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Dunkin' Donuts: Repulsive on immigration, but attractive with fair trade espresso beans.

Where to spend coffee shop dollars? (Image from Bureau of Engraving and Printing's website.) On June 5, 2006, I added a new reason for me to avoid patronizing Dunkin' Donuts -- aside from their many non-vegan and unhealthy menu items: (1) the signs in many Dunkin' Donuts shops proclaim "We follow the law! This company hires lawful workers only" (the signs appear to reply to various customers erroneously concluding that Dunkin' Donuts employees whose first language is not English are in the United States unlawfully), and (2) Dunkin' Donuts is requiring its franchisees "to participate in the [now-voluntary] Basic Pilot Program, which allows employers to verify a worker's [immigration] status using online databases [which often are inaccurate] from the Social Security Administration and the Department of Homeland Security." Boston Globe (May 30, 2006). Just as my blaming Richard Nixon for taping Oval Office conversations was hampered by learning that Johnson introduced Nixon to the White House taping system -- and Nixon was not the original tape rigger there -- now I learn that all of Dunkin' Donuts' espresso coffee beans are being certified as fair trade coffee by TransFair USA. However, just as the revelation about Johnson and taping did not rehabilitate Nixon for me, Dunkin' Donuts' fair trade approach apparently is limited to espresso beans and not the rest of its coffee, and does not appear to solve all the coffee farmers' economic woes, so is not enough for me to overcome its approach to immigration. Nevertheless, hopefully Dunkin' Donuts' fair trade coffee focus will be infectious. Links, blogs and comments on the issue are here, here, here, here, and here. Jon Katz.

Posted by Jon Katz in Jon's news & views at 00:10