Hitting the Bricks: An International Comparative Study of Conflict on the Waterfront

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Although many longshoremen have a deserved reputation for militancy, the waterfront has been remarkably peaceful in some countries. The propensity of longshoremen to strike is explored in a historical and international comparative context, looking beyond industry-level variables to determine the nature and causes of industrial action. The incidence of strikes on the waterfront depended ultimately on the propriety of labor regulation, most notably the operation of different "dock labor schemes" in combination with union leadership, management policy, and the efficacy of dispute resolution procedures.

Introduction

Whatever their nomenclature—longshoremen, dockers, wharfies, or watersiders—the people who work in the world's ports have a reputation for militancy. Their proclivity to strike was noted by Kerr and Siegel (1954), who in their seminal study of the interindustry propensity to strike ranked longshoremen alongside miners, sailors, and loggers as one of the "isolated masses" of society, people with an "independent spirit" who perform dangerous, dirty, and unpleasant work that inclines them to be more vigorous and combative. More detailed studies of waterfront labor relations have likewise noted the importance of "certain widely prevalent conditions of dockwork" that combine to "produce a universal

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dockworker subculture" (Miller 1969:304–5).[1] This in turn generates a "casual frame of mind" (free workers or irresponsible opportunists), suspicion of management and outsiders, extraordinary solidarity and undiffused loyalty toward fellow longshoremen, and militant trade unionism (Miller 1969:308). As Broeze (1991:194) notes in his study of maritime labor in 10 countries between 1870 and 1914, "the underlying causes of the men's continued propensity to strike were rooted squarely in their working and living conditions."

The two hypotheses advanced by Kerr and Siegel (1954) to explain the interindustry propensity to strike—the location of the worker in society and the character of the job and the worker—have, of course, been subject to empirical revision and theoretical critique, the latter invariably enlightening the former (see, for example, Church, Outram, and Smith 1991; Rimlinger 1959; and Shorter and Tilly 1974). Crucially, as Edwards (1975:553) notes, the measure of strike propensity deployed by Kerr and Siegel, namely, days lost in relation to industry employment, is a measure of the *impact* of strikes rather than the tendency to strike (which is better measured by the number of strikes and workers involved). Thus, according to Kerr and Siegel's classification, Dutch dockers would be defined as highly strike-prone, at least for the period 1970–1979, when the Netherlands' ports recorded a yearly average of 2196 working days lost per 1000 employees compared with just 32 working days per 1000 employees in manufacturing (Smit 1992:105). But this figure is almost entirely the result of just two major wildcat strikes in the Port of Rotterdam at either end of the decade, a 2-week strike in 1970 and a 4-week dispute in 1979. London dockers would be ranked alongside their Dutch counterparts under the Kerr and Siegel classification, but the Port of London recorded a yearly average of almost 9000 working days lost per 1000 men on the payroll over the slightly longer period of 1967 (fourth quarter) to 1979 (first quarter), the result of almost 18 strikes per annum (Turnbull, Morris, and Sapsford 1996:704).

Although dockers in Britain and the Netherlands might well be "strike prone" when compared with their compatriots in other industries, London dockers are evidently more strike prone than their counterparts in the Port of Rotterdam. Utilizing a ranking of industries based on days lost and employment in different countries, such that industries with a "days lost rank" significantly higher than their "employment rank" are defined as

[1] These conditions include the casual nature of waterfront employment; the exceptional arduousness, danger, and variability of the work; the absence of an occupationally stratified hierarchy and mobility outlets; the lack of regular association with one employer; continuous contact with foreign goods, seamen, and ideas; the necessity of living near the docks; and the belief shared by dockers that others in the society consider them a low-status group (Miller 1969:304–5).

"strike prone," focuses attention on *between*-industry rather than *within*-industry variation in strike activity. This (mis)measurement of strike activity leads Kerr and Siegel to the (erroneous) conclusion that strike propensity is determined by *industry-level* variables such as the isolation of dockland communities, the nature of dock work, and the type of people who work on the waterfront. Moreover, such variables are invariably, but incorrectly, assumed to be "universal" (Miller 1969:304). This approach breaches one of the fundamental laws of comparative analysis, namely, that it must embrace at least two levels of analysis. Ideally, comparative research should incorporate different patterns of labor regulation at the macro, meso, and micro levels (Hyman 1995:43).

Equally important, it must be recognized that strike activity will vary quite considerably over both time and place, which therefore requires a combination of historical (diachronic) and sociological (synchronic) analysis (see Franzosi 1995). For much of the period studied by Kerr and Siegel (*ca.* 1911–1948), for example, collective agreements had been negotiated in the Port of New York without any strikes, while on the West Coast longshoring was beset with industrial strife. Thereafter, the position reversed; the 1945 strike in New York, while not necessarily marking a decisive break from the past, was "a portent of things to come and a revelation of unsatisfactory conditions" (Jensen 1974:7); on the West Coast, in contrast, the landmark collective agreement that ended the 95-day longshoreman strike in 1948, as Kerr correctly anticipated, ushered in an unprecedented period of industry-labor cooperation (Kerr and Fisher 1949). More recently, strike activity declined markedly in Britain's ports during the 1980s (Turnbull, Morris, and Sapsford 1996:702–4), whereas Rotterdam experienced a succession of more than 20 official disputes between 1980 and 1990 (Rotterdam Municipal Port Management 1992:19). These strikes, however, have been small, short, localized stoppages designed not simply to signal the dockers' discontent but their organizational capacity to disrupt cargo handling without actually creating any serious delays to shipping. These "cargo-friendly disputes," as Vervoersbond FNV dubbed them, are hardly what one might expect from an "isolated mass" for whom, according to Kerr and Siegel (1954:193), the strike is more akin to a "colonial revolt."

Using data from the United States, Europe, and Australasia,[2] the propensity of longshoremen to strike is addressed by first considering the

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[2] The research combined detailed analysis of available strike statistics for each country, typically based on industry rather than on national data sources; a careful reading of press and industry reports, union and employer records, historical studies of waterfront industrial relations, and other published research; and in-depth interviews with government and industry officials, port authority and stevedoring company managers, trade union representatives, and retired and working longshoremen in each country.

fundamental characteristics of dock work (the labor process) and in particular the casual nature of the dockland labor market that lies at the heart of industrial conflict on the docks. However, while these industry-level variables may predispose dockworkers to strike, they represent insufficient data to explain the actual pattern of industrial conflict on the waterfront (see, for example, Weinhauer 1997). The advantage of a (multilevel) comparative approach is that it is possible to control for many of these industry effects, given that longshoremen handle similar, if not the same, vessels and cargo using almost identical equipment and traffic in every country is affected by the economic cycles of international trade, seasonal variations, and the daily fluctuations of activity attributable to "wind and wave." Thus, although countless studies have noted the *association* between casual employment and industrial conflict on the waterfront (e.g., Canadian Department of Labor 1967; Devlin 1965; Phillips and Whiteside 1985; Tait 1957; Turkington 1980; and Woodward 1967), comparative analysis confirms that casualism did not *cause* conflict; casualism simply created a *context* in which strike action was more likely. To determine why in some countries or ports, but not others, strikes became part and parcel of the discontinuity of work that was normal on the waterfront requires the analyses of institutional arrangements (dock labor schemes), employer policy, and trade union organization. These dock labor schemes and their associated labor relations practices and procedures are therefore examined in the following section, along with an evaluation of how these schemes alleviated or in some cases exacerbated industrial conflict.

Dock labor schemes and their associated labor relations do not, of course, exist in a vacuum. It is necessary, therefore, to look beyond the regulation of the (casual) labor market to the impact and interaction of port administration, operating structures, cargo-handling technology, and product-market conditions. The propriety of such an approach must be demonstrated in a historical context not least because just as most countries finally came to terms with the parlous *consequences* of casualism in the decades immediately after World War II, the root *cause* of capricious labor demand in the industry, namely, the irregular arrival of traffic and the nature of the ship's cargo, was transformed by the advent of containerization from the late 1960s onward. New forms of employment security were needed to allay dockers' fears of redundancy and the loss of exclusive control or jurisdiction over "dock work," whereas new operational and administrative structures were required to ensure investment and the exploitation of new technology. Once again, appropriate institutional structures, such as new forms of labor market organization and effective industrial relations procedures, were needed to maintain

industrial peace and maximize the productive potential of mechanization. The introduction of new technology thus constitutes a key test of our theoretical approach, since empirically it can be demonstrated (see the third section) that some countries made the transition to containerization with minimal disruption, whereas others experienced persistent and often heightened levels of industrial conflict.

Casualism, Conflict, and Dock Labor Schemes

In his classic study of unemployment, Beveridge (1909:77) identified the rapid and irregular fluctuations of work and the engagement of irregular hands for only short periods as the key features of casualism. Short engagement and chance selection became the bane of the longshoreman's life, leading to the expectation that they might secure at least some work every day (Hicks 1963:46–8) but inevitably leading to periods of idleness punctuated by frenetic and often long hours of continuous work when ships were in port. When work was available, longshoremen could earn high wages, but the variation in their pay led to highly irregular consumption patterns. Irregularity of employment and income were thus the key obstacles to a more stable and efficiently functioning labor market.

Drawing on the work of Beveridge (1909) and Hicks (1963), it can be established that regulation of the dockland labor market is a prerequisite to industrial peace on the waterfront. Unlike other labor markets, longshoring is the only industry that embraces at one and the same time the three main elements that together characterize the demand for casual labor. These are (1) the continuity of irregular demand, (2) the attachment of both employer and worker to the market, and (3) frequent periods of short-term employment (Morewedge 1970). For employers, there was always the expectation of a ship's arrival in port and the need to have a pool of labor in excess of "normal" daily requirements in the event of peak demand. For longshoremen, there was always the expectation of work and a reluctance to seek work elsewhere for fear of missing the ship. The result was a total pool of labor generally well in excess of the average daily requirement of *all* employers in the port. First and foremost, then, the total supply of labor must be controlled in the sense of being broadly matched to anticipated (peak) demand; otherwise, the industry will be stricken by chronic excess supply and, as a result, labor unrest.

Further measures to improve the functioning of the labor market are also required. Most notably, shortages and surpluses of labor can coexist within the market as a result of the geographic size and spread of many ports and the numerous different hiring centers operated by different employers. This

"frictional" unemployment can be reduced by measures to control the hiring and allocation of labor, such as the centralization and formalization of hiring procedures. Furthermore, "structural" unemployment can be minimized by the allocation of labor from a single pool, such that dockers are allocated to work for which they are best suited by skill, aptitude, or preference. Mobility can be further enhanced through the (collective) provision of training to extend the cognitive skills of the workforce, which also facilitates more equal work opportunities. The latter was a constant bone of contention among longshoremen and a frequently cited cause of strikes.

Finally, a system of "work or maintenance" must be instituted to provide security of income. From both a social and economic perspective there is a case for longshoremen to be paid for being available for work as well as for actual work performed (just as firefighters are paid even when there are no fires burning). This maintains a healthy, stable, and more efficient workforce through the payment of a regular (minimum) income, which then allows the longshoreman to budget for household and other expenditure. Maintenance payments are therefore important not only for the individual longshoreman but also for the dockland community, providing greater security both inside and outside the dock gates.

These characteristics of dock labor schemes—control of labor supply; arrangements to ensure availability, effective allocation, and mobility of labor; and maintenance payments—were common to ports throughout the world by the 1960s, as Table 1 illustrates (see also Evans 1969; Jensen 1964). In every country listed in the table, longshoremen were accorded special status either by statute or by virtue of union membership, and "dock work" was invariably restricted to either registered longshoremen or union members. Overall control of labor supply generally was under the joint control of management and union(s), although the state may have *de jure* or the union *de facto* control. Frictional and structural unemployment generally was mitigated by centralized allocation from a state employment office, union hiring hall, or a labor pool managed by the employers. In addition, a combination of permanent employment and pool labor to ensure both functional and numerical flexibility was, and still is, a feature of many schemes. Finally, longshoremen typically are paid when available for but not actually engaged in cargo-handling duties. Employers, the state, port users, or some combination of these groups may finance such payments.

Despite these broad similarities across different countries, the institutional arrangements and industrial relations procedures introduced to "remedy the evils of underemployment" (Lascelles and Bullock 1924:120) differ significantly across several dimensions as a result of different

TABLE 1

DOCK LABOR SCHEMES IN EUROPE, AMERICA, AND AUSTRALASIA

Country	Control of Labor Supply	Availability and Mobility of Labor	Maintenance/Guaranteed Income
Belgium	"Dock work," as legally defined, is restricted to "dock workers" in the "port zone," under the joint control of employers and the unions.	All dockers are "casuals," but around 25 percent work on a regular basis for the same employer. Extensive training to ensure flexibility.	Not less than 65 percent of basic salary (usually 70–80 percent) paid from state benefits (75 percent) and employer contributions (25 percent) financed via a levy on gross wages.
Netherlands	All dockers are registered and permanently employed. Legislation provides a national framework for the industry, with extensive joint regulatory bodies at the port level.	Dockers are either employed directly by port operators or by the labor pool (SHB), which is used to accommodate fluctuations in demand. Extensive training to ensure flexibility.	Full pay at all times, financed by state benefits (55 percent) and employer contributions (45 percent).[a]
Britain[b]	The NDLS provided a legal definition of dock work, and dockers were registered with the NDLB. The national and local boards were jointly controlled by the employers and the unions.	Prior to 1967, dockers were casuals. Although Port Labour Offices were responsible for allocation, most ports retained a "free call." After 1967, all registered dockers were permanently employed by operating companies.	Attendance payments and a guaranteed weekly wage (set nationally) applied until 1980 (replaced by port or company guarantees). Payments were financed by a levy on the employers' wage bill.
United States, West Coast	Only union (ILWU) members can perform dock work. Class A (fully registered) workers are given preference over class B (registered casuals).	Labor is allocated through the union hiring hall on the basis of low-person-out hiring (the worker with the lowest accumulated number of hours has first choice of work), except in the ports of San Francisco and Los Angeles, where "steady" workers are employed by most operators.	Pay guarantee plan provides 36 hours pay per week, financed via an assessment on hours (paid by the operational employers) and tonnage (paid by the shipping companies).
United States, New York	Longshoremen are registered with the Waterfront Commission, and only registered labor can perform dock work.	Most longshoremen are employed as "list" (regular) workers with a particular company. The rest are allocated from a hiring hall, which is regulated by the Waterfront Commission. Allocation is based on seniority.	A guaranteed annual income (GAI) scheme provides up to 1900 hours per year guaranteed pay (at the straight time rate), financed via a levy on cargo.

Country	Control of Labor Supply	Availability and Mobility of Labor	Maintenance/Guaranteed Income
Australia[c]	Dock work is restricted to members of the Waterside Workers' Federation (WWF) (a pre-entry closed shop). Employment is jointly regulated by the union and the employers.	All dockers are permanent employees of the companies with provisions for intercompany transfers in the event of surpluses/shortages.	Idle time payments are financed by a levy on all employers.
New Zealand[d]	Dock work was defined by statute and was under the control of the Waterfront Industry Commission (WIC). The size of the register was determined by joint agreement between employers and the union.	Labor was allocated by the WIC on a casual basis, with low-person-out hiring to equalize hours. Dockers on container terminals could be allocated for up to 5 months.	Idle time payments were paid from a National Administration Fund, financed by a levy on the employers' wage bill and a supplementary charge on container traffic. Guaranteed weekly wage equal to 40 hours (time rate).

[a]The state withdrew financial support for the labor pool in 1995.
[b]The NDLS was abolished in 1989, and these regulations no longer apply. Employers now use direct employment and casual labor.
[c]This was the situation immediately prior to the implementation of extensive reforms between 1989–1992. Wharfies are now covered by enterprise-based agreements.
[d]These arrangements were terminated in 1989 in favor of direct employment by the operative companies.

management and union policies, interaction between the parties, the interests of the state, and a host of other variables. Take, for example, the level and funding of any maintenance or guaranteed payments. In some countries, such as the Netherlands, dockers received full pay at all times. In others, such as Britain and Australia, the fallback (guaranteed) wage was much lower.[3] In New York, there was *no* maintenance pay for longshoremen shaping up but unemployed until 1964. Inadequate or irregular income, as stated previously, has been a persistent source of dissatisfaction among longshoremen. From the employers' point of view, however, the provision of guaranteed payments presents rather different problems. If there is too much labor (oversupply) or insufficient flexibility (via interfirm transfers or pool labor), guaranteed payments escalate and lead to pressure to reduce the level of payments and/or registered/union labor, especially if payments are financed entirely by the employers. In other words, maintenance payments can become a source of rather than a palliative for conflict and dissension.

Instead of bringing industrial peace and greater efficiency to the waterfront, dock labor schemes in several countries became the focus of industrial conflict and institutional inertia. Our research suggests that, in general, where the dock labor scheme challenged established (casual) work practices *without sufficient compensating benefits* for longshoremen or where (outmoded) work rules were preserved or extended *to the detriment of operational efficiency* and the consequent vexation of employers, then conflict was more prevalent. Put differently, industrial labor peace followed from achieving the goals of longshoremen, employers, and users (in particular the international shipping lines) via a process of "integrative bargaining" (Walton and McKersie 1965). It is perhaps no coincidence that the countries with the most effective dock labor schemes, principally the northern European ports and the West Coast of the United States, are also those with the lowest strike incidence and the highest productivity rates. The Port of Antwerp, for example, which is the most efficient port in Europe (see Barton and Turnbull 1999; Marconsult 1994), experienced a series of wildcat strikes between 1946 and 1950 but has subsequently experienced just four disputes (in 1961, 1973, 1993, and 1999) involving dock workers. This record stands in stark contrast to Australia, Great Britain, and New Zealand.

[3] In Britain, the guaranteed weekly wage was typically less than 50 percent of average earnings and for much of the postwar period was *below* the level of state unemployment benefits. In Australia, the dock labor scheme initially provided attendance money but no guaranteed weekly wage.

In Australia, the Australian Stevedoring Industry Board (ASIB), established in 1949, enjoyed the support of neither the Waterfront Workers' Federation (WWF) nor the employers (Perlman 1953). The principal benefits to the wharfies of the new scheme—work rotation and attendance pay when no work was available—upset established hiring and work preference patterns, and in the boom period immediately after Word War II, very little was paid in attendance money (Perlman 1953:468; Sheriden 1994). For many wharfies, then, the dock labor scheme brought only limited benefits but imposed significant costs, not least the exercise of disciplinary sanctions by the new ASIB. In 1955, 34 percent of personnel-hours lost due to industrial stoppages were caused by suspensions by the ASIB or as a result of sympathy stoppages in protest against such suspensions (Tait 1957:74). Eventually, ASIB gave up trying to impose discipline on the workforce (Tait 1957:84), and the ASIB was reconstituted. Under the new Australian Stevedoring Industry Authority (ASIA), established in 1956, which removed federal government control over the performance of the industry and included union and employer representatives, disputes arising from disciplinary sanctions declined somewhat (to 21 percent between 1957–1958 and 1966–1967), but it was only after 1977 when ASIA was abolished that disciplinary disputes ceased to be a major source of discontent (ISC 1988:191–9). As for Australian employers, the system of gang rotation that applied under the dock labor scheme (in order to equalize work) ensured that obnoxious and other undesirable cargoes were handled, but employers now had to accept whichever gangs were allocated, thereby breaking established relationships between foremen and wharfies (Sheriden 1966). Employers in general, and the (British) overseas shipping lines in particular, blamed ASIB for the decline of discipline on the waterfront and pressed for its abolition. Their hostility toward third-party intervention was even more evident in their animosity toward the WWF, which colored labor relations for many years to come (Sheriden 1966).

Across the Tasman Sea, the loss of managerial prerogative over hiring and firing was likewise a constant bone of contention for New Zealand port employers. New Zealand stevedoring companies complained bitterly about the increase in "spelling,"[4] which they attributed to the absence of discipline (the right to hire and fire) under the bureau system of employment (whereby employers had to accept workers allocated on the basis of accumulated hours, such that watersiders with the lowest hours worked were allocated first to ensure equality of opportunity) (Green 1992:

[4] *Spelling,* or on/off working, is a common practice on the waterfront, where only a proportion of the gang works at any one time while the rest take a "spell" off.

112–13). To be sure, shirking watersiders could be returned to the bureau, and the Waterfront Industry Commission (WIC) would impose penalties, but this simply aggravated industrial relations; such penalties accounted for 12 percent of all disputes between 1946 and 1951 (see Green 1997). The New Zealand Waterside Workers Union (NZWWU) was unhappy about the extent of spelling, but as in Australia, where many wharfies "were too locally aggressive for the overall good of the tribe," much to the distress of the WWF leadership (Sheriden 1994:270 and 274), the NZWWU was unable to exert effective control over rank-and-file members (Green 1992:109). The proportion of hours lost as a percentage of total hours worked was particularly high during 1948–1950 (2.7 percent), a figure unsurpassed until 1989, when prolonged industrial action preceded the abolition of the bureau system of employment.[5]

Disciplinary powers exercised by the National Dock Labour Board (NDLB) in Great Britain also provoked unofficial action by rank-and-file dockers. These disputes accounted for nearly 9 percent of all strikes between 1947 and 1955, over 14 percent of all workers involved, and 16 percent of all working days lost (Turnbull, Morris, and Sapsford 1996: 706). As in Australia, whenever dockers were placed on a disciplinary charge for refusing to work a particular job (e.g., if the job was deemed to be excessively dirty, dangerous, or difficult), other dockers would invariably refuse the job, and the dispute would escalate, often beyond the control, and even in defiance, of the Transport and General Workers' Union (T&GWU) (see McKelvey 1953:41–2; NDLB 1950:27). Individual insubordination also was rife, and by the early 1950s, around 15,000 dockers, almost a quarter of the total registered labor force, appeared annually before joint disciplinary committees (see Phillips and Whiteside 1985:246–7). The numerically dominant group on the docks, "who have the reputation of hard workers and usually manage to get attractive jobs for themselves" (Liverpool University 1956:61), especially when trade was busy, liked the casual employment system because it gave them the freedom to choose when, for whom, and on what cargoes to work (see Phillips and Whiteside 1985). For them, the obligations of the National Dock Labour Scheme (NDLS) outweighed any intrinsic benefits, and the "free call" system of hiring by the foremen, rather than allocation by the

[5] In 1951, a 151-day stoppage (accounting for the loss of over 20 percent of all personnel-hours worked) led to the complete defeat of the NZWWU and the registration of 26 new port based unions (see Bassett 1972). Watersiders engaged in a long struggle to regain control of the labor process and reestablish a national union (see Reveley 1996), hence the very low level of industrial disputation in the 1950s and early 1960s.

local dock labor boards, prevailed in all ports except Southampton and South Wales.[6]

For most British dockers, then, the NDLS operated at the *margins* of their tolerance, such that conflict over disciplinary issues and other regulations imposed by the NDLB only subsided in the late 1950s when the NDLB, even though it was supported by the T&GWU, finally accepted the futility of trying to impose mass discipline. Thus traditional (casual) work practices prevailed, such as irregular attendance, spelling, and the like, to the detriment of port efficiency and the chagrin of most employers. Like its counterparts in the antipodes, then, the NDLS was resented by employers and many rank-and-file dockers alike. As a result, the dock labor scheme became the focus of conflict and deadlock rather than a forum for the effective regulation of employment and the resolution of industrial conflict. The latter is of particular importance; in all ports there is conflict, but in some ports industrial conflict is resolved more rapidly and effectively than in others.

Prior to mechanization, the infinite variety of dock work—attributable to ship, cargo, stowage, gang size and composition, equipment, and ultimately, weather—presented unparalleled opportunities for dockers to dispute the rate for the job, the number of workers necessary to unload or load the cargo, the safety of operations, etc. As a union official from the English port of Bristol pointed out, "Rarely does a ship enter or leave my port without some matter arising which calls for a ruling by the Docks Officers, or joint consideration" (quoted by Allen 1957:188). Postwar dock strikes in Great Britain, of which there were almost 70 per year between 1947 and 1955, more than 100 per year between 1956 and 1966, and then double this number (250 per year) between 1967 and 1972, falling to 129 per year for the remainder of the 1970s (Turnbull, Morris, and Sapsford 1996:702), were invariably short, small, unofficial, and in breach of established procedures.[7] The same was true of New Zealand (Turkington 1980:91) and Australia (ASIA 1975:45; Tait 1957:90). In other words, dockers, wharfies, and watersiders often would strike first and talk later rather than continue working and allow the dispute to be processed through the port committee or be referred to an arbitrator, by which time the ship might have sailed. Of course, most disputes were resolved without industrial action, but in either event, the result was invariably an increase in costs for

[6] The free call negated one of the fundamental principles of an efficient dock labor scheme, namely, to ensure availability and mobility of labor, and proved to be an important source of tension in Britain's ports (see Jensen 1964:171; Turnbull, Morris, and Sapsford 1996:710–11).

[7] Around two-thirds of all U.K. dock strikes lasted a day or less, and more than half involved fewer than 100 people.

the shipping company (because of either delay or higher charges). This serves to highlight the importance of effective dispute-resolution procedures, where again a contrast can be drawn between the stability and efficacy of procedures in northern European and Pacific West Coast (United States) ports and those countries, such as Great Britain and Australia, where dockers rejected the very source of authority of the disputes procedure.

In Antwerp, for example, disputes are settled by a permanent committee, which is available 24 hours a day, consisting of employer and trade union representatives and an official from the state employment office. The decisions of the committee are binding and without appeal and do not constitute precedents for either subsequent disputes or the next *Codex* (port-wide collective agreement). Work invariably continues while any dispute is under consideration, with the exception of safety issues, and the system functions to the satisfaction of both employers and dockers (see Baetens 1997; Suykens 1985). Likewise in Australia, Clause 7 of a former agreement between the Association of Employers of Waterside Labour (AEWL) and the WWF stated that once an authorized representative was called to resolve a dispute, the parties should continue work without interruption. However, not only did Australian wharfies fail to observe Clause 7 of the agreement, the WWF maintained that "where the Federation, or a Branch, decides as a matter of principle, that it has no alternative but to exercise its prerogative to take strike action, nothing in the agreement shall be considered as abrogating this right" (ASIA 1964:26).

More important, the procedures themselves often were ineffective. Between June 1964 and June 1965, for example, there were 884 unauthorized stoppages in Australian ports, leading to the loss of over 1 million working hours. In Sydney and Melbourne, the two largest ports, there were 178 and 280 work stoppages, respectively. In Melbourne, however, 85 percent of these stoppages were resolved within the duration of the shift in which the dispute began, compared with only 44 percent in Sydney. It is notable that in Melbourne the authorized employer representative was called to 124 (44 percent) of the disputes and attended 109 (39 percent), whereas the union representative was called on 165 occasions (59 percent) and attended 137 (49 percent) of the disputes. In Sydney, both the employer and trade union representatives were called on fewer occasions (23 and 40 percent, respectively) and attended only 20 and 30 percent of disputes, respectively. Thus not only did the WWF assert its right to strike, but when disputes erupted, they also frequently were slow to be resolved and often without due recourse to agreed procedures.

The contrast, on the one hand, between Australia and Great Britain, where dispute procedures also were ineffective (Hill 1976:108), and the West Coast of the United States, on the other, is particularly instructive. The years that followed the establishment of union hiring halls in West Coast ports, after a particularly long, bitter, and violent strike in 1934, "were among the stormiest in U.S. labor history" (Kossoris 1961:1), a period of "concerted and almost daily militancy" (Goldblatt 1980:805). Between 1934 and 1948, the West Coast experienced over 30 major port strikes (involving 1000 or more longshoremen), more than 300 days of coastwide strikes, and well over 1000 local "job action" strikes. After a 95-day strike in 1948, however, and the negotiation of an unprecedented 2½-year agreement, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) resolved not to sanction "quickie" disputes, and a new grievance and arbitration procedure was introduced to resolve disputes at the source rather than focus on coastwide arbitration (Kerr and Fisher 1949:19; Killingsworth 1962:296). More important, the employers finally conceded full control of the hiring halls to the ILWU, while in return the union conceded control of production to the employers without hindrance (except in cases of health and safety issues). In other words, the ILWU agreed to continuity of work while disputes were in procedure.

Two factors were particularly important in bringing forward this "integrative bargaining" approach. First, unlike the boom that accompanied the introduction of new dock labor schemes in Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand in the immediate postwar period, employment was significantly below wartime levels in all West Coast ports (Kerr and Fisher 1949:21). Most notably, intercoast (between the East and West Coasts) and coastwide (West Coast) traffic had declined dramatically (Kerr and Fisher 1949:22), and the 1948 strike had a particularly detrimental effect. Economic conditions convinced not only the ILWU leadership but also the rank and file (who shared the costs of declining traffic as a result of low-person out-hiring) that a new approach was called for. Leadership was the second crucial factor, most notably that of Harry Bridges, founding president of the ILWU (see Fairley 1979; Larrowe 1977; Waters 1993). Equally important was the new approach adopted by the employers, who at last "discovered personnel administration" (Kerr and Fisher 1949:20). Paul St. Sure, president of the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) from 1952 to 1965 and then chairman until his retirement in 1966, played a key role because he determined that the employers would do better to concede to union demands rather than "bull through" as long as any concessions did not affect basic managerial prerogatives (see Finlay 1988:50; Killingsworth 1962:296; Ross 1970:411). As Louis Goldblatt,

former secretary-treasurer of the ILWU put it, "The 'new look' brought no big change, but bit by bit labor relations, which had been pretty acerbic over the years, took on an entirely different tone" (1980:787).

The importance of the new accommodation between management and labor on the West Coast was not only the more rapid and successful resolution of industrial disputes, as indicated by the marked decline in strike activity (PMA 1958) but also the fact that the 1948 agreement paved the way for the mechanization and modernization (M&M) agreements of the 1960s that facilitated the introduction of new technology. By the late 1950s, the PMA was concerned that while there had been no major "hitting the bricks" since 1948, "this ostensible era of stability belies the industry's overall soundness. . . . Slowdowns, restrictions and malpractices are routine, and cargo handling costs mount each year" (PMA 1958:1). Under the M&M agreements, the ILWU (formally) gave up restrictive work practices in return for employment and income security, whereas the employers secured managerial autonomy and hegemony over the organization of work (see, among others, Fairley 1979; Finlay 1988; Killingsworth 1962; Ross 1970). "For the most part, both parties prospered under this new approach" (Betcherman and Rebne 1987:82), as did the international shipping lines, which were able to invest in expensive capital equipment in the ports safe in the knowledge that their operations would not be unduly disrupted by longshoremen.

The key feature of West Coast longshoring, therefore, was not the eradication of conflict but the minimization of disruption to shipping (Finlay 1988:178; and Mills 1978:29). As Wellman (1995:300) points out, "Ships can be loaded and unloaded while at the same time, *in the grievance machinery*, workplace control is being contested" (emphasis added). Between 1966 and 1970, there were over 100 stoppages per year in West Coast ports, but only 15 disputes each year (on average) involved six or more longshoremen and lasted an entire shift or longer. Between 1971 and 1976, there were less than 70 stoppages per year, but more than 80 percent of these disputes involved fewer than six longshoremen and were settled within the duration of a single shift. Over the latter period there were just 30 disputes each year (on average) that caused any delay to shipping. Given that disputes on the West Coast tended to be small, short, localized affairs, the amount of working time lost due to industrial disputes during this period was minimal, certainly in comparison with Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. Between 1966 and 1970, the West Coast lost just 0.24 percent of total hours worked in industrial disputes, compared with 0.64 percent in New Zealand and over 2.1 percent

in both Australia and Great Britain.[8] Between 1973 and 1976, just 0.37 percent of total hours worked on the West Coast were lost as a result of strike action, compared with 0.8 percent in New Zealand, over 1.5 percent in Great Britain, and almost 2.3 percent in Australia.[9]

In 1971–1972, however, the West Coast was paralyzed by the first coastwide strike since 1948. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, heightened levels of conflict characterized ports throughout the world as new forms of work organization were introduced with the rapid containerization of general cargo. Employers demanded, and now required, a more regular workforce, which threatened to put paid to the cherished freedom of casual dockers to choose when, for whom, and on what cargoes to work. This became a major source of contention for which longshoremen demanded commensurate remuneration. More important, however, were conflicts arising from the loss of control (jurisdiction) over dock work itself and the understandable fear of job losses, which in turn led to demands for new forms of employment and income protection. Yet again, some countries were able to alleviate such conflicts far more effectively than others and in doing so were able to reap the efficiency gains of new technology.

Containerization and Industrial Conflict

With the onset of containerization in the late 1960s and early 1970s and the growing capital costs of maritime transport, shipping companies demanded both improved productivity (reduced turnaround time) and greater reliability (minimal disruption to operations), which they could only secure through the employment of a regular workforce. Container terminals with the highest levels of productivity, *ceteris paribus*, are those with a permanently attached workforce and minimal job rotation (Dally 1981:2). While this might appear to satisfy one of the major objectives of waterfront workers and their unions, namely, employment security, it was clear that (initially at least) only a minority of the workforce would be engaged on the new container terminals, whereas regular employment with a single employer threatened the individual longshoreman's cherished freedom of choice and the widespread union policy of work

[8] If the infamous "rat strike" in San Pedro (November 18 to December 3, 1968) is excluded, the West Coast figure for 1966–1970 falls to just 0.08 percent (the strike involved 2012 longshoremen from Local 13 who complained about infestation of a ship's hold).

[9] Detailed PMA statistics are available only for the period 1966–1976, during which time there were fewer than 1000 disputes. Over the same period there were more than 2600 disputes recorded by the NDLB in Great Britain, whereas ASIA recorded almost 1000 stoppages in Australian ports in 1972–1973 alone.

sharing/equalization. More important, containerization implied a massive reduction in labor requirements, with the prospect of occasional *under*-employment replaced by the far more pernicious threat of permanent *un*employment. Furthermore, it was by no means apparent that longshoremen should enjoy exclusive jurisdiction over container work, especially the stuffing (loading) and stripping (unloading) of container boxes outside the dock gates.

In New Zealand, there was a further demarcation dispute to be fought between crane drivers and watersiders, since the former traditionally were employed on a permanent basis by the harbor boards (port authorities) rather than the stevedoring companies and crane drivers were represented by a different union. This particular dispute was resolved by employing "composite gangs" of six watersiders to every ship-to-shore gantry crane driver. The latter were employed permanently by the harbor boards, whereas the watersiders, much to the annoyance of the employers, worked for just 3 to 5 months on the container terminal before returning to the employment bureau (with around a quarter to a third of the workforce being rotated every 4 to 6 weeks). The watersiders' main concern was job security, which they sought to preserve through job rotation/work equalization and an agreement signed in 1973 committing the employers to no compulsory redundancies. Initially, and quite amazingly, the employers predicted that containerization would not cause major job losses. In November of 1971, the *Interim Report* of a royal commission on containers declared that there was "no reason to fear redundancy on the New Zealand waterfront for at least some 5 years or so" (Southwick 1972:6). The following year, the commission's *Final Report* declared that employers had revised their personnel estimates and were talking of labor force reductions in excess of two-thirds (Southwick 1972:63). In this context, restrictive (make-work) practices, most notably spelling, persisted and flourished. Watersiders, unlike Pacific West Coast longshoremen, were unwilling to trade job controls for long-run employment security because they fundamentally mistrusted the employers (see Reveley 1996). There were more than five times as many strikes on the New Zealand waterfront in the 1970s compared with the 1960s and twice as many working-hours lost in industrial disputes.

The WWF's preferred solution to technological change in Australia was a mechanization/pension fund, planned early retirement, retraining for employment in other industries, and severance pay. The employers' main objective, largely dictated as in New Zealand by British shipping companies, was to secure permanent employment in order to ensure specialist training and company loyalty (see Deery 1978; Woodward 1967). In 1967,

a system of permanent employment with the operating companies was introduced, supplemented by pool labor employed by the Stevedoring Employers of Australia, Ltd. (SEAL), in each port and underwritten by a minimum weekly wage. But the labor scheme soon ran into problems. Most notably, a sharp wage disparity developed between the operational companies and SEAL, which jarred with the egalitarian tradition of the WWF and its members. In response, restrictions were imposed on the allocation of labor within the operational companies, thereby undermining the productive potential of new technology and frustrating the objectives of employers and users. This compounded the problem of "locked-up idle time," where permanent personnel employed by the operational companies were idle but still paid, because there were no provisions for the intercompany transfer of permanent wharfies. Contrary to initial estimates that such costs would be minimal (Woodward 1967:7), locked-up idle time cost the employers over A$8 million in 1972 and over A$6 million in 1973. As a result, animosity prevailed, company loyalty failed to materialize, efficiency was impaired, and strike action persisted.

Similar problems lay at the heart of the 9-month coastwide strike on the Pacific West Coast in 1971–1972, most notably the question of "steady men" and increasing job insecurity (Burke 1972; Goldblatt 1980:830). The fundamental principles of the hiring hall—work equalization via low-person out-hiring and the right of longshoremen to choose their employer, rather than vice versa—ran against the desire of container terminal operators to employ regular (steady) equipment operators, which had been conceded in the 1966 M&M agreement.[10] As the number of steady workers increased in the 1960s, so too did dissension within the ILWU and conflict with the employers. The key to resolving the 1971–1972 dispute, however, was a new pay guarantee plan (PGP) that guaranteed 36 hours of pay per week. To qualify for the guarantee, longshoremen must work 50 percent of average working hours and be available for any five of seven days in the week. If they refuse a job or stop work, they are disqualified for the guarantee. The steady worker issue was set aside for resolution through the grievance arbitration procedure and was formally settled in 1978 with a formula to equalize work for crane drivers, although the employment of steady workers still irks many longshoremen even today (see Wellman 1995). Thus, as in the past, conflict was not eradicated on the West Coast—in fact,

[10] Under Section 9.43 of the contract, steady workers report directly to the job rather than to the hiring hall. There was already a precedent for crane drivers to be employed on a steady basis as members of the Union of Independent Engineers, which was absorbed by the ILWU in 1956, and they were permanently employed and retained their employment status when they transferred to the ILWU (see Finlay 1988).

the contract is still used as a weapon to enable longshoremen to be "defensibly disobedient" (Wellman 1995:254)—but disruption to shipping has been minimized.

In combination, the introduction of steady workers and the PGP ensured the availability and higher productivity of labor while at the same time minimizing the costs of financing the guarantee by placing the onus on longshoremen to be available for and not to refuse work. In addition, with attractive pension and early retirement benefits on offer, accumulated and continued from the very first M&M agreement, the PGP acted to encourage older workers to leave the industry, thus ensuring a broad equilibrium between labor supply and (rapidly declining) labor demand through a process of voluntary wastage. The contrast between "integrative bargaining" on the West Coast and "distributive bargaining" on the East Coast is particularly instructive in this instance. In the port of New York, a guaranteed annual income (GAI) scheme was introduced, with the allocation of labor based on inverse seniority such that older workers rarely have to work but still draw the GAI, which served to encourage older men to stay in the industry rather than retire.[11] As the chairman of the New York Shipping Association complained in 1971, "We are suffering from an unconscionable abuse of the guaranteed annual income, and we will not be able to halt the flight of maritime business to other ports unless the malady is checked" (*New York Times*, April 3, 1971). Whereas the PGP cost the West Coast employers around $6 to $8 million per year, the GAI cost over $20 million (see Waters 1993).

Not surprisingly, the financing of the GAI was a recurrent source of conflict, especially in the Port of New York during the 1970s and 1980s, as employers sought to buy out personnel (i.e., reduce gang size). Unlike the West Coast, where the coastwide agreement precluded interport competition based on labor costs, New York faced low-cost competition from other Atlantic and Gulf Coast ports that reduced its traffic share, increased GAI costs, further eroded competitiveness and traffic share, intensified conflict between management and labor, undermined the confidence of shipping lines and other port users, further reduced traffic share, etc. This vicious spiral, which was only checked in the 1980s through the intervention of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and a new approach to collective bargaining, was mirrored in the United Kingdom.

[11] Furthermore, since seniority was pier-based, the GAI discouraged internal labor mobility because many older longshoremen preferred to draw the guarantee rather than transfer from declining berths to the new container terminals. This presented employers with both rising costs and labor shortages on some terminals (see Jensen 1974:342–85).

The 1967 National Dock Labour Scheme (NDLS) was intended to pave the way for containerization in Great Britain but in fact had the opposite effect of increasing the costs of mechanization, discouraging investment by the international shipping lines, and undermining the competitiveness of major ports such as London and Liverpool (both in relation to British ports excluded from the NDLS and major European ports). In September of 1967, Great Britain's registered dockers became permanent employees of the many stevedoring companies then in existence. To secure their acceptance of the change, they were promised that there would be no redundancies as a result of decasualization and modernization (Devlin 1965:90). Containerization clearly made nonsense of any such assurances, and the first redundancy scheme was introduced in London in 1968, to be followed soon after by a national scheme. Following a national dock strike in 1972, however, the dockers secured an industrial agreement that eschewed compulsory redundancy and provided for the reallocation of registered dockers to other port employers in the event of any bankruptcy or company liquidation. The result was a "domino effect" through the ranks of Great Britain's port employers. Containerization and other modern cargo-handling techniques created surplus labor that had to be paid for directly by the individual employer because there was no longer any pool labor, personnel could only be reduced on a voluntary basis, and volunteers could only be attracted with ever more generous severance payments. Costs therefore increased, employers went out of business, labor was reallocated, the operating costs of remaining employers increased in proportion, more employers went out of business, labor was reallocated, and so on.

Empirically, it has been established that this process was itself a significant cause of conflict (Turnbull and Sapsford 1991), but of greater importance was the residual effect of this process: Port authorities became the major employers of dock labor, whereas the international shipping lines were reluctant to invest in port facilities. Although some port authorities were able to improve their balance sheets by expanding their operations into stevedoring, many more could not afford the costs of capital investment and were reluctant employers of dock labor (the "employers of last resort," as they became known). As such, they were both ill suited to and inefficient as operational stevedores. For their part, when faced with a costly and inflexible dock labor scheme and persistently high levels of industrial conflict, it was hardly surprising that international shipping lines were reluctant to invest in Great Britain's ports (most international shipping lines withdrew from cargo-handling operations in 1967). This fueled fears of future job losses because the principal

(shipping line) could more easily contract with other agents (stevedoring companies) in other ports. When investment in new cargo-handling technology did take place, it was often at ports *outside* the auspices of the NDLS, such as Felixstowe and Dover, which further exacerbated the problems of declining employment and industrial conflict at NDLS ports such as London and Liverpool (see Turnbull, Morris, and Sapsford 1996). Not surprisingly, industrial conflict reached its peak during the period of decasualization and modernization (1967–1972) (see Turnbull and Sapsford 1991; Turnbull, Morris, and Sapsford 1996).

The failure of British ports to lock in the major shipping companies intensified interport competition not only within Great Britain but also with major European ports such as Rotterdam and Antwerp. Instead of mainline ships calling directly at British ports, cargo increasingly was transshipped on smaller vessels to more efficient, less costly, and more frequently served European ports, where the cargo would be loaded onto deep-sea vessels to their final destination (or vice versa). The transshipment of U.K. trade doubled between 1976 and 1986, and around 20 percent of all U.K. deep-sea traffic is now transshipped (Barton and Turnbull 1999). Of course, ports such as Antwerp, which markets itself as Great Britain's third largest port, and Rotterdam, the largest port in Europe, have the advantages of scale and a much larger hinterland, but their dock labor schemes have been instrumental in winning cargo, servicing vessels efficiently, providing attractive terms and conditions of employment for dock workers, and minimizing industrial disruption (see Barton and Turnbull 1999; Turnbull and Weston, 1992). In both ports, regular employment is combined with a labor pool to ensure minimum costs and maximum productivity and flexibility. Both schemes are heavily subsidized by the state, which further reduces costs for employers and enhances security for dockers.

In Rotterdam, the split between permanent and pool labor is currently 50:50. The proportion used to be 70:30, but in order to contain costs in the face of competition from other European ports, the number of pool workers was increased relative to permanent labor, with a major (re)training program to increase the number of multiskilled pool workers in order to avoid structural unemployment. Rotterdam has a long tradition of permanent and other progressive employment policies, initiated by the employers in response to chronic labor shortages in the 1950s and 1960s, when labor turnover was 40 to 50 percent (see Jensen 1964; Nijhof 1997). By the mid-1960s, at the onset of containerization, over two-thirds of the port's dockers were regular workers with a single employer, and the major international shipping lines had no hesitation about entering into

joint-venture operations with local stevedoring companies, especially since many already owned stevedoring subsidiaries in the port. The most notable example was Sea-Land's involvement with several stevedoring companies in the formation of European Container Terminals (ECT), the largest container terminal operator in Europe.

According to Rotterdam Municipal Port Management (1992:11), the port's labor scheme "can be considered as a synthesis of the interests of employers and employees alike, because it provides both (cost saving) labour flexibility for the employers as well as job security for the employee." It was only when job security was threatened in the 1980s that (cargo friendly) strike action was taken by dockers to defend their interests. Just as the militancy of West Coast longshoremen had been tempered by competition in the 1950s, contemporary port workers in Rotterdam are well aware that if strike action should cause any serious delay to shipping, then cargo (and jobs) might easily be diverted to other ports in the "northern range" (Le Havre to Hamburg), most notably Antwerp.[12]

The dock labor scheme in Antwerp is very similar to the Pacific West Coast, in that all the port's dockers are (*de jure*) casual workers but many work (*de facto*) for the same employer on a regular basis. The major difference is that foremen hire dockers from the state-funded hiring hall, which means that some dockers get more work than others do. Older dockers have shift preference, and most choose to work on the day or morning shift rather than the afternoon or evening shift, but unlike New York, there are severe penalties (including deregistration) for any dockers who fail to work the agreed number of days over a 6-month period for his or her particular shift. When they are unemployed, dockers receive around two-thirds of their basic wage, which in the words of one union official "keeps them keen to work but stops them starving" (quoted by Turnbull 1997).

More important, dockers retain the freedom to choose their employer, and in a closed labor market where the unions effectively control entry, it is the employers who must compete for the best workers. Whichever employer they work for, however, their basic pay and conditions are identical, as laid down in the *Codex* negotiated by the unions and the employers association (which is also responsible for paying the dockers' wages). The success of the system, according to the chairman of the employers

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[12] Although the number of containers handled in the Port of Rotterdam continues to grow, the port's share of container traffic in the northern range fell from 44 percent in 1975 to 37 percent in 1995. *Ceteris paribus,* longshoremen and their unions have adopted a more accommodative approach to collective bargaining where interport and intermodal competition is most intense, as the contrast between Australian and north European ports clearly indicates.

association, is based on respect for the *profession* of dock workers and continuous dialogue (see Turnbull 1997; Suykens 1985). In fact, the port is replete with consultation committees and other representative forums. Even the socialist union Belgische Transportarbeidersbond (BTB) characterizes its approach as "diplomatic syndicalism rather than fighting syndicalism, talking rather than warring" (quoted by Turnbull 1997). The employers, like their counterparts on the Pacific West Coast (Finlay 1988), place greater emphasis on company-based deals to secure productivity and cooperation rather than on the formal contract. But they are of one voice in their opinion that

> Social peace is fundamental to the success of stevedoring companies and the Port of Antwerp. If any of our competitors in the port have a strike, that reflects badly on us all, so good labour relations are in everyone's interests. The price of social peace is high—wages and benefits in the port are very good—but it's a price worth paying. Social peace is priceless [Operations Manager, Hessenatie N.V., quoted by Turnbull 1997].

Conclusions

Contrary to the assumption that an industry effect can be isolated to explain strike propensity across industries in different countries, when comparative analysis moves beyond (or below) the industry level, it can be demonstrated that antagonisms between capital and labor, which for longshoring at least are generally perceived to be endemic (Perlman 1953:463), can in fact be mitigated by an appropriate system of labor regulation, integrative collective bargaining, and effective dispute-resolution procedures. To be sure, industry-level variables such as economic conditions in the product and labor markets, the nature of the labor process, occupational subcultures, community isolation, and the like may predispose longshoremen to engage in strike action, and such factors are essential to an understanding of the character of workplace relations, the connections between work and nonwork activities, and ultimately the *processes* involved in strike action, most notably the ability of longshoremen to mobilize and sustain collective solidarity in the face of employer and/or state opposition. But these variables cannot be invoked to explain the actual *incidence* of strikes (see Turnbull et al. 1996).

Whether conflict on the waterfront was manifest through strike action designed to hurt the employer and port users, as was invariably the case in Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and New York, or alternatively was manifest through cargo-friendly disputes (Rotterdam), diplomatic syndicalism (Antwerp), or defensible disobedience (Pacific West Coast) ultimately depended on the propriety of port labor arrangements and

industrial relations procedures, most notably the dock labor scheme and dispute-resolution procedures. Where the former met the aspirations of longshoremen for security, equity, and opportunity and the requirements of employers for efficient and competitive operations, then conflict was less prevalent. Effective dispute-resolution procedures were particularly important in an industry where spot contracting prevailed, but whether such procedures ameliorated industrial conflict and prevented delays to shipping rested with management and union leadership. Effective leadership and progressive personnel policies proved to be particularly important during the transition to containerization, since new dock labor schemes were needed to ensure the efficiency of operations and security of employment. In the short term, strikes might boost earnings and protect long-established work rules, especially where employers are prepared to accept a marginal increase in labor costs to ensure vessel turnaround, but in a competitive industry, the long-term effect was declining traffic share, fewer employment opportunities, and job insecurity. Conflict prevailed, and in many cases intensified, under such circumstances. It is perhaps no coincidence that pressure for change in the 1980s and 1990s was strongest, and reform most radical, in those countries or ports, such as Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and New York, where industrial peace and economic efficiency proved most elusive in the past.

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