



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on July 20, 2010

## Labor Unions Hire Picketers

Organized labor has increasingly moved away from its original stated goal: representing industrial workers against the “ogres” of big business.

When labor unions were forbidden by state or federal law to organize, those who cherish liberty might feel some sympathy for labor unions. As long as membership was voluntary and as long as the only weapon was a voluntary strike that did not violate the property rights of the factory owner, then government was actually interfering against the free rights of workers when it banned unions.



That period in American labor relations was very short. Workers who organized in unions soon began to assert the right to trespass on the property of businesses or interfere with the access of replacement workers or customers by picketing businesses. The violence associated with strikes in the early days of American unions is largely connected with that violation of the property and traffic rights of the business owner.

After that, labor unions began to push legislators to create extraordinary rights for labor unions that came, not only at the expense of the business owner but also at the expense of the individual worker. The right to bargain individually with the owner because an employee is very productive or possesses special skills or has an excellent work record were melted into that cauldron called “collective bargaining.”

Almost inevitably, when politicians reach a power-sharing arrangement with labor bosses, corruption and violence reach ugly extremes. The Teamsters Union, infamous for its ties to organized crime, is just the best known example of the cabal of corrupt politicians, dictatorial union bosses, and chieftains of organized crime. This nefarious influence in many American ports shot the costs of imports and exports up significantly.

The next incarnation of labor unions, once they had succeeded in driving many industrial jobs out of America, was to move into the area of “public employee unions.” Calvin Coolidge and Ronald Reagan, in dealing with public employee strikes, took the only legal action and fired all the striking workers. There is no right to “strike” against the people of a republic in order to extort bigger packages of salaries and benefits or sweeter pension packages. Sadly, few politicians have stood up to this blackmail.

Now, it appears, labor unions have adopted new, almost surreal, operations. When unions go on strike, their well-paid members are finding the drudgery of picketing too much trouble for the money they will receive. So what are they doing? Hiring nonunion workers to picket for them! The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council of Carpenters in our nation’s capital is paying unemployed nonunion workers the minimum wage, \$8.25 an hour, to walk the picket lines so that union members do not have to wear out shoe leather. California unions are paying nonunion unemployed workers \$10 an hour to demonstrate



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against the unfair working conditions. Paid picketers in Maryland yell slogans like “Low pay! Go away!” and “That Rat Gotta Go!”

Paid “activists” are increasingly open not only for unions but for other “social activism.” A recent graduate from Central Michigan University, Stephen Borlik, now works making \$13 an hour for CARE, an Atlantic antipoverty, nonprofit organization. He is given a quota of new donors that he must meet or risk losing his job. Others are being hired as day laborers to “protest” offshore drilling. While it is easy to understand why unemployed workers would be happy to get the best job that they could in tough economic times, it is a bit harder to explain how organizations that routinely pillory businessmen for not being “socially responsible” have to hire off the street “activists” to wage their tiresome campaigns.

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