

## Changing The Bosses' Mind

By T-BONE-SLIM

"I am not the last word in finesse and when I say district form of organization is identical with the American plan of separation—separate them first and lick them one at a time—I do not mean by that statement that miners should organize in industrially in a one big union the world over, or at least in the states. No, I mean just what I say, district form of organization is separation of labor and any one that thinks it is industrial unionism is undernourished above the ears. When I get ready to say they should organize industrially I shall say so in so many words, point blank. Don't rush me. When a sailor tells me 'it is impossible to gain any benefit by transferring from craft to industrial unionism' and presents argument 'the storm is too great,' he is talking through his hat—a seaman would know better. The storm is too great! Is that an argument for sticking to a rotten raft? What kind of sailors are they? To me it would seem, and it's a long time since I sailed, when 'the storm is too great' that is just the time to change on to something seaworthy, if you have to swim for it. May as well slip out of your dungarees—the storm is terrific.

Any man with half of one eye can see it is next to impossible to get me to say "organize industrially," but wait, just wait, give me a chance. I'll say "organize industrially" before I get through with this article. I must guard myself so as not to say it in the wrong place—everything in its place, is my motto and the place for every worker is in the I. W. W.—came pretty near saying it right there. I've got to be more careful—big truths should not be tossed around like bricks or baseballs; you may knock out a man's eye without creating an impression on his brain.

After a miner has been taught to God by shutting down Ohio mines for a period of seven long years and running West Virginia seven fat years; after Illinois has been tamed by Kentucky coal; after Indiana coal invaded Iowa, and Iowa coal retreated to Wyoming and Wyoming coal jumped to Pennsylvania it is idle to tell me "the mine owners are not in power and can't do as they please," with one exception: they cannot cut wages without hitting rock. The wages have reached the lowest possible living level—all of which has been brought about by district form of unionism.

When a miner tells me he cannot desert that union and join the I. W. W. because he fears the boss would cut his wages, he is merely making a noise with his throat and telling a lie at the same time. The fear he entertains is that he'll get a wage cut whether or no he joins the I. W. W.—that of course is impossible—right now he is spoon-fed. But we must take further note of that rumble in his air shaft and examine his words with a microscope: Colorado tried out the I. W. W. and was gratified to learn that instead of a cut they got an increase; not in the front page but in wages—and they were bucking the toughest bunch of rascals in this or any other country. But that is a small matter. That is not like running a wage increase in several states simultaneously—

to the I. W. W.; in the several states the miners belong to Lewis & Co.

But I hear the miners of Colorado are vacillating and are looking for a wage cut under the auspices of the communist party—I suppose in the expectation of having the I. W. W. once more pull them out of a hole.

We shall see. Basically, the I. W. W. is so correct, its prestige so heavy, the merest threat, the faintest whisper, the naivest hint, an innocent rumor or a white lie put in circulation to the effect "miners are joining it" is enough to cause the mine owners to spend a sleepless night and dish up a ten or fifteen per cent increase in the morning—whichever figure he thinks of first—all of this without taking out a single card. Of course it would be perfectly proper to flash the red card before the boss's eye, to kind of keep his fever at sparking point.

What's the matter with the miners? Why do they not start that rumor rolling? Their failure to take hints indicating their determination to join the I. W. W. is sacrilegious and serves to convince all and sundry that the miners have no use for money—not that they actually hate it but they don't love it enough to take it when the boss forces it on them. Which, same, the boss does cheerfully in hopes of getting a breaking

spell, and catching up with his lost slumbers.

There is this peculiarity about a boss's mind: it works in one direction all the time, cut, cut, cut. It is a one-way street. Of his own accord never would he be able to think of a raise. He must have help, guidance, inspiration. Under the most trying difficulties of income tax dodging he can think of dozens of ways to shrink his loot, but it never occurs to him to raise the men's wages.

Here's where the I. W. W. comes in. It is the prosperity around the corner. But you put it this way: "I. W. W. around the corner."

The boss's eyes grow big; his frame twitches; he looks behind him that's inspiration working—in the morning you get a raise.

But the I. W. W. don't want any credit for bringing it about—after all it is a very simple service. The wages are low as they can be; the boss can't think of any way to make them lower; long as he can't think in his accustomed channel of lowering wages he has only two alternatives: maintain them as is, or raise them.

A little encouragement right there will cause his thinking to flow in the opposite direction and he'll clap raise after raise on you.

Why then should the I. W. W. demand credit for the simple task of changing the boss's stream of thoughts to flow uphill? Especially in view of the fact that the boss's stream of thoughts was pounding cut, cut, cut against an insuperable bulkhead and was piling up in one place; eventually to flood the channel, from bottom to top, or cause the boss to lose his mind.

Study that picture, Mr. Reader, it is scientific—I'm pulling a fade-out—We don't want the bosses crazier than they already are. I was to induce the workers to join the I. W. W. and ask them to organize industrially. I am sorrowful to say it's too late now, this article is dragging to a close. Besides, we left a bunch of sailors on a rickety raft, storm tossed, in the middle of the Sea of Despond. We've got to go back and see how they fare. May the merciful winds blow their craft shoreward, for verily they will not sign on "Industrial Unionism," because its port light is too red and its starboard too green . . .

May the ocean currents beach them on sandy bottom where they may wade ashore and start a chicken ranch—do anything but the right thing. Seeking a heaven in the hell they have built! And, finding the heaven, they find a hell built by some one else. What is the idea of visiting each other's hells, why not stand pat in your own hell and make a heaven of it? Ah, that can be done only industrially! As the preamble says: "By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of a new society within the shell of the old."

Addenda: Wait a minute! Do not throw your hat in the air just yet and jump on it. Control yourself—the boss is still downward. Just at present, true enough, he is peering around for a way out and causing it to be published in his daily liar. "Don't cut the wages. High wages make buying so much in the sense of deceiving the workers and making them think empty pockets are concomitant parts of high wages; not so much in the sense of admitting, left handed, that 'he can't cut 'em—nothing there to cut'; he does it more in the spirit of a small boy whistling in a dark churchyard to keep up his nerve.

We must do something to distract his attention away from wage-cuts—if we don't and he doesn't find a way to cut 'em soon he'll go batty as a bat.

If you ask him, he'll admit the I. W. W. is the best distraction he ever tried; that it drove him plumb to distraction. He is still capable of devising ways and means to divide you. He is still able to pass an agreement into your hands reading not to strike before March 32 or after it until such a time as no one some one else starts striking at the same time the signatory "agrees to quit striking instantly."—Sign on the dotted line, Mr. Yellow Dog.

I see where the sailor is getting a kick out of this article just to look at it. He never signed the ship's protocol agreeing to make round-trips even if the steward saw fit to feed 'em slumgullion, made from old shoes. And he murmurs, "you've got to sign, it is the law." So it is, Jack, the ship owner made the agreement

and his helper made the law—but there is no law that says you've got to sign. Every law says you don't have to sign. But if you keep on signing to eat shoes and dishwater after a while, not far away, they'll want your finger prints, your inspiration.

You'll have to lay 'em on the table to be measured with callipers and yardstick.

Luckily you don't have to stand for any of that stuff. Ships can sail without your signature, and your signature is wanted only to guarantee that you'll stand for anything they impose upon you, for a round trip. If no man signed the papers the ship could still sail but there is no return trip—with this exception: your signature and in that case no shoes or dishwater would go in the slum. Consciousness of their guilt would prevent—you are bound in no way—you can jump off anywhere. Now that I've argued and won that you don't have to sign those papers I will argue that you've got to sign 'em. I'm the most obliging cuss in movement. And I must be pretty bright to argue and win on both sides of the fence—excuse me while I blush—after making such a bald-headed, self-appreciative statement, I generally blush fifteen minutes to an half-hour.

My very monicker T. B. S. stands for The Blushing Slave.

I won the last argument on the grounds that you will not sail on that ship; that they can't make you sign away your appetite if you do not go on the ship. This other argument I'll win, "you've got to sign." If you sail, if you can't get the offer to sign, because you ain't organized, fier to sign, because you are organized in the weakest form of unionism that comes under the head of organization—the Seamen's Shipping Circle; because you are not a member of an industrial union—the M. T. W. of the I. W. W. You may belong to the Marine Transport Workers Social Ship's Society or the Marine Transport Workers Benevolent Beefsteak Banquetters; but that isn't going to keep you from signing away your galley rights on sea-going vessels.

I've succeeded in making it clear, despite the fact that the day got cloudy and my mind became befogged—you've got to sign because seamen, no matter how able-bodied, are not organized properly in the wrong union they are in (the pay proves this)—what few still belong to it.

To be able to stop your pen from signing away your bill of fare (Menu de Mer) you've got to belong to the Marine Transport Workers' Industrial Union Number 510 of the Industrial Workers of the World and Chicago, Illinois.

A long name, true enough, but you see, it's got to be long to reach around the world. The seaman, too, has been listening to the cut, cut, cut of the master and he knows the master never yet raised his wages voluntarily. He top knows that every raise he got was the result of persistent demands.

He knows, too, that every cut he got was the result of slack organization and the boss's inherent habit of looking downward only.

The I. W. W. can make him lift his eyes. Well and good, you shall join the I. W. W.—your wages shall be raised not only to the level required for living well but to the high level nature intended, to reward industry.

Questions will rise; schemes will be tried to wreck your program; pay no attention to them, sit tight or stand pat—solidarity takes care of all such puny efforts.

You shall walk in on the branch secretary, toss the ante on the table and say "deal me a hand of those red cards."

Even so—even so. The boss's mind still works in the one direction only, cut, cut, cut! This trend is so strong in him it will take almost superhuman effort to lift his mind from such gloomy things. Verily I do believe we'll have to stand on his trail all the time, or the great mind won't soar to any great heights. T. B. S.