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## On the Global Waterfront: The Fight to Free the Charleston 5.

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loosening. Combined, the supply-side factors and the removal of sources of opposition made women more attractive.

Chapter 4 explores regional and sectoral variations. Preferences for women and men changed over time, in “waves” that corresponded to different phases of industrialization in Indonesia. The three phases are linked through the dynamics of stickiness, spillovers, and snowballing. “Stickiness” was the result of factories’ gendered division of labor: existing factories had to defer hiring women, whereas new factories could hire them straight away. Caraway finds evidence that in the 1990s, factories in sectors set up prior to EOI primarily hired men (although even they had more female than male employees). In contrast, “spillovers” and “snowballing” helped accelerate feminization. Late entrants were influenced by the example set by earlier firms that had profited from the use of female workers. Work in these sectors became known as women’s work, even though men had performed it earlier. Snowballing involved the growth of employment in sectors such as garments that already employed a large number of women.

Chapter 5 examines gendered discourses within factories. These discourses, which are tied to broader Indonesian gender discourses, are largely uniform, but their effects vary. The discourse itself had no or little predictive value. In many respects, this is a familiar story in the literature on women and work, although Caraway places emphasis on the competitive pressures in labor-intensive sectors. Her aim in this chapter is to show how the field of international political economy can gain from a gendered analysis of work.

Caraway finds corroborative evidence in other countries. Examining the experience of EOI across several country contexts in Chapter 6, she argues for examining the “balance of employment between labor-intensive and capital-intensive sectors, employment growth, the strength of labor unions, and fertility.” In the early stages of EOI, labor-intensive industries are set up, and therefore more women are employed. As EOI matures, employment expands rapidly in capital-intensive sectors, and masculinization ensues. In contrast, ISI does not always bring masculinization.

In the conclusions, Caraway touches on the issue of inequality and the ambiguous effects of EOI on women. Although women gained employment opportunities in EOI economies, Caraway echoes earlier studies of women and EOI to argue that these have been dead-end jobs; men’s wages continued to be higher; and women continued to be barred from high-paying jobs.

Caraway presents an important, nuanced, and

timely account of feminization and de-feminization of labor markets. Her findings leave us with questions about prospects for women’s employment and employment conditions in countries like Indonesia.

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## History

*On the Global Waterfront: The Fight to Free the Charleston 5.* By Suzan Erem and Paul Durrenberger. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2008. 200 pp. ISBN 1-583-6716-41, \$60.00 (cloth); 1-583-6716-33, \$17.95 (paper).

This book is about events set off when a small Danish shipping company, needing to cut costs, signed a contract involving non-union longshoremen at the port of Charleston, South Carolina. Prior to 1999, this work was reserved for members of the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA). The same is true today. What happened in-between is both fascinating and complex.

The authors first introduce us to the world of global shipping. Shipping has become concentrated in the hands of a few large lines whose size guarantees a degree of market power. In addition to concentration, the industry has seen massive downsizing due both to containerization (the same containers that are on ships can be transferred to semi-tractor trailers for land shipping) and to the mechanization if not automation of much of the work involved in transferring containers.

The work of transferring goods to and from ships is that of longshoremen, a roughhewn, generally poorly educated group with the power to cause tens or hundreds of millions of dollars of losses with even a brief slowdown or strike at any significant port. The flip side of that dynamic is that longshoremen can save a company millions of dollars by quickly, efficiently, and safely moving cargo. The resulting historical strength of the longshoremen in the United States has taken diverse expression, from the progressive activism of a Harry Bridges to New York City “mob” links.

To bring a ship into a U.S. port, a company needs to make arrangements with the local port authority and hire a stevedoring firm. The latter hires the longshoremen. On the East Coast of the United States, the longshoremen work under an agreement between a shippers’ association and the ILA. That agreement stipulates uniform wages

up and down the coast, and members of the ILA typically come to the local union hall to get work, where they are given jobs largely on the basis of seniority. The work is dirty, dangerous, subject to the vagaries of weather, and often performed at night or on weekends. As a result, a lowly longshoreman can earn as much as a six-figure income annually.

During the slave era, longshoremen in Charleston often unloaded cargoes of Africans who officially became private property once they landed on American soil. Some of these slaves in turn became longshoremen, and their future generations now comprise much of the membership of ILA Local 1422. By 2000, Local 1422 was largely responsible for the movement of \$63 million worth of goods each day in Charleston.

It was against this backdrop that Nordana, a small Danish shipping company, tried to cut a deal with the union stevedoring firm in Charleston. When the latter balked, Nordana hired a non-union stevedoring firm that tried to purchase old docks nearby. The Charleston port authority, seeing its monopoly in danger, was able to thwart the purchase but ended up with non-union longshoremen working at the same docks as Local 1422 members. Local 1422, led by Ken Riley, responded by sending a handful of picketers whenever a Nordana ship landed, and generally made life uncomfortable for the non-union longshoremen.

Then, on January 19, 2000, a mix of 600 police officers, sheriffs, and SWAT team members appeared at the docks to confront Local 1422 members when a Nordana ship was arriving. The details of the confrontation are complex, but the fear of violence was pervasive, and heads were beaten, although no one was killed.

Within months, Nordana abandoned its efforts to use non-union longshoremen, and came back to a union stevedore and the ILA. The local police and magistrates wanted to put the matter to rest quickly and quietly. Things did not go smoothly, however, because Charlie Condon, the Attorney General of South Carolina, state co-chair of the committee to elect George W. Bush, and a candidate for governor, demanded that charges be pressed against five members of Local 1422. In a state known for virulent anti-union sentiment and racism, the demand made sense politically. Ultimately, however, Condon backed down as well; he subsequently failed to become governor, and the Charleston five received a slap on the wrist.

Due to space considerations, I give short shrift here to the scope of the drama, the larger-than-life figures populating it, and the often vivid and arresting details the authors provide. Suffice it

to say that the story is very well-told and even riveting in places.

The lessons of the book are many. One is the value of coalitions and community. Without successful efforts by 1422 to build relationships not only in the Charleston community but also within the ILA, across the nation, and even around the world, events might have turned out very differently, and the union would likely have emerged much weakened and perhaps even in bankruptcy.

A second lesson is that large companies, and particularly those operating in a just-in-time inventory world, invariably have a pressure point where workers can resist. In this case, the same communications technology that allowed Nordana to operate quickly and efficiently around the world also allowed Local 1422 to pick up allies. Ultimately, perhaps the pivotal event of the entire story occurred in Barcelona, Spain, where dockworkers threatened not to unload ships coming from Charleston and loaded there by non-union, unskilled workers. This event, among others, both led Nordana to back down and, more importantly, signaled the value of international cooperation and speedy communications to the labor movement.

The final chapter links the story both to broader trends in international shipping—where non-union ports, including some in Mexico, are booming—and to worker efforts to resist the assault on labor rights, wages, and benefits through globalization.

If anything is missing from this book, it is the subprime mortgage debacle, followed by a dramatic rise in the world price of oil and, most recently, signs of a serious worldwide economic slowdown. Those factors are likely reducing U.S. demand for imported foods, water, automobile parts, and virtually everything else. The decades-long movement to outsource the production of goods from the United States is likely reversing, and the shipping industry will shrink as a result. Because the book was completed before these developments, the authors cannot be faulted for ignoring them. Nonetheless, such considerations leave one wondering what will become of Local 1422.

As a piece of historical research involving complex issues of globalization, race, class, and politics, as well as corporate and public bureaucracies and leadership, *On the Global Waterfront* is solid. As a story, it is even better.

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