

## Compte rendu

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### Ouvrage recensé :

David B. LIPSKI, Clifford B. DONN : *Collective Bargaining in American Industry*. Lexington, Lexington Books, 1987, 351 pp., ISBN 0-669-12595

par Joseph B. Rose

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Nous sommes donc en présence d'un volume qui sera, dans les années à venir, un outil de travail de tout premier ordre autant pour le praticien oeuvrant dans les relations du travail, qu'il soit juriste de formation ou non, que pour l'étudiant en droit ou en relations industrielles. Il ne nous reste plus qu'à souhaiter vivement que les auteurs n'attendent pas seize autres années avant de nous livrer une nouvelle présentation systématique du droit du travail en vigueur au Québec.

Alain BARRÉ

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**Collective Bargaining in American Industry**, by David B. Lipsky and Clifford B. Donn, eds., Lexington, Mass., Lexington Books, 1987, 351 pp., ISBN 0-669-12595 (alk. paper) 0-669-12595-4 (pbk.: alk. paper)

This book examines contemporary collective bargaining in eight industries and seeks to capture changes in the labour relations climate that began in the late 1970s. Drawing on established scholars with research interests in the respective sectors and utilizing a conference to promote discussion of draft chapters, the editors have achieved two important objectives. First, they have produced a richly detailed study of the effect of recent environmental changes — economic — technological and legal — on the structure and process of collective bargaining and patterns of labour-management conflict. Second, this is a book which should appeal to both practitioners and academics (either as a reference book or as a supplementary text for a collective bargaining course).

Two challenges often exist in putting together this type of edited volume. The first involves the selection of industries for study. In this case, the editors chose automobiles, agricultural machinery, rubber, telecommunications, airlines, professional sports, higher education (primarily faculty) and police. This appears to be a representative cross-section of industries in that it reflects well-established and new collective bargaining relationships, as well as diversity in union representation, bargaining structure and collective bargaining coverage. As well, many of the established sectors have been exposed to environmental shocks — deregulation, technological changes, foreign competition and economic recession. The editors also did not want to replicate the ten industry studies (with the exception of airlines) edited by Somers in 1980 (**Collective Bargaining: Contemporary American Experience**). They acknowledge that «much has happened in collective bargaining in those ten industries since then», but point out «that much of the material in the Somers volume is still valid and the book continues to be widely used» (page 7). While this approach has some merit, it remains unclear to this reader why the steel industry was excluded or for that matter why professional sports and higher education were chosen. Although the latter two industries may be perceived as «important», it can just as easily be argued that their inclusion reflects a sports fetish and a preoccupation with introspection by industrial relations scholars.

A second challenge confronting edited volumes is the ability to develop a common framework for the industry studies. The format adopted here is a variant of Dunlop's industrial relations systems model. Although not all contributors were wedded to this approach, there is a broad consistency across studies which gives the book a coherent focus. Additionally, the editors have written an excellent concluding chapter synthesizing the results.

Although many of the changes in collective bargaining at the industry level have been reported elsewhere, this volume represents a valuable addition to the industrial relations literature. There are several reasons for this including: (1) the chapters are well-written and adhere to a common format; (2) the authors are knowledgeable about their industries and have been given the opportunity to update and reassess previous research findings; (3) the volume amply illustrates the diversity in labour relations across industries (e.g., the more far-sighted union response to deregulation in telecommunications than in the airlines and differences in the extent of change in labour-management relationships and work environment in the automobile and tire industries) and the diversity within industries (e.g., variations in concessionary bargaining within airlines and militancy among professional sports unions); and (4) the study also provides ample evidence of common themes across industries, including the negative effect of economic changes on union bargaining power and the decentralization of bargaining structures. One minor disappointment is the limited analysis of contract administration in most chapters. Given the important changes in contemporary collective bargaining and the renewed interest in grievance procedures (e.g., David Lewin and Richard B. Peterson, **The Modern Grievance Procedure in the United States**), the issue should have received greater attention. Aside from these minor quibbles, this is an extremely informative book.

Joseph B. ROSE

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**New Departures in Industrial Relations: Developments in the U.S., the U.K. and Canada**, An Occasional Paper published by British-North American Committee, Toronto, C.D. Howe Institute, April 1988, 74 pp., ISBN 0-89068-092-2

**New Departures in Industrial Relations** considers whether the drive for competitiveness has replaced «the adversarial practices built up since the 1930's» with «a series of partnerships». No definitive answers are forthcoming but each of the six authors bring thoughtful responses in this concise and useful 61-page pamphlet.

The country studies range over Ben Roberts' (London School of Economics) «new era in British industrial relations» to Thomas Kochan's (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) «great innovation and experimentation» in the United States to Noah Meltz's (University of Toronto) modestly incremental changes in Canada.

Prime Minister Thatcher is reforming British industrial relations by «reducing the level of inflation by privatization and by changing the legal framework to remove some of the long-enjoyed underpinnings of union strength». British employers are stopping short, however, of capitalizing on the Thatcher advantage to employ the American union-free option.

In the U.S. programs in employee participation, work organization reform, new technology and «union participation in strategic management decisions» coexist «with more polarized, distrustful and adversarial» relationships. By contrast with British and American ex-