



Horsestealing Was Beginning Of Capitalism

By T-BONE SLIM

Getting the horse to feed us was a noble achievement.

Let us say the thing first began in the manner of horse trading—even today the saying persists "Do not trade horses in the middle of the stream."

Sometimes too, darn the luck, one or both horses suffered the ignominy of having been stolen recently for the sake of the trade. (Trade unionists branch from this ideology also.)

Originally the horse trade was only for the purpose of gypping the neighbor, but now the purpose is to get a hot horse off your hands.

If only one horse is hot then, very naturally, an innocent man whose only crime was an overwhelming yen to gip another in a horse trade, gets hung—for possession is nine points of the law.

What irony! Clearly it is an inducement for honest men to have stolen horses on hand so as to get the horse thief's neck stretched also; otherwise horse thieves will dominate the country—maybe get into the President's cabinet.

But thank god, scientists have started earmarking the atoms and vitamins etc., and soon we'll get to the bottom of the smell. We'll find out what makes the onion stink.

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Such was the early beginning of capitalism—a yen to beat the other fellow. Based on crookedness, it got so raw that finally a system of ethics had to be adopted so as to keep the thieveries within reasonable limits. It was always argued that low-pressure thievery is strictly proper, if not gentlemanly; even today the profit motive is eulogized as the spirit that keeps horse thieves active.

Not only them. Only the other day the press explained with many apologies that a commissioner of weights and measures went among the tradesmen and was horrified to discover their scales gave short weight, their measures were scant, and the tradesmen handed him short change. Clearly the profit motive in full flower.

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'Tis hard indeed to tell just where business ends and thievery begins, lest it be both are one.

There is no guide for the businessman in the matter of profit taking and we might well forgive him if he falls into the error of grabbing all the traffic will bear.

True enough, there is an abstract theory, the law of supply and demand, that is supposed to keep him honest but I am persuaded that the law applies only to the state of thievery practiced by the whole. An open question—nothing fundamental.

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As capitalism developed exploitation of labor became a great joy to the erstwhile horse thieves and horse traders—now industrialists, tycoons, magnates, and governmental advisors. Profit taking, based on crookedness, began to take on the appearance of civilization. That's where we are today (nothing to brag about) in the hands of inveterate thieves.

Are you sorry?

Well, sorrow no more. Lend a hand to jerk this world out of the degradation into which it has fallen

in the course of our slumbers. Lend a hand to organize the One Big Union of workers so as to rescue the workers from the hands of organized thieves.

Little it matters if the thievery be involuntary.

Little it matters if the thievery be unintentional. An unloaded gun kills.

So does the capitalists system.

Before we were threatened only from one side—the traders. Today we are between two fires, exploitation of labor and merchandizing—between the devil and the deep sea.

We are in the middle and everybody's hands except our own are in our pockets. It's a wonder they didn't get our shirts.

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Times have changed since Pres. Taft pranced on the springboard and there is no reason why Taft Jr. should not be permitted to shove in his oar. Let 'em all run. But I insist the presidential race be on a regular cinder track; no favors to be shown, and the devil take the hindmost.

Further be it resolved: Wall Street must finger their man six months before the conventions or give themselves up and get a job peeling potatoes. No jumping into the race at the last minute when the heavier than air candidates are getting winded.