



Can 1930s Tactics Solve Current Labor Problems Related to Globalization?

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Rob Ashmore has just published a book review in the *Berkeley Journal of Employment and Labor Law*. He presents a management-labor lawyer's critique of a book about three major strikes of the 1990s, involving, respectively, Caterpillar, Bridgestone-Firestone, and A.E. Staley. Rob criticizes the local union leaders and activists for stonewalling the employers' efforts to increase the efficiency of their plants in the face of increasing global competition. Those labor leaders badly misjudged the employers' willingness to replace their entire work forces, if necessary, to bring about needed changes. Rob also rejects the author's look backward to the activist tactics of the 1930s for ways in which the strikers might have won. In Rob's view, 1930s tactics would not have worked against these strong, global enterprises, and, like the strikers, the author fails to recognize that globalization is not business as usual. Rob suggests that the author's efforts might have been better spent exploring ways of better preparing workers to recognize that job security in a global economy will be different from what it was in the past. It will derive from giving management the flexibility to incorporate technological and competitive changes quickly and from continuing to work with management to learn the skills that will be required by the changing technology.

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