

# IR NEWS

INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AT UCLA

IR NEWS is a publication of the Institute of Industrial Relations in cooperation with the Industrial Relations Alumni Association. Its purpose is to acquaint persons interested in industrial relations with current research and educational programs — with particular emphasis on those in Southern California.

FEBRUARY, 1957

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CONFERENCE SET FOR SATURDAY, MARCH 2

All persons interested in industrial relations as a career are invited to participate in a CONFERENCE ON JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS. The conference will be held in the Business Administration and Economics Building on Saturday morning, March 2. It will open at 9 a.m. with a general session, addressed by representatives of management, labor, government, and the university on the subject **INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AS A CAREER**.

Following the opening session, conference participants will have the opportunity to join one of four workshops in which leading professionals in the industrial relations field will answer specific questions. The list of resource persons for the workshops includes **John W. Adams**, Administrator, RAND Corporation (formerly UCLA Placement Director); **Jack S. Albert**, Owner, Ames Bureau of Employment; **Robert P. Armstrong**, Personnel Manager, Helms Bakeries (and President of the Personnel and Industrial Relations Association); **Phillip Barnett**, Administrator, Los Angeles Painting Industry Insurance Trust Fund; **James E. Carr**, Personnel Director, Waste King Manufacturing Company; **Gerald S. Honey**, Assistant Director of Industrial Relations, North American Aviation; and **David G. Seash**, Director of Employee Relations, Merchants and Manufacturers Association.

The conference will conclude with a luncheon in the University Religious Conference Building, and an address by **Orme W. Phelps**, Professor of Industrial Relations, Claremont Men's College. Dr. Phelps, one of the leading industrial relations scholars on the West Coast, will speak on **The Growing Contribution of Industrial Relations to Modern Society**.

The Personnel and Industrial Relations Association has joined with the Institute of Industrial Relations in sponsoring the conference, and its officers and Educational Planning Committee, under Chairman **Norman M. Kellett**, have been instrumental in obtaining many of the speakers and panelists. The Industrial Relations Alumni Association is also a co-sponsor and is substituting the conference for its regular March meeting.

**Advance registration is required.** Please fill out the form below and mail it in at your earliest convenience. Registrations must be received by **February 28**. The registration fee of \$2.00 covers everything, including coffee and doughnuts during the break and luncheon. Further information may be obtained from **Richard N. Baisden**, Bradshaw 2-6161, Ext. 425, who is in charge of arrangements.

### PROGRAM

8:45-9:15 a.m. REGISTRATION (Room 100, Business Administration and Economics Building)

Section 1—Irving R. Weschler, Discussion Leader

9:15-10:50 a.m. GENERAL SESSION (Room 121, BAE Building)

Section 2—Robert Tannenbaum, Discussion Leader

Panel Discussion on "Industrial Relations as a Career"

John B. Clark, Director of Industrial Relations, Northrop Aircraft, Inc.

Henry Santiestevan, AFL-CIO Field Representative

John F. Rood, Area Manager, California Department of Employment

Robert Tannenbaum, Associate Professor of Personnel Management and Industrial Relations, UCLA

2. HOW TO ADVANCE TO BETTER JOBS IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, Robert F. Smith, Discussion Leader

3. JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS TRAINED IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS WITH LABOR UNIONS, GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES, CONSULTING FIRMS, HEALTH AND WELFARE FUNDS, ETC. Arthur Carstens, Discussion Leader

10:50-11:00 a.m. Coffee Break

11:00-12:30 p.m. CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

1. HOW TO OPEN THE DOOR TO A FIRST INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS JOB WITH A COMPANY

12:30-2:15 p.m.

LUNCHEON—University Religious Conference Building (900 Hilgard—Corner of Hilgard and Le Conte Ave.)

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Speaker: Orme W. Phelps, Professor of Industrial Relations, Claremont Men's College

Subject: "The Growing Contribution of Industrial Relations to Modern Society"

## IN-PLANT POLITICS AT THE EXECUTIVE AND SUPERVISORY LEVELS DISCUSSED BY SOCIOLOGIST

The term **politics** as used in business and industry usually has an unpleasant odor to most people. Actually it need not, and probably should not, be a "bad" word, since a certain kind of politics is indispensable for the operation of any organization. As we look closer at established, recognized **formal organizations**, we see why this is. All formal organizations are **out-of-date** in a sense. They are really adjustments to **past** situations. Politics enters as part of the necessary, but to a degree futile, effort to bring them up-to-date.

Formal organizations are originally set up only after careful planning. And in the sense of private understandings, trust of members in each other, mutual commitments, shared interests, etc., politics went into the planning. Once the organization is set up, its various departments are cautioned to subject departmental interests to those of the parent body. However, division of labor and assignment of responsibility to the various parts actually encourage **departmental** consciousness. This is especially true where departments are stimulated to excel each other in production, maintenance of safety, low cost operation, etc. In their struggles to get a margin above adequate operating allowances, various leaders and members are saddled with commitments to **departmental** policy. Leaders at all levels are, of course, usually guided by moral principles in their selection of means for carrying out policy.

Once the organization is underway, leaders also become concerned to preserve it, possibly to expand it, and to protect themselves against competing organizations. Much the same condition develops in the departments and divisions of the organization. This is all legitimate and natural in a democracy, which allows and encourages lawful organization and their members to advance their interests — always, of course, with awareness of the rights of others. In this democratic ferment there are many ambitions and many frustrations as some persons rise and some fall. There is varying turnover of personnel, and keen search by many for more rewarding jobs. Consequently, some people are solidly in the firm; others, for various reasons, are emotionally outside and stay on from need, not choice. Some are even embittered toward the firm. In other words, there are **differentials in attachment** to the firm. And in view of differences in age, ability, expectations, personal responsibilities, community ties, etc., this is not surprising.

These variations in identification with the firm, this endless replacement of personnel, the market changes, changes in technology, etc., jar the organization. So leaders demand more loyalty and some followers seek more stable relations. The shocks of simultaneous disorganization and reorganization bind certain members together to act as **unpublicized suborganizations**. Of necessity, they exchange confidences and work out private arrangements to aid each other. This is done (1) in part from uncertainty about the outcome of plans they fear to expose to the strategies of other similar groups; (2) in part from the need of considering alternative courses in the contradictions of an expanding organization, and (3) in part from knowledge that specific members do not identify strongly with the firm's general interest and are likely to exploit debatable points of policy and use information for personal reasons, etc. These small intimate groups are really cores of action, the points from which responsible motion arises. They are recognized in all organizations, but by those not in them they are often given censorious names. One of these labels is **clique**. But like "politics," once this term is deodorized it is useful in describing organizational action. For plant politics the clique is roughly what the electric motor is for plant production.

There are many kinds of cliques. Some hurt the organization and have thus brought the term into disrepute. **Parasitical** cliques in which members clearly damage the organization more than they

aid it are bad. But cliques in which the reverse is true are **essential**. These are the cliques that bridge the gap between planning and the unforeseen events that actually develop. Obviously any set of plans applied to a dynamic world must be departed from or revised from time to time. Where the revision will cause more dis-sension and delay than an emergency, in the judgment of competent leaders, will tolerate, then clique action is necessary to anticipate difficulties and to block the disruptive work of those who are less responsible and informed. Possibly this action will temporarily depart from accepted principle in order to preserve principle and maintain the organization as it undergoes unavoidable surgery. One repeatedly hears able executives explain and justify their deviations by saying that "two and two sometimes add up to three-point-nine or four-point-one, but that's close enough."

Cliques in this sense initiate action and get things done. Where the situation is confused and no clear guides to action exist, a clique able to deal with confusion must take over or the organization suffers. These cliques, like any more formal, legally recognized interest group, may get out of hand at times so that one department or division of a firm must be curbed. This will, of course, call for **more clique action elsewhere in the organization**—especially if good internal and public appearances are to be maintained. The shifts and dodges or "techniques and skills" for containing cliques, or advancing one's own, are myriad. (We have to note, too, that what is an unrecognized "clique" today may be a legitimate department or organization tomorrow.)

Cliques in industry commonly develop around at least four general areas: (1) those friction-producing situations where experts or specialists in advisory roles "cooperate" with executives; (2) in union-management relations — and here one finds cliques not only **in management and in the union**, but also cliques made up of managers and union officers who act against similar cliques; (3) inside and between various departments under pressure to operate more efficiently in terms of cost, etc.; and (4) where people are competitively seeking to advance their careers.

We need to realize the naturalness and merit of some politics. Is there anyone who grew up in a family and a neighborhood and continues to associate with human beings who has not been a participant in or target of politics? Those who flee politics as something necessarily evil in one organization with the thought of finding eternal quiet (and stagnation) in another are expecting too much from a society that stresses the right of individuals to talk back and to collectively do something about their dissatisfactions. They are also ignoring the fact that where such rights are denied, politics merely goes underground whether in private organizations or in governments. As long as the **content** of "politics" proves so serviceable it will not die in organizations, deny the condition or call it what we will.

The above statement is a partial summary of an address made to the January meeting of the Industrial Relations Alumni Association by **Melville Dalton**, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Research Sociologists at the Institute of Industrial Relations, UCLA. Dr. Dalton is highly regarded as a scholar in the field of industrial sociology. He has held a number of positions in industry which have brought him into contact with workers in a wide variety of occupations and at all levels of operation. His numerous writings have emphasized the great contribution which the sociologist can make to the field of industrial relations. Complimentary copies of the following reprints of articles by Dr. Dalton may be obtained from the Institute of Industrial Relations: **The Role of Supervision, Industrial Controls and Personal Relations, Managing the Managers, and The Industrial "Rate-Buster": A Characterization**. (Additional copies are available at 20c each.)