



Union Security, Dues Check-off and the Rand Formula

What is the Rand Formula?

In 1945 Ford workers in Windsor led a daring 99-day strike in defense of their right to form a union. As a result of this strike, Supreme Court Justice Ivan Rand made a historic decision in 1946 ruling that if a union requests a “dues check-off” clause, it must be included in the collective agreement.

What is Compulsory Dues Check-Off?

Once a majority of workers in a given workplace vote to join a union, all workers who are benefitting from the contract negotiated by the union must pay union dues. By the same token, the union must represent all workers covered by the collective agreement. Compulsory dues check-off, also known as “union security,” became law in Ontario in 1980.

What is Union Security?

Union security ensures that everyone in a workplace who benefits from the union, pays to support the work of the union. Workers in a unionized workplace are not obligated to become members of the union, but if they are covered by the collective agreement, they must pay dues to the union. This prevents the problem of “freeloading.”

What is “Freeloading”?

Without union security clauses, individual workers could elect to not pay union dues, despite the fact that they would continue to benefit from the collective agreement. This is known as “freeloading.”

Why is union security important to me?

It promotes fairness in the workplace by preventing freeloading;

It promotes stability in labour relations by avoiding strikes like the 1945 Windsor Ford strike over the collection of union dues;

It ensures that unions can continue to collect dues in a timely manner to have the resources to properly represent people in the workplace and also build the power of working people through political activity, such as lobbying and coalition-work; and,

It allows unions to challenge the increasing power of corporations and the growing divide between the super-rich and the rest of us.