



There Never Was Strength In The Old Craft Unions

By T-BONE SLIM

"U. S. puts war blame on Japs."
Probably typoglyffical error?

"U. S. puts war blame on Saps,"
how's that?

When the American Legion came to the city they were welcome—O, how welcome!

We were on the verge of going to the poorhouse. Butchers and bakers hung out signs WELCOME, AMERICAN LEGION. Then the saloons saw the light, WELCOME, AMERICAN LEGION, and damn me for a fatfoot if I didn't see a sign, WELCOME, AMERICAN LEGION in the Perhapsbyterian cemetery.

All out for the shekels the American Legion was supposed to possess. The warmth of the welcome wore off and you ought to have heard the natives knifing the Legion in the back, "Chiselers! They're down here to chisel Wall street out of the price of the next convention. They got the jack for their train fare down here from the Buffalo convention," etc.

So it is quite evident New York City's welcome didn't reach any further than the Legion's pocketbook and, if Wall street didn't stake them the convention was a total loss.

I
W W

"Meat prices kill business."

So? And here all the while I thought it was part of a plan to put the boys on a grass diet. How naive I'm getting to be in my second youth!

The setting of Black on the Supreme Court bench also sets a precedent and it is a pippin. Some of the ultra-circumspect savants of the privileged bit, swallowed hook, line, and sinker and helped to nail the precedent to the masthead of the ship of state.

Now laugh that off. Franklin throws a mean curve, and those bushers should never stray into higher civilization . . . maybe they are in on it? I hope so.

I
W W

The class struggle did not get so grievous until the masters of men started in to civilize the craftsmen, the trade unionists—it has been a losing fight all along for the past fifty years and, by a strange coincidence, the same leadership has strutted its stuff during that period. At first blush it would seem a class struggle is hard to win—the reverse is true, however, it is easy of accomplishment; but it cannot be done under leadership. Leadership dreads to go too far, as the girls say and is a trifle skittish about wounding the feelings of our overlords and masters. Fifty years of economic war is a long time and many of us are under sod—leaving behind us, of course, suitable replacements, boys and girls to take up where we left off.

Prolonged wars are peculiar in the sense that armies grow bigger despite the most modern and brainless instruments of extermination, malnutrition, filth, and disease.

A matter of 6,000 Finlanders went to the 30 years' war in Germany and when they returned to Finland it was discovered that their number was greatly increased. Some of the wise heads figured out that in the

excitement of bursting shell and shot they had neglected to practice birth control. Had they practiced it, there is no doubt in my mind, that all would have been exterminated and no one would have been the wiser.

They Keep Coming

So it is also in economic struggles; many, many fall but a greater and hungrier army is left to carry on the wage war.

A little sense here would be of great benefit, for strikes are non-productive of commodities even so as the World War and lesser misunderstandings. But in as much as sense does not reside in leadership, and labor Napoleons too often feel the call to treck to Moscow in dead winter, I believe it is to the interest of labor to organize a one big union and determine themselves what they shall do; so that their well-known sense may have fair play and remove the wars from the working class.

I have given up all hope of ever seeing a birth of reason in the employing class, inasmuch as they hire all their brains, and rented brains are averse to inaugurating innovations though they contain improvement.

It must come from the working class, whose brains are not for sale and whose responsibility begins with and ends at John Workox. The watchword of hired brains is, "Let well enough alone," but well enough is not good enough for the working class. It must be better, best.

No Power In Craft Unions

Craft unionism never did have the horse-power to raise wages as sole motivator. But in the interests of peace the master has raised the wages of these considering that they were but a small 10 percent of the working force. The motive was ulterior; the boss didn't wish to contaminate the other 90 percent of the force with a strike notion. On the other hand the craft unionist always made it a point not to strike with the common herd except upon great moral persuasion against his will.

Those are the records and he was known in those days as the aristocracy of labor even when he had no sox. In other words, he traded his honor for a mess of pottage and nestled under the bosses' wing out of harm's reach. He has been untrue to the working class and but slightly untrue to the boss.

Everything went well with them while the country (industry) was expanding, but when the country was "full up" and the bosses started in to civilize them, as they had civilized the 90 percent before them, it was then the aristocratic wail rose to high heaven, rent the air and it was discovered their union didn't have the strength of a sick Portuguese; quite easy of discovery because the strength was imaginary in the first place—they had been leaning on a broken straw.

These good old days are gone forever and it would seem logical that these craftsmen of another world would have the manners to join the world-wide union of their class, the I. W. W.—there dies power. Build from the bottom up; take from the top down. Selah!