

Stories and Songs of the Struggle

By T-BONE SLIM

IS BOUND FOR CALIFORNIA AS SAFE PLACE TO WINTER

Willows, Cal., Oct. 10, 1923.

Hon. T-bone Slim,
Sir: As the jails in California are filled to capacity, you might come back as we need you. If there is a shortage of t-bones around Chicago, don't forget we are well supplied in California. If your clothes don't suit other climates, come to sunny Cal.—Member-at-Large.

Chicago, Ill., Oct. 20, 1923.

Hon. Member-at-Large,
Willows, California,

Fellow Worker:

I am in receipt of your kindly invitation to spend the winter in California, and being fearful of offending you by declining, I hereby do accept of your hospitable offer. True it is that t-bones are getting scarce in Chicago, so I figure that one more or less can have no bearing on the ultimate result. I am further persuaded in taking this step by the knowledge that California jails are full to capacity. I understand that no one is being admitted into them except for good cause, hence I am not being fond of jails, will hasten to embark upon a fast ramble for the golden west. Not that I am not used to jails—that is one of the best things I do, time—jails are only a bugaboo the master class holds up to frighten those of us poor creatures who are unable to reason correctly.

But I realize that the full object of California jailings has now been reached and hence your state is about the safest place for a Wobly to put in a good winter. I further realize that the late criminal syndicalism agitation has cleared the state of the more cowardly and thus there will be a great demand for those of us that still care to take on labor, at so much per take.

I am sorry you didn't give me your address and enable me to answer you in a personal way. This way, by the time you read this in the Worker, I will have been in California a week or ten days; sitting in under the strawberry tree denouncing the 2x4 statemen and the petite-larceny diplomats who use the working class as a plaything—a football—a pawn—a . . .

The utter brainlessness of their procedure is now plain to them as it has been plain to us from its inception. They hoped by jailing twenty or thirty to scare 75,000 men, but developments have proven that they had to exceed their estimate—without scaring anybody. Now their jails are full and the state will be full of candidates (as it has been all summer) and the problem is for California to turn out these prisoners and still save the faces of her political performers. Every day they are held will add to the splash they will make when they do get out. Of course, they will put us now but . . . hm . . . later, it will put us "over the top." I see it coming and it will be demonstrated forever that these men were not in the can in vain.

It takes just so much grief—that's the emption of it—to bring about the final emancipation of the working class. But California has surprised the world with its idiotic and futile jailings of vast numbers. California voluntarily shouldered the burdens of the whole capitalist class and is, just about now, beginning to notice the magnitude of the task. Yes, I think sunny Cal is through tinkering with the I. W. W.—Seattle had its session; Spokane its session; California its "canfest" and Chicago, no doubt, will be the next scene of capitalist persecution. Me for sunny Cal, and you do not need to show me around.

I know all the trails and my spavined dogs have pounded the Macadam until a fill-up of figs tasted like prime-beef-t-bone. My clothes do not suit this northern climate and my suit does not clothe me properly. Why should I forever be kicking snowballs when I can pass for a native son from Diego to Mendicino?

I am yours for a better world.

T-BONE SLIM.

P. S. Never mind the inference that a lack of nerve set me in a snowdrift—cold feet are not warmed that way. Consider that I have never bragged about my comprehensive bravery—industrial unionism is a reasonably safe "business."

happens the cause for it can be found when it is found who benefits by the happening, i.e., bananas disappearing from the bunch might be explained if the innocent looking small boy standing under the bunch be searched. So, too, when overseas men find themselves split three ways it would be well for them to find out who benefits by it. Don't tell me that the Legion organized itself. Don't tell me that "an organization had no hand in organizing it." Same in re. Klan; don't tell me that it is not a subsidiary of a greater organization. Nobody benefits by the three-way-split of the ex-service men, but the profiteering traitors that jack-rolled the nation while the flower of its fighting manhood was in Bloody France.

Time has now been gained and the ill-gotten gains—war gains—have been sequestered into "respectable business channels." The returning war hero has been prevented inquiring into the "methods of strangling" used upon Uncle Samuel. True, in the nullification of the overseas man (in three organizations) was done in self-defense, for the profiteers know that robbing a nation in war time is considered treason, not profiteering. To save their own necks, therefore, it was very desirable to have the returning fighters "split" into several factions; so that they might spend their time and energy in convincing each other that "I'm right; you're wrong"—and in the mean time, the treasonable profiteers smiled their whole-hearted patriotic approval, and proceeded to "deflate" labor—which was done and which was so recorded. Who was the father of the idea of splitting the soldiers and who actually did the dirty work, who, even, were the organizers that actually caused three or more organizations to spring into being is beyond me—I only know who profited to the extent of an unstratched-neck in the trans-action—the profiteer. And therefore, I am persuaded that the Centralia Armistice Day Tragedy was not a part of a program to make the Legion grow. The assassination of Wesley Everest, by his "buddies," was not a pre-conceived plan to obtain "favorable publicity" for the Legion . . . such publicity can never be favorable. No, it was purely of a local origin and had an economic base. Somebody's interests were in danger and the Legion was "led" into the "breach" to uphold the interests of the very men who had been doing a highly lucrative business during those maddening days of world war. It would be begging the question to say that the subsequent brutality and mutilation practiced upon the person of Wesley Everest was the result of the depraved nature of the Legion—it was not so. Whatever may be the nature of a few of its members cannot be construed as the "consensus" of its membership-nature.

Serious objections have been taken, by over half the membership to the action taken by the "mobists of the Legion," and the membership has dwindled until the Legion, too, has been nullified as a further factor in the affairs of men. This bears out my contention that the Legion was organized not to become strong and powerful, but sized not to become small and little (as such it serves as a dividing factor in the ex-service world) as they would not have alienated a great else they would not have participated in irresponsible rolls," by participating in irresponsible night work against the men who are trying for a little of the democracy so plentifully fought for. But the buddies in Minneapolis said:

"This will be the makings of the Legion."

The ill-gotten war gains are now safely and carefully tucked away—forgotten. The righteous indignation of the soldier can no longer burst forth. Time's cooling hand has rested on the brow of the shell-shocked warrior. Wesley Everest, their buddy and our fellow worker, the bravest man that ever crawled out of a dug-out to face the enemy, lies in a very prosaic grave where the fringing timber frowns down upon a scene of peace and calm—where the grey-haired mother tenderly replaces the dead flowers in a neglected vase—on an almost forgotten mound.

Can we forget?

Not one profiteer is in jail. Not one traitor in the "can." Poor blind justice is cockeyed and Miss Liberty has another miscarriage. Darn the luck.

ALWAYS BE WHITE WITH THE BOYS IN THE CAN

— Air (Why Should I Cry Over You?)

Once on a time, Wobblies would climb,
High on a shaky chair;
Now, Rosalind, they ride the wind,
Peddling their papers there.

Chorus

Now they have wings and they fly over you—
Really they do—high over you:
Dropping a call for the 'lumberjacks' ball,
Down from the azure blue:
"Join in the fight," so the message ran,
"Dare to do right by your fellow man,
Always be white with the boys in the can,"
That's why they flew over you.

Time was when they "wended their way,"

Nor did they travel far;

Now, Rosalind, they ride the wind;
Out where the big things are.

Chorus

MUSIC HATH QUALMS

Would You Say It Can't Be Done?

Air (Down the Trail to Home Sweet Home)
When you're unaware of the troubles of those

Whose burdens compare with worst of your woes;

When you can't behold all the great things they do

And organization just hinges on you—

Chorus

Would you care to become a scissorbill?
Would you dare to deny your brains?
Have you the gall to "hit the ball,"
While others writhe in chains?
When you're all but adrift
From reason's shore,
And imagine you're "only one,"
Would you sit on your load?
Would you block the whole road?
Would you say—"It can't be done?"

When everyone else is a "traitor," a "thief,"
And no one but you seems to struggle with grief;
When nobody else "seems" downhearted and blue,
And organization just hinges on you—

Chorus

When nobody else is unhappy, it "seems,"
And everyone else has a "set of new dreams,"
From ballots to pellets, from home-brew to glue,
And organization just hinges on you—

Chorus

Just when you most feel every thorn in your crown,
And believe the whole system is bearing you down;
When your fellow workers are not toming through,
And organization rests squarely on you—

Chorus

When everyone else is fit for a nurse,
And you're the dead center of the universe;
Don't get ye discouraged—you're one of the crew
And ORGANIZATION shall rest upon you!

P. S. I would like to warn all fellow workers, musically inclined, to refrain from singing these songs in the bunkhouses—you'll only be thrown out. I've already been chased three times by an angry mob. About 3:30 a. m. is the proper time to sing the chorus of the second song—the lower it is sung the better it goes and the madder they get. Have your clothes packed. . . .

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But I realize that the state has been reached a
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hence you state is about the safest place
for a lobby to put in a good winter.
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a great demand for those of us who
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I am sorry you didn't give me your
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It takes just a little bit of imagination to bring about the final emancipation of the working class. But California has surprised the world with its idiotic and futile jailings of vast numbers. California voluntarily shouldered the burdens of the whole capitalist class and is, just about as deserving to notice the magnitude of its task. Yes, I think sunny Cal. is the best tinkering with the I. W. W.—Seattle's session; Spokane's session; California's session; and Chicago, no doubt, was its "canfest" and Chicago, no doubt, was the next scene of capitalist persecution for sunny Cal. and you do not need to be me around.

I know all the trails Macadam
dogs have pounded the prime-beef-
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My clothes do not suit this cloth
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Why should I forever be kicking
when I can pass for a native son
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P. S. Never mind the inference—lack of nerve set me in a snowdrift—feet-are not warmed that way. Cripple, that I have never bragged about my prehensile bravery—industrial union a reasonably safe "business."

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[illegible]

Serious objections have been taken over the membership to the association by the "mobbiots of the Legion," a faction within the mobbiots, who claim that the membership has dwindled until it is a factor, too, has been nullified. This bearing factor in the affairs of men, was born of my contention that the Legion was only not to become a thing and powerful to remain small and little (as such it is) as a dividing factor in the ex-service men's association would not have allowed the core of their membership from rolling by their participating in iron-pot night work against the men who were for a little of the democracy so plainly said off. But the buddies in Minnesota found:

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warrior. Wesley Everest, *their* buddy and
our fellow worker, the bravest man that
ever crawled out of a dug-out to face the
enemy, lies in a very prosaic grave where
the fringing tinsel from the wreath upon a
scene of peace and calm—where the gray
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— Air (Why Should I Cry Over You?)

Once on a time, Wobblies would climb,
High on a shaky chair;
Now, Rosalind, they ride the wind,
Peddling their papers there.

Chorus

Now they have wings and they fly over you—
Really they do—high over you:
Dropping a call for the 'lumberjacks' band
Down from the azure blue:
"Join in the fight," so the message ran,
"Dare to do right by your fellow man,
Always be white with the boys in the can"
That's why they flew over you.

Time was when they "wended their way,"
Nor did they travel far;
Now, Rosalind, they ride the wind;
Out where the big things are.

Chorus

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Would You Say It Can't Be Done?

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 Air (Down the Trail to Home Sweet Home)
 When you're unaware of the troubles
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 Whose burdens compare with worst of y
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 When you can't behold all the great thing
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 And organization just hinders on you

Chorus

Would you care to become a scissorbill?
Would you dare to deny your brain?
Have you the gall to "hit the ball"
While others writhe in chains?
When you're all but adrift
From reason's shore,
And imagine you're "only one,"
Would you sit on your load?
Would you block the whole road?
Would you block the way to peace—"It can't be done?"

When everyone else is a "traitor," a "thief,"
And no one but you seems to struggle
grief;
When nobody else "seems" downhearted,
blue,

And organization just hinges on you—

Chorus

When nobody else is unhappy, it "sees"
And everyone else has a "set of new dre-
From ballots to pellets, from home-br
glue,
And organization just hinges on you—

Chorus

Just when you most feel every thorn in
crown,
And believe the whole system is bearing
down;
When *your* fellow workers are not
through,

And organization rests squarely on
Chorus
When everyone else is fit for a nut
And you're the dead center of the unit
Don't get ye discouraged—you're one

And ORGANIZATION shall rest upon

P. S. I would like to warn all workers, musically inclined, to refrain singing these songs in the bunkhouse; you'll only be thrown out. I've already chased three times by an angry mob. 3:20 a. m. is the proper time—the chorus of the second song—the low sung the better it goes and the madder. Have your clothes packed. . . .