

## Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



### *Industrial Democracy in Western Europe, A North American Perspective*, by John Crispo, Toronto, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978, 151 pp.

Alexander J. Matejko

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mais qu'elle est le fruit d'une réflexion élaborée par des personnes possédant des responsabilités dans des entreprises dont les résultats ont ensuite été acceptés au cours d'une assemblée générale du CDE. C'est encore qu'elle n'est pas seulement, comme on le trouve trop souvent, une revendication auprès des syndicats et du gouvernement, mais un appel aux employeurs eux-mêmes de changer leurs attitudes et de faire les premiers pas.

Ce manifeste du Centre des dirigeants d'entreprise constitue un véritable défi à la conscience des employeurs, des travailleurs, des dirigeants syndicaux et des gouvernants. Et ce n'est pas sans raison que le ministre du Travail du Québec l'a qualifié de «bouffée d'air frais» dans le climat des relations de travail.

Gérard DION

Université Laval

**Industrial Democracy in Western Europe, A North American Perspective**, by John Crispo, Toronto, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978, 181 pp.

In order to avoid changes coming to our industrial relations system just by default, and not by the well calculated and prepared design, it is necessary not only to know very well the existing weaknesses but in addition to have a good foresight of new developments, as well as to learn about the foreign experience. J. Crispo analyses the Western European experience of industrial democracy in relation to the urgent needs of our system as seen by him: strengthening of checks and balances which preclude any one interest group for acquiring and utilizing too much power, the supplementation of the conflict-oriented collective bargaining by some more co-operative forms of union-management interaction, the avoidance of a too much governmental interference, overcoming of the great fragmentation and decentralization of collective bargaining in at least some industries, the much better information of labour by

employers on issues vital to bargaining, a widened scope of bargaining. According to J. Crispo, "The idea of a free collective bargaining system functioning almost oblivious to national economic and social developments and priorities is becoming increasingly untenable/.../ The ultimate choice now beginning to confront all modern industrialized societies is between highly bureaucratized and centralized corporate and technocratic systems and series of reasonably well balanced and interdependent quasi-autonomous sub-systems. Collective bargaining could prove to be one of the first of these sub-systems of democratic pluralism to be jeopardized if the choice even begins to go the wrong way. For this reason labour and management could be risking everything if they do not consider more carefully, earnestly and openly all of the alternatives which are still freely available to them" (pp. 152, 153, 174).

In Western Europe there is a trend towards the codecision-making arrangement at various levels of industrial relations, including the shop-floor democracy. Collective bargaining between unions and management is widely supplemented by various forms of employee representation on company boards, works councils, etc. There is usually much more political involvement and commitment than in North America. The negotiations promoted at the national or regional level are supplemented by the local additional agreements in which several parties, not only unions and management, may be involved. "Lacking elaborate formal contracts within which to operate, Western European managers and workers are much more disposed to enter into informal understandings. The need is obviously present, and there is less reason to fear the results as they are unlikely to prove binding on either side in their later relations" (p. 38).

The systems of industrial relations in Western Europe vary from a consensual model to the class conflict model. However, there is a general tendency towards the multiplication of forms within which

management, unions, government and various categories of employees are expected to prepare some joint decisions. The traditional formal and informal roles of various partners in the decision making process have to change under the impact of new circumstances. Union leaders and union representatives have to learn how to face effectively such challenges which were never before met by them. Management people learn how to handle their own employees on an equal basis. Public interest has to be jointly taken care of in the administration of selected public programs: tripartite labour courts, manpower and social security agencies, advisory conciliation and arbitration services, etc.

The author discusses in detail the growing worker representation on all types of company boards, as well as the works councils. The limited scope of his analysis did not allow him to take into consideration the nature of societies in which the participatory schemes are implemented. However, he makes some interesting remarks. According to him, Germany's codetermination system is endangered in the long run by elitism and formalism, as well as by the possible threats to the workers' standard of living (p. 89). It is a very important general question how much the existing participatory schemes are just parts of the consumer society which may not be able to resist any major crisis within this type of society. Another question is how much the existing Western European forms of management participation serve primarily as communication channels between unions and management, neglecting to a large extent the genuine concerns and interests of the personnel.

It is necessary to make a clear distinction between the obvious need to gain the union support, and another problem how to activate the employees within the framework of a shop-floor democracy. These two issues are obviously interrelated but at the same time they remain far from being identical. Pity that the author did not pay an adequate attention to the subtlety appearing in this field.

However, he makes clear that "some of the more grandiose industrial democracy models can become quite remote from the shop floor. Codetermination is especially vulnerable on this front because the worker representatives involved often seem so distant and far removed from the day-to-day problems of workers" (p. 107). This problem would need much more elaboration.

The Swedish new model of shop-floor democracy growing gradually from the hundreds of participatory experiments sponsored by management with the consent of unions was not adequately covered by the author but this is the relatively recent development and the documentation of it remains relatively scarce. Having the opportunity to study this development directly in Swedish companies during the Spring of 1979 the author of this review has come to the conclusion that this type of industrial democracy in the long run may have much more validity for Canada than any other type.

The concept of autonomous work groups and the reorganization of production processes according to the participatory group needs both lead to the progressive evolution of the whole management style. People located at various levels of the organizational hierarchy learn how to handle situations in a new way. The participatory social organization of workplaces evolves gradually and peacefully, becoming an important factor of industrial relations. The vital interests and concerns of the grass-root ranks become articulated and start to play an independent role within the general framework of collective bargaining. The danger of worker alienation even within the framework of codetermination schemes has been considerably diminished under such circumstances (J. Crispo mentions the above danger on p. 108).

The development of industrial democracy in Western Europe is not popular in many North American management circles because of the issue of management prerogatives. J. Crispo taking about the West

German experience mentions, among others, that effective management has not been sacrificed to any significant extent. "So far at least, management has been left with a relatively free hand to operate efficiently, provided it allows for and takes into consideration the effects on workers of literally everything it decides and does. Assuming due allowance is made for their concerns, worker representatives on company boards and works councils do not tend to interfere unduly with management's judgment, as they share the employer's interests in a healthy and prosperous enterprise" (pp. 142 and 143). When assuming, as J. Crispo does, that "the managerial process is certain to become more politicized" (p. 144) there is no another way for managers but to learn how reconcile the political game with the priorities of business.

**Alexander J. MATEJKO**

University of Alberta

**Une analyse des gains au Canada**, par Peter Kuch et Walter Haessel, Ottawa, Statistique Canada, 1979, 272 pp.

Cet ouvrage qui s'inscrit dans la série **Etude analytique du recensement** constitue une des études les plus fouillées qui ait été publiées sur l'analyse des revenus d'emploi au Canada. Durant la dernière décennie, les études sur la répartition et les disparités de revenu se sont multipliées au Canada. Ces travaux portaient principalement sur le rendement de l'investissement en capital humain, la discrimination selon le sexe et l'influence de caractéristiques personnelles, comme l'appartenance ethnique. Non seulement, le présent ouvrage s'inscrit dans cette lignée, mais par son approche intégrée, il complète les précédentes analyses sur l'investissement en capital humain en y incorporant en particulier des variables de marché. De plus, l'utilisation de variables d'interaction permettant d'estimer le rendement de l'investissement en éducation et en expérience, selon les groupes

ethniques, débouche sur d'importantes considérations de politiques économiques.

Les auteurs utilisent l'analyse de régression multiple avec estimation des coefficients selon la méthode du maximum de vraisemblance. La variable dépendante retenue est la moyenne du logarithme des gains annuels ou hebdomadaires ou ce qui revient au même le logarithme de la moyenne géométrique des gains. On sait que de nombreuses études menées sur la répartition des revenus indiquent que les distributions de fréquences des revenus peuvent être assez bien représentées par une fonction de densité lognormale. Quoique l'étude de Lydall citée par les auteurs n'apportent pas de conclusion aussi catégorique. En effet Lydall a testé cette hypothèse pour plus de 30 pays pour conclure que «La partie centrale de la distribution, entre peut-être le dixième et le quatre-vingtième percentile à partir du haut, est près d'être lognormale, mais les extrémités de la distribution contiennent trop de fréquences par rapport à la distribution lognormale». Les auteurs reconnaissent implicitement que cette conclusion quelque peu mitigée peut restreindre la précision de l'estimation des coefficients de la fonction de gains sous l'hypothèse d'une distribution lognormale. Mais, ils croient que les nombreux avantages qu'elle comporte sont suffisants pour justifier son emploi. La distribution lognormale est, en particulier, compatible avec la théorie du capital humain, qui explique le mode de formation des revenus. De plus, sa signification économique est claire, en ce que la variance des logarithmes de gains est une mesure non ambiguë de leur disparité. Enfin son utilisation est facile. On peut ajouter ici que les nombreuses études qui ont été faites pour expliquer la forme mathématique que la répartition des revenus, amènent souvent comme explication à la présence d'une forme lognormale, le fait que les facteurs explicatifs se renforcent eux-mêmes. Or les auteurs ont eux-mêmes observé ce phénomène. Ainsi, il existe une corrélation simple de .87 entre le niveau d'instruction et le taux de rendement.

Quant aux facteurs explicatifs des dispa-