

UNION?

The concept of *unions* originated as a means of giving workers a stronger voice when negotiating with their employer, and under the right conditions, there's nothing wrong with collective bargaining.

If two or more employees believe that they have a better bargaining position by forming an association, or if a company decides it is easier to deal with a single employee representative rather than with (possibly) hundreds of individuals, who could fault either side? Both parties are well within their rights to try to promote their point of view in the most favourable or convenient manner possible.

In practice, however, union activity increasingly has less and less to do with the relationship described above. Although it often seems otherwise, there is a very important concept that is ignored and which is key to the problem with unions in the world today.

That concept is called *freedom of choice*.

Freedom Party believes that the *purpose of government* is to *protect* our freedom of choice, *not* to restrict it.

Individual freedom of choice is a cornerstone of any free society. Unfortunately, freedom of choice is sadly lacking within union relationships, whether it applies to membership, employers, or even the general public.

Unions have evolved into political lobby groups who, in order to justify their existence and their funding, just happen to do a little collective negotiation on the side. From the viewpoint of those they claim to represent, unions have abandoned their primary duty to act as employee representatives in favour of what they consider to be a higher priority: *political lobbying*.

Freedom Party

To deal with the subject of unions operating in a manner which respects individual freedom of choice, we must first define the conditions of a *voluntary* relationship and establish why such a relationship is necessary and proper.

Simply stated, a voluntary relationship is one which is *non-coercive* (i.e., a relationship where force, compulsion, coercion or intimidation cannot justifiably be initiated by one party against another). In fact, this is a condition that most people in any free society *expect*, and the prevention of such use of force and coercion in our relationships is precisely why free societies require objective laws and governments.

Regrettably, unions in their present form operate under an entirely different principle. True freedom of choice is non-existent when all employees are forced to pay compulsory dues to a union and the variety of causes it supports.

The issue facing us is whether the use of compulsion (force), as exercised by unions, should replace a voluntary relationship within a free society.

Assumably, as free individuals, the law must allow us to make our own choices on our own behalf, rather than have those choices made *for* us by politicians, bureaucrats, and yes, even unions.

But from organized labour's point of view, freedom of choice is a threat to its existence. The greatest weakness of unions is that *they believe that coercion is their strongest asset*. And in a negative sense, it is. It allows them to claim not only that they represent a much larger group than they actually do, it also allows them to raise financial support without having to *earn* it.

And that's wrong.

Real support is voluntary support. Having a right to coerce either money or membership does not constitute "support" by any stretch of the imagination; in fact, it proves the opposite.

A union capable of operating on *voluntary* support and the principle of *freedom of choice* is the only kind of association morally justified in claiming the support of its members.

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