

# Union 'Splitters' Double Standard Challenged

## *Will They Acknowledge Individual Worker's Right to Break Away?*

On July 25, two powerful bosses of international unions ended months of speculation about whether or not they would really follow through on their public threats to break off their unions from the AFL-CIO unless the union conglomerate's oligarchy granted them key concessions.

At a joint press conference held on the first day of the AFL-CIO's 50th anniversary convention in Chicago, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) czar Andy Stern and Teamster kingpin Jim Hoffa announced that they would be pulling their unions out of the hitherto 13 million-member colossus.

Four days later, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union bigwig Joe Hansen revealed that he as well would break off his union.

Within the next few weeks, other unions may follow suit.

Despite intense media focus on the AFL-CIO break-up, it remains unclear whether it will lead to any significant change in the way Organized Labor operates in America.

The number of employees compelled to accept union officers as their monopoly-bargaining agents won't change, nor will the number forced to pay union dues or fees as a condition of employment.

Union bosses will continue, Mr. Stern, Mr. Hoffa, and Mr. Hansen insist, to coordinate their efforts as they spend billions of dollars on partisan politicking and aggressive organizing campaigns, which typically target small business owners and employees.

### **Breakaway Union Bosses Are Glad AFL-CIO Is a 'Voluntary Organization'**

At the same time, the break-up does raise a significant and obvious question for Mr. Stern, Mr. Hoffa, Mr. Hansen, and other union bigwigs who are now openly considering withdrawal:

If you can "disaffiliate" your union from the AFL-CIO, why can't the union rank-and-file disaffiliate from your union?

Mr. Stern, Mr. Hoffa, and Mr. Hansen decided to leave the AFL-CIO because, they claim, AFL-CIO chief John Sweeney's leadership has been poor, but they lacked majority support among the AFL-CIO brass to institute a change of



REUTERS/JOHN GRESS

**In breaking off from the AFL-CIO, international union bosses like Jim Hoffa (left) and Andy Stern (right)**

**appear to view themselves as free agents, but workers as pawns in their power struggle.**

direction.

As one supporter of the Stern-Hoffa faction publicly observed back in June, union officials who are frustrated because they are part of the minority within the AFL-CIO can always "leave," because the AFL-CIO is "a voluntary organization."

Mr. Stern, Mr. Hoffa and Mr. Hansen still give no sign of seeing the irony of their asserting their right to take themselves and their forced dues-paying members out of the AFL-CIO because they can't beat Mr. Sweeney in an election or force him to adopt their preferred strategies.

### **Right to Work President Asks Three Union Bosses To Explain Double Standard**

Big Labor-crafted federal and state labor laws deny workers who disapprove of how their unions are being run, but aren't able to oust the people in charge. the right to disaffiliate from the union.

If workers try to do so by resigning

and withholding all their dues and fees, Big Labor bosses have the legal power to get them fired!

"If union bigwigs have the right to take themselves out of the AFL-CIO, why shouldn't a worker have the right to take himself or herself out of the union?" asked Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Committee.

Early this month, Mr. Mix posted a letter to Mr. Stern, Mr. Hoffa, and Mr. Hansen asking them to explain themselves.

"Is it the case that you view yourselves as free agents, but workers as pawns in a power struggle" over who will command Big Labor in America? asked Mr. Mix.

"If not, then how can you justify continuing to orchestrate the firing of employees for refusing to bankroll what they honestly believe is a mismanaged union, just as you honestly believe the AFL-CIO is mismanaged?"

If any of the three union bosses offers any explanation, it will be discussed in a future Newsletter article. 📧