

unlawful, and its enforcement to the injury of others becomes an actionable wrong.

If this article shall have made it clear that the closed shop in and of itself is not an unlawful thing, and has further clearly defined the limits set by the courts upon efforts to secure or maintain the closed shop, it has accomplished its purpose. The question of the closed shop contract, and the other labor questions now of such acute interest, are but different phases of an epoch in industrial history through which we are passing. The epoch started with the entry into the labor world of the spirit of combination. The epoch may be called the epoch of incomplete combination.

The very fact that combination on the part of labor is partial and incomplete, makes inevitable strife and war and legal questions. If there were 1,000 carvers in the United States, all of whom belonged to a union, it could not be said that such a union was trying to gain a monopoly or to injure nonunion men in any agreements it might make. Such a union could carry on its collective bargaining with the employer unhampered. It could name any wage or other conditions it saw fit, and the employer would have no option but to accede or go without the services of its members. Unreasonable demands would thwart their own purpose, for the public would arrange to do without services for which a wage not warranted by trade conditions was insisted upon. In other words, complete combination of labor secured and maintained would do away with the present epoch of strife, with its attendant bitterness and legal questions. It would bring an era of collective bargaining when the different questions at issue between labor and capital would be settled more than ever before by the laws of trade and not by the laws of the courts.

It is the belief of the writer that the courts are more and more recognizing the fact stated, that they look upon complete combination of labor as a good and not as an evil; and that within the limitations already set they will put no unnecessary obstacle in the way, but that their attitude toward labor in combination will be broad and liberal.

WRECKED LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.

BY ETHELBERT STEWART.

[Ethelbert Stewart, special agent, United States Bureau of Labor; born in Illinois, April 22, 1857; educated in the public schools of Illinois; commissioner of labor in Illinois for eight years, and special agent in the United States Department of Labor since September, 1889. Author, Fines and Fining Systems in Illinois, Early Organization Among Printers, Restriction of Output, etc.]

Talking with a man who believes trade unionism is about to be wiped out in the United States, he said: They come up and go down. The wrecks of labor organizations are strewn all along our path for forty five or fifty years. This is quite true; indeed, he might have said 3,000 years, for trade unionism, of a kind, was as strong in Rome at the birth of Jesus as it is in Chicago to-day. The shores of time are strewn with the wrecks of trade unions.

The shores of time also are strewn with the wrecks of kings, of empires, of governments. You find wrecks of religions, too, along that shore, and yet the real solid foundation of religion as a spiritual inspiration and ethics is stronger to-day than it ever was. You will find civilizations among the wrecks; and whole races have gone out—but man is still here, more numerous than ever before. The only sane purpose there can be in studying wrecks upon the sands of time is to know whether the wrecking of the vessel was due to mistakes of the crew; if so, avoid them; or to bad construction of the boat; if so, build a better one.

When a king went down another king or a better thing than kings came on to take the place. The wreckage of governments along the line has humanized and improved; remodelled, helped to perfect governments—it has not abolished them.

Government, in the sense of an organization of the people for a purpose, is, as an idea and as a fact, stronger among mankind to-day than it ever was. Its form and its purpose may be changed frequently, but it stays.

Out of every civilization wrecked by time has grown a better civilization. From the ashes of every trade union movement, the wreck of which is noted so triumphantly by esteemed contemporaries, has, Phoenix like, arisen a better trade unionism.

Take a few samples of wrecks of trade unions. In the machinists' trade, for instance, the international machinists and blacksmiths organized in the late '60's, busted in 1875, but at once reorganized as the mechanical engineers. This organization dwindled to a remnant and that remnant merged with the newly organized metal workers' union in the early '80's. The wreck of this organization formed a nucleus for an organization of machinists in the Knights of Labor as machinery constructors. With the passing of the Knights of Labor came the international machinists of America, formed in 1891 and which went down in 1895 to make way for the present international association of machinists, which, if not perfection, is the best organization the craft has ever had.

Small comfort for pessimism or Parryism in a survey of the wrecks along that shore. So, too, in the history of cooperative associations among the trades.

If the national labor congress, organized in 1866, went down in 1872; if the industrial congress of 1874 died a bornin', the amalgamated labor union came in 1878, and in 1881 issued a call for, and itself hied into the federation of organized trades and labor unions of the United States and Canada. This was a greater and better organization than any that had preceded it; and it voluntarily and in its own convention after a four days' debate began the life of and died into the present American Federation of Labor in 1886. Twenty years from the national labor congress of 1866 to the American Federation of Labor can stand that kind of wrecking fairly well, thank you.

I only wish I had space to go into a few more cases; the unions of bakers in colonial times whose wrecks have resulted in better and better unions, local, it is true, but now national and international, until boarding with the boss is a thing of the past, and the bakeshop and the brewery are no longer one.

The shoemakers' guilds of colonial New England forced the organization of journeymen shoemakers' unions just as

it did in old England, and many of these came long before the revolutionary war. The road from colonial caulkers' clubs to the national union of shipwrights, joiners, and caulkers of America may have some wrecks along the way, if you wish to call them wrecks; we will treasure them ever as milestones on the path of progress.

Perhaps the necessity for differentiation has carried the movement to individualize trades too far, but that is correcting itself. In 1803 a glassblower must blow window glass, druggists' bottles, beer bottles, and make stoppered goods all in the same establishment. In short, he must do everything then done in glass. The differentiation of the window glass blower from the bottle blower was an imperative necessity from every point of view.

So, too, in scores of trades the extremes of differentiation are correcting themselves and unions are merging into unions. It may be just as well to note here for information of wreck hunters, that these mergers are not wrecks in labor matters any more than in railroad circles.

The man who reasons that, because a strike in a single factory in Podunk has failed, the downfall of trade unionism is sure, should have had better school books than he seems to have been provided with. No local defeat, no temporary rebuff, can stem the tide of organization. No student who has got away from the straw man of the old school of political economists doubts that industrial organization is as much an inherent function of the social organism as is government, religion, or the social control of sex relations.

Whether we are evolutionists from the Darwin standpoint of forced adaptation of structure to physical environment, or whether we believe with the bigger Lamarck and Hegel that perfection is a spiritual germ within and that evolution is that germ unfolding itself, the very idea of evolution necessitates a belief, an absolute faith, in the final perfection of the thing evolving.

There can be but one goal for evolution, and that is ultimate, absolute perfection. To any sociologist not absolutely stifled mentally by the political economy of the schools there is not the least doubt that labor organization is a differentiation

in society of the central evolving force, as much inherent and as indestructible as any other of its functions, and not to be destroyed either by opposition or by its own mistakes.

The church was not destroyed because it burned witches; its destruction was not advocated even by the witches it tortured. On the other hand, the church has become a better and better organ of the religious instincts of the race with each mistake, with each intelligent opposition. But even suppose the church should be destroyed as an organization by some awful blunder of its leaders, or a masterly fight on the part of a united opposition. The religious instincts of the race, the spiritual intuitions and impulses of mankind would not be injured—would not, in fact, be touched by the destruction of this organization or agency.

You might as well say you destroy the power of steam when you disable a locomotive. This religious instinct would at once construct a new and better organized expression of itself. Those religious institutions which were the original cause of an organized church, would organize another, and as many others as the destroying forces made necessary.

This is but to say that function precedes and produces organism, and this is just as true in the social structure as it is in the physical structure of animals.

Sympathetic association of men who work together for each other's protection and benefit is just as much an inherent instinct in man as are any other of his religious or social faculties; and this inherent impulse always has asserted itself, and when its outward means of manifesting itself, its organization, was destroyed, it formed another. In other words, the sympathetic association of men along trade union lines is just as natural as the instinct to worship God, and you can no more destroy one than the other.

In some it is so strong that you hear men say, trade unionism is my religion.

All the blood spilled throughout the ages in religious wars has only strengthened religion—a lesson the czar has yet to learn. All the fight against labor organizations but crystallizes their producing instinct in the human soul—a lesson that may reach our Indianapolis and Dayton friends ultimately.

Like all other forces, this force moves along lines of least resistance, and the wrecks along the road are only wrecks because they had served their purpose of pointing to better methods.

There has never been a time when more responsibility rested upon leaders than to-day, nor a time when such serious postponement of further progress might result from a lack of conservative sense. But the final welfare of labor is not now, nor ever was, in the hands of any set of men; it is a part of the power that evolves, and a backward look at the wrecks of labor organizations inspires in me very much the same feeling toward those same wrecks as the religious awe and consequent worship the old Aztecs had for a woman who had given up her life in maternity.