Preface

I have tried to make this book as accessible as possible. It is primarily intended for an academic audience, yet I hope that it falls into the hands of policymakers, students and interested laypeople. Particularly with the two latter groups in mind, I have compiled a glossary which is found at the end of the book and elaborates the meaning of key terms and functions of studied organizations. Readers for whom this subject matter is new might consult it as they progress or before they start.

I at least hope that this book is easier to read than it was to write. Colleagues who were veterans of similar projects warned me of the challenges of such an endeavour and, in the years which this work has taken to complete, I have become more than acquainted with various trials. I can at least say that I very much enjoyed writing this book. I have a passion for the topic which I hope is reflected in the text, and the process of research took me to a series of stimulating locations and organizations. Regardless of these satisfactions, I often walked a lonely road. Perhaps it is an improper admission for a Welsh scholar of labour movements to make, but I was often buoyed by the timeless counsel of Sir Winston Churchill: keep buggering on.

The act of buggering on may be a lonely one, yet Churchill himself would doubtless have conceded that it cannot be done without support from others. In this sense, I am grateful to a succession of institutions and people without whom this project would not have been possible. Thanks must go to institutions. Cardiff University has provided a conducive environment for research since I joined in 2011 and Marco Hauptmeier, Ed Heery and Keith Whitfield have been particularly supportive colleagues. In this time, I have also been fortunate enough to complete stays at the Solidarność trade union, Fundación Primero de Mayo, Carlos III University of Madrid and ETUI and have received warm welcomes.

I am indebted to Tony Mason of Manchester University Press. Tony has believed in this project from the start and was instrumental in securing its publication. Special thanks must go to interviewees. In each of the four countries in which I did fieldwork, I met a series of kind people who intelligently explained to me the positions of their organizations. Interviewed organizations are listed in an appendix, though the need to preserve anonymity prevents me from naming individuals. I hope that this work does justice to the richness of their accounts.

The help of readers of drafts was no less pivotal; it is difficult to convey my gratitude to those who read early versions of this work and made detailed remarks which invariably improved the manuscript. In an order which is merely alphabetical, I thank Colin Crouch, Patrick Emmenegger, Magnus Feldmann, Bob Hancké, Martin Höpner, Paul Marginson, Guglielmo Meardi, Nick Parsons, Vera Šćepanović, Mateusz Szymański and Gareth Williams. The comments of anonymous reviewers procured by Manchester University Press also strengthened this work. Miscellaneous acknowledgements must be made. For invaluable assistance with German-language sources, I thank Sven Werner; the chapter on Germany strongly reflects his incisive analysis. Extended conversations with Michael Argyrou, Barbara Bechter, Romaric Godin, Simon Lightfoot, Aleksandra Maatsch and Torsten Müller elucidated national contexts. Ania Gałązka helped with last-minute presentational tasks and Chloé Fortin-Bergeron and Weronika Poliszuk transcribed interviews.

Family members also helped me complete this project. My sister-in-law, Elea Belda Beneyto, provided crucial aid with finer points of Spanish grammar, while my wife, Justyna Prosser, assisted in a similar way with her native Polish. I cannot limit my gratitude to Justyna to a single line; sharing my life with her is a privilege. Thanks should also go to my multi-talented mother, Lesley Prosser, who, aside from making a maiden stand for Parliament while this book was being written, continues to be a proof-reader without peer.

One of the individuals who would have read this work most enthusiastically is alas not around to do so. My father Stephen Prosser was instrumental in encouraging me to enter academia, yet passed away before I had taken many steps down the career path. I dedicate this work to his memory.