

Labor Day Lament

Where Have You Gone, Samuel Gompers, Dennis Kearney, Cesar Chavez, A. Philip Randolph?

BY JAMES FULFORD

The AFL-CIO is suing the Justice Department on behalf of illegal aliens. It has succeeded in getting a Clinton-appointed judge to put a stop to a recent attempt to prevent employers from hiring illegals with fraudulent social security numbers. [Judge puts hold on immigration penalty letters to employers, AP, August 31, 2007]

Why is the AFL-CIO doing this you might ask? After all, whoever the employer hires will be a new union member, and the majority of AFL-CIO members are Americans.

But around the year 2000, the AFL-CIO reversed its position on mass immigration in favor of embracing, not the American worker, but any worker in America as a potential new member.

Labor leaders of the past have regularly opposed mass immigration. You may be familiar with a class of ethnic joke, which I believe is now capable of getting you fired from your job, that would start something like this: "An Englishman, an Irishman, and a Scotsman," but might also include a Mexican and a Jew.

Well, today's history lesson includes four labor leaders—Samuel Gompers, Dennis Kearney, Cesar Chavez, and A. Philip Randolph—who might, if they went into a bar together, feature in that kind of joke.

They were drawn from several different American communities, but they all objected to the idea that the American working man was replaceable by cheap foreign labor.

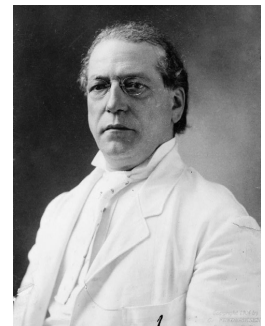
Samuel Gompers, an "immigrant himself"...from England

James Fulford is a columnist for VDARE.COM.

Gompers supported Chinese Exclusion. He considered that mass immigration from China was dangerous to American workers. Nowadays this is generally portrayed as an instance of Early American Racism, but in fact serious problems for American workers, caused by mass immigration from China. As always, numbers matter.

Here are some of the facts Gompers mentioned in 1910:

...The ladies' furnishing and undergarment trade is almost under the control of the Chinese. Their stores are scattered everywhere throughout San Francisco, and the American manufacturers have been gradually driven out. One or two who may still remain employ [native-born white] girls at most scanty wages.



Samuel Gompers

The cigar, boot and shoe, broom-making, and pork industries were for many years entirely in the hands of the Chinese, depriving many thousands of Americans of their means of livelihood. As their power grew they became independent, and in the pork industry they had secured so strong a hold that no white butcher dared kill a hog for fear of incurring the displeasure of the Chinese. This state of affairs became so obnoxious and unbearable that the retail butchers and the citizens generally finally succeeded in wresting the monopoly from the hands of their Chinese oppressors.

"In factories owned by white employers the Chinese employees refused to work

together with white men, and upon one occasion at least positively struck against them, refusing to work unless the white help was discharged. This instance so aroused the State of California that an anti-Chinese convention was called and held at the city of Sacramento March 10, 1886, in which the most representative citizens of California took part...

Manhood Gives Title To Rights (1901)
Samuel Gompers and Herman Gutstadt

As an American citizen, Gompers thought that immigrant cheap labor was bad for American labor in general, as well as for his own group of Jewish immigrant factory workers.

Here's another selection from the same document, "If we were to return to ante-bellum ideas of the South, now happily discarded, the Chinese would satisfy every requirement of a slave or servile class. They work well, they are docile, and they would not be concerned about their political conditions; but such suggestions are repulsive to American civilization. America has dignified work and made it honorable. Manhood gives title to rights, and the Government being ruled by the majorities, is largely controlled by the very class which servile labor would supersede, namely, the free and independent workingmen of America."

Cesar Chavez, a Mexican-American

Cesar Chavez, who led the United Farm Workers (UFW) against low wages and terrible conditions in the growing fields of California in the 1960s, was a Mexican-American. His workers were Mexican-Americans, and growers who didn't want to pay UFW wages or ameliorate conditions would import illegals as replacement workers. The Library of Congress says that "In 1969, the UFW organized a march through the Coachella and Imperial Valleys in Central California to the United States-Mexico border to protest growers' use of illegal immigrants as



Cesar Chavez

strike breakers." (Barbara Boxer's website says that he was protesting "undocumented" immigrants.)

As an American citizen, Chavez thought that immigrant cheap labor was bad for American labor in general, as well as for his own group of Mexican-American agricultural workers. See "La Causa or La Raza," by Steve Sailer, who quoted columnist Ruben Navarrette, Jr. writing in the *Arizona Republic*:

"Cesar Chavez, a labor leader intent on protecting union membership, was as effective a surrogate for the INS as ever existed. Indeed, Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union he headed routinely reported, to the INS, for deportation, suspected illegal immigrants who served as strikebreakers or refused to unionize." [*Constitutional Slights*, August 31, 1997]

I don't think Ruben Navarrette approved of that. But we do.

Dennis Kearney, An Irishman

I first heard of him in *Alien Nation*:

"[A]n Irish immigrant, Dennis Kearney, was a leader of the agitation that halted Chinese immigration into California. (His—probably mythical—slogan: 'Americay for Americans, Begorrah!')" [Peter Brimelow, *Alien Nation*, P. 21]

Kearney was the founder of the Workingman's Party of California in the 1870s. His movement was a response to real problems in California at the time:

"The financial and commercial disturbance caused by the Bank of California's closing made labor conditions worse. There had been much unrest on account of the overplus of Chinese thrown on the labor market when the trans-continental railway was completed. This was aggravated by the continual arrival of thousands of Chinese laborers by trans-Pacific steamers. The unrest caused among white laborers by the presence of these alien thousands caused clever leaders—some called them demagogues—to use the Chinese labor question as a stepping-stone to power. The most



Dennis Kearney

prominent among these were Denis Kearney and Isaac Kallloch—both orators.

“There was much unemployment in 1876, 1877, and later, most of which was attributed by the California workingmen to the presence of Chinese laborers. During the three years 1876, 1877, 1878, there was not only unemployment but also destitution in San Francisco. The benevolent associations and the churches were feeding some thousands of persons daily. This had never before been known in California.’ [*The Sand Lot and Kearneyism*, by Jerome A. Hart, 1931]

As an American citizen, Kearney thought that immigrant cheap labor was bad for American labor in general, as well as for his own group of Irish-American workingmen. Kearney’s followers reacted to the situation by rioting and burning down Chinese laundries, which is deplorable.

You can consider this to be either the unacceptable face of nativism, or an entirely predictable consequence of mass Irish immigration. Either way, there are parallels today in violent clashes between Mexicans and African-Americans in Los Angeles.

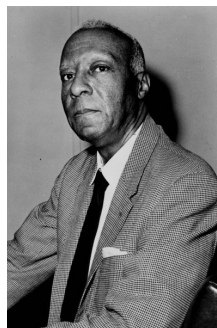
Philip Randolph, an African-American

Randolph founded the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, an African-American union, in 1925. (All Pullman porters were African-Americans in those days). He knew that the railroad companies would replace his members with Asians if they were cheaper and less likely to organize. As an American citizen, he thought that immigrant cheap labor was bad for American labor in general, as well as for his own group of African-American railroad workers. [“Immigrant Indigestion,” A. Philip Randolph: Radical and Restrictionist, by Daryl Scott, Center For Immigration Studies, June 1999]

In 1933, Randolph supported legislation requiring the railroad companies to hire only American citizens in interstate commerce. Eight years later, America was in a war with Japan. It would have been embarrassing if large parts of the rail network were staffed with Japanese immigrants.

Conversely, in 2002 a Japanese-American judge rejected as “unconstitutional” a plan to require TSA screeners to be American citizens.

So there you have four Americans, two of them immigrants, two of them native born, of different races and creeds, who agreed that Big Business’s plan to import poor people to keep labor costs down was wrong.



A. Philip Randolph

And that’s what the AFL-CIO has turned its back on.

Which is too bad, because the American working man is being hit from all sides by globalism, outsourcing, and financial catastrophe. It would be nice if he had someone on his side.

But as far as the modern labor movement is concerned, he doesn’t.

We wish everybody who still has a job a happy Labor Day. You should probably be out in the fresh air or something, but if you don’t want to go play in the park, then read our Labor Day archive below:

- Sept. 2, 2001 - Happy (Fairly Priced) Labor Day!
- Aug. 30, 2002 - View from Lodi, CA: A Labor Day Lament
- Aug. 31, 2003 - Unhappy Labor (Investor Taxpayer) Day?
- Sept. 3, 2003 - *WSJ* Editorial Page’s Labor Day Revisionism
- Sept. 3, 2004 - Unconventional Opinions for Labor Day
- Sept. 5, 2004 - Thinking about Jobs on Labor Day
- Sept. 2, 2005 - View From Lodi, CA: Labor Day—As the Rich Get Richer....
- Sept. 3, 2006 - Labor Day in Cardinal Mahoney’s Alta California
- Sept. 4, 2005 - Labor Day vs. Day Labor
- Sept. 4, 2006 - Labor Day through the Looking Glass
- Aug. 31, 2007 - For Labor Day, Good News from the Lodi, CA. Vineyards—Plenty of Workers (and Machines) for This Year’s Grape Harvest
- Aug. 31, 2007 Happy Labor Day Teamsters—Here Come Mexican Truckers!
- Sept. 1, 2007 - Happy Labor Day-AFL-CIO fights to lower US wages! ■

VDARE.COM - September 2, 2007

http://www.vdare.com/fulford/070902_fulford_file.htm