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Leuman Maurice Waugh collection - Correspondence, 1929 (Part 1)

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THE WORLD: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 1929

Racketeers Apply Own Methods Of Uplift to Medical Profession

But Trade Associations
Remain Best Bet for
Easy Money

THE cornerstone of the Cathedral of The Holy Name, in Chicago, bears across its face a great ugly scar. Machine gun bullets sprayed upon alcohol racketeers by enemy assassins as they were entering a florist's shop across the street from the Cathedral one afternoon in the spring of 1927, cut a deep segment from the cornerstone and partly obliterated the Scriptural text which dedicates the basilica to the service and reverence of the Deity.

Nothing more symbolic of the nature of rackets and the characters of racketeers exists anywhere in the world than that defaced cornerstone of the Cathedral. To them a physician or surgeon is only a "croaker." a "right croaker" if he is the sort who will treat a fugitive criminals' wounds or injuries without notifying the police. A dentist is merely a "jawcracker," and perhaps of no higher rating in a hoodlum professional scale than is a pharmacist. "Boobs," fools all of them with curious and amusing codes of ethics; and earning incomes—most of them—that a successful racketeer would contemptuously call "small change." But Isidore Braverman proposed for them a program of uplift.

Mr. Bravermann was indicted for murder, May 12, 1922. He is alleged to have shot and killed policeman who attempted to arrest him while fleeing from the scene of a bombing. "Big Tim" Murphy was indicted with him as a fellow conspirator.

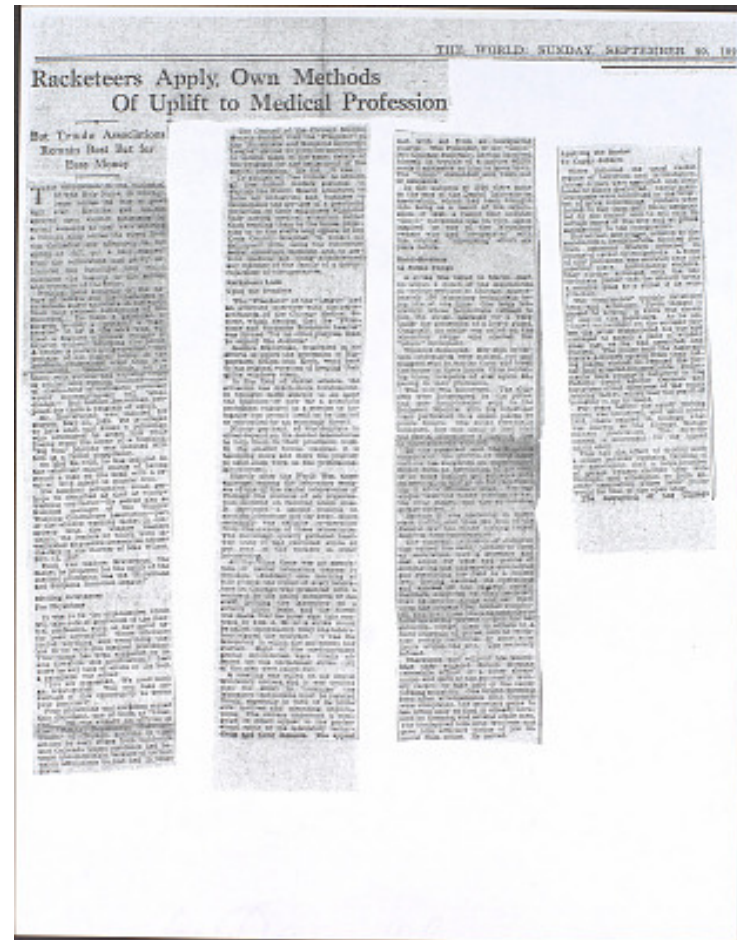
On May 24, 1922, he was indicted on the relatively minor charge of having struck a man on the head with a revolver, with intent to murder him.

His nominal occupation could perhaps be described as that of window washing contractor—He served also as business manager of Window Washing Contractors Association— part of the window washing racket in conspiracy with the window washers union, the leaders of which were investigated as possible accessories before the fact in the murder of Max Wilner, Nov. 17, 1927.

Such was Isadore Braverman, the racket he proposed for the uplift of the medical profession was the "Physicians and Surgeons Economic League!"

Settling Grievances For Physicians

It was to be "an organization which will take care of grievances of the medical profession, such as has never before been attempted. Those grievances include anything and everything that has to do with the medical profession. Your name has been suggested to us, and therefore



this notification." Lest there be any lack of allure in the bait, a paragraph was added:

"You are interested. We need such an organization Will you take advantage of this opportunity to better your position?"

Four physicians and surgeons signed this document, one of them as "President." He was already an official of the "Health Department Dietitians Union," of Chicago, arriving at that station by easy stages from California and Colorado where residence had become uncomfortable because of certain union affiliations he had had in those States.

The Council of the Chicago Medical Society decided that the "President" of the "Physicians and Surgeons Economic League" should be given an opportunity to inform them of the exact details of the program for the betterment of the medical profession. He did. It was

To abolish all free clinics; to abolish all free infant welfare stations; to abolish the Public Health Institute; to force all industries and business to recommend the services of a practicing physician to their employees whenever they needed medical attention rather than sending them to the house physician or to the staffs and clinics of the Cook County Hospital; to collect all delinquent bills, using the customary racket collection methods, and to prevent medical aid being administered any member of the family of a debtor, regardless of circumstances.

Racketeers Look
Upon the Dentists

The "President" of the "League" had an awkward interview with the representatives of the Chicago Medical Society, which decided that the "Physicians and Surgeons Economic League" was formed "for no other purpose than to exploit the doctors."

Isadore Braverman, frustrated in his efforts to uplift the profession of Hippocrates, Galen and Koch, went back to his original vocation of keeping their office windows clean.

In the field of dental science, the situation was much more troublesome. It brought more sharply to an issue the question of how far a scientific profession engaged in a service to humanity can permit itself to be limited or controlled by an economic theory.

Ninety per cent. of the dentists in cities depend on the dental laboratories to help them in their prosthetic work. In the smaller towns, likewise, it is becoming more and more the practice to send such work to the professional laboratories.

Shortly after the World War, there appeared among the laboratory workers of one of the dental laboratories of Chicago the nucleus of an organization modeled on familiar union lines. It developed a second nucleus in another laboratory not far away. There seemingly was definite co-operation from the owners of these laboratories. The movement quietly gathered headway until it had recruited above 40 percent. of the workers in other laboratories.

At that time there was no association of dental laboratory owners in Chicago. Suddenly one morning at 8.30 o'clock the owner of every laboratory in Chicago was presented with a contract by the union members of his staff, putting the laboratory on a strictly union basis, and the threat was made that he must sign this contract by 9.30 A.M. or a strike would be called immediately. Only one laboratory signed the contract. It was the laboratory in which the movement had started. Eight of the medium-sized dental laboratories were vitally affected by this threatened strike. All of the men were called out.

A meeting was called of the dental laboratory owners and it was decided that effort "unionize" the laboratory technicians must be resisted firmly, especially in view of its probable motives and menacing implications. The owners undertook a campaign of direct appeal to the professional spirit of the laboratory technicians and their families. The appeal met with aid from an unexpected quarter. The President of the "union" left Chicago suddenly, having involved himself in trouble of a nature which made it advisable to him to leave town. The "union" disbanded and went out of existence.

In the autumn of 1926 there came to the ears of the Dental Laboratories Association, which had been brought into being as a result of the experiences of 1920, a rumor that another "union" movement was on foot, again inspired by one of the laboratory owners who had "co-operated" with the original "unionizing" effort six years before.

Hand-Breakers As Strike Thugs

A strike was called in March, 1927, on about a dozen of the laboratories in various sections of Chicago, approximately 150 laboratory technicians being idle at one time. One large laboratory, whose technicians refused to join the strike, operated for a week under the protection of a heavy guard. Curiously, no strike was called on the laboratory owner who started the "union" movement.

Violence developed. Key men in certain laboratories were marked out and sluggers sent to waylay them and break the bones in their hands, thus rendering them incapable of ever again engaging in their profession.

The plot was discovered. The sluggers were intercepted by the police, and one hand-breaker sent to the Bridewell Hospital with his intestinal tract perforated in a dozen places by police bullets. The strike eventually collapsed, but not until it had cost the dental laboratories a financial loss of approximately \$100,000.

To the racketeer and the business conspirator, the growth of trade associations has suggested an opportunity: Either form an association of his own, or in some fashion get entrance into an association and go in for racketeering it on a wholesale scale. For example, take the candy jobbing racket, the drug racket, and the automobile garage racket.

Because it was operating in interstate traffic, and thus fell foul of the Federal law, the candy jobbing racket deserves first consideration.

The constant intrusion of competition caused the candy jobbers to form

an association, hire a secretary and cast about for ways and means of eliminating the undesirable competitor and restricting the field to a chosen few. Having watched the operations and success of the rackets, certain members suggested to their secretary that he employ thugs and set them upon the jobbers they wished eliminated, and that these thugs be used also to force unwilling jobbers to join the association, compel them to adhere to a fixed schedule of prices, and to recognize certain territorial or zone sales limits within the city. The secretary refused.

Thereupon and without his knowledge they engaged Simon Gorman (erstwhile officer of a horse shoer's union and hero of the successful laundry racket) to take hold of the candy jobbing situation. One bright morning soon after arrangements with Gorman were completed, the secretary came to his office only to find it already occupied by Gorman and several other men, who confronted him with revolvers and gave him effective notice of his removal from office. He moved.

Applying the Racket To Candy Jobbers

There followed the usual racket regime of terrorism and intimidation. Jobber drivers were assaulted, and their loads of candy destroyed. Candy manufacturers were boycotted in the interest of price concessions. Jobbers were forced to buy from only those designated by the racket, and to sell only in certain zones of the city and at prices satisfactory to the conspirators.

But at last one jobber, ordered to the association's headquarters, notified the then Assistant State's Attorney in charge of racket investigations. A force of city policemen was secreted near the meeting place. Anticipating violence, they further arranged with the fortunate jobber that he should break a window glass as a signal if he were attacked.

The "conference" quickly developed heat and acrimony. From threats it passed to action, A knife was drawn by one of the racketeers. As he advanced menacingly on the accused jobber the latter remembered his cue and managed to smash a pane of window glass just as he was assaulted and stabbed. The police and the Assistant State's Attorney sprang from their hiding places, rushed in, rescued the jobber, and arrested his assailants. Indictments were promptly returned in the Federal Court against Gorman and forty-two other members of the candy jobbing racket, which had the result of breaking it up in haste.

For years before the candy jobbing racket was conceived, and until about 1925, there existed in Chicago what was known as the Chicago Garage Owners Association. The director started a movement for the closed union shop.

This had the effect of driving such a wedge between opposing factions of the association that a large number of garage owners decided they were through, and attempted to form another association whose labor policy would be that of the open shop.

The disruption of the Chicago

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