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Cet ouvrage est complété par une annexe méthodologique, une bibliographie et un index.

En somme, un livre potentiellement utile aux personnes qui s'intéressent à la médiation.

Jean SEXTON
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This is a collection of writings on the European quality of working (QWL) projects and their general impact on industrial relations. One of the most significant among them is the contribution by G. Hofstede who emphasizes the difference in basic values existing between managers, professionals, technicians and skilled workers, and finally clerks and unskilled workers. Managers as well as professionals put on the first place job content. For the two remaining categories safety and security, reward, and interpersonal relations play the most important role. «The values explicit in humanisation efforts tend to be in the areas of job content and learning; values which a priori are more salient to the humanisers than to those to be humanised» (p. 222).

It is not possible to overcome the passivity of the alienated workers, the resistance of the ruling elite and the inertia of the industrial and administrative establishment without taking into consideration the existing gap in values. The humanisers need the involvement of the workers themselves, and possibly the unions too.

So far unions are not directly concerned. According to R. Tchobanian, «Employers will have to look upon the humanisation of work not merely as a modern technique in labour management but also as something to be worked out in consultation with the unions and taking due account of their overall policies (...). It is bargaining at the plant level that ensures the most effective control over the actual conditions of work» (pp. 210-211).

The papers on work restructuring (Heppworth & Osbaldeston, Jonsson, Birchall, Carnall and Wild, Durand, Docherty & Berg) help to understand several demands for change in the operation of working systems. A distinction has to be made in this respect between the remedial short term perspective and the preventive long term perspective. The first one quite often prevails to the detrimental of broader interests.

A company strategy is badly needed in order to avoid the fragmentation of actions and their very limited validity in a long run. As may be learned from the examples included into the book, there are several difficulties involved into the work restructuring. For example, in the cases reported by Durand the enlarging of autonomy and quality of work resulted in some lowering of production or to the deterioration of product quality.

One of the common difficulties in the QWL projects arises when there is not enough freedom of introducing necessary changes. «Projects with fairly narrow degrees of freedom cannot make significant improvements to levels of worker responsibility and participation if other support systems in the organization discourage such changes (...). There are difficulties related to the different cultures and perspectives of people from different departments and levels in the organization (p. 82). Top management support is a critical factor.

Papers on work changes and their effect on people (Stjernberg, Hill) show the mutual interaction between personal transformations of people and the techno-organizational transformations of work processes. The patterns of responses by people to organizational changes are a product of their prior orientations to work (affected by their life values and concerns), as well as their more ‘deterministic’ reactions to the specific changes be
they structural or technical (p. 84). It is a
great task of management to synchronize
both work changes and human changes in
order to achieve a perfect mutual reinforce-
ment in this respect.

The papers on comparative assessments
and evaluation (Bartolke and Gohl, Hep-
worth and Osbaldeston) ask some major
questions: how much of a genuine concern
for the welfare of workers is involved in the
QWL projects? Which among the various ap-
proaches to QWL are generally successful
and which lead to problems or even failures?
As long as the management’s primarily
motivation are profits and earnings, welfare
and workers (as well as clients) remain of a
secondary importance.

A management belief in the legitimacy of
worker participation is an important factor
of the QWL success. A tight labour market
makes management more favourably
oriented. The ‘project’ team system in which
employee groups are set up to solve particular
problems seems to be much promising.

The immediate supervisors are particu-
larly vulnerable and it is necessary to pay a
particular attention to their changing roles.
The wage payment systems have to be ade-
quately redesigned in order to secure for the
employees an appropriate reward for a higher
performance. There is also a need for educa-
tion towards a broader interpretation of pro-
motion. A relevant information has to be
provided, as well as enough additional train-
ing.

The organizational aspects of work
humanisation are well presented in this book
which should become well accepted by the in-
terested readers.

Renewal in the Workplace: A Critical Look
at Collective Bargaining, by Harry Anto-
nides, London, Ontario, Christian
Labour Association of Canada, 1982,
82 pp., ISBN 0-919663-00-1

In this short booklet, Mr. Antonides,
research director for the Christian Labour
Association of Canada (CLRA), briefly exa-
mines man’s relationship to God and its rami-
fications for such issues as the nature of
work, quality of worklife, codetermination,
inflation, strikes, compulsory arbitration and
union plurality. On the basis of a rather
superficial analysis of these issues as seen
from a Christian perspective, the author
recommends solutions to a variety of pro-
blems which he sees as part of the malaise of
the Canadian industrial relations system.

The sections which discuss man’s rela-
tionship to God are developed in a rather cur-
sory way with man being viewed as the image
bearer of God with one of his tasks as the
keeper and developer of God’s creation. The
author acknowledges that the Christian faith
does not provide quick and easy answers to
immediate problems, and that Christians
possess no magic formulas. Nevertheless, he
makes some very specific recommendations
on some very complex issues.

After describing how work has been
broken down into small parts which are often
routine and boring, he endorses the concept
of quality of worklife projects without show-
ing how this will change the meaning of work
from a Christian perspective. While being
critical of the hierarchical structure of
organizations and the lack of worker par-
ticipation in the decision-making process, the
author recommends a form of codetermina-
tion (workers elected to the boards of direc-
tors) which is practised in a number of Euro-
pean countries, but he does not show how
this conforms to the Christian view of man.

Inflation is seen as a cruel form of in-
come redistribution and its major cause is
seen as greed — a greed that lives inside of us.
While the author acknowledges that greed

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