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Peter Turnbull, Charles Woolfson, and John Kelly. *Dock Strike: Conflict and Restructuring in Britain's Ports*. Aldershot, U K and Brookfield, VT: Avebury Publishing Company, 1992. x + 270 pp., figures, tables, maps, appendices, references, index. US \$59.95, library binding; ISBN 1-85628-176-0.

In the 1989 national dock strike, British dockworkers, falling into a pattern already evident in the fate of coalminers, printers and seafarers, suffered an historic defeat. The National Dock Labour Scheme of 1947, which had enabled the Transport and General Workers Union (T & GWU) to exercise considerable control not only over the labour process but more importantly over the process of hiring and firing, was abolished; thousands of workers became redundant.

Dock Strike accounts for this defeat by examining the way in which the technological revolution in cargo handling associated with containerization created a surplus of labour, generating inexorable pressures for labour force restructuring. With the atrophy of the National Dock Labour Scheme under the force of these changing conditions both labour and management sought to alter the political regime governing the industry. Labour sought "*total regulation*" with the Dock Labour Scheme extended to all the country's ports, and a new, wider definition of dockwork; the employers... called for *total deregulation* of the industry." (p. 109) In the end, after a bitter fight, the employers won.

For those aware of similar events earlier in North America much of this will seem familiar. Nevertheless, the struggle in Britain occurred on a larger canvas, since the battle lines were drawn on a national scale, rather than on a port by port basis as in Canada, or a coastal basis, as in the U.S. Moreover, the assault on the unions in Britain was initiated and organized by the state as part of the Thatcherite revolution. One of the contributions of *Dock Strike* is thus that it demonstrates the power and militancy of British dockworkers. The Conservative govern-

ment had been in power for a decade before it felt able to declare war on this "avant garde of the working class," and even then not until technological change had opened up breaches in labour's ranks. When the state entered the battle it brought huge sums to pay to workers as a means of securing a victory over the union. As a government representative later conceded, "The decision by Ministers was that ex-registered dock workers who were made redundant by their employer would qualify for these payments *without any cash limits* on these payments." (p. 233) Over £250 million were allocated by the government and employers as direct and indirect payments to upwards of 6,600 workers involved in these "liquidation redundancies." The price of defeating the T & GWU was thus one that the Thatcher government was willing to pay "whatever the cost." The authors persuasively argue that, in the UK case, this concentration on developing coercive management has meant that too little attention has been placed on long-term investment in the ports themselves. The results are likely to be devastating as Britain's ports fall behind those of other European nations.

Dedicating their book to the great unofficial dock leader Jack Dash, the authors make no pretence of detachment. Yet, no one reading this book could fail to be impressed by the analytical clarity, wealth of documentation and intimate knowledge of the industry, which together make this one of the best works of its kind.

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Iain Ward. *5M/ Geng: The Hong Kong Marine Police, 1841-1950*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1991. xx + 214 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index. US \$19.50, paper; ISBN 962-209-286-1.

Some kind of emergency is always happening in Hong Kong and the Marine Police

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