

NEWSLETTER FROM DR. BEN YELLEN
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President L. B. Johnson's Special Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders
Washington, D.C.

Gentlemen:

I am Dr. Ben Yellen, a physician, of 128 South 8th St. Brawley, Calif. and in this letter am presenting testimony for you to consider in relation to civil disorders now occurring all over the U.S.

Civil disorders have occurred all over the world for many centuries. Their causes are many and varied. Since my personal experience is mainly along the line of unemployment as the cause of the present disorders, I will limit myself to this aspect.

Unemployment is one of the chief causes of civil disorders during the known history of man. If you will refresh your memories by reading Gibbons's *DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE*, you will read where the Roman Emperors were faced with the problem of mobs of unemployed persons. Their solution was to stage the chariot races at the Circus Maximus and keep the unemployed busy watching the races. Loads of bread would be supplied at the Circus Maximus so the people would not starve. Some of the present so-called cures closely resemble the solution of the Roman Emperors--distract the populace who have no jobs.

It must be realized that we literally are participating in a war now with a good percentage of the citizenry actually fighting or are in industries supporting the fighters. Yet there is marked unemployment. From the newspapers, one would be led to believe that the unemployment is only in the cities.

This is not true for Imperial County, Calif. a rural area with only 75,000 people has an unemployment of 13%. There are similar high rates of unemployment all along the Mexican border. For the explanation of this high rate of unemployment, enclosed are Newsletters *IMMIGRATION SERVICE CREATES POVERTY ALONG MEXICAN BORDER* (January 7/66), *IMMIGRATION SERVICE HELPS SMUGGLING OF NARCOTICS* (January 14/66), *IMMIGRATION SERVICE SABOTAGES WAR ON POVERTY* (August 25/66), and *IMMIGRATION SERVICE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEATHS OF 2 U.S. BORDER PATROLMEN* (July 25/67).

After reading these Newsletters, you will realize that the U.S. Immigration Service is maintaining a pool of cheap labor in Mexico for the benefit of U.S. employers in direct contravention of the *FULL EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1946* which made it mandatory for all Federal Agencies "to coordinate their economic policies to promote maximum employment, production and purchasing power".

Where U.S. employers can not bring over the cheap labor to work here, they establish factories just across the border in Mexico to take advantage of the low wages. Instead of setting up their factories in Watts to give work to the unemployed, Litton Industries, Fairchild Camera & Instrument Co., Hughes Aircraft Co., Kayser's Roth Catalina Division, and other American companies have done this.

The Far West along the Mexican border is not as congested as the East or the Midwest near Chicago. Mexican "commuters" can cross the border at 5 a.m. and be 100 miles North of the border taking away the jobs of negroes and Mexican-Americans who live in Los Angeles. Is it any wonder the negroes can not get jobs in Los Angeles and riots result? Is it any wonder that Mexican-Americans when constantly unemployed resort to being "runners" for narcotics?

Even the big San Joaquin Valley of California which is 300 miles to 600 miles North of the Mexican border has high unemployment figures. The explanation is the same--employers send trucks and buses down to Calexico, Calif. and to similar towns along the border,

and bring Mexicans up North to work for 1 or 2 months. They work for lower wages, give kickbacks to the foremen, will work longer hours, and never complain when they are fleeced on their wages. With their earnings, they go back to Mexico and live the rest of the year on what they earned in the U.S.

But the domestic farmworker can not get work or if he does, it is at depressed wages. It must not be forgotten that these Mexican "commuters" also work in non-farm work like miners, factory workers, mechanics, construction workers, houseworkers, clerks, etc. etc.

Now as to Detroit. The writer has visited there several times. There you have the Canadian "commuter" who takes jobs away from persons living in the U.S. Because of similar wage scales, the situation on the Canadian border is not as bad as on the Mexican border.

The writer originally came from New York and saw the influx of negroes and Porto Ricans in the 1920's. He has visited there every year. The Porto Rican has been encouraged to emigrate from Porto Rico by U.S. employers on the East coast. They became the competitors for jobs with the negroes.

There has been an exodus of East Coast factories to Porto Rico to take advantage of the low wages. But what is more important, the Federal Government has permitted the Porto Ricans not to pay income taxes if they work in Porto Rico and has permitted the Porto Rican Government to make financial arrangements so that factories find it a Paradise to operate in.

So with a pool of cheap labor in Porto Rico and a financial setup to their advantage, many factories left the Eastern states during the period that the negroes were leaving the farms down South because they could not make a living as a tenant farmer. Hence, with the remaining factories of the East, the negro had to compete for a job with the Porto Rican who is encouraged by the U.S. employer to come to the U.S.

Porto Rico and the United States is in an entity called a Commonwealth. It is pointed out to the Commission that Great Britain is in a Commonwealth with islands in the same region as Porto Rico. But the inhabitants flooded England from these islands so that much unemployment was caused in England. Great Britain then halted immigration.

The U.S. must take the same course as England. Porto Ricans should have a quota for immigration to the U.S. The same should be done to Mexico and the other Latin-American countries. These areas all have high birth rates. Permitting them to flood the U.S. only causes unemployment and various other problems in the U.S. The U.S. has adopted such a course towards Europe, Africa, and Asia.

It must be recognized that even when we are having a war economy, there is still high unemployment in many parts of the country. To permit employers to have cheap labor pools in Mexico and Porto Rico to flood the labor market and try to fight "A WAR AGAINST POVERTY" is to defeat our ends.

Many persons are leaving the farms. This may be necessary in certain parts of the country. But in the Southwest and particularly Arizona and California, this is not necessary. The Bureau of Reclamation has built most of its irrigation projects for farming in California and Arizona. The Reclamation Law limits the water a person can get to farm to that amount needed to farm 160 acres. The other limitation is that the farmer must live on the land or close by. You can not be an absentee farm operator.

The Bureau of Reclamation in collusion with the big ranchers has not enforced the law. Instead, big companies farm big acreages instead of there being family farms. These big outfits want the Mexican "commuters" to work on the farms. Small family farmers do their own work. The family farmers and their families have been squeezed out and forced to go to the big cities where they create more problems.