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The Open Shop, Volume II Number Five

Business Men's Association of Omaha

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Railroad Strike Averted

The threatened railroad strike has been called off. The executive heads of the train service brotherhoods have felt the rising force of public opinion and have wisely decided not to go against it. They seem to have realized that a strike now would be interpreted as against the government rather than against the railroads.

The following words spoken by Senator Knute Nelson of Minnesota, on the floor of the Senate well interprets the attitude the public took on the threatened crisis:

"I am getting tired of these strike threats. I do not know but that it would be a good thing for the country if these railroad men should start a strike. Let the people of this country understand once for all what these men mean by their striking. Let the people realize that they will be deprived of their food supply, their fuel and everything else. If the employees ever embark on such a strike, leading to such results, I venture the prediction that the American people will rise in their might and wipe them from the face of the earth.

We cannot tolerate in this country a Government or a rule stronger than the people of the United States. We cannot afford a government within a government. We cannot afford to let any people take our country by the throat and say: "You must do as we want or we will destroy everything in this country. We will hold up the entire transportation system of the country, deprive the cities and counties and towns of their food, their fuel supply and everything else, unless you do as we want."

It is time, Mr. President, that we taught these men a lesson that they are not bigger than the Government of the United States.

If it be true as press reports indicate that assurances were given by the Board that action would not be taken on future petitions for further wage reductions until questions before it concerning working rules were disposed of, meaning thereby to promise delay in wage-adjustments as an inducement to the brotherhood executives to rescind the strike order, the Board has materially weakened its position. A tribunal created by law to sit in a judicial capacity cannot be effective if it does not keep itself free to meet any condition that may come before it.

The public is vitally interested in the immediate reduction of freight rates to the end that that obstruction to business recovery may be removed. If wages must be reduced in order to bring this about the Board has not right to make advance promises on that matter. It is to be hoped that the Board has not surrendered a principle to avert the strike.

Davis Discusses Unemployment

In an article appearing in the American Legion Weekly of October 7th, Secretary Davis of the Department of Labor says that the unemployment crisis will be solved only by a return to "unanimous common sense."

Discussing the present unhappy condition and what must be done to bring us out of it, he says:

A day of prosperity and work for all lies ahead, just as surely as day follows night. But there is this difference between the reappearance of the sun and the return of business activity—the sun comes back of its own accord; better business returns only as we force its return. We cannot all sit down and idly wait for the coming again of prosperity. If we want prosperity back we have got to work for it.

The question at once arises: What can we do, what kind of work can we perform, that will bring us back to old times? That work is of all sorts; it lies all about us. Wage earners can help by giving up unreasonable demands, so that employers can afford to start their mills
again, or so that buildings can be built—houses, schools, factories, stores. Merchants can help by giving up unreasonable profits, so that more people can afford to buy clothing, furniture, food, and general supplies. The landlord can help by lowering unreasonable rents, so that workmen can afford to accept a wage that shall become a living wage as rents are lowered.

It is a very short-sighted employer, by the way, who lowers his wages too far and takes advantage of the necessities of the unemployed. The man who trims his wage scale to the hungry crowds at his millgate may be earning larger profits now, but he is also earning and deserving an ill will which will cost him dearly when business revives again.

The Secretary holds that this reasonable attitude can only be brought about by building up a public opinion that will force these things.

Another matter in which common sense and reason must be used is pointed out in the following words:

Facts and experience show that many men are needlessly out of work. They are out of work because they hold fast to the old extravagant notions of their value. Employment agencies report that many high-salaried office executives are idle—for the depression has hit them as hard as any other group. Some of these have turned their business knowledge and skill to the creation of new business for themselves. They have used their wits and their training as never before. Hard times have really been their making, in forcing them to see new opportunities, and to work and progress as they never did before. Others of these men have turned down jobs they might have had at a lower salary. Having once got $10,000 or $20,000 a year, they have nursed a false pride and looked with scorn on $5,000 or $6,000 jobs.

These men commit an error that still runs through nearly all of us, from the landlord and the merchants, from the office executive to the humblest worker. The fact is overlooked that a man earning $10,000 may have been worth every penny of that, or more, to the particular organization where he fitted in. That was his "going value." But once out of that organization, his abilities are worth no more than some other organization will offer for them. His abilities have that value, and no more. Hence the $10,000 man who cheerfully accepts half that salary, and aims to work back from that point, is the man who will most quickly come into his prosperity. He has been quick to see and to accept the inexorable fate of things. He has perceived what has got to be done, and has lost no time in doing it.

The same principle applies to the artisan who may have been earning $50 or $75 or $100 a week only a year or two ago. His going value has disappeared, like every other. He cannot bring it back except as he himself works back to it. Meanwhile, his abilities will bring precisely what they are worth in the sensible scale of things determined by public opinion. And the quicker he realizes this fact, the quicker somebody will be to employ him and make him again a worker and a buyer.

Mr. Davis admits that the process is slow and will necessarily take time but he says that readjustment is going forward and that those that have been the first to sense the new conditions as they are have been first to swing into the slowly gathering movement of re-employment.

The Ford Motor Company inserts the following clause in every contract for building, or building repairs:

It is understood and agreed that in carrying out this contract on our premises, there shall be no distinction between union and non-union men; or, in other words, the work shall be done under what is known as an open shop policy. Any violation of this policy permits the owner at his option to see that both non-union and union men are properly considered in their application for work.

The Weekly Review of September 3rd, says editorially:

Mr. Gompers' objection to further reduction of wages on the ground that the cost of living is still high, especially in rents, has much force, and yet the ease of rents is an excellent illustration of the difficulties involved in readjustment. Rents are high because houses are scarce, houses are scarce because of the high cost of materials and labor; and building is not likely to be resumed on a large scale until these costs go down still further, or until the laborers, especially those in the building trades, determine to give a fair day's work for whatever wages they may receive. Indeed, a revival in building just now would do much to reduce unemployment during the coming winter, and would go a long way toward solving the housing problem.
War In West Virginia

Demand for “Union Recognition” the Cause

“Union recognition,” which means the closed shop and compulsory acceptance of union domination, was the only question involved in the recent West Virginia mine war. That wages, hours and working conditions did not enter into the dispute is shown by the fact that 4,931 of the 5,000 workers in the Williamson Coal Field, on June 30th, 1921, have stated in petitions that they were entirely satisfied with their terms of employment and do not care to join the union. Undisputed wage statistics submitted to the United States Senate Investigating Committee show that the miners in the non-union fields were making more money than those in the union fields.

The question arises as to why the United Mine Workers want to force unionization of these fields. "Recognition" of the union would help it to gain their radical demands for a six-hour day, a five day week and nationalization of the coal mines. These could not be realized unless the West Virginia mines were organized for the unionized mines could not grant the demands and compete with those that were not unionized.

As far back as 1898 the United Mine Workers union and the operations of the Central Competitive Field agreed that the union would "afford all possible protection to other parties hereto against any unfair competition, resulting from a failure to maintain scale rates." Court testimony shows that this clause referred to the competition of coal mined by non-union labor. In the convention held in 1901, President Lewis, then Vice-President of the United Mine Workers declared:

If I understand the real purpose of this movement whether they like it or not.

Other evidence shows conclusively that the operators and the Union in the Central Competitive Field have determined to forcibly unionize the West Virginia field.

The recent war is the result of an attempt by the union to carry out its agreement. The operators in the West Virginia field, because of the lack of restrictive union conditions, are able to undersell the unionized mines. Threatened with a termination of their closed shop agreement, the union tried to forcibly organize the West Virginia mines in order to raise the cost of operation and thus "save its face" in the mines of the Central States.

American Shop in Packing Plants

With the expiration of the Alschuler arbitration agreement, on September 15th, the four largest packing companies put into effect the American shop representation plan of dealing with their employees. This plan is strictly open shop for it lays down the principle that all men and women are eligible to employment, whether affiliated with an outside union or not. The companies inaugurating the policy are Armour & Co., Swift & Co., Wilson & Co., and the Cudahy Packing Co.

As outlined by Attorney James G. Condon, who represented the packers at the Alschuler hearing, the plan is as follows:

All men and women are eligible to employment whether affiliated with an outside union or not.

No person may represent workers in adjustment of grievances who is not an employee of the company.

The employees elect their own representatives by ballot.

No representative may be elected who is not an American citizen or who, at least, has not signified his intention of so becoming by taking out his first papers.

In representing a group of foreign-born workers, it is not necessary that the representative be able to read, write or even speak English.

These representatives, with others
selected by the company, form shop councils. Both parties have the right of appeal to a higher council ending with
the decision of the National Council drawn from the various branches of the concern throughout the country.
That the new plan is opposed by union leaders is not surprising. Under it the men are assured a voice in the determination of
their wages and working conditions, without the undesirable features of union dues and the constant fear of labor troubles.
We believe that the time has come when management and men realize that the problems of industrial relations can only be
solved by co-operating for the good of the industry. The management has taken a long step toward this goal and it is to be
hoped that the men will meet them in the same spirit.

Printers Increase Demands
Citizens of Omaha have reason to be thankful for the stand taken by members of the Open Shop Printers Association of
Omaha against accepting the 44-hour week and union domination. In the bulletin published by the Citizens' Alliance of Sioux
City, we find the following:
During the recent discussion over the demands of the Printers Union, we forecasted the supplemental demands which would follow the granting of the 44-hour week and retention of the then present scale of wages. We are now in receipt of advice from Chicago, which confirms this prediction. The Closed Shop employers of Chicago have been handed the new wage scale by Chicago Typographical Union No. 16. It is effective November 6th, 1921, and calls for $60.00 per week for hand-compositors, linotype and monotype operators, the 44-hour week for day workers and 40-hour week for night workers, double pay for all overtime, Sundays and holidays.
The present scale is $46.65 for 48 hours, and the Closed Shops are paying that amount for 44 hours' work. Three thousand ems per hour is all that is required of $60.00 operators. Five years is required to teach apprentices. The National 48-Hour League of Employing Printers, in its comment on the apprentices feature says, "They evidently do not know that in almost every printing center, the employers are turning out apprentices, who after three months training; boys and girls who never saw
a machine before, are doing even better than 3,000 ems per hour."
The question is again before the buyer of printing. Who is going to pay for this? You know!!!
You also know the solution of the whole matter will be the adoption of the Open Shop, and the installation of Open Shop standards.

Howat's Defiance Praised
The following statements appear in a signed editorial in the October 14th issue of the Mid-West Labor News, the local labor publication:
Alexander Howat is in jail in Kansas. He stands before the stupid and unthinking, a criminal. He is locked up like a criminal. He is a criminal in the eyes of the law. Why?
Because he refused to bow to political and industrial despotism. Because he has discovered a high destiny for the labor movement and is everlastingly loyal to that discovery.
He defies the coal operators. He defies the Industrial Court of Kansas. He defies the Governor of Kansas. He defies even the president of his own union. He is prepared to defy the President of the United States. He is defiant, not because defiance offers an outlet for surplus energy, but because he cannot be anything else and remain true to those who trust him and to his own convictions of what is just and right.
Are we to understand that the defiance of constituted authority on the flimsy excuse that it is based on a person's "own conviction of what is just and right" is to be praised? What manner of doctrine is this that the labor press assumes to teach? It savors very much of anarchy.
Obedience to a responsible government is at the very base of our civilization. Without it we would have utter chaos. Organized labor had better repudiate its leaders who defy the government than condone their actions. Failure to do this is one of the causes that has brought it into its present disrepute.

"The world will begin to wag in a more normal way when men acknowledge the fact that work is necessary and that the world does not owe them a living."
Picketing, A War Measure

Justice Selah B. Strong, of Brooklyn, gave some very good advice to labor unions and to the people generally in his decision granting an injunction to the A. L. Reed Company, leather goods manufacturers, of Richmond Hill, N. Y., restraining the Leather Goods Workers’ Union from interfering with the plaintiff’s business. We believe that it is well worth reading. He said in part:

It is not the labor organization in the shop which is objected to, but the paid agent, the walking delegate, and the picket of labor, who so often becomes a menace to society and a danger to liberty. It is because that great American principle of the greatest good for the greatest number is violated by the labor delegates and agents that the acts of these men and women must be so often restrained. No contract of any kind can permit the defendants or anyone to interfere with law and order.

The defendants, many of whom are foreigners, claiming that this is a free country, state that they are within their rights, admit the picketing and allege that the plaintiff has no cause for complaint. Some foreigners coming to this country have a strange idea of freedom and liberty. Their conception of liberty is the unrestrained rights of the individual to do as he may choose, irrespective of any right of his neighbor. Their cry is that, all men being equal no individual must be permitted to profit by reason of individual strength of arm or brain, that everything in life must be brought to some unknown level.

Men and women of this sort come into this country in droves, and the immigration laws are insufficient to curb them. It is therefore important that they be made to realize that the American people and American Institutions stand for a liberty with justice to all and with our shops open to all on a common ground of equality. Any attempt to equalize the strength of brains of individuals is an attempt to deprive the individual of the right of freedom which a free country guarantees to its citizens. Yet labor delegates have decreed that all men must work the same number of hours and at the same wage according to a classification. They fix the scale of wages applicable to all weak and strong, of mental power or lacking it. As a result, we find that men of different walks in life are not paid a proportionate amount for the labor furnished. There exists an equality which works an in-justice to some, while others are getting far more than a fair return for the services rendered. The great law of supply and demand, as well as the law of equal rights, has been set at nought.

During the war did not the labor delegates in this country hold the Government by the throat, when weak-kneed officials and public officers bent to their demands, instead of using the draft army for essentials? Did they not intimidate legislators and executive officers with their threats and scold at the courts and the Judge who in the administration of Justice did his duty in maintaining law and order?

The defendants allege in their answer that they are “peacefully picketing.” Why picket at all? Picketing and the posting of sentinels are done as war measures. Our laws and institutions will not permit of the waging of private war in such a manner.”

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New Laws In Illinois

As a result of the revelations concerning union tactics in attempting to force the closed shop upon Chicago industry the Illinois State Legislature passed two very interesting laws, which became effective July 1st:

Imprisonment in the penitentiary for not less than one nor more than five years is provided for extortion by representatives of labor unions.

Persons found guilty of using or attempting to use stink-bombs and vile smelling or injurious substances used in union labor disputes may be confined in the County Jail for not less than six weeks nor more than one year.

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Closed Shop and Industrial Depression

Judge Gary, in his annual report to the stockholders of the United States Steel Corporation, calls attention the the part which the closed shop unions play in the country’s present industrial depression.

“Some of you,” he says, “have no doubt personally seen or read of the results of complete organization by the unions in certain lines. * * * The natural and certain effects of labor unionism are expressed by three words: inefficiency, high costs. And be it remembered that in the end the general public, which is more interested in the selling prices of all products, must pay for extortionate, unnecessary and unreasonable costs of production.

“I am not discussing what is the fair
seventy-five per cent of the laboring men are convinced that the open shop is best.

The New York Herald, in commenting upon this statement, says pertinently:

Labor union leaders that have been promoting such non-productivity when the public is clamoring for lower living costs, and is going to get lower living costs: have made so bad a job of it for themselves and their organizations that if they have not brought the whole American labor union system to the verge of wreck, with the Open Shop again in the ascendant as a national institution, they have ended for many a day their power to dictate the practices and maintain the abuses that were gradually throttling the economic life out of the nation.

—OPEN SHOP REVIEW.

Closed Shop, Labor Tyranny

Dr. Charles Aubrey Eaton, of New York, who, during the war was head of the National Service Department of the Emergency Fleet Corporation where he took careful note of the spirit and trend of working conditions today, is certain that seventy-five per cent of the laboring men are convinced that the open shop is best for all classes.

"I am an open shop man," said Dr. Eaton. "The day is coming when the open shop will be observed through this country. It is the right and proper way for men to work and there is no place in this country properly for the closed shop. There is no justice in any group of men saying to a man that he shall not work because he does not belong to a union.

"We have got to have the open shop, truly an open shop. And it behooves the employer to take the lead and direct his own men and show them the way. The right to work is guaranteed to every man, and it is all poppycock for the labor leaders to say that the closed shop is the bulwark of labor. The closed shop is the very essence of tyranny: it is the tyranny of the capitalist class that was abolished long ago: it is the tyranny of George III. It imposes one law for one man and another law for another.

"It is little short of anarchy when we see laws passed year after year in our National Legislature that exempt certain classes, that except the labor unions and the farmer from laws that are enforced upon you and me."

Effort and Reward

One of the fundamental principles which Judge Landis is trying to get established in the industrial life of Chicago is involved in the sliding or differential scale of pay. In our opinion it is essential to our industrial efficiency and to the maintenance of American standards of individual liberty.

In so far as unionism insists upon the flat scale it is inimical to the common good, including, of course, the good of the workers in the long run. Compensation must have a direct relation to skill and industry. To pay the same for unequal service is at the bottom the same as to deprive the individual of his right to make use of his faculties to the best advantage. It resembles the abolition of the right of private property, and Americans should realize from the fate of Russia the injustice of attempting to establish an artificial equality of rights. The result is a general discouragement of effort, a closing down of production and a consequent heavy loss to all concerned.

Russian sovietism has tried that system, and the result has been disastrous to labor as well as to the country as a whole.

Unionism cannot prosper by placing itself in opposition to laws of life which are far outside its reach. Human progress and welfare depend primarily on production, and any attempts to establish an artificial system of equalization strikes at the motives deep in human nature which stimulate production and keep society progressing.

Injustices of distribution there are, and we constantly ought to be correcting them by the evolution and application of better standards. But this correction must respect the fundamental motives of human effort or it will do harm and not good.—CHICAGO TRIBUNE.

"Modern government must intimately concern itself with the economic well-being of the people. In a majority of instances, it functions most efficiently by not interfering with private business affairs, save to the extent of reducing those conducting these enterprises liable before the courts for vicious or immoral actions."
Organized Labor's Function

If the labor union wishes to get a firm grip on the principle of immortality in organization life, it must stop thinking so much about organization and think very much more about the essentials of the cause of the working man.

At the outset, it ought to turn its back now and forever on the narrow view which makes everything turn on the possession or non-possession of a union card.

It ought to declare that its interest is in but three things:

Good working conditions,

Good wages

And the highest possible standards of craftsmanship;

and place its approval on these things wherever found.

It should take the ground that it has no quarrel and no cause of difference with any industrial organization, organized or unorganized, union or non-union, where wages, conditions and output meet certain tests.

It ought to make its campaigns wholly on the basis of the service it is capable of rendering.

America At Work does not for a moment deny that labor unions are being opposed today by prejudiced men, by narrow men, by men of feudal instincts, and of chilled steel selfishness. But this is not the opposition that counts. It is not the opposition that needs be reckoned with.

Labor unions are also being opposed today, not in blind prejudice and hot blood, but in response to the verdict of the sober second thought, by a large group of enlightened Americans who recognize the fact that

ALL "CLOSED SHOP" ORGANIZATIONS ARE DESPOTISMS.

THE CLOSED SHOP IDEA RUNS SQUARE AGAINST ALL THE ESSENTIALS OF MODERN DEMOCRACY—

for the way of democracy is to test everything by service, to go back of the label and try the contents.

When the American Federation of Labor becomes enlightened enough to declare that it is interested to push itself only in those parts of the labor field that need its help in order to attain the ends of good wages, good conditions and high craftsmanship—when it proclaims this

creed in public and lives by it in private, then and not till then will its power be of the kind that endures.—AMERICA At WORK.

Otto H. Kahn, prominent American financier, is quoted as follows in the New York "Times" of September 1st, upon his return from Europe:

In order to use the capacity of our industrial plants and to give full employment to our workers we must make every effort to hold our own in the markets of the world. And that is only possible if the cost of production can be brought into line with existing conditions. All of us, including labor, will be better off in the long run by getting away from an artificial level, which has been of genuine benefit to no one and of considerable harm to a large fraction of our population.

Wages

"The reason for labor's troubles? Well, the General Board of Education has been digging into the question of teachers' pay, and learned that only 30 per cent of the 8,400 teachers in the 250 academic institutions investigated, received as much pay as the railroad yard switchman gets. The Boston Chamber of Commerce investigating the building situation finds that in 1898 a bricklayer and his helper laid 1,500 bricks in an eight hour day for 35 cents a hundred, whereas the present rate is 500 bricks a day at $2.72 a hundred. Whether wages be $5, $10, or $100 a day, it doesn't really matter, but the product of labor matters a good deal. No more can be bought and enjoyed than is produced, and small production means a low standard of living, though money wages be advanced to infinity. Labor's product is the great determinator of labor's wages in all lands. Increasing costs of production cannot possibly raise the rate of real wages."—COMMERCe AND FINANCE.

The Case Against the Unions

The trade union officials have gone up and down the land for long years proclaiming that "Labor has a right to organize." The union officials know perfectly well that the right of men to organize has not the remotest relation to their calling, craft, profession, trade, nor to anything else. They know perfectly well that men have a right to form any honorable organization. They also know that all the organizations in the country, except the trade unions, are made up of a voluntary membership. They also know that all their cry about the right of labor to organi-
ize is made to divert men's minds from the lawless methods they employ, to force men into, and to keep them in, their organization.

There have crept into the unions three features which should be eliminated at once; one, compelling a man to give money in order to work; another, preventing a man from doing an honest day's work; another, preventing a boy from learning a trade.

The trade union officials have a right to say their own sons shall not learn a trade—but they have no right to say that other men's sons shall not learn a trade; and the only way they can prevent other men's sons from learning a trade is by committing, or being ready to commit, lawless deeds. Let the trade union officials be stripped of the mask they have worn so long; let their sham, and deceit and hypocrisy be known to all; let the words resound from one end of the land to the other, that all organizations in the country must be made up of a voluntary membership; then the damnable practice of preventing a man from doing an honest day's work will cease.—Detroit Saturday Night.

Axioms for Unrest

E. C. Atkins & Company, saw and knife manufacturers at Hamilton, Ontario, are distributing cards among their employees with the following axioms printed on them, which points are well worth considering:

1. Under any economic or industrial system, men and women must inevitably continue to work for wages.

2. Some workers must always be paid more wages than others, either owing to special ability or the class of work performed.

3. No worker can continuously be paid wages that he does not earn.

4. The value of the work must be controlled by the saleable value of the articles produced.

5. The cost of living is governed by the cost of production, both in regard to primary products and secondary manufactures.

6. The community cannot expect cheap bread, meat and other foods at the expense of the farmer and grazier.

7. Shorter hours of work must increase the cost of all articles, including food and clothing.

8. The maximum output in the hours worked, will result in cheapening the articles produced, as the cost of production inevitably governs the selling price.

9. Men and women in a free country cannot be prevented from saving money and acquiring property.

10. In order to promote industrial development and provide work, the nation must continue to depend upon its intellectual citizens.

11. The community or nation that develops most brain power and inventive genius will be the most prosperous, and brain must inevitably command more reward than mere manual labor.

12. Capitalism (or the accumulation of wealth) can never be abolished, for some men will always earn, (and save) more money than other men.

13. Without hope of profit there would be less industrial development, less employment, lower wages and higher cost of living.—Bulletin Employers' Association of Manitoba.

Ten Commandments for Foremen

1. Be an optimist. Confidence is infectious.


3. Every question has two sides. Always hear both.

4. Study your men. Put each where he can do his best work.

5. Never show discouragement. A stout heart will never say die.

6. Don't hold spite. Correct when necessary, but forgive afterward.

7. Notice good work as well as bad. Give both credit and blame justly.

8. Be fair. A foreman often has to act as judge, and therefore must be just.

9. Control yourself. Anger is too valuable to use except on special occasions.

10. Take your full share of the blame. Sharing both blame and praise with workers is a big part of the secret of managing men.—National Cash Register's "Rules for Success."

"Why do the people of Europe madly scramble for leave to come to America? That is the question which American workers should ask themselves."