

Upton Sinclair  
**SINGING JAILBIRDS**



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A Drama in Four Acts

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# SINGING JAILBIRDS

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A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS

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BY

UPTON SINCLAIR

"The only work of art that Upton Sinclair has produced."—*Mrs. Upton Sinclair.*

"A better example of the expressionistic drama than any I have seen."—*Floyd Dell.*

"You are that genius of whom I prophesied, saying that he would arise to write the truth about California, only to be immediately hung by the vigilantes. It is terrible, bitter truth, and some of the scenes brought the tears to my newspaper-sterile eyes. . . . The play has a great sweep, and a real power in moving the heart. Some of the scenes are like a real experience—the loss of one's friend by death, the pangs of loneliness or prison experienced again."—*Michael Gold.*

TIME: EE UU, 1923.

PLACE: The Harbor Jail in a California City.

(All scenes outside the jail are dreams of the prisoner.)

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## CHARACTERS

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

“RED” ADAMS, the Wobbly

PETE

JERRY

MATT

JOE GUNTHER IKE

THE DOMINIE

THE CHIEF OF POLICE

JAKE APPERSON

ONE LUNG, the Chink

NELL, wife of “Red” Adams

A JAILER

MRS. SMITH, a Neighbor

MURIEL, the Stenographer

THE BAILIFF

THE TIGER

THE JACK-IN-THE-BOX SECOND JAILER

STRIKE-PRISONERS, JAILERS, POLICE OFFICERS, a DOCTOR, a  
WAITER, a CLERK, and the two children of “Red” Adams

FELLOW WORKERS



*Remember!*

WE ARE IN HERE FOR YOU; YOU ARE OUT HERE FOR US

## ACT I

### SCENE I: An Office in the Jail.

At the front of the stage, nearest to the audience, a small room, bare and severe. Entrance center; a flat-topped desk in middle of room, with swivel-chairs on two sides of it; a barred window at right.

At rise: The DISTRICT ATTORNEY sits in chair at right of desk; a smooth-faced, keen-featured lawyer. "RED" ADAMS stands behind the desk, facing the audience; a lean, wiry, young workingman with pale, tense face, reddish touseled hair, a manner of defiance. He wears old trousers and shirt, no tie. He does not look at the DISTRICT ATTORNEY, but stares straight before him. Outside, through the window, right, a mob is parading before the jail, singing to the tune of "Hold the Fort for I Am Coming":

We're here from mine and mill and rail,  
We're here from off the sea:  
From coast to coast we make the boast Of Solidarity.

From the rear, offstage, comes an answering chorus of several hundred STRIKE-PRISONERS confined in the cells and "tanks" of the jail:

In California's darkened dungeons For the O.B.U.  
Remember you're outside for us  
While we're in here for you.



DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Well, this might be a strike we're running, and again it might be a grand opera. (no answer from the prisoner) So you're Red Adams?

RED: They call me that.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Name Bert, I believe.

RED: Yes.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Belong to the I.W.W.?

RED: You've got my card at the desk.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Give me a straight answer.

RED: I belong to the I.W.W.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: YOU understand that I'm the district attorney of this county, and that what you tell me may be used against you?

RED (looks at DISTRICT ATTORNEY for the first time): Mr. 'Cutor, did you ever know a wobbly to crawl?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Out for martyrdom, eh? (a silence) You're the leader in this strike?

RED: We don't have leaders in our organization.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: You've given a few orders, however.

RED: Let your stools tell you about that, Mr. 'Cutor.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: You're feeling a little sore?

RED: In places. The Chief nearly twisted off my arm this evening.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Tried to get away from him?

RED: Hell! You know we never try to get away. You only have to tap us on the shoulder.

THE CROWD (singing, outside, at the right):

We make a pledge—no tyrant might  
Can make us bend the knee;  
Come on, you workers, organize,  
And fight for Liberty!

THE PRISONERS (singing in the rear):

In California's darkened dungeons  
For the O.B.U.  
Remember you're outside for us  
While we're in here for you.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Well, Red, you've been having things your own way for the past week.

RED (laughs): Ah, Mr. 'Cutor, you don't know what our way is! Some day we'll show you!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Dictatorship of the Proletariat, eh? I get you! But meantime, you've tied up the ships.

RED: With you loading a dozen a day?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Where d'you get that?

RED: I read it in this morning's "Times."

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Well, we have to whistle to keep our courage up—the same as you fellows have to sing.

THE CROWD (outside, singing, to the chorus of "John Brown's Body"):

Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
And the Union makes us strong!

RED: Well, what's the point? You didn't bring me here to chat on the class struggle.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Have a seat, Red. (RED sits stiffly in chair at left of desk; the DISTRICT ATTORNEY takes out cigars) Have a smoke?

RED: NO, thanks.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Don't smoke?

RED: Not with parasites.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: NO use to quarrel, Red. Our point of view differs. I think the public has some rights in this harbor.

RED: If you want to talk to me, Mr. 'Cutor, cut out the Sunday school stuff. The public isn't loading these ships—it's the Shipowners' Association. They've given you the orders—over that telephone, I've no doubt, (a pause) You see, I know the Dictatorship of the Capitalist Class.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Well, my boy, there'll be this much dictatorship—we're going to load the ships.

RED: By arresting all the men who do the work? You must have pinched a thousand tonight.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: We figure about six hundred.

RED: Well, you go down to the waterfront and take a broom and sweep the harbor dry, and then start to mop up the discontent of the workers.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: We're going to mop up the agitators and troublemakers

RED: Troublemakers! Hell, man—get these finks that run the employment business for the Shipowners! You knew how they were robbing the men—you saw us herded there in the slavemarket, showing our muscles to the dealers, trampling each other to get a job! The troublemakers! But shucks—you don't want any preaching from me. You know all the facts. What am I here for? Come to the point!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Suppose I just wanted to make the acquaintance of a worthy foe?

RED: Idle curiosity? No, there's something else—and it's something for you, not for me. I wasn't weaned yesterday, 'Mr. 'Cutor.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: YOU were nursed on vinegar, it would seem, Red.

RED: My mother was a working woman—a miner's wife. I guess she got her share of vinegar—the kind your class feeds to my class.

THE CROWD (shouting outside):

Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
And the Union makes us strong!

RED: What is it? Come across, man!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: YOU know we've got your whole executive committee?

RED: I saw a few of them in my tank.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: We've got the rest.

RED: Well, there'll be a new committee.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: They can't give orders without our finding them.

RED: Oh, sure! You'll crush this strike. This is only practice.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Don't forget, it's practice for the police also.

RED (fixes him with an intent look): Good God, are you figuring to win me over? Make a deal with me—like I was some old line labor leader?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (in a business-like tone): You know Jake Apperson, don't you?

RED: Sure; old pale of mine.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: YOU went through the Oakland strike with him?

RED: I sure did.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: YOU know he's out of jail again?

RED: I heard it.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Expecting him down here?

RED: Ask your spies, Mr. 'Cutor. You'll get nothing like that, out of me.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Jake Apperson! One of your barn-burning gang!

RED (starts): Barn-burning? Cut it out! You aren't such a fool!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Oh, you're a choir of lily-white angels, you wobblers! That's why you sing all the time! Well you know what you stand to get, Red: criminal syndicalism

RED: Twenty-eight years—yep.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: YOU won't live through that.

RED: Nope.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (studying him curiously): I don't see what you figure to gain.

RED: You don't see, and I couldn't make you see. (with a laugh) However, it's more comfortable here than in the tank, so if you're looking for a lecture, you can have it. I've been what you call a leader of the wobblies for three years. I've traveled from Vancouver to San Diego; I've visited every lumber camp and every harbor on the Pacific Coast. I've talked to the men on the job— there must be ten thousand that know me, and they know I'm not in the business for my pocket. Tonight the word goes out—they've got Red Adams in jail. Pretty soon it'll be: They're trying him in their dirty courts. It'll be: Their bulls and their lousy stools are lying about him. The 'Cutor of the Shipowners' Association is accusing him of burning barns. Then it'll be: They've sent up Red Adams for twenty-eight years! They've got him coughing out his lungs in the jute mill! They've got him in the hole—he's hunger-striking, because he wouldn't stand for the beating of some fellow-worker. Then some day it'll be: Red Adams is dead! Red Adams died for us! Do -you think they're all skunks and cowards, Mr. 'Cutor? Why, man, when you get through there'll be a thousand on the job in my place!

THE CROWD (outside, singing):

Long-haired preachers come out every night,  
Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right,  
But when asked how 'bout something to eat,  
They will answer with voices so sweet.

THE PRISONERS (at rear, offstage):

You will eat,  
By and bye,

In that glorious land above the sky.  
Work and pray,  
Live on hay,  
You'll get pie in the sky when you die!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: A little comic relief!

RED: YOU might learn something from that song. Ever hear of Joe Hill? He wrote; it. And out in Utah the master-class stood him up against a wall and shot him with a firing-squad. They called him a burglar—just such a frame-up as you'd delight in. But now Joe Hill's songs are all over the land. We sing 'em in Dago and Mex, in Hunkie and Wop, we even sing 'em in Jap and Chink! We're teaching 'em to five or ten thousand tonight—you hear the lessons! In California's darkened dungeons, for the O.B.U. They say: What's the O.B.U.? We answer: The One Big Union! They say: What's the One Big Union? We answer: The I. W. W.! Solidarity for the workers! The hammer that will smash the doors of all the jails!

THE CROWD (outside, singing):

In California's darkened dungeons  
For the O.B.U.  
Remember you're inside for us  
While we're out here for you!

RED: Don't you see how you're doing our work, Mr. 'Cutor?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: And you're sure you don't want to work for me, Red?



RED: Hey?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: You know, we could make it easy for you. We could find some trick to let you get away.

RED: Oh! So that's it, after all!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: We could find you a very good sum of money.

RED.: Judas Iscariot, Benedict Arnold, and Red Adams! California for climate, hell for company!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: A lot of your fellows are getting theirs, you understand. We carry three of your executive committee on our payroll.

RED: That may be true, and again, it may be a shrewd lie to take the heart out of us. We soon spot the ones you get.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: They become tame and conservative, eh?

RED: Quite the contrary! They become real, sure enough red revolutionists—regular fire-eaters. Want to get something done—maybe burning a barn or two! (with a smile) You see, Mr. 'Cutor, we fellows who are nursed on vinegar and go to work at the age of ten—we grow just as sharp wits as you fellows who go to college and live on bootleg whiskey.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: So, Red, you're bound to fight us!

RED: We nail the I. W. W. preamble to the wall: "We are forming the new society within the shell of the old."

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (earnestly): You're an intelligent man, Red—one of the keenest. Take it from me—this lousy gang isn't worth what you'll suffer for them.

RED: They're just average stiffs, of course; some of them are scum. But they're learning the great lesson, Solidarity; and somebody has to teach it.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: YOU weren't always an agitator, I take it.

RED: NO, I was an honest workingman. I read the advertisements of your boosters, and came to sunny California, and put my little savings into a ranch. You know what happened when the war was over and prices went down!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Married man?

RED: I was then.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Where's your wife?

RED: Where you want to put me.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: In jail?

RED: No—in her grave.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: I understand you had some children.

RED: Yes, a boy and a girl.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Where are they?

RED: They're being taken care of.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: By you?

RED: No, by others.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: YOU support them?

RED: They don't need it.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: In other words, you deserted them?

RED: Who told you that yarn?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: YOU left them to other people so you could go off with some other woman?

RED (starts): You dirty cur! Is that what I'm here for—to have you spit on my grief!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (sneering): Looks like I've found a sore spot, eh?

RED: If you weren't a coward, you'd say that outside, where I could knock your block off! You whore-master,' with your little stenographer! (the other clenches his fist as if to strike him) Oho! You think we didn't hear about the lady that you had in the private room at the roadhouse and the suit she threatened and the dough she got out of you! And you dare to throw my life's tragedy in my face!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (coldly): Well, Red, I guess we won't prolong this discussion.

RED: NO—since you're not having it all your own way.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: You'll find the law will have its way, my man!

RED: To hell with you and your law! Bring on your perjurers and your torturers! Send me up for criminal syndicalism—or choke the life out of me, if you want to! I wipe my feet on you—lackeys and lickspittles of the capitalist class! You and the whole crooked game that you call your law—bribers and bribe-takers

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Rave on—we'll stop your foul mouth.  
(he presses a button on his desk)

RED: Yes, you may stop mine—but there are others you'll not stop! (he rushes to the window and waves his arms through the bars, shouting) Solidarity for the workers!

THE CROWD: Hooray! It's Red! Red Adams! Red! Red! Three cheers for Red! Hooray for Red! Red! Red! (RED starts singing to the crowd outside, which takes it up)

We speak to you from jail today,  
Six hundred union men;  
We're here because the bosses' laws  
Bring slavery again.

(two police officers enter; the DISTRICT ATTORNEY indicates RED with a jerk of the thumb, and they collar him and drag him from the room. He sings, in unison with the crowd outside and with the prisoners inside the jail)

In California's darkened dungeons  
For the O.B.U.

Remember you're outside for us  
While we're in here for you.

(the curtain falls; the singing continues until the rise on  
Scene II. The audience is invited to join the singing)

We're here from mine and mill and rail,  
We're here from off the sea;  
From coast to coast we make the boast  
Of Solidarity.

(Chorus)

We laugh and sing, we have no fear,  
Our hearts are always light;  
We know that every wobbly true  
Will carry on the fight.

(CHORUS)

We make a pledge—no tyrant might  
Can make us bend the knee;  
Come on, you workers, organize,  
And fight for Liberty.

(CHORUS)

Long-haired preachers come out every night,  
Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right;  
But when asked how 'bout something to eat  
They will answer with voices so sweet:

CHORUS

You will eat, bye and bye,  
In that glorious land above the sky;  
Work and pray, live on hay,  
You'll get pie in the sky when you die.  
And the starvation army they play,  
And they sing and they clap and they pray,  
Till they get all your coin on the drum,  
Then they tell you when you're on the bum:

(CHORUS)

Holy Rollers and Jumpers come out,  
And they holler, they jump and they shout;  
"Give your money to Jesus," they say,  
"He will cure all diseases today."

(CHORUS)

If you fight hard for children and wife—  
Try to get something good in this life—  
You're a sinner and bad man, they tell,  
When you die you will sure go to hell.

(CHORUS)

## SCENE II: A "Tank" in the Jail.

The scene occupies the rear two-thirds of the stage, away from the audience. At the right are two "tanks," in a row, the corridor leading to them being at the left, running towards the audience. At the end of the corridor farthest from the audience is a solid iron door, guarded by a keeper with a shot-gun. Along the left-hand side of the corridor a row of barred windows, looking to the street outside; the windows are open, and through them can be heard from time to time the shouting and singing of the crowds of strikers. The audience looks into the nearest of the two tanks through a row of steel bars. A steel-barred door, facing left, opens into the "corridor." The other two walls of the tank are solid.

The tank is packed with men, so tightly that not all can sit down; some are half standing, half hanging to the bars. Most of them are ordinary sailors and longshoremen on strike, having been swept up off the streets for attempting to parade, or for jeering at the police.

At rise: All are singing lustily:

Workingmen of all countries, unite,  
Side by side we for freedom will fight;  
When the world and its wealth we shall gain,  
To the grafters we'll sing this refrain:

You will eat, bye and bye,  
When you've learned how to cook and to fry;  
Chop some wood,  
'Twill do you good,  
And you'll eat in the sweet bye and bye!

PETE (a frail, consumptive fellow in the back part of cell):  
Christ, fellers, can't you make a little room for us?

MATT (a big longshoreman in shirt sleeves, near the door):  
What the hell we gonna make it outa?

PETE: We're just suffocatin'!

JERRY (a young wobbly): Give us a turn near the door—that's  
fair.

PETE: Stick your legs through them bars; that'll give room for  
the rest of us.

MATT: The hell you say! An' the bulls come crack our shins?

JOE GUNTHER (a wobbly leader, young, energetic, a  
machinist): If we make any room they'll only jam some more  
in.

JERRY: Don't let 'em jam no more in. Crowd up there, pack  
the entrance.

MATT: Sure, an' have 'em jab their sticks "in yer guts!

PETE: Well, let me get out there! I'd rather have a stick in my  
guts than be suffocated.

IKE (a spy of hang-dog appearance): Cut out the shovin'!



JERRY: Git off my feet!

IKE: Gimme some room there!

MATT: Where 'm I goin'?' Through the wall?

JOE GUNTHER: Forget it, fellers! Don't get to scrappin'!  
Solidarity!

PETE: We're solid, all right, in this crate!

JOE GUNTHER: Give us a song!

MATT: How the hell can we sing when we got no air?

JOE GUNTHER: Sing, you jailbirds! Sing! (he begins, and they take it up, but rather feebly)

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

And the Union makes us strong!

(three figures appear up the corridor; a chorus of yells as they pass the entrance to the other tank) Here come some more! Don't let nobody else in here! Crowd up to the door! Think this is a sardine cannery? Give us some air in these tanks! D'ye want to kill us? (chorus of cat calls, hisses and curses) You goddam bunch o' murderers! Let us out o' this hole! We'll all be dead in this tank before long! We gotta stay in here all night? Give us some air! Give us some air!

PETE: Don't let 'em in!

JERRY: Jam up the door there!

MATT: Spit in their eyes! (the newcomers are discovered to be "RED" ADAMS, escorted by a jailer and a police officer)

JOE GUNTHER: It's Red!

JERRY: Red Adams!

PETE: 'Ray fer Red!

MATT: Good old Red!

JOE GUNTHER: Three cheers for Red Adams!

ALL: Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

JOE GUNTHER: What'd they do to you, Red?

MATT: Good old scout!

JOE GUNTHER: Come on in, Red!

JERRY: Git back there, make room fer Red!

PETE: Where we gonna git to?

JOE GUNTHER: We want Red if we have to hold him on our shoulders.

JERRY: Move up.

IKE: Take him on your lap. (They crowd back and make room; the POLICE OFFICER stands with club in hand while the JAILER opens the cell door and shoves RED inside, then shuts the door again)

JERRY: Hello, fellow-worker!

JOE GUNTHER: Welcome to our city! (All who can reach him grasp his hand)

MATT: What did they do to ye?

RED: They tried to buy me out!

JOE GUNTHER: The hell you say!

JERRY: The dirty skunks!

RED: The 'Cutor offered me money.

JOE GUNTHER: I'll bet he got a good rang-a-tanging!

RED: I told him we nailed the I.W.W. preamble to the wall: "We are forming the new society within the shell of the old!"

JERRY: Hooray fer Red!

RED: And then he talked about my dead wife—accused me of deserting my children.

MATT: Oh, the lousy bastard!

VOICES (from the other cells): Talk up, Red, so us fellers can hear!

ALL: Speech! Speech!

RED (stands facing entrance and shouts): Fellow-workers!  
Fellow-workers!

ALL: Hooray fer Red!

RED: The 'Cutor tried to put me on his payroll. He threatened me with twenty-eight years—and he'll give it to me, too, for I bawled him out!

ALL: To hell with him!

RED: Fellow-workers! They won't send you all up! They'll let most of you out—and when you go, take this story to the rest of the bunch.

ALL: We will! We will!

RED: Tell them how they're suffocating us here! Tell them how they beat Jim Kearney's face to a mash!

ALL: We'll tell! We'll tell!

RED: They'll try to send your committee to the pen!

But you'll raise up new ones, you'll study and think, you'll never forget this night!

JOE GUNTHER: You bet your life!

JERRY: We'll stand by you!

RED: Remember—this may be the last word I'll get to Bay.

MATT: We'll stick! We'll stick!

JERRY: Yes, and we'll bring ye out o' the pen, too! IKE: Hooray fer the strike!

ALL: Solidarity forever!

THE CROWD (singing outside, left):

In California's darkened dungeons  
For the O.B.U.  
Remember you're inside for us  
While we're out here for you.

THE PRISONERS (taking up the chorus):

In California's darkened dungeons  
For the O.B.U.  
Remember you're outside for us  
While we're in here for you.

RED (whispering to JOE GUNTHER): Joe!

JOE: Hey?

RED: YOU heard anything about Jake Apperson coming here?

JOE: NO, who told you?

RED: The 'Cutor. That's one of the things he was trying to get out of me.

JOE: Maybe he was just fishin'.

RED: I know that.

JOE: Be careful, Red. They're bound to put a stool in here with us.

RED: I know that, too.

JOE (turns suddenly upon IKE who is next to him): What yer crowdin' on me for?

IKE: HOW can I help crowdin'?

JOE: You tryin' to hear what we're sayin'?

IKE: Why not?

JOE: Who are you?

IKE: I'm Ike.

JOE: You a wobbly?

IKE: Sure, I'm a wobbly.

JOE: Got a card?

IKE: Not in here I ain't.

JOE: Did they get one off you?

IKE: Sure they did.

JOE: When did you come to town?

IKE: A week ago.

JOE: Well, nobody ever saw you at headquarters. Git back there by the wall, and don't do so much rubberin'. (shouts) Remember, fellow-workers, they got this place full o' stool-pigeons, and be careful what you talk.

PETE (from back of cell): Fer Christ's sake, you stiffs by the door there, give us a chance fer some air.

JERRY: Where we gonna go to?

PETE: Change places with us.

RED: That's fair—we got to take our turn, boys. Move round and let the ones in back get the air. Let me get back there.

JERRY: We don't want to kill off our good men.

RED: There'll be plenty more of us—don't worry, (he crowds his way to back part of cell; four figures appear at entrance to the corridor and the prisoners start to yell) More coming! To hell with you! We're packed tight enough! There's no room in here! Put 'em on the roof! Give us some air! You want to murder us? Ya! Ya! Ya! (a chorus of shrieks and curses; men pound on the doors, or shake their fists through the bars)

PETE: Let me out o' this crate! We're dyin' back here!

JERRY: Crowd up, boys!

MATT: Don't let no more git in here!

JERRY: We got our share.

JOE GUNTHER: Fight 'em back!

PETE: We might as well die in a hurry! (the newcomers are the JAILER and the CHIEF OF POLICE escorting the DOMINIE under arrest. They come down the corridor and stop outside the barred door of the front tank. The CHIEF is a broad-shouldered, stern-featured man in civilian clothing. The DOMINIE is an Episcopal clergyman, fifty years of age, in full regimentals, stoutish, florid in face, prosperous in appearance, the very picture of an English bishop, except for the gaiters; a man of the world, urbane and sophisticated, he

takes this adventure with zest which not all his indignation can mar)

MATT: Hell! It's a sky pilot!

JERRY: Holy mackerel! They've pinch a Bible-shark!

DOMINIE (a magnificent pulpit voice which rolls through the corridor): Fellow-workers, I greet you in the name of the Crucified.

RED (shouting from hack of tank): It's the Dominie!

PETE: What the devil's a Dominie?

RED (shoving): He was coming to preach to us! He's on our side!

JOE GUNTHER: Gangway! Coming through here!

(they make room so that RED can get up to the door of the tank)

RED (elbowing his way to the door): Hello, Dominie!

DOMINIE: Welcome, my lad!

RED: By God! They pinched you?

DOMINIE: By Satan, you should say!

RED: Welcome to our midst! Boys, this is the Dominie. Squeeze up and make room for him.

PETE: Where the devil we gonna squeeze to?



JOE GUNTHER: I'll hold him on my lap, if I must!

RED: He was coming to make us a speech tonight!

DOMINIE (to the CHIEF OF POLICE): Chief, I call your attention to this outrageous condition of crowding.

THE CHIEF: You'll love to be close to them.

DOMINIE: I protest against this devilish inhumanity! I denounce this indignity to a wearer of the cloth! (the CHIEF makes no reply, hut stands while the JAILER opens the door and shoves the DOMINIE by main force info the tank) Once more I warn you—every man who participates in this outrage is incurring a suit for damages and prosecution' for false arrest.

THE CHIEF: All right, Dominie, go to it! (they lock him in and depart)

RED (grabs DOMINIE by hand): Well, well! So they knocked you off!

DOMINIE: They have done me that honor!

RED: What did you do?

DOMINIE: I walked down your main street, having in mind the criminal intention to commit the criminal act of preaching to the strikers when I got to where they were. But the telepathic department of your city detective service discovered the aforesaid criminal intention, and laid hands upon me.

RED: Three cheers for the Dominie!

ALL: Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

DOMINIE: Being a citizen of the United States, as well as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, I rejoice in having accumulated a most gorgeous series of damage suits against the public authorities of your city.

JOE GUNTHER: GO for them, Dominie!

DOMINIE: With all my heart and soul I shall do that!

RED: Preach to us, Dominie!

JOE GUNTHER: Sure thing! We'll never need it more!

DOMINIE:, I could ask no better pulpit.

RED (shouts through bars to the men in the other tank): Fellow-workers! Fellow-workers! The Dominie, who got in jail for us, is going to preach us a sermon.

VOICES (from the other tank): The hell you say! Go to it, old timer! 'Ray fer the Bible-shark! Up with the sky-pilot!

DOMINIE (stands facing the door of tank and orates in best pulpit style, with gestures through the bars): Fellow-workers! There has befallen me this night the proudest honor that can come to a minister of the Son of Man on earth. Standing a prisoner before the bar of World Capitalism, I have been dowered with my celestial title— my crown of thorns—my halo of glory. Him, mocking, they called the King of the Jews; me, mocking, they call the

Dominie of the Wobblies, the Parson to the I. W. W. Fellow-workers in the cause of social justice, I put the question to you: Will you ratify that appointment? May I wear that badge of honor before the Throne of Grace?

ALL (tumultuously): Hurray! You bet! Go to it, old scout! You're our parson! 'Ray for the Dominie!

DOMINIE: Fellow-workers, the bond is sealed, the everlasting glory is mine. I hear the thrilling words of my Lord and Master: "For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me!"

ALL: Hooray! Three cheers for the Dominie!

THE CROWD. (outside, through the windows): Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

DOMINIE: They hear me outside on the street! I can preach my night's sermon after all! (raising his voice to a mighty bellow) Friends and fellow-workers! Fellow- strikers against the rule of greed! You hear me out there?

CROWD (outside): We hear! Hooray!

DOMINIE: I proclaim unto you Christ and Him crucified! Not the stained glass window saint of the fashionable churches, but the working-class revolutionist, the rebel carpenter, the First Wobbly of the World!

CROWD (pandemonium both inside the tanks and outside on the street): Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

DOMINIE: Glory hallelujah, and deliverance unto all the oppressed! In the name of Jesus Christ the Redeemer I prophesy and ordain the downfall of World Capitalism, and the Second Coming of the Saviour in the Social Revolution!

CROWD: Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

DOMINIE: I preach to you Fellow-worker Jesus! Forget Him not in this your time of trial, for He is here tonight among you. All that you have borne, He bore; all that you hate, He hated—He scourged it with whips from His holy temple! All that you love, He loved—He was the brother of the humble and the lowly! Like you, fellow-wobblies, He faced the cruel power of the money- masters! Like you, He was scourged by the hired soldiery of a predatory class! Like you, He was thrown into prison! Like the best of your glorious martyrs, He died in anguish, that mankind might be free from the enslavement of Mammon!

ALL: Hooray! Hooray! Hooray! (while the crowd yells, the DOMINIE fishes out with some difficulty from under his long clerical coat a snowy linen handkerchief and mops the perspiration from his brow)

VOICE (from the rear tank): You'll lose your job if you talk like that!

DOMINIE: I've lost it already.

RED: Come join the wobblies!

JOE GUNTHER: We'll pay you a living wage.

DOMINIE (with a touch of melancholy): Ah, boys, I have no delusions on that score. I have lived in the world, and learned its temptations. I like my muffins toasted just right. I like my beefsteak properly turned. I like clean linen and polished silver. But more than all these things I like the salvation of my soul!

THE CROWD: Hooray! Hooray!

DOMINIE (raises his voice again, to reach the crowd outside; he speaks with the gestures of a trained pulpit orator, and in tones of especial solemnity): Once more a new religion is born into the world—a new church is founded—a new covenant is sealed with the blood of holy martyrs! Stand firm, Industrial Workers of the World! Stand firm for the rights of the toilers, and against the might of the exploiters! Know that every tear you shed is sacred, that every drop of blood from your veins is caught in a heavenly chalice, and serves to fructify the future of the human race!

THE CROWD: Hooray! Hooray! Hooray! (as the tumult mounts, the CHIEF OF POLICE enters hurriedly at end of corridor, followed by the police officer and the jailer)

DOMINIE (paying no attention to the CHIEF): Fellow-workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, the time of the promised harvest draws nigh! The cries of the afflicted have mounted up to the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth

CHIEF: Well, well, Dominie—you're getting in your spiel after all!

DOMINIE (still paying no attention to him): The salvation of the workers is promised! The people's hour draws nigh...

THE PRISONERS: Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

CHIEF (to JAILER): Open her up! (to DOMINIE) We'll have to move you away from the windows, Dominie...

DOMINIE (louder than ever): Stand firm for the workers! Bow not to the servants of Satan!

THE PRISONERS (shaking their fists at the police): We'll stand! We'll stand! (JAILER opens door, while policeman stands with club, as before)

CHIEF: Come on out! (They pull DOMINIE from the tank, then close door with a clang; the officer leads him down the corridor, while he continues to orate at the top of his voice) In the name of God the Father, I denounce this torture of His children! In the name of the God the Son, I denounce this unchristian brutality! In the name of God the Holy Ghost...

THE PRISONERS: Shame! Shame! Hooray for the Dominie! Down with the cops! Spit on them! Hooray! Hooray! (the DOMINIE is escorted off by the officer; the prisoners sing)

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

And the Union makes us strong!

THE CHIEF (stands waiting until they finish): Now, boys, I have something to say to you!

PRISONERS: Go to hell! Shut your dirty mouth! Get out, you fat prostitute! Bring us our supper! Ya! Ya! Ya!

CHIEF (shouting): We're going to have order in this jail!

PRISONERS: TO hell with your order! Come make it if you can! Give us some air in here! Give us our grub! Shut your mouth, you bloody bastard! (A storm of yells, hisses and curses)

THE CHIEF (with sudden decision): All right, if you will have it. (to JAILER) Shut the windows; every damn one. (The JAILER proceeds to slam down windows along the corridor, left)

PRISONERS: What's that? Jesus Christ, they're goin' to shut out the air! The murderers! They're goin' to suffocate us! The dirty hounds! The sons o' guns! Damn your soul! Ya! Ya! Ya!

CHIEF: Will you listen to me now? (a partied silence) We are going to have order in this jail. Make up your minds quick, for it won't take you more than three minutes to use up the air in this place. When you're ready to behave, you can have the windows open; but you'll have no more air to sing with, and no more to curse with.

PRISONERS: To hell with you! We'll sing! We'll sing all we please! We'll die before we'll quit! Take your lousy face out of here! Crook! Scab! Gashound!

THE CHIEF: All right, if you want to fight it out!

RED (shaking fist at the CHIEF): Fellow-workers! Fellow-workers! Here is our chance to win the strike! They mean to break our spirit. We'll take up the challenge. We'll nail the I. W. W. preamble to the wall!

ALL: We will! We will!

RED: We'll die singing for Solidarity! It will be another Black Hole of Calcutta! It will mean the end of the boss-class in California! It will make the One Big Union! It will win the strike! Will we stick?

ALL: We'll stick! We'll stick!

RED: Sing, you jailbirds! Sing while there's life in us! (he sings)

We speak to you from jail today,  
Six hundred union men...

ALL (taking up the song):

We're here because the bosses' laws  
Bring slavery again.  
In California's darkened dungeons  
For the O.B.U.  
Remember you're outside for us  
While we're in here for you.

(While this is going on the CHIEF OF POLICE signs to the JAILER, who opens the door of the tank again. The CHIEF pulls RED ADAMS out. The JAILER locks door again)



CHIEF: We'll give you a few days in the hole, my lad.

RED (shouts): Three cheers for the One Big Union! (the CHIEF strikes RED and knocks him down. A shriek of fury from the cells)

ALL: Ah, you brute! You dirty dog! Shame! Hit a helpless man! Thug! Bully! Coward! Ya! Ya! Ya! (as RED staggers to his feet, the CHIEF seizes him, twists his arm behind his back, and pushes him down the corridor, followed by JAILER) Hit a fellow your size! Stick it out, Red! He'll pay for it! We'll stand by you!

RED (as the CHIEF and JAILER drag him off): Sing, fellow-workers! Sing! (the CHIEF, the JAILER and RED go off)

JOE GUNTHER: Sing, you jailbirds! Sing! (he begins)

We come from mine and mill and rail...

ALL (taking up the song):

We come from off the sea,  
From coast to coast we make the boast  
Of Solidarity.

In California's darkened dungeons  
For the O.B.U.  
Remember you're outside for us  
While we're in here for you!

(voices begin to falter at the end)

JOE GUNTHER: Keep it up! Keep it up!

PETE: HOW can we sing without air?

JERRY: We gotta sing!

MATT: Jesus, fellers, I'm dyin' in here!

JOE: We all got to die—what the hell?

PETE (begins to shove): Lemme git near them bars!

JERRY: Stay where you are! What's the diff?

JOE: Lay down there!

PETE: How can I lay when there ain't no room!

MATT: Oh! My God!

JOE: Sing, you jailbirds! Sing! (He begins)

In the prison cell we sit,  
Are we broken-hearted—nit!  
We're as happy and as cheerful as can be.

(Others take up the song, but feebly; the men are seen to be wilting, hanging on to the bars)

For we know that every wob  
Will be busy on the job,  
Till they swing the prison doors and set us free.

(While some are singing, others are trying to force their way to the door; there is a general pushing and milling about)

JERRY: Stay still, fellers, fer God's sake!

PETE: Jesus, I'm drippin' wet!

JOE: Don't let them beat us! Stand by your guns! Sing! (he sings)

Are you busy, fellow-workers,  
Are your shoulders to the wheel?

(The tune is kept up, feebly and quaveringly, by the few nearest to the bars)

Get together for the cause  
And some day you'll make the laws;  
It's the only way to make the masters squeal!

Though the living is not grand,  
Mostly mush and "coffee and,"  
It's as good as we expected when we came.  
It's the way they treat the slave  
In this free land of the brave,  
There is no one but the working class to blame.

(Gradually the men sink into heaps; the last words are sung in a faint whisper by half a dozen men clinging to the bars and gazing through with tortured faces)

CHORUS

Are you busy, fellow-workers,  
Are your shoulders to the wheel?  
Get together for the cause  
And some day you'll make the laws;  
It's the only way to make the masters squeal.

## CURTAIN

The audience sings:

I'm as mild manner'd man as can be,  
And I've never done them harm that I can see.  
Still on me they put a ban and they threw me in the can:  
They go wild, simply wild, over me.

They accuse me of ras—cal—i—ty,  
But I can't see why they always pick on me.  
I'm as gentle as a lamb, but they take me for a ram;  
They go wild, simply wild, over me.

Oh! the “bull” he went wild over me,  
And he held his gun where everyone could see;  
He was breathing rather hard when he saw my union card  
He went wild, simply wild, over me.

Then the judge he went wild over me,  
And I plainly saw we never would agree.  
So I let the man obey what his conscience had to say;  
He went wild, simply wild, over me.

Oh! the jailer went wild over me,  
And he locked me up and threw away the key—  
It seems to be the rage so they keep me in a cage;

They go wild, simply wild, over me.  
They go wild, simply wild, over me.  
(I'm referring to the bed-bug and the flea.)

They disturb my slumber deep and  
I murmur in my sleep;  
They go wild, simply wild, over me.

Even God, he went wild over me;  
This I found out when I knelt upon my knee.  
Did he hear my humble yell?  
No, he told me, "Go to hell";  
He went wild, simply wild, over me.

Will the roses grow wild over me  
When I'm gone to the land that is to be?  
When my soul and body part in the stillness of my heart—  
Will the roses grow wild over me?

## ACT II

### SCENE I: In the Hole.

A solitary cell, deep in the basement of the jail. The cell stands at the front of stage, center; it is eight feet wide and the balance of the stage is covered by curtains. One wall of the cell is missing, and through this missing wall the audience looks into the cell. The two side-walls of the cell open fan-wise towards the audience, so that all may see into the cell; also the roof of the cell slopes upward, so that those in the gallery may see in. The far wall of the cell, opposite to the audience, contains a sheet-steel door with two holes, one near the bottom of the door and the other near the top, each about two inches in diameter. There is a sliding device at the bottom of the door, which, can be opened to admit of objects being shoved into the cell. When the door is opened, we see a narrow corridor, by which the jailer comes to the cell, his coming being heralded by the clang of a distant corridor door. There is a dim electric light with switch-button in the corridor, and the jailer switches this on and we see the light through the two round holes. When the jailer leaves the corridor he switches out this light, leaving the cell in total darkness. The scene is then played in darkness until RED ADAMS, in his imaginings and dreams, leaves the cell, and we follow him to the outside world. As preliminary to this, the side curtains, the walls, door and roof of cell go up out of sight, so that when the light begins to appear there is

no trace of the cell, but instead we are in the world of RED'S memories and visions.

There is frequent return from these imaginary scenes to the reality of the solitary cell. When that change takes place, the light fades, and the side curtains and cell return to place, with RED inside. It should be noted that the cell and the corridor occupy but a small portion of the stage, in front. The dream-scenes are set in the back portions of the stage, so that quick changes from one to the other are possible.

At rise: The cell and corridor are empty; the cell door is open, and the light in the corridor is on. After a pause the clang of a corridor door is heard, then footsteps, and the JAILER appears at the door of the cell, escorting RED, battered and bloody. The JAILER, without speaking, shoves him into the cell, closes door, locks it, and closes slide at bottom, of door. The footsteps of the JAILER are heard down the corridor, the light is switched off, and the clang of the corridor door is heard. Then darkness and a long silence.

RED: By God, I'm in for it! It's my turn! (Slowly in frightened voice) All the times I spent imagining it— and here I am! Yes—he said he was going to break me. So I got it to do; I got to stick it out! You think it's some other guy, and you're sorry as hell—gee, it's tough, poor guy! But you never thought it would be you—Red Adams! Like when you think about dying; others die, but you have the luck! Yes, old sport, don't fool yourself—they're not going to let you out of here in a hurry. This is the real thing! This is it!

(With frequent pauses)

In the hole! Dark as hell, not a sound, bread and water once a day, and nobody speaks to you! Not a damn thing to do, not a damn thing to think about! But you'll stick it, all right! What else can you do? You're here! They do it to you, and you got to stand it!

(silence)

Gee, but my nose hurts! That old son of a monster must have broke it! And now it'll heal crooked. But what's it matter? If a man's going to die, why bother about his nose? The worms make all noses the same.

A busted bone in a skull, buried in the ground, somewhere nobody knows! God, but life's queer! I could duck this trouble in a few minutes by biting an artery in my wrist. Where'd I be then? Maybe I'd have more troubles! Maybe the Shipowners' Association is running the next world, too! But I don't want to kill myself. No, I shan't give them that satisfaction. Christ A 'mighty— men have done it, why can't I? Show 'em my nerve is better than theirs! Stick, till the boys outside make noise enough, and they have to give me a chance. Sure, that's what I'll do! I'll beat them! Sing, you jailbird, sing!

(Sings, in feeble voice)

In California's darkened dungeons  
For the O.B.U.  
Remember you're outside for us  
While we're in here for you.



Gee, it's lonesome, singing by yourself. But that's one of the ways to keep my mind busy; sing all the songs I can remember, and maybe make up some new ones. I wonder if I could write a song! That would be a joke on them—write something that would get the boys going, give the movement a boost! The poet is born, not made. Sure, but who knows when he's born, or how? We've had some prison poets, real ones—like Joe Hill. And now Red Adams! Gee, I'm beginning to get nutty already! Sing, you jailbird, and cheer yourself up! (Sings)

Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity...

(He stops abruptly)

Say, that sounds too funny. I'll have to put it off a bit. But I'm sticking pretty good, so far. Jesus, I wonder what the boys are doing. I wonder if they've opened those windows. The dirty skunks, would they dare let a whole crowd suffocate to death? No, that would make too much fuss. But they get things their own way more and more—they'll do anything pretty soon. God knows, it's raw enough to bury a man alive like this. It seems enough, if you're the man!

(A pause)

Well, here I am. Let's see what I "got. Something to pass a couple of minutes, anyhow! Stone walls...

(He pounds with his fist)

Good and solid! Three walls, and a steel door.

(Shakes the door)

Stay here, all right. And what do they give you for air? A hole near the top—two inches square. Another near the bottom—scientific ventilation! And some kind of a slide here, where they shove in the grub, I guess. Don't have to open the door at all! Seems tight. I suppose it's bolted outside. Well, I won't spend my time planning to escape. I can't bite stone and mortar—nor butt it with my busted nose. I got to beat them with my mind! Yep, that's the job, old sport; and you can set about it whenever you get ready. Plenty of time—no particular hurry! Tomorrow will do—only you won't know when tomorrow is. (A pause) What you call having leisure! The first in your life! Some day you'll go back, and find out what's been happening in the world. I never liked that world— but I sure do miss it now! It's got sunlight at least; and here—Jesus, I wonder if a man loses his eyesight if he stays in the dark all the time, (a pause) Nothing to do but think! I wonder if a fellow could think everything—or if there's always something else. I'll find out a bit about the human mind; this psychology bunk they sell to poor suckers. I might get interested if this nose would stop hurting—and my head, and my arm that the old son of a monster nearly twisted off. Well...

(The corridor door is heard to clang)

Somebody coming? Do I get out so quick?

(The light is switched on, and the slide in bottom of the door is unbolted and pushed back. It is the jailer, who shoves in an empty slop-pail and then closes and bolts slide and goes

off, switching out light and relocking door of corridor.  
Silence)

A present, hey? Slop-pail, by the stink. Say, that's swell! All modern conveniences! Hotel Biltmore! But I'd rather had a pail of water. That ought to come first. Well, I suppose I drink tomorrow. They'll come once a day and I'll count the days—if I can manage to remember them. That'll be something to work at. I remember the guy in the dungeon that made friends with a spider. Maybe there's one here, but I won't know it unless he bites me. They're rougher than in the old days—they don't give us light enough for spiders! I suppose that jailer isn't going to speak to me. Well, I'll play the game—by God, he'll never get a moan out of me. Not unless I go crazy—and I'll try not to do that. I got to stick, for the sake of the boys. Yes, fellow-workers, they never broke Red Adams—he never squealed, he stood the gaff! When they had him in the hole, he sang...

(Feebly)

Solidarity forever  
Solidarity forever  
Solidarity forever  
And the Union makes us strong!

(A silence)

I got to figure out the way to live. Bread and water— they'll tend to that part. And sleep—I'll do lots of sleeping. But no blankets, and a stone floor—I suppose that means

rheumatism. Exercise—let's see; this hole will be about eight feet long and five feet wide. Seven feet high, I guess.

(He paces back and forth)

Three steps one way and three back—one, two, three —one, two, three— one, two, three. Not much exercise in that. Four steps from corner to corner —that's better— one, two, three, four—one, two, three four—one, two, three, four. Who was that fellow wrote a poem about a man walking up and down in a cell? Some Dago name, I remember. I can make it five steps by bringing up my- other foot each time; that makes it seem like more—one, two, three, four, five— one, two, three, four, five—one, two, three, four, five. Jesus, that would drive me crazy if I did it very much! I remember that old tiger in the zoo! I'll have to find something that wild beasts don't do!

(A pause)

Seven feet high; I can't swing my arms up, but I can exercise them with the elbows crooked—up, down—up, down—up, down. I can work out body exercises—that part'll be all right. Only the air; there isn't going to be air enough in here for exercise. I must breathe in at the bottom hole, and breathe out at the top—that's scientific.

(Breathing and stooping slowly)

Up-down! Up-down! Up-down! That's the stunt! Only—what sort of air have they got out in the corridor?

I heard the jailer lock that door—maybe it's tight. But no—that couldn't be, nobody could live that way. There've been fellows in here, lots of times before. That's something to think about—all the poor guys that have suffered here. Christ, they've done just what I'm doing—walking up and down counting their steps, thinking they were tigers; worrying about the air, feeling the cold floor, getting the rheumatism, kicking the damned slop-pail.

(Gives the pail a kick)

Poor fellow-worker slop-pail! A real manly, satisfying form of self-expression!

(A pause)

'Yes, they're bound to have been in here—wobblies, too! Maybe there's more cells, with some of the boys in now. They might be near!

(Shouts)

Boys! Boys!

(Waits, then louder)

Hello! Fellow-workers!

(Silence)

Nix on the society stuff. I remember reading about the dungeons of the tsar. They used to make tapping noises on the water pipes, and they worked out a telegraph code, and

could talk all day. But I got no pipes here. I wonder if I could knock on the walls. The slop- pail! A fancy telegraph key!

(He knocks three times with the pail, then listens, then knocks again)

Nobody home in Western Union! Maybe they're asleep.

I haven't been in here long enough for it to be day. I'll try that tapping off and on. When you're in solitary, you don't mind doing the same things over and over, thinking the same thoughts over and over.

(A sudden hysterical outburst)

Oh, my God! Let me out of here! I can't stand it— I'll go crazy, sure as fate! Jesus, you got no right to shut a fellow up like he was a beast! Let me go, I tell you! Take me where the others are!

(He sobs)

I'll quit! I'll be good! Whatever you want—only I can't stay alone in the dark! Oh, it's too much! It's hell! (frantic sobbing; then silence)

Ah, you dirty cur! So that's all you amount to! Half an hour—maybe not that long, and you show the white feather. Yes, you'll lick their boots, you'll crawl on your knees to them! Maybe they got a spy watching—maybe he's gone now to tell the 'Cutor!

(Imitates voice of DISTRICT ATTORNEY)

So, Red, you've had enough! I thought you'd listen to reason after a bit!

(Shouts)

No, no! Damn your dirty souls—not while I live! Not while I've got the breath to curse you! I nail the I.W.W. preamble to the wall!

(Laughing)

No, Mr. 'Cutor, have another guess! Just a little joke that time! Thought I'd come out for a few minutes, to see if my nose was on straight! Yes, sure, I like it fine in my new lodgings—quiet neighborhood, and the rent's cheap!

(A pause)

Gee, I'm getting off my nut! That's always the trouble with me—too doggone much imagination. Mind works too fast. Why do I always have to be stewing inside— reading books, thinking things, arguing at the scissor-bills, making speeches, organizing? Why couldn't I be a regular bindle-stiff —carry my blanket, do my ten hours, hold my damned tongue, never mind the bugs in the beds and the weevils in the flour? What makes me an agitator, a trouble-maker? Yes, Mr. 'Cutor, it's true. I've been one. I've argued and sassed the boss—raised cain when the pay envelope was wrong. I'm made that way; I got a mind— yes, and I got it right here in the cell with me—the only thing I have got! By God, that's the problem—to save my mind, learn how to use it. What's that poet say:

Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage.

They got my body here, but they haven't got my soul.

(With excitement)

Yes, get hold of that! Get it straight! That's the key to the problem—that's the way out! They can do what they please to my body, but they haven't got the real me— they can't touch that! They've no control of what I think, what I really am! I'm free—I've got the whole world for company! And I don't have to be afraid of them! I don't have to sit here, moaning in a hole, going crazy! I'm the master—nobody else! I wave my hand and the walls are gone. I go laughing, singing! I travel on the wings of thought, I'm free—I'm free!

(The cell, curtains and corridor go up in the darkness)

No, Mr. 'Cutor—I'm not your slave, you can't hold me in solitary! I've got friends that love me, and won't desert me. Yes—Jake Apperson, if you ask me! Jake's out of jail—Jake's on the job, for me and the whole wobbly bunch, like he always was! Jake! Jake! Where are you?

(Light begins to appear)



## **SCENE II: A Restaurant for Workingmen.**

In the back part of the stage, to the left, is a lunch counter, with stools for four customers. To the right of this is an oil-cloth covered table, with chairs for six customers. Entrance at the left.

As the light appears, three men are eating at the counter, their backs to the audience. ONE LUNG, the Chinese proprietor, in soiled white apron, stands behind the counter, facing the audience. He and the customers are in shadow; the light brings out the center of the stage, where JAKE APPERSON stands—a six-foot lumberman, fair-haired, florid, jovial, a fellow to lean on; he wears a startled look, hearing the call of RED ADAMS, who is on the same spot where he lay when in the cell.

RED: Jake! Jake!

JAKE: Who calls! Who's that? Red Adams, by God! (Starts to him; they clasp one another)

RED: YOU old fuzzy-tail! (Holds him at arm's length, stares at him in rapture, then hugs him again)

JAKE: YOU old ding-bat!

RED: You old jungle-buzzard!

JAKE: You old scissor-bill!

RED: YOU old ho-atzin!

JAKE: Ho-atzin! What the hell?

RED: I read about 'em in a book—they're a bird!

JAKE: You're a bird—you red-head woodpecker!

RED: A woodpecker with a busted nose! Jake! Jake! I'm sure glad to see you! You're out again?

JAKE: Sure, they can't ever hold me!

RED: It hasn't hurt you, either!

JAKE: I get fat on it! The workingman's rest-cure!

RED: Jake! They thought they had me in the hole! But I got away, too!

JAKE: They can't dig the holes deep enough for us wobblies!

RED (his voice breaking suddenly): Jake, hang on to me—I don't want to go back! Hold me tight, old pal! (Clasps him again)

JAKE: By heck, we're the original Siamese twins! One Lung, bring me a hammer, I'll nail his hoofs to the floor! (Full light on the whole scene. ONE LUNG, behind his counter, grinning with pleasure)

RED: One Lung! Say, old Chink! You remember me?

ONE LUNG: Su', lemember. Led Adam.

RED (grabbing his hand): You Celestial hash-slinger!

ONE LUNG: Good boy, Led Adam!

RED (to JAKE): Where's the gang?

JAKE: They're coming. We'll have an old-time feed this night!  
You got some grub, One Lung?

ONE LUNG: Plenty glub! All kind glub! Ham an' egg,  
hamblugg steak, fly fish, macaloni—hot allee samee hell,  
(the door opens and JOE GUNTHER, PETE, JERRY and MATT  
enter)

JAKE: Here's the gang!

RED: Fellow-workers!

ALL: Red! It's Red Adams! (They fall upon him, slap him,  
pound him, with laughter and shouts of greeting). Hurrah!  
Old red-head! Welcome to Chinatown! When did you blow  
in? What's the good word? (They clasp hands and dance a  
fantastic caper, singing to the tune of "Steamboat Bill")

Scissor Bill, he is a little dippy;  
Scissor Bill, he has a funny face;  
Scissor Bill should drown in Mississippi.  
He is the missing link that Darwin tried to trace.

(They grab ONE LUNG and the three customers from the  
lunch counter, all dance and sing)

Hallelujah, I'm a bum!  
Hallelujah, bum again!  
Hallelujah, give us a handout  
To revive us again!

Now why don't you work like other men do?  
How the hell can I work when there's no work to do?

Hallelujah, I'm a bum!  
Hallelujah, bum again!  
Hallelujah, give us a handout  
To revive us again!

JAKE: Fellow-workers, I'm just one big hole inside!

JOE: We'll have chow.

JERRY: We'll clean the old Chink out! (A general rush for the table)

JAKE (parodying song):

We'll have pie—not bye and bye!

JOE:

We'll have pie—if the Chink don't lie!

ONE LUNG: Chink no lie! Chink come along! (he rushes to get food; they pound on the table with knives and forks)

JAKE: Fly fish for me!

JOE: Hamblugg steak, that's mine!

MATT: Macaloni! You got macaloni?

JERRY: Hot allee samee hell!

ONE LUNG: One Lung quick! (He comes running with tray containing bread, butter and glasses of water)

JAKE: One Lung, I'm busted. You trust me?

ONE LUNG: Su', plenty tlost!

JAKE: Why you trust me?

ONE LUNG: You wobble-wobble!

JAKE: How you say I.W.W.?

ONE LUNG: I-Wobble-Wobble. (They all laugh)

JAKE: Try again: W.

ONE LUNG: Wobble. (They laugh. ONE LUNG hurries back to get more food)

JAKE: Say, boys, you know that old Chink made a new word in the language. He made the name "wobblies."

MATT: Come off!

JAKE: Sure thing! You hear him—he can't say the letter W.

MATT: But was that what began it?

JAKE: Sure as I'm here! Us boys took up the Chink's word, we got to calling ourselves wobblies when we came here to a meal. In the big strike I telegraphed to Chicago—send a bunch of wobblies that can be trusted. When the bulls raided us and went through our files they got that telegram, and me and the 'Cutor had a session on the subject of secret codes! A deadly mystery—was a wobbly a dynamiter, or was he a gun-man? Did he cause bank-safes to wobble, or did he cause the government to wobble? Holy Christ, he spent an

hour trying to get it out of me—and next day the newspapers spread the mystery to the whole world, and wobbles we've been ever since! (ONE LUNG comes with more food)

JOE: YOU trust me?

ONE LUNG (grins): Su'! Tlust you.

JERRY: YOU trust me?

ONE LUNG: Tlust all I-Wobble-Wobble. (They laugh)

JAKE: YOU belong I-Wobble-Wobble?

ONE LUNG: Me belong cook.

JAKE: You cook for I-Wobble-Wobble?

ONE LUNG: SU' cook! Good glub quick! (He hurries to get more food)

JOE (pounds on the table): Hurrah for the wobbles!

JERRY: We'll wobble on the job!

JAKE (noticing RED, who has sunk into silence): Red, what's the matter with you? You haven't ordered anything.

RED (looking dazed): Boys, I hate to spoil the sport— but I—I don't think I can eat.

JAKE: Why not?

RED: I'm not really here, you know. I'm just dreaming all this. The truth is, they've got me in the hole on bread and water.

(He rises, and begins to walk back to forth) One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four.

JOE (looks at him anxiously): Aw, fergit it! You're dippy, Red!

JAKE: Cheer up, bo! (As ONE LUNG comes with tray of food and begins to set it before them) Have some macaloni!

JOE: Hot allee samee hell! (Brings him a steaming plate)

RED (earnestly): Fellow-workers, you don't understand. I'm not here, I tell you—I'm just fooling myself. And you can pretend all right with songs and jokes and things like that, but when it comes to food—by God, it's got to be real food!

JOE: The hell you say!

JAKE: Of course you're here!

RED: I'm in the hole! I can't eat any real food—I only get bread and water. I'm near crazy with pain—my nose is broke and my arm is twisted.

JAKE (puts arm about hint): Poor old kid'. They've got his nerve!

JOE: Cheer him up, boys! He needs a good rebel song!

ALL (shouting):

You'll have pie  
When you die,  
In that glorious land above the sky!  
Work and pray,

Live on hay,  
You'll have pie in the sky when you die!

RED (in heart-broken tones): Fellow-workers, they've got me! I'm done for this time for sure!

JAKE: Listen, old pal! Look what I've been through— and I always come out cheerful!

RED: I know, Jake; but in my case...

JAKE: Look inside your soul! Look at the movement! It's growing! Think of the rebel workers. They love you and need you! (leads him away from the table towards the audience; the light gradually fades from the table and the lunch-counter) See here, Red, there's something wrong with you. I mean—not just this business about your being in the hole. I've watched you for a long time. You're melancholy, kid. You've got something on your conscience. Let's you and me have it out. You know, we've talked about it before. (puts his arm about RED) Look here, pal—it's a mistake to waste yourself. It's not fair to the movement—the others need your strength.

RED: Yes, Jake; but what can I do?

JAKE: IS it something you're afraid will be found out?

RED: NO, it can't be found out—never in this world.

JAKE: Hell! Is it the next world you're worrying about? The sky-pilot's been scaring you?

RED: Nothing so silly.



JAKE: Well, boy, why worry? The man don't live that hasn't done things he's ashamed of. You can't undo them; put your old forgetter to work!

RED: Jake, you can't understand about this...

JAKE: Why can't I? Because you won't tell me.

RED (withdrawing): I just couldn't talk about it!

JAKE (holding on to him): Come on, old pal—have it out, and you'll feel like you've coughed up an alligator.

RED: I can't tell it!

JAKE: Red, you know I'm your friend!

RED: NO man ever had a better.

JAKE: It is some guy you bumped off? Christ, old man, in this world we're in don't they bump us off whenever they feel like it?

RED: NO, Jake, not that.

JAKE: Well, what then?

RED: Jake, I had a wife. And I loved her—oh, God, we were so happy. And then—she died

JAKE: I know that. A long time ago, wasn't it?

RED: Four years. But it seems like it was yesterday. And it was my fault! You see... (starts away) Jake, I can't talk about it! It most kills me to remember! No, I don't belong, I can't stay with a happy bunch, with fellows who have no dead

love. I got to go back to the hole—on bread and water! That damn black hole where there's nothing but the past to think of. (JAKE steps backwards, with hands outstretched, fading into the darkness. The light dies on the scene) I can't stand it, on account of the pain. I'm going mad—I've got too many dreadful things in my head, things I can't face, I can't think about! Christ, what a life the world gives the poor devils who do its dirty work! And the wives of workingmen—that bear too many children, and are poor and ignorant! (the cell and curtains return to place; RED lies on the floor, moaning faintly) They begin as young girls, happy and innocent. Beautiful things, gentle, tender, quivering with life—how can they know what's coming to them—the horrors piled on horrors? The better they are, the worse they get it! Oh, Nell, Nell, you ought never have married me! You ought never have married any workingman! (In a louder voice) No woman should marry a workingman! No woman should bear a child in poverty! (His voice drops low) Nell, why didn't you marry a rich guy? Why didn't you climb up and live on us poor stiffs—drink our blood and get fat—take our sweat and tears, and make pearls and diamonds of them, and wear them round your neck and in your ears! (A pause) I'm getting loony, I believe! I ought to go to' sleep instead of lying here torturing my mind—trying to pretend I'm outside, having supper at One Lung's! How little you appreciate things while they're here! And how you do miss 'em when they're gone! A meal at that old Chink's! I-Wobble- Wobble! (A pause) God, my nose is swelled as big as my face. I wonder if it's going bad—gangrene, or something like that. I suppose I had a bit of fever—thought I was outside, sure enough! Only I

couldn't pretend it was real grub; and I couldn't talk to Jake about Nell! (He calls loudly) Nell, Nell! (A pause) What's happened to you since you died? I couldn't believe you were really gone. That you could fade away, body and soul — everything that used to be so real— your mind, your voice, your face— just go to pieces, disappear! If there's anything left of you, where is it? Do you know what's happening to "me? You couldn't stand it if you did—surely you'd find some way to come to me, to talk to me, help me out! I could always stand things, so long as I had you! Oh, Nell, I'm so miserable! I daren't admit it to myself —but I'd tell you, my love, my blessed one! Nell, Nell! (A faint light appears)

### **SCENE III: In the Hole.**

NELL stands near the door, looking down at RED; a young woman with pale, gentle face, slender figure, wearing a faded calico dress. RED manifests no surprise, but takes her presence for granted.

RED: Ah, Nell, you knew how I loved you! But I think of all the chances I' had, the times when I might have told you more! Then I think—no, I loved you too much! That was the trouble—love isn't for working people! We're too cheap, we have too many troubles, we can't afford fancy feelings! Sweetheart, where have you been hiding? (She kneels beside him and takes his hand) Ah, if you'd only stay with me, Nell!

NELL: I've come to stay, Red.

RED: Here? In this cell?

NELL: Yes, here! We can always be together here— nothing can tear us apart.

RED: Kiss me, Nell!

NELL (bending over him): Dearest, truest heart!

RED: I try to be true, Nell; but I find I'm a coward. A wretched one—you've no idea!

NELL: NO one else will ever have an idea, Red!

RED: Imagine, calling on you for help!

NELL: Who else should help you? Didn't I always try to?

RED: Ah, Nell, if I could only forget what happened!

NELL: I tell you to forget it, Red. It wasn't your fault! You did nothing but what I made you do. I loved you— I craved your love! You've no right to blame yourself. Don't you know, when things happen like that, it's the woman's fault as much as the man's?

RED: Ah, yes, I try to make excuses for myself

NELL: Tell yourself that everything's different now. We belong to each other; there are no longer any penalties of love. Here in jail we can be happy—even poor working people, that can't afford to have children—that can't pay the doctor's bills, or buy food in the real world. (With rising intensity) Oh, Red, I never thought it would be so nice in jail. This is the one free place—the wage-slave's heaven! Dreams are free—joy and peace! You can have me, Red, without fear! I'll stay with you, day and night— just us two, with everybody else locked out! The world is in jail, Red—in a dungeon of greed and hate; the world is mad, while you and I are free and happy! You and I have love!

RED (raises himself and clasps her in her arms): Oh, my beautiful one! My darling!

NELL: Tell me that you want me to stay!

RED: I love you! I love you with all my heart and soul —dear, brave, blessed one— my sweet, good wife!

NELL: Press me to your heart! Tell me again! No woman ever hears it enough!

RED: I love you! I love you!

NELL: Kiss me! Kiss me, dear heart! (Gradually the light fades) My love! My love! My precious man! (Their voices die away; faint violin strains, the Barcarolle from the "Tales of Hoffmann")

### CURTAIN

Nell's voice sings, to the above melody, the tribute by Gerald Lively to Frank Little, the I.W.W. martyr:

You've fought your fight, a long good night  
Is all that we can say.  
Sleep on, sleep on, your work is done,  
Brave fighter for the Day.  
Kind Mother Earth, who gave you birth,  
Receives you to her breast.  
For us the fight, for you the night,  
The night of well-earned rest;  
No more you'll feel the cling of steel,  
You've burst the prison bars;  
You gave your life in this our strife,  
Brave conqueror of stars.  
Sleep on, 'sleep on, your work is done,  
Sleep on, sleep on, sleep on.

## ACT III

### SCENE I: In the Hole.

At rise: RED is in darkness, taking exercise.

RED (slowly): Up—down! Up—down! Up—down! Up—down!  
Up—down! Up—down! Up—down! Up—down!

(A pause)

Well, am I tired yet? I never know if I'm tired, or only bored. A man wants sure enough will-power to keep at work for nothing. I can't ever decide if the air I get through that hole is better than what's in here. It don't smell any better, that's sure. But when I stoop down and rise up, I exercise my stomach muscles, and that helps to keep your bowels active, so they say. But hell, what can you expect, when you get nothing to eat but white bread? You expect just what I've got—a headache like my skull was split. All right, Nell, old girl, I promised I'd stick; I'm taking care of myself, the best I know. Now for the chest muscles. Arms front—arms back!

One—two, one—two, one—two, one—two...

(He exercises vigorously, so that his breath comes hard) But maybe I oughtn't to do that! If I use up the air in here, I'm only the wope off. No, there's just one thing—stoop and breathe in at the lower hole—stand up and breathe out at

the upper hole. All right, Nell, I'll keep at it! I'll sweat twice every day! Up—down! Up—down! Up—down! Up...

(The JAILER is heard opening door of corridor)

My jailer!

(The light is switched on and the slide is unfastened and pushed back)

JAILER (speaking from behind the door in a mechanical tone): Shove out your slop-pail, (as RED obeys, the JAILER takes pail, and shoves in empty one instead) Shove out your water-pitcher! (As RED obeys, he shoves in a full pitcher of water and a hunk of bread; then the slide is closed and fastened, the light is switched off, and the sound of locking corridor door is heard)

RED: Beginning of the fifteenth day. Two weeks! And nothing but bread to eat! One Lung, if you ever put a slice of bread in front of me— I'll make you eat it. Fourteen days! Nell, did I tell you my scheme to make sure of the count? First I made a little pellet from each loaf of bread, and I laid them in a row against the wall. I'd count them whenever I was in doubt. I count them over, every one apart, my rosary, my rosary! (In sing-song tone) Each hour a pearl, each pearl a prayer...

(His voice, breaks)

No, Nell—I'm not going to go crazy! But you know how it is when I think about the songs you used to sing to me! Well, the reason the bread pellets didn't do for a calendar was because of the rats. The rats ate up my rosary! Now I've



another scheme—I ravel out a thread from my shirt; I have a little sheaf of them that I count. I keep wondering—will the rats want them for a nest? Listen, Nell, I can't figure what I'm going to do about this white bread. I don't want to play the baby, but once in a library I read all about it—there's no minerals in white flour, so your teeth rot, your hair drops out, your bones go to pieces. It's scurvy—regular scurvy like the seamen get, when the owners want to save money too fast. I guess that's what this headache means. Oh, what's the use, Nell? Mightn't I just as well die quick and have it over? Then I'd see you—at least so the preachers say. (Pause) I could go on a hunger strike—they say you can live a couple of months without anything but water. Wouldn't it be just as good for the cause? I've got to decide, for I'm near crazy as it is. Good God, it sounds so nice and simple—a bread and water diet!

(In sudden excitement)

I've got to stop brooding! Yes, that's the dope! Bring on the psychology bunk! I'm giving myself bad suggestions—that's what they call it. It's all right to deal in economics when you're outside, where they count; but when you're in the hole—by God, you're in, and psychology's all you got! So let psychology have a chance! Yes, Nell, you're right. A don't see why those religious guys and Christian Science bunkshooters should get any favors that I can't get. I'm as worthy as they are. I'm sacrificing life for a cause. I suppose I ought to give that old French guy Coue a chance at me. All right, we'll try that! He says to be monotonous, and by heck, that's

made to order for wobblers in solitary! Come on, Mounseer Coue—here's for a monotonous nap!

(The cell and curtains go up in the darkness; RED begins in a droning voice)

I am happy—I am happy—I am happy—I am happy— I am happy—I am happy—I am happy—I am happy! I'm with Nell—I'm with Nell—I'm with Nell—I'm with Nell—I'm with Nell—I'm with Nell—I'm with Nell—I'm with Nell—I'm with Nell—Nell is singing—Nell is singing—Nell is singing...

(His voice gradually dies away to a murmur; NELL'S voice is heard singing, and at the same time light begins to dawn)

## **SCENE II: A California Ranch-house.**

The view is of the rear shed; the house itself being painted on the rear curtain. A door at the center leads into the house; the shed walls project down stage, the shed being open towards the audience. There are wash-tubs at one side, a wood-pile at the other, with axe, shovel, ' hay-rake, buckets and general farm-litter. NELL is seated in a chair by a tub in the front of the shed bathing a baby; a year old child sleeps in a clothes basket near by. NELL wears the same calico dress as in the previous scene, but fresh and bright. It is noon of a summer's day, and RED is tying asleep on the ground in the sunshine, at the spot formerly occupied by the cell. He is young looking, clean and attractive.

At rise: NELL, singing:

The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,  
Are as a string of pearls to me.  
I count them over every one apart,  
My rosary! My rosary!  
Each hour a pearl, each pearl a prayer...

RED (opens his eyes and sits up): I've been asleep!

NELL: And I've been singing you love-songs!

RED: Sleeping like a pig, while you work!

NELL: I don't know who earns a Sunday rest if it isn't you.

RED: There are no Sundays at this ranching game.

(Bitterly) Go West, young man! Get a stake in Sunny California!

NELL: No grouching, Red! This is God's country!

RED: Yes! The Great Absentee Owner! I was reading in the paper; it said: "Stick something in the ground and watch it grow." Oh, the stuff they feed to us come-ons from the East! Stick something in the ground, and hold a hose over it the rest of your life!

NELL: We're going to win, Red! We're not going to think of quitting!

RED: Yes, dear; but what about the mortgage that falls - due in three months?

NELL: We'll find a way! Keep your courage up.

RED: Yes, sweetheart, I know—the psychology bunk. Plenty of that in the paper, too. Hold the success thought! But we can't feed these two kids on anybody's thoughts, and if the price of our lettuce and oranges goes on dropping, we'll lose our place at Mother Nature's breast.

NELL: And live in a slum again, Red!

RED (gets up and moves restlessly about): At least we'll have a bit of cash every Saturday night. Gee, it's a wonder how they get us poor ranchers fixed, Nell. Eggs go to forty cents a dozen—and you can't squeeze one out of your hens. Then, when the price drops to ten cents, the hens take to laying, just to be nasty.

NELL: Well, you can't blame California for that, Red. All hens behave that way.

RED: I know. The small farmer gets it in every part of the country.

NELL: Yes, and it's a good thing to know his side. The farmers and the workingmen have got to get together...

RED: Oh, sure! It's education, all right. Only I'm thinking it's time we got our diploma in poverty. The College of California Agriculture!

NELL: Cheer up, sweetheart. We're poor, but we have each other. Nothing can take our love from us!

RED: Are you sure, Nell?

NELL: How can you ask?

RED: I find myself wondering—isn't that some more of the bunk they feed us? Can you keep love while you're in terror of starvation? While you're hounded by misery and debt?

NELL (has put dress on the child and lays it in its basket. She leans back in her chair and holds out her hand to RED, who comes to her and kneels at her side): Dearest, I can't answer for you, but get my side of it clear—nothing the world can do to us is going to make any difference in my love for you.

RED: Oh, it's hell for a woman—to have a man that can't earn a living!

NELL: It's not one bit worse on the woman than it is on the man. Don't you think I read the strain in your face?

RED: Ah, Nell, you're too good for this devil's world!

NELL: I love you, dear.

RED: I ought not to have to be told it; but I see the way it's wearing on you, and it seems too much. I imagine you're growing cold—you keep away from me

NELL (in sudden pain): Sweetheart! Don't say such words! Surely you know—we can't afford another child!

RED: Yes, I know; but then

NELL: Ah, my beloved! That's the real agony of my life—that I have to repress and hide my love. It becomes a terror—a flame that threatens to destroy us! I can stand everything else but that! Red, we simply dare not take any chances—if I were to have another baby while we're so near to starving, it would knock us flat—every hope, every chance. So what can I do? I love you—I see how you're tormented! But we must not, must not run any risks!

RED: Then it isn't coldness, Nell?

NELL: Sweetheart, how can you ask? There are times when I want to throw caution to the winds. Then I remember these babies that we already have, and what we owe to them! Oh, this curse of poverty! Our little ones must not be forced to endure any more of it. (Suddenly sobbing) The world is too cruel, Red!

RED: It isn't the world. It's the damned fools that live in it. We don't need to suffer like this—if only we weren't ignorant. There are ways

NELL: I've asked every one I know—but they're all guessing, and I daren't trust their guesses.

RED: I talked with the doctor again; begged him to tell me. It was all I could do to keep from cursing him!

NELL: Oh, Red! We may need him again. Please don't quarrel with him.

RED: I ask him how you can keep from having another baby, and he shuts up like a steel trap. He says it's defying the will of the Lord. Be fruitful and multiply! (laughs sneeringly) Sounds like a California booster's club. I said to him: For Christ's sake, man, what does the Lord expect the ranchers to feed the children on? Is it the will of the Lord that lettuce shall drop to forty cents a crate? Is it the will of the Lord to have the orange crop rot under the trees?

NELL: Let's not talk about it! I don't want to hate life entirely, (she throws herself into his arms, weeping) Ah, dearest! Dearest! Life is too terrible!

RED (comforting her): Kiss me, sweetheart! Kiss me!

NELL: Ah! So long as you love me!

RED: I do love you; I love you more than anything else in the world, (the light begins to fade; she responds to his embraces, but then, in terror, seeks to withdraw)

NELL: NO, no! We must be careful! Ah, wejnust! (She breaks away and runs from him; the light grows more dim, and she backs away through the door into the house)

RED (stands in semi-darkness, alone): Where am I? Am I dreaming? Was that Nell I had in my arms? I thought I was in the hole! I thought they had me on bread and water! I get things mixed up. I was talking to Nell, and it was day; but now it's night! I thought it was summer-time; but now it's cold! (JAKE APPERSON enters from right and stands in silence) Who's that? Jake! Jake Apperson! I'm dreaming sure! Of course! Or I'm crazy! Why, I never met Jake till after Nell was dead—till I went on the road and turned into a wobbly! Jake, is that your ghost? No, I'm in the hole. (Stares hard at ranch-house) I'm just plain nutty! Well, anyhow, old pal, I'm glad you came. You'll have a chance to meet Nell. My wife, you know. Listen! She's singing!

NELL (heard singing offstage, in the rear):

The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,  
Are as a string of pearls to me;  
I count them over, every one apart,  
My rosary, my rosary.

RED: She comes and sings that to me in the hole, Jake. I hear her all the time. I lay on the ground here, listening while she sang it—and it was summer, the sun was shining, and she said she loved me—we forgot our fears, Jake—we were happy in our love. Just once, Jake—you know how it is when you're in love. That was last summer, and we thought we were going to get the mortgage renewed on the ranch. Stick



something in the ground and watch it grow! That's in my diploma that I got from the College of California Agriculture! (Laughing wildly) Well, Jake, the mortgage on the ranch fell due—three months later; and the mortgage on our love fell due at the same time! First a notice from the bank—we were going to be turned out—we were going back to the slums to live! And then came Nell to me—it was one cold night in the fall (His voice rises in a tone of agony) Oh, my God, my God, I can see her now as she looked when she ran out here to me—white and terrified

NELL (calling offstage, in the rear; a voice of keen distress): Red! Red!

RED (turns to the sound, anxiously): Sweetheart! What is it? (He starts towards the door of house; as he does so, JAKE withdraws into the shadows, where he stands watching the scene, pitying, but helpless)

NELL (appears in doorway of ranch-house, deathly pale and with a look of fear): Red! Red!

RED (rushes to her): What's the matter?

NELL: Something horrible

RED: What do you mean?

NELL: Red, it's happened!

RED: What?

NELL: The thing we said must never happen! Oh, how I hate that doctor! He could have told me!

RED (starts hack, whispering): Oh, my God!

NELL: It's true!

RED: You're sure? Maybe you're wrong on the time.

NELL: I suspected it a month back, but I waited—I didn't want to frighten you. But it's true! (He moans) Listen, Red! There's only one thing to do! I must get rid of it!

RED: No! No! You can't do that!

NELL: I've got to!

RED: It's too dangerous!

NELL: It's no more dangerous than for me to have another baby, and for all of us to starve! (Hysterically) Oh, I just can't have another baby! I can't! I can't! And I won't! I'll die first!

RED: Nell! Nell! For God's sake, wait! Give me a moment to think! (He leans against the side of the shed)

NELL: All right! Think! (She draws hack, unnoticed by him, and darts into the house)

RED (alone): Oh, Christ, have mercy on the poor! We've ruined—we're done for! What can we do now? Another baby! And what's to become of the two we've got? (A piercing scream from NELL, inside the house) What's that?

NELL (appears in doorway, staggering, half falling): Help!

RED (leaps to her): Sweetheart!

NELL (wildly): I've done it! (He catches her in his arms) Run for help! Call Mrs. Smith! Call the doctor!

RED: What have you done?

NELL: Run! Run! I may die! I had to do it! There was no other way!

RED: Darling

NELL: I tell you, be quick! Run! (RED dashes off left; she clutches the wall of the shed for support and sinks gradually to the ground) Oh, God! God! Such pain! I didn't know it could be! (She sobs)

MRS. SMITH (an old country woman, rushes on left): Child, what's the matter? (She stoops over NELL)

NELL (gasping): I'm in agony! Oh! Oh! Call the doctor!

MRS. SMITH: He's coming. He was at my house.

NELL: God save me!

MRS. SMITH: Let me help you into the house.

NELL: I can't walk!

MRS. SMITH: I'll carry you. (She lifts NELL to her feet and half carries her into the house; the DOCTOR comes running, carrying instrument case; he goes into the house)

RED (rushes on the scene distracted; he is about to enter the house, but hearing NELL'S screams, he stops, and runs to JAKE, distracted): Jake! Jake! Can't you help her?

MRS. SMITH (appearing at door): Some water! Water!

RED (rushes to hand her a bucket of water): Here! Tell me! What's the matter?

MRS. SMITH: Don't ask! Oh, the poor child, she was out of her mind! She's not to blame for it! (He starts to follow, but she stops him) No, stay out! There's nothing you can do! This is woman's trouble, (she enters house)

RED: Woman's trouble! Woman's trouble! (He stands bewildered, moaning) Oh, my darling! My precious Nell! (He enters through the door; JAKE moves to follow him, drawn by irresistible sympathy. But RED rushes out again, staggering and crying) Blood! Oh, horrible blood! (The light upon the scene turns to red. There is a crashing of thunder; RED plunges dizzily, and falls. Darkness. The curtains and cell return into position, with RED and JAKE inside the cell. Silence, then sobbing) Oh, Nell, Nell! Where have you gone? Oh, God, such a dream! It was just as real as if I'd been there. It comes like that all the time. I can never forget it. Never, never, never—no matter how I try! You see, Jake, why I couldn't talk about it. You couldn't ask a man to talk about a thing like that, could you, Jake? (A faint light)

### **SCENE III: In the Hole.**

(JAKE APPERSON, standing in the cell, silent, with a look of pity. RED, lying on floor, lifts his gaze to him)

RED: Think of it, old man—that night of horror! When a man has seen his wife go like that, can anyone blame him for turning rebel—for hating capitalism, and the world of grafters? Nell wanted her husband —she wanted her child—she wanted life; and she got the most horrible death! That’s what poverty is! And I say, God damn a world that stands for poverty! God damn the whole filthy system, masters and henchmen— stool-pigeons spying on wage-slaves, ’cutors throwing men into jail, (he leaps up wildly; the light fades, and the cell and curtains disappear. JAKE goes off) I say, God damn that District Attorney! He dared to sneer at my tragedy! He dared to put his filthy hands on my grief—him with his little stenographer and his private room in the road-house, and the woman suing him for damages! (faint strains of a jazz orchestra; RED raises his voice so as to be heard above it) Imagine such as him having the power to put me in the hole! Because I dared to lead a strike and demand a decent life for the working-class! Because I wouldn’t sell out to him, and betray my fellow-workers! That’s what they call justice in their capitalist world! My Nell dies of an abortion, and my jailer dines in a road-house with his mistress! (the strains of the orchestra become loud; light appears)

## **SCENE IV: A Private Room in a Road-house.**

A place of luxury and elegance; a couch against the wall, also a window, at right; an entrance door left; a serving-table against the rear wall. In the center of the room, a table set for two, with hand-embroidered linen, silver, wine-glasses, orchids, etc. Jazz orchestra heard through the open door.

At rise: The DISTRICT ATTORNEY and MURIEL, the stenographer, seated at dinner. She is the blue-eyed, 'doll-baby "vamp," in extreme décolleté. He is in evening dress, and flushed with wine; a bucket of ice with bottle on the floor by his side. The waiter enters, and with obsequious gestures serves steaming dishes of food. RED ADAMS, with touseled hair, torn clothing, battered face and distracted aspect, crouches in the far corner, near the door, watching the scene with eyes of fury. No one pays any attention to him. Elaborate business of serving and enjoying the repast. The scene begins in the spirit of melodrama, it being RED'S imagining of the life of the ruling-classes. It becomes more real as it progresses, as if RED'S hatred were making a reality of its own.

MURIEL (a gushy voice): Squabs en casserole! Oh, I adore squabs! Don't you?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (chewing and beaming at her): I adore my honey-baby!

MURIEL (pouting): You old masher! This is a dinner party. Be dignified, now!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: I'm dignified all day—that's what I'm paid for. Now I want to cuddle with my honey-baby! (Ogling her)

MURIEL: HOW many people did you convict today?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Only a dozen or two. It's our off season.

MURIEL: Oh, you man-eating shark!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Oh, you squab-eating doll-baby! (Reaches over and pinches her)

MURIEL (slaps his hand): Quit! You'll shock Pierre.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Pierre is shock-proof—eh, garçon? (The waiter beams indulgently) She's still trying to play the lady! Get her a bigger glass, Pierre—she needs a real dose of fizz. Go on—I mean it. (The waiter scurries off, and the DISTRICT ATTORNEY takes MURIEL in his arms and kisses her lips)

RED (springing forward): So this is where our money goes! (They start and stare)

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Red Adams!

RED (seizes a knife from the table): Here's the end of your debauchery! Pay for your crimes against the workers! (He

starts forward; MURIEL screams; he lifts the knife) A sharp, clean blade through your foul heart!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (recovering his self-possession): Forget it, kid! (To MURIEL, who seeks to drag him back) Don't worry, ducky. He won't hurt us.

MURIEL: He's mad!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Yes, but he can't do anything.

MURIEL: Why not?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Because, he's in the hole! He's one of those wobblers I've put away! Look at him.

RED (lets the knife drop and moans): Oh, God!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Aha! You see? He can only rave! I'll break him like a rotten stick! Back with you! (RED recoils and wilts) See that?

MURIEL: Oh, marvelous man!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: I mash these vermin under my thumb! I stamp them down! I teach them to respect our government!

MURIEL: My hero!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: One of those I won't work, that want to live on the fat of the land! You see the sort of ruffian we have to protect you from—we guardians of the public welfare.



MURIEL (cuddles in his arms): Oo won't let him hurt oo itty Muriel!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (moved to eloquence by her admiration): Your people is a great beast, said Alexander Hamilton. A blind beast—I have taken a sharp scalpel and cut out its eyes! A deaf beast—I have pierced its ear-drums! A dull beast—I have snipped out its brains! Its leaders arise—and one by one I lop them off! I stow them in dark dungeons to rot and perish. Ahem! Well, you see, I shut up this fellow Red, and all of his ilk, in dungeons. I put him on bread and water—white bread, that has no minerals in it. His teeth- rot, his hair drops out, his very bones go to pieces. There won't be much of him left to prey on society!

MURIEL (snuggling to him): You deserve a lot from society!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Well, I get it! Squabs en casserole, with mushrooms! Champagne fizz—the real stuff, from our private bootlegger! We put the workers on prohibition, but we get ours—you bet your- bottom dollar!

MURIEL: Look at him, how he winces! (she goes towards RED, timid but curious, inspecting him as if he were some strange animal)

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: His hands shake, his teeth chatter with fury; but don't be afraid, I've got him safe. Three stone walls, and a sheet steel door! Eight feet long, five feet wide, seven feet high! Black as night, silent as the grave, and no fresh air in the corridor! A stone floor and no blankets—that means rheumatism! We've broken his nose, and left it to heal

crooked! He hates us —he flames with hate— but he's powerless to move a finger!

MURIEL: The common workingman! Te, he, he!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (leaning back in his chair, studying her through half-closed eyes): The common workingman! Your blood-brother— hey, my pet?

MURIEL (turns upon him, startled): What?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Just so! You climbed above them —got out on your pretty face!

MURIEL: Oh, wretch!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: SO much for Solidarity! Ha, ha, ha!

MURIEL (furiously): You'll pay for this some day!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Take it easy, kitten; don't spoil your make-up. You won't keep that pose —you know your master. You'll come when you're called! (He crooks his finger and she comes to him, slowly and reluctantly, but helpless before his power) We, the owners of the world— we know how to stand together all right! We make our will into a law, and you of the working-class obey it. You toil and sweat, and we enjoy the fruits. You show your muscles in the slave-markets —or your pretty faces in the road-houses— and we buy you. We're the masters! We're on top, and we stay! (reaches and pinches her on the cheek) But don't worry, cutie— your face is your fortune! We feed you on squab, and deck you with jewels, made from the sweat and tears of

your brothers! Pearls and diamonds to hang round your pretty neck and in your cunning ears! (fingering her jewels) See, here's a brooch! Each diamond a year he spent sweating on the docks! A pearl necklace—the hours he spent in the dungeon! I count them over every one apart (sings, in mock-sentimental tone)

My rosary, my rosary!

Each hour a pearl, each pearl a prayer...

Ha, ha, ha! (He catches her to him and kisses her, laughing at her efforts to remain indignant) His wife used to sing that song. She died—because she didn't know how to keep from having babies! A little secret that we keep for ourselves—eh, pretty one? He comes here to see how we do it! Ha, ha, ha! (to RED, with commanding gesture) Back to your hole, to your dreams of vengeance! Back to your psychology bunk! And when you get tired of that, sing a few songs of Solidarity!

RED (shouts in sudden frenzy): Sing, you jailbirds, sing! (he starts to sing)

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

And the Union makes us strong!

(Voices offstage through the open window take up the song with power)

All the world that's owned by idle drones is ours and ours alone;

We have laid the wide foundations, built it skyward,  
stone by stone;  
It is ours, not to slave in, but to master and to own,  
While the Union makes us strong.

Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
And the Union makes us strong!

MURIEL (shuddering and clinging to DISTRICT ATTORNEY):  
Ugh! That frightens me!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (laughing): See! You need your master  
to protect you! Well, we have a way to drown their songs.  
(strikes a bell on the table; the waiter comes running) Open  
the doors! We want music! Our kind! Leisure-class music!  
(The waiter runs off, and the strains of the jazz orchestra rise  
loud. MURIEL leaps into activity, enacting the music,  
pressing herself into the DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S arms, kissing  
him, cajoling him; they abandon themselves to a sensual  
orgy)

MURIEL (sings):

Oh, you're my bunny-hugger, you're my grizzly, you're  
my duck!

You're my tricky turkey-trotter all the day!

You're my chicken in the night-time, come a-running  
when I cluck!

You're my piggy, in the clover-patch at play!

VOICES (the revellers in the road-house heard through the open door; MURIEL and the DISTRICT ATTORNEY dance):

Quack, quack, ducky-duck!  
I'm your chick, cluck, cluck!  
I'm your tricky turkey-trotter all the day!  
I'm your rooster in the night,  
I'm your grizzly, hug me tight,  
I'm your piggy, in the clover-patch at play!

(As the music ends, MURIEL and the DISTRICT ATTORNEY confront RED with roistering laughter)

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Here we are! This is our music! Join the chorus—or we put you in the hole!

RED (with clenched fists, staring ahead, confronting the future): Stand firm! Fight for the One Big Union! Solidarity, fellow-workers!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Solidarity! The boob thinks he's got somebody behind him! And we buy them like fish in the market!

RED: It's a lie!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: I'll show you! (He rings bell, and the waiter comes running) Serve the stool-pigeons! (Waiter bows and runs off) Stool-pigeons en casserole! How's that for wit?

MURIEL: Oh comical kid! (Gives him a resounding kiss upon the lips)

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: A change of diet, Red! Pigeons instead of bread and water! (IKE enters, escorted by the waiter; he has his coat-collar turned up, his cap pulled over his eyes, keeps his face averted from RED, and acts as slinky as possible) Stool-pigeons en casserole, piping hot! Here's the first one! (He hands a roll of money to IKE, who slips it into his pocket and slides off to the back part of the room) You get that, Red?

RED: Sure, I know him. That's Ike. We spotted him for a stool in the crate.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Well, there are some you haven't spotted yet. Serve 'em up, garçon—quick! Get a move on! (PIERRE brings in PETE, also acting slinky. DISTRICT ATTORNEY repeats business of handing him money) How's that?

RED: Who is he?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Show him your face, spy. (PETE gives RED a glimpse of his face)

RED: Pete! My God!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: The next one! Quick! (PIERRE brings in MATT, who goes through the same procedure) You know him?

RED: No, (MATT shows his face) Matt! It's a lie! I don't believe you!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Seeing's believing! Ha, ha, ha! - The next! Speed 'em up! (JERRY enters and takes money) Show him your face! (JERRY obeys)

RED: Jerry! It's a dirty frame-up!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: More! Hustle 'em along! We'll convince him! (JOE GUNTHER enters and takes money) Your whole executive committee, you see!

RED: Good God! Who is that?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Show him! (JOE shows face)

RED: Joe Gunther! Ah, what you trying to tell me? A trick to break my nerve!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: They've got my money in their pockets—the whole precious crew. I can buy anyone in your crowd!

RED: YOU lie! You lie! There's one you can't buy, and I know it. Jake Apperson never took your money.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Ha, ha, ha! That's a good one! Get a move on, gargon! Stool-pigeons for a whole banquet of the Shipowners' Association! Here's a big fellow! (JAKE APPERSON enters, with especial precautions of secrecy, and takes money)

RED (screams): Christ A'mighty!

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Look at him! Take off your cap and let him see.

RED (getting a glimpse of JAKE'S face; then laughing wildly) You're playing me for a sucker! You crowd of cheats and grafters! Away with you—I'll waste no more time on you! I nail the I. W. W. preamble to the wall! (He draws from under his coat a hammer and a rolled-up scroll, headed "I. W. W. Preamble," and containing one sentence. He nails it to the wall at rear, and stands shouting its message) "We are forming the new society within the shell of the old." That's our answer to your grafting and villainy—by that we destroy you—we wipe you from the earth! (He seizes the table and hurls it over, scattering contents. A clatter and banging, peals of thunder, quick changes of colored light on the scene, juggled about in kaleidoscopic effect. Then darkness; the curtains and cell come down, RED and JAKE inside the cell) My God, what things I see! And the devil of it is I'm never sure if they're dreams. That's what makes insanity. Yes, I'm cracking, sure enough! Stool-pigeons en casserole—by heck, that's a good one! Of course, they buy some of us—there's always crooks in every movement. But most of it is lies, to scare us, to spread doubt and distrust! Imagine Jake Apperson selling out! Jake! Good old Jake! (Faint light appears).



## **SCENE V: In the Hole.**

JAKE stands gazing down upon RED, as he lies on the floor.

RED: Hello, old pal!

JAKE: Stick it out, Red! Stand fast!

RED: I'm doing it, Jake!

JAKE: You're going fine, boy! They'll never break you!

RED: What do you think? They tried to tell me you had taken their dirty money!

JAKE: Some sell out, Red—but the movement goes on! Remember, no one can buy the movement! The working-class of the world awakening to life and hope!

RED: I'm doing my part!

JAKE: We'll not forget you, Red!

RED: Are they really not forgetting me? It's been two weeks now, and my head aches like it was bursting—I'm near crazy with it!

JAKE: We're fighting for you, Red!

RED: I ought to have some kind of a trial, Jake! They can't keep me buried here forever—without a hearing in court!

JAKE: They do pretty much what they please, you know. But we're agitating—we're doing all we can! They've got so many in jail —we can't get lawyers enough, we haven't the money. The judge has assigned a lawyer to defend us, and of course he's no good; he plays the game their way.

RED: Yes, I know him—that fellow who defended the last bunch. A regular little jack-in-the-box!

JAKE: But stick it out, Red! Don't lose your nerve!

RED: I'm sticking, Jake—that's all I can say! (The light fades; darkness again) A trial! Hell! Where do you get that stuff? That 'Cutor said it—they make their will into a law! It's their game—they've stacked all the cards, they've loaded the dice. I sat in that court-room and watched them railroading our lads to the pen. They had the skids greased all right! The boys named it the Hall of Hate! (The curtains and cell disappear) Some day I'll have my turn. They'll put me up in the dock and snarl at me—tigers they are, and wolves! They'll bring in their spies and provocateurs—the hissing snakes! And that little jack-in-the-box of a lawyer pretending to defend me! The whole farcical show—my day in court! Oyez oyez, oyez! (His voice rises to a tone of proclamation) Be it known to all open that the master-class hereby calls the social rebels to judgment; the Hall of Hate is declared in session! The honorable supremacy of the masterclass is present! Hats off before the honorable supremacy of the master-class! Take notice, all wage-slaves are hereby inspired with terror. Be it duly and legally made known that the grand jurors have been chosen, selected and sworn, in

the name and by the authority of the Shipowners' Association of the State of California. (RED speaks faster and faster, and the voice of the BAILIFF mingles 'with his; gradually RED'S voice dies away, and we hear the BAILIFF. Light appears)

## **SCENE VI: The Hall of Hate.**

A high raised platform, in the back part of the stage, away from the audience. Over this platform: peers an enormous tiger's head, with snarling teeth. When the mouth opens, it reveals the face of a wizened, bald-headed old man in spectacles, who delivers judgments in a voice of senile vindictiveness. To the left of his seat, and slightly lower, is the witness-box—an arm-chair, upon which sits coiled a huge serpent, having a mouth which opens, revealing the face of IKE the spy. In front of the bench runs a rail, to which RED is presently summoned. At the left is a stand, 'over the top of which appears a wolf's head, which opens, revealing the face of the DISTRICT ATTORNEY. At the right is a stand, the top of which pops open, revealing a living jack-in-the-box, the attorney for the defense. Farther to right is desk of the clerk, who has the head of a rat, and occasionally runs about, displaying a long grey tail. The BAILIFF stands before the bar, having the head of a bear. Across the front part of the stage, in a row, facing the tiger's head, and with their backs to the audience, are the spectators, including MATT, JERRY, PETE, JOE GUNTHER, JAKE APPERSON and others who were in the tanks in Act I. Behind them sits a row of policemen in blue uniforms, having the heads of bulls; each is armed with a club.

At rise: The BAILIFF stands before the rail, facing the audience, and declaiming with great rapidity. The whole

scene is played fast and wildly, it being not a natural scene, but a delirium.

BAILIFF: And be it furthermore made known that the said honorable grand jurors of the master-class of the State of California, within and for the body of the aforesaid master-class of the State of California, being duly empanelled, sworn and charged to inquire of charges and crimes committed against the interests of the aforesaid master-class of the hereinbeforementioned State of California, do on their oaths taken as by statute required, and in the name of the aforesaid master-class of the hereinbeforementioned State of California, furthermore find and solemnly present that the aforementioned organization, to-wit, the Industrial Workers of the World have unlawfully, feloniously, criminally and maliciously conspired, combined, confederated and agreed to weaken, degrade, humiliate and threaten the prestige, power, rule and sovereignty of the aforesaid master-class of the hereinbeforementioned State of California: therefore the honorable authority of the aforesaid master-class hereby orders, decrees, ordains and enjoins that the said Industrial Workers of the World shall be wilfully, feloniously and of malice aforethought, intimidated, assaulted, beaten, bruised, kicked, robbed, shot, hanged, mutilated, castrated and otherwise discouraged by all persons whatsoever belonging to the aforesaid master-class of the hereinbeforementioned State of California; and that all members of the said Industrial Workers of the World who shall be found, detected, discovered or otherwise ascertained to be within the boundaries or confines of the hereinbeforementioned State of California, shall be immediately apprehended,

seized, possessed and incapacitated, and summoned and brought before the honorable presiding authority of the Hall of Hate. In accordance with which decree, aforesaid, the honorable grand jurors hereby indict, present and bind over the body of the defendant Bert Adams, who because of notorious radical affiliations and the habit of burning down barns is popularly known, designated and referred to as Red. (a sudden burst of red light all over the scene) And the honorable authority hereby commands that the body and person of the aforesaid Bert Adams, alias Red, shall be and hereby is presented, brought forward, summoned and made available for inquiry, examination, torment, intimidation, mutilation, starvation and harassment. Is the defendant Bert Adams present?

RED (defiantly): Here he is.

BAILIFF: Prisoner to the bar! (A police officer grabs RED and jerks him before the rail)

THE TIGER: Guilty or not guilty?

RED: Of what?

TIGER: Silence!

RED: But you asked me a question.

THE TIGER: Hold your tongue! (The policeman twists RED'S arm)

RED: Ouch!

BAILIFF: Order!

THE SPECTATORS (rising in their seats): Shame!

THE BULLS: Sit down! (they rise and smite the spectators over the heads with their clubs. - The spectators collapse)

THE TIGER: What is the defendant's plea?

THE JACK-IN-THE-BOX (popping open and declaiming rapidly): Your supremacy, the defendant demurs to the indictment, and according to the form of the statute made and provided in such cases, hereby states and shows to the honorable authority that the aforesaid charges and the matters therein contained are not sufficient in law for the plaintiff to hold and maintain his aforesaid action thereon against the hereinbeforementioned defendant, and that he, the said defendant, is not bound at this time and under these circumstances to make answer or response thereto. And furthermore we cite to the honorable authority the decision of the Propaganda Department of the Commercial Hierarchy, section four hundred and seventy-three of the revised pronouncements, volume sixty- three hundred and forty-two, page ten thousand three hundred and eighteen, paragraph seven ninety-eight, that the charges and allegations presented in the said indictment are not applicable under the present jurisdiction

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY: I object, your supremacy!

THE TIGER: Objection sustained.

JACK-IN-THE-BOX: But may it please...

TIGER: Demurrer overruled. What is your plea?

JACK-IN-THE-BOX: Not guilty.

RED: Hold on there!

TIGER: Silence!

RED: But I demand to know

TIGER: Hold your tongue!

RED (as the policeman twists his arm): Ouch!

BAILIFF: Order!

THE SPECTATORS (rising): For shame!

THE BULLS (hitting them over the heads): Sit down!

TIGER: We will hear the evidence.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: May it please the honorable authority, our first witness is an expensive and habitual prevaricator for the master-class, by whose testimony we propose to show that the defendant did feloniously, unlawfully, maliciously and of deliberate intent conspire, confederate and agree to think disrespectfully of the Shipowner Association of the hereinbeforementioned State of California...

JACK-IN-THE-BOX: I object!

THE TIGER: What is the ground of your objection?

JACK-IN-THE-BOX: According to section four hundred and twenty-two of the Revised Version of the Criminal



Syndicalism Elucidations, the word think is indefinitely defined...

TIGER: Objection overruled.

JACK-IN-THE-BOX: Exception, your supremacy.

TIGER: Exception noted. Proceed.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: What is your name?

IKE: Ike Snake.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: YOU know the defendant, Red Adams?

IKE: Sure, I know him.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: YOU have heard him speak disrespectfully of the master-class?

IKE: Sure.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: What have you heard him say?

IKE: I have heard him say that the District Attorney took his stenographer to a road-house.

THE SPECTATORS (in uproar): Hurrah!

BAILIFF: Silence in the Hall of Hate! (The bulls club the specators)

JACK-IN-THE-BOX: Your supremacy, I object to this testimony as irrelevant, obscene, humiliating and irrefutable. I ask that the testimony be stricken from the record.

TIGER: Objection sustained. It is so ordered. Proceed with the interrogation.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: What else have you heard him say?

IKE: I've heard him say that the workers should stick together.

JACK-IN-THE-BOX: I object, your authority.

TIGER: Upon what ground?

JACK-IN-THE-BOX: May it please this honorable supremacy, according to the decision of the Unimpeachable Infallibility, recorded in the Transcript of Technicalities, volume three forty-seven, page nine eighty-two, it appears that the definition of colloquial terms is subject to various interpretations, of which many remain still in controversy, and accordingly...

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Your supremacy, I refer to page six forty-seven, according to which the aforesaid devisers of technicalities declare that, all and singular the premises being submitted and the said pleadings being fully understood and duly considered, and mature deliberation being had thereupon, it is decreed that the decision, order, and adjudication aforesaid be hereby reversed, annulled and altogether held for naught. And furthermore...

JACK-IN-THE-BOX (becoming excited): May it please your authority, it is plain that this decision was only intended to be applicable in cases where the defendant had entered a

declaration of assumpsit, or an averment upon final judgment for default in ejectment...

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (enraged): Not at all, your supremacy! May it please the honorable infallibility, I cite the exact words of the decision—the aforesaid defendant may not prosecute or maintain the said writ of error, because after the judgment aforesaid in the form aforesaid, and before the day of suing out of the said writ of error, to-wit...

JACK-IN-THE-BOX: The argument is not rogatory, your authority, because in the replication by way of estoppels to the plea of abatement... (the DISTRICT ATTORNEY breaks in, and they both talk and gesticulate with furious excitement at the same time)

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: In the record and, proceedings aforesaid, and the giving of the judgment aforesaid, there is a manifest error, to-wit—that the declaration aforesaid, and the matters therein contained, are not sufficient in law for the said defendant to have or maintain the aforesaid" replication; and we therefore desire and hereby formally demand permission to enter a plea of release to assignment of error...

JACK-IN-THE-BOX: We maintain that before the committing of the grievance by the said defendant hereinafter next mentioned, the said plaintiff, at the special instance and request of said defendant, did severally and each for himself assert that he denied responsibility for the said error in implication, and he now asks of the honorable supremacy a mandatory injunction requiring the continuance of the plea in respondeat...

TIGER (pounds on the desk): Order! The indispensable authority, having duly considered the respective arguments of the learned counsel, will take this matter under advisement. Proceed.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: What else have you heard the defendant Adams say?

IKE: I've heard him say that the Hall of Hate is a necessary part of the master-class system.

THE SPECTATORS: So it is!

THE BAILIFF: Silence! (The bulls club them)

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Your authority, I submit to this honorable body that the above testimony is sufficient to render any member of the working-class liable to any penalty the master-class can inflict. Accordingly I move your honorable supremacy that the defendant be declared guilty. It costs a lot of money to run this show.

THE TIGER: Any one second the motion?

JACK-IN-THE-BOX: It's damn poor pay I'm getting. I second the motion.

TIGER: It is moved and seconded that the defendant be declared guilty. All employes of the Shipowners' Association will say aye.

CHORUS OF THE ANIMALS: Aye!

TIGER: It is so ordered.

THE WOBBLIES (springing up): No!

TIGER (furiously): Silence!

BAILIFF: Order in the Hall of Hate! (The bulls club them)

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Your supremacy, we point out the monstrous nature of the offense of which this defendant has been adjudged guilty. We ask the severest penalties, the limit of master-class implacability. We ask that he have his nose smashed and healed crooked. We ask that he be shut in the hole for as long as I see fit, and fed upon a diet without minerals, so that his teeth will rot, his hair will drop out, and his bones will go to pieces. We ask that he have a stone floor and no blankets, which will mean rheumatism. We ask that he be permitted no fresh air, and no thoughts except nightmares and psychology bunk: We ask that the rats shall eat his rosary. We ask that once a day the jailer shall bring him a pail full of stool-pigeons

TIGER: The application is granted. Let the sentence be executed—and if anything has already been done, let it be done again for good measure. The proceedings will now be ratified by all hundred per cent Americans singing in chorus.

THE ANIMALS (rise, face the audience, and sing with religious fervor):

My country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing.  
Long may our land be bright,  
With freedom's holy light;

Protect us by Thy might,  
Great God, our King.

RED (turning to the spectators): Sing, you jailbirds, sing!

THE SPECTATORS (rise, face the audience, and sing to the same tune. The bulls step around behind them and begin to club them, the clubs falling at each italicized word. The singers wince at each blow, and gradually collapse to the floor, but go on nevertheless. RED sings' with especial fervor):

*My job now is no more,  
My boss has slammed the door;  
What shall I do?  
Seems like my end is near,  
My guts feel awful queer—  
Where do we go from here?  
This is up to you!*

*No, I've not lost a leg.  
Why must I starve and beg?  
What shall I do?  
Where can the answer lurk?  
Why am I out of work,  
Gating on all this murk?  
This is up to you.*

CURTAIN

The audience sings:

You may ramble 'round the country anywhere you will,  
You'll always run across the same old Scissor Bill.  
He's found upon the desert, he is on the hill  
He's found in every mining camp and lumber mill  
He looks just like a human, he can eat and walk  
But you will find he isn't when he starts to talk  
He'll say: "This is my country," with an honest face,  
While all the cops they chase him out of every place.

CHORUS

Scissor Bill, he is a little dippy.  
Scissor Bill, he has a funny face.  
Scissor Bill should drown in Mississippi;  
He is the missing link that Darwin tried to trace.

Don't try to talk your union dope to Scissor Bill,  
He says he never organized and never will.  
He always will be satisfied until he's dead,  
With coffee and a doughnut and a lousy old bed.  
And Bill, he says, he'll get rewarded thousand fold,  
When he gets up to heaven on the streets of gold.

(CHORUS)

But I don't care who knows it, and right here I'll tell,  
If Scissor Bill is goin' to heaven, I'll go to hell.  
Scissor Bill, he wouldn't join the union,  
Scissor Bill, he says, "Not me, by heck!"  
Scissor Bill gets his reward in heaven,  
Oh! sure. He'll get it, but he'll get it in the neck.

## ACT IV

### SCENE I: In the Hole.

RED (whispers in the darkness): Nell! Nell! Where are you?

NELL (whispers): Ram here.

RED: Take my hand! I must know you are here.

NELL: Yes, dear.

RED: I can hardly move my hand; but I feel yours, the same as ever.

NELL: I won't leave you, beloved. (Faint light; RED lies on his back; NELL sits by his side, holding his hand)

RED: Nell, I'm happy!

NELL: Yes, Red; and I'm glad!

RED: I've won! They can never hurt me now!

NELL: Never! Never!

RED: I fought and suffered and hated—but now I'm free. I've conquered, not only my enemies, but myself. I am rid of fear.

NELL: Yes, beloved.



RED: Even fear of the rats, Nell! That was my last trouble. You know, when I began my hunger-strike, and my pain left me, I was so peaceful, and I thought that was the victory. But then came the horrible idea—I'm getting weaker and weaker, and some day the rats will eat me! Eat me alive! I feel them running over me— they come for the bread, you know. They learned to get in through the hole in the door, and I can't close it without suffocating. So I have to let them run over me; and, now —any time— they'll discover I'm too -weak to fight them.

NELL: The work you've done will live, Red, long after you are gone.

RED: I'm going soon—the way doesn't matter. I shall leave this old body—whether to the rats or to the worms.

NELL: You've fought the good fight.

RED: And I'm almost at the end. I think it's sixty days since I've eaten. I try to keep count, though I can't handle my threads any more. Fasting is a fine way to die.

NELL: Yes, dear.

RED: It's a marvel, how active my mind stays. I've roamed the whole universe—I've seen the most wonderful things—more than words can tell. Mankind is only at the beginning of its life, Nell. You and I have suffered its birth-pangs, and those who come after us will have an easier time.

NELL: They will bless you for it, Red.

RED: They may never know what I've done. But my little bit will never be missed.

NELL: You've accomplished more than you know, Red.

RED: One thing I still can't feel sure about—the children. I want to believe I did right.

NELL: It was the only thing possible, Red.

RED: HOW could I, a workingman, with no home and no job, raise two babies?

NELL: YOU couldn't.

RED: At least they're getting good care, Nell. They won't starve—and they might have, with me. They'll grow up to ride on the backs of the workers; but then—so many do it! The workers' backs are broad! The thing that worries me is this—they'll be taught to despise us—the people who gave them life.

NELL: They won't know anything about us, Red.

RED: They'll despise what we are. (A pause) That lawyer made it good and clear to me. He didn't make any bones about it, or spare a father's feelings. I must surrender all rights; I must go away and never see the children. These rich people would raise them, and the children would never have the humiliation of knowing their origin. That's the way to put us in our place, us working-stiffs!

NELL: Peace, beloved! Peace!

RED: I wrestled over it a week, Nell. Oh, how I loved those babies! Not because they were mine—but because they were yours! They were the seal of our love, they were all I had left of you! But I had to choose, and give my life to two babies, or else give it to the working-class.

NELL: Dear heart!

RED: I tried to forget. But I was like a murderer returning to the scene of his crime. I found out where the people lived, and I used to watch the children come out into the park. There was a governess, who didn't know me; she was polite when I spoke to her and the little ones. Oh, such a strange sensation, Nell! I used to go off crying. But then I saw she was getting to be afraid of me; she'd draw the children away from me, with some pretext or other. So I knew I'd be found out, and I went away.

NELL (crying softly): You had a greater work to do than raising two children, Red. You had to help educate a whole world.

RED: I've educated some. The migratory workers—the poor devils that have no homes, and wander about, hunting the job. I've taught them—their rights, and how to get them. Oh, Nell, such fine fellows! Loyal hearted fellows—I've wished you could have met them. Dear old Jake Apperson—he's built like a big oak tree, and by God, he's good to lean on! And Joe Gunther—they had him in the crate with me, God knows if they suffocated him, or what. And the Dominie—say, did I tell you about the Dominie? That old boy used to be the Bible-shark in a swell church in Philadelphia—regular

gilt-edge stuff. But he kicked over the traces—went to the bat for the reds, and they fired him. Poor old boy! But he stuck by his guns. Wherever there was a big strike, and they began to can the workers, he'd come preach to us. I'd sure like to see that old gent again.

NELL: He'd like to see you, I've no doubt.

RED: Yes; I've had a sort of conversion—I realize it more and more, what I'm talking is the regulation sky-pilot dope. By heck, it's true, when you're in a place like this, you've got your own soul, and God, or whatever it is—and that's all. You get no help from the world. You stretch out your thoughts to your friends—to your fellow-workers—but the thoughts don't reach. Fellow-workers! Where are you? (the light fades; the cell and curtains disappear; NELL exit) Where are my wandering boys tonight? Out in the jungles somewhere—frying hot dogs, making flapjacks, singing songs—and wondering what's become of poor old Red Adams in the hole! Sing, you jailbirds, sing! (He begins feebly to sing)

Where is my wandering boy tonight,  
The boy of his mother's pride?  
He's counting the ties with his bed on his back,  
Or else he is bumming a ride.

Oh, where is my boy tonight?  
Oh, where is my boy tonight?  
He's on the head end of an overland train—  
That's where your boy is tonight.

(Gradually the song is taken up by other voices; light begins to dawn)

## **SCENE II: The Jungles.**

A forest with tall trees, at night; in the center of the stage a small camp-fire.

At rise: JAKE APPERSON, JOE GUNTHER, MATT, PETE, JERRY and other workers sprawled on the ground, or sitting on their big rolls of blankets. Some are toasting frankfurter sausages on sticks, one mixing flapjacks in a tin can, and cooking them on a piece of tin beaten flat. Red is standing at the left, watching the scene unnoticed. The wobblies are singing:

I was looking for work, oh, judge, he said.  
Says, the judge, I have heard that before.  
So to the chain-gang, far off he goes,  
To hammer the rocks some more.

Oh, where is my boy tonight?  
Oh, where is my boy tonight?  
To strike many blows for his country he goes,  
That's where your boy is tonight.

JERRY: Is that a Joe Hill song?

JOE: The little red book don't say,

JERRY: That feller sure could write pomes!

JAKE: Yes; and while you're singing them, don't forget that he was stood up against a wall and shot by a firing squad.

JOE: Because he was a wob!

JAKE: That reason, and no other; he threatened the master-class!

JERRY: He won't be the last, neither.

JAKE: Not by many thousands.

MATT: Well, the hot dogs is ready.

PETE: No more ready than my stummick.

MATT: Move up, 'boes!

JERRY: This open-air life sure gives a feller the appetite.

PETE: I got something here to help it along, (he pulls a quart flask from his pocket) The real stuff, too!

JAKE: Let me see it.

PETE: Keep it circulatin'.

JAKE (takes bottle, uncorks and smells it, then starts to pour it on ground): Let Mother Nature drink it.

PETE: Hey! Fer Christ's sake!

JAKE (holding him back with his other hand): Stand back, fellow-worker!

PETE: The hell you say!

JAKE: If there's anybody in this crowd don't know the difference between a scissor-bill and a wobbly, here's where

he learns it. One pours this stuff into his gizzard, the other pours it into the sewer. You get me?

PETE (furiously): Damn you! Who learned you that Billy Sunday spiel?

JAKE: Hard knocks learned it to me. We got a social revolution to make, and if you think it can be made by drunkards, you got a bum steer. You boys that have been through the real fights will back me up—wasn't it so at Portland, and at Seattle—every time we get power the first thing we got to do is to raid the booze dens and smash the kegs and pour the stuff into the gutters? Ain't that so, Joe?

JOE: Yep, that's straight.

PETE: A fat chance we'd have to get drunk on a pint o' gin!

JAKE: Well, a rule's a rule, no booze in the jungles. You can't fight booze and fight capital! Wobs have got to study and think, not drink and loaf. - When we sing our songs, we want to mean every word, and be ready to act them.

JOE (a trifle sadly): I gave up my share of the booze.

JAKE (to PETE) Hell, man! Stop and think a moment! To spend good money for bad liquor, when you know there's hundreds of our boys suffering torments in jail, and no one but us to get 'em out!

PETE: What can we do about it?



JAKE: What can we do! And he calls himself a wob! You can spend your money for literature, and your time getting the scissor-bills to read it.

PETE: They don't want to read. They dunno how.

JAKE: Well, go into town and make a speech on a street-corner! Chain yourself to a lamp-post, so the cops can't drag you off till you've finished what you got to say!

RED (steps forward): Yes, fellow-workers, that's the talk!

ALL (chorus of cries): By God, it's Red! Red Adams! Hurrah! When did you blow in? How'd you get loose?

RED: Fellow-workers, I beg you, never forget the man in jail. It means so much to him to know that those outside remember him; that the crowd is working to keep the fight alive! Don't forget us, fellow-workers!

VOICES: We won't! We'll stick, Red!

RED: Keep at it till the last class-war prisoner is out! Till the last wage-slave is free—no matter where he is, in what part of the earth! Nail the I. W. W. preamble to the wall: "We are building the new society within the shell of the old."

VOICES: You're right! That's the talk! Hurrah!

RED: They'll punish you—they'll torture you. But the soul of the working-class is unbreakable there are no chains, no prison-walls, that can bind the will of the masses.

ALL: You're right, Red! Count on us! Hurrah!

RED: Brotherhood. Solidarity! That is our goal. The worker is nothing alone—but in the mass he is the world! Learn to forget self—learn to think, not as one person, but as part of the movement, as one cell in a great body. Put down greed and jealousy and fear. Cease to care what happens to yourselves. Live for the working-class! Live in the working-class, so that its life is yours, its joys, its hopes, its mission—to do away with capitalism.

ALL: Hurrah! Hurrah!

JAKE: Solidarity forever!

ALL (rise and sing with solemn fervor):

Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
And the Union makes us strong!

NELL (offstage, at the left, sings in a soft, melancholy voice; all turn and listen wondering):

The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,  
Are as a string of pearls to me;  
I count them over, every one apart,  
My rosary, my rosary!  
Each hour a pearl, each pearl a prayer

(Her voice dies)

RED (calls with tender longing): Nell!

NELL: Sweetheart!

RED: Come to me!

NELL (enters; radiant, charming, as in the days of her shining youth, all trace of care gone from her): Dearest one! (She takes RED'S hand—they are as two spirits in perfect understanding; the other men show no surprise, hut gaze enraptured at this pleasing vision)

RED (turns to the crowd): Fellow-workers, meet my wife. I've longed so to have you meet her! Nell, these are my friends! The heroes of the class-struggle!

NELL (stretches out her hands to them): Fellow- workers!

JAKE (with crude but ardent courtesy): Hats off to the ladies!

JOE (bowing low): Pleased to meet you, ma'am!

JERRY (inspired): The rebel girl!

ALL (sing with ardor):

That's the rebel girl!

That's the rebel girl!

To the working class she's a precious pearl!

She brings courage, pride and joy

To the fighting rebel boy!

We've had-girls before,

But we need some more

In the Industrial Workers of the World!

For it's great to fight for freedom

With a rebel girl!

(During the singing JAKE APPERSON moves over to RED and NELL; the light becomes centered upon them)

RED (with concentrated earnestness): Jake, there's a favor I want to ask.

JAKE: Yes, old man?

RED: You know my two children?

JAKE: Yes.

RED: The thought of them is my one trouble. I want you to find them, Jake—find some way to get next to them. Make them understand their father and his life. I don't want them to despise the workers.

JAKE: I understand, Red.

RED: Just because they're raised by rich people needn't mean they have no hearts. There are lots of young people that have understanding—boys and girls in the colleges. You know what I mean, Jake.

JAKE: Sure thing. I'll do my best.

RED: That's all I need to set me free. Nell and I are happy, Jake—oh, so happy, and at peace! (He takes the hand of JAKE)

DOMINIE (calling, off right): Hail, fellow-workers!

JERRY: Who's that?

JOE: Watch out, boys! It may be a trap!

PETE: The bulls are watchin' us!

JAKE: Who are you?

DOMINIE (off): The Dominie of the Wobblies!

ALL: The Dominie! By God, the Bible-shark! Hurrah! Hurrah!  
Welcome to our jungles!

JAKE (hastens to welcome the DOMINIE; at the same time RED and NELL step back into the shadows at left): We're glad to see you, Dominie.

DOMINIE (enters right): Glad to find you, fellow- workers!

JOE: Welcome to supper!

JAKE: Greetings in the name of the Workers' Commonwealth!

ALL: Hurrah! Hurrah!

DOMINIE: I bring you sad news, my friends. I fear it will spoil your feast. Red Adams

JAKE: What about him?

DOMINIE: He's dead.

JAKE: Dead!

DOMINIE: I've had word from the jail.

JOE: But man, he was here!

DOMINIE: What do you mean?

JOE: He was here just a minute ago!

JERRY: As big as life!

DOMINIE: That's impossible!

JOE: But we all saw him!

MATT: And heard him!

JERRY: He made us a speech!

DOMINIE: But—are you sure?

JOE: Why, of course! Don't we all know Red?

JERRY: And his wife!

JOE: Come to think of it, his wife is dead!

JERRY: Been dead for years!

MATT: Four years, he told me! (They stare at one another)

JOE: By Christ, it was his ghost!

JERRY: They were dead—the two of them!

JOE: It was a miracle!

MATT: He brought a message to us!

JERRY: His dying words!

PETE: Look! He's there still!

MATT: Both of- them!

JERRY: Look!

JOE: For God's sake! (A faint light on RED and NELL; the rest stare amazed)

DOMINIE (raises his hands): In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!

JAKE (imploring): Speak to us, Red!

JOE: Just a word, old pal!

JERRY: We'll never forget it!

RED (in a gentle, deeply moved tone): Fellow-workers! This is what I have learned from my suffering: in love and fellowship is deliverance for the workers. Man has been a beast, wandering alone, devouring his own kind, making torment for himself; but now comes the great day of solidarity. The purpose of your long agony is that the toilers shall become one being, one body with one mind, one soul. Be of good cheer, friends and fellow-workers, for when you suffer most, then is the time of great achievement, then are hearts brought together. It is only in white heat that steel can be smelted; it is only in persecution that solidarity can be forged. Rejoice, therefore, when men do revile you and torment you for the sake of the One Big Union; for then you fulfil your destiny, you become the sharp tool that, shall cut the chains from the workers' limbs. This message I give unto you; write it in your hearts, take it with you into the blackest dungeon—that even there is unity, even there, in the midst of affliction and despair, brotherhood works its miracles of life and resurrection. Remember my words.

JAKE: We'll remember!

RED: Stand firm, Industrial Workers of the World!

ALL: We stand!

RED: I bequeath to you my love and my vision. I cannot stay now—my time is come, my light fades. But fear not, I shall be with you in the spirit of the One Big Union, which is the hope of all mankind. (The light begins to fade)

JAKE: You are going?

RED: My word is spoken.

JAKE: YOU will come back?

RED: I live in your solidarity.

JOE: Speak once more! A last word, old man!

RED: I have one fight more before my deliverance. One more agony (with rising excitement) It's the rats! The rats are eating my eye-balls! (a crashing of thunder, and sudden darkness; the cell and curtains come into place. A long silence. The JAILER is heard opening the door of the corridor; the light is turned on, and the slide is unbolted and shoved open)



### **SCENE III: In the Hole.**

RED lies in a crumpled heap on the floor.

JAILER (speaking from behind the cell door): Shove out your slop-pail. (Silence) You hear me? Shove out your pail. (Silence) What's the matter in there? (Silence) Hell! What's up now? (Raising his voice) Hey, you, get me straight! If you put me to the trouble of gettin' the key to this cell, by God, I'll hammer the top of your nut off! (Silence) Last warning, now! Hand out your slop-pail, and no funny stuff! (Silence) All right, I'll go for the key. If you ain't dead, by Jesus Christ, you'll wish you were! (He stands listening; faint voices are heard singing from upper part of jail)

We're here from mine and mill and rail,

We're here from off the sea;

From coast to coast we make the boast Of Solidarity.

(The JAILER is heard going away; the light is switched off, and the corridor door is heard to shut. The cell and curtains disappear, and light dawns. The singing swells to a loud chorus)

#### **SCENE IV: In the Forest.**

The same spot as in Scene II, but ten years in the future. The same trees and forest background, but in the center of the stage, in place of the campfire, is a monument, with Red Adams standing upon it as a statue. There is a crowd about the base. The pedestal consists of two broad steps, upon the first of which stand JAKE, JOE, PETE, JERRY and MATT, with red sashes and badges. On the higher step is the DOMINIE, in priestly vestments, a youth and a girl on either side of him, in festive attire and holding a wreath of flowers. All are singing:

In California's darkened dungeons  
For the O.B.U.  
Remember you're outside for us  
While we're in here for you.

We laugh and sing, we have no fear,  
Our hearts are always light.  
We know that every wobbly true  
Will carry on the fight.

In California's darkened dungeons  
For the O.B.U.  
Remember you're outside for us  
While we're in here for you.

THE DOMINIE (beginning a speech): Fellow-workers! In the name of the Industrial Commonwealth! We are here upon an errand of love, to revere the memory of one who gave His

life for the freedom we now enjoy. Upon this hallowed spot, where first His spirit appeared to His disciples, and where His message of brotherhood was handed down to posterity— here we assemble with prayer and hymns, to pledge our loyalty to the new dispensation. What more fitting touch than that these tribute wreaths should be laid at His feet by His own children, whom He so dearly loved, to whom His thoughts turned even in His last agony? They were torn from Him by the cruel class system; but in spite of mental barriers, they fought their way out to His faith in solidarity and social justice, they stand here today as living testimony to the power of Truth, which overthrows all the schemes of its enemies, which smashes the doors of all cells and razes the walls of all dungeons. Fellow-workers, the Man whose statue shadows us today was one of the fathers of the Industrial Commonwealth; He lives as one of the heroes of the Great Deliverance. In love and gratitude we bare our heads, and join together in singing.

ALL (sing):

Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
And the Union makes us strong!

(The light fades to darkness, and the cell, curtains and corridor come into place. The chorus dies to a murmur, heard from the upper parts of the jail)

## **SCENE V: In the Hole.**

RED lies as before. The sound of the corridor door is heard, the light is switched on, and then the door of the cell is opened. The JAILER enters, followed by a second jailer. They turn over the body of RED.

FIRST JAILER: Christ A'mighty! He's a goner!

SECOND JAILER: Sure enough!

FIRST JAILER: Look at that! The rats have eaten his eyes!

SECOND JAILER: Holy Christopher, the Chief will be wild about that!

FIRST JAILER: Yes, and I'll be the one he'll land on!

SECOND JAILER: Didn't you guess anything wrong?

FIRST JAILER: Hell, no! He shoved out his slop-pail every day.

SECOND JAILER: He's a skeleton! He starved himself to death!

FIRST JAILER: He took in the bread all right.

SECOND JAILER: The rats must have eat it!

FIRST JAILER: A quick funeral he'll have, I make-my guess.

SECOND JAILER: Yes! The soreheads outside would raise a sweet stink if they ever got this story!

PRISONERS (singing, offstage):

Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
And the Union makes us strong!

(The singing continues faintly through the following dialogue)

FIRST JAILER: Hell! That everlasting singing gets on my nerves!

SECOND JAILER: That new bunch they brought in!

FIRST JAILER: The devil himself can't stop them. I heard the Chief say he'd turn the reserves loose and club the heads off 'em.

SECOND JAILER (shakes his head): What do you suppose those birds have got that makes 'em take punishment like that?

FIRST JAILER: Search me—I can't figure it out. But it's got my goat, I can't stand bein' round here! (Music grows louder; he shouts above it) Singin', singin' all the time! (Shaking his clenched fist) Stop your damn singin'! Stop it, I say!

SECOND JAILER (in frenzy): To hell with your singin'! (They turn towards the right, whence comes a Man's voice, singing)

It is we who plowed the prairies;  
built the cities where they trade;

Dug the mines and built the workshops;  
endless miles of railroad laid.

Now we stand, outcast and starving,  
'mid the wonders we have made;  
But the Union makes us strong.

(They turn left, frightened, as if seeing, ghosts; another.  
voice sings)

All the world that's owned by idle drones  
is ours and ours alone.  
We have laid the wide foundations,  
built it skywards stone by stone.  
It is ours, not to slave in,  
but to master and to own,  
While the Union makes us strong.

(The chorus swells to a loud roar)

Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
Solidarity forever!  
And the Union makes us strong!

(The two men put their fingers into their ears and run out of  
the cell in a kind of panic, slamming the door. The singing  
continues)

They have taken untold millions  
that they never toiled to earn,  
But without our brain and muscle  
not a single wheel can turn;

We can break their haughty power,  
gain our freedom when we learn  
That the Union makes us strong.

## CURTAIN

The audience sings:

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

And the Union makes us strong!

## POSTSCRIPT

For the benefit of those readers who ask to what extent conditions pictured in this play really exist:

The impulse to write the play came as a result of an experience in the strike of the Marine Transport Workers at San Pedro, California, the harbor of Los Angeles, in May, 1923. The writer was arrested with three friends and held in jail “incommunicado” for eighteen hours, for the offense of having attempted to read the Constitution of the United States, while standing on private property in San Pedro, with the written permission of the owner, and after due notice to the mayor of the city and to the police authorities. Those who care to know about this strike and the conditions leading up to it will find an account in the opening chapters of “The Goslings.” In the “Nation,” for June 6, 1923, they will find the writer’s letter to the chief of police of Los Angeles, who did the arresting.

In this strike six hundred men were jailed in one night, for the offense of manifesting by cheering and singing their sympathy with the strike. Scene II of Act I, portraying conditions in the “tanks,” is an exact account of what happened in the police station at San Pedro, and in the various city jails of Los Angeles. The “Dominie” in the play is the Reverend George Chalmers Richmond, formerly rector of Old St. John’s Episcopal Church, Philadelphia; Dr. Richmond



was arrested under the conditions described, and behaved in the jail as described. Subsequently the various abuses of prisoners and violations of law by the police were investigated by a committee of the Ministers' Association of Los Angeles. Before this committee, and in the presence of the writer, Police Captain Plummer, in charge at San Pedro, stated: "I broke that strike." Before this same committee one member of the I.W.W. testified how he had been personally struck in the face again and again, and otherwise beaten, by the then chief of police of Los Angeles, and several other men testified to having witnessed this and other brutalities. The police authorities admitted in a formal report that they had stopped the singing of the prisoners by shutting off all ventilation in the tanks. They denied having turned on the steam heat, as a large number of the prisoners asserted had been done.

It is only fair to the police authorities of Los Angeles to state that exactly similar things have been done and exactly similar conditions prevail in jails and prisons throughout the United States. If anyone feels doubt on this question, he is advised to read "In Prison," by Kate Richards O'Hare, a woman who served several years in a federal prison for the crime of having expressed an unpopular political conviction. The reader is also advised to familiarize himself with a book entitled, "Crucibles of Crime," by Joseph F. Fishman, who as prison inspector for the United States government made over sixteen thousand visits of inspection to prisons and jails throughout the United States. When the reader has finished these two books he will have less doubt about incidents in this play.

In order to avoid misunderstanding, the writer wishes to state that he does not belong to the I.W.W., and never has belonged to it; as a Socialist, he disapproves of the I.W.W. program, and has never hesitated to make that disapproval known. But he stands for the right of all groups of men and women to voice their political and social opinions; and his play is an appeal to 'the American people' to re-establish the most fundamental of constitutional rights, free speech, free press, and free assemblage.



San Pedro Court House where IWW strikers were jailed during the 1923 maritime strike. Jailings inspired Upton Sinclair to write his play "The Singing Jailbirds." The building was demolished in the late 1920s.

At the time this play is completed, May, 1924, there are in the prisons of the United States 114 men and women, whose only offense —the only offense charged— has been the holding and advocating of certain political ideas. Four or five years ago there were between 1,000 and 1,500 such

prisoners. In the State of California, "land of orange-groves and jails" where this play is written, there are 97 men now in jail, against whom no act of violence has been proved or even charged. Most of these men are in solitary confinement as I write these words. In July, 1923, the writer, accompanied by Mrs. Kate Crane Gartz, a woman well known for her efforts against the Criminal Syndicalism law, and Mr. Alexander Marky, editor of "Pearson's Magazine," paid a visit to San Quentin prison, and protested to the warden against the holding of some three score political prisoners, members of the I.W.W., in solitary confinement. One of these prisoners had broken down under the ferocious conditions of labor in the jute-mill, and the others had declared a strike in sympathy, and had been thrown into the "hole." All pleas on behalf of these men were without avail.

Recently the writer addressed a letter to this same warden, asking for information as to the number of men who had been in solitary confinement during the past two years, and the periods of such confinement. The warden replied that records were kept and were in charge of the State Board of Prison Directors, who might give out the facts if they saw fit. A letter to the board requesting this information was "ordered on file"—that is, the request was denied. A letter to the governor of the state brought a refusal to direct the board to furnish it. The secrets of California's prison-hells are withheld from the public eye by the representatives of the ruling class now in office.

Do political prisoners die in solitary confinement? Not very often; for the reason that their dying condition is discovered, and they are taken to some hospital, thus enabling the prison' authorities to deny prison deaths. That is what happened to Paul Bourgon, I.W.W. who was among the six hundred men swept into jail at San Pedro; he was confined in a damp cell, with no blanket, and therefore contracted pneumonia, and was taken to a hospital a few hours before his death. The secretary of the General Defense Committee of Chicago writes that six political prisoners have died in prison, and five went insane, one while in solitary confinement. He states:

“Our records of men in solitary confinement show that hundreds were thrown in for from three to fifteen days, while the following men did terms ranging from two to four years: Jack Walsh and Charles Plhan, 2 years; Quinlan, 2 ½ years; Lorton and Hamilton, 3 years; Roy Connors, 4 years. I have no data at all on Folsom or San Quentin. All of the above were members of the I.W.W... I might add that William Weyh died of consumption contracted in prison eighteen months after he was released. The same applies to Tomas Martinez.”

From the secretary of the General Defense Committee in San Francisco comes the following letter:

“It is impossible to estimate the exact number of class war prisoners who have died and gone insane in the prisons in the United States. No record, to my knowledge, has been kept of this. I can only report to you the number that I recall.

“In the Chicago case in 1918, one man went insane in Cook County jail while awaiting trial. None died. In the Sacramento case four died in the Sacramento County jail of influenza. Their deaths can be laid to the crowded condition of the jail, the insufficient and poor quality of the food and the total lack of bedding and beds. These men were forced to lie on the concrete floor for months. One man of the Sacramento group went insane after he arrived in Leavenworth. He was driven insane by the terrible third degree he underwent in jail in California. In the Wichita case two men went insane due to the terrible conditions of the county jail at Wichita, Kansas. One of these men twice attempted to destroy himself, but was prevented by the prompt action of his fellow workers.

“One political prisoner, Ricardo Magon, died in Leavenworth federal prison. Comrade Magon’s death was due to the lack of medical attention in prison. Magon had many times asked for a competent physician to examine him. The prison authorities repeatedly refused to allow a physician to examine him, nor would they give him treatment themselves. Attorney-General Daugherty publicly stated that there was nothing wrong with Magon. About two weeks after the statement by the Attorney- General, Magon died of angina pectoris.

“Seven class war prisoners spent some three years in solitary confinement in Leavenworth prison. They were repeatedly beaten by Negro ‘sluggers’ at the instigation of the deputy warden. One of these men was kept nearly four years in solitary confinement. Another political prisoner in

Leavenworth was handcuffed to a door in solitary confinement for a period of sixty-five days.

“In San Quentin the number of class war prisoners who were sent to solitary is appalling. The men were repeatedly forced to go on strike as a protest against the unjust treatment accorded them. There have been six strikes involving a large number of men. The largest number involved at one time was 86, at another time 65 went on strike and were put in isolation. The other strikes involved a smaller number, of men, but only because there were fewer victims of the Criminal Syndicalism law in prison. Most of the times the men were sent to solitary in San Quentin they remained there thirty days, but on one occasion they remained there forty-four days.

“As a result of the brutal treatment accorded them in solitary confinement one man, Abraham Shocker, committed suicide. This fellow-worker was unable to endure the suffering entailed in solitary confinement, and not wishing to embroil his fellow-workers in any more trouble on his account he decided to kill himself. His body was found hanging in the cell. A note explaining his act was found by the dead body. One man was kept for several weeks in solitary confinement in Folsom prison and was brutally beaten by prison guards. Two men were kept in solitary confinement for over two years in Walla Walla. They are still in solitary.”

From the secretary of the General Defense Committee in Los Angeles comes the following:

“Owing to the constant raids on this office and the continual removal of all records, reports and files I cannot be exact, but I assure you the estimates I give are conservative. Since January 1, 1923, there have been more than 1,200 arrests in this city for I. W. W. organization activity. Ninety-three men have been charged and brought into court for Criminal Syndicalism. Of these 9 were acquitted, 28 dismissed, 17 not yet tried, and the rest are in San Quentin or Folsom.

“The balance of the arrests have been on suspicion of Criminal Syndicalism or trumped-up charges, such as vagrancy, blocking traffic, or picketing. No one actually died in jail, though four men, Paul Bourgon, Harry Lindsay, Capt. Griffin, and Hudson died as a result of jail conditions. Peter Lustica, a onetime defendant in a Criminal Syndicalism case here, and arrested eighteen times afterward and never tried, has gone insane and is now in the hospital at Norwalk. He has a fixed idea that everybody is a stool-pigeon and persecuting him.

“Twenty-five of our members have been beaten up while in jail here. One has contracted an incurable disease as a result of confinement under barbarous conditions. The police are now very particular whom they throw in, and if anyone complains of his health they have him examined, and if that examination bears out the prisoner’s assertions he is immediately turned loose with a volley of oaths.

“All jails here have dungeons. Those of the city jail are particularly vile. I understand that one has a concealed shower-bath. Two of our members were put in this dungeon

over night and there was a couple of inches of water standing on the floor.

One of our members, H. T. Collins, reports that he has seen the 'sapping' cell with the leg chains riveted on the floor and fresh blood on the walls. The torture methods of the police are well known to all criminals, many of whom shoot it out with the arresting officer rather than go to jail. Several times the prisoner taken after one of these shootings has given as an excuse that he would be beaten up. Really members of the I. W. W. are much better treated than the ordinary run of prisoners, but once in a while the police go wild because the I. W. W. will not bow down to their petty authority."

Also the reader will be interested in the following letter from Carl Haessler, now managing editor of "The Federated Press," and during the World War a political objector and military prisoner:

"For one year while in Alcatraz military prison in San Francisco Bay I paid daily visits to all the prisoners in solitary confinement or in the iron man-cages there, except for two weeks: when I was myself confined in a solitary cell there. My prison job was bread-cutter, which included taking the daily ration to the men in solitary. Under army rules approved by the War Department, each man was entitled to 18 ounces of bread and as much water as he could drink per day. No other food was permitted. I used to smuggle other things in and was caught at it by a guard after eight months of success. The penalty was two weeks in the hole myself.



“Regulations apart from food varied at the caprice of the authorities. At one time only one blanket was allowed to each solitary and Alcatraz is always snappily cold at night, even in summer. But when I took my turn the rule was two blankets by day and five by night. They were thin army blankets and we had to sleep on the concrete floor. Mice ran over my face as I lay on the floor after things had quieted down, but the rats which men claimed to have encountered in the underground dungeons did not come to the ground floor where I was held. By day the Cell was in as complete darkness as the authorities could make it. The air holes in some of the cells were so small that not even a cigarette could be pushed through, and that incidentally is how I got caught at my charitable work. Each cell had a wash-bowl, and toilet-bowl, but no light or air except what seeped through the cracks in the door. A medical officer came once a day to see how we were, and at my request the chaplain came once, but under protest. I had asked for him to relieve the monotony, though he knew I was an atheist.

“The rules provided that 14 days was the limit for one turn in solitary, which had to be followed by 14 days on regular diet before another 14 days was permitted on bread and water in the dark cell. A total of 84 days was the limit in solitary in any one year. Nevertheless, particularly in Fort Leavenworth, this was evaded by a punishment known as isolation, which differed from solitary only in that bread and water was supplemented by some other food, but the confinement continuously in a cell persisted. At both prisons the practice of shackling men to the cell door by the wrists, sometimes above the man’s head, was continued until abolished by

Secretary Baker's order after politicals like Evan Thomas had been shackled thus for their sympathetic strike on behalf of the Russian religious objectors.

"At Alcatraz the underground dungeon to which I used to bring bread and water had no toilet arrangements except a bucket. The dungeon was part of the old Spanish fortress and now formed part of the foundation of the cell house. Here is where the Hofer brothers contracted scurvy while standing freezing in their underwear, because they would not put on the uniform that lay on the floor beside them, and had been unlawfully issued to them by the prison authorities in place of the prison garb prescribed by regulation.

"For weeks also I daily saw the men placed in the iron maidens or cages in which prisoners were placed so that they could, neither sit, kneel or turn around. At first they were put there eight hours by day and in solitary on bread and water the remaining 16 hours, but the great outcry in the country in 1920 when this was instituted at Alcatraz modified the practice into eight hours in the cage with release at meal hours for regular meals and the ordinary springless iron cot at night. I saw politicals clubbed, kicked and tossed to the ground from a wagon like a bag of potatoes by the prison guards.

"I saw a soldier who had run away with the prisoner he was supposed to guard slowly tortured to death under the Alabama sun in midsummer in 1918—a 60 lb. ball and chain on his leg and denied any shade while he lay between two

rings of barbed wire with medical attention, for which he begged, refused. When a doctor was finally brought through a ruse and the man taken to the Camp Sheridan hospital, he died the same night of “typhoid,” the report stated, but really of torture by exposure. He had been on bread and water and had to sleep with the ball and chain. He was delirious at night. He was not a political but a plain, good-natured Indiana soldier, fond of his friend whom he had been foolishly placed to guard.”

Finally, the writer has a long letter from Ammon A. Hennacy, who was a conscientious objector in solitary confinement for long periods, and who afterwards wrote out a sketch of his feelings during this time. It so happens that Mr. Hennacy’s letter was not written until “Singing Jailbirds” was completed; otherwise the reader might have assumed that the spiritual content of the play had been derived from this prisoner. ^ Passages are quoted, with the idea that some readers may be interested to see how imagination and reality check up:

“Bread and water, I wonder how long it will last. This corn bread is soggy and I can only eat part of it. I wish I had something to read. I sent word to the chaplain for a Bible, but did not Mel one... I guess I am to stay in here three months because I helped to persuade 900 out of 1,100 men in the second mess to stay away from dinner Friday noon rather than eat the rotten fish which they handed to us. The warden says I am put here for plotting to kill officers, but that, of course, is a frame-up in order that the other prisoners will not sympathize with me... I have commenced

to walk four and one-half miles a day across my cell; take some exercises, and read certain hours... Tore off some buttons the other day so as to have something to do to sew them on again, and glad to talk to old Jackson (the jailer) and ask him for them... Have said good-morning to Jackson several times, but he only grunts; guess it hurts him —lately he has refused to answer at all, but scowls at me— what’s the use anyway?... I lay for hours and try to remember the names of my friends on the outside, arrange their names alphabetically, and by states, also to name states and bound them, name cities, in planning a trip before the next war comes for revolutionary propaganda... Well, my three months are nearly up and I’ll soon be out again. It’s not so bad in here when you get used in it and know your time is short. A fellow gets used to anything... (Six weeks later.) Well, I get out of this hole tomorrow; wonder how many letters I will get—now I can write to my wife and the folks... The warden came in a few minutes ago and said I would get out tomorrow if I would promise to quit my plotting to kill officers. I laughed at him and he admitted that this was all a frame-up and that they put me in because of the strike. He said he wanted to ask me a question and that whether I answered it or not I would get out tomorrow just the same. He wanted to know if I had sneaked any letters out of prison before I got in the hole. I replied that I had and he wanted to know who sneaked them out for me, but I wouldn’t tell him. Then he flew into a rage and said I would stay in the hole ten more months until my time was up unless I told on my friend... (A month later.) The warden came in the other day and with tears in his eyes spoke of his belief in the Golden

Rule, of how he pitied my mother who had not heard from me and how he had written to her, that he could have put me in the hole long before he did but that he was a Christian. I believed him for the moment —then when he asked me to practice the Golden Rule with him and ‘squeal’ on my friend who sent my letters out I saw through his game and said I would practice the Golden Rule with my friend first—then he got mad and went out... I heard them beat up Popoff in the next cell to me and can now hear the chains rattle each morning and evening as they chain him to the bars and leave him hang for eight hours... They beat up Popoff again, I could hear his cries—damn such guards. Oh, what’s the use of trying to do anything, why not end it all and be done with it —my time in here is not half up yet and I may have another year back in the hole. Dunn said 7440, only two numbers away from me, died of the flu and that thirty others had died in a week. What’s the use of living anyway... (Later) The deputy said that I was looking pale and would not last long from the flu if I did not get fresh air and wanted me to squeal and get out... Damn them, I see through their games and am not going to give in. If Berkman did three years I can do two... Heard them beat up Popoff again. I am going to hold my temper and not give them a chance to kill me... Was reading the Sermon on the Mount the other day and tried to put myself in the warden’s place. I guess he can’t help doing as he does, but that does not help me any... I have been in the hole seven and a half months now. The warden and the superintendent of federal prisons, Duehay, and his secretary came in to my cell today and said that the Espionage act had been repealed; that the war was

over, and that now I could say anything that I pleased against the war, the government, and the president. Then they called me a coward, spoke against Lenin, Debs, etc. I defended my ideas, but did not get angry. Later they asked me to tell who sent the letter out for me, saying that such a person might sneak in bombs and dope and cause loss of life in the prison, for which I would be indirectly responsible. I told them that my friend would not sneak in such stuff... Finally they said that they admired me for not 'squealing,' and intimated that they had just been trying me to see if I were honest, and that they needed honest people in the government service to track down real criminals, and that when I got out there would be room for me in that service—also that there was no use in my suffering in the hole and ruining my health to better the prison conditions of a lot of bums who did not appreciate my efforts for them. When they later asked me to tell on my friend I laughed at them and said they would have to kid me quite a bit before I would squeal on my friend... I am called into the office and told that they have changed their minds, and that I am not to be released the next day, but am to stay in the hole for five more months... I commence to read the Bible over the sixth time and determine to stay the five months and not allow it to worry me. I determine that I am not going to use violence and hatred, for it only leads to more violence and more hatred... The next day I am released from solitary. Then after seven weeks in a cell in the Tower in Leo Frank's old cell with three murderers, one of them condemned, and after seven and a half months in Delaware, Ohio, county jail, and with the opportunity to read and study and rationalize

upon my experience in the hole, I arrive at the absolute pacifist stand for myself. I had not determined at that time its application to the radical movement or to the world at large. If I had been released from the hole during the first five months I would have been an active bomb-throwing Anarchist, I believe, for I was angered by the brutality around me. But the continual solitary forced me to think the thing out to its logical conclusion.”

## POST SCRIPTUM

As this play is being put into type, an unusual incident occurs.

The new chief of police of Los Angeles summons a conference of his captains to discuss the increase of crime, and invites a committee from the American Civil Liberties Union to consult with them. At the end of the discussion Police Captain Plummer stands up and speaks. This is the officer who was in command at San Pedro last year, and who stated: "I broke that strike." He now states as follows —the substance of his remarks being taken down and certified by Rev. Clinton J. Taft, director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Los Angeles, and Mr. J. H. Ryckman, an attorney of Los Angeles. Their summary reads:

"Somebody has been making holy asses of us policemen. Last summer at the time of the harbor strike I went to see old man Hammond. He told me to take a bunch of my men, arm them with clubs, go up on Liberty Hill and break the heads of the wobblies. I replied that if we did that they would burn down his lumber piles. 'They will do it anyhow,' he answered. But they didn't. Not an overt act have they committed.

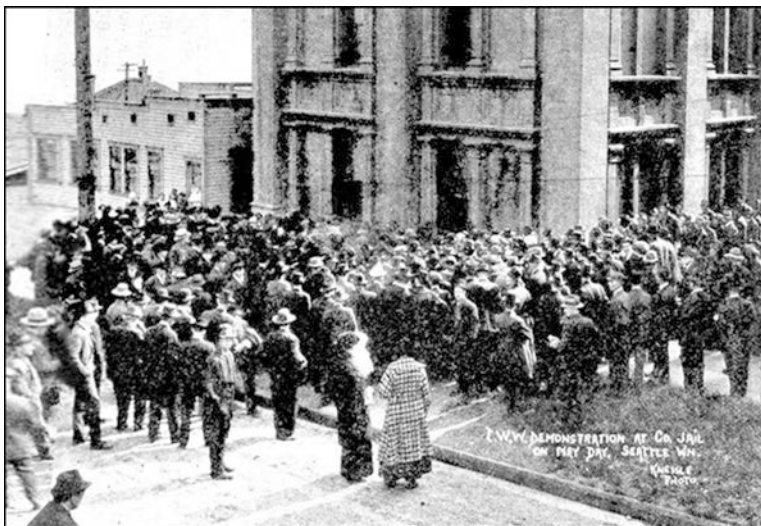
"The police who raided the I.W.W. hall in San Pedro recently and threw that piano out in the-rain did commit an overt act, however. In fact, we policemen have been made the



tools of big business interests of this town who want to run things. I'm ashamed of myself for consenting to do their dirty work.

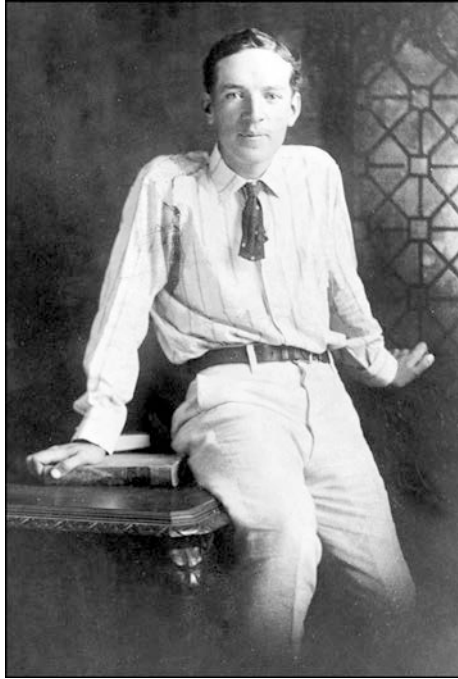
"It's a good thing I'm not a wobbly. If I were and had been kept in San Quentin for fourteen months unjustly, as have the wobblies just discharged because of a reversal of their case in the lower court by decision of the appellate division, I would come out a direct actionist, and hell would be to pay. These wobblies are better men than we are—they show more self-control.

"The big fellows in this town can do anything they like and get away with it. But the workers can't even think what they want to think without being thrown into jail. This sending men to the pen for things done by wobblies seven or eight years ago is all wrong —it's an outrage."



1917. Seattle. The King County Court House. Singing to the Prisoners of the massacre of Everett.

And a few days after this speech was made, a mob of three hundred men, including policemen and sailors, raids a peaceful entertainment held in the I.W.W. hall at San Pedro, and beats those present with baseball bats and clubs. One little girl is thrown into a vat of boiling coffee, so that the flesh is cooked from her limbs, and she is in hospital, not expected to live. A number of men are dragged into automobiles, carried out into the country, and tarred and feathered. Repeated appeals to the police authorities in this matter result in promises of arrests but no arrests—excepting for two made by victims of the raid, who met their assailants on the street and escorted them to the police station. Several weeks have passed, but the most determined agitation on the part of the American Civil Liberties Union cannot persuade the public authorities to give any protection to the working people at San Pedro, or any pretense of justice.



## UPTON SINCLAIR

AMERICAN NOVELIST

WRITTEN BY: Lauren Coodley

Upton Sinclair, in full Upton Beall Sinclair, (born September 20, 1878, Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.—died November 25, 1968, Bound Brook, New Jersey), prolific American novelist and polemicist for socialism, health, temperance, free speech, and worker rights, among other causes. His classic muckraking novel *The Jungle* (1906) is a landmark among naturalistic proletarian work, one praised by fellow socialist Jack London as “the Uncle Tom’s Cabin of wage slavery.”

Sinclair's parents were poor but his grandparents wealthy, and he long attributed his exposure to the two extremes as the cause of his socialist beliefs. He graduated from the College of the City of New York in 1897 and did graduate work at Columbia University, supporting himself by writing jokes for newspapers and cartoonists and adventure stories for pulp magazines. His first four books—King Midas (1901, first published the same year as Springtime and Harvest), Prince Hagen (1903), The Journal of Arthur Stirling (1903), and a Civil War novel Manassas (1904)—were well received by the critics but did not sell well.

His public stature changed dramatically in 1905, after the socialist weekly Appeal to Reason sent Sinclair undercover to investigate conditions in the Chicago stockyards. The result of his seven-week investigation was *The Jungle*, first published in serial form by Appeal to Reason in 1905 and then as a book in 1906. Though intended to create sympathy for the exploited and poorly treated immigrant workers in the meatpacking industry, the novel instead aroused widespread public indignation at the low quality of and impurities in processed meats and thus helped bring about the passage of federal food-inspection laws. As Sinclair commented at the time, "I aimed at the public's heart and by accident I hit it in the stomach."

*The Jungle* became a best seller, and Sinclair used the proceeds to open Helicon Hall, a cooperative-living venture in Englewood, New Jersey. This experiment was inspired by a model developed by feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman. The building was destroyed by fire (possible arson, because of his socialist views) in 1907, whereupon the project was abandoned.

Sinclair and his second wife, Mary Craig Kimbrough, moved to Pasadena, California, in 1916. His muckraking novels continued with *King Coal* (1917), which is about the poor working conditions in the mining industry. With *The Brass Check* (1919), Sinclair tackled the financial interests and supposed "free press" principles of major newspapers and the "yellow journalism" they often engaged in to attract readers. His novel *Oil!* (1927) was based on the Teapot Dome Scandal (it loosely served as the basis of the Academy Award-winning film *There Will Be Blood* [2007]), and *Boston* (1928) was inspired by the

Sacco-Vanzetti case. His searing novel *The Wet Parade* (1931; film 1932) is about the tragedy of alcoholism, and *The Flivver King* (1937) tells the story of Henry Ford and how “scientific management” replaced skilled workers in the automotive industry.

During the economic crisis of the 1930s, Sinclair organized the EPIC (End Poverty in California) socialist reform movement and registered as a Democrat. His 1934 bid for the governorship of California—he ran on the EPIC platform, which featured proposals for state-administered economic relief and reforms throughout a number of societal institutions—was his most successful political campaign. (He had run for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1906 and 1920, for the U.S. Senate in 1922, and for the governorship of California in 1926 and 1930, each time running as a Socialist, and each time he lost.) The campaign was surprisingly popular, helping to build and push to the left the Democratic Party in California and to inspire Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal programs, but once again he lost. He was defeated by a joint propaganda campaign, orchestrated by the conservative political and business establishment, newspaper moguls, and Hollywood studio bosses, who brazenly portrayed him as an American communist. Using admen, media consultants, and assorted “dirty tricks,” the anti-Sinclair battle has been called one of the most well-orchestrated smear campaigns in American history; bogus interviews were staged and run as legitimate newsreels in movie theatres, a forerunner of “fake news” and the attack ads on television decades later. Sinclair recounted the campaign in *I, Candidate for Governor: And How I Got Licked* (1935) and said about his experience in politics, “The American People will take Socialism, but they won’t take the label. I certainly proved it in the case of EPIC. Running on the Socialist ticket I got 60,000 votes, and running on the slogan to ‘End Poverty in California’ I got 879,000.”

Inspired by a tour of the northern California redwoods in 1936, Sinclair wrote a children’s story called *The Gnomobile*. It was one of the first books for children with an environmentalist message, and it was later adapted as a film by Walt Disney in 1967. Sinclair again reached a wide audience with his Lanny

Budd series, 11 contemporary historical novels, beginning with *World's End* (1940), that were constructed around an antifascist hero who witnesses all the events surrounding World War II. For *Dragon's Teeth* (1942), the third novel in the series, about the Nazi takeover of Germany in the 1930s, Sinclair won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1943.