



Robots, climate change and workers' rights; the role of Unions in the coming years.

Since the beginning of the organizations, Unions have been an incredibly important and essential institutions in our society. From ensuring safety to preventing the exploitation of workers, workers would not have the security which is had today without Unions. However, as the world changes at an alarming rate, Unions must evolve and adapt at the same pace. In the future, I foresee Unions taking on a few major roles. Unions will be very important in the transition to an automated workforce, they will be essential in the fight against ecological disaster, and the wealth disparity cannot disappear without supporting Unions. On top of that, what has been won must be protected, and so Unions must continue to be proactive organizations which protect the rights already established. These roles will make Unions fundamental to our society in the coming years.

In an era in which an increasing number of positions are being marked as redundant due to automation, organized labour is becoming even more vital to the protection of the rights of labourers. An issue is currently being faced which is unique to the early twenty-first century; our economic model demands that the individual has a job in order to facilitate their survival, but technology facilitates the removal of the human elements from those jobs. This issue was faced once already, when workers in the manufacturing sector were largely phased out by automation, but we are now seeing a rise in the automation of jobs in the service industry. Organized labour and Unions face a difficult task in trying to protect workers while still allowing for the technological advances of the modern day to develop. The ideal course of action would be for these two forces, the human and the technology, to collaborate so that the individual who has been deemed redundant can share in the spoils generated by the technology. Since this



technology lower costs by a large amount, workers should be seeing some of that amount going to their pocket. Modern Unions should be taking notes from their predecessors, such as when containers revolutionized the shipping industry. Instead of stopping the containers, the Unions instead demanded large retirement packages for those let go, and raises for those who stay. In assuring that the profits from technological advances benefits labourers primarily instead of the capital of entrepreneurs, Unions can insure that worker's rights will be respected, and no one will be left hungry in the wake of automation.

We live in an age where significant changes to our economic model will be necessary in order to put an end to the ecological devastation wrecking our planet, and Unions will play an important role in ensuring that workers' rights are respected during this transition. Currently, business models that encourage the maximization of profits, in particular in the fields of generating energy, are causing significant damage to the planet. A choice will have to be made; change the business model, or lose our planet. The change in business model will be an immense one, one that will fundamentally change the way that we create energy, and one that will cost a large amount of money. This is where Unions are incredibly important. The loss of money that corporations may experience due to these shifts may lead to mass layoffs, due to their want to maximize profits. Unions must be established, funded and supported in order to prevent labourers from being treated poorly. A well supported Union will have massive amounts of power during this shift, as a single strike will cripple progress and revenue by these corporations. This gives Unions the opportunity to leverage this power, to ensure that workers will not be laid off unjustly, and negotiations for proper wages and benefits will favor workers. It is also important to consider the Unions' power in advancing ecologically safe practices, as it can be



seen as their responsibility to use the leverage that they have in order to maintain and Earth that we can hand down to our children. In the great shifts that will be caused by our ecological emergency, Unions will be incredibly important.

Unions must be on the front line in the battle against the disparity of wealth. There is a huge crisis in our society; those at the top make more than they will ever need while those at the bottom struggle to even survive. If this disparity is to be combatted, Unions will be in the fight. Primarily, Unions need to provide as much support as possible to workers as they negotiate for better wages. The knowledge that this disparity exists should also be spread through Unions channels, as this knowledge will provoke an even stronger reaction from workers, who will demand fairer wages for themselves. The final role that I foresee Unions taking is that of a proactive organization. Once the fight is over, someone will have to be sure that the progress made stays in place, that the rights of workers are still protected, and that the problems of today do not sprout again. Unions must be able to do that in the coming years, or else all other progress that is made will be a moot point.

In these ways, I see Unions being incredibly impactful in influencing the ways in which society develops. Unions will ensure that, in the transition to automation, workers will be respected and will receive any and all proper compensation if their work becomes obsolete. Furthermore, during the massive shifts that will happen while society attempts to save our ecology Unions will be there to help workers in that transition, giving security to those who will be most affected. Finally, ending disparity of wealth will be very important to the modern Union, as important as protecting the precedents set by Unions in the past. Unions have always been



important, and will continue to be important as the years continue, and society as a whole must put their support into organized labour if our world is to become a better place.