



Written by [Daniel Sayani](#) on February 28, 2011

## A History of Union Murder and Sabotage

The raging union-led protests in Wisconsin have resulted in many Americans taking a closer, more critical look at labor unions and their political clout and influence in shaping policy. With the ubiquitous announcement from AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka that he is granted an audience at the White House “nearly every day,” the American people have become more skeptical of unions and the role that they play in the political process.



Spawning this renewed attention to organized labor are reports that Democratic politicians have been endorsing violence as a legitimate means of protest and political expression. Rep. Michael Capuano (D-Mass.) has gone as far as telling a crowd of protesters at a union rally that they should be unafraid to “get out on the streets and get a little bloody when necessary,” and several other protesters took Capuano’s advice to heart, as former Tea Party Republican congressional candidate Marty Lamb, who ran against Democrat Rep. Jim McGovern in the 2010 elections, was reportedly brutally pummeled to the ground by union operatives at the same rally where Capuano issued his charge to violence.

However, the events that are unfolding now across the country must be placed within the context of organized labor’s broader history of violence and its historical embrace of brutal physical force as a means of legitimate political expression (which crosses the line into what is commonly defined as terrorism). The violence surrounding the various labor uprisings across America is part of a broader culture of bloodlust and savage turbulence within organized labor that has marred the movement since its inception in the late 19th century. It has clear roots in violent, anarcho-communist ideology that lacks any regard for natural rights of life, liberty, and private property — and it threatens the very foundations of our constitutional republic.

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Under the presidency of Grover Cleveland, organized labor began to gain clout, and also assumed a bloody persona, as evidenced by the willingness of unions to use savage force to get their own way. The first tragedy to put labor unions squarely within the national consciousness was the Haymarket Square Massacre of May 4, 1886, in which striking union workers threw a bomb at Chicago police, killing eight



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police officers and countless civilians, after being incited to their lethal rampage by socialist Samuel Fielden (not unlike how Marty Lamb was beaten after the crowd of unionists was inflamed to violence by “progressive” Rep. Capuano).

Similarly, whenever labor unions perceive any threat to their hegemony and dominance in the workforce, they have a propensity to react with bloodshed. On July 6, 1892, union workers at Andrew Carnegie’s steel plant in Homestead, Pennsylvania were enraged when after going on strike, Carnegie hired non-union strikebreakers, resulting in the Amalgamated Association of Steel and Iron Workers union battling private Pinkerton guards and the Pennsylvania militia. Likewise, on May 11, 1894, 4,000 employees of George Pullman’s railroad company erupted into violent riots, sabotaging the delivery of mail (interstate commerce) to innocent Americans, and forcing President Cleveland to send in federal troops, declaring: “If it takes the entire army and navy of the United States to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered.”

Historians well know that past events are the best predictors of future behavior and phenomena. The events of the late 19th century are playing themselves out all over again almost 120 years later, with the vast majority of Americans suffering (according to modest estimates, no more than 20 percent of all American workers belonged to unions at any point in history), as best expressed by *The New York World*, in its [report](#) on the Pullman strike:

[T]his strike is...a war against the government and against society...iniquitously directed by leaders more largely concerned to exploit themselves than to do justice or to enforce the right.

Those hard-working, innocent, and loyal Americans who either refuse to join labor unions or who rely on government services provided exclusively by labor unions (due to the political muscle of the AFL-CIO and its allies in both the Democrat and Republican parties) are the ones who suffer. Just as mail delivery was sabotaged in 1894 (in fact, the word "sabotage" derives from the practice of French laborers hurling their clogs, or sabots, into machinery as a protest against management), Americans in recent times have also suffered.

In January 1999, members of the [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers](#) union toppled two transmission line towers at Thompson Pass, Alaska, depriving 400,000 Alaskans of power in the dead of winter. Also protesting the hiring of nonunion electrical workers, the unionists shot guns and assaulted the strikebreakers. Just two months ago, members of the Sanitation Workers Union in New York City [sabotaged](#) snow removal efforts following a blizzard at the end of December, crippling the city and resulting in several deaths, due to the inability of ambulances to reach critical patients in time.

According to the [National Institute for Labor Relations Research](#), there have been over 9,000 documented cases of union violence since 1975, and of these, only 1,963 arrests and 258 convictions have been made; due to the collective political power of unions, only 3 percent of union thugs have been convicted of their crimes. The institute also reports that local law enforcement authorities are frequently overwhelmed by the number of participants in union violence, who sometimes lash out by blaming the company targeted by union militants for trying to continue its legal operation in the face of illegal violence.

Socialists and their comrades in the unions believe that human life is cheap and that people are merely “matter in motion,” explaining the [litany of murders](#) and atrocities committed by union operatives. Without the basis of respect for an individual’s right to life, it logically follows that they [also lack respect](#) for property rights:



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- In 1905, Governor Frank Steunenberg (D-Idaho) was assassinated by members of the militant Western Federation of Miners, due to his refusal to cave to their demands.
- In 1990, the Teamsters Union in New York City struck against the *New York Daily News*, and pelted replacement drivers with bricks, rocks, and baseball bats, and one Teamster was charged with transporting Molotov cocktails.
- In 1991, Steelworkers Local 5668 in West Virginia was found responsible for committing over 700 act of violence against strikebreakers, including two house bombings, six house shootings, four arsons, and 43 death threats.
- In 1993, 16,000 members of the United Mine Workers went on strike in West Virginia. Non-union subcontractor Eddie York refused to walk out, and was shot in the head by union thugs. Callously endorsing the murder, Richard Trumka (now head of the AFL-CIO, and widely known as Obama's puppet-master), said "if you strike a match and put your finger in, common sense tells you you're going to burn your finger."
- In 1997, Teamsters Local 769 in Miami ordered a strike against UPS, and UPS driver Rod Carter, refusing to strike, was stopped and stabbed with an ice pick while on his route. Another driver testified that union bosses sanctioned the stabbing.
- In 2005, Andrew Shomers of Laborers Union Local 91 in Buffalo, N.Y. pleaded guilty to vandalizing local housing authority offices and firebombing workers on an asbestos-removal project.

The above are but a few of the many documented cases of union violence, which currently go unprosecuted under the Supreme Court (SCOTUS) decision [US v. Enmons](#) (1973), in which SCOTUS ruled that union violence, if carried out to further the goals of a union, does not violate the provisions of the Hobbs Act, which prohibits extortion affecting interstate or foreign commerce.

Essentially, SCOTUS gave official sanction to terrorism on American soil when the terrorists are labor unions, necessitating legislation such as the [Freedom from Union Violence Act](#) (FUVA), which would amend the Hobbs Act to override Enmons by criminalizing union violence. The legislation was last proposed in 2007 by 17 Republican members of Congress, including Rep. Ron Paul, and has yet to be proposed again in the Republican-controlled 112th Congress.

*Photo: Teamsters, armed with pipes, riot in a clash with riot police in the [Minneapolis Teamsters Strike of 1934](#)*



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