

# 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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## **Can Textile Union Czars Tell an Organizer From a Thug?**

On its web site's "Employment Opportunity" page, the international Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, also known as UNITE, boasts that it is seeking "union organizers to work with our team of staff . . . who are running aggressive campaigns . . . across the country."

Last year, southern Californian Matthew Kahn found out what the UNITE hierarchy means when it says "aggressive."

On May 21, 2001, a gang of thugs descended on Mr. Kahn in the parking lot of the Commerce, Calif., office of the staffing agency Labor Ready, where he works as a branch manager. Mr. Kahn, who was viciously beaten, suffered a concussion and several gashes on the head.

According to allegations in a lawsuit, Mr. Kahn was assaulted by several UNITE union militants and one Ramiro Hernandez. For years, Mr. Hernandez has been on the international UNITE payroll, collecting a salary for his services as a "professional union organizer."

Of course, his compensation is covered almost entirely by union dues that the nearly 220,000 workers in UNITE's empire are forced, with rare exceptions, to pay in order to keep their jobs.

And the available evidence indicates both that international UNITE officials know Mr. Hernandez is a thug, and that they are pleased with his work.

After he was arrested in connection with the beating of Mr. Kahn, UNITE officials drew from workers' forced-dues treasury funds to bail out Mr. Hernandez. And they were aware of the fact that he had previously been arrested numerous times for strike-related violence. Within the jurisdiction of Vernon, Calif., alone, the well-traveled Mr. Hernandez had been arrested five times.

If top UNITE officials had been displeased with Mr. Hernandez' chronic lawbreaking, they would have let him go long before he and his cohorts had the chance to pummel Mr. Kahn's face and give him a concussion.

Mr. Hernandez and the UNITE hierarchy were enraged at Labor Ready and its employees last spring because the firm was then providing temporary employees that enabled another company, the L.A.-based Hollander Home Fashions, to keep a factory functioning during a strike by UNITE Local 482.

Under federal law, Labor Ready replacement workers have an unconditional right to accept such temporary jobs, and AFL-CIO lobbyists did not even question this right in the early nineties when they sought to pass legislation barring the employment of all permanent replacement workers during strikes.

Nonetheless, international UNITE officers apparently think they are justified in keeping a thug, whom they call a "union organizer," on their payroll to make sure no one works at a company they are targeting without UNITE's permission.

Assisted by attorneys for the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, Mr. Kahn sued the top brass of UNITE in the Los Angeles County Superior Court last month for encouraging Mr. Hernandez' savagery. At this writing, UNITE lawyers have yet to file a response.

Mr. Kahn's legal battle is important for every American who believes in the impartial rule of law. But he is not the only victim of bloody-minded UNITE officials.

The hundreds of thousands of honest textile workers who are forced to pay dues to UNITE, or be fired, have also been wronged. And today, federal law continues to deny them the right to resign from the union and withhold their dues until Ramiro Hernandez and any other glorified thugs now on the UNITE payroll are cut loose.

Federally-imposed forced dues are a grave offense not just to workers who want no part of a union, but also to workers who favor one, but abhor union violence and other abuses. Current federal law ties the hands of unionized workers who want to protest union abuses.

That's a key reason why the National Right to Work Committee is fighting in Congress to pass the National Right to Work Act (H.R.1109/S.873), which would safeguard the freedom to work in the private sector without being forced to join or pay dues a union.

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