

Are Unions Communist Organizations?

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2024 0614

It's a simple question, with an apparently simple answer. But, as with most things, the truth is often buried in the blather. The origins of the Workers Union are rooted in the writings of Karl Marx, and these writings are undeniably also the origins of Communism. The stimulus for his work, however, is in the extremes put upon employees under the Capitalist system. Today, there is a philosophical divide between the Capitalist and the Communist that goes well beyond the workplace and the corner office.

From a pure philosophical standpoint, Capitalist corporations should not treat employees as chattel. On the other hand, the employee ought not have the power to dictate policy, wages, and benefits to the Capitalist. Were that the case, the masses would, in fact, own the corporation, leading to a situation that is very socialistic.

Now, here's where it gets complicated. When a group of employees forms a union in order to establish collective negotiations, the relationship is between the employees and the employer. When that same union bonds together with other unions with employees in other corporations, the trouble begins. For example, if the cake baker's union in Hawaii bonded with cake baker's union in Arkansas, and then negotiated a wage agreement that was adopted by both, the precept of communist equality is breached. The two groups of workers may be paid the same hourly wage, but the buying power of a dollar in Arkansas is greater than the buying power in Hawaii.

On the Capitalist side of this situation, an employer is negotiating with the needs of his own employees as well as the needs of others who are not his employees.

When unions representing different type of workers formed and coalesced into one, the breakdown for the employer was complete. When a single union undertakes collective bargaining representing employees in automobile manufacturing, a delivery service, a hairdresser, and a carpenter, the Capitalist has lost all management authority, and he may even be subject to a strike for something that happened in a completely different industry. At that point, the Union is a Communist organization. The mega-union demands dues and pressures members to vote in certain ways.

The mega-union has not freed the employee from the oppression of the Capitalist. It has replaced it. The mega-union is then the oppressor.

The correction, however, is simple, if difficult to achieve. If Union membership and activity was to be limited to collective bargaining between one employer and one group of employees, both the Capitalist and the Collective interests can be maintained.

The Capitalist has the resources to be competitive for good employees. The suggestion normalizes wages and benefits to the regional character. Employees are not affected by other regions or industry and can maintain suitable local buying power. Employees maintain input on the product and on workplace safety.

Perhaps most importantly it reduces the power of the mega-union to influence government while maintaining the ability of both employer and employee to influence local government.

In conclusion, single-shop unions or collective bargaining groups are beneficial to Employer, Employee, and Local Government, when arranged as suggested in this paper, and the power of the mega-union is reduced.