

Chicago's Capitalists Fighting Organized Labor

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CHICAGO, March 18.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—Chicago is the great storm center of labor and capital in the United States. Its record of strikes exceeds that of any other city. It has about 200,000 men in its trades unions and it has been and is now largely ruled by the man in the overalls. At the same time the capitalists are good fighters. They have studied trades union methods and within the past few months have combined together in a great association to protect themselves. Nearly every business has its local organization of employers, and these have affiliated with the great city association of employers, which is now opposing a solid front to most of the demands of organized labor.

The Chicago Employers' association represents a capital of thousands of millions of dollars. It is backed by Marshall Field & Company and the great department stores, by the millionaire pork packers and the steel magnates, by the street railways and by about 2,000 other companies and individuals handling altogether a number of workmen far in excess of the army of the United States.

This association is running its campaign in opposition to organized labor on much the same lines as those which organized labor has used to defeat the individual employer. It has brought a new feature into the labor question and one which promises to extend to every city of the United States. Similar associations are being organized in many places and they may in time form part of a great national association embracing the whole country.

The Chicago Employers' association can command no end of money and it is ready to spend freely to protect the individual workman or the individual employer, supplying the latter with funds to reimburse him for losses in case of strikes and even carrying him financially at the banks. It will protect him or the workman in the courts and bring the best legal talent in opposition to any fight with organized labor.

The association has a secretary who is paid a salary bigger than that of a United States senator. He holds much the same position in regard to the association as Samuel Gompers does to the American Federation of Labor or John Mitchell to the United Mine Workers, and has in fact been named the "walking delegate of the Millionaires' club." The real name of the man is Frederick W. Job, and his profession is that of a lawyer. He is an Illinois man and a graduate of Ann Arbor. He is, I judge, about 40 years old, is six feet tall and weighs 200 pounds. He is big headed and broad shouldered, having the muscles of an athlete and the jaw of a bulldog. He looks like a good fighter and as far as I can learn is proving himself so.

I met Mr. Job in his office in the Marquette building on Dearborn street and had a long chat with him about the Employers' association and the labor conditions here. In response to my question as to the association, he said:

"We are a combination of employers' unions rather than an association of individual employers without regard to our businesses. The association does not want individual employers as members, although there are cases where such are taken in. It is rather an affiliation of the representatives of employers' associations. For instance, the laundry owners of Chicago have an organization, the manufacturing confectioners have an organization and the brass manufacturers and the picture frame makers have each an organization. It is so with nearly every branch of business. We are made up of all these organizations, as such, and if an individual employer wants to join us we tell him to join the employers' organization of his own business and to be represented through it."

"Then you are to the employers' associations much what the American Federation of Labor is to the different trades unions?"

"Yes," said Mr. Job, "save that our field is confined to Chicago and its neighborhood, and also that we believe in the laws and in doing all we can to enforce them, and this the trades unions do not."

"Is your association avowedly opposed to all organized labor?" I asked.

"As such labor is now constituted and operated, I say most emphatically 'yes.'" was the reply. "We do not object to men combining or organizing to better their condition so long as they do not break the laws as regards the public, their employers or their fellow-workmen. We insist that every man should have the right to work, that every employer shall have the right to employ whom he pleases."

"Do you aim to do anything as to fixing wages and prices?" I asked.

"Not at all," replied the secretary. "That is a matter for the employers and their men, or it may be for the associations of the different branches of trade and the men. All that we want is the preservation of our principles as to the enforcement of the laws in the protection of the public, of the employer and his business and of the rights of the men to work whether they belong to a union or not. We don't care for more laws. We are satisfied with those already on the statute books. What we want is to have the laws enforced."



FREDERICK W. JOB, SECRETARY OF CHICAGO EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION.

"What has been your chief fight, Mr. Job?"

"We are fighting for several things," was the reply. "In the first place, we want the open shop; second, we want no sympathetic strikes; third, no restriction of output or of personal industry, and, fourth, the full enforcement of the public laws. I think we have gained our point as to sympathetic strikes and that we are in a fair way to make the open shop the rule in Chicago, if we have not already done so. In ninety cases out of every hundred we have won. We are making it possible for the nonunion man to work in Chicago and possible for his employer to hire him without fear of being boycotted or otherwise injured in his business."

"Do you admit members to your association who have the closed or union shop?"

"No, we do not. We are ready, however, to come to the support of such men if they have trouble with organized labor and want to reform and join us."

"Give me some idea of the extent of the trades unions of Chicago."

"We have several hundred unions," replied Secretary Job, "but I believe that from 50 to 80 per cent of their members are involuntary ones. They have been forced or coaxed into the unions and are afraid to leave them. If I had the power of emancipation President Lincoln had when he freed the slaves, if I could send forth an edict which would enable the members of the trades unions of this country to desert the ranks of organized labor without fear of violence or ostracism, I firmly believe that four-fifths of the trade unions would leave."

"You will see that this is the case," Mr. Job continued, "if you watch any election in which the labor vote constitutes an important element. That vote is never half so large as anticipated."

"Why so?"

"It is because the men, voting as they please, secretly change their ballots and throw them against their own candidates, because at heart they are sick of the thralldom to which they are yoked."

"Is Chicago a dangerous place for a workman who does not belong to a union?"

"It has been so at times, and I will not say that it is not so now under certain conditions," replied Secretary Job. "I could cite many instances of men who have been assaulted and maimed because they have opposed the will of the unions and some in which men have been murdered. I have heard of union meetings where men were forced to assent to the doings of their leaders, and where they believed their lives would be in danger if they did not. There have been many outrages on nonunionists, as, for instance, we had recently a published case of a nonunion printer who was thrown to the floor by a party of union employes in one of our saloons and the question there debated whether it would not be better to break the man's arms or his fingers one by one that he might be incapacitated for work. The police rescued that man."

"Now, such things may not be done by the leaders or the better element of the unions, but I believe they are instigated by them, and we have it alleged that there is 'In what classes of labor do such condi-

tions obtain?' I asked.

"They have obtained in almost every class," was the reply, "and that even among the women trades unions. One odd case was that of a nonunion girl in a West Side factory, who was guilty of the heinous offense of wanting to earn her living in her own way. The union girls wanted her to join them, but she would not, and they then appointed a committee to assault her. Now, the nonunion girl wore a bright green silk waist, and this was the mark by which she was known to the committee. She was followed as she went home one day by the members of the committee, and they remained outside her house waiting to assault her when she might come out. The house in which she was living was a two-story flat and she had the upper apartment. After a time a girl in a green waist appeared and started down the street. It was about dusk. She had not gone far before the members of the committee pounced upon her and scratched and pummeled her to their taste. She objected strenuously and screamed again and again, but it was some time before they learned that they had got the wrong girl. Another green-waist maid lived in the lower flat, and it was she who came out first."

"Yes," continued Mr. Job, "the women are quite as bad in union matters as the men. Take, for instance, a strike which occurred in the plow works at Springfield. The union men left and nonunion workmen were put in their places. Violence was apprehended and the employers carried the nonunion workmen home in closed cars. Some of the wives and female friends of the strikers got in the cars on the plea of wanting to ride, and after they were well on their way they went for the nonunion men with their hat pins. They came near killing one man whom they struck too near the heart."

"But such cases, Mr. Job, should not be charged to the unions," said I. "They are merely the acts of hot-headed individuals."

"Yes, you might think so," was the reply. "I know that the labor leaders claim they do not counsel violence, but everyone here knows that is not true. I have an incident in my mind now which I know to have occurred, but which I do not want to locate. I won't say that it was or was not in Chicago; but it was in one of the big cities of the United States. A street car strike was in progress, and the leader of one of the striking unions talked thus to his men:

"Now, my men, remember, in the conduct of this strike we want no violence! No violence! Suppose, for instance, you should see several joints of gas pipe lying near the car track, and someone suggested that if the pipe was joined and laid on the track so that one end of it would touch the trolley wire and the other the rail, thereby forming a connection which would make a short circuit and burn out the trolley wire, don't let any such act be laid to your doors."

a band of paid sluggers here who are used as wrecking crews to commit acts of violence in behalf of organized labor. The hospital records will verify this."

"Or if anyone should tell you that you could wreck the underground cable

by throwing rocks into the manholes—and I know there are piles of rocks near some of them—don't let such an act be laid to your doors."

"Again, my men, some persons may tell you that if you throw in cement and sand and rock it will ruin the track. Now, I understand there are warehouses near the track where there are barrels of cement, and you know very well if this is mixed with rock, sand and water it will harden, and if thrown into the manholes it will hold the cables. If you did that it might hurt the company, stop the cars and we might gain the strike, but, boys, we want no violence, no violence. If anyone does that, let us see that it is not laid to our doors. I hope you have understood me correctly."

"But, Mr. Job, do you think your employers' association is really making matters better? Have you done anything?"

"We have done a great deal, and we are going to do more. I have told you we have given the nonunion man the chance to work, and we have protected the employer in numerous instances. Take the Kellogg strike, in which 600 men left work and tried to prevent the business of the plant from going on. The employers had put nonunion men in their places, but the Teamsters' union joined them and would not deliver goods nor permit others to deliver to them. We investigated the matter and waited upon the mayor, who issued a proclamation warning the teams to keep off the streets in the vicinity of the Kellogg plant. We had policemen go along with the wagons, and we saw that the goods went in and out, regardless of the demands of the union. Before that strike 90 per cent of the men in the Kellogg plant were members of the union. The shop is now a nonunion shop, and it has 550 contented men doing the same work that 600 strikers did, and at the same time turning out 25 per cent more of a product."

"We have had a number of similar cases," continued Mr. Job, "in which we have helped the employers, and we are ready at any time to defend the rights of the nonunion men. Take the case of Chester B. Blish, who was a nonunion elevator boy in one of the downtown buildings. He was threatened, bulldozed and bluffed by the unionists, but his father wrote a letter to this association and we came to his protection. When the unionists saw that the power and wealth of the employers' association was at the command of a simple colored boy, whose existence the association had never dreamed of until he became bold enough to work as a nonunion man, they began to realize that the employers of Chicago proposed to protect not only themselves, but all unorganized labor as well."

"Again, take the recent street car strike," continued Mr. Job. "The strikers had promised there would be no disturbances, but there were hotheads out in force to stop the cars, and the union teamsters tried to block the road. It was largely through the employers' association that 1,500 police were put on duty in the strike territory, and through it all other teamsters were kept out of the way. The result was that the cars ran and the men were protected. When the coal teamsters struck in sympathy and refused to haul coal to the street car power house, the employers' association undertook the delivery of that coal and sent the wagons, guarded by policemen, to deliver it. The result was that the street car companies won their fight for the open shop."

"How about the people are they with you in this matter?"

"I think they are," replied Mr. Job. "In the street car strike they were entirely so, and they have been so in most of our other fights. We are not waging a war of offense, but of defense. We have no chip on our shoulders and we do not seek quarrels, although we are ready to fight if we have to. Before the association was formed our newspapers here were somewhat apathetic on labor questions, but since then at least one-half of them unite in indorsing our methods. The same is true of the politicians, and I think our work has also aided the judges in showing them that their injunctions to prevent such outrages have the indorsement of the best of the business element of the community."

"We are not only doing good here, but also in other cities of the United States, where we are looked upon as the originator of this movement. We are helping to organize them, and in doing so we feel that we are approaching the nearest practical solution of the present industrial problem."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Easily Settled

Rich American (abroad for the first time)—Say, I'm told you're an expert on fixing up coats of arms and titles and all that sort of thing for a fellow, and I'd like some 'kind of handle to my name.'

Expert—Something suggestive of the source of your family wealth?

Rich American—No, I'm afraid you can't use that. I made my money in the—er—milk business.

Expert—Just the thing. I'll attach a pump handle to your name.—Chicago Tribune.