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SERIES XXIX

NO. 3

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY STUDIES
IN
HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Under the Direction of the
Departments of History, Political Economy, and
Political Science

THE CLOSED SHOP IN AMERICAN
TRADE UNIONS

BY

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PREFACE.

This monograph had its origin in an investigation carried on by the author while a member of the Economic Seminary of the Johns Hopkins University. The chief sources of information have been the trade-union publications contained in the Johns Hopkins Library. Documentary study, however, has been supplemented by personal interviews with trade-union officials and employers of labor and by immediate study of labor conditions.

The author wishes to express his appreciation of the helpful criticism received from Professor J. H. Hollander and Professor G. E. Barnett.

THE CLOSED SHOP IN AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS.

INTRODUCTION.

Few industrial questions in the United States have attracted the popular interest that has been accorded the recent dispute over the closed shop. For a full decade the American public has listened attentively to a widespread discussion of what should be the proper attitude of union workers toward non-unionists. As a result of this extended debate there are no terms in labor-union terminology more familiar to the average American citizen than "closed shop" and "open shop."

Although the closed shop has been subject to much debate, little has been done to make clear the extent to which the trade unions have excluded non-unionists from employment and what methods the unions have pursued. This gap in our information is to be explained chiefly on the ground that the general public has been interested only in the broad social aspects of the question. Accordingly, much that has been said concerning the closed shop has dealt with its ethical significance, and arguments have been addressed to the public conscience concerning the justice or injustice of excluding certain classes of persons from employment. Some attention has also been given to the question of how far the closed shop is necessary as a trade-union device and what effect it tends to have upon social well-being. The employers have tried to show that the closed shop is an institution which is out of place in modern industrial life, that it cripples business, and that it creates an undesirable labor monopoly. In reply, trade unionists have insisted upon the necessity of the closed shop to the existence of many unions. They have attempted to show that the closed