INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LEGISLATION IN GREAT BRITAIN

1. Background


This description of British industrial relations was first written in 1969. Only the final chapter in the second edition was rewritten to reflect changes enacted in 1971. The author describes the structure and government of the trade unions, the practice of collective bargaining, and the nature and regulation of industrial disputes.

2. Proposals for Reform


The Royal Commission, chaired by Lord Donovan, found that conflict between the formal and informal systems of British industrial relations was the cause of the widespread industrial unrest. The formal system is embodied in official institutions and recognizes industry-wide collective agreements which lay down in broad terms the basic levels of pay and conditions of employment. The informal system is the result of actual behavior of trade unions, employers’ associations, managers, shop stewards and workers. The Commission proposed legislation which would provide for comprehensive and authoritative collective bargaining at the factory and company level. In addition, the Commission proposed that companies register their collective agreements and that an Industrial Relations Commission be established to investigate and report on cases and problems.

"The Report of the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers’ Associations: a Symposium." *British Journal of Industrial Relations*

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**Items in this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference."
The nine papers in this symposium include a summary and analysis of the Royal Commission Report and recommendations, comments on the economic and legal consequences, and reactions by representatives of the trade unions and business community. The final paper is a review of the Conservative Party's statement of policy as set forth in its pamphlet Fair Deal at Work.

Conservative Political Centre. *Fair deal at work*. London, SW1P 3HH. The Centre (32 Smith Square). 1968. 67 pp. 7s.6d.

This statement, which appeared shortly before the publication of the Donovan Report, stresses the importance of changes in the legal framework of collective bargaining through the enactment of a comprehensive industrial relations act. The Conservatives would impose restrictions on the right to strike and provide legal sanctions against unions which failed to exercise authority over its members.


This White Paper incorporates the Labour Government's proposals for legislation which, in the main, follows the recommendations of the Donovan Commission. The White Paper goes further than the Royal Commission in proposing more restrictions on strikes and in fines for unions which fail to comply with the recommendations of the Commission on Industrial Relations.

Trades Union Congress. *Reason: the case against the government's proposals on industrial relations*. London, WC1B 3LS. Trades Union Congress (Great Russell St.). 1970. 29 pp. 1s.5p.

This attack by organized labor on the government's proposals details their opposition to specifics in the legislation and attacks its basic premises. The TUC finds that the proposals are anti-union and will destroy collective bargaining.

3. **The Industrial Relations Act**


An outline and analysis of the Industrial Relations Act from the perspective of management and the individual worker which focuses on its impact on the industrial relations system rather than legal theory.

The authors examine three major cases involving the use of the national emergency provisions, injunctions against boycotts, and the right to union membership to explain why the Industrial Relations Act failed to accomplish its objectives. They find that the government underestimated the power of the unions and their determination to pursue a policy of noncompliance. At the same time, neither the British employers nor the British public opinion fully supported the implementation of the new legislation.


This article discusses the provisions of the Act in the perspective of its three main objectives: curtailment of strikes; reform of industrial relations practice; and the rights of the worker.


The author compares and contrasts the new British law on industrial relations with the American system. The emphasis in this analysis is on the provisions for regulating collective bargaining and enforcing collective agreements, on union security, strikes, boycotts and emergency dispute procedures.


This book outlines and comments on those provisions of the law which effect both the internal and external affairs of trade unions and the employment rights of individual workers.


The authors consider the implications of the introduction of regulatory legislation into a voluntary system of collective bargaining. They trace the development of the Act and analyze its provisions in terms of underlying principles and problems.

The authors examine the effects of the 1971 Industrial Relations Act and explore the reasons for its failure.

4. Repeal and Further Legislation


A critical examination of the 1974 Trade Union and Labour Relations Act which emphasizes provisions regarding the closed shop, unfair dismissals, regulation of trade union affairs, and picketing and other industrial disputes.


The 1974 Act was not intended to be a comprehensive statute governing industrial relations. Rather it was the first of a three-part legislative program. The new legislation repealed the Industrial Relations Act of 1971 and abolished the controversial National Industrial Relations Court. The Act contains provisions concerning the status of trade unions and employers' associations, legal immunities and unfair dismissals.


This analysis of the Act summarizes the new provisions and outlines the changes from the 1971 legislation.


This bill represents the second stage of the government's program for legislation on industrial relations. The bill sets up machinery to improve industrial relations, including a statutory Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, introduces new rights for individual employees, regulates terms and conditions of employment, makes changes in the function of the wages councils, and specifies procedures for handling redundancies. The third phase of the government's program for legislation on industrial relations is concerned with industrial democracy. Proposals have been drafted and are being discussed.


The Employment Protection Bill received Royal Assent on November 12, 1975. It is designed to improve industrial relations by strengthening collective bargaining and to provide employees with a series of fundamental new rights and greater job security.