Essay

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Essay

**Introduction**

*The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress* - (Martin Luther King Jr.). National Labor Relations Act of 1935, also called the Wagner Act, was enacted by 74th United States Congress which was effective from July 6, 1935, onwards. This law prevented the private sector employers to exploit their employees and empower the employees to organize into trade unions. A known practice among employers before the enactment of this law was that they used to stop employees from joining labor unions and they were fired via company unions if they were involved any activity related to labor unions (Zickar, 2004). Considering the following incidents, it seems that some of the employers were justified in opposing unions. Currently, labor unions are facing hard times in America because the Republican Party is in power.

**Body**

Employers used to bar labor unions before the mentioned law was enacted in 1935. Some popular tactics used by employers in the USA to counter labor unions were that they used to discourage labor unions by discriminating against or firing the workers who joined or cooperated with such unions. Moreover, the unions which were involved in political activities were especially countered by employers (Mishel, & Voos, 1992). Moral codes and business ethics were introduced and employees who were seen violating company code of conduct were tried with the company unions established by employers and were used to systematically fire the workers who dared to challenge any employer.

Some tactics used by employers prior to the National Labor Relations Act are lawful today like firing employees over the charges of partisan politics within a company. Employers made it clear to the employees that any person involved in partisan politics or any person who affects the company's operations by causing unrest in the company would be tried and punished accordingly (Bernstein, 1950). This act was enough to make majority of workers realize that it would be risky to be a part of any trade union which always demand by their members to stay ready for any kind of action proposed by the union (Gould IV, 1987). Currently, employers have lawful grounds to take action against such people and forces with the help of the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 and the Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959.

Currently, trade unions have challenges because of the crackdown Republican Party launched against these unions after the enactment of the Wagner Act, and employers still face challenges due to the Wagner Act of 1935. The issues of American labor were simpler at the time when the Wagner Act was enacted because it was an isolated developed country and the majority of workers were employed in major industries like textile and agriculture, but the scenario changed when the world moved towards globalization (Reilly, 1960). The companies became multi-national and the employers found more opportunities to hire employees beyond the borders of the USA. It also lessened integration among workers because they also found a variety of platforms to work on. Moreover, severe criticism and opposition by the Republicans for unions under the allegations that unions support Democrats also decreased the unions’ popularity.

**Conclusion**

Wagner Act of 1935 was a milestone victory of trade unions which encouraged workers to join trade unions and demand their collective rights more effectively. Unfortunately, the powers given to unions under this law could not long because unions turned political power hubs and Republican lawmakers proposed the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 and Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959 which became reality and curbed the powers awarded to trade unions (Keyserling, 1960). Currently, both employers and employees face challenges due to these acts. One segment of lawmakers (Democrats) strives to empower workers whereas the other segment (Republicans), supports employers. Consequently, both groups (employees and employers) are struggling against each other and facing many challenges.

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