10-15-1920

The Open Shop, Number Ten

Business Men's Association of Omaha

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/ascdigitizedbooks

Part of the Labor History Commons, and the Labor Relations Commons

Recommended Citation

Business Men's Association of Omaha, "The Open Shop, Number Ten" (1920). Digitized Books. 8.
http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/ascdigitizedbooks/8
Am I An American?

The time has come when every citizen of this Nation should halt in his daily doings and, searching his soul, ask himself the question: “Am I an American? In my actions, am I squaring myself with the great American principles of Liberty, Justice and Equality, which have been the great constructive forces for the advancement and uplift of Humanity?”

The man who would subject the national life and all of its interest to the will of his group is an unrighteous and a disloyal citizen. He is unrighteous because he would substitute selfish aggrandizement for fixed principles of justice. He is disloyal because he denies his allegiance to his country and gives it to the particular class to which he belongs and beyond which his narrow vision and perverted purpose do not reach.

Americanism cannot live — this Nation as conceived by our fathers cannot endure under the shackles of class control. When the laws are defied and mob violence resorted to, we must meet it with force and see to it that life and property are protected.

—Governor Goodrich of Indiana.

How Labor Votes

"Wherever the issue has been joined since the American Federation of Labor went into the political campaign this year to reward its minions and flay those who opposed its dictates the candidates who have boldly defied class coercion have won. Mr. Gompers is making a sorry mess of his political dictatorship: he can drive the members of the unions he is supposed to control to the polls, but he cannot make them vote the radical ticket. Members of the unions are doubting, with good reason, the sincerity of their leaders. * * * * and when their ballots go into the box they are generally for the candidate who has a record for putting country before class, whose ‘one big union’ has for its emblem the Stars and Stripes.”

The above quotation is taken from an editorial in the Los Angeles Times of August 31, soon after the primary election in that state. It expresses a fact that has always been true and will no doubt be true after November 2.

There is one fact that must not be lost sight of and that is the American citizen is very jealous of his right to vote as he sees fit. He may be a member of an organization which he thinks will legitimately better his economic condition but he is not willing to let that organization dictate to him in politics. He is eminently fair in his attitude on all problems that beset the country and he wants them decided on the basis of a square deal to all. This is true no matter whether he works for wages, a salary or runs his own business. He will vote as an American citizen and not as a member of any class.

The Strike Score

The United States Department of Labor has issued a comprehensive review of strikes in the year 1919.

The record shows 3,253 strikes and 121
lockouts. What is reported as a lockout is very often a strike: the doors being closed only because it is utterly impossible to meet the demand of the union.

Approximately 4,000,000 men were out on strike during some part of the year.

The Bureau estimates that the monetary loss sustained throughout the country because of these strikes, amounted to $875,000,000.

At the time when the needs of the country and the world demanded the largest amount of production and the freest possible movement of all that was produced into the hands of the consumer, 4,000,000 men at different times did everything within their power to limit production and to check transportation.

The cost of living was forced to heights that were not known even during the war. Organized labor instead of assisting to make up the scarcity, took the most effective means to make it more acute. The radical leaders of these strikes were not interested in improving the conditions of the laborer, but were intent upon crippling the industries of the country. Is it any wonder that a remarkable interest in breaking the strangle hold of organized labor on our industries is sweeping the country?

Amendments Carry

All the constitutional amendments submitted to referendum on September 21st carried by fairly large majorities. A determined fight was made by organized labor to defeat proposal 38 at the instigation of President Gompers of the American Federation of Labor.

This provision makes it possible for the state legislature to establish an industrial commission, like the Kansas Court, where disputes that arise in public utility corporations may be settled. It was opposed on the grounds that it would "supersede the constitutional guarantees such as freedom from involuntary servitude and the right of private contract for one's labor."

The public in general took no great interest in the warnings of Mr. Gompers, feeling that the rights of the public are greater than those of either employers or employees engaged in public service.

Contributing to H. C. L.

One of our members writes us:

"At a large factory (I will not say 'name on application,' but I can vouch for the information as having come direct from the factory manager), the rate of wages for bricklayers and the reduction in the number of bricks laid per day is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>RATE PER HOUR</th>
<th>BRICKS PER DAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>0.75 to 0.87</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words, the workmen get more than four times as much for brick laid in 1920 as he did for brick laid in 1909. This is not a question of raise of wages or the purchasing power of money, but a question of reduced production. Is it any wonder building costs are high?"—WEEKLY LETTER, NATIONAL METAL TRADES ASSOCIATION.

Educate the Employee

The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company has opened an industrial university at Akron, Ohio, wherein its employees may not only get technical training in certain lines, but may also round out their incomplete college careers.

It provides educational work ranging from grade classes to post graduate college courses in addition to a special Americanization department for the foreign born. The school has a faculty of 117 college professors. It has 5,200 men and women enrolled in its 600 classes. The school has 65 class rooms. Already the new industrial university has an enrollment nearly as large as some of the larger state universities.

Projects of this nature warrant careful consideration. The educated employee, the one who can think for himself, is not an easy target for the professional agitator. This is a step in the right direction. It is worthy the attention of the employer who has the interest of his employees at heart.
Omaha Dailies Have Strikes

Omaha newspapers have been experiencing some of the trials which beset employers bound to closed shop unionism. On October 2, union mailers employed by The Bee and The News quit work, without notice and in violation of an existing contract, in an effort to enforce a wage increase from $30 to $42 a week. The strike was timed for Saturday, the rush period for both papers, but both managed to get out their papers with the assistance of employees of other departments.

The next day a number of mailers returned as individuals. A walking delegate from the international headquarters has since attempted to re-establish the recognition of the union and re-open negotiations. The newspapers have taken the position that their contract was broken and that they are now dealing with individual employees. So far, the international representative has been unable to bring about a second strike.

The World-Herald and The Bee were confronted with a much more serious situation on October 14. Forty-five out of sixty-five union printers on the World-Herald "took a vacation" on that day, not only in violation of their contract with the World-Herald but in defiance of specific orders from the International Typographical Union. The next day forty-nine out of sixty-two printers employed by The Bee undertook the same "outlaw" strike tactics.

The printers had a contract with The Bee which expired September 15. The contract provided, however, that it should continue in effect until a new contract was agreed upon, either by negotiation or arbitration. The union presented demands for increased wages and additional restrictive working conditions. The Bee elected to arbitrate the issues. The World-Herald and The News, whose contracts had no arbitration clause, said that they would abide by the result of The Bee's arbitration.

Production declined at once in the composing rooms of all three papers and finally the climax came in the "outlaw" strike.

Both newspapers appealed to the International Typographical Union for enforcement of contract. Meanwhile, with the aid of printers employed in various job shops and in the composing room of the Council Bluffs Nonpareil, they published the best editions which they could produce under the circumstances. Officers of the local union remained at work, as did some others loyal to their employers and their union regulations.

On October 17, following warning by the International Union that continued "vacations" would result in the suspension of such members, the "outlaws" returned to work without concessions on the part of the newspapers.

The closed shop under which the newspapers operate includes some of the most vicious restrictions enforced by any union. Not only are apprentices limited and production held down to a point below that possible for the average compositor, but newspapers are forbidden to use matrices made from type set in another newspaper office, unless the matter is later set in their own office. It frequently happens that the same advertisement appears in all three Omaha papers. More often than not the type is set in one office and matrices are furnished the other two. Under union rules the office receiving the matrices must later set the type for this advertisement, proof read it, correct it and then throw it away. Frequently printers are found at work setting type for advertisements which appeared several weeks before. This absolute waste was insisted upon by the union even during the war, although the time limit was extended during that period.

A Bolshevik, by Cobb

A Bolshevik is a person who believes in giving you anything he's got—and hasn't got anything.

An I. W. W. is an Industrial Worker of the World—who is not industrial, is not a worker and doesn't properly belong in the world!

A real American is almost any American who is neither of the above things.—IRVIN S. COBB.
Omaha Painters' Strike

Early in September the union painters submitted a demand for a wage increase of two dollars a day. Their wage at that time was eight dollars. The demand was not met and the men went out on a strike.

This demand was made in the face of the fact that there has been a decided decrease in the cost of living. Building costs are so high now that there is not much new work being let and this in spite of the fact that there is a real shortage of houses.

The contractors pointed out to the men these reasons for not granting the demands and even went so far as promising them to consider a wage increase in the future if living costs did not continue to fall.

This action on the part of the contractors is to be commended. They have shown a spirit of fairness to the men and to the public at large in trying to keep down building costs.

The contractors operating an open shop are not affected by the strike.

Labor's Rights

"Can the employees of the company who have undertaken equally with the stockholders of the company to serve the people of that city lawfully agree to strike—to leave en masse and thus paralyze the industries and social organization of a great center because they are not receiving what they consider a suitable wage?" asks the Nebraska State Railway Commission in the case brought before it by the employees of the Omaha and Council Bluffs Street Railway Company. Here is its answer:

"The state has provided a tribunal for the adjustment of wage difficulties and there is no occasion for the settlement of such difficulties other than by resort to it."

Along this same line Justice Fawcett of the Supreme Court of New York in an opinion recently rendered, said:

"While it is indisputable that a man may enter any vocation that he chooses, yet if he sees fit to select the field indissolubly linked with the rights of the public, such as that of a common carrier, he must subserve his own rights to that of the public welfare and must at all times stand ready and willing to assume all of the exacting duties which he knows are owed to the public."

Sane Leadership

Mr. John H. Ferguson, President of the Baltimore Federation of Labor, recently voiced a sentiment that has been woefully lacking in the appeals of organized labor's leaders.

"Frequently I have heard during the debate," said Mr. Ferguson, "the expression that organized labor must stand so solidified that it will rule the nation. I yield to no one in my respect or sympathy for labor, or in my cordial and sincere advocacy of its just and reasonable claims—but the rulership of this nation will and ought to apply to no one class."

How differently that sounds from the slogan of Mr. Gompers, "Elect your friends and defeat your enemies" in his appeal for labor to get solidly behind certain candidates for office.

There is one thing that must be learned. Our government is safe only when those who hold office are free from class domination. An officer takes the oath to serve all impartially. He cannot do this when he feels that he owes his election to any one class. It is a relief to know that some of labor's leaders dare to point out this fact.

Union Contracts

"No Government, no employer, no person having any reputation to protect, can afford to enter into contractual relations with any organization which systematically or repeatedly violates its contracts. The United Mine Workers of America is the largest single labor organization in the United States, if not in the world, but no organization can long endure that sets up its own strength as being superior to its plighted faith or its duty to society at large."—President Wilson to the United Mine Workers of America, July 30, 1920.
The Old Story

Wherever the closed shop policy of unionism has been tried it results in the same old story, constant agitation, constant demands, constant strikes. A typical case is found in the experience of the Hamilton-Beach Manufacturing Company of Racine, Wisconsin. A year ago this company practically turned its factory over to union labor, granting all demands, and attempting in every way to work on a closed shop basis. Controversy followed controversy, with the result that the entire plant is now strike bound. Driven to desperation the officials finally proclaimed that they would no longer recognize the unions and laid down the following as the governing policy when the plant reopened:

"Now, therefore, this company has decided that it will have nothing further to do with a closed shop. When this company opens up again it must be an open shop. We will not allow shop stewards on the floor. We will not recognize union labor; however, we do not care whether a man is a union man. The company will operate what is known as an open shop. It does not discriminate between union and non-union men in its service, nor will it permit either union or non-union men in its employ to make this question one of contention between them.

"This company considers every man on its payroll including its highest official an employee.

"Wages must depend upon the individual ability and willingness of each employee to serve the company and to promote its interest. This is loyalty. This company does not believe the good workman should have to limit his earning capacity to carry the incompetent workman.

"This company believes that its interest as well as the interest of every employee, is best and most honestly served by maintaining an open shop.

"This company recognizes the right of employees to proper working conditions and fair, clean treatment and expects in return just what every good workman knows is due the company.

"This company is glad to discuss such matters with employees and will meet criticism fairly. No employee or class of employees needs the help of any outside agitator to correct conditions in this shop."

The experience of the Hamilton-Beach Manufacturing Company is the experience of every company which permits itself to be tied down by the closed shop.

Too Many Ifs

"If the cost of construction could be reduced, if the cost of material could be lessened, if labor would increase its efficiency and production, if owners could be convinced that their jobs would be strikeless, and if they could have their buildings on scheduled time, what a difference it would make in building construction activities in and around Chicago," says the Bulletin published by the Building Construction Employers Association of that city.

Over a hundred million dollars' worth of building construction is being held up in Chicago pending a drop in prices and a return of industrial peace and efficiency. This same thing might be said of building conditions in Omaha, only in a lesser degree. It is safe to say, however, that many million dollars worth of buildings and homes would be in the course of construction if conditions were not as they are today.

There is one way in which Omaha has had the advantage. Due to the fact that we have some open shop contractors there has not been the industrial unrest here in the acute stage that there has been in Chicago.

It is up to everybody to get busy now and remedy many, if not all, of the ifs that are interfering with a speedy resumption of the industry in all of its branches. Omaha needs homes and business buildings. Let's make it possible for them to be built.

A. F. of L. Obstinate

"The men are deserters. This is not a strike. These men are public officials," said Governor Coolidge, when the Boston policemen, because they were not permit-
ted to form a union and affiliate with the American Federation of Labor, walked out and left the city defenseless.

That sentiment was echoed in the heart of every true citizen, and today the American people as a whole are agreed that policemen's "unions" and "strikes" are outside the bounds of legitimate union activities. A policeman being a government official, he cannot divide his allegiance. He owes it to the people whom he swears to protect.

Yet the American Federation of Labor at their Montreal convention, refused to accept the verdict of the people and passed a resolution offering their moral support to the striking Boston policemen who are still out, and condemning the action of the governmental authorities.

Open Shop Candidate

For the first time in history Georgia has an open shop candidate for governor. Walter R. Brown, prominent Atlanta attorney, has announced his candidacy for the office, the open shop representing one of the principal planks in Mr. Brown's platform.

Counterfeit Money

Bill Osborne in a noon-day discussion outside the factory, said:

"Suppose you found a counterfeit dollar in your pay envelope on next pay day.

"Wouldn't you raise a 'holler' and wouldn't you make Mr. Cashier come across quick with another one that was perfectly good?"

"You know it!"

"Well, you've heard the old saying that 'time is money,' haven't you?

"Suppose then, that you take this for a fact and ask yourself this question: "Did you ever count up the bogus minutes, the idle hours—the counterfeit time you passed off on the firm in a single week in pay for perfectly good, full value money?"

"Try some day to check up your time just as carefully as you check the money in your pay envelope.

"You may find that you've been 'shoving the queer,' as professional counterfeit passers call it, yourself!"—Bulletin—

Employers' Association of Manitoba.

Picketing

The following paragraph is reproduced from a recent bulletin published by the Associated Industries of Butte, Montana. It illustrates the attitude that the people in general are taking toward picketing.

"Time was when a banner carried in front of a Butte business establishment declaring such establishment 'unfair' to organized labor, caused nervous chills to the proprietor, but that day is past. The Associated Industries having taught the building trades crafts—the most powerful of all—a lesson, the entire business community has taken heart. There is no sting to a union boycott now and an 'unfair' banner merely brings a smile to the public's face and more business to the picketed establishment. Symon's store has done more business with an 'unfair' banner in front than ever; the Butte Grill, one of the city's largest restaurants, has increased business under union boycott; and the Rialto theatre is drawing daily increasing patronage since the Musicians' union saw fit to picket the house because some 'unfair' show-house manager in Tacoma is distantly connected with one of the Rialto partners. Pickets and banners are now regarded by the people as so much bunk."

A Radical Gem

Here's a radical gem credited to the lips of Eugene V. Debs, Socialist candidate for President of the United States:

"While there is a lower class, I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it; while there is a man in jail, I am not free."

This is the sort of teachings with which the workers of this country are being fed.
Movement Spreads

A good idea of the spread of the open shop movement or "the American principle in employment relations" can be gained when we understand that there are now 540 organizations in 247 cities in 44 states engaged in promoting it. These figures were arrived at by a partial survey made by one of the leading associations in the country. New associations are being organized right along.

Equal opportunity for every man to dispose of his labor where it will be of most benefit to him and his family and industrial peace for the whole country are things that appeal to the American spirit.

The class selfishness displayed by organized labor in demanding that an employer turn over his business to the dictation of its representatives and dismiss all his employees that do not belong to a certain union causes the fairminded man to quickly show his disapproval.

Here are a few of the recent additions to the ranks of the open shop.

ILLINOIS

A campaign for the establishment of the open shop among Illinois manufacturers was launched October 8th at a luncheon given by the Illinois Manufacturers' Association. "The open shop is the most vital question now before American Industry," declared John M. Glen, Secretary of the Association, "and we hope that this gathering of manufacturers will prove the foundation for a compact open shop campaign throughout the State."

NEW JERSEY

Declaring the open shop principle to be "in no way hurtful to the legitimate activities of trade unions, and is not a check upon the right and proper affiliations of workmen banded together for legal and American objects," the Associated Industries of Paterson, comprising in its membership the Paterson silk manufacturers, announced September 24, that they favored the open shop principle in the silk mills. A special appropriation of $3,000 was voted for conducting a three-months' educational campaign in Paterson in the interest of the open shop movement.

The closed union shop was declared to be un-American, illegal and unfair to the independent workman and to the employer.

KENTUCKY

The Northern Kentucky Employers' Association has recently been organized at Covington and Newport, Kentucky. It was formed as a direct result of a recent machinists strike in the Cincinnati district. The strike has been called off by the union.

ST. LOUIS

The proprietors of a large majority of the hotels and restaurants in St. Louis have inaugurated a strong open shop movement and have informed the employees that hereafter they will negotiate only with individuals. They agree that they will not discriminate against either union or non-union employees.

CITIES IN TEXAS

Most of the building operations in San Antonio, Beaumont, Dallas, Palestine and Wichita Falls are now conducted on the open shop basis.

The employment department of the Dallas open shop organization placed 3,276 persons in employment during August. In that same month building permits amounting to $409,050 were contracted for and will be erected under the open shop and $207,400 under the closed shop.

Strikeless Town

In a recent issue, the New York Times told the story of industrial peace in the city of Troy under the caption "Unionless Peace In a Big American Industry."

During all the period of labor unrest, during the war and afterwards down to the present day, Troy is the one American city that has been free from labor troubles.

There are two reasons for this. A great majority of all the employees are native-born Americans. The unions have never succeeded in getting any hold on the workers there except those of foreign birth, and they are a negligible quantity.

This freedom from ideas brought over from Europe and the absence of the paid business agent, whose job depends on the trouble he can make, has made it easy to keep good relations between the employers and the employees in the city of Troy.
Industrial Decalogue

Ten Industrial Commandments, written by W. L. Huggins, presiding judge of the New Kansas Court of Industrial Relations, are herewith reprinted from the "Viewpoint."

To ORGANIZED LABOR
1. Thou shalt not permit any of thy members to place the union card above our country's flag.
2. Thou shalt not deny to any man, at any time, in any place, the right to work as a free man and to receive wages as such.
3. Thou shalt not demand for any worker a good day's wage in return for a bad day's service.

To CAPITAL
4. Thou shalt pay a fair living wage to each and every one of thy workers.
5. Thou shalt furnish a safe and healthful place in which, and safe appliances with which, thy employees may work.
6. Thou shalt operate thy business as continuously as its nature will permit, to the end that labor shall be regularly employed and that the public may not suffer for the living necessities furnished throughout the medium of thy activities.
7. Thou shalt not demand extortionate profits, but shall be content with a fair return upon thy investment used and useful in thy business.

To THE GENERAL PUBLIC
8. Thou shalt willingly pay a fair price for all commodities required by thee from labor and capital, to the end that labor shall have a just reward and capital a fair return.
9. Thou shalt pay thy taxes cheerfully and honestly, to the end that the obligations of the State to all its people may be promptly and properly fulfilled, liberty and justice safeguarded and the general welfare assured.

To EVERYBODY
10. Thou shalt honor and love thy government, for it is the people's government, the best ever devised by man, and there is none other like it in all the world.

Which Are You?

There are just two kinds of people on earth today,
Just two kinds of people, no more I say,
Not the sinner and saint, for 'tis well understood
The good are half bad and the bad are half good.
Not the rich and the poor, for to count a man's wealth,
You must first know the state of his conscience and health;
Not the humble and proud, for, in life's little span
Who puts on vain airs is not counted a man;
Not the happy and sad, for the swift flying years
Bring each man his laughter and each man his tears
No! The two kinds of people on earth that I mean
Are the people who lift and the people who lean.
Wherever you go you will find the world's masses
Are always divided in just two classes.
And, oddly enough, you will find, too, I ween,
There is only one lifter to twenty who lean.
In what class are you? Are you easing the load
Of overtaxed lifters who toil down the road?
Or are you a leaner, who lets others bear your portion of labor and worry and care?—Bulletin—Employers' Association of Manitoba.

Kentucky Schools Teach Thrift

C. C. Ousley, Secretary of the Kentucky Manufacturers' Association, and the industrial interests of the State of Kentucky, are being warmly congratulated over the successful achievement of causing the enactment of Chapter 21 of the Acts of 1920, providing "that there shall be taught in the public and high schools of the State of Kentucky, a course of lessons to inculcate habits of thrift and industry." The State Superintendent is also instructed under the act to furnish every teacher with a bulletin on the subject and also to provide placards with "statistics, epigrams and mottoes showing the advantages of thrift and industry." Teachers are enjoined by the act to devote not less than fifteen minutes a week to teaching these subjects. The manufacturers throughout Kentucky are co-operating in the fulfillment of the requirements of the law.—Bulletin—National Industrial Council.