

Malfeasance of the American Labor Movement

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In labor relations during the 1930's, what was regarded as a cure to one problem ran to excess and became a problem itself. Before the 1930's, the courts had been the major bulwark against the organization of workers. Property had been granted the right to organize up to a point: Corporations were legal but trusts were not. Still, this favoritism was enough to produce the "Corporate state" which, with the blessings of the federal government, assumed responsibility for the economic well-being of practically everyone¹—especially those responsible for running the corporate state. The very nature of the American Republic changed as corporations took over and the characteristic of "Virtue" so essential to a functional republic disappeared:² i.e., there is no such thing as a "Virtuous corporation" any more than there is "Corporate virtue" or a virtuous CEO, as Machiavelli would have noted.

After the corporate-state debacle leading to the Depression, the New Deal encouraged unionization of workers and made big labor a counterpoise to big business, but all within the system: most emphatically, the typical American non-worker was not a Marxist revolutionary dedicated to overthrowing the establishment.³ Although this seemed sensible in so far as the National Labor Relations Act (1935) safeguarded the workers' right to collective bargaining, the labor movement proceeded to go to excess with absurdly high demands of more pay for less work.⁴ This became a classic case of a positive feedback system with increasingly inordinate union exactions rewarded,⁵ although they fueled national inflation.⁶ This then reduced business and eventually led first to unemployment,⁷ then, in some cases, to the wholesale hiring of illegal aliens and eventually the inevitable loss of jobs with savvy businesses moving abroad in the guise of Free Trade.

The reality of the post-war world economy was that American steel workers getting \$26 per hour simply could not compete against cheap foreign labor and thus drove business overseas. In the 1960's, laborers struck, paraded and demonstrated for their right not to work; in the '70's, they were equally emphatic about marching and demonstrating for their right to work.⁸ Of course, this idea of a right to work was a fiction embraced by workers trying to cope with the fact that they had priced themselves out of the international labor market. Only in the 1980's did union executive back off in their self-defeating demands and resumed their proper role of helping rather than harming the American worker.⁹

Notes

1. Lundberg. *Op. cit.* pp. 239f. But at a price. The development of corporations meant a loss of the Protestant ethic in that the corporate personality was more that of a team player than a go-getter. (Whyte. *J. Crimes against Logic.* McGraw-Hill; New York. 2003. p. 14.)
2. Levin, M. *Plunder and Deceit.* Threshold Editions; New York. 2015. p. 4.
3. Shale's, A. *The Forgotten Man.* Harper Perennial; New York. 2007. p. 331.
4. Flew, A. *Intended conduct and unintended consequences.* In Duncan, R. and Weston-Smith, M. (eds.) *the Encyclopedia of Delusions.* Wallaby; New York. 1979. p. 27. (Mr. Flew discusses the British labor movement, but his remarks seem quite applicable to American unions.) With benefits, reaching \$70/hr. in the early 21st century. In 2010, a wage earner in American manufacturing got \$30/hr.; in China, 80 cents. So, if you were a shrewd capitalist, where would you set up shop?

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5. Hargraves, R. *Superpower: A Portrait of America in the 1970's*. St. Martin's Press; New York. 1970. p. 163.
 6. Walker, P. Charity begins at home. In Duncan and Weston-Smith. *Op. cit.* p. 222. (Mr. Walker is discussing conditions in England, but his remarks seem totally applicable to urban America as well.) After WWII, the expanded British government anticipated problems with want, disease, squalor, idleness and ignorance (Kishtainy. p. 123)—but not stupidity.
 7. Wilson, C. The right to work. In Duncan and Weston-Smith. *Op. cit.* p. 8.
 8. Wall Street Journal. "Economic Gloom Cuts Labor Union Demands for Big 1982". Sept. 1981.
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