

“The true path to salvation”: Conversion to the Religion of Socialism in the Work of Jack London and Upton Sinclair

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Abstract

The most common motif in early twentieth century radical literature is the conversion narrative. A variation on the bildungsroman, these works feature conversions to socialism or to the labor movement that are modeled on techniques used by evangelical revivalists and on the experiences of religious converts. The most widely read and emblematic radical authors to consistently employ this trope were Jack London and Upton Sinclair. Not only did London and Sinclair continually utilize the conversion story in their fiction and nonfiction, they both described their own discovery of socialism as a religious conversion. In their work, both authors diligently seek to conflate Christianity and socialism and to prove that, not only are the two compatible, but that authentic observance of Christianity demands the endorsement of socialism. London and Sinclair use their writing as a method of evangelism that aims to convince their audience that socialism is a religious enterprise and means to salvation.

Jack London and Upton Sinclair

The most common motif in early twentieth century radical literature is the conversion narrative. Walter Rideout has observed that the conversion story is a central element in one third of all the labor novels written in the first three decades of the twentieth century. A variation on the *bildungsroman*, these works feature conversions to socialism or to the labor movement that are modeled on techniques used by evangelical revivalists and on the experiences of religious converts. Here, a character's salvation is achieved through the acquisition of class-consciousness, which is described as a kind of rebirth, awakening, or recognition of revelation (Rideout 58). The most widely read and emblematic radical authors to consistently employ this trope were Jack London and his protégé Upton Sinclair. Not only did London and Sinclair continually utilize the conversion story in their fiction and nonfiction, they both described their own discovery of socialism as a religious conversion. In their work, both authors diligently seek to conflate Christianity and socialism and to prove that, not only are the two compatible, but that authentic observance of Christianity demands the endorsement of socialism. London and Sinclair use their writing as a method of evangelism that aims to convince their audience that socialism is a religious enterprise and means to salvation.

1. Evangelists for the Church of the Revolution

Jack London's fervent devotion to socialism is well known but he is not typically remembered as a Christian socialist. However, in both his essays and his fiction, as Jay Williams put it, “socialism and Christianity...ran in the same stream bed” (*Sail* 304). Though London's “deeply spiritual” interpretation of socialism is most overt in the work he produced from 1899 to

1906, “the religious element in London’s rhetoric is never lost” and remained “a constant for him throughout his life” (*Sail* 444, “Authorial” 25). “Christian imagery and rhetoric abounds” in his early essays where London first begins to present socialism as a religion that is synonymous with authentic Christianity (“Authorial” 24). Biographer Carolyn Johnston argues that London not only believed he had found “salvation through socialism,” but that it “could provide salvation” for all Americans as well (Johnston 63, 85).

London’s identification of Christianity and socialism can be traced back to his early tutelage under Frederick Irons Bamford, a reference librarian at the Oakland public library and proponent of the Social Gospel who endorsed the Christian socialism of minister-activists George Herron and Walter Rauschenbusch. Bamford acted as a mentor to young London in the 1890s, guiding the reading that would ultimately lead London to champion socialism and to persistently interpret it through the lens of Christianity. Joan London writes that her father’s early acquaintance with Bamford “was destined to dictate the course of his life” (95). Williams writes that, while “London was too radical to be called a Social Gospeler, he did agree with its major tenets” (“Authorial” 27). The sustained influence of this early study of the Social Gospel is evident in that, in the years to come, after he had long outgrown Bamford and become increasingly versed in Marxist theory and scientific socialism, like his friend Upton Sinclair, London continued to approach socialism as a moral imperative.

The period of London’s most fervid interest in socialism, 1899-1908, coincides with the time when he was engrossed in the study of Christianity and the figure of Jesus in particular. Throughout this period, he publicly promoted the socialist cause as a religious endeavor and privately compiled notes and research for the grand “Christ novel” he planned to write. Johnston writes that London was both “a socialist minister” and an “evangelist for socialism” who

engaged in a tireless “crusade” to spread the “revolutionary gospel,” effectively making him “the Charles Finney” or “the Billy Sunday of the socialist movement” (Johnston 65, 109, 113, 112).

Prior to his famous 1905-1906 lecture tour, London’s “preaching” was confined to print (Johnston 71). In 1899, London entered John Brisbane Walker’s essay contest for *Cosmopolitan* and won with his essay, “What Communities Lose by the Competitive System.” Walker, a millionaire and would-be preacher “who wrote Christian sociological essays,” was sympathetic to the religious tone of London’s entry in which he insists that capitalism is “soulless” and antithetical to Christianity, as “altruism and industrial competition...cannot exist together” (*Sail* 302, Foner 428). In his 1902 essay, “Wanted: A New Law of Development,” London called socialism “the passionate gospel of the dispossessed” (Foner 442). In July of that year, he sailed to London to research and compose *The People of the Abyss*, his study of the city’s underclass. As Williams has noted, this work relies on a “faith-based” examination of economics and uses quotations from scripture to forward “a biblical argument against” the capitalist system (*Sail* 444). Here, London argues that England’s relief efforts have failed because reformers do not “understand the simple sociology of Christ” (*People* 176). In his 1903 essay, “How I Became a Socialist,” London describes his discovery of socialism as a kind of religious “conversion”; he writes, “I had been reborn” (Foner 362, 365). The following year, in his “Explanation of the Great Socialist Vote of 1904,” London contends that socialism is “a religious movement” that “preaches the passionate gospel of the brotherhood of man” (Foner 405). A year later, in “What Life Means to Me,” he offered his most impassioned synthesis of Christianity and socialism to date. He would later reuse this same passage in *The Iron Heel* (1908). He writes that, in socialism, he found “a spiritual paradise” (*No Mentor* 93).

I found...warm faith in the human, glowing idealism, sweetness of unselfishness, renunciation, and martyrdom,—all the splendid, stinging things of the spirit...I was in touch with great souls who exalted flesh and spirit over dollars and cents...All about me were nobleness of purpose and heroism of effort, and my days and nights were sunshine and starshine, all fire and dew, with before my eyes, ever burning and blazing the Holy Grail, Christ's own Grail, the warm human, long-suffering and maltreated, but to be rescued and saved at the last. (*No Mentor* 91)

Finally, in his most famous essay, “Revolution,” the text that served as the “sermon” he delivered along his 1905-1906 lecture tour, we find his most strident endorsement of Christian socialism (Johnston 110). In the essay, London employs several forms of Christian suasion. First, he assumes a prophetic register, exhorting his listeners to disavow capitalist idolatry—to “cast off allegiance to the bourgeois gods” (Foner 493). He then acts as an apologist to demonstrate that socialism and authentic Christianity are one and the same. He explains that “the revolutionist...preaches righteousness” and “service, unselfishness, sacrifice, martyrdom—the things that sting awake the imagination of the people, touching their hearts with the fervor that arises out of the impulse toward good and which is essentially religious in its nature” (Foner 502). He then ends with an appeal to new converts to take up the mantle of evangelism themselves. He proclaims that “preaching the revolution—that passionate gospel...is in essence a religious propaganda with a fervor in it of Paul and Christ” (Foner 504). Ultimately, as Johnston has recognized, the essay was intended to initiate a conversion experience by employing the tactics of “a Christian sermon in which the minister tries to convince his audience of the evils of sin so that the sinner will accept salvation” (110). In “What Life Means to Me,” also written in 1905, London argued that to be complicit in the injustices of capitalism is to “sin passively” (*No*

Mentor 93). Here, he once more “condemned the sins of capitalism” and presented socialism as the means to salvation (Johnston 110).

After completing his essay for Walker, London wrote to Cloudsley Johns on August 10, 1899 to tell his friend that he had decided to write a “Christ novel” (*Letters* 1:104). It would be his first foray into the form. However, though London was engrossed in research for the “Christ novel,” he chose to write *The Daughter of the Snows* (1902) first, as the commissioned novel would provide him with much-needed funds immediately and could be written quickly. London would go on to compile sources and compose notes for the “Christ novel” from 1899 to 1915, a period spanning nearly the entirety of his literary career, and would ultimately incorporate this material into two novels, *The Iron Heel* (1908) and *The Star Rover* (1915). His early notes on the novel indicate that he originally planned to “show Christ partly and largely a labor-leader” and to demonstrate that Christianity and socialism were founded upon identical principles (qtd. in Tavernier-Courbin 260). London “clipped, saved, and marked at the top ‘Christ Novel’” a review of Karl Kautsky’s *Der Ursprung der Christentumus* entitled “A Socialist View of the Origin of Christianity” (“Authorial” 25). He was particularly interested in the passage where the reviewer writes that, for Kautsky, “Jesus was an agitator, a revolutionary, a rebel, and felt a strong class hatred of the rich,” and underlines the contention that Jesus was a “working class messiah” (“Authorial” 25). He also collected relevant texts, such as an article entitled “Economic of Jesus” and a pamphlet called “The Socialism of Jesus” which presented a “socialist portrayal of Jesus as a proletariat working to undermine the ruling classes” (“Authorial” 26, 28). He makes notes instructing himself to revisit the work of Walter Rauschenbusch, to “See POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CHRIST,” and to refer to Howard Pyle’s *Rejected of Men* (qtd. in Tavernier-Courbin 260). Pyle’s novel was part of the new genre of Jesus biographies that were immensely

popular at the time. In the novel, Pyle “describes the events of Jesus’s life as if they had happened in New York, 1903. Jesus is portrayed as a leader of the oppressed poor” and is “executed by the ruling church body” (“Authorial” 25). London’s devotee, Upton Sinclair, would later write an exemplar of this genre with his *They Call Me Carpenter* (1922). Williams writes that “London, like other socialists, was attracted to the idea that the organization of men behind Jesus was communistic in nature. Jesus’s followers, the theory postulated, were the first to form an urban working class collective [whose] immediate goal was to overthrow Roman rule” (“Authorial” 25). London was fascinated by the figure of Jesus, but not because he regarded him as a deity. Rather, London was compelled by Christianity’s ethics and economic philosophy, by “the socialistic nature of Jesus’s message” (“Authorial” 27). But most importantly, he was interested in “the organization of men” who had made Jesus into a god; that is, he was drawn to the process and social-political function of god-making. As he demonstrates in “Revolution,” London was keenly aware of the power of “religious propaganda” and wanted his Christ novel—in whatever form it would take—to show that “the task of all socialists was like the task of the early Christians: to overthrow the corrupted institutions” that constituted capitalism (“Authorial” 25).

Though it would not be published by Macmillan until 1908, London composed *The Iron Heel* from August to December, 1906, just months after completing his evangelistic lecture tour. London’s research into ancient Jerusalem and the crucifixion of Jesus would not be translated into fiction until he composed *The Star Rover* between 1913 and 1914, but it was here, in *The Iron Heel*, that London incorporated the bulk of his forgoing work on the Christ novel; this was the culmination of the work on Christianity and socialism that he had been crafting and refining over the previous seven years.

As in his earlier essays, in *The Iron Heel*, London characterizes revolutionism as a religious enterprise led by zealots, ascetics, and martyrs. The novel's Avis Everhard recalls that, "the Revolution took on largely the character of religion. We worshipped at the shrine of the Revolution, which was the shrine of liberty. It was the divine flashing through us. Men and women devoted their lives to the Cause, and newborn babes were sealed to it as of old they had been sealed to the service of God" (*Iron* 179). London suggests that the revolutionists are fulfilling God's plan and adhering to His will, depicting those who perform this holy task as saintly figures intent upon the salvation of humanity. Again, he reuses a passage from "What Life Means to Me," written just months earlier, to describe the novel's socialist combatants as martyrs whose vision was set upon "Christ's own Grail" and their "ardent idealism" intent upon the "maltreated" who were "to be...saved" by the revolution. Like so many of his peers in the movement, London exalted labor activists, imbuing them with a saintly aura, and sacralized socialism, depicting it as redemptive return to authentic Christianity.

The Iron Heel is essentially a hagiographical text that documents the final days of a Christ figure — Ernest Everhard — covering his evangelism, his recruitment of disciples, and the early stages of the revolutionary movement that would ultimately lead to his martyrdom. Throughout the novel Ernest is by turns characterized as a prophet, "oracle," teacher, "father confessor," and evangelist, "one of God's own lovers" (*Iron* 5, 56, 44, 133). It is clear that Everhard is modeled on London's interpretation of Jesus, but we must recall that London did not regard Jesus as a god, but as an integral figure in the progressive salvation history of humanity, who possessed a preternatural command of the divinity inherent in all people. Therefore, Everhard is depicted as a messianic figure or proletarian savior but not as a deity. London writes, "all his lifetime [Everhard] toiled for others...And all his life he sang the song of man. And he

did it out of sheer love of man, and for man he gave his life and was crucified” (*Iron* 132).

London’s use of Jesus as the template for his socialist hero is perhaps most explicit in his account of the transfiguration of Ernest Everhard. Avis recounts,

Ernest rose before me transfigured, the apostle of truth, with shining brows and the fearlessness of one of God’s own angels, battling for the truth and the right, and battling for the succor of the poor and lonely and oppressed. And then there arose before me another figure, the Christ! He, too, had taken the part of the lowly and oppressed, and against all the established power of priest and pharisee. And I remembered his end upon the cross, and my heart contracted with a pang as I thought of Ernest. Was he too, destined for a cross? (*Iron* 49)

Later we read, “he stood transfigured before me. His brows were bright with the divine that was in him, and brighter yet shone his eyes from the midst of the radiance that seemed to envelope him as a mantle” (*Iron* 61). We recall, of course, that The Transfiguration is the culminating event of Jesus’s life as an evangelist, related in each of the synoptic gospels¹. Here, Everhard takes the place of Christ and is imbued with divine light which shown from his brow, enveloping him as it had Jesus.

2. Conversion to the Religion of Socialism

An alternative title for *The Iron Heel* could be *The Gospel According to Avis* as it consists of her account of Ernest’s ministry, martyrdom, and the establishment of the church of the revolution. We read that, by preaching the gospel of socialism, Everhard provokes a conversion experience in many of his interlocutors, who receive his teaching as revelation and are born

¹ See Matthew (17:1-6), Mark (9:1-8), Luke (9:28-36), and 2 Peter (1:16-18).

again after attaining class-consciousness. *The Iron Heel* is a prime example of a common type of conversion narrative, one that concerns the redemption of a member of the leisure-class. As is standard with this type, the novel recounts a young, wealthy woman's "conversion into a revolutionist" upon meeting and falling in love with a charismatic socialist hero who opens her eyes to economic injustice and her class's complicity in the sins of modern industry (*Iron* 200). Avis's conversion experience occurs when Ernest awakens her class-consciousness, and she describes this event in decidedly religious terms: "It was as though I were about to see a new and awful revelation...My whole world was turning over" (*Iron* 48-49). We recall, of course, that conversion literally means "turning over." Hearing Ernest's socialist gospel leads Avis to be born again, to become his leading disciple, and to join the church of the revolution. In this way, Avis joins the ranks of numerous middle-class women in radical fiction whose conversions are provoked by saintly socialist men, such as the namesake of Howells's *Annie Kilburn* (1888), Margaret Vance in his *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890), Evelith Strange in his *Through the Eye of the Needle* (1907), Freda Hartwell in Charlotte Teller's *The Cage* (1907), and Sinclair's aptly-named Mary Magna in *They Call Me Carpenter* (1922), to name but a few.

Moreover, this literary motif is correlative with the real-world experience of many radicals at the turn of the century. Many socialists of the era described their experience of the movement in terms reminiscent of revival conversions. For example, Henry George reported that his awakening to the "social problem" in 1869 came to him as a "conversion after the pattern of evangelical Protestantism" (qtd. in Gutman 106n9). George writes, "Once, in daylight, and in a city street, there came to me a thought, a vision, a call—give it what name you please. But every nerve quivered. And there and then I made a vow" (qtd. in Gutman 106n9). Autobiographical conversion stories were a staple element of the radical publications of the time. Numerous papers

and journals featured articles written by prominent socialists in which they recounted how they were called to the movement. These accounts of political rebirth were invariably written in the idiom of the Christian conversion story and were pervaded by allusions to their religious analog². Further, Herbert Gutman finds evidence that suggests a “close connection” between “religious conversions and subsequent labor militancy among certain workers” (Gutman 106). For example, Samuel Fielden, one of the convicted Haymarket anarchists, had been a Methodist preacher, evangelist, and Sunday school teacher before being converted to socialism. Based upon Fielding’s own accounts, Gutman concludes that “his ‘conversion’ to socialism suggests a close parallel to evangelical conversion” (Gutman 106n9). By conflating these two forms of conversion, radical authors suggest that salvation is to be achieved through the endorsement of socialist norms. In this way, socialist doctrine is transformed into a salvation ethic, the adherence to which is thought to confer redemption.

Perhaps the most widely read of the Progressive Era’s radical conversion novels is Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1906). The extent to which Christianity pervades Sinclair’s conception of socialism is readily observable in the climactic pages of *The Jungle*. Before his ultimate conversion to socialism, Jurgis Rudkus joins a labor union, which Sinclair describes as the discovery of a new church.

Jurgis had always been a member of the church, because it was the right thing to be, but the church had never touched him...Here, however, was a new religion—one that did touch him, that took hold of every fibre of him; and with all the zeal and fury of a convert he went out as a missionary...after the fashion of all crusaders since the original ones,

² For example, see Eugene Debs, “How I Became a Socialist.” *New York Comrade*. April, 1902; Hellen Keller, “How I Became a Socialist.” *New York Call*. November 3, 1912; and Jack London, “How I Became a Socialist.” *The Comrade: An Illustrated Socialist Monthly*. 2.6 (March 1903).

who set out to spread the gospel of Brotherhood. (*Jungle* 100)

Not only does Jurgis undergo a conversion, he becomes an evangelist for his newfound faith.

Later, disillusioned with his trade union and in despair, Jurgis inadvertently stumbles into a meeting where he hears what can only be described as a sermon. The speaker offers a “message of salvation,” a gospel of “deliverance” (*Jungle* 338, 339). At times, the speaker’s words are indistinguishable from those of a revivalist who beckons unrepentant sinners to the mourner’s bench with the promise of redemption: “there will be some one man whom pain and suffering have made desperate...and to him my words will come like a sudden flash of lightening to one who travels in darkness—revealing the way before him, the perils and the obstacles—solving all problems, making all difficulties clear!” (*Jungle* 340). Through conversion to socialism, the speaker promises, the believer will become “a free man at last! A man delivered” (*Jungle* 340). This message elicits a “supernatural experience” from Jurgis, causing him to feel as though he’d been born again (*Jungle* 353). The speakers words

rang through the chambers of his soul...with a sense of things not of earth, of mysteries never spoken before, of presences of awe and terror! There was an unfolding of vistas before him, a breaking of the ground beneath him, an upheaving, a stirring, a trembling; he felt himself suddenly a mere man no longer—there were powers within him undreamed of, there were demon forces contending, age-long wonders struggling to be born, and he sat oppressed with pain and joy, while a tingling stole down into his fingertips, and his breath came hard and fast. [...] There was a falling in of all the pillars of his soul, the sky seemed to split above him—he stood there, with his clenched hands upraised, his eyes bloodshot, and the veins standing out purple in his face, roaring in the voice of a wild beast, frantic, incoherent, maniacal. And when he could shout no more he still stood

there, gasping, and whispering hoarsely to himself: 'By God! By God! By God!' (*Jungle* 344, 345)

Jurgis's emotionally fraught experience is clearly reminiscent of a revival conversion, where one finds salvation and is reborn through the acceptance of a new revelation. Sinclair writes, "a miracle...had been wrought in him...he knew that in the mighty upheaval that had taken place in his soul a new man had been born...he had been delivered...he was free" (*Jungle* 346).

Given Upton Sinclair's personal history, it should come as no surprise that he described his own discovery of socialism in religious terms, as "a conversion," or "a visitation by angels" (qtd. in Gottesman xxi). Religion had been an ever-present and immensely significant part of Upton Sinclair's youth. He writes that he "had been brought up as a very religious little boy" (*Autobiography* 288). He was "a devout little Episcopalian" whose mother "decided that [he] was to become a bishop" (*Autobiography* 30). Sinclair went to church consistently, taught Sunday school as a teen and "could recite every prayer and sing every hymn" (*Autobiography* 31, 30). As he grew older though, his faith was thrown into crisis when the young Sinclair, who had attained class-consciousness at an early age, was unable to reconcile his religion with the economic inequality he witnessed and suffered firsthand. Sinclair was mentored during this period by Reverend William Wilmerding Moir who "became a foster father" to the young man; later, Sinclair described Moir as having "more influence upon me than any other man" (*Autobiography* 30). Though Sinclair had become disenchanted with the church, that had not shaken his faith in Christianity. He writes, "my quarrel with the churches is a lover's quarrel. I do not want to destroy them but to...drive out the money changers from the front pews" (*Autobiography* 31). This is an exemplary expression of a sentiment shared by many Christian

socialists of the era, whose vocal anticlericalism did not preclude a pious devotion to the faith and in particular, to the figure of Jesus.

Though Francis Lacassin contends that it was Jack London who converted Sinclair to socialism in 1902, Sinclair attributes his turn to radicalism to “the Protestant Episcopal Church” (Lacassin 3, *Autobiography* 99). Sinclair explains, “I really took the words of Jesus seriously”; by converting to socialism, he writes, “I thought I was helping to glorify the rebel carpenter, the friend of the poor and lowly, the symbol of human brotherhood” (*Autobiography* 99). In 1901, nearly on the eve of his fortuitous discovery of socialism, Sinclair writes to Edwin Markham that he wants “to give every second of my time and of my thought, every ounce of my energy to the worship of my God and to the uttering of the unspeakable message that I know he has given me” (qtd. in Arthur 178). In 1902, Sinclair found the language with which to utter that “unspeakable message” when, “dropping off an article for consideration at *The Literary Digest*,” he met a young man named Leonard D. Abbott, “an active socialist” (Arthur 20). Abbott gave Sinclair a copy of *Wilshire’s* and some socialist pamphlets, including one authored by the preeminent Christian socialist, George Herron. Sinclair was so moved by what he read that he wrote Herron “an admiring letter” (Arthur 20). Herron quickly replied and invited Sinclair to a dinner which, upon arriving, Sinclair learned was being hosted by Gaylord Wilshire himself, who, at the threshold of an “apartment of extreme elegance...introduced himself as ‘Comrade Wilshire’” (*Autobiography* 101). It was this triumvirate of Christian socialists, Abbott, Wilshire³, and Herron who “opened his eyes to socialism,” an experience Sinclair described in terms reminiscent of a born-again revival convert; he writes that it was “like the falling down of prison

³ Wilshire would later publish his treatise on Christian socialism, *Socialism: A Religion*, in 1906, the same year *The Jungle* was published.

walls about my mind” (*Autobiography* 101). Herron would go on to be Sinclair’s chief

benefactor, supporting the young writer while he completed *Manassas* in 1903. Meanwhile, the Sinclairs and the Wilshires became “intimate friends” (*Autobiography* 104). Like Herron, Wilshire was eager to support the burgeoning writer and printed a picture of Sinclair in his magazine, introducing him to the socialist movement as “a coming novelist” before Sinclair had even begun work on *The Jungle* (*Autobiography* 104). In 1904, after completing *Manassas*, Sinclair began his study of socialism in earnest, under the direction of Herron and Wilshire, reading Marx, Kautsky, and Veblen, among others. Sinclair met this coterie in a time of personal and professional crisis. His long-held faith was shaken and he was failing as a writer. “What saved Sinclair,” explains biographer Anthony Arthur, was “being converted to the religion of socialism” (Arthur 324). Sinclair was “searching for the true path to salvation. Socialism gave him that path” (Arthur 324). Like London, Sinclair had been grasping for a means to reconcile his faith and his opposition to capitalism. And like London, he found his answer in Herron’s brand of Christian socialism.

Though Sinclair did not attribute his conversion to London, it is incontestable that London’s Christian socialism had an immense influence on Sinclair. In 1902, Sinclair began to write “reverential letters to London,” who he regarded as a “boyhood hero” (Silet 49, 51). London kindly responded, and thus began a friendship conducted “entirely by mail” but one that, as Sinclair put it, continued “all our lives” (qtd. in Allatt 78). Though their personal lifestyles were incompatible, Sinclair continued to approach London as a kind of “guru” who he often went to for advice and aid (Lacassin 5). Sinclair recalls that, upon their first meeting in January 1906, he “was prepared to give my hero the admiration of a slave” (*Mammonart* 364). Throughout the years of their relationship London remained generous to his protégé and by

Sinclair's own account was largely responsible for the success of *The Jungle* and the fame it

brought its young author. After *The Jungle* had been rejected by several publishers, London intervened and sent a synopsis of the novel to his publisher, Macmillan, who gave Sinclair a \$500 advance but ultimately declined to published the book (Lacassin 1, Silet and Silet 26-27).

Fred Warren finally agreed to serialize the novel in the *Appeal to Reason* from February 25 - November 4, 1905, but only under the stipulation that London, now the favorite son of the socialist movement, write a favorable review of the book in a major newspaper or magazine.

London not only obliged but did so threefold, writing glowing reviews for the *Appeal to Reason* in November 1905 as well as for *Wilshire's* and the *New York Evening Journal* in August 1906, just as he was beginning to write *The Iron Heel*. Sinclair later maintained, "if that book went all over the world, it has Jack London's push that started it" (*Mammonart* 372). One year after completing *The Star Rover* and just one year prior to his death, London performed a final favor for his devotee, composing an introduction to Sinclair's anthology *The Cry of Justice*, in which he writes that, when one comes to understand socialism and its ethical imperatives, she inevitably "becomes converted to the gospel of service" (*No Mentor* 155). On March 22, 1915, Sinclair wrote London to profusely thank him for the introduction, describing it as "a really quite religious utterance—written to organ music" (qtd. in Lacassin 5). This underscores that from 1899 until the time of his death, for Jack London socialism was synonymous with authentic Christianity and that this was a sentiment shared by his disciple, Upton Sinclair.

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