
The development of the trade union movement in most countries has meant a restriction of the wide powers formerly enjoyed by the management within the factory. "Restrictive practices" have grown up and these prevent the management from doing what it considers to be in the interests of maximum production and efficiency. It is usual to assume that these practices do, in fact, lead to lower productivity and there are many economists and industrialists — who look back with nostalgia to the time when the management was free to make its own decisions on such matters.

Theoretical presuppositions, however, do not prove as satisfactory in certain fields of economic studies as in others, and the held of labour relations is one of them. Generalisations here do not always fit the facts because the background of factors and historical patterns of behaviour in which they operate are not the same at all times and places. Mr Zweig, who is the Simon Research Fellow at the "University of Manchester, realises this important feature of the material with which he is dealing. The result is, therefore, a valuable study in the various factors and behaviour patterns which influence the trade union productivity relationship.

Intending to examine the influence of certain trade union practices on the productivity of labour, Mr Zweig discards that definition of a "restrictive practice" which prejudgets the issue by speaking of it as one which reduces production directly or indirectly. If one were to start with such a definition, of course, there would be nothing left to do except to find evidence to support a foregone conclusion. This he is not prepared to do. Therefore, the author sets out to examine the impact of trade unions on productivity, whether favourable or adverse, direct or indirect, intended or unintended. The inquiry was confined to five major industries in Great Britain: building and civil engineering, cotton, iron and steel, printing and engineering. The author examined leading industrialists, managers and foremen on the one hand and trade unionists and individual workmen on the other. He lias not tried merely to present a consolidated picture of the various views advanced. In fact he has tried to get to the facts themselves, with the views being recorded as aspects of facts or reflections on facts.

A special feature of the book is the deliberate exclusion of all statistical material. The author suggests that this was due to the nature of his experiences. The effects of any particular practice or change; of practice being dependent on the historical pattern of behaviour prevalent in the factory or industry concerned, a statistical presentation of the material would give a false picture. That is not to say, however, that no conclusions were possible. Tentative conclusions have been drawn and subject to all sorts of qualifications as they are, they make a valuable contribution to knowledge on a highly complex problem.

A fundamental conclusion which Mr Zweig seems to have arrived at quite early in his study is that any question must be considered in the light of the situation in which it arises. Thus, in talking about trade unions, he points out that all generalisations about the type or size or constitution of the unions are bound to fail unless all the associated situational factors are considered.

Not the abstract factors count but the situations, which have to be envisaged as a whole in a concrete setting, while particular factors must be viewed against this integral background. The unions' attitudes and behaviour are themselves factors which contribute to the general situation. The union functions as the repository of the collective memory and the historical experience of the union determines its attitude to any scheme of measure, to established practices and changes in them which may be proposed. The records of past struggles, therefore, frequently prevent present co-operation.

Differences in the sectional character of different unions also contribute to differences in their attitude to industrial problems. The small local union defending a small section of craftsmen is found to be more restrictive than a big national union which has to protect the interests of many different classes of unions. The attitude of the management is also an important factor. A militant management will always have militant unions. A co-operative attitude, on the other hand, engenders a co-operative attitude on the part of the union. Another factor is the behaviour of other unions. Conflict between unions controlling different sections of workers within a single factory or industry is a source of constant friction and tends to cause a more militant attitude generally.

The conditions of the labour market are equally important. It is obvious that full employment increases the power of the unions. But Mr Zweig feels that it also creates an atmosphere in which the unions are not willing to misuse their power. He devotes one chapter to an examination of the attitudes that lead to full employment on the attitudes of trade unions and on the efficiency and discipline of workers.

The trade union, therefore, is one of the factors in the situation acting on and in turn being acted upon by the other factors——wages; the area from which the workers are drawn; the conditions of work; welfare activities or the absence of them; the quality of the supervising staff; attitude of the management; management-labour relations in the past; these are some of the other factors which must be considered before a clear view of the situation can be obtained. It is only then that it is possible to predict with reasonable accuracy what the reactions to any particular scheme are likely to be.

A recognition of this need to consider the whole complex of factors leads to what the author calls the situational approach.

Mr Zweig admits that this situational approach is rather discouraging but asserts, nevertheless, that in it alone lies the hope of achieving any substantial results. Modestly he suggests that his contribution consists only in having pointed out the right path. That in itself is no mean contribution. But in many respects Mr Zweig has himself travelled some considerable distance along that path and his own conclusions, though tentative, are quite likely to be confirmed by subsequent investigations. In the meantime, the book will be read with profit by all those interested in problems of labour and industry in this country, instep of the fact that the investigations were carried out in England.

H. E.

Though its caption is Indian Banking and Money Market, the book primarily deals with the functions and working of the Reserve Bank of India with reference to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and the Banking Companies Act, 1949. With the passage of time, the Reserve Bank of India has been called upon to play a more effective role in the Indian money market and has been endowed with various powers and responsibilities under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and the Banking Companies Act, 1949. The book contains up-to-date information on this aspect and will be of use to students who are interested in the study of the working of the Reserve Bank.

The book, however, suffers from lack of a critical approach to the various problems facing a Central Bank in an undeveloped money market as also to the problems with which the Indian banks in general are faced. The usefulness of the publication would have been considerably enhanced, if the author had tried to deal with these problems. Besides, there is no reference to the peculiar features of the Indian money market which would otherwise have made an interesting study. Thus from a perusal of the book, it may not be possible to take the measure of the problems of central banking as well as of commercial banking in India.

The printing and get up are good but the price seems to be rather on the high side.

A. K. B

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