

BOOK REVIEW

The Great Labor Uprising of 1877

BY PHILIP S. FONER

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In 1877, the Great Strike washed over America. Railroad, canal boat, manufacturing, and construction workers walked off the job and over 100 lives were lost before the strikers were forced by the military to return to work with none of their demands met. Rather than viewing this as a significant defeat, Foner, in a well-reasoned and well-documented analysis, portrays that summer as the “Second American Revolution,” in which American workers exerted their power as a class for the first time. He argues that resulting reform movements along with concessions offered by some capitalists are victories of the strike. There is already one study published on this strike (Robert Bruce’s *1877—Year of Violence*, Watts, 1959), but Foner is able to reinterpret the event through a change in methodology and some new documentation. An important work and an essential addition to any collection on labor history in the United States. —*Ronnie J. Phillips, Dept. of Economics, Univ. of Texas, Austin*