CHAPTER - IV

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In 1895, at the age of nineteen, Jack London took out, his red membership card, in the Oakland branch, of Daniel De Leon's Socialist labour party. London had enthusiastically accepted the social analysis of the 'Communist Manifesto'. He became convinced of the inevitability of class-war, imminent downfall of capitalism, the victory of the proletariat, and the necessity of revolutionary action for achieving these aims. Despite the injustice, that prevailed, he never failed to lose hope, in the eventual brotherhood of man.

As Jack London had himself experienced the appalling conditions of child labour and exploitation of the workmen, under the capitalist regime, he identified himself with the working class. Jack London has done, for the portrayal of the working class, in the artistic literature of that time, for more than any other writer in U.S.A. He became the first truly significant and influential writer in U.S.A., who was a man of the people, and who defended the interests of the
proletariat. According to Carl Sandburg, "It is the common man, for whom Jack pleads and he wants it understood, that he too is a common man."

Jack London wrote of his own proletarian life and experience, with vivid reality and exposed the evils of the capitalist society. *Martin Eden*, *The people of the abyss* and *Iron Heel*, are principal examples of London's class consciousness, and his proletarian background. His best writing is found in the realistic portraits of minor figures, who are proletarian. According to his own statement, socialism is the only outlet for art and artists. Maxim Gorky saw in London, a writer, who had paved the way for proletarian literature. In January, 1929, issue of the *New Masses*, Martin Russak wrote, "Jack London, was the first really proletarian writer of genius, in America. Factory workers, farm hands, seamen, miners, newsboys, read him. He is the most popular writer of the American working class."

According to Foner, "London poured into his social writings, all the pain
of his life, the fierce hatred of the bourgeoisie that it had produced in him."

Jack London pointed out the mismanagement of the capitalist class, in a vivid and yet plain expression, that the working class people could understand without difficulty. That is why, his writings were vigorous, alive and magnetic for them. London's conviction is that, the proletariat must free itself from the shackles of the bondage. His attention is upon deprivation, misfortune, lack of opportunity and absence of motivation, inherent in the working class. London's sympathy, is with the unfortunates of the societies' abyss. Jack London is called the Gorky of America. Like Gorky, Jack London had experienced misery and suffering in his youth and was a victim, of unjust social conditions.

In his introduction to 'Iron Heel', Anatole France, regarded him as Karl Marx of U.S.A. It was Marxism which helped Jack London to discern in contemporary life, the conflict between personality and social conditions, the class differences and the bourgeois society with its morals. London's socialist convictions, were founded upon a funda-
mental humanitarian regard, for social justice, rather than an inflexible intellectual commitment to an abstract political ideology. According to Rideout, London's conversion to socialism has resulted almost entirely from his experience, with the pressure of the economic screw.

Broadly speaking, Jack London played an active part, in the socialist movement from 1897 to 1907. His socialist activities, brought his name before the public, through newspaper publicity. San Francisco Chronicle published an article on February 10, 1896, about his missionary work for socialism. Oakland Times dated February 11, 1897, writes, "London is recognized among a certain set, as a leader in socialism, and is thought to be a bright fellow." He was called 'a boy socialist', by the newspapers. Lecturing frequently to socialist organizations, he raised money, donated his own money and wrote many essays, stories, articles and novels, for the socialist cause. His activities as a socialist must be regarded as remarkable and brilliant one.

According to Foner, he was representative of the left wing of the socialist party,
which was for extreme radicalism, as opposed to the right wing, of the middle class intellectuals, the so-called reformists, who stood for a peaceful and mild attitude.

4 According to Rideout, "London's socialism was always interpenetrated by his individualism, a condition which explains how both he and his writings, could at once combine racism, the glorification of the superior individual over the mass, a fascination with brute force and a warm-hearted sense of the brotherhood of man."

5 Rothberg feels that, "London's working class writings can not accurately be called either proletarian or socialist."

6 Labor writes, "A rugged individualist who preached socialism, he fought his crusade for world revolution with a unique mixture of Marxist piety and frontier pep."

7 Lynn comments, "London's socialism clearly reflects the success aspiration of an ex-newsboy and reveals the impingement of the life outlook, of Horatio Alger, on that of Karl Marx."
Whipple feels that, "Jack was attracted to socialism, because he was rebellious, gregarious, sympathetic, humanitarian and idealistic, because socialist arguments carried intellectual conviction, and above all, in the labour movement, as for instance in strikes, he found the violence he loved."

According to O'Connor, "Assistant editor of the wave, believed that even Jack's socialism, was essentially a romantic attitude."

On January 20, 1905, he spoke before 3500 students of the University of California on 'The revolutionary spirit of American proletariat'. As a socialist, he supported the Russian revolution of 1905. In 1905, was founded the 'International Workers of the World', organization, popularly known as I.W.W. He was unanimously elected as president of the Inter-collegiate Socialist party on September 2, 1905. He subsequently resigned this post in May, 1907. He spoke at Yale, Harvard, New York, Columbia and University of Chicago.

Jack London has not only acted as a social observer, but from his own experience,
spoke with authority about the 'submerged Tenth'. From his observations and reflections on the then contemporary society, London brings to the fore its antagonistic nature. This antagonism emanates from economic disparity and lack of opportunity. London sharply criticizes the misuse of money and machinery by the rich industrialists. Jack London exposes the evils of capitalism, by his biting criticism on the ills of the then existing economy. He gave a clarion call for the destruction of the system which was responsible for the social ills. Jack London was interested not only in exposing cruelties and oppressions in the economic system, but in remaking it and building a new better social order. In his enthusiasm for socialist cause, he began his letters with, 'Dear Comrade', and signed them, 'Yours for the revolution'.

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Upton Sinclair feels, "Jack London's social writings constitute him, as one of the great revolutionary figures in our history."

There can be no doubt that Jack London was one of the outstanding interpreters and champions, of the American socialist movement prior to first World War.

London often utilized the short fiction as a vehicle through which he could unleash his contempt for the merciless exploitation of the worker. The spirit of revolt appears in Jack London's well-known socialist stories like "The Strength of the Strong", "The Dream of Debs", "Apostate", "South of the Slot", "The Mexican", "Curious Fragment", and "Goliath". Each of these stories, illuminates, the abominable conditions under which the working class lived in London's time. Many of the stories, have an element of satire, bringing the truth into focus.
Jack London's concern for the problems of the society, is reflected in his passionately written and often violent denunciations in some of those stories. In some stories, the role of the artist, as propagandist for a scientific Marxism, is a recurring motive, that demonstrates his messianic impulse and sincerity of conviction.

Only the socialist element of each story will be discussed.

'The people of the abyss', 1903, was the first of Jack London's social documents, describing the social and economic condition of the poor, in the east end of London, the capital of England, in 1902. Jack writes in the preface, "I went into the under-world of London, as an explorer. I wanted to see things, with my own eyes." The book is a catalogue of human misery and poverty. Jack London gives a reporter-like eye-witness account of what he found in the east end.

London visited rooms, which were mean, sordid and completely lacking in ventilation and sanitation. The mortality rate was very high in this human hell-hole. The misery of their
lives drove them to drink, crime and suicide.

He calls Frying Pan alley, with a dirty environment as an inferno. He observed that some poor, for want of any inhabitation, walked the streets all the night and slept in day time, on the lawns and benches of spitalfied garden or green parks. The dehumanizing effect is seen in the following lines, "On the benches on either side arrayed a mass of miserable, distorted humanity. It was a welter of rags, filth, of loathsome skin diseases, open sores, grime, of loathsome skin diseases, open sores, grime, indecency and beastial faces." 

He saw women and children grubbing through garbage in the streets for something to eat, found families of eight or nine, living in mere cubicles. Some lived like tenants in rooms, sharing the same beds, according to shifts. He actually stayed at White Chapel and Poplar Work houses, and was horrified by the awful conditions prevailing there. For a cot and a bit of breakfast and supper, consisting of food, unfit for human consumption, they worked the wretched men, nearly to death. He had a bitter experience in the salvation army centre.
He found many poor, like the young sailor he met, who did not marry, because of the burden it would impose upon them. Jack London describes ironically, the pomp and pageantry, of the coronation-day celebrations of Edward VII, against the background of the social misery and the poverty.

Jack London was indignant, when he saw men forced out of the labour market. He felt sympathy for the casual labourers. Jack attacks the industrial system. He feels that inefficients are being constantly and wantonly created by the forces of the industrial society. He found rampant unemployment, due to Jewish immigration and the disbanding of thousands of soldiers, after the Boer War. He calls eastend as a ghetto or a gigantic slum.

Jack was very much concerned with the deterioration of a healthy, peasant stock, in the urban centres. He noticed the ugly, undernourished, stunted bodies of the famished inhabitants. He witnessed malnutrition, excessive drinking, crimes, debauchery and obscenity. He found families of paupers and women who would
sell themselves for two or three pence, or even a loaf of bread.

Jack London compares the degraded life of a city dweller to the pure life of the savage and asserts that the modern civilization has not bettered the lot of the average man. He says, "If this is the best that civilization can do for the human beings, then give us the howling and naked savagery." Civilization has increased man's producing power an hundred fold and through mismanagement, the man of civilization, live worse than beasts, and have less to eat, and wear and protect themselves, than the savage Inuit in the frigid climate. He found that British slum dwellers were more degraded and more hopeless, than any in America's most destitute area. Nothing in his past experience or his personal misery, could be compared with what he saw in the city of degradation.

'The People of the Abyss', presents an atrocious social situation, it points out the mismanagement of capitalist society and calls for a reorganization of society. The book is a powerful presentation of a repellent theme, but it
brought to the notice of thinking men, the horrors of hunger, filth, cold and suffering of the down-trodden poor working class. It created a sense of urgency and awareness among the people and the social workers, to strive and work hard for changing such an atrocious system, by social reforms, aiming at ameliorating the conditions of the poor. Jack blames the English economic system that made the rich, richer and the poor, poorer. He implies that profit motive must go and there should be suitable distribution of production.

The book is a realistic portrayal of serious truths, of the underworld of the capital city of London, and in many ways, reveals its author, much more fully, than even the frankly autobiographical works. Its sincerity places it, among the handful of books, Jack wrote, because he wanted to, and not merely to make money. He loved it the most, of all his books.

In a letter to a friend, London wrote, "As to my favourite book - that is hard question to answer. I think, I put more of my heart in 'The People of the Abyss', than into any other book."
Possibly, realizing that he had seen the ultimate bottom of human despair, he gave this title to the book.

According to Upton Sinclair,

"For years afterwards the memories of this stunted and impoverished population haunted him beyond all peace."

Giles describes, "It is an orwellian study, of the dehumanizing effects of slum life of the east end of London."

Sal Noto comments, "The People of the Abyss" is the story of human misery, that flourished long before, London's book was published and continues to exist today."

Fujinara feels that, "The People of the Abyss", is a sociological study of London east end or the product of the much raker's age, rather than a socialist work."

According to Shepard, "People of abyss" remain over fifty years a masterpiece of human interest reporting and a unique sociological document."
The book, 'War of the Classes', 1905, is made up of six socialist studies, entitled, The class struggle, The tramp, The Scab, The question of maximum, A review: wanted a new law of development and How I became a socialist. In the essay, 'The Class Struggle', London disproves the claim of the American capitalists, that there is no class struggle in American society. He compared the capitalists to ostriches. He asserts that class struggle was intrinsically a part of the industrial scene of 1900 and the only question, was what would be its outcome. The very existence of trade unions is a proof, of its presence. He points out that the disappearance of the frontier, forced the superior workers, to remain in the working class. Having failed in their individual efforts and enterprises, they organized the labour and preached revolt. The capitalists are after more profits whereas the workers demand higher wages. Naturally the capital-labour conflict becomes inevitable. London is fully confident, that the ultimate victory, will be of the workers. He concludes, that trade unionism, imbued with a corre-
political ideology, will usher in a new social order in America.

In the essay, 'Tramp', Jack London states, There being more men, than there is work for them to do, a surplus army inevitably results. It is an economic necessity, without it, the present society will fall to pieces. Into the surplus labour army, are herded the mediocre, the inefficient, the unfit, and those incapable of satisfying the industrial needs of the system. The road is one of the safety valves, through which the waste of social organism is given off. The industrial system is supported by judges and armies of private militias. Naturally a tramp had become a typical product and universal figure of America society.

In the essay, 'Scab', Jack London points out that the scab is an inevitable feature of the class struggle and scabs were just as essential to the conduct and welfare of a nation's economy. He defines Scab; 'as one who gives more value, for the same price than another.' What more perfect and better definition can be
given than that, of the most profitable type of human being. Some employers used the scab, to break strikes and labour unity. Another type of a scab is a labourer, who does more work, for the same wage. Jack London concludes that in a competitive system, everybody scabs on one another, in the fight for shelter and food, worker against worker, capitalist against capitalist, nation against nation. Thus it was a universe of scabs. London has not sufficiently clarified the reasons for scabbing in this essay.

In the essay on 'The question of maximum', London speaks about the inevitability of the fall of capitalism. London gives a stern warning, that the ruling class, faced by an economic crisis and the growing influence of socialism, might quickly put a strong curb upon the masses, till the crisis was past. It has been done before, and there is no reason why it should not be done again. He cites an example of 1871, when the soldiers of the economic rulers stamped out, root and branch, a whole generation of militant socialism. Thus the ruling class can become an oligarchy, ready to crush the masses under their iron-heel.
In the next essay, Jack London wanted a new law of development, in order to supplant the theory of brute survival. We find that the philosophy of the superman to which London had been so strongly drawn to, in his popular fiction, was expressly denied in his socialist writing.

Both the essays, 'How I became a Socialist', and 'What life mean to me', have already been fully discussed in the second chapter, 'The autobiographical element'.

Jack London can be said to be the first major fiction writer, to proclaim the beliefs of revolutionary socialism, not only so clearly, but in such a flambouyant spirit. The essays illustrate Jack London's ability to take a difficult subject, and so simplify it, that even a political illiterate could understand it, without much difficulty. The essays also reveal his skill in applying Marxist theories to American conditions. The essays show, London's concern with major problems of the working class. We find descriptions of the underworld, the graft, the strikes, the class conflict, the lock-out,
the boycott, the blacklist and so on. The essays all brilliantly and unflinchingly develop his thesis, that the system, which produces hoboes, scabs, tramps, the society in which all things were commodities, all people bought and sold, must be toppled over, along with its rotten life.

Though the book is marred by repetitions, and lacks coherence and cogency of a logical whole, though the economics is not clear and there is little constructive thinking, the essays are characterized by strong thematic development and dramatically employed examples. The essays are written in vigorous, forcible, striking style, with sweeping rapid movement of thoughts. In the 'War of the Classes' is presented the socialist and labourers' side of the economic situation, with vigour, clarity and impressiveness. Jack develops the socialist attitude on modern social antagonism in his characteristic way.

The book reveals much of the genesis and growth of particular ideas and prejudices for which Jack London was later to be noted.
In the first heat of his revolutionary enthusiasm, Jack London castigates the American statesmen for selling themselves and their country for gold. He condemns the municipal servants and State legislators for committing countless treasons. He denounces the prevailing system as the world of graft and world of betrayal. It is a carping criticism of the rampant corruption prevailing in those days in America.

The Bookman of 1905 comments, "No other American and probably no English writer has produced anything in the advocacy of socialism, that can compare with it, in forcefulness and literary merit." One critic observed in 1906, "Whatever may be thought of Mr. London's social theories, there can be but one opinion, of his mastery of English style. There is nothing dead about his art. Its spell holds thousands, who hate and fear his views." The book was hailed by the International socialist review. It wrote, "The trouble with London is that he is not the ordinary kind of literary socialist. London, however, is a genuine, old fashioned proletarian, class struggle socialist. His socialism
is like every thing else about him, virile, combative and genuine to the backbone." It adds, "There are enough striking illustrations, strong quotations between the covers of this book to supply an army of soap box orators with ammunition." Both 'The People of the Abyss' and 'The War of the Classes', were interesting and valuable documents, in the social history of that period in England and America respectively. For their time, the first five years of the twentieth century, they could be called bold books of social criticism.

Before the Russian Revolution of 1905, Jack London believed in a peaceful democratic revolution to bring about a change of government. In his 'Explanation of the great socialist vote', 1904, he declared that when the socialist party wins control of the government, by the ballot box, it would confiscate with or without remuneration, all the possessions of the capitalist class which are used in the production and distribution of the necessaries of human life. He was confident that socialism will be triumphant, because the capitalis
being in minority, socialist party is bound to get the majority of votes, in time to come.
Thus the revolution will be silent, orderly and peaceful, brought about by democratic methods.
But the Russian revolution changed his outlook and he began to think that an armed conflict was unavoidable.

Jack London's novel, 'Iron Heel', 1906, is written as a personal account of events in U.S.A. between 1912 and 1932, written by Avis Everhard. This document, the Everhard manuscript was supposed to have been discovered in 2368, in the cave, where Avis had taken refuge, was published, seven centuries after it was written. The central device was that of Jack London's stepping completely outside his own age and describing its salient characteristic, as an outside observer.

Avis the narrator and heroine of the novel begins her story by telling how she met her future husband Ernest Everhard, at a preachers' night dinner, in her home. Her father, John Cunningham, professor of physics, in the State University at Berkeley in California, had invited
him as a guest. A number of eminent preachers were present. In their discussion, Ernest asserts his stand as based on irrepealable facts, calls the church as controlled by the capitalist class and the preachers as mere mercenaries. Avis is very much impressed by his personality.

Ernest challenges Bishop Morehouse, a devout Christian and scholar to investigate the conditions under which the working class was living and call publicly, for the literal application of Christianity. Avis was also challenged to find out the exact circumstances and facts of a recent industrial accident, when one Mr. Jackson lost his arm in Sierra mills.

Bishop Morehouse overwhelmed by a visit to the working class slum tenements, brings out to his own detriment a collusion between the church and capital. The Bishop was appalled at the sight of the miserable conditions. Deciding to literally apply the gospels, he invites two prostitutes to live in his fine bungalow, in order to protect them from sin. He proclaims this from the pulpit and asks his faithful rich to shelter one thief, each one of them,
so that crime may disappear, making the police force and prison superfluous. He is shut in a psychiatric asylum, as insane, by the higher authorities of the church.

Avis met everybody concerned with the mill, interviewed them, and after due investigation, she was convinced that Jackson had been badly treated and injustice has been done to him. She confessed to Ernest that he was right. Ernest was invited to speak before the wealthy members of the Philomath Club. Ernest enrages the upper class audience by charging them with incompetence, and challenging them that the working class is determined to take over the management of the society. He ends his speech, "This is revolution my masters. Stop it who can." One of the capitalists replies, "We will grind your revolutionists down under our heels. The world is ours, we are its lords and ours it shall remain." Ernest retorted, "If you do not turn the government to us, even when we get sweeping majority by ballot in election, we shall also use force. It is a struggle of classes."

Ernest in his address, at a dinner party, called Profit and Loss dinner, given to middle class businessmen and small capitalists, by
Professor Cunningham, calls upon them, to unite with the workers, to achieve socialism, otherwise all of them will be crushed alike. Large capitalists and trusts, who were called plutocracy are called oligarchy and Iron Heel by Ernest. Meanwhile the ruthless oligarchy, has already begun its march towards total power. Professor Cunningham is dismissed from the university. Press is gagged. Cunningham's book, 'Economics and Education' disappeared mysteriously from the market. Black hundreds set on fire a big socialist publishing house. The street-car strike, strikes by teamsters and machinists were ruthlessly suppressed. There were riots, arson, wanton destruction to property by the black hundreds. The oligarchy recruited, the strike breakers from the unemployed. Professor Cunningham was robbed of his shares and house. Avis having fallen in love with Ernest, married him and came to live with him in a four room tenement, in a San Francisco slum.

Ernest was elected to the Congress in the fall of 1912, when the socialists won 52 seats. A general total strike engineered by socialists, prevents a war for markets between U.S.A.
and Germany on December 5, 1912. The Iron Heel learns its lesson and sets up favoured unions over the mass of unskilled workers. The oligarchy strikes a lightning blow. It expropriates the farmers, liquidates their Granger party, crushes the peasant revolt and imprisons Ernest and Avis and all the fifty-two socialist congressmen. It declares open war on the socialist underground organization. There was forcible enrolment in Militia. Young men became outlaws and terrorists in the mountains. Men were shot without investigation or trial. Every Granger State was ravaged with violence, murder and bloodshed.

Avis was released after six months. She went to a hiding place, in Glen Ellen, Sonoma, in California. It was a secret hide out of the underground. All the socialist congressmen escape from prison in 1915. Ernest and Avis become agent provocateurs in the service of Iron Heel, in order to carry out their work better, as leaders of the underground, to plan for the first revolt for which a date had been set in the Spring of 1918. Through the spy-ring, the oligarchy got wind of the impending revolt. It inflicted a terrible punishment
on the underground by provoking, a premature rebellion in Chicago, in the fall of 1917.

Avis gives an eye witness account of the ghastly scenes in Chicago. The people of abyss, became abysmal brutes, roaring for the blood of their masters. The mercenaries struck a deadly blow, with a vengence. The premature first revolt, was bloodily put down, Avis lived a nightmarish life for three days in the Chicago commune. She somehow managed to hide and by chance met Ernest. With his arms round her neck, Ernest says, "For the time lost, dear heart, but not forever. We have learnt. Tomorrow the cause will rise again, strong with wisdom and discipline." They go to New York.

The Iron Heel, begins the work of searching and probing out the revolutionaries, who had burrowed, into its structure. The oligarchy punished without mercy. Revenge was the order of the day. Countless executions took place. The disheartened comrades became terrorists. It became very hard for Ernest to reorganize the forces of revolution.

Here the manuscript, abruptly
breaks off with the unfinished lines, "The magnitude of the task may be understood when it is taken into ........ and the book ends here. Possibly Avis had time to hide the manuscript safely, before she fled or was captured. Avis did not live to complete the Ms., hence mystery, about the execution of Ernest Everhard could not be unravelled.

We have already discussed the autobiographical element in the novel. The first half of the novel is full of Marxist theories, and socialist propaganda. Ernest used powerful arguments to condemn capitalist ideology. The real strength of the book is concentrated in the latter half. London relishes in his description of the uprising of the masses. His genius functions most efficiently in describing conditions of utter violence. The closing sections of the novel, where London pictures the condition of the common masses, the work of the underground, are among the best passages of imaginative writing. The description of the imaginary civil war in Chicago is superb. We are reminded of the repression of the Paris Commune of the French revolution. It was an apo-
-calypthic vision of modern history, in which the fate of the individual was uncertain. In 'Iron-Heel' he glorifies the role of the terrorists. He writes, "They gave up their lives for humanity, no sacrifice was too great for them."

'Iron Heel' was a reflection of all social classes. At the top was the class of magnates in whose hands were centred all the trusts, corporations and business, the class to which belonged the seven major groups that desired to centralize and monopolize all capital and trades rapidly, like oil, railroad, natural gas, electricity. To serve the capitalists were politicians, educated class, lawyers, doctors, journalists, ministers of church and artists. They held their jobs by serving the plutocracy. We find a new tribe of corporation lawyers whose special function was to serve the legal thefts of trusts and big corporations. Relationship between business interests and corrupt political machine, was taken for granted. The novel also brings out the indomitable spirit of the working class of America.

The revolutionaries had their own surgeons capable of doing flesh and bone graft-
The art of disguise was common, wigs, beards, and false eye-brows were the various devices used in disguise. Will-making and will-breaking became complementary trades.

Thus there is the realistic analysis of the social conditions in London's days, as well as the imaginary conditions of the conspiracy, intrigue and murder under the Iron Heel of the ruthless oligarchy. Both have been described forcefully by Jack London. To fully appreciate the value of this novel, the readers must put themselves in the time frame, in which London wrote the novel. The novel is realistic, prophetic and a superb piece of imaginative writing.

There are certain obvious faults. The plot does not show dramatic progression. The action of the story gains momentum slowly. The narration by Avis, at times, sounds sentimental and maudlin. There is too much of ideology, preponderance of argumentation rather than psychology, and conviction outweighs writing. Editorizing in middle of exciting passages and foot-notes of Meredith divert the attention of the reader. Characters are reduced to mouthpieces.
Most true to life character is that of Ernest. The hero Everhard was the first image of a proletarian leader in American Literature. According to Carlson, "Ernest Everhard was a frustrated socialist, but a successful terrorist."

Dorothy Roberts had strongly defended the structure of the novel. She feels that, "the power of the novel resides in the artistry of London's construction of his novel, a construction based on the tension and interaction between a pessimistic action and optimistic super structure."

A review in Arena, a socialist magazine deplored London's attitude, "Considered from literary and imaginative point of view, this is one of the greatest work of fiction, yet it is to us, a most disappointing work. All talk of forcible revolution is foolish."

Anatole France commented in International Socialist review, "It is impossible to deny literary skill, which London displays, in this ingenious and stirring romance. It gives impetus to the old and discarded cataclysmic theory, it weakens political socialist movement, by discrediting the ballot box and to encourage the chimerical and rea-
-ctionary notion of physical force."

21 According to Joan London, 'Our benevolent feudalism', by W.G. Ghent, gave him the idea of popularizing Marxist theories, in a novel, in order to avert the reformism, into which American socialism was slipping. Philip Foner calls it, "the most revolutionary novel in American literature and probably the most amazingly prophetic work of the 20th century."

22 According to Labor, "Politically speaking, Iron Heel was Jack's bravest novel and psychologically London's most revealing book."

23 Lacassin recommends, "The Iron Heel deserves to be read for the flame that enlightens it, for the faith that inspires it, and for what it has become with the passage of time - a classic of proletarian revolt."

24 Geismar suggests that it is "a key work - perhaps a classic work of American radicalism."

25 According to Blother, "It is the first apocalyptic novel of the century."

26 Stone calls it, "the greatest contribution to
economic revolution."

Rideout classifies it, "as a minor revolutionary classic." Robert Spiller calls it, "a terrifying forecast of Fascism and its evils." Gower says, "The Iron Heel, perhaps the first anti-Utopian novel has implications that are still worth consideration in today's society."

Do Duc a Vietnamese calls it, "a unique masterpiece of its time, Jack's best known, most outstanding and most typical novel describing class struggle in American society and is comparable to Gorky's 'Mother', 1906."

The novel was most enthusiastically commended by Eugene V. Debs, Leon Trotsky and the British labour leader Aneurin Bevan.

Leon Trotsky wrote in 1937, "The Iron Heel made a deep impression on me. The form of the novel represents only an armour of social analysis and prognosis. Artistically the last chapters beginning with Chicago Commune are good. The book surprised me with the audacity and independence of its historical foresight. In 1907, no revolutionary Marxist, even Lenin or Rosa Luxemburg, imagined so fully the ominous perspective
of the alliance between finance capital and labour aristocracy. In 1907, Jack already foresaw and described the Fascist regime, as the inevitable result of the defeat of the proletarian revolution."

32 Aneurin Bevan, has affirmed that "like thousands of young men and women of the working class of Britain, and as I have learned since, of many parts of the world, I was led to Marxism by reading 'Iron Heel', a novel written by so beloved an author as Jack London."

'The Road' published in June, 1907, was a collection of articles under the sub-title, 'My life in the underworld', in a book-form. It describes Jack London's experiences, as a hobo or a tramp. He states in the preface, that he became a tramp, not to study sociology, but because of wanderlust in him. He went on the road, because he could not keep away from it.

In the chapter, 'Road kids and Gay-cats', he describes frankly the brutality, the feuds, the hooliganism of his associates, farming a group of unpleasant juvenile delinquents. They operated like a gang or wolf-pack, robbing the
Jack proved that he was as strong, as quick, as nervy, as good as any of them in their cunning, and misguided adventures.

In the next two chapters, 'Hoboes that pass in the night' and 'Two thousand stiffs', London describes how he joined Kelly's army of the unemployed, on their march to Washington. He describes his adventures with pride and gusto. Jack and nine of his companions, devised a method of outwitting the leaders of the march, by going ahead in their pilot boat, when the army was forced to travel in boats, through the Mississippi river, from Des Moines to Ohio. Jack's boat ahead of all the other boats, for 300 miles, enroute, managed to get the best cream, milk, food and clothing, in advance, from farmers and towns people. Jack deserted the army at Hannibal, Missouri. In the chapter, 'Holding her down', he narrates his skill in train catching. Once he outmaneuvered, an entire crew of a train, determined to ditch him. He became the best train-holder. The reader is thrilled to read the account, of sheer joy of conflict, the tenacity, perseverance, quick wittedness, physical endurance and prowess shown by London. In all the above chap-
-ters, we find overtones of the superman. He deliberately takes pride in his superiority over others.

In 'Pictures', he describes how two gentle maiden ladies, entertained him lavishly at Harrisberg. He was overwhelmed with their kindness and sympathy. In the outskirts of the same town, he witnessed the cruelty of American gypsies, when their leader mercilessly beat a woman and two young boys and then played gambling, after the incident nonchalantly. Jack was shocked but found himself helpless. In 'Bulls', he gives his experience with policemen at various places. Once, in New York, he was hit with a club, by a policeman, whom he calls a bull.

In the next two chapters, 'Pinched' and 'Pen', he narrates how he was arrested for vagrancy at Niagara Falls and sentenced to thirty days imprisonment in Erie jail. His faith in American institutions was shaken, when he was denied jury trial or even an opportunity to plead his own case. He gives a heart-rending account of his prison life. He witnessed brutality and cruelty. He saw a convict mercilessly beaten by the guards. Another
prisoner was thrown from above, to fall in a crushed heap at the bottom of the cell block, later to crawl miserably away. Jack was sensitive to this experience, saw things and felt things, which for the rest of his life, he insisted were not only unprintable but unthinkable. He began to feel sympathy for all prisoners and captives. Later, he always purchased hand woven bridles made by convicts in jail. On his ranch, he gave jobs to paroled prisoners and ex-convicts.

The pull of Jack's socialist convictions, is evident in his description of graft and corruption. He describes, how he was named a trusty and learned like his fellows to benefit, from the system of petty graft, which thrived in the jail. He writes, "We patterned ourselves, after our betters, outside the prison walls, who on a large scale and under-respectable disguise of merchants, bankers, and captains of industry, did precisely, what we were doing."

In the last chapter, 'Confessions', he confesses, that he was a liar. He takes manifest delight, in his skill and success as a liar. He tells that inventiveness or ability to tell
a good story, is necessary to become a successful bum. He illustrates this point, by giving examples of several highly humorous anecdotes of tales he had fabricated, in the course of his hoboing. He writes, "I have often thought that due to this training of my tramp days, is due much of my success as a story writer."

There is no aspect of hoboing that London does not find intriguing. Jack is the invincible tramp in these pages. By quick wit, alertness, and master strength, he wards of the dangers. All hoboes were not as fortunate or skilled as Jack, some were maimed or killed under the wheels of box-cars. The book abounds in tramp-tricks, and tramp scrapes. The tramp vernacular like, bull, bum, stiff, hobo, Gay cats, profesh, is interesting to a curious reader or a student of sociology. It carries a lesson too, that men of conscience and high minded patriots, could not have overlooked in London's days. There is social criticism explicit in the chapters, 'Pinched' and 'Pan' and implicit in other chapters. London tells of hunger and cold, of mistreatment at the hands of local police or railroad guards, of forced labour
in convict camps in the south and in New England. He present the plight of the hobo, as an indictment of the economic system of the U.S.A. at that time.

The book is written with London's usual command of clear, incisive English and shows powers of terse, vivid description. It is the vigour of his nature and of his own time, that permeates this work. The general tone is positive and optimistic. It is full of exuberance and excitement. Element of adventure is predominant. 'The Road' is as good as a picaresque novel. But these tramp reminiscences, can not be taken at their face value. There is a lot of exaggeration in the account.

According to King Hendricks, "The Road has preserved the hobo experience, the emotions, the personality of Jack. This together with London's power to convey the youthful wanderlust spirit of the road, makes this book relevant to new generations today."

According to Feild, "The Road, although not the first book in dealing with the life and problems of the American tramp, is first, by virtue of its freshness, vividness and dramatic quality to lay any claim to literature. Jack London
was the first American writer of any significance to speak of the tramp or hobo from intimate knowledge and understanding through personal experience."

Jack London's book, 'The Revolution', 1910, is a collection of thirteen essays. In the title essay, 'Revolution', London states that there are seven million revolutionists in an organized, worldwide, international movement. The aim of the revolutionists is to destroy the bourgeois society, and the capitalist system. "No quarter! We want all that you possess. We want in our hands the reins of power and the destiny of mankind." It is a distinctly working class revolt. "The capitalist class had managed society and its management has failed deplorably, ignobly and horribly.".

In U.S.A. ten million people are living in poverty and misery, in slums and ghettos. In New York, 50,000 children are toiling out their lives in textile mills alone. In South, work shift is of twelve hours duration. Many receive no more than ten cents a day as wages. There are numerous child labourers. There is graft in every municipal council and strong lobbies and bribery in every
legislature. Strike breakers and Pinkertons are used against the tide of revolution.

Capitalist class offers nothing that is clean, noble and alive. The revolutionists offer service, unselisfiness, sacrifice and martyrdom. They offer facts, statistics, economic and scientific arguments. "Capitalists are like drones clustered round the honey vats when the worker bees spring upon them, to end their rotund existence." He attacks the attitude of the American press. It is under the monopoly of big guns. Only a few editors are honest. The revolutionists want to extend the class-war from the industrial world to the political world. London concludes, "Seven millions are preaching revolution - that passionate gospel, the brotherhood of man. The capitalist class has failed in its management, hence the working class is determined, to take the management away from their hands. The revolution is here and now. Stop it, who can." The essays expose the monstrous selfishness and sodden materialism, out of which the edifice of the society is constituted and which charge the revolutionists, with the task of setting the whole edifice rocking, in collaboration with
the intellectuals, idealists, class conscious workmen, all working shoulder to shoulder. London delights to contemplate, a bloody and terrible overthrow of the corrupt social system by an uprising of the masses in revolt. The essays show radical fervour.

The book is in sharp contrast to the 'War of the classes'. One notices the harsh tone of London's polemics. He justified the employment of his Korean valet by the Marxist argument of division of labour and specialization of function. He declares that he is a white man first and a socialist afterwards. We find the influence of Kipling for this dominant racial strain in his thinking. London's defence of Kipling's art and ideas is strongly voiced in the essay, 'These bones shall rise again'. The tone of writing is often angry, bitter and defensive. His radical materialism had very often anger and tenderness.

In these essays we find a mixture of realism, irony and deliberate ambiguity. There is economic underpinning, under the veil of race glorification. On one hand he had consciously
accepted and exploited the imperialistic way of thinking, which as a socialist he had himself condemned. We find this contradiction and duality after reading the essays in this book. We get an impression that London's socialism was based on the mixture of discoveries, by modern biologists and physiologists with observations of the French philosophers and English pre-Raphaelites.

The message of social revolution is expressed better in essays, tracts, articles, than any of London's fiction, with the exception of 'Iron Heel'. In the essays of 'The War of the Classes', 1905, 'The Revolution', 1910, and the 'Human Drift', 1917, Jack London states with passion but without philosophic depth, the position of the American social revolutionist, and his faith in the rise of the working class. In the title essay, 'Human Drift', London ultimately realizes that social revolution is only an incident in the process of evolution. He declares that man the latest ephemera, is pitifully a creature of temperature, strutting his brief day, on the thermometer, driven onward by his need for food.

Whatever may be errors and distort-
-tions in Jack London's series of socialistic writings, which we have considered so far, one cannot deny their insights. They are a glimpse of the underworld of profit and misery - at the peak of blind material optimism and dawning imperialism.

Now we shall consider London's short stories, with socialist element.

'Apostate', which appeared in 'Woman's home compassion', in September, 1906, became one of the most popular socialist pamphlets. Johnny, the apostate, is a work-beast. We get a glimpse of the drudgery of a factory workers' daily life. Arise before day-break, gulp a meagre breakfast, spend the daylight hours in the shadow of the machine, then fall into bed in total exhaustion. This social injustice, is the essence of Apostate, a story of disintegration and dehumanization. The story calls for a total abolition of child labour.

'The Dream of Debs', published in Jan-Feb. 1909, is a socialist story, dramatizing collectivist triumph. It describes the mechanism and effect of a total nationwide general strike.
London demonstrated, how a militant labour movement led by honest men, could gain important victories for the working class. It is a crusade in itself for organized labour. London has already described the efficacy of such a strike, in his novel, 'Iron Heel'.

'South of the slot' published in 'Saturday evening post' of May 22, 1909, is a tale of class-struggle in San Francisco. It is a magnificent working class story showing the inevitable conflict between the haves and the have-nots.

'The Strength of the Strong' published in Hampton's magazine in May, 1920, is one of the best of London's socialist propaganda stories. Foner calls it as one of the finest parables, in American literature. The story depicts the evolution of capitalism, but prophesies its demise. Kipling had written an attack on socialist antiwar theory in his parable entitled 'Melissa'. The motto affixed to 'The strength of the strong' is 'Parables don't lie but liars will parable - Lip King. Lipking is a word play on Kipling. Thus the story is an attack on Kipling. London's simplicity of plot, style and story-telling ability makes this story
an ideal propaganda piece. London made effective use of the past, to build his indictment of capitalism. It became the classic of socialist literature.

The only other story similar in form, technique and theme of *Strength of the Strong* is London's story, *Curious Fragment*. It is a satire on ignorance. London called for eliminating school age children in factories, thereby giving them an opportunity for education. In this story, London restates his attack upon writers who support the establishment and distinguishes them from his ideal artist. This story is an example of London's belief that literacy would free the unlettered from poverty and oppression.

The story, *Mexican*, portrays the silent anguish of the proletariat, facing economic, social and political injustice. In this story London uses a frankly ideological socialism. The protagonist is Felipe Rivera, the Mexican, a victim rebel. His mood is revengeful. Fighting brutally and destructively, he emerges winner in the prize fight against Danny Ward. With the help of the prize money, the revolution could go on.
In the short story, 'Goliath', Jack London described the establishment of socialism, by dictatorship, assassinations, and other forms of violent methods. Here, London ignores the basic tenets of socialism which reject all terrorist, anarchist, violent and individualistic policies and work only for peaceful mass movement, condoning force only in self-defence and where peaceful progress is barred, but in this story for the first time, London describes his ideal of a socialist state. The protagonist, Goliath by virtue of a dread substance or secret weapon, Energon comes to power. He wipes out child labour, forbids women to work in factories; Wall Street is abolished, captains of industry are installed as heads of Government owned business, salesmen are put to work, middle men are forced into useful occupations. He gets rid of all those that sat in high places and obstructed progress. Thus Goliath brings Marxism to the people. Whatever may be London's interpretation of socialism and its tenets, there is no doubt that 'Goliath' is among London's strongest and most remarkable, of the futuristic fantasies.

In 'The Sea Wolf' we find certain
passages with socialist element. Humphrey says, "Humphrey descripts the heartless indifference of the masters ( hunters and the captain ) of the Ghost, " The callousness of these men to whom industrial organization gave control, of the lives of other men was appaling. I never dreamt that the work of the world was carried on, in such a fashion." p.61.

See the remarks of Wolf Larsen, " Why ! if there is any thing in supply and demand, life is the cheapest thing in the world. There are more sailors than there are ships on the sea for them, more workers than there are factories or machines for them. Why, you, who live on land know that you house your poor people in the slums of cities and loose famine and pestilence upon them and that there still remain more people, dying for a crust of bread and a bit of meat. Have you ever seen the London dockers fighting like wild beasts for a chance to work ?" p.68-69.

In 'Martin Eden' the hero is against
socialism but we find indictment of capitalist society, in the novel. Brisenden replies to Eden, "I am a socialist because socialism is inevitable because the present rotten, irrational system cannot endure." In his speech at the socialist meeting Martin says, "You have a new set of masters - not the great, virile noble men but the shrewd and spidery traders and money lenders. They have enslaved you, by spidery machinations, by wheedling, cajolery and lies. They have purchased, your slaves judges, they have debauched, your slave legislatures. Two million of your children are toiling today in this trade-oligarchy of the U.S. Ten million of your poor are not properly sheltered nor properly fed."

In 'Burning Daylight', 1910, the latter half of the novel is almost socialist propaganda. Dede Mason, the heroine acquaints the superman hero Elam Harnish, in the rudiments of socialism. She chides him as a selfish individualist who has done nothing for the poor. There is forceful judgement and analysis of the anomic forces of capitalism. In the novel, London exposes the evils of capitalism and its destructive effect
on those at the top of the system as well as those at the bottom. We find social criticism in the summary of American finance, press, politics, the masses and the civic responsibilities. Some left critics hailed it as authentic proletarian writing.

'The Star Rover,' 1915, is a flaming social document. It is a bitter attack on capital punishment, prison tortures and prison abuses.

In the 'Valley of the Moon,' 1913 practically half of the novel describes the proletariat life of Oakland. We get a picture of the life of workers and of the flaming labour trouble and unrest in Oakland. Both Billy and Saxon, the hero and heroine belong to the working class. In the novel, there are references to the labour strike of 90's and the trucking strike in San Francisco. There are some sharp pictures of strike and violence in Oakland.

According to Rideout in both 'Burning Daylight' and the 'Valley of the Moon,' there is a conscious deflection of London's radicalism from its expected conclusion, as in both
the novels the hero and heroine settle down in Sonoma Valley, leaving the class struggle to take care of itself. Capitalism as practiced in the cities is evil, ruthlessly pitting the workers, against one another. The best can survive only through escape.

In his social writing, in a newspaper article entitled, 'Strike methods American and Australian', we find his belief in strike methods, his assertion of class-struggle, the indictment of capitalism for mismanagement reiterated with same old vigour. He predicts bright future for the labour. He emphasises that there can be no real industrial peace as long as the prevailing industrial system is not changed. He feels that industrial peace may be achieved and there will be no more strikes if capital will own labour or labour own capital absolutely.

He wrote an introduction to Upton Sinclair's novel, 'The Jungle', 1906. He writes, "It is written of sweat and blood, groans and tears. It depicts not what man ought to be, but what man is compelled to be in our world. Our country is really the home of oppression, and injustice, a
nightmare of misery, an inferno of suffering."

In February, 1915 Jack London visited Hawaii. There he wrote introduction to Upton Sinclair's anthology, dated March 6, 1915, 'The Cry for Justice'. He called, the book as a bible of the working class. He raised a cry for justice, sympathy, understanding, service and unselfishness in transforming the society. He made a call to the people for service in the cause of humanity. He urged the strong to serve the weak, and make opportunities for the poor. One feels this writing of introduction was written from the depth of a tormented and riven soul. "He who becomes converted to the gospel of service, will serve truth, will serve kindness, will serve beauty. And he who is strong will serve the weak, that they may become strong."

When he resigned from the socialist party nine months before his death in 1916, he went on public record, whatever his confused private reasons, as leaving because the party had become too respectable to insist on class-struggle.

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