International and Comparative Industrial Relations *edited by Greg Bamber and Russell Lansbury*
(Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1987), pp. xvi + 289. Paper $17.95. ISBN 0 04 327096 4.

This book provides a useful student text in the important and popular area of comparative industrial relations. The editors have assembled descriptions of industrial relationships in nine developed market economies. Four are English speaking: the UK, USA, Canada and Australia; four are chosen from the European continent: Italy, France, West Germany and Sweden, and the final country included is Japan.

All the contributors have written to a standard framework which starts with basic contextual statistics on the size and type of the labour force and the economy, and the basis of the political system. The country chapters then comment on the industrial relations actors, *viz.* employees, employers and government; on industrial relations processes, and on issues of current importance, e.g. approaches to technological change or industrial democracy. These descriptions are followed by a chronology of events of particular importance in the history of the country concerned.

The chapters on the separate countries are all competent and concise, and their standard format provides easily assimilated information for student use. The book ends with a lengthy appendix of comparative labour force, economic and strike statistics. For these reasons the book should prove very popular for students on basic comparative industrial relations courses.

The two editors have contributed to the British and Australian chapters, and have also written an introductory chapter 'Studying International and Comparative Industrial Relations'. As comparative industrial relations is an area that has recently begun to attract sustained research this introductory chapter is worth careful attention. The chapter starts by quoting Bean's distinction between international industrial relations — concerned with parties and processes that cross national boundaries, and comparative industrial relations — concerned to compare and contrast different national systems. It would have been useful, in a book with this title, to have noted the extent that different nations' industrial relations affected, or were affected by, the international policies of multinationals, the international union organisations or the ILO. However the nine comparative chapters in the book do not discuss international industrial relations. The international content is limited to a short description of international institutions and their development, in this introductory chapter. For a concise student text, the book's focus on national comparisons, without attempting to relate this to international industrial relations, is probably ambitious enough.

The bulk of the introductory chapter consists of a review of the growing literature which attempts some analysis of comparative industrial relations. The review demonstrates how recent and under-developed this analytical literature is. The authors start with Dunlop's **systems theory**, although as they note this was a heuristic device or model, not a set of theories. It never provided hypotheses for comparative industrial relations beyond the somewhat anodyne notion of a system's ability to return to a stable, and hopefully pluralist, equilibrium. In conventional industrial relations literature attempts at theoretical comparison really start with the **convergence theory** of Kerr *et al.*[1] This hypothesised a general convergence between different types of systems, the driving logic being common

technology, division of labour and a common pluralistic complexity and interdependence within society. The convergence was seen, perhaps not surprisingly in view of the home base of the study, as towards an American liberal pluralism. This study usefully stimulated further research which demonstrated the ethnocentricity of the original convergence theory, and started more detailed attempts to distinguish the causes of continued national diversity. From mention of the more recent partial convergence theories, the chapter notes Hugh Clegg's[2] argument that the structures of management determine the type of industrial relations processes, or at least of collective bargaining, that develop. It then notes the radical Marxist inclusion of class structures, and the focus on management strategy provided by the labour process debate. Comment is made on the strengths and limitations of these approaches.

Finally the editors comment on what I would see as the most analytically sophisticated attempts at recent comparative research. First they note the Harvard Centre for European Studies' work[3] that seeks to explain contrasts between five west European countries in terms of differences in types of union strategy, and their success in the context of different political economies. The second study of this type is by Kochan *et al.*[4] and focuses on the strategic choices made by industrial relations parties in the process of shaping American industrial relations. These two studies would seem to suggest the value of focusing comparative industrial relations, not so much on descriptions of parties, institutions and processes, but on the power structures and policies that have shaped industrial relations. A similar approach underlies the comparative industrial relations studies that have emerged from the Institut für Sozialforschung, Frankfurt.[5] The Frankfurt studies also focus on the development of interrelated political, economic and industrial relations policies, and the role of class, government and social pressures in the mobilisation of support behind such policies.

In these recent comparative studies there is an explicit focus on the sociological and political pressures shaping industrial relations policies, which provides a welcome expansion to the traditional range of vision of industrial relations research. Within this book some of the comparative chapters show evidence of knowledge of this literature in their individual country comparisons. However the comparative chapters have not been structured to relate to any of the particular analytical frameworks noted.

Bamber and Lansbury's introductory chapter ends with the presentation of their own typology for comparative studies, based on a dichotomy between Type I and Type II countries. They suggest Type I countries have a predominantly adversarial approach to industrial relations and Type II countries have a social partnership approach. The discussion of this typology is brief, although they do suggest that Type I is more likely to have difficulty adjusting to technological change, and that Type II countries are more likely to have industry unionism and centralised regulatory processes. I do not see that this typology of countries provides any advance over the typologies of policy used in the Harvard and Frankfurt studies. A typology of countries obviously presents difficulties for attempts to explain changes in national systems of the type that occurred in Sweden in the 1930s, and is being attempted by strategists in the ACTU and ALP within Australia now. I find the analytic notion that the major industrial relations parties shape industrial relations processes through strategic actions in the face of various economic, political and historically determined constraints, very much more fruitful. I am therefore not disappointed to find that the Type I and II typology is not used to relate to the substantive comparisons in the book.

Bamber and Lansbury have produced an excellent and easily readable student guide to the industrial relations systems of nine major countries. At a time when the Australian system of industrial relations is under pressure for radical change in a number of conflicting directions, it is essential that the differences between different types of industrial relations systems be more adequately understood. This book should find a good market in this area.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. C. Kerr, *et al.* (1960) *Industrialism and Industrial Man, the Problems of Labour and Management in Economic Growth*. Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1960.
2. H.A. Clegg, *Trade Unions Under Collective Bargaining: A theory Based on Comparisons of Six Countries*. Blackwell, Oxford, 1976.
3. P. Lange, *et al.*, *Unions, Change and Crisis: French and Italian Unions and the Political Economy, 1945-1980*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1982; and P. Gourevitch, *et al. Unions and Economic Crisis: Britain, West Germany and Sweden*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1984.
4. T. Kochan, *et al.* (1984) 'Strategic choice and Industrial Relations Theory' *Industrial Relations* 23, 1, Winter, pp. 16-39. See also T. Kochan *et al. The Transformation of American Industrial Relations*, Basic Books, New York, 1986.
5. G. Brandt, *et al. Labour Exclusion or New Patterns of Co-operation?* Institut für Sozialforschung, Frankfurt, 1986; O. Jacobi, *et al. Technological Change, Rationalisation and Industrial Relations*, Croom Helm, London, 1986; and O. Jacobi, *et al. Economic Crisis, Trade Unions and the State*, Croom Helm, London, 1986.

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Education and Technology *by Task Force on Education and Technology* (Australian Education Council, Melbourne, 1985), pp. 79.

In writing this review one must be aware that the Green Paper on Higher Education has since emerged and has highlighted, in particular, a number of aspects of those addressed in the present report. It has always been the case that when innovations are introduced into any system there is a gap between such an introduction and the expertise of those effecting the implementation. In particular, major changes in the expertise and skills of children take place in schools, but the efficiency of teaching such new skills is in the hands of teachers who may themselves not have had appropriate training in these areas.

As is stated in the introduction to this report on Education and Technology, there are two components: one relates to educating the community about technological changes; the other to the use of technology in educational delivery. In the context of co-operation between those responsible for education, industry, government and non-government organisations, and the community at large, there is no doubt that technology is having a pervasive effect. In almost all teacher education courses, all students complete, at least, a 'computer literacy' module. Thus, there should be in each school at least, a small number of teachers who will have the expertise to bring together computers and the curriculum in a learning context. Increased knowledge by teachers and their pupils brings a new