
A British View of American Strikes

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May 1982

CRSO Working Paper No. 267

Copies available through:

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prepared for publication in the INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LAW JOURNAL

What and Why Are Strikes?

John R. Commons, the great American theorist of collective action, had two fundamental insights into strike activity. "People may question," he wrote in his summing-up volume, "why it is that even high wage workers go out on strike, and employers often think that by offering workers still higher wages they can induce them to stay at work or win them back to work. But what the union wants is a hearing for each individual before he is fired, or when he alleges that he has been discriminated against. This is the most that the members mean by 'recognition of the union'."¹ As a lifelong member of the typographical workers' union, and an incessant promoter of institutions for collective bargaining, Commons developed a strong sense of the necessity of guarantees for worker collective action, at the same time as he hoped to stabilize and contain worker-management struggles. Yet Commons also had this insight: "The question of power is the fundamental question of class war, or class struggle, breaking out in strikes, lockouts, and even in military revolutions."² Two insights, then, converging into one: that industrial conflict concerns the rights of workers and employers, as well as the strictly economic return workers receive for their labor.

If the double insight now seems obvious, that is not because all students of industrial conflict take it for granted. Following P.K. Edwards, we might make a rough distinction among three alternative views of industrial conflict: as protest, as power struggle, and as industrial relations.³ The analysis of strikes and related actions as protest, typified by Jeremy Brecher's Strike! The True History of Mass Insurgence in America from 1877 to the Present, presents them as relatively direct expressions of the current level and character of discontent among workers.⁴ The analysis of power struggle, illustrated by Walter Korpi's The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism, portrays a continuous competition among workers, managers, and government officials, in which strikes and lockouts become contingent outcomes of a much larger set of interactions.⁵ The analysis of industrial relations accepts the idea of interaction (as opposed to direct expression of one side's discontent),

but stresses the containment of workers' and managers' demands within organizational forms that a) vary strongly from one time, industry, or place to another, b) significantly shape the likelihood and content of industrial conflict; Hugh Clegg's Trade Unionism Under Collective Bargaining offers a recent version of industrial-relations analysis. P.K. Edwards' Strikes in the United States builds directly on Clegg's work. Speaking very schematically, protest theorists tend to reject Commons' first insight (that workers regularly seek to stabilize and legitimize their collective voice in the conversation with management and government) and to stress the second (that strikes spring from struggles for power). Power-struggle theorists tend to give the two insights equal weight. And industrial-relations theorists tend to stress the first, while being at least dubious about the second. Although the industrial-relations school can claim the most direct line of descent from Commons via Selig Perlman and other Commons students, recent generations of that school have left one side of the Commons heritage relatively undeveloped.

Unsurprisingly, the three alternative views of industrial conflict lead to somewhat different ways of grouping and interpreting the available evidence. Two choices loom especially large: general vs. particular, broad vs. narrow. By no means do they reduce to the same choice. The choice between general and particular runs like this: If we treat individual conflicts as manifestations of a general, regular phenomenon, we gain the advantages of ready comparison and access to well-stated models that have already stood the test of confrontation with hard evidence, but run the risk that the models hide quite inappropriate assumptions about the contexts in which the conflicts occur. If, on the other hand, we read individual conflicts as signs of the conditions currently affecting particular sets of managers and workers, we gain knowledge of those conditions at the risk of mistaking very general features of industrial conflict for peculiarities of

the situations at hand. We might hope, to be sure, to discover the ideal equation that simultaneously summarizes the general laws of industrial conflict and states the principles of variation. In the meantime, protest theorists more often give a particular reading to individual instances of conflict, scanning them for news of problems and grievances here and now, while power-struggle theorists more frequently aim at a certain level of generality, and industrial-relations theorists, on the average, find themselves in between.

As for the choice between broad and narrow, it follows from the fact that the strike is only one form of industrial conflict -- one whose very definition in any time and place is a result of previous struggles and administrative practices. Where should we draw the lines among absenteeism, shop-floor disputes, sabotage, lockouts, and strikes stricto sensu? If we choose a broad conception of industrial conflict, we gain the advantage of examining the interplay among different forms of struggle at the cost of taking on the study of phenomena for which the evidence is fragmentary and often intractable. If we choose a narrow conception (which usually means concentrating on strikes as currently defined and recorded), we gain the advantage of crisp, comparable, abundant evidence at the cost of being vulnerable to variations in administrative practice and of sometimes interpreting shifts in the forms or loci of conflict as changes in the overall level of conflict. This time protest and power-struggle theorists commonly group together at the broad end of the range, insisting on the examination of several different forms of conflict, while industrial-relations theorists remain more willing, on the whole, to concentrate on strikes as such.

Protest, power-struggle, and industrial-relations views of industrial conflict all have pedigrees stretching back into the nineteenth century. General histories of the labor movement, for example, usually incorporate a protest

interpretation of strikes and other forms of industrial conflict. Recurrent studies of industrial conflict as a social problem, on the other hand, usually adopt an industrial-relations perspective, with its implication that different institutions for conflict management could make industrial conflict less likely, or at least less costly. Until recently, however, power-struggle interpretations have been relatively unpopular among professional students of industrial conflict.

Over the last decade or so, the balance has changed. Partly as a result of the intellectual ferment surrounding the movements of 1968 and partly as a concomitant of the renewal of Marxist work on industrial processes, power-struggle treatments of industrial conflict have flourished. Michelle Perrot's Les ouvriers en grève, the Shorter-Tilly Strikes in France, Walter Korpi's Working Class in Welfare Capitalism, James Cronin's Industrial Conflict in Modern Britain and Douglas Hibbs' multiple essays on the evolution of industrial conflict in western countries exemplify the power-struggle renaissance.⁷ Although these works differ considerably from one another -- and, indeed, often take aim at one another -- they have in common an urge to generalization, a relatively broad conception of industrial conflict, a view of strikes as contingent outcomes of wider struggles, and an inclination to assign national structures of power a good deal of significance in the shaping of strikes and other forms of industrial conflict.

P.K. Edwards on American Strikes

P.K. Edwards thinks of many of the recent authors as advocates of organizational-political models. They are organizational, as he sees it, in stressing worker organization as a prerequisite to worker collective action. They are political in claiming that strike activity has significant connections with national struggles for power. Edwards offers Hibbs, Korpi, and Shorter-Tilly as examples, and takes the Shorter-Tilly analysis of French strike activity as

his chief object of scrutiny. He self-consciously places himself at a distance from these power-struggle analyses, but not so far away that he loses all their insights.

Exactly how far Edwards stands from the organizational-political models remains unclear, for two reasons. First, he often turns from the sustained critique of the Shorter-Tilly argument to tussle with another group of antagonists: theories of institutionalization, which suggest that with mature industrialism and adequate mechanisms for the resolution of disputes, strikes calm down, lose significance, become less costly, or even wither away. Second, while his most general statements establish a sharp separation from the Shorter-Tilly position, his analyses of particular features of American strike activity frequently converge with those of Shorter and Tilly. Nevertheless, over the book as a whole Edwards takes a position noticeably closer to the industrial-relations school (and noticeably farther from the protest school) than Shorter, Tilly, and their confreres. As opposed to national politics, he argues the importance of job-control issues in American strikes. As opposed to unionization and worker organization in general, he argues the significance of the special mechanisms for labor relations American workers, managers, and government officials created.

Edwards portrays his book as an attempt to answer "one large question: how and why has the American strike picture altered during the enormous industrial and institutional changes of the past century?"⁸ How, then, does he propose to answer that large question?

Edwards centers his work on the study of almost one hundred years of official strike statistics, as collected and published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. His empirical results come not only from the analysis of standard strike indicators -- number of strikes, number of workers involved and number of hours lost -- but on a variety of other strike measures, such as trade union involvement in strikes, results of strikes, strikes by issue, official vs. wildcat strikes, number of establishments struck, and so on. He often uses the data in ingenious, insightful ways.

His quantitative method consists of straightforward tabulations, simple correlations, and standard single-equation econometric analyses. In these respects he stays a cautious distance behind the current state of the art among quantitative analysts of industrial conflict. That quantitative reticence makes his presentation relatively easy to follow. As we shall see later, it also involves him in unnecessary risks of error, and reduces the comparability of his results with those of other investigators.

What are those results? As Edwards reads them, four main findings emerge from the empirical analyses:

1. Unlike the experience of many other countries, the "shape" of American strikes (i.e. the particular configuration of frequency, size, and duration at any point in time) shows no significant long-term change over the last century.
2. Economic factors and the business cycle affect strike activity, but not to the extent that is generally believed.
3. American strikes do not follow the patterns predicted by a political/organizational model.

4. Bargaining structure has a strong effect upon strike activity.

If these findings hold as stated, they challenge ideas of the "institutionalization" of strikes, raise doubts about protest and power-struggle models of industrial conflict, and add weight to industrial-relations models. For these reasons, and for the most comprehensive description of American strike patterns published so far, Strikes in the United States deserves close attention.

Edwards Close Up

Several features of Edwards' book stand up well to close scrutiny.

First, it is a welcome addition to the small number of extensive, longitudinal, quantitative studies of industrial conflict, which are especially rare for American strikes. The last comprehensive investigation of American strikes dates back to Griffin's study, over forty years old.⁹ Large-scale studies of single countries (such as Edwards for the United States, Shorter/Tilly for France, Cronin and Knowles for the United Kingdom) should eventually make cross-national understanding of strikes more meaningful.¹⁰

Second, the work attempts to bring the more qualitative evidence of case studies to bear on the main arguments. Those case studies are especially rich and abundant for the United States. No other general work has made such extensive use of this large body of literature; it never seems to find its way into the bibliographies of quantitative investigations of industrial conflict. That is a pity, not only because the case studies provide another perspective on strikes, but also because they offer the means of validating the measures and interpreting the results of quantitative analyses spanning hundreds or thousands of events.

Third, most investigations of strike activity -- quantitative accounts more than the rest -- deal with the decision to strike and the decision to stop striking almost exclusively from the workers' side. Edwards properly portrays

strikes as outcomes of the interactions among workers, employers, and representatives of governments.

Finally, Edwards makes a convincing case for the role of bargaining structure in the pattern of strikes. His work makes one of the few attempts so far to follow up systematically on Clegg's seminal ideas concerning the relationship between strike activity and the particular organization of collective bargaining.

All, however, is not admirable in Edwards' work.

First, the quality of Edwards' methods does not always keep pace with his grasp of theories -- other people's and his own. One can hardly escape feelings of uneasiness about some of the econometric work: the use of unorthodox measures such as Edwards' "trough" and "peak" indicators of the business cycle; the use of an unlagged real wage variable instead of the usual distributed-lag relationship in Edwards' version of the Ashenfelter and Johnson model; the lack of a stated rationale for the particular choice of sample periods (1881-1910, 1900-1939, and 1946-1972) in the most general time-series analyses; the unexplained fluctuation in the periodization from one table to the next (see, e.g., table 3.4); the lack of correspondence between these various periodizations and the general timetable proposed in the book's table of contents; the presentation of zero-order correlations between ratio variables with common terms (e.g. tables 3.1, 3.3, 3.4), despite Edwards' own cautions against just such practices.¹¹ In sound econometric practice, an investigator who wants simultaneously to innovate and to compare conducts the crucial analyses in both the "old" way and the "new", thus constructing a solid bridge back to the previous analyses he means to refute, incorporate, or improve.

Such small technical points accumulate to a large methodological point: we accept and reject theories on the basis of empirical evidence treated in comparable ways. Without competent technical work and comparable treatments of the evidence, we lose the ability to decide whether discrepancies between the results of different investigators result from technical errors, true variations from one case to another, or the superiority of one theory to another.

Here is one example. Edwards uses his unorthodox economic indicators -- the "trough" and "peak" variable and the unlagged real wage -- to gauge the contribution of business cycle theories to the understanding of strikes. Since his conclusion is negative, how much of the discrepancy between Edwards' findings and those of previous business-cycle advocates results from his use of those particular variables?

The choice of sample periods can also be critical. If institutional arrangements and bargaining structure play such a significant role, and if "the year 1934 was a turning point"¹² in this process of institutionalization, why lump together in the same analysis periods as different as the 1920s and the 1930s? In his own analysis of American strike data, Romagnoli found marked differences between the two periods.¹³ At a minimum, we might have expected Edwards to introduce a before/after dummy variable to capture the effect of the proposed turning point.

For these reasons and others, Edwards' analyses never address directly the discrepancies between his findings and those of ostensibly similar studies, for example the Ashenfelter-Johnson analysis. The discrepancies leave a nagging doubt: Do they really mean that the structure of conflict has changed, or could they be due simply to differences in the choice of measures and specifications?

Sometimes the discrepancies set one of Edwards' interpretations against another. It is not always clear from his work which interpretation he prefers. He declares, for instance, that "the view that strike activity will depend on the business cycle has won rather too easy acceptance."¹⁴ Statements to the contrary appear throughout the book. Example: "One cannot reject the hypothesis that levels of economic activity are adequate predictors of the rate of strike activity" for the 1900-1939 and 1946-1972 periods.¹⁵ Again: "During the 1930s as much as at other times, strike activity was related to economic conditions."¹⁶ Finally: "Identifiable economic factors lay behind the rise in strike activity" for the 1962-1972 period.¹⁷ Since every one of these statements describes a time-series analysis, they amount to declarations that the business cycle, as usually understood by analysts of industrial conflict, had significant effects on strike activity in 1900-1939, the 1930s, 1946-1972, and 1962-1972. In short, over the main periods Edwards singles out for study.

One last example. "The failure of union density," writes Edwards, "to operate significantly in combination with the more general economic variables casts very great doubt on the view that organizational factors must be given an independent role in the determination of strike activity."¹⁸ Yet the relevant regression analyses use strike frequency alone as their dependent variable. Strike analysts are generally aware that unionization is related to the number of workers involved in strikes rather than to their sheer frequency. Elsewhere, Edwards recommends that we "explore the role of the same model in explaining different features of strikes, while bearing in mind that strike frequency and worker involvement may be influenced by different factors."¹⁹ Why, then, doesn't he present results concerning duration, person-days and, especially, size? Once again a major conclusion Edwards draws from his analysis appears to come

from a partial, somewhat inappropriate, confrontation between argument and evidence.

Strikes and Politics

Similar difficulties dog Edwards' rejection of organizational-political models of industrial conflict: "On empirical as well as on methodological grounds . . . a 'political' interpretation of American strikes cannot be advanced for any period since 1881." Since Edwards directs his main fire at the work of

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Shorter and Tilly, let us be clear what Shorter and Tilly claimed. Their most general statement ran like this:

In the long run, changes in the organization of production, including the effects of technical innovations on work routines and supervision, shape both (a) the features of the work situation which workers seek to improve, eliminate or control and (b) the opportunities and constraints affecting collective action on the part of workers and of managers.

Prosperity, governmental toleration and the mobilization of their opponents all promote collective action by the one party and the other. Largely as a result of their own collective action . . . organized groups of workers acquire places in the national structure of power. The strike becomes the principal means by which those organized groups display their strength and exert pressure on the other chief participants in the power structure -- both employers and the government. As a consequence of these multiple long-run changes, strikes become more frequent and larger in scale, their responsiveness to changes in the national political position of labor increases and acquiescence or even collaboration on the part of government officials plays a growing part in the outcome of strikes. Strikes are power struggles; organized workers use what power they have to economic advantage, of course; but strikes expand as workers organize and as their organizations acquire increasing stakes in the national structure of power.

That is what Shorter and Tilly called their "political" interpretation of strike activity. On the basis of extensive quantitative analyses, they claimed to have made a reasonable case for such an interpretation of French strike activity from 1830 to 1968. Then they described the evolution of strike shapes -- size, duration, and frequency -- in a number of western countries from 1900 onward, and speculated on the application of political interpretations to those countries. In the case of the United States, they suggested that "before the Depression collective action was as much political as economic, intended equally to build political organizations and press political demands and to elevate the standard of living by pressuring individual employers."²² "Then during the Depression," they continue, "the North American working classes succeeded to political power. The 1930s meant in the United States the worker entry to the polity, as part of a coalition of farmers and ethnic groups. But strike activity did not wither away in the United States, as it did in northern Europe after a similar entry. Why?"²³ In contrast to northern Europe, they suggest, "although American labor tried hard during the late thirties to obviate the strike through government intervention in labor relations, the weight of historic traditions of non-intervention, plus the indifference or opposition of other members of the polity, doomed these efforts to failure. Finally, American labor reconciled itself to a watertight division between job action, where the mechanisms of free collective bargaining were to function unobstructed by government intervention, and political action, which was to be executed through interest-coalition political parties."²⁴ Shorter and Tilly offer no new evidence -- qualitative or quantitative -- for this interpretation, but lay it down as a proposal for future investigation.

Edwards, then, takes up the proposal. He concludes that such an organizational-political argument does not work. What are his grounds?

"Economic factors," writes Edwards, "are common to all strikes, but political ones are likely to have an impact which is limited to a small range of strikes."²⁵ He continues: "Instead of concentrating on a supposed political orientation among workers . . . one should examine the role of the government and its decision of when to intervene in labor disputes."²⁶ "Political factors," it appears, mean the explicit incorporation of demands concerning the national structure of power, or the direct intervention of national government in the course of a strike. Those are, indeed, rare events. But they do not exhaust the political context and significance of industrial conflict. A factory occupation movement can sweep a country while the bulk of workers' demands concentrate on wages, working conditions, and job security. Strike waves have far-reaching political implications, invariably attract significant governmental intervention, and depend, among other things, on workers' readings of the likely character of that intervention.

What evidence does Edwards offer on these matters? He rests his case with two regression equations, for the periods 1900-1939 and 1946-1972.²⁷ In those equations, party of president and percent voting Democratic are the proposed political measures, and strike frequency is the dependent variable. Once again, we must ask the two insistent questions: Why these periods, and no others? Why not look at other features of strikes? In this instance, we must also ponder the adequacy of Edwards' measures of political change; they certainly stand some distance from the portrayal of politics in the Shorter-Tilly account. Indeed, they do not even represent Edwards' own characterization of a political account. These seem thin grounds for eliminating politics from strike activity.

An "Industrial Relations Interpretation" of Strikes

In arguing first against economic factors and then against political factors, Edwards narrows the available explanatory ground considerably. American strikes, in his view, can best be understood in terms of institutional arrangements. In particular, he claims, the bargaining structure makes a difference. "Collective bargaining -- rather than economic or political factors -- remains the centre of attention," he maintains. ²⁸ A country's bargaining structure can best explain prevailing patterns of strikes: their frequency, duration, and size.

Edwards has a point. Bargaining structure can go a long way toward explaining prevailing patterns of strikes, even in countries traditionally thought to have poorly-institutionalized industrial relations. ²⁹ To draw an example from Italy, the two-level bargaining prevailing during the 1970s deeply affected strike patterns. Industry-wide collective agreements, renewed every three years, are underscored by a few large, demonstrative strikes. At this level, size is the characteristic dimension; the workers of a whole industry go on strike for the renewal of their collective contract. Right after the signing of the industry-wide contract, however, plant-level bargaining opens, in order to catch productivity differentials among firms within the industry. Then hundreds of firms throughout the country renew their plant contracts. At this level, frequency is the characteristic dimension. Quantitatively, strike size and frequency describe two out-of-phase sine waves with periods of three years and an average phase-lag of one year, as a consequence of Italy's specific arrangements for bargaining. ³⁰

Yet Italy's bargaining structure can hardly be taken as an explanation in this case, and bargaining structure can only serve as a short-run explanation

in general. First, as Walter Korpi has argued, the emergence of a given bargaining structure is itself the result of conflict, a function of changes in the balance of power between workers and employers.³¹ While, then, a given bargaining structure, once in existence, affects the pattern of strikes, "the structure [itself] reflects the conflicts on which it was built", as Edwards himself recognizes.³² To follow up on our Italian example, the increased decentralization of bargaining levels in the postwar period was brought about through conflict. In the early 1960s, as a result of increased labor unrest, industry-wide bargaining came to parallel -- not without much resistance from employers -- national, centralized bargaining that had until then been exclusive. Again, plant-level bargaining only gained recognition during the wave of strikes that swept Italy during the late 1960s.³³

Second, the bargaining structure only helps explain some of the characteristics of strikes: why strikes are shorter or longer in some institutional settings rather than others, why they are more or less frequent, more or less large. It also helps explain some of the over-time behavior of strikes: in particular, cyclical and periodic movements in strike dimensions (size, frequency, and duration) and their interrelations.

There are, however, other aspects of strike activity for which an institutional explanation has much less to offer. Strikes, for instance, also show short and medium term fluctuations. They are better explained in terms of the business cycle. To be more exact, the bargaining positions of workers and managers vary with some regularity through the business cycle, and therefore produce regular variations in the frequencies, forms, and outcomes of strikes. Edwards himself admits as much, with a good deal of ambivalence.³⁴

There is no reason, however, why economic and institutional effects cannot be combined to offer complementary explanations of different aspects of strike activity. Reliance on one explanatory factor (such as the bargaining structure) to the exclusion of others (such as economic and political factors) may be quite misleading. Instead of contests to the death, we need integration among alternative explanations and models that have proved to be successful within particular domains. Korpi, for instance, has shown convincingly how economic hardship, relative deprivation or, more generally, economic factors can be incorporated in a balance-of-power model.³⁵ Edwards' work does justice to a factor -- bargaining structure -- often neglected by theorists of protest and power struggle. But in calling attention to that factor he has blinded himself to the insights of competing theoretical approaches.

Job Control and American Labor

If a country's "strike pattern undoubtedly reflect aspects of its collective bargaining arrangements", the key variable is really job control or, better, "the intensity of struggle for control."³⁶ It is job control, according to Edwards, that provides the running thread, the unifying force that can explain both the unchanging shape of American strikes over the last century and the decentralized bargaining structure prevailing in America. The very emergence of such a decentralized bargaining structure thus "reflects the previous struggle for control."³⁷ The bargaining structure, with its emphasis on plant-level bargaining and job-control issues, therefore represents only the crystallization and institutionalization of previous struggles over job control. What Edwards offers as an explanation at one point becomes the answer at another. We come full circle.

This circling between job control and bargaining structure calls for two observations. First, some comments on the meaning of "job control" and "job control struggles." "Struggles over control," writes Anthony Giddens, "are 'political' struggles -- using this term in a very broad sense -- since they necessarily involve attempts on the part of working-class associations to acquire an influence over, or in the most radical context to gain full control over, the 'government' of industry." If so, either Edwards is wrong to reject political interpretations of strike activity or he has in mind more than one meaning of job control.³⁸

The Fourteenth Resolution adopted at the Third Congress of the Communist International (1921) provides one possible meaning of "job control" and "workers' control":

All of the economic struggles of the working class should center around the slogan of the party 'Workers' Control Over Production.'³⁹ In this first sense, "job control" represents a first step toward the achievement of working-class political power. Edwards, on the other hand, uses the expression "job control" to mean the worker's ability to control his immediate work environment and tasks, to create or maintain a niche of autonomy within the industrial division of labor. Michael Mann calls this second form of control "defensive control," even if it involves some partial encroachment upon marginal managerial prerogatives.⁴⁰ The more radical form of control, on the other hand, involves "the possibility of altering existing hierarchies of authority within the enterprise."⁴¹

This distinction in the meaning of "control" brings us to the second point. To quote Giddens again, "Any sort of major extension of industrial conflict . . . into the area of control poses a threat to the institutional separation of economic and political conflict which is a fundamental basis

of the capitalist state . . . because it serves to bring into the open the connections between political power in the polity as such, and the broader 'political' subordination of the working class within the economic order."⁴²

How do these abstract statements apply to American experience? On the one hand, American capitalists, with the aid of government, kept American labor from taking a centralized, political stance at the national level, like its European counterparts. On the other, managers prevented "control" issues at the plant level from taking a more radical turn. A good example from Edwards' own analysis is management's deflection of workers' demands for disclosure of company profits.⁴³ This was the lost political struggle of American workers. It does not mean they failed to fight. One has only to read Brecher's narrative of major American fights to learn the contrary.⁴⁴ American workers tried hard, with some of the most violent, bloody, and bitter clashes in the western world. The difference from the European experience is that they lost even more emphatically than their European fellows.

This ability to maintain the separation between "economic" and "political" conflict; to prevent the "centralization and politicization of strike action"⁴⁵ to limit industrial conflict to job-control issues and plant-level bargaining, to block the expression of working-class issues in national class-wide bargaining constitutes the great political victory of American capitalism. It has so far succeeded in maintaining a divided working class, fragmented in the pursuit of corporatist plant-level economism. The meaning of such an ongoing struggle is essentially political. It concerns power, local and national. That is true regardless of whether a regression equation representing the alternation of parties in power captures the struggle. It helps us to understand the institutionalization that took place in the 1930s. As Michael Mann writes, "What we call the

institutionalization of industrial conflict is nothing more nor less than the narrowing down of conflict to aggressive economism and defensive control."⁴⁶

In seeking to challenge the organizational-political interpretation of strike activity, then, Edwards brings us to bargaining structures and job control. But bargaining structures and job control rest on a web of organization and politics, of organized struggles for power. Despite himself, Edwards points correctly to the next round of work on industrial conflict: to abandon the fruitless opposition of "economic", "political" and "industrial relations" variables, and to see strikes as struggles for power over the conditions and returns of work. In that sense, Edwards takes us back to the agenda implicit in John R. Commons' old insights into industrial conflict.

8. EDWARDS 11.

9. J. GRIFFIN, STRIKES: A STUDY IN QUANTITATIVE ECONOMICS (1939).

10. EDWARDS (1981); SHORTER AND TILLY (1974); CRONIN (1979); K. KNOWLES,
STRIKES - A STUDY IN INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT (1952).

11. EDWARDS 55-6.

12. EDWARDS 143.

13. G. ROMAGNOLI, Il Movimento degli scioperi negli Stati Uniti (1900-1970), in:
G.P. CELLA (ed.), IL MOVIMENTO DEGLI SCIOPERI NEL XX SECOLO (1979).

14. EDWARDS 67.

15. EDWARDS 80.

16. EDWARDS 148.

17. EDWARDS 179.

18. EDWARDS 77.

19. EDWARDS 73.

20. EDWARDS 83.

NOTES

1. J. COMMONS, THE ECONOMICS OF COLLECTIVE ACTION 27-8 (1970).
2. COMMONS 266.
3. P. EDWARDS, STRIKES IN THE UNITED STATES, 1881-1874 (1981). Edwards does not use these labels or categories explicitly, but the categories represent the chief distinctions he makes. At times, Edwards also singles out an "institutionalization" school of thought, exemplified by A. ROSS AND P. HARTMAN, CHANGING PATTERNS OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT (1960).
4. BRECHER (1972).
5. KORPI (1978).
6. CLEGG (1976).
7. M. PERROT, LES OUVRIERS EN GREVE (FRANCE 1871-1890) (1974); E. SHORTER AND C. TILLY, STRIKES IN FRANCE, 1830-1968 (1974); W. KORPI, THE WORKING CLASS IN WELFARE CAPITALISM (1978); J. CRONIN, INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN MODERN BRITAIN (1979); D. HIBBS, Industrial Conflict in Advanced Industrial Societies, 70 AM. POL. SCI. REV. 1033-58; HIBBS, On the Political Economy of Long-Run Trends in Strike Activity 8 BRIT. J. POL. SCI. 153-75. Other recent work in this line includes C. RAGIN, S. COVERMAN, M. HAYWARD, Major Labor Disputes in Britain, 1902-1938, 47 AM. SOC. REV. 238-252.

21. SHORTER AND TILLY 8.
22. SHORTER AND TILLY 329.
23. SHORTER AND TILLY 330.
24. SHORTER AND TILLY 330.
25. EDWARDS 80.
26. EDWARDS 81.
27. See EDWARDS Table 3.9 80.
28. EDWARDS 83.
29. See SNYDER, Institutional Setting and Industrial Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of France, Italy and the United States, 40 AM. SOC. REV. 259-78.
30. See R. FRANZOSI, Strikes in Italy: An Exploratory Data Analysis, RIVISTA DI POLITICA ECONOMICA, Selected Papers, 70 73-122; R. FRANZOSI, La conflittualità in Italia tra ciclo economico e contrattazione collettiva, RASSEGNA ITALIANA DI SOCIOLOGIA 22 533-75.
31. W. KORPI, Conflict, Power and Relative Deprivation, 68 AM. POL. SCI. REV. 1569-78.
32. EDWARDS 237.

33. See G. GIUGNI, Recent Developments in Collective Bargaining in Italy, 91 INT. LAB REV. 273-91; G. GIUGNI, Recent Trends in Collective Bargaining in Italy, 104 INT. LAB. REV. 307-28.

34. See notes 14 through 17 and connected text.

35. KORPI, See note 31.

36. EDWARDS 234.

37. EDWARDS 237.

38. A. GIDDENS, THE CLASS STRUCTURE OF THE ADVANCED SOCIETIES (1973) 205.

39. Quoted in: J. MONDS, Workers' Control and the Historians: A New Economism, 97 NEW LEFT REV. 81-100.

40. Quoted in: GIDDENS (1973) 206.

41. GIDDENS 206.

42. GIDDENS 206.

43. EDWARDS 237.

44. BRECHER (1972).

45. EDWARDS 234.

46. Quoted in: GIDDENS 206.