

Forced-Unionism Abuses Exposed

The facts Big Labor bosses would rather you didn't hear about.

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Compulsory unionism breeds corruption. In each issue of "Exposed," the National Right to Work Committee will highlight yet another example of union-boss abuse spawned and perpetuated by Big Labor's government-granted privilege to force workers to pay union dues, or be fired.

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California Union Bosses Would Rather 'Good-Paying Jobs Not Be Created, Than Let a Company . . . Go Nonunionized'

Like many of the Golden State's mid-sized and smaller communities, Palmdale, a city of roughly 150,000 residents located in northern Los Angeles County, is hurting economically. In September Palmdale's unemployment rate was 9.7% -- well above the statewide average of 7.3% and far above the national average of 5.9%.

But just a few months ago, the outlook for the Palmdale job market seemed to be getting brighter. In June, as an Orange County *Register* editorial recalled late last month, Palmdale Mayor Jim Ledford announced an agreement the city had reached with Kinkisharyo International, a Japanese firm, to "build a \$60 million factory on a vacant, 60-acre city-owned site."

The 400,000-square-foot plant, continued the editorial, was expected to employ "as many as 300 locals to paint and wire light-rail cars manufactured by Kinkisharyo, under an \$890 million contract with the L.A. Metropolitan Authority." Ledford publicly predicted that the facility would usher in a "manufacturing renaissance" in Palmdale and nearby Lancaster, where unemployment stands at 11.1%.

But last month, rather than submit to International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) union bosses' blackmail by agreeing to help them grab monopoly-bargaining power over the new factory's employees, Kinkisharyo walked away from the deal and announced it would locate the factory and jobs in another state.

Almost immediately after the Palmdale rail-car assembly plant was announced, union officers of the IBEW's L.A.-based Local 11 stepped forward to demand that Kinksharyo acquiesce preemptively to "card-check" unionization of its yet-to-be hired employees.

As many *Exposed* readers already know, in so-called "card-check" campaigns union bosses may acquire monopoly power to negotiate employees' pay, benefits, and work rules solely through the acquisition of signed "union authorization cards."

Consequently, individual workers under the pressure and peering eyes of union organizers may be intimidated into signing not just themselves, but all of their nonunion fellow employees, over to union-boss control. However, as stacked as current law is in favor of Big Labor's forced-unionism power, employers nevertheless retain the right to stand up for their independent employees against union-boss intimidation tactics.

That's exactly what Kinkisharyo executives did. They refused to consent to any "card check." As one of the company's managers, Donald Boss, explained to the *L.A. Times*, "We offer good salaries and good benefits, and we've never had a labor issue. If our employees want to organize, they can. But we aren't going to organize for [IBEW officials]."

It was at that point that a hitherto unknown "environmental" group, labeled as "Antelope Valley Residents for Responsible Development," emerged on the scene to present Ledford and other city officials with a 588-page document claiming that the proposed project was a potential environmental hazard.

Of course, as a wide array of media reports have acknowledged, "Antelope Valley Residents for Responsible Development" is bankrolled by IBEW Local 11 and other union bosses. It is, bluntly speaking, nothing other than a Big Labor front group. Spokesmen for the "responsible development" group never even bothered to deny that their "environmental" concerns would be alleviated once Kinkisharyo caved in regarding a "card check."

But the company refused to sell out its employees' freedom in response to what L.A. County Supervisor Michael Antonovich has rightly described as "greenmail." Instead, it is looking for an out-of-state site to build its assembly facility, even as it assembles rail cars for now from a hangar in Palmdale.

As the Orange County *Register's* October 26 editorial sorrowfully concluded, the IBEW Local 11 mindset revealed by this unfortunate episode is shared by "many, if not most," California union officials.

They would "rather a plant not be built, and good-paying jobs not be created, than let a company like Kinkisharyo International go nonunionized."

And, as the editorial might have added, it's unlikely Golden State union bosses' "rule or ruin" mindset will ever change until federal or state elected officials take away their longstanding special privilege to get employees fired for refusal to join or pay dues to an unwanted union.

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