

## Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



*Waterfront Blues: Labour Strife at the Port of Montreal, 1960-1978* by Alexander C. PATHY, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004, 328 pp., ISBN 0-8020-8980-1.

James Thwaites

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syndicale, la négociation collective et la gestion des conditions négociées. La présentation est à la fois juste, rigoureuse et accessible. Le chapitre sur le processus de négociation collective porte tout d'abord sur les quatre sous-processus de Walton et McKersie, puis sur les facteurs influant le comportement des négociateurs, les phases de la négociation et enfin le rôle du tiers en négociation. Sous chacun de ces thèmes, on reconnaît l'expertise des auteurs du chapitre. En contrepartie, le contenu porte en partie sur le « comment faire » des relations industrielles ce qui tranche du reste de l'ouvrage. Le dernier chapitre passe en revue le contenu de la convention collective. Les clauses principales y sont discutées de façon claire et facile à comprendre. Toutefois, il y a quelques redondances entre ce chapitre et celui sur le Code du travail en ce qui a trait aux règlements de griefs. Qui plus est, la typologie relative à la classification des clauses contraste avec celle adoptée au chapitre 9.

L'ouvrage dirigé par Jean Boivin devrait rapidement devenir le manuel de base le plus utilisé pour l'enseignement des relations industrielles au Québec car son contenu est plus complet que

les quelques ouvrages concurrents sur le marché. L'auteur principal a su s'associer des spécialistes chevronnés pour produire des chapitres rendant justice à chaque sous thème.

Dans une vision orthodoxe des relations industrielles, l'auteur visait juste en accordant une place à la GRH et aux politiques publiques de l'emploi dans un manuel d'introduction aux relations industrielles. Autrement, il n'aurait pu choisir ce titre. Mais à l'usage, les cours d'introduction aux relations industrielles introduisent plutôt aux relations de travail, d'autres cours étant réservés à introduire les deux autres segments des relations industrielles. De plus, comme le font les ouvrages comparables anglo-saxons, l'auteur aurait pu consacrer un ou deux chapitres aux contextes sociopolitique et économique dont les influences sont omniprésentes dans le système de relations industrielles. Enfin, l'ouvrage traite des relations industrielles au Québec sous le régime institutionnel québécois. Il aurait peut-être fallu en faire part dans le titre.

**RENAUD PAQUET**

Université du Québec en Outaouais

***Waterfront Blues: Labour Strife at the Port of Montreal, 1960-1978***

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This manuscript by Alexander C. Pathy is new and unique. It definitely provides a fresh look into an important part of the maritime and general Canadian economy.

The manuscript contains a wealth of information on management-labour relations, particularly in the Port of Montreal, but also in other related ports of Eastern Canada. It furnishes the reader with a great deal of crucial information "direct from the firing line" between management and labour

during an important period of Canadian development.

It is absolutely full of relevant detail and privileged insight, linked doubtless in large part to Pathy's own activities in this field. This detail has, obviously, been carefully collected, carefully transmitted to paper, and appears to have been checked thoroughly by the author and his editorial team.

It also contains a host of interesting work-related biographical information,

such as the emergence of young Brian Mulroney as management legal council and spokesman. Although explaining the fundamental underlying factors involved, it underlines the role of individuals in the various aspects of the negotiating process and highlights the constant ebb and flow of evolving negotiations and conflicts.

The strength of this manuscript, its great attention to detail, is also a potential weakness, for it is very difficult for the reader to synthesize and integrate the contents and obtain a clear overview. The proverbial image of not being able to see the forest for the trees comes to mind.

The competent collection and writing of the chronological account is impressive and revealing. On the other hand, one has the impression of an extensive, unbroken, chronological exposé, with limited variation, which is occasionally difficult to read and which is also difficult to exit and re-enter with ease.

The observations of the author are obviously based on a wealth of personal experience and insights drawn from a considerable knowledge of the events and the people involved on all sides of the issues discussed. On occasion, nevertheless, the very intimacy of certain impressions and interpretations, regarding motivations and actions of the parties involved for example, can cause

problems because they can be subjective and difficult to verify.

This is particularly a concern when the author deals with observations and analysis of union activities and union strategy. The result is perhaps accurate, but definitely seen through management eyes, and occasionally lacks depth.

This book is part analysis and part témoignage. The writing of this sort of study can take at least two different directions: the presentation of a chronological account, a virtual logbook, with commentary, or the presentation of a series of appropriate vignettes, each of them unified by one or more specific themes. Both trajectories can lend themselves to a personalized account of events, such as the author presents. The author has favoured the former.

This approach will doubtless attract a readership of industrial partners and specialists in the relevant fields. This approach, however, may very well pose a problem in attracting a broader audience. Hopefully, in future, it may also inspire a complementary version, or perhaps counter-argument, on the union side and eventually provide us with a fully-rounded vision of relations between labour and management in our ports.

**JAMES THWAITES**  
Université Laval