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The Fight To Break The Unions

Just what to do the chambers of commerce, the employers' association, the "associated industries," the Republican Publicity Association, and other like-minded organizations actually mean when they proclaim the "open shop" as the new slogan of Americanism? It is important to find out, for the labor struggles of the next few years, will center around that issue, and the public is already being "educated" by the familiar methods of cheap propaganda to a proper attitude in the matter. The employers have tried to tell us what the open shop campaign implies; they have named it the "American plan of employment" and in the words of the "Dallas Chamber of Commerce Open Shop Square Deal Association," the open shop is "the only way to cure radicalism" and has been inaugurated "to protect personal liberty and property right by seeing that non-union workers have an equal chance with workers who belong to unions." It is inevitable that Americans should respond sympathetically to the proposal that all men must have an "equal chance." If the open shop means an equal chance the open shop propaganda will be easy to conduct.

What the term implies, however, is something quite different. The open shop, as the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor has said, is in practice simply a non-union shop. The idea of union and non-union men competing for jobs on equal terms and working side by side is in fact nothing more than an amiable fiction. The primary object of labor organization is collective bargaining between the employer and the union. The object of the open shop is to eliminate collective bargaining and to substitute dealing with the individual worker. If collective bargaining is eliminated, the union is killed; a worker might as well join a golf club as a union in an open shop. The open shop, then, becomes a non-union shop and the meaning of the present campaign becomes clear. The New York World put the matter very plainly when it said last week that "the champions of the open shop are not actuated by any patriotic impulse whatever. They believe that the open shop is more profitable to themselves than the closed shop and that to destroy the unions would put money in their pockets. That is all there is to the controversy. The open shop advocates wear a mask of patriotism because they are afraid to meet the economic issue." In the face of the obvious intent behind the open shop campaign the noble spectacle of the embattled employers of America rising in defense of the "personal liberty" of their employees takes on a comic aspect, while the claim of the employers that they seek to increase production must, in the present state of the market at least, be largely discounted.

Winter, the industrial depression, and the disorganization of the forces of labor have joined to help the open

Substance Not Shadow on Wages

There have been six main reasons presented thus far to the law of wages governing wages. They are substantially as follows:
The wage fund theory, suggested by Adam Smith and developed by his followers, as originally stated is that wages, like everything else, are governed by supply and demand, and in the aggregate depend on the proportion of laborers to the capital available for employing labor, this capital being denominated a "wage fund."
This wage fund theory naturally leads to and did historically lead to the German socialist theory of the iron law of wages. According to this theory, wages under competition can never be higher than that which will just support the laborer and enable him to renew his kind. The German socialists claimed that under the intense struggle to live, the laborer could not be sufficiently educated, and that the only way was to stop competition and introduce socialism which would lead to education rather than dependence on education to lead to socialism.
But now a new theory arose. The theory that production furnishes the true measure of wages. The theory argues that the wage-fund theory and its socialist corollary are wholly false and that wages depend upon the productivity of labor. Wages, it says, are not dependent upon capital, because men without capital can and often do employ labor, provided they know that the laborers employed will produce enough value to enable them to pay the laborer out of the product and have a balance for the employer. Again the employer may borrow capital, and out of the product of labor he can pay for the capital borrowed, the laborer themselves, and leave a profit for himself.
But some critics urge, wages do not necessarily rise and fall with production, but are often lower when production is highest because of so-called overproduction discharges laborers and materially lowers their income. Hence a new theory, that wages depend upon what the working man considers the lowest level upon which he can live. Competition it argues, can reduce wages to the lowest limit he will work for, because he will then starve rather than work, or so strenuously organize a strike that wages will have to rise.
Again other critics say that wages do not so much depend on the standard of living as the standard of living

depends on the wages men can secure. Another theory is therefore presented, namely, Henry George's theory of wages. Wages cannot be lower, he says, than men can get by working for themselves without paying rent, because men prefer to work for themselves, and will only work for an employer provided he will pay more than they get by working for themselves.
We come now to the last general theory which has been propounded, the theory that wages depend, as in any other case of value, on the marginal or fiscal value of the laborer. This theory is rather a way of looking at things than the statement of a definite law. It simply states that no definite law of wages can be laid down. Each worker will get what his labor is worth to the employer at the time his wage is decided upon.
All of the foregoing laws of wages contain elements of truth. Thus the wage theory has some. So with all theories. The standard of living, the margin of production, the productivity of labor, do all affect wages. Wages are the resultant of many economic forces. This seems today all that economists can say. Trade unionism of the other hand is not so much concerned in propounding theories. It actually and constantly raises wages, lessens the working hours and improves the conditions of work and thus far has not greatly concerned by what theory or combination of theories these ends have been obtained.—Matthew Wolf.

Relief by Popular Subscription?

Halifax, N.S.—Funds toward the relief of the unemployment situation in this city will be raised, it is hoped by popular subscription. At meeting of the city council a committee of four aldermen was appointed to act as a permanent unemployment committee.
Mayor John S. Parker announced that he had issued to social service workers checks chargeable to his own account of a sufficient amount to cover immediately any cases of actual want among the unemployed, but expressed the hope that a public fund would be raised to look after the matter.

New Regulations Having Effect

A falling-off in overseas immigration to Canada is attributed by a high official of the Department of Immigration and Colonization, to the money qualification rule, which requires that an immigrant shall be possessed of \$250, on his arrival in this country. This official stated that officers of the Department overseas were impressing on intending immigrants, that this rule was being rigidly enforced, and that it was no use to embark for Canada unless they were prepared to submit to it.
A bona fide farmer who intends going to Canada was always welcome to Canada.
The unemployment situation however, made it a kindness to the immigrant to enforce regulations in regard to money qualifications, with rigidity.

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