EVOLUTION OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS*
1922-1952

I. General Developments in Personnel and Labor Relations


A very brief review of changes in personnel administration from 1910 to 1940. Stating that "Attention has broadened from individual efficiency of the teens, from organization setups and devices of the '20's, from social responsibilities of security, unemployment and negotiating of the '30's, to a new emphasis for the '40's," Mr. Dietz suggests the possibility of gaining greater understanding of basic problems in personnel relations through new research techniques.


Traces the development of trade unionism in the United States as a background for understanding the contemporary scene. Chapters XIV-XIX cover the period since 1922.


Traces the early background and changing content of personnel management, and its influence in breaking up "the Labor Problem" into separate problems and relationships requiring specialized study. In this author's opinion in 1928, one might "question the purpose that has been behind these improvements," but, "with all due allowances made, when the contributions of Personnel Management are recapitulated . . . , the result is bound to be an imposing sum."


*Items from this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference. The out-of-print items, for which prices are not given, can usually be found in a large public library or may be used in the Industrial Relations Section.
Brothers (49 E. 33rd St.). 1950. Part I. "Big business and industrial relations." pp. 3-51. $2.50.

Looking backward over thirty years' work in personnel administration, Miss Southall analyzes motives, mistakes, influences, and progress of management of United States industry in handling industrial relations since 1920.


Both of these talks by a leader in personnel administration consider progress in this field and analyze the personnel function. The former pamphlet deals principally with historical developments and includes a chart, "Fluctuations in industrial activity and the evolution of industrial relations" (1912-1936); the latter considers the changing content of industrial relations and emphasizes the need for increased management responsibility in applying the fundamentals of personnel administration that are already known.


This concise analysis of the roots and growth of personnel relations in British industry is pertinent in a number of ways to a study of the growth of industrial relations in the United States. One statement may be of particular interest: that "currents . . . being generated in the United States . . . are likely to have a profound influence on industrial organization throughout the world." These currents "present a vision of the executive process as including a 'personnel' factor that is its vital force, and that adds to our concept of management an element of 'leadership' without which it cannot achieve effectiveness or stability."


In the author's opinion, the two fundamental changes in the 1920's were (1) the tendency of personnel administration to become a part of line management, and (2) its increasing scientific character; and the three most needed points of progress in the next ten years were (1) the more careful integration of policies and methods, (2) the development of a line organization capable of applying the right kind of personnel policies, and (3) an increased sense of social responsibility in industry.

In his presidential address to the first annual meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association, Professor Witte reviews both the progress of industrial relations in the two decades prior to 1949 and continuing unsolved problems.

II. REPRESENTATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHANGING CONCEPTS IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

A. PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

Appley, Lawrence A. *Functions of the personnel executive*. Pasadena 4, Calif., California Institute of Technology, Industrial Relations Section, Bulletin No. 1, January, 1940. 20 pp. 50 cents.

In this analysis of the functions of a personnel executive, Mr. Appley presents the principle of which he has been a leading advocate—that "it is not only unwise but impossible to separate industrial relations activities from the function of the general executive." Accordingly "the basic objective of the personnel executive is to assist the entire organization from top to bottom in bringing about an improvement in knowledge, skill, habits, and attitudes that will ultimately express itself productively in work and constructively in human relations."


The author states his belief that "the changes in labor-management relations which have already taken place have been so profound as to require a new philosophy of personnel administration." This new philosophy will require modifications in the use of psychological personnel techniques which seek to mold the worker according to management's "ideal" and in "the assumption that the fulfillment of management's logics is the total objective of the enterprise. . . . Management must develop a new approach . . . [and] accept the logics of the trade union as a permanent factor which must be accommodated."


These outstanding leaders in developments in industrial relations in the 1920's express in slightly different ways their realization that industrial relations had become much more than "welfare work." Mr. Hicks emphasized the desirability of building a program on the
basis of "the unity of interest of all employees, including management." Mr. Hall defined a "wise personnel policy" as one "which undertakes to find ways and means to bring out the best in each individual in the organization, and then find ways to bring the best efforts of all the individuals up to a high degree of cooperation for the accomplishment of the objectives of the industry."


A plea for statesmanship in industrial relations based upon recognition of the major importance of a "sound human organization" in which "the principle of self-determination" is "harmonized with the principle of efficiency." The author states his belief that the problem is not so much to bring about further refinements in methods as to "bring up the laggards and establish a good average practice."


In its approach to the subject as a whole as well as in its emphasis on particular areas, this text illustrates the changing content and methods of personnel administration. It presents personnel administration as a basic management function, suggests the importance of the impact of unionism on personnel management, the value of "situational thinking" for both line and staff in handling personnel relations, and the importance of the recognition of the interaction of individual goals and teamwork.

Princeton University, Industrial Relations Section. The determination and administration of industrial relations policies. By Helen Baker. Princeton. 1939. 74 pp. $1.50.

An analysis of company practice showing especially the transitional nature of industrial relations in the late 1930's, this report also considers briefly the changing concepts of the function of the industrial relations specialist and the changing influences on policy determination.


In this book and article, the co-author of the first textbook on personnel administration (1920) succinctly presents his philosophy of personnel relations and collective bargaining. He states that "the personnel function is preeminent the function of the conservation and enhancement of morale . . .", and that "the case for collective bargaining from the point of view of this discussion rests fundamentally on its value as promoting a democratic agency and form of group articulation and interrelation." In his appraisal of personnel management (in the mid-thirties), he concludes that personnel work has been
too paternalistic and that the future criterion of its real success must be its "fundamental concern for employe growth and welfare in terms that employes no less than managers define, accept, and work for...."


In this author's opinion the primary aim of the personnel administrator is "to prove that the basis for good production from satisfied workers is a triangle of good relations which consists of recognition and acceptance by management of the interests and needs of the worker as an individual as well as in a group." In two other points, he expresses somewhat less generally accepted principles: (1) that the personnel manager should have a more distinct professional status, and (2) that the personnel specialist, not the line supervisors, should be responsible "for the practices of the company which fall within the area of his specialty."


Throughout the paper, emphasis is given to the point of view that "a working philosophy of personnel management must be part and parcel of a working philosophy of management in general." The author believes that the personnel administrator should help management maintain teamwork and cooperation by assisting in the development of "a more adequate science of management" freed from the handicap of an "over-functionalization" which denies to the majority of members of an enterprise any real sense of the significance of their part in the productive process.

B. THE IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT AND TRADE UNIONS ON INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Bakke, E. Wight. Mutual survival, the goal of unions and management. New York 16. Harper & Brothers (49 E. 33rd St.). 1946. 82 pp. $1.50.

A report of interviews with management and union leaders revealing "the fact that each party is concerned primarily with its individual survival," and has failed to recognize "that sovereignty in a democracy must be shared, not exclusively possessed by a particular group." Professor Bakke concludes that to develop this recognition and a sound basis for mutual survival "it is far more important to know why the other behaves as he does than to have convictions about how he ought to behave."


Considers all aspects of personnel management as part of the broad effort to reconcile the aims of management and the desires of employees to a common purpose of production, and weighs the role of unionism in relation to this effort.

A series of case studies in union-management relations serve to illustrate and substantiate the authors' thesis that collective bargaining should and can grow into union-management planning and “a new capacity on the part of those in industry . . . to work together . . . with a singleness of purpose and action for the attainment of a common objective.”


Making the central question of their inquiry the criteria by which union-management relations may be considered “constructive” or “destructive,” the authors assume that collective bargaining is constructive to the extent that it promotes the attainment of commonly held goals of a free society. The book is a study of institutional accommodation supporting the authors’ concept that both union-management cooperation and conflict can be either constructive or destructive.


Written by an executive who has encouraged and participated in collective bargaining for many years, this book develops the concept that while many labor agreements include recognition of the mutual interest of employees and employers, none of them has directly created the will to work efficiently and cooperatively. To create dynamic cooperation, the employer must show confidence in the employees’ leaders and share with them and the employees “his ideas, his hopes, his plans, and his problems.”


A trade unionist, a company executive, and an economist discuss the objectives of government, industry, and unions in the rapidly expanding quest for old-age security. Professor Kerr’s contribution considers especially the changing interests of management and union in pensions resulting from governmental action.


Pointing out the highly complex nature of relationships among management, union, and men, this book “examines the course of interacting influence upon the intricate network of relationships when a union enters a workplace” and stresses the great need for more skilled leadership on both sides.

Aiming "to lay the foundation for a more realistic approach to the study of trade unions—to focus attention upon the problems created by unions and upon the tremendous contributions which unions can make to national prosperity and industrial democracy," Professor Slichter covers briefly in this series of lectures many ideas which he has discussed more specifically or at greater length in other books and articles.


Looking upon trade unionism as "the conservative movement of our time," Professor Tannenbaum develops the thesis that the industrial organization in which union and management are interdependent and only different aspects of the same situation has replaced the early community. "The collective agreement is the substance out of which a society of status is being constructed..." The worker's life-long fortunes are identified with the industry in which he is employed, and it will devolve upon the union to share with management responsibility for increasing production and working out a society that is concerned with the whole man.


Primarily an examination of national labor policy as expressed in the Wagner Act, emergency controls, and the Taft-Hartley Act, this book expresses the author's belief that the trend in the direction of increasing government regulation and control is cause "for disturbing concern..." Professor Taylor concludes that "Labor and management can grasp the opportunity that is theirs to work together purposefully for the improvement of collective bargaining processes...." And that "The task of making collective bargaining work embodies one of the great challenges to what we call 'the democratic process.'"


This document is important in appraising the Social Security Act after its first years of operation and in reaffirming the philosophy behind Congressional action in establishing a contributory program of old-age insurance. The Council expressed the belief that "such a method of encouragement of self-help and self-reliance in securing protection in old age is essentially in harmony with individual incentive within a democratic society."

A long-time conservative leader in trade unionism, Mr. Woll states that the American labor movement rests upon the principles of: (1) voluntary action, (2) economic organization rather than political power, and (3) the mutuality of interest between capital and labor. Fearing any extension of government controls of labor relations, he urges "a higher, fairer, and more equitable order of business statesmanship and of industrial relations" on a voluntary basis.

C. THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMAN RELATIONS IN INDUSTRY


Attempting to "run a kind of chain and compass line across the whole front of the sciences devoted to human relations," Mr. Chase provides a readable analysis of social science methods, a description of representative studies illustrating the use of these various methods, and a summary of implications of the studies. Most of the subjects covered are important elements in the background of industrial relations; some of the chapters deal specifically with research in human relations in industry.


This text aims to develop an adequate economics of industrial relations through a realistic general analysis of all aspects of union and management behaviour. The concluding chapter summarizes the underlying ideas upon which a philosophy of industrial relations must be founded, and considers the alternatives facing unions and industrial management in making adjustments in their relationships to each other and to changing national and world situations.

Mayo, Elton. The social problems of an industrial civilization. Boston 63. Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University (Soldiers Field Station). 1945. 150 pp. $2.50.

This book provides a summary of the research and thinking of a man who as professor in the Department of Industrial Research at the Harvard Business School initiated and supervised such influential projects as the "Hawthorne experiment." The appendix provides a brief description of the various studies of this Department between 1926 and 1945.


A textbook which traces the development of the field of industrial sociology. Of special interest is a chart showing the chief contributions made by social scientists to industrial relations knowledge.