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The Open Shop: Volume IV Number 1

Business Men's Association of Omaha

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The Open Shop

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Closed Shop Rules Hamper Public Schools

Statistics show that unnecessary restrictions are placed upon our educational institutions.

PHILADELPHIA, April 27.—Noel Sargent, manager of the Open Shop Department of the National Association of Manufacturers, declared today in an address at the University of Pennsylvania, that the closed shop in the building industry forces both public and private builders to pay 46 per cent more for construction.

Mr. Sargent said: "Closed shop leaders talk in vague terms of the necessity of the closed shop. They inevitably emphasize only alleged benefits to organized minorities, neglecting and even refusing to discuss the question of whether the closed shop harms or benefits the general public. Opponents of the closed shop, however, recognize that the open shop cannot be a permanent factor in industry unless it is for the best interests of the public, and in the final analysis, most beneficial to the great majority of workers."

"Perhaps no public institution," continued Mr. Sargent, "is more important than our public school systems. The handicap the closed shop places on educational facilities is clearly shown by the latest obtainable figures on the cost of construction per cubic foot of public school buildings."

Mr. Sargent presented the following figures (in cents) of the cost of construction per cubic foot under open shop and closed shop conditions in different cities:

ERECTED UNDER OPEN SHOP CONDITIONS

Birmingham	\$.22
Los Angeles	.22
Minneapolis	.23
San Antonio	.23
Jacksonville, Fla.	.24
St. Paul	.24

Omaha	.26
San Francisco	.27
Richmond	.27
Oklahoma City	.27
Spokane	.28
Seattle	.28
Erie	.30
Detroit	.36

Average cost\$0.26

ERECTED UNDER CLOSED SHOP CONDITIONS

New Orleans	\$.26
Louisville	.28
Cohoes, N. Y.	.32
Albany, N. Y.	.33
Springfield, Mass.	.33
St. Louis	.35
Dallas	.35
Utica	.36
Rochester	.38
Quincy, Ill.	.38
Pittsburgh	.43
Cleveland	.45
Providence	.50
New York	.55

Average cost\$0.38

"These figures," said Mr. Sargent, "demonstrate that the average cost of construction in this country is increased 46 per cent by the closed shop. Taxes are increased and the taxpayers receive less for their money. The advocates of closed shop unionism must either show that the closed shop benefits the general public or be prepared to find ever-increasing nation-wide support by the public of the open shop, which permits employment without regard to membership or non-membership in lawful labor organizations operating in a lawful manner."

American Plan Gains in Omaha's Building Industry

The several unions in the building trades, in the face of a large building program and an apparent shortage of workmen, have demanded large wage increases all over the country.

In Omaha these demands were for as much as 25% above the present and equalled the wages paid during the immediate post war period when wages and living costs were at their peak. Building contractors recognizing a growing labor shortage and being unwilling to have men leave Omaha for other localities offered to pay an increase of from 10% to 12½%. In some trades the offer was accepted and the men continued to work. In other trades it was refused and strikes were called.

The plumbers, steamfitters and electricians were the first to strike. They had demanded an increase of two dollars a day over their former scale of eight dollars a day for eight hours work. Unreasonable demands for overtime and restricted working conditions were also made.

The contractors employing these trades offered to pay nine dollars per day but the

unions promptly refused the offer. At this point the Master Plumbers' and Steamfitters' Association declared that hereafter it would not deal with the union but would employ men on the American Plan of open shop. It advertised for men on this basis offering nine dollars per day. They found many men in Omaha willing to work for that wage and a number of others came from other places where wages were less. Today the contractors are experiencing no difficulties in carrying on their work.

Several electrical contractors took the same position and are now operating open shop. The painters union demanded an increase from their scale of 90 cents per hour to \$1.12½. The contractors offered to pay \$1.00 but it was refused and a strike called. After waiting for some time the contractors declared that they would refuse to deal further with the union and would hire men only on the American Plan.

The building trades strikes in Omaha this spring have resulted in a decided gain for the American Plan in this important industry.



Which Way The Wind Blows

The Boston News Bureau says, "That for every 100 persons in the United States in 1910 there were 115 in 1920, and for every 100 mechanics and artisans in 1910 there were 80 in 1920. But for every 100 building permits issued in this country in 1910 there were 400 issued last year. Thus, while the population was gaining 15 per cent, and building was increasing 300 per cent, the supply of skilled building labor was decreasing 20 per cent. **In short, we have four men today to do three times as much work as five men did in 1910.**

Here is a situation that is rapidly becoming alarming. Why is this thus? Why is skilled labor falling off in the face of a growing population and a tremendous increase in building requirements? Ask the labor unions in these building trades that are restricting the ratio of apprentices almost to the negligible point and are imposing other artificial limitations. The

whole proposition resolves itself into how far the public will allow the unions to corner the labor market. It didn't allow the trusts to maintain corners, but it has been supremely indifferent to the arbitrary and really high handed actions of the unions."



Purpose of Government

"The most important purpose of Government lies in its guarantee to relieve each individual citizen from the necessity of protecting his personal and property rights from invasion. Its courts are organized to define and protect each individual citizen in those rights which are guaranteed to him by the Constitution. The dignity and integrity of the courts of the land and the respect of the public which is commanded by them, to a large extent measure the value of that Government. Any agency which protects one class of people at the expense of another, cannot long maintain public confidence."—
MINING CONGRESS JOURNAL.

Open Shop Printers

An object lesson of what can be done toward establishing the American Plan in an industry is furnished by the printing industry of Omaha. The plan followed by these employers to protect themselves and their employees from the evils of closed shop unionism is worthy of emulation by other industrial groups.

It is safe to say that in no other city or in no other industry are employees better satisfied than they are in Omaha's open shop printing establishments. Two of the principal elements in this satisfaction lie in the fact that employees are not afraid of losing their jobs by the plant being unionized or of being called out on a strike to enforce unreasonable demands made by an international union with headquarters in Indianapolis.

Away back in 1905 several of the leading plants declared their purpose of running open shop from then on. Their fight to maintain that principle was not easy. Later other plants adopted the American Plan and in 1919 the owners of eight shops formed an Association known as the Open Shop Printers. The membership has now grown until at least 75% of the total output is produced in open shop plants.

In the Articles of Association the duration of the Association was originally made from June 2, 1919 to June 1, 1921. The date was afterwards extended to 1924 and at a recent meeting it was unanimously agreed to extend it to 1930. As one member expressed it,

"This is to give notice to those that have any other idea to sell that we have bought the Open Shop until 1930."

The members of the Open Shop Printers agree to operate without a contract or agreement with any labor union. Any other course would be a notice to their employees that they recognized the union as representative of the employees. This would practically force them into the union and result in a closed shop. The members further agree that the owner, superintendent or foreman shall not be members of a

union because their obligations to the union would compel them to discriminate against non-union employees and thus unionize the shop.

No restriction is placed on the employment of union men. However, the union will not knowingly permit its members to work in an open shop.

The objects of the Association are set forth in Article II of the Articles of Association. They establish a high plane for the conduct of industry by acknowledging the obligation of the members not only to their employees but to the young men of the country who desire to learn an estimable trade. They are as follows:

SECTION 1. The objects of this Association are: The mutual assistance of its members, in upholding their rights to operate their plants upon the principle of the Open Shop.

SEC. 2. The securing of mutual advice, co-operation and assistance in all matters affecting Open Shop conditions.

SEC. 3. To secure and preserve equitable conditions in the workshops of its members, whereby the interests of both employer and employee shall be properly protected.

SEC. 4. The investigation and adjustment of any question in regard to labor conditions arising among its members, or between its members and their employees.

SEC. 5. To assist those desiring employment to secure same.

SEC. 6. To provide means of educating young men to become good, true and efficient workmen."

The present members of Association are:

Acom Press
Burkley Printing Co.
City Linotype Co.
Corey & McKenzie Ptg. Co.
Festner Printing Co.
Gate City Stationery Co.
K-B Printing Co.
I. A. Medlar Co.
McCoy & Finlayson
National Printing Co.
Omaha Printing Co.
Rees Printing Co.
Swartz Printing Co.
U. S. Printing Co.

Minute Men of the Constitution

A report comes from Chicago under date of April 26th stating that an organization of "The Minute Men of the Constitution" heralded as "a movement for good government" has been launched there by Charles G. Dawes, former director of the National budget, and a group of associates.

The organizers announce that one of its purposes is to "obtain delegates from Illinois to the republican and democratic state and national conventions pledged to support the inclusion of five certain planks in the platform of each party."

The planks are outlined as:

Advocating renewal and building up of respect for the law and constitution.

Condemnation of all influences and agencies breeding class or religious discrimination.

Recognizing the right of individuals to collectively defend within the law their rights, and advance their economic, social and political interests.

Indorsing the announced position of the government that a citizen has a right to work without unlawful interference, irrespective of whether he is a member of a labor or other organization.

Placing loyalty to the government paramount to obligations to "any civil or industrial organization working for the interest of special groups or classes."

General Dawes and the other organizers issued a statement saying that the new organization was a movement for good government only, and not in the interest of any candidate of any party. He said:

"The action of political leaders and office seekers in evading issues involving the safety of our great free and constitutional government because they antagonize aggressive minority organizations makes it necessary for patriotic American citizens themselves to define issues or stand idly by and watch the undermining of the republic.

"Whether you are a republican or a democrat, to join this movement does not mean that you abandon your political party. It means that you demand and purpose to see that your party properly upholds in precept and action the constitution of the United States and its principles, for which our forbears fought and died, and which has given to us as a people the blessings of liberty under law."

False Reports

High wages in the building industry in any particular place will cause a flow of workmen toward that place. Knowing this the unions attempt to discourage it by circulating reports of unemployment. Truth is disregarded in these reports.

Here is an excerpt from a letter in the "Correspondence" section of the Journal of Electrical Workers and Operators for April, 1923.

"And all trades and labor keep away from Omaha as half the working men are idle here now and Omaha is a poor and costly place to live in."

The letter is signed by the Press Secretary of local union No. 205 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

There has been very little unemployment in Omaha during the past year. Particularly has this been so in the building industry and indications are that there may be an actual shortage of labor in this industry this summer. During the month of April this year there were calls for 1,251 workers at the Employers' Free Employment Service. This is 246 more than were called for during April, 1920, when industry was at its height. Men who want to work can get plenty of it in Omaha. When union labor cannot be fair with its own membership what can the public expect from it?



Back in 1890

The world's most famous automobile manufacturer was working in a bicycle shop.

A millionaire hotel owner was hopping bells.

America's steel king was stoking a blast furnace.

An international banker was firing a locomotive.

A President of the United States was running a printing press.

A great merchant was carrying a pack on his back.

A railroad president was pounding a telegraph key.

There's always room at the top—where'll you be in 1954? —DISSTON CRUCIBLE.

Open and Closed Shop Views of Leading Women

What do women think of the Open Shop and the Closed Shop? That question was asked of a large number of prominent women by "American Industries." They were requested to give individual expressions instead of organized views.

While some of the women believe the labor unions have a definite mission to fulfill, generally they believe the open shop is more in keeping with American ideals; that it eliminates coercion, appeals to most women wage-earners because it is fair and closes no doors to willing workers.

Some of the individual views follow:

Mrs. Margaret C. Robinson of Boston, president Massachusetts Public Interest League said:

"I am in favor of the open shop because the principle behind it is in keeping with the ideal of freedom upon which our government was founded. Americans have so long enjoyed so great a degree of liberty that they take it for granted, like the air they breathe, and in consequence are ceasing to appreciate it at its true worth.

"The tendency of thought and political action today is strongly toward compulsion, and away from individual freedom. This is largely due to the spread of Socialist theories. The shrinkage of liberty under state socialism is tremendous.

"In Russia under the present Socialist experiment, the working man has few more rights than a slave. The hours he shall work, where he shall work, what shall become of his children, etc., are, in the cities, matters over which he has no control.

"In this country the movement to destroy the rights of the states, and to put the control of education, maternity, child labor, etc., into the hands of the bureaucrats at Washington, politically appointed, over whom the people have no control is a tremendous menace to the liberty of American citizens.

"The people through ignorance and laziness are practically giving their liberty away, in submitting supinely to the rapid encroachments upon it by those who profit by their loss. When it is gone—when political and personal liberty are legends of the past—the pendulum will swing the other way. Liberty will again be valued and the long slow discouraging fight to regain it will begin.

"Because I should like to see the working man hold fast to his freedom to dispose of his labor as he sees fit, I am not in sympathy with the effort of the closed shop policy to force him to join a labor union against his will."

Mrs. Charles White Nash of Albany, New York, state regent Daughters of the American Revolution said:

"Coercion is not the spirit of America, it has no place here. The open shop is the only plan in industrialism which has any place in this country whose constitution not only advocates but safeguards the liberties and rights of the individual, and every thinking citizen should help to make a public opinion so strong that the growth of group control by classes or masses, shall not only be regarded but wiped out of the United States of America.

Miss Mary G. Kilbreth of Washington, president The Woman Patriot, said:

"The whole theory of American life and happiness is based on the exercise of individual liberty. The price paid by the founders of the nation was too great to allow any impairment of that principle. No authority can ever be tolerated that presumes to restrict the lawful enjoyment of opportunities to work and be paid, to engage services and to pay for them, on terms, equitable and satisfactory to the parties directly concerned.

"Normal relations in employment forbid any conditions that make membership or non-membership in any organization prerequisite to a chance to earn one's bread. Stable industrial conditions, with amicable relations promoting jointly the mutual interests of wage earners, wage-payers and the consumers, are the concern of every citizen. America wants no doors closed to willing workers. Justice and fair play demand that there be no discrimination between those who belong to labor unions and those who do not belong to them."

"Equality of opportunity, liberty of contract, individual freedom, are American principles that recognize no limitations except those laid down by the law. If the Open Shop in industry is based on these fundamentals, then it has a valid claim on the support of all."

Mrs. Elizabeth E. Bliss, of Meridan, Conn., vice-president Meridan Women's Club, and during the war Colonel of Second

Regiment of Connecticut Minute Women, said:

"I live in a factory town—one in which the contest between 'open' and 'closed' shop has been waged—and I can still remember the streets of our little city crowded with sullen men and sadfaced women. To my mind the 'closed shop' is to be avoided.

"The 'open shop' is best:

First—for the employe, in that it gives each man or woman an equal chance;

"Second—It is best for the employer. It gives him the opportunity to pick his workmen according to their ability.

"Thirdly—It is better for the consumer—with factories running smoothly, he can buy his product at the best prices.

"Lastly—It is best for this country—the United States of America—which stands above all things for 'freedom and liberty for all'."

"The employer cannot exist without the employe—nor the employe without the employer. One supplies the brains, the other the hands. One takes the risk—the other fulfills it—if he will. The one cannot exist without the other, and the sooner each realizes it the better for us all.

"Capital and labor go hand in hand, the balance of power should be equal and the 'open shop' gives the better opportunity of arriving at that end, of 'Freedom and Liberty for all'."

* * *

Utah Follows Nebraska

The Legislature of the State of Utah, at its recent session, followed the lead of Nebraska and passed a "Right to Work" Law. It reads as follows:

SECTION 1. It shall be unlawful for any person or persons acting singly or jointly with another or others, by means of any kind of force, threats, coercion, intimidation or violence, to cause or induce or to attempt to cause or induce, any person engaged in a lawful occupation to quit such employment, or to refuse or to decline to accept or begin, a lawful employment.

SEC. II. Any person violating any of the provisions of this act shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by fine in any sum less than Three Hundred Dollars (\$300) or by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding six (6) months or by both.

SEC. III. This act shall take effect on approval.

Union Restrictions in the Coal Fields

Although there is a formal agreement between anthracite operators and miners that there shall be no limitation of output, facts submitted to the United States Coal Commission show that there is an effort on the part of the unions to curtail production by the passage of resolutions fining miners for producing more cars than a specified maximum. In a brief submitted to the Commission by Walter Gordon Merritt, Counsel for the General Policies Committee of Anthracite Operators, the following statements appear:

"Typical cases serve to illustrate the practice. Before the suspension of 1922, it was customary with one company for a miner to load from 8 to 12 cars. Following the suspension the union imposed a restriction of 4 to 6 cars for the various veins, with the result that thereafter the highest output of any man is 6 cars. One contract miner desiring to make more money and exceeding the union limit in January, 1923, is informed by the union president that he has been fined \$25 for loading an excess of seven cars. Finally the fine is reduced in amount and paid, with a warning to the miner that if he again loads more than 6 cars a day they will 'soak' him.

"Two men are fined in another mine for loading more than two cars of coal a day, and a strike is threatened to enforce collection of the fine. The union president admits the existence of a rule to that effect and declares that any man violating it will be fined. He further states that the reason for the restriction is because the union does not wish the operators to be able to show a large wage earned by individual miners on certain days, and that the union has as much right to fire men for loading too much coal as the law has to fine men for speeding.

"In another case, the union demands that the company collect the fine and a strike is ordered because it refuses. The company is punished for refusing to collect a fine imposed on a man for doing what the company believes he ought to do.

"The direct losses due to outlaw strikes and the economic waste flowing from inefficiency and limited output represents a substantial addition to the total cost of coal production without benefit to anyone."

Away With Law

When radicals are balked in their plans to "rapidly reform" everything they immediately suggest some scheme to get rid of the obstruction. If the Constitution interferes, amend it. If the Supreme Court declares a "reform" law is contrary to the Constitution, destroy the authority of the Supreme Court. Instead of proceeding according to the form and under the authority of a government that has permitted the greatest progress that any people has ever known they are willing and eager to trade it for some new and untried theory.

Senator Frank B. Willis addressing the Ad-Sell League in Omaha, May 14th, very clearly expressed his opinion on this subject and it is one that should have the careful consideration of every American citizen. He said:

"Lawlessness does not always come in hideous form. Sometimes it makes an appeal which it takes fine instinct and courage to reject. Such is the present attempt to prove the law lawless and the constitution unconstitutional by taking from the Supreme Court of the United States the power to declare acts of congress unconstitutional. If this spurious reform shall be adopted, there will be an end to constitutional government in this country, in the place of government under a charter made by the people, there will be substituted the tyranny of a legislative body. In the place of deliberate judgment under the methods prescribed by the constitution, will come the fitful fancies of a temporary majority drunk with power—in the place of calm counsel and reason hatred and vindictive class prejudice will rule."

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Ye Towne Gossip—K.C.B.

The following appeared in the Chicago Herald-Examiner under the above topic. It teaches a way of looking at things that will appeal to the average person as sensible.

NASHVILLE, TENN.,
October 30th.

DEAR K. C. B.—When I joined the union I made an oath. I am honorable and kept that oath when we were called out on strike. I have been out four months now, and couldn't get my place back if I tried. Others have tried and

failed. I have a wife and two babies to provide for. My groceryman has notified all strikers that he can credit them no longer. I don't blame him. Winter is on and we haven't a lump of coal and no prospects of any. We are about to lose our home into which we put our savings. We are almost without proper clothes, and we have contracted several small debts during the past four months. The union has never given me one penny, but they don't tell me how I am to live. I can't find work in town. K. C. B., you are just—please give me your opinion on the situation.—ONE OF MANY.

In The first place
If I had a wife
And A couple of kids
And Some sort of a job
That Enabled me
To Provide for them
There Isn't a man
Or a body of men
By Any old name
That Could ever get me
To Quit that job
Unless I knew
There Was something ahead
To Provide the food
And Provide the warmth
For The three of them
And I wouldn't care
If They'd take my name
And Mark it high
On A traitor list
For I am sure
It Must be so
That If each of us
No Matter the place
That We may fill
Shall First be true
Unto Our homes
And Dependent ones
Within Those homes
That It must follow
We Shall then be true
Unto Ourselves
And Being true
Unto Ourselves
We Should then be true
To Every One
I Thank You.

"I Got Tired of Being Mad At Somebody All The Time"

The other day a man who had been a labor union member for 15 years resigned from his union. He was asked why he had taken such action.

"Oh, there was no trouble with anybody," he said, "but I just got tired of trying to be mad at somebody all the time!"

Then he made another statement that should be interesting to workmen. "I feel that I have practically wasted 15 years of my life. During this time I have made no progress worth mentioning. If I had worked with my employers instead of against them, I would have done something worth while."

A definite explanation of why this fine old man got tired of labor unionism may be found in the outstanding policies created by union leaders: that an employer may hire only union men; that raw materials may be purchased only from union concerns; that apprentices may be employed only on approval of the union; that a man may do only a certain amount of work in a given time.

Trying to tell the employer what must be done; **things which may be for the good of the union, but certainly not for the good of the union members!**

When will the good workmen in the labor unions realize that their own welfare is more important than the welfare of the union?

Somehow, we believe that all good workmen are beginning to get a bit tired of trying to be mad at somebody all the time.

And gradually, but surely, they are coming to look to the "open shop" as a relief from this atmosphere of hatred.—CINCINNATI INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION.



Who Are The "Toilers" of America?

Outside the mine breaker, a grimy figure raised a voice that shook with passion on the "rights of the toilers." Sweat is the basic currency of man. The law of nature is that a certain quantity of work is necessary to produce a certain quantity of goods. But there are two ways in which one may fulfill his obligation; by **brain** sweat and by **brawn** sweat. It is a fallacy to speak of those who toil with their hands as if they alone were workers.

In the cause of human progress the merest drop of brain sweat has often outweighed an ocean of brawn sweat.

What caused the vast increase of wealth in America in the past fifty years?

A recent workingmen's manifesto de-

clares, "We, the toilers, have created all the wealth of America." Right. But let it clearly be understood that "We the Toilers" includes not merely those who wear overalls. "We the Toilers" includes the man who burns the midnight oil long after those who swing the pick have sunk into restful slumber.

A dangerous aspect of modern social legislation is that which overlooks the labor of keen minds or seeks to relegate it to a secondary place, as incidental to manual labor. A too common tendency is to put a premium on brawn and a discount on brain. If the frontiers of American business are still to advance, we must continue to encourage those toilers of the mind upon whom advancement depends.—SATURDAY EVENING POST.



Work

The world is wrong!

We need a living wage, women's rights, a change of government, more taxes on the rich, employment insurance, the forty-hour work week, repeal of the Volstead act, recall of judges and let's pass some nice new laws!

So say the soap-box orators and others.

But I say the world is only tired and needs a rest from the blatant mouth-pieces of single-track minds.

One-half the physical jawbone exercise of these panaceists expended on productive labor would long ago have made the old world grin with glee.

Fundamental economics teach that everywhere the loafer retards the effect of the worker, among laborers, artisans, executives and employers alike.

Theoretically each unit in the social structure pays for what it receives in productive labor of mind or hand; but multitudes in late years have been sucking a living by their wits and not paying in service or labor for what they received, reaping where they had not sown.

This class are too often our millennium agitators. They have never thought seriously of work.

Work will increase the wealth of the country, hasten and anchor prosperity, bring down the cost of living and bring happiness to its participants.

Why look farther?—HAMILTON B. WOOD
Worcester, Mass.