

The Democrats' Betrayal of Labor Unions

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For decades unions have unwaveringly supported the Democratic Party, sticking with them through thick and thin. However, in recent years, the Democratic Party has repaid union loyalty by pushing through pro-corporate legislation at the expense of the working class. It very well may be time for the unions to break from the Democrats and form their own party.

The betrayal of labor by Democrats began with NAFTA, which would allow free trade between the US, Mexico, and Canada. It was touted as a great deal to expand and grow American's economy, even though there was resistance to it not only from labor unions but from ordinary people.

Fear was part of the arsenal used to get the bill passed. Then-President Bill Clinton predicted that "international competitors [would] themselves forge free trade agreements with Mexico if Congress fail[ed] to approve the North American Free Trade Agreement, giving nations such as Japan an economic windfall at U.S. expense." [1] However, he was quite incorrect. A *New York Times* article published at the time stated that **"most European and Japanese companies [would] be much more interested in investing in Mexico if NAFTA is passed, so they can gain free access to the U.S. market."** [2] (emphasis added) There were also elitists such as Andrew Tobias pushing for NAFTA. In a *Time Magazine* article on the subject, he stated:

The problem with NAFTA is that, like almost any change, it will disrupt the lives of some Canadian workers, some American workers and some Mexican workers. They are a tiny minority, but anyone who thinks he or she might wind up in that tiny minority is understandably fearful and upset. And vocal. Compounding this, there are those who would play to those fears with demagoguery, rather than minister to them with reassurance and support. [3]

One can see his contempt for the working class, acting as if the lives of Canadian, Mexican, and American workers aren't really that big of a deal, that what occurs to them is negligible. In that same article he states that "over the long run, NAFTA will employ more of everybody," however, just as with Bill Clinton, he was quite incorrect. A while after NAFTA was signed into law by Bill Clinton in the name of the "free market," The US Department of Labor "certified that well over half a million U.S. workers lost their jobs due to NAFTA" [4] and the Economic Policy Institute stated that "The resulting \$30 billion U.S. net export deficit with these countries [Mexico and Canada] in 1993 increased by 281% to \$85 billion in 2002" [5] and that NAFTA has resulted in job losses in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Under President Obama, things have only gotten worse as multi-billion dollar corporations

are given handouts and labor is left to suffer. Just last month, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner revealed that the Obama administration wants to lower “the top corporate tax rate from the current 35 percent to less than 30 percent and as low as 26 percent.” [6] The Democrats have now gone the route of the right-wing by allowing “the super rich to recklessly dominate the economy while giving them massive handouts.” [7]

All the while this is going on; unions are running a fool’s errand as they continue to support the Democratic Party when they are blatantly looking out for the interests of corporations instead of the worker.

Since unions can’t match the money that the super rich are able to give out to the political elite, the best thing for them to do as of now would be to cut their losses and break away from the Democratic Party in order to form a labor political party, funded and supported by unions to look out for union interests.

Only then will unions be able truly look out for their interests.

Notes

- 1: <http://tech.mit.edu/V113/N54/nafta.54w.html>
- 2: http://www.nytimes.com/1993/11/09/business/worldbusiness/09iht-think_1.html
- 3: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,979585,00.html>
- 4: <http://blog.aficio.org/2006/09/12/nafta-cafta-not-working/>
- 5: http://www.epi.org/publications/entry/briefingpapers_bp147/
- 6: <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0511/54246.html>
- 7: <http://globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=25232>

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