



AFL-CIO Film Discussion Guide

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FIGHT FOR MY UNION? DAMN RIGHT I WOULD!

Produced by AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education. 10 minutes. 1978.
Color. Rental: \$3.

Summary:

The intensified campaign of corporate and right-wing forces to break unions and elect anti-labor candidates is described in this film. The rise of corporate political action committees and the implications of the Supreme Court decision permitting the use of corporate treasury funds for political purposes are spelled out. How union members can organize to fight against these destructive forces is outlined.

Introduction: (Suggested theme for remarks introducing film)

A large scale propaganda offensive is now underway throughout the nation. The primary target is your union and Senators and Representatives who support unions. Millions of dollars is being collected by corporate political action committees and the right-wing, anti-labor groups who will be heavily involved in election campaigns in your state and your community this fall. The film we are going to see tells you more about this nation-wide anti-union campaign, and the kinds of tactics that are being employed to destroy unions and political candidates supported by unions. While you watch this film, try to identify the groups that are out to destroy your union and the methods they use. Think about what this means to the labor movement and how we are going to fight back. Corporate and right-wing groups have more money than we do, but there are more of us. If we mobilize our members and are determined to fight against this new assault on unions, we can win. Let's discuss these issues after we look at the film.

Discussion Questions:

1. The film makes the point that corporations are trying to turn back the clock to the good old days when the employer owned the worker as well as the plant and the machines. Why is the attack on unions intensifying at this particular time?
 - Many corporations have never really accepted the legal right of unions to organize and represent workers. Throughout the years they have fought for the open shop, "right to work" laws, amendments to weaken the Wagner Act.

- Now the law gives corporations the right to set up Political Action Committees and check off political contributions from executive personnel and stockholders. Big business is now assembling a war chest to elect anti-union candidates and defeat labor's friends in Congress.
- Anti-labor corporations are increasing their lobbying activities. Unprecedented lobbying and mail campaigns have been mounted in this session of Congress against labor law reform, situs picketing, minimum wage, consumer legislation.
- A recent Supreme Court decision said there is no limit to the use of corporate treasury funds for political purposes.
- The "new right" is growing at an alarming rate. It is very active politically, is well organized, raises big money and is primarily devoted to breaking unions.

2. What kind of tactics do the corporations and right-wing enemies of labor use in their attack on unions?

- Raising large amounts of money. Corporate PACs have more than \$25 million to pour into elections. At the same time, anti-labor, right-wing groups will be raising another \$25 million to support the same anti-labor candidates.
- Advertisements and letters promote fear of "Big Labor," spread lies about unions and smear labor leaders.
- Corporations sponsor seminars to teach high-level management personnel ways to evade the law and keep unions out or break existing unions.

3. What effect is this having on unions?

- It's harder to organize. Unions won 61% of union elections in 1966. But, in 1977, unions only won 46% of the NLRB representation elections.
- Union-busting seminars have clearly taught management how to defeat organizing campaigns and how to motivate anti-union employees to file decertification petitions. NLRB records show:

Union decertification elections have increased by 300% since 1966.

- Unions are having a more difficult time getting liberal legislation passed in Congress as corporate political funds and political action continue to grow.
- Unions will be faced with business and right-wing organizations working for anti-labor candidates in the fall elections. They will be:

setting up phone banks, distributing pamphlets, spending big money on radio, TV and newspaper publicity and getting out the vote.

4. What will happen to us if these groups win?

- Unions, job security, wage standards, fringe benefits, will be destroyed.
- Legislation that protects workers will be defeated.

5. How can we fight back against anti-union corporations and their right-wing buddies?

- Educate your members...form a COPE committee
- Endorse good candidates; oppose bad ones
- Distribute voting records; get people out to listen to the candidate when he speaks in the community
- Collect COPE dollars...the union is entitled by law to a check off for COPE dollars. Get a check off provision in your contract. In some cases, you can get a check off by sending management a letter requesting it.
- Don't wait til the month before the election to get active. Get your education program going now and get your COPE committee organized right now.
- Get materials from COPE. Distribute them in the shop.