions


This report, published by the British Library, examines the information needs of trade union representatives. Much of the research is devoted to detailing and discussing two questionnaires: a survey of trade union representatives and a survey of public libraries.


The authors outline the major functions which should operate in a university-based industrial relations library. They are: the collection and cataloging of materials used in research; bibliographic instruction promoting primary sources and other non-monographic research material; service to companies and unions; and the analysis and procurement of materials. The authors conclude that in the field of industrial relations specialized library services are indispensable investments.


A meeting of experts on industrial relations information systems convened in Geneva from May 12 to 14, 1977 to examine such basic questions as: who are the industrial relations library users; what are their needs; and what supporting role is the ILO called upon to play. As a result of the meeting, two working papers and a summary report were published. Information programs currently operating, such as ILO efforts in computerized information retrieval, are examined in the first working paper. The second working paper describes the present information systems in Germany, France, Great Britain and the United States.


Organized labor is a sizable, easily identified and homogeneous group with some clear library needs. This essay offers some basic operational guidelines to libraries planning a service or who presently serve organized labor.


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**Items from this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference. For items that are out of print consult libraries.
This book serves as an historical compilation of literature on the subject of library service to labor taken from the American Library Association's (ALA) Library Service to Labor Newsletter, ALA's Guide for developing a public library service to labor groups and other library related titles. Articles were selected with a view to serving practicing libraries who may want to establish or further develop labor-related services. Of related interest is Library service to labor groups: a guide for action by AFL-CIO/ALA (Chicago, 1975) and Labor collections and services in public libraries throughout the U.S. by the ALA Reference and Adult Services Division (Chicago, 1976).


Industrial relations became a major field of study in American universities in the 1930's and 1940's, and the majority of industrial relations centers came into being after World War II. In order to meet the research needs of scholars, practitioners and policy makers, a number of industrial relations libraries were opened. Indeed, the growth of the industrial relations discipline was reflected in the corresponding growth of its related research centers. Ms. Soltow offers an overview of university-based industrial relations libraries in the United States. She reports on their organization, functions, and services. She also discusses the origin and activities of the Committee of Industrial Relations Librarians. This professional library association was formed in 1947 to address the challenge of effectively collecting library materials for industrial relations research requiring acquisitions and indexing across such diverse fields as economics, sociology, psychology, history, and political science. Of historical interest, see "Special Libraries and Research in Labor and Industrial Relations" by Phillips Bradley which appeared in Special Libraries in March of 1948.

2. Basic Collection Development Guides


The literature of labor economics, industrial relations and to a lesser extent, labor history, labor law, and personnel management are identified and discussed. Emphasis is given to English language sources published in the United States and Great Britain. In view of the interdisciplinary nature of the field, the discussion of industrial relations material is classified by type of publication. Of related interest see also "Industrial relations materials in Warwick University Library" by John Bennett and John Fletcher published in the Industrial Relations Journal, 1981, pp. 62-67.


This classic work presents an integrated and analytical guide to sources of business information available in most academic and special libraries. Of special interest to practitioners in industrial relations are chapters on basic U.S. statistical sources, management, personnel, and industrial relations.


The authors offer practical advice on how to avoid information obsolescence in the rapidly changing field of industrial relations. Monographs, subject journals, reporting services, online databases and many other relevant sources of information are identified. This narrative essay appears as part of the official handbook of the American Society for Personnel Administration.


This collection of essays concerns itself with sources of information on labor, industrial relations, and personnel management. The authors discuss and share interesting perspectives on collection development in this diverse field. Among the topics discussed are: publishing efforts by professional, trade association, think tanks and lobby organizations; a case study of online database usage; a review of subject journals and indexes in industrial relations; a guide to federal labor-management decisional materials; and a critical look at the state of labor statistics programs and the availability of data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and other federal agencies. In addition to identifying new titles and reference techniques in this growing field, these essays review many standard sources of information.


The author observes that the mainstream development of industrial relations literature has undoubtedly been characterized by a marked diversification of research efforts from within the field itself. A review is offered of bibliographical aids, scholarly journals, British government publications, publications of international bodies, other published or unpublished material, and information about research in progress.


This compilation was prepared as a working paper for use in a group discussion at ALA on collection development for labor materials. The document serves as a selective acquisitions guide to materials on the labor movement, labor history, union activities and publications. An annotated bibliography on labor archival materials was issued separately as a supplement.


Because it comprehensively identifies bibliographies, dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks and government documents, this handbook is recommended for use by all researchers who need to quickly and effectively identify the best sources for conducting industrial relations research. This bibliography is an excellent source to consult for building an industrial relations reference collection. Each item included is accompanied by an evaluative description which points out its strengths and its limitations. In some instances a comparison with other similar or related works on the same subject is provided. This source is especially useful in identifying relevant statistical publications.

3. Industrial Relations and Labor Libraries and Archives: Descriptive Guides

This survey attempts to assess the basic orientation and direction of several participating industrial relations (IR) libraries. It documents such information as: statement of purpose, library organization and staff size, relationship of the IR library to the parent institute and to the central library, size and scope of the collection and services rendered. (The first such guide was published in 1948.) A statistical supplement accompanies this survey. (Of additional interest is a master's thesis by Rose A. Shapiro cited in this document entitled "A survey of IR research libraries in the U.S." [Univ. of Chicago, 1962].)

_Labor History_ (Bobst Library, Tamiment Institute, New York University, 70 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012), Fall, 1982. (Entire issue, pp. 487-581.)

This special issue is devoted to a survey of labor archives and libraries in the United States. It highlights the holdings of 13 different American institutions. In general _Labor History_ often includes descriptions of labor archive holdings. The "News Notes" section in this journal frequently includes announcements and descriptions of new labor archive acquisitions. [See also 1980 volume 27 of the _International Review on Archives_ which is dedicated to labor archive collections in 21 countries.]

4. THE COMMITTEE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LIBRARIANS

Committee of Industrial Relations Librarians. _Annual Conference proceedings_. 1946 and following (Published by the hosting institutions).

V.P.

In 1946, a group of directors of IR centers met to explore the possibility of inter-university cooperation of library facilities. The following year, 16 librarians and four directors met and established the Committee of Industrial Relations Librarians (CIRL). Since its inception, there have been no bylaws, no constitutions, no officers, no dues. Despite the informal ties, this group has been most productive and has issued several noteworthy reference titles. The conference proceedings reflect the concerns, objectives, and collaborative undertakings of the group.

Directory of CIRL members. Produced by Cornell University, New York School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Martin P. Catherwood Library, Ithaca, NY 14850. (235 Ives Hall, Cornell University).

The CIRL mailing list presently consists of: directors of pertinent institutions, active and retired industrial relations librarians from academic, business, government, and other special interest settings, and individuals from abroad who are interested in CIRL activities.


The Committee of Industrial Relations Librarians (CIRL) has served as a medium for an exchange of ideas and information and engages in cooperative projects designed to improve the usefulness of materials in the industrial relations and labor field. This article offers a brief review of CIRL activities and publishing efforts since 1946. Since the mid 60's special attention has been paid to computerized information retrieval systems, resulting in such surveys as the "Feasibility Study of Centralized Information Services in Industrial Relations" released in 1968. In addition to meeting annually the group supports a newsletter and several other informal exchanges of information.