

THE CHALLENGE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN THE PACIFIC-ASIAN COUNTRIES. Ed. by Harold S. Roberts and Paul F. Brissenden. [Honolulu: East-West Center Press. 1965. viii + 259 pp. \$6.50].

This book is a collection of papers presented at a conference held at the East-West Center in Hawaii in April, 1962. Industrial relations scholars from six Pacific-Asian nations; Australia, Canada, India, Japan, New Zealand and the United States met and discussed three general topics. First they dealt with the industrial relations research being carried out in the various countries with a view to a possible interchange of materials and scholars. Following that the delegates examined the various dispute settlement and prevention systems in the six countries. The concluding topic of the conference was an analysis of the impact of ideologies on industrial relations systems. This volume contains eleven of the papers presented at the conference.

From the introductory chapter it appears that the topic dealt with most extensively was dispute prevention and settlement. The questions discussed included:

“(1) How is one to explain the fact that such highly “authoritarian” systems of industrial regulation have developed in the Australian and New Zealand democracies? And compulsory conciliation in New Brunswick, Canada?

(2) The “authoritarian” systems of regulating labor relations in Australia New Zealand, if “authoritarian” is the right word for them, appear to be the only such systems in the world — with the possible exceptions of India and the city-state of Singapore. How does it happen that similar systems have not taken root in the Philippines, Japan, or in the United States?

(3) Specifically, as to Japan, how is it that that country, with a long history of nondemocratic government, did not follow the line of Australian labor authoritarianism, lock, stock, and barrel?

(4) Is the method and effectiveness of labor dispute settlement related in any significant way to the extent of labor organization? Or to the extent of employer organization?

(5) Is a high degree of industrializing a prerequisite to (a) authoritarian regulation, or (b) a pervasive system of control by collective bargaining? Does the experience of India throw any light on this question?

(6) To what extent in the six countries are the internal affairs of unions subjected to regulation by government? Is the practice in this respect significant in relation to methods of dispute prevention and settlement?

(7) What are the most reliable criteria for assessment of the effectiveness of a country's methods of labor-dispute prevention and settlement? To what extent may fact-finding be a means of prevention as well as settlement?

(8) What should be the composition of arbitration, mediation, or fact-finding tribunal? Should they be tripartite? What does the experience of Japan suggest? Of the United States? Of Western Australia? Should the parties have a say as to who are to be their judges?

(9) Are methods of dispute settlement (whether by mediation, arbitration, seizure, fact-finding etc.) affected by the nature of the country, e.g. whether it is pastoral, agricultural, or manufacturing?

(10) Has the growth of bargaining or of interventionary methods of settlement (fact-finding, mediation, arbitration, etc.) had any effect on the extent of resort to direct action?”

All of these questions are fundamental and far reaching. One is somewhat disappointed therefore to find that the summary of the discussion of them is set out in two pages. Further, the papers following the introductory chapter although meant to be concerned with these matters fall far short of the mark.

The three papers dealing with industrial research in the Pacific Asian countries represented are of very little interest. They are just descriptive accounts of research projects and facilities in three countries; Japan, Canada and Australia.

Of the following six papers dealing with substantial industrial relations only Kingsley M. Laffer's "The Working of Australian Compulsory Arbitration" and Paul F. Brissenden's "Settlement of Labor Disputes in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States" come close to being pieces of scholarly research. And, in the case of Kingsley M. Laffer, his two earlier articles, "Problems of Australian Compulsory Arbitration" in the *International Labour Review*, May, 1958 and "Compulsory Arbitration and Collective Bargaining" in the *Journal of Industrial Relations*, October, 1962, are far more carefully developed than his conference paper. As for Paul F. Brissenden's article and David J. Saposs's piece on "Ideological Developments in the International Labour Movement", their topics were extremely broad and could only receive sketchy and skeleton treatment. Mr. Saposs's article nevertheless provides an interesting account of some of the ideological factors which have affected trade unionism and industrial relations in the Western nations, particularly those in Europe.

The defects in the papers are probably due to the fact that they were designed to serve as bases for discussion at the conference. And further, because this conference was intended primarily as an introductory one, it is not surprising that the papers are not highly sophisticated. They do have positive value however. The collection, particularly the papers contained in Chapters Five through Ten, does provide a good introduction to the dispute settlement and prevention systems in Australia, New Zealand, India and Japan. To have brought this material together in a comparative context is worthwhile. Furthermore, the extensive bibliography comprising twenty-three pages will be very useful to anyone doing further research in the field.