

# STAGED ACTION

*Six Plays from  
the American  
Workers' Theatre*

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*Edited by* **Lee Papa**

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# Introduction

“It is theatre which provides one of the most valuable means through which communities understand themselves and become understood by others. . . . [I]mages and imagination are . . . the means through which the material needs of communities and their mental aspirations form and disperse, at each point allowing a break with past dogmas and the expression of intangible possibilities.”

—ALAN READ, *Theatre and Everyday Life:  
An Ethics of Performance* (93)

This collection is an attempt to restore and revitalize interest in a largely forgotten American theatrical genre, the workers' theatre movement. “Workers' theatre” is a term that is used broadly to define theatre from the working class or theatre about working-class people. Here it refers to a unique and specific movement in the American theatre of the 1920s and 1930s to employ the stage to address issues concerning the worker and the workers' movement. A simple definition was given by Hollace Ransdell of the Affiliated Schools for Workers in 1936: a workers' theatre play “deals truthfully with the lives and problems of the masses of the people, directly or suggestively, in a way that workers can understand and appreciate” (2). These plays need not be written by workers themselves, and, in fact, many were written by figures sympathetic to the labor movement. The plays themselves are a series of fascinating, moving, occasionally frustrating dramas that often passionately explore the possibilities of the workers' movement. Even during the Great Depression, these plays never displayed the pessimistic images of the future as reflected in the contemporary fiction of Steinbeck and Dos Passos. Instead, the plays of the American workers' theatre clung tightly to stirring, utopian visions, as was hoped for in the early writings that formed a basis for the movement.

In *Left-Wing Dramatic Theory in the American Theatre*, Ira Levine cites the common characteristics of pre-World War I theories concerning the social function of dramatic art. First was an “insistence on the independence of political and artistic practice”; art and politics existed on equal planes, and neither could avoid the other. Second, “ideas and artistic perception had power in themselves to hasten the momentum and affect the direction of social change.” Third, theatre was seen as “the best artistic medium for the presentation of social ills and discontents” (2). One can assume that the ap-

peal to left-wing thinkers was the immediacy and intimacy of theatre, as well as the ability of theatre to bring large groups to a common understanding of an issue. In his 1917 "Valedictory to a Theatrical Season," *Seven Arts* theatre critic Waldo Frank railed against "unreal" theatre and "love theme dramatic parades." He called for the "dawning of a theatre of populous America" against the "present danger of America [so that] the citizen will find no clearer picture of our condition than within the world of the stage" (363).

For radicals in publications like *The Masses* and *Seven Arts*, drama appeared to be the most viable means for the dissemination of a revolutionary ideology. In her 1914 *The Social Significance of Modern Drama*, anarchist and activist Emma Goldman attempted to set down a theory of the drama in the wake of the spread of realism and other dramatic innovations. She argued that American theatre was in its "infancy," explaining, "We in America have so far looked upon the theatre as a place of amusement only, exclusive of ideas and inspiration" (5). At the same time, Goldman found modern drama universal, because it "mirrors the complex struggle of life, the struggle which . . . has its roots in the depth of human nature and social environment" (6). She therefore believed drama was the necessary medium to link intellectuals with the "common" people, who were the persecuted ones in the United States. Only drama could succeed in making intellectuals "realize their relation to the people, to the social unrest permeating the atmosphere," because drama reflects "every phase of life and embraces every strata of society" (7). Goldman hoped that her book, with its detailed analysis of the revolutionary nature of modern European drama from Ibsen and Chekhov to non-realists like Maeterlinck and Yeats, would lead the way to a revolutionary drama in the United States: "[The social drama] is the dynamite which undermines superstition, shakes the social pillars, and prepares men and women for reconstruction" (8).

The climax of the early part of the established workers' theatre movement was the Paterson Silk Strike Pageant of 1913. Influenced by German expressionistic theatre and the pageant/parade tradition in the United States, journalist John Reed, among other intellectuals supportive of the labor movement, collaborated with the Industrial Workers of the World to bring to New York City a staged version of an ongoing strike against silk mills in Paterson, New Jersey. Before an audience of over fifteen thousand in Madison Square Garden, workers and sympathizers enacted the closing of the mills, the rallies, and the violence of the strike. Ultimately, the Pageant, which was supposed to be a fundraiser for the IWW, was a financial failure, and the IWW's leaders later blamed the distraction of the Pageant for union's loss in the strike. However, the Pageant would prove to be a launch point for the entire movement that came after.

In her autobiographical appreciation of the period, *The Road to the Tem-*

ple, author Susan Glaspell called the Pageant “the first labor play” (368). The most stirring summation of the meaning of the Paterson Silk Strike Pageant would come from John Howard Lawson, author of *Processional*, included here. In his introduction to a 1967 edition of Reed’s chronicle of the Bolshevik revolution, *Ten Days That Shook the World*, Lawson attributes to the Pageant the roots of “audience participation, living newspaper, working-class point of view,” stating further that it “foreshadowed Mayakovsky and Meyerhold in the Soviet Union and Brecht and Piscator in Germany, as well as the New Playwrights’ Theater in New York and the social drama of the 1930s” (x). The Paterson Pageant thus demonstrated that drama and the labor stage could be used as a weapon in the struggles of workers.

Few full-length studies of the workers’ theatre movement have been done, though notable is *Staging Strikes: Workers’ Theatre and the American Labor Movement* by Colette Hyman (1997). Jay Williams’ *Stage Left* (1974) takes a look at the American theatre companies that produced social dramas; it concentrates on the Group Theatre, the Theatre Guild, and the Federal Theatre Project. *The Political Stage: American Drama and the Great Depression* by Malcolm Goldstein (1974) provides a strong overview of the labor drama movement from 1926 to 1940. Mostly, the workers’ theatre movement shows up in larger discussions of leftist or Communist culture in the 1930s, for example, in *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* by Michael Denning (1998) and *The Work of Dance: Labor, Movement, and Identity in the 1930s* by Mark Franko (2002). An interesting (if a bit anomalous) study is the red-baiting *Drama Was a Weapon* by Morgan Himmelstein (1963), which investigates how the left-wing stage was used to propagate Communist ideology.

Most plays of the American workers’ theatre movement of the first part of the twentieth century are available only as typewritten manuscripts in scattered collections and archives across the United States. These works are an untapped, obscure source of material from a movement that at one point in the 1930s had over four hundred companies nationwide, several successful plays on Broadway, and courses at major universities like Vassar and Bryn Mawr that were devoted to its continuation. The plays themselves are fascinating not just as historical documents, but as theatre. They range in quality from the purely didactic sketches of the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union to absorbing explorations of class and gender. For example, Bonchi Friedman’s 1928 play *The Miners* combines expressionism and realism in a drama about a violent strike that has a female union leader as its hero, willing to risk life and limb for the union.

The large number of plays could fill many different kinds of anthologies; a volume could be devoted to plays about the Sacco and Vanzetti case, like Maxwell Anderson and Harold Hickerson’s *Gods of the Lightning* and Peter Yrondy’s *Seven Years of Agony*; another volume could be devoted to

plays just about the coal mining industry, and still another volume to the plethora of plays about the case of the Scottsboro boys, such as Langston Hughes' *Scottsboro, Unlimited* (1933) and John Wexley's 1934 play, *They Shall Not Die*.

Rather than being an isolated sub-genre left in the past, the plays of the workers' theatre movement had an influence on American drama that continues until today. Indeed, these plays provide a key to a transformation in American literature and culture, through drama and theatre, in the representation of workers' lives. It is not overstating the case to say that works by Arthur Miller and Eugene O'Neill are direct results of the movement. *All My Sons*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Hairy Ape*, and *The Iceman Cometh* have some of their origins in their creators' interactions with the workers' theatre.

While the dramas of August Wilson and David Mamet carry on that influence, workers' theatre in its more direct form remains in action in the work of Vermont's Bread and Puppet Theatre and California's El Teatro Campesino. In 2006, writer Kim Bent and the Lost Nation Theatre of Vermont produced *Stone*, a play based on a 1930s oral history of granite quarry workers and their families. *The Line* by Michael Gordon and Milwaukee's now-defunct Theatre X, about meatpacking workers who went on strike against Hormel in the mid-1980s, is a stunning piece of documentary theatre that weaves monologues taken from interviews with workers into the drama of the strike. These groups have created ensemble works and performed them in much the same fashion as the theatre groups of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In a more mainstream vein, the work of Anna Deavere Smith, as well as *The Laramie Project* by Moises Kaufman and the Tectonic Theatre Company, continue the project of the workers' theatre movement through labor dramas: to represent the voice of the working class on stage by staging the working class and its concerns.

Given the enormously rich and varied amount of material, the most difficult part has been whittling *Staged Action* down to a publishable length. My file cabinets alone have nearly a hundred plays, copied from archives at the ILR library at Cornell, the Wisconsin State Historical Society, the Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the New York Library of the Performing Arts, the Highlander Center in Tennessee, and the University of Indiana, as well as from libraries and collections at activist centers elsewhere. However, I used a few basic criteria as a way to select the texts for the anthology:

(1) Importance to the Movement. Each play in *Staged Action* was considered integral and influential to some part of the workers' theatre movement, as discussed by the labor press and other media. For example, *Processional* by John Howard Lawson is constantly cited by writers in the 1920s and 1930s as an example of the best work of the movement (and Lawson himself was a strong proponent of the workers' theatre). Bonchi

Friedman's *The Miners* was one of the most performed plays from a labor college; Irwin Swerdlow's *In Union There Is Strength* was performed for years by the ILGWU and other unions.

(2) Availability in Print. None of the texts in *Staged Action* are in print. Two of the plays, *The Miners* and *Pins and Needles*, are only available as type-written manuscripts from archives. While the score for *Pins and Needles* is partially available, the script is not. Another pair of the plays, *Mill Shadows* and *In Union There Is Strength*, were only printed contemporaneously by the organizations involved at the time of their performance. The remaining two, *Processional* and *Singing Jailbirds*, while published in the 1920s, have long been out of print. This criterion allows the anthology to concentrate on "lost" scripts, and it necessitates leaving out two canonical works from the workers' theatre: *The Hairy Ape* by Eugene O'Neill and *Waiting For Lefty* by Clifford Odets. Both of these plays are widely available.

(3) Quality and Interest to a Wide Audience. To be frank and subjective, many of the plays from the workers' theatre are just not very good. They are overly didactic, mannered, and clichéd. Yet each one is fascinating as a historical document. However, in considering the selection, I included works that had been well-received in their time and works that were not simply recruiting tools for unions, although *In Union There Is Strength* remains as the most potent example of this kind of pure agit-prop drama. Instead, I sought to bring together works that are artistically fascinating and very much alive and relevant. In addition to labor issues, the plays included in the anthology address racial and ethnic disparities, treatment of prisoners, the effects of violence against women, and the destruction of the working class community. Also, the plays range in style from expressionism to realism.

Since this anthology may be one of the first occasions in which readers will have encountered this genre, I wanted to present a selection of the strongest work that crossed multiple areas of interest. Therefore, the book can appeal to a broad range of general readers, scholars, and students. I also considered which plays might be most readily produced by theatre companies, especially those that concentrate on older or "forgotten" works of the American stage.

(4) Exclusion of Federal Theatre Project Plays. I have not included any plays from the Federal Theatre Project. During its existence from 1935–1939, the FTP was a Works Progress Administration program that sought to give employment to artists during the Great Depression. In addition to many productions of Shakespeare and Shaw, as well as puppet shows and circuses, the FTP staged new plays that considered issues such as the threat of fascism, the treatment of workers, and workers' rights. The FTP existed more or less side by side with the workers' theatre movement; in fact, many of the artists active in the workers' theatre believed that because it was

funded by the federal government, the FTP delegitimized the political impact of its productions (although others worked in both FTP and non-FTP productions). Federal Theatre Project plays exist under a readily definable and distinct umbrella, and, as such, I believe they should be published as a volume separately, a project I hope to develop in the future.

LEE PAPA

*New York*

**STAGED  
ACTION**

# The 1920s

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## Workers In (and Out of) Jail

**P**roduced during the nadir of the labor movement in the 1920s, plays by John Howard Lawson and Upton Sinclair reflect the historic reality of the American government's crackdown on union activity—the large-scale arrests of strikers and union organizers—during and after the First World War. The image of the jailed laborer became a popular archetype that perhaps had its origins in the response to the imprisonment of Eugene Debs, the labor organizer and socialist who ran for president from jail in 1920 and garnered almost a million votes. Debs's popularity grew in large part because of his willingness to be jailed after disobeying court orders against strikes. Leading a Pullman strike in Chicago in 1893, Debs was one of seven hundred arrested in the violent clashes with police. In his two years in jail, Debs was radicalized and became a socialist; by the end of his term, he had become something of a folk hero, and one hundred thousand people cheered him when he was released from jail in 1895 (Feuerlicht 25–27). Debs helped organize the Industrial Workers of the World, or the Wobblies, which actively recruited groups that other unions rejected—unskilled laborers, minorities, immigrants, farmworkers (30).

Perhaps seeing the possibilities of this heroic stance, the IWW fostered the image of the brave worker unjustly imprisoned. When Wobbly leader "Big" Bill Haywood was imprisoned in Chicago in 1917, he wrote:

A prison cell is the heritage we gain for the blood and lives our forefathers gave; they fought for religious freedom and left us with minds free from superstitious cant and dogma; they waged war for political justice; they carried on the struggle against chattel-slavery—these were the titanic battles that were fought, bringing us to the threshold of the greatest of all wars—the class war—in which we are enlisted as workers. (334)

The cell, then, became a part of the history of the struggle for socio-economic freedom. Such inspirational language established the jailed worker, more often than not represented as a Wobbly, as the rallying point for the labor community. For instance, in a drawing in a newspaper of the IWW, *Solidarity* (August 4, 1917), one can see the stern face of a man staring between bars of a prison window, his hands clasping the bars. The caption reads: "Fellow workers: Remember! We are in here for you; you are out there for us" (qtd. in Kornbluh 220). In other words, in order to succeed, the labor movement needed its martyrs. And imprisonment, by fair or unfair methods, was one quick path to martyrdom. Haywood and Debs both knew the power of the prison in drawing new members to their causes. But often the strongest rallying for the cause surrounded martyrs with no grounds for their imprisonment.

This picture of jail-as-community is historically accurate; in fact, jail-time was often viewed as an additional opportunity to organize workers. Haywood called imprisonment "a period of improvement," and the workers used the opportunity to recruit new Wobblies (334). According to a Wobbly prisoner in 1909 in Spokane, Washington:

In the jail we held rousing meetings and in order to do it systematically we elected a secretary and chairman and set aside Sunday night for propaganda meetings and Wednesday night for business meetings. . . . [W]e established rules and regulations of all kinds . . . Needless to say, these . . . were scrupulously obeyed by the IWW members, and also by many of the ordinary prisoners, who fell under the magic spirit of the well known IWW discipline. (qtd. in Kornbluh 64)

The organized workers in the jail fought against cruel treatment by guards and went on hunger strikes for better conditions, often with great success (66).

This martyrdom and its role in the labor movement may be best exemplified by two cases from 1916. In the famous case of Tom Mooney, the imprisonment became a cause célèbre because of the obvious injustice involved. During a parade in San Francisco, an explosion killed eight people. Despite the fact that Mooney, a popular union agitator, was a mile away on his own roof at the time, witnesses placed Mooney at the scene. The jury heard conflicting testimony from prosecution witnesses yet convicted Mooney and sentenced him to be hanged. Upon appeal, the defense showed that a key government witness had been paid to give false testimony. However, not only were perjury charges never filed against the witness, but Mooney was kept in jail for twenty-two years for a crime he did not commit before being pardoned by a less hysterical state government. Even the involvement of Woodrow Wilson and the federal government failed to

cause any change of heart on the part of the California Supreme Court, which refused to overturn Mooney's conviction on writ of error. Writer I. J. Golden wrote a 1931 play about the Mooney case as a way to agitate for Mooney's release. Upon Mooney's release in 1938, a parade was held in San Francisco in which tens of thousands of workers marched with him.<sup>1</sup> Mooney's belief in the labor movement remained undaunted throughout his time in prison, and after his release he lectured for the rest of his life in support of union causes and to make a living.

Another injustice occurred in the case of Frank Little, an executive member of the IWW. Little, who had been jailed several times for union activities, was taken out of a lodging house in Butte, Montana, in 1917 and hanged by a group later identified as the "Montana Vigilantes." The DA of the region called the act "unwise," yet no one was ever arrested for the crime (Dubofsky 391–92).

The United States government, under the guise of national security during World War I, systematically destroyed the IWW. Woodrow Wilson, not heeding advice to the contrary by his secretaries of War and Labor, believed the IWW was "worthy of being suppressed" (Johnson 93). Wilson's fear was that if the IWW called a strike, the resulting industrial shutdown could slow the war effort. A bill essentially directed at outlawing the IWW was introduced by Senator Thomas Walsh of Montana, who called the Wobblies "public enemies" (Johnson 98). The bill passed the Senate but failed in the House in 1918.<sup>2</sup> In the end, nothing could persuade the Wilson administration not to crush the IWW, not the fact that the unions of the AFL took part in over five hundred strikes in the first six months of the war versus the IWW's three, not even the fact that the National Civil Liberties Bureau, created by the federal government, demanded that Wilson end the prosecutions against the union (Johnson 101). With the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918, the final nails were placed in the coffin of the free speech for which the Wobblies had fought so hard in the previous ten years. Under these acts, it was illegal to say or write anything "disloyal . . . or abusive about the government, the Constitution, the flag, or the army and navy uniform" (Feuerlicht 36). These laws were interpreted loosely in the ensuing years: in the first year after their passage, almost one thousand people were prosecuted under the Espionage and Sedition Acts, and half of these were IWW members from Sacramento to Chicago (*American Labor Year Book, 1919–1920* 92).

Despite the fact that the IWW did not endorse violence, the popular mis-

1. The information on Mooney is taken from *The Gentle Dynamiter* by Estolv Ethan Ward (Palo Alto, CA: Ramparts Press, 1983).

2. After the Palmer Raids in 1921, when any suspicious immigrants were rounded up and arrested under the orders of the Attorney General, Walsh became a "staunch civil libertarian" (Johnson 98).

interpretation of the union's ambivalence about the First World War and the public's reaction against the Russian Revolution led to the perception that the union might be a vehicle for the violent overthrow of the American government. An editorial cartoon showing the devil manipulating his two bestial servants, a Bolshevik and a Wobbly and other similar images in the press bolstered the misconception (Feuerlicht 61). The representation of the union man in popular culture was almost always a violent Wobbly. In the cinema, before and during the war, despite several films that were sympathetic to the labor movement, union workers were overwhelmingly portrayed as unclean, shady, Eastern European types, easily mesmerized by a leader with ulterior motives. Films such as *The Dynamiters* (1911) and *Bill Joins the WWW* (1916) never offered even the most cursory examination of the workers' grievances; instead, the audience was supposed to cheer as workers were clubbed by police and jailed (Ross 339).

The major labor dramas of the 1920s tended to focus on the persecution and trials of the Wobblies, which were the most enduring images of the labor movement. As the government attempted to crush the effort to form a labor community and further alienated and separated the radical union male from society, the artistic response attempted both to explain the original source of the worker's alienation and to offer rejoinders to the popular perceptions of the Wobbly male.

In *Processional* by John Howard Lawson, produced by the Theatre Guild on January 12, 1925, the jailed worker not only has a place to belong, but he needs to belong in order for the workers to unite. Lawson's play is perhaps the most accomplished of all labor dramas. It combines elements that will be picked up in later labor drama, such as the "dangerous" worker, the eventual demeaning of the worker, and the need for the worker community to come together for the sake of the jailed worker.

Lawson combines several techniques to create what he considers a new kind of drama. In his preface to the play (not reproduced here), Lawson explains that he wants to merge straight drama with vaudevillian slapstick, shtick, and song and dance, using as his model jazz music with its "staccato, burlesque" rhythm ("Preface" ix). In doing so, he presents, without apology, stereotypes in every character, from a Steppinfetchit-type black worker to a kvetching Jewish storekeeper, with names that immediately identify the characters: Dynamite Jim, Boob, Slop. The strikers are a jazz band that periodically marches through the audience, bringing the viewers into "the American processional" (ix) Lawson hopes to present. The sets for the original production, designed by Mordecai Gorelik, were satirical, cartoonish representations, with, for example, an exaggeratedly large jail cell with a single window or the Labor Temple with grotesque statues at its front. The reasons for this technique seem obvious: if the writer is creating, for the widest possible audience, a drama that is ultimately about

"industrial peace," as a character says at the end (see page 80 in this volume), then one efficient method of presentation is to reflect the message through the popular culture of the day, using easily identifiable characters. However, Lawson also satirizes the very popular culture that he uses to create his play; in taking every character to its extreme, he uses grotesques to expose the mythology of American history and capitalism. To subvert the play's ebullience, Lawson gives the play a protagonist, Dynamite Bill, whose purpose is to revel in the undercurrent of violence beneath the gaudiness and spectacle of the play.

Contemporary critics noted Lawson's technique with varying degrees of praise. Joseph Wood Krutch, in *The Nation*, found that the expressionistic drama with a realistic tragic hero "suggests the wild disorder of contemporary life," that the play was "grotesque yet veracious," and that its "emotional effects could not be duplicated by any drama of conventional structure" ("Drama" 99). While Krutch approved of this, he also noted that "large parts of the audience were puzzled or contemptuous" (100). Stark Young, in *The New Republic*, belonged in the latter category for the most part. He was sarcastic about the "comico-realistic expressionism" and "social comment expressionism" throughout the play and also derided it for being "formed by a theory and cursed by an excess of seriousness." He did, however, find *Processional* a "thoroughly American play" that "adds to [the tradition of] plays of curiosity and uneasiness of Americans about themselves" (281).

Other reviews were much more effusive. R. Dana Skinner, in the *Independent*, who found the play "a really splendid achievement," believed that the identity of the nation was wrapped up in the play. Watching the play, he said, is "as if you are in a cathedral and you hear the noise of elevated trains, a Salvation Army choir, the riveting of a new building, and a jazz band outside," with all sounds commingling to create an image of "how American life treats us at our moments of crisis" (114). Barrett Clark also identified something uniquely American in the fact that the play is "about our fear of radicalism." Clark went further than the other critics, saying that "*Processional* will in the years to come be regarded as marking an epoch in American drama" (130).

Upton Sinclair's *Singing Jailbirds* moves away from a depiction of the labor community outside the cage to focus on the community of workers inside the jail cell. *Singing Jailbirds*, which had its American premiere at the New Playwrights' Theatre on December 4, 1928, keeps its action confined to the cell, other than within the mind of "Red" Adams, the Wobbly hero of the play.

Few other plays so starkly lay out the issues of a union community and the meaning of being divorced from it. Red is constantly attempting a communion with the other workers. His last deed before being thrown into jail

is to rush to the window of the DA's office and shout, "Solidarity for the workers!" (see page 000 in this volume—), an act that elicits cheers from the workers below. Inside the jail exists a community of caged men of similar types and ethnic groups as seen on the outside in other plays. Even in jail, Sinclair says, where one is presumably completely alienated, the worker will try to create a community. Here, with the other jailed workers, Red becomes a historian of sorts, telling the workers what stories to recount when they are released from their cells. The workers even get their own religion in the person of the Dominie, who brings faith into the community of workers by calling Christ "the First Wobbly of the World." The singing also helps to create community: as long as they sing, the prisoners do not fight among themselves; they simply attempt to show the most unified face possible for their community.

According to Brooks Atkinson, the jail scene was the most stunningly designed of the play: "The cage-full of militant migrant malcontents, figuring for the occasion as striking dock workers, was impressive both as a simulated spectacle of man's notorious inhumanity to man and as an example of skillful organization and direction in the art of stage make-believe" ("*Singing*" 4). Atkinson perhaps reveals his prejudices when he adds that "if it was not convincing . . . it was because the idea of the manual laborer as an oppressed creature in this tenth year after the Great War in these United States is . . . patently absurd" (4). Among other events, in the ninth year after the Great War, a mob in Walsenberg, Colorado, led by the mayor of the town, wrecked the IWW headquarters when the Wobblies threatened a miners' strike. In January 1928, a U.S. Senate committee issued a report pointing out that, in Pittsburgh, employers were regularly using hired thugs to beat any union agitators in the coal industry (Taft and Ross 218).

Atkinson draws attention to a strange moment in the play when the audience is forced to look through bars to see the prisoners, who have formed a tidy community in their cage where all work together to give everyone an equal position in the cell (they rotate to allow those in the rear a chance for fresh air). In designing the scene with the bars in front, and a united labor community outside, Sinclair also places bars in front of the viewers; he, in essence, cages the audience. The audience is invited to join in the singing in order to join the community of workers inside the cage. With the bars caging the audience, those in the audience themselves become "singing jailbirds." As a result, the prisoners inside the cell are no longer distinct from those outside the cell; all are part of the same community.

Sinclair presents a stark lesson concerning the need for community within and without the workers' world; the two refrains of the play are, after all, the Wobbly preamble, "We are forming the new society within the shell of the old," and the words of the Joe Hill song, echoed in that flyer mentioned earlier, "Remember you're outside for us / while we're in here

for you," which is inverted whenever the crowd outside the prison is heard to sing. The singing demonstrates a direct bond between the separated workers' communities. Sinclair asserts that the workers' community is in fact the community of all people, that the people inside the cages are exactly like the people outside, and that "One Big Union," the goal of the IWW, is in fact the entire nation.

Both of these plays portray tumult of one kind or another. That tumult includes the failures of institutional American society to offer the worker-community any kind of redress for abuses against it. Within that tumult the labor movement would shift from the radical Wobbly stance to the more conciliatory stand of the more mainstream AFL. The labor drama would also shift during the late 1920s and early 1930s, from the romantic Wobbly model to a drama which sought to educate and indoctrinate. With the dream of the One Big Union all but dead, labor drama became more particularized and, while even more popular, perhaps less universal.

In these plays, we see the results of the dissolution of the labor communities of the first part of the century, before World War I, before industrialization affected all aspects of the lives of workers, before "the industrialist's power became legitimized" by establishing itself firmly in city government and institutions (Gutman 259). The labor plays discussed here anticipate the plays of the 1930s, which place the labor community firmly in the center rather than focusing on just an individual necessary to the success or defeat of the community as a whole.

# Processional

JOHN HOWARD LAWSON

## Cast of Characters

BOOB ELKINS

ISACC COHEN

SADIE COHEN

JAKE PSINSKI

POP PRATT

MACCARTHY

BILL

PHILLPOTS

THE SHERIFF

A MAN IN A SILK HAT

OLD MAGGIE

MRS. EUPHERMIA STEWART FLIMMINS

DYNAMITE JIM

RASTUS

SLOP

SMITH

FIRST SOLDIER

SECOND SOLDIER

THIRD SOLDIER

FOURTH SOLDIER

Place: Outskirts of a large town in the West Virginia coal fields during a strike.

Time: The present.

## *Processional*

### ACT I

#### On the Fourth of July

*A drop curtain, like those used in the older vaudeville theatres, represents a town street painted with brick buildings, signs of Central Hotel, Palace Movie, Quick Lunch, etc. In center of curtain is the door of Cohen's General Store, with show window painted on curtain and this sign: Isaac Cohen the Cut-Rate Store, Green-Grocer, Antiseptic Barber, Kosher Delicatessen, Mining Tools. Above the door is a small*

*practicable window in the curtain. The tone is that of the usual vaudeville drop, except that it is more startlingly crude, vigorous in color contrast, blaringly American.*

*A broad, uniform row of steps leads up to the stage.*

*Stage and auditorium brilliantly lighted.*

*Down the aisle of theatre comes a newsboy selling papers, shouting as he comes.*

*BOOB ELKINS is a thin, pimply lad of sixteen, with bright eyes and a hoarse voice.*

BOOB: Extry! Extry! Trouble in West Virginia! Charleston paper! Jazzin' up the big strike! (*By this time he is on the stage, still shouting.*) Extry! Extry!

*(COHEN sticks his head out from square window in curtain. A middle-aged merchant with a lisp that makes his caressing voice a little ridiculous. A kindly man, puzzled and worried by the violent labor dispute going on around him. The vaudeville type of Yiddish figure. He has just gotten out of bed, his sleepy head surmounted by an absurd nightcap.)*

COHEN: Say, just lay one on the doorstep, will you? Here's a nickel.

*(He throws the coin. BOOB catches it adroitly. Boob throws newspaper on doorstep. The head above disappears.)*

BOOB: (*Shouting*) Extry! Soldiers an' miners clash! Threats thrill throngs!

*(He exits left. Enter right SADIE COHEN, a sallow-faced girl of seventeen, all dressed up in white with short skirts and frills calculated to fill out her childish figure. Her hair in two neat pigtailed. Sometimes she sticks her finger in her mouth. She often stands on one leg and giggles.)*

SADIE: (*As she runs in breathless with news*) Popper . . . Popper . . . (*She stands on one leg for a moment waiting, then louder.*) Hey . . . Popper!

*(COHEN sticks his head out of square window again with nightcap as before.)*

COHEN: Well, who's dead now?

SADIE: Nobuddy yet, but they're gonna kill lots a' people, oo . . . lots a' people!

COHEN: Come indoors then, you li'l devil you, before you get shot. Can't I get no sleep on a holiday?

SADIE: They got a lot a' soldiers an' they got martial law.

COHEN: Never heard of him.

SADIE: (*More and more breathless*) The Governor a' West Virginia has made a big paper sayin' it's martial law an' everybody can be kilt . . . an' the soldiers has taken the mines an' the strikers has got music an' they're marchin' an' they're marchin' . . .

COHEN: Is that a fact? There it is for the Fourth a' July . . . Coal dust an' blood . . . oi, there's no money in it! I'll be right down; come indoors,

Sadie. (*He disappears from window*)

(THE JAZZ MINERS come through the audience playing the jazz march which forms a background throughout the play, "Yankee Doodle Blues." The band is a group of nine men in tattered blue overalls, playing on an incongruous assortment of instruments ranging from Jew's harps to bassoons. These do not keep time or tune very well but the effect is lively. The men are rugged types, hardened mine workers of the mountain region. The Jazz Band: (1) The leader, SLOP, is thin, with a long, glum face, playing on an old-fashioned flute. (2) JAKE PSINSKI, a Pole, with fiery wild eyes and a starved face, blows a long trumpet. (3) RASTUS JOLLY is a Negro, his torn overalls hung up by a string over his muscular back. He plays a banjo and sings most of the time for good measure. (4) A big Soiled Man with a beard which looks as if chickens might roost in it manipulates the slide trombone. (5) He is followed by a little, middle-aged, anaemic man who makes a ghostly effort to manage a badly dented French horn. The feeble players of this feeble instrument is known as FELIX. (6) ALEXANDER GORE, a man of the hayseed type, straw-colored hair and beard, red face, red bandana handkerchief tied around his scrawny neck, blows on the big bassoon. (7) DAGO JOE, a sleek, greasy Italian has an accordion. (8) WAYNE WHIFFLEHAGEN, a man with a curious face, plays a harmonica. (9) SMITH, young and serious, brings up the rear with the big drum banging methodically. This group makes its noisy eruption into the theatre, marches around stage and lines up still playing. SLOP, the glum man with the flute, stands a step below, leading them, waving his arms. SADIE stands on one leg at edge of stage.)

SLOP: (*Pointing the flute at PSINSKI, shouts angrily*) Hey . . . you! (*The band stops in a straggling manner. Slop approaches PSINSKI angrily.*) You with the face, what you trying to hog it all for?

PSINSKI: (*Taking SLOP by the arm*) My friend, we make the jazz today for the glory of the working class.

SMITH: (*Bored*) Speech . . . speech . . .

PSINSKI: Each man make the big noise what he can. (*PSINSKI is evidently a man of education, slight foreign accent.*)

DAGO JOE: (*Pleased*) Sure, maka da beeg noise!

SLOP: Aw, say it with flowers—I'm a musician, that's what I am; I can sing too, that's my nature. This bunch a' tin-horn mechanics is rotten!

(*He sits down top step wearily. SADIE walks in front of the Jazz Band, looking curiously at instruments, finger in mouth.*)

GORE: (*Poking Smith*) Who's the skirt?

SMITH: Store-keeper's daughter.

WAYNE: She's a li'l lady, y'know what I mean.

SMITH: A clean, square li'l girl.

*(Seeing that there is a halt, RASTUS has seated himself on steps at extreme left, lazily twanging banjo.)*

SLOP: I wish Jim Flimmins was here; he's the guy got music inside him comes out natural like the foam off beer.

SMITH: Well, Jim's in jail, where we'll all be before long.

RASTUS: No, sir!

PSINSKI: We do not go to jail, we got rights, we are class-conscious workmen—

GORE: *(Scratching himself uncomfortably)* I ain't conscious a' nuthin' except an itch an' a thirst.

SLOP: Now, if Jim was here, he'd blow a horn like it would make the cows shimmy.

SADIE: *(Who has been listening to the conversation, eager and scared)* I can shimmy!

RASTUS: Wanna join the coal town jazz, kid? Wanna step along in the big parade with us guys?

SADIE: I'd be scared.

GORE: *(Offering SADIE his bassoon)* Wanna play, kid?

SADIE: *(Looks down at it)* What's in it?

GORE: Noise.

*(SADIE turns to Soiled Man with the trombone, who is pulling it in and out sadly.)*

SADIE: I like this one 'cause it slides so funny.

WAYNE: Aw, give it to her. *(Soiled Man looks puzzled, wipes the mouthpiece carefully and hands it to her.)* Gentlemen, lemme introduce Miss Sadie Cohen, about to tickle the slide trombone.

*(SADIE tries to play, when COHEN reappears at window in his undershirt.)*

COHEN: Sadie, what's that in your hand?

SADIE: Look, Pop.

COHEN: Lay it down.

WAYNE: Just a slide trombone—

COHEN: Oi, a lot a' musical rippers, they don't do you no good with their slide trombones! Get in the house for once, will you? I'm comin' down.

*(He disappears from window.)*

SADIE: *(Giving back the trombone)* I don't do nuthin' I hadn't oughter, but Popper's always got the blues, he's always scoldin'.

*(Down aisle of theatre comes POP PRATT, hobbling on a stick, a typical Civil War veteran, wizened and unbelievably old in his tattered blue uniform. He has one wooden leg. He carries a faded American flag.)*

POP PRATT: (*Calling as he comes, in a plaintive, cracked voice*) Hey, boys, wait for me; I wanna march along in this procession—

WAYNE: He can't march, he ain't a member a' the Union.

POP PRATT: What's that?

WAYNE: A back number.

SMITH: A hot sketch.

SLOP: You ain't in, that's all, you're out.

POP PRATT: Try the other ear. I don't hear very good.

SLOP: You tell him.

(*SADIE sits down at foot of steps center practically in the audience looking up at group of men.*)

WAYNE: (*To POP PRATT*): Where you goin' with a face like the newspapers was writ on it?

SMITH: What's eatin' you, old man?

GORE: (*Pulling him the other way*) What for you wave the old flag?

(*RASTUS continues throughout to twang the banjo in lazy accompaniment to the scene, now and then breaking into song.*)

RASTUS: (*Sings*)

“He's got them Yankee Doodle Blues . . .  
 He's ninety an' he's spry,  
 With them never-say-die,  
 Them historic blues . . .  
 Yankee Doodle Blues . . .”

POP PRATT: Eh?

SMITH: (*Loudly, pointing to flag*) Them stars is states, stars in that flag.

POP PRATT: Oh . . . (*Scratching head*) I quit countin' year Amanda died: Mandy died in '93 . . . now it don't seem like she could be dead, her with her yaller curls.

WAYNE: I bet you seen lots of 'em die.

POP PRATT: (*Not heeding him, pounds stick on ground and chuckles*) That girl was a devil . . . yes, sir. Yaller-haired girls die quicker—they uses their strength dancin'.

WAYNE: Ain't that the cat's knuckles? Ninety years a' drums a-ratlin', he's seen wars an' deaths an' the makin' a' states an' yet he won't die.

RASTUS: (*Continues his accompaniment*)

“He's got them Yankee Doodle . . .  
 Yes, sir . . . Blues.”

POP PRATT: They don't make girls the same no more, ain't got the same shape now. I seen shapes change—

PSINSKI: (*Pushing the others aside importantly*) This is somethin' you ain't never seen, this is industrial, savvy—there's men marchin', men in a sweat an' their flag is the black smoke in the sky, 'cause they dig coal from the ground—

(PRATT has not heard a word.)

SLOP: Listen, then.

(*He cocks the old man's hand over ear, then he beats a lively volley on the drum.*)

POP PRATT: (*Puts his hat on and salutes*) I hear the drums a-rattlin' across Gettysburg.

WAYNE: Don't it beat hell the way they walk aroun' rememberin'?

(RASTUS sings low as PRATT continues.)

POP PRATT: (*Looking very much alive*) Yes, friends, in them days sinful pride leaped up an' we fought our brothers, American blood to water American earth . . . (*Tapping wooden leg with stick*) That's what my flesh done; fertilizer. My leg went to make the flowers grow in Gettysburg. We fought our brothers, we did . . .

PSINSKI: (*Shouts at PRATT*) All men are brothers!

POP PRATT: (*Turning and wiggling his finger in his ear*) Try the other ear.

(COHEN, dressed, has come out of store, carrying a large wooden board which he sets up beside door, on it written in big letters: "Headquarters for Guns—Wholesale Prices." He pushes through the men to SADIE, who stands up.)

COHEN: Sadie . . . Sadie . . . Did I tell you to get in the house, or are you deaf already, is it?

SADIE: I wanna hear the music, Pop.

COHEN: Ain't you got a swell victrola? Didn't I tell you them fellers mean you no good? (*Turning to the JAZZ BAND*) Get away from the front a' my store an' leave my daughter alone.

SMITH: We ain't said a word to her.

WAYNE: She's just been settin' there, an' that's the truth.

COHEN: (*His arm affectionately around his daughter*) A child raised for sassiety, understand . . . a flower, I am here to say it, a rosebud, a tulip, a forget-me-not, a regular Madonnis! . . . What else? A lady. . . Have I spoken? (*JAZZ BAND is impressed. COHEN looks them over.*) Oi, what a bunch this is!

PSINSKI: This is the Industrial Jazz chosen for their music talent, every mother's son.

POP PRATT: (*Coming between them, trying to hear*) What's that?

COHEN: (*Peering down the bassoon*) Have you got a bomb in that thing?

PSINSKI: (*Catching COHEN by arm and swinging him around*) Bourgeois!

COHEN: You dirty little foreigner.

SMITH: (*Swinging COHEN around the other way*) Who the hell's a foreigner?  
What are you yourself?

COHEN: What's your name?

SMITH: Smith.

COHEN: Mine's Cohen, you an' me is Americans. Shake. (*SMITH turns away from him. COHEN shakes his own hand.*) It's just the same by me—half a' these birds can't even talk in U.S.A.

DAGO JOE: Me savvy all linguagio, sail on da sea, walk on da land, see all da place, me clever wop, speaka Sensen wid Chinese girl, speaka Spearmint wid Eskimo girl, see all da place!

SLOP: Line up, boys, it's your turn to show 'em.

FELIX: Peerade—

WAYNE: March—

SMITH: Procession—

SLOP: An' for Christ's sake, sugar it!

COHEN: (*As Jazz Band forms in line*) Play the music, make a little music, murder an' starve—rights . . . rights . . . wave the flag an' play a little jazz . . .

(*Music starts with a bang and they march off right, led by SLOP. Music continues in distance off stage. PRATT, COHEN and SADIE remain.*)

POP PRATT: (*Hand cocked over ear*) Why, don't them boys make a noise, eh . . . music, eh?

COHEN: You got luck an' you don't know it. Come on, Sadie.

(*He exits into shop. SADIE is at door of shop when BOOB returns, still shouting.*)

BOOB: Extry! Extry! Threats thrill throngs!

POP PRATT: Here y'are, boy.

(*PRATT buys a paper. BOOB turns to SADIE.*)

BOOB: Hello, Sadie.

SADIE: Good mornin'.

BOOB: Give us a kiss, will you?

SADIE: (*Pointing to PRATT*) Huh, the old man.

BOOB: When you gonna give me the other garter off your leg?

SADIE: I can't . . . I got nuthin' to keep my stockings up.

BOOB: I'll give you a new pair with diamond buckles.

SADIE: You're kiddin', you ain't got the money—

BOOB: I'd steal for you! Give us a kiss for the Fourth a' July.

SADIE: I don't want to.

BOOB: (*Produces a pile of firecrackers from pocket*) I'll give you a firecracker if you do.

SADIE: (*Hesitating, finger in mouth*) Well . . . no, I don't want to.

BOOB: I thought you was my girl.

SADIE: I ain't nobuddy's girl. I'm free, I'm a suffragette, I don't care!

(*She goes into shop.*)

BOOB: Aw, listen, Sadie.

(*He follows her into shop, but only for an instant, then he is projected out head first, falling on the ground. COHEN appears in door.*)

COHEN: Out an' stay out, a boy that's no good, a thief, a loafer, I don't want to soil the hands on you again. (*COHEN disappears. BOOB picks himself up, produces firecracker, lights it and throws it into shop. A small explosion is heard inside. COHEN's head appears at door.*) That's how boys learn to be gunmen an' murderers. You will end in a big jail.

(*He disappears again. PRATT limps forward.*)

POP PRATT: What you doin' with them things?

BOOB: (*Hopping around*) Celebratin' my country 'tis of thee . . . it makes people dance! (*He lights the pack, throws it under PRATT and runs off, shouting.*) Extry! Threats thrill throngs!

(*BOOB has gone. The firecrackers explode with bangs and puffs of smoke. The old man loses his balance, waves his stick wildly and then goes flat on the ground. Enter on either side of stage simultaneously a soldier fully armed. The soldiers stand at either side, worried as if they were attacking an enemy trench. MACCARTHY, muscular and grizzled, hard-boiled, with dirty red hair, whispers loudly.*)

MACCARTHY: D'ye hear it, Bill?

BILL: (*A young city boy, tough, but easily frightened.*) I heard shootin'.

(*They approach PRATT on the ground.*)

MACCARTHY: They've done for the old man.

POP PRATT: (*Angrily*) Help me up, bloomin' fools!

MACCARTHY: Where'd it get you?

POP PRATT: My ear—(*MACCARTHY and BILL look at each other.*) Louder.

MACCARTHY: (*Shouts*) What was it?

POP PRATT: Rheumatism.

MACCARTHY: He ain't hurt.

(*They help him up.*)

BILL: Handle him careful, he's a veteran.

MACCARTHY: No, he ain't. Where's his American Legion button?

BILL: Sh . . . the other war . . . the Civil . . .

*(COHEN comes out of shop with a bunch of American flags on a stand which he hangs by the door, on it a sign, "Your Country's Flag. Special Sale." He bustles forward.)*

COHEN: Good mornin', gentleman, nice mornin', can I sell you anything?

BILL: Say, you remind me of Second Avenue.

COHEN: A New York boy?

BILL: No, Jersey City.

COHEN: Keep your eye out, Sammy, this is a tough place.

MACCARTHY: That's the bunk, tie it outside.

COHEN: They got what they call industrial warfare here—

MACCARTHY: *(Slapping chest)* We been in a real war; what about Argonne?

COHEN: Well, what about it?

MACCARTHY: Ever hear of Chateau Thierry? There was blood in the woods that day, a stinkin' lot a' blood.

BILL: Shut your head, I cough up every time I think a' that.

MACCARTHY: Uncle Sam's gonna keep order here. Any guy doubts it goes underground with lead in him, that's the law an' order program, savvy, 'cause the place is lousy with foreigners that don't understand American freedom—

*(Enter PSINSKI, a bullet wound in shoulder, shirt torn open shows a red scar.)*

BILL: What's a' matter with him?

PSINSKI: Some guy didn't like the music—just a flesh wound, it's nuthin'.

MACCARTHY: Hurry up, Bill, we better go look. *(Turning to COHEN)* Send the old man home, he'll get hurt. Come on, Bill.

BILL: *(Whining as they go)* I don't half like it.

*(Exit MACCARTHY and BILL. Off stage the recurrent rhythm of marching feet and music.)*

PSINSKI: *(Center)* Hear them feet a-shufflin' . . . the feet go clippety-clop an' the music make a splash like dynamite!

COHEN: *(To POP PRATT)* Better go home, Pop; looks like trouble here.

POP PRATT: *(Listening intently)* What's that about beer?

COHEN: *(Shouting angrily in PRATT's ear)* Trouble, disorder, riots, fighting . . .

*(Enter PHILLPOTS, young, amiable, brisk, neat made-to-order clothes, straw hat, nasal voice, folding Kodak slung over shoulder, a very GEORGE M. COHAN sort of newspaper man.)*

PHILLPOTS: Who said trouble? Riots, masses, poisonous gas, I'm for it!

POP PRATT: (*To COHEN*) Did you say there was gonna be another war?

PHILLPOTS: Sure, why not?

COHEN: Stranger here?

PHILLPOTS: I belong everywhere.

COHEN: Well, you look like you thought you was a devil with the women.

PHILLPOTS: Confidentially, I am.

COHEN: A newspaper feller!

PSINSKI: Treat him good, he owns us all, the guy that holds the wires . . . he laughs, he makes death, he telegraphs—

COHEN: Umph!

PHILLPOTS: That's me, Hiram, the History Kid. (*Inside the house SADIE has started the phonograph, a nasal voice singing. "There's no land so grand as my land from California to Manhattan Isle."* PHILLPOTS continues to speak.) Say, I've covered the map—steamers, trams, aeroplanes, camels, round and round in the path of war and all the time I had . . . (*The phonograph goes on. "Make me lose those . . . Yankee Doodle Blues."* PHILLPOTS joins in, singing.)

"I had those, yes I had those . . .  
Yankee Doodle Blues . . ."

(*The phonograph starts again at the beginning, SADIE dances out of store clapping her hands.*)

SADIE: I was makin' music an' I heard a voice that answered, heard a stranger's voice.

(*PHILLPOTS and SADIE look at each other smiling, stepping in time to the music.*)

PHILLPOTS: Is this my dance?

(*He and SADIE dance. POP PRATT delighted, pounds stick and jigs in a circle.*)

COHEN: Here . . . here! (*He tries to stop them. The first time he fails, but on next round succeeds in separating them.*) Enough is too much, young man. That's my daughter an' you ain't been introduced.

PHILLPOTS: She sure knows how to dance.

COHEN: She goes out now an' then to a social party where they dance genteel with a fox-trot an' a rabbit run, but no fightin' or pushin'—a social time, would you believe it.

(*The phonograph ends in a cracked wheeze.*)

PHILLPOTS: Are you one of the debutantes here?

SADIE: No, sir, I'm a good girl.

PHILLPOTS: You can't kid me, little girl, my mother was Jewish . . .

COHEN: Welcome.

PHILLPOTS: And my father was Irish.

COHEN: (*Suspiciously*) Oh ho, is that so?

PHILLPOTS: Yes, sir.

SADIE: What you doin' in a coal town, stranger?

PHILLPOTS: What sort of place is this?

COHEN: Oh, there you ask somethin'. It's rotten! Look at me: I come up here from Charleston when the mines opened. It looked like a million dollars, an' I tumble into a valley where Death lives.

PSINSKI: Go up that big hill, see all the graves a' men died sweatin' in the mines, little stones standin' like an army, but there on the other side a' town a temple built by a rich man with statues an' all—but go look at them graves!

PHILLPOTS: I don't care about the dead ones, but the live ones!—

COHEN: A live town, a coal center, ain't it? . . . (He points to the picture on curtain.) With a movie palace an' a rotary club an' a Ku Klux Klan—but out here on the outskirts a' town the hell a' coal begins, all these little black valleys full up with mines.

PHILLPOTS: Out of this the soul of America rises in a pillar of smoke. It warms the heart of the U.S.A. all right.

SADIE: (*Stands on one leg looking at PHILLPOTS, gaping with admiration*) Ain't he got the silver tongue, though?

PHILLPOTS: Little girl, rose of the coal dust with olive skin, were you born of smoke?

COHEN: Not on your life, she ain't, I'm here to say it, an' don't you go give her no such ideas. What a place for a girl among all these foreigners an' rippers!

SADIE: What's a ripper, Pop?

COHEN: A feller pulls the clothes off your back.

SADIE: Oo . . . I'd like that!

COHEN: Innocent, ain't it? She's all I got in the world. I got money saved to send her to correspondence school, some swell place, y'know what I mean.

PSINSKI: (*Comes up to PHILLPOTS, looks him over thoughtfully.*) Looking for trouble, are you?

PHILLPOTS: If I don't find it I'll make it. What do I care for guns! I'm going to raise the lid off this strike, make it a national issue, put it on the front page, put it before Congress, put it—

(While he has been speaking, all his hearers have suddenly taken cover, made signs of fright and disappeared. PSINSKI to left, followed by POP PRATT, COHEN and SADIE into shop. SADIE peeks out once and retires as a big, dangerous-looking man enters right. CONNER, the SHERIFF, carries two large pistols, dressed in half Buffalo Bill style, high boots, black whiskers, a very big badge on his chest. He twirls the pistols in each hands in a way to terrify any onlooker. PHILLPOTS sees him and his voice dies.)

SHERIFF: (Roaring) Out a' my path, stranger!

(PHILLPOTS dives into Cohen's store. SHERIFF walks up and down dangerously, trying to intimidate the audience. Enter right a tall MAN IN A SILK HAT and immaculate afternoon clothes, white kid gloves, followed by BILL and MACCARTHY marching stiffly, guns on shoulder. SHERIFF swings fiercely on the newcomer. His manner immediately changes to cringing civility. He salutes.) Yes, sir.

MAN IN SILK HAT: (Has a deep, ringing voice) I wish to announce . . . (He clears his throat.) Sheriff, I have arranged to have the strictest cooperation between your deputies and the army. The Colonel is sending his men out on police duty.

SHERIFF and TWO SOLDIERS: (In chorus) Yes, sir, yes, sir.

MAN IN SILK HAT: Another point, Sheriff. I am informed loose women are hanging around the camp making propositions to the soldiers. People take advantage of these periods of disorder to commit nuisances. (Off stage the distant discord of the Jazz Band is heard again like a derisive echo.) What's that?

MACCARTHY: It's them musical miners.

BILL: It's that strikers' jazz.

MAN IN SILK HAT: Gratuitous effrontery—

(A shot off stage, and the silk hat flies off into wings, disclosing a shiny bald head.)

MACCARTHY: What was that?

BILL: Where was it?

SHERIFF: You get the hat, you chase whoever done it.

(The soldiers hurry off, one on either side.)

MAN IN SILK HAT: (Clapping hands to head) Did it hit my head? . . . No, no, I think not.

SHERIFF: (Cheerfully) Why sure, that's nuthin'.

MAN IN SILK HAT: (Muttering) I wish to announce . . . (Looking at watch) That is, I think I'll just be going, Sheriff, I have a meeting . . .

(He is so nervous that he leaves watch hanging on its gold chain. BILL returns with silk hat and a handsome gray wig.)

BILL: I found this, too.

SHERIFF: Excuse me.

*(He takes wig and brushes it. It is very dusty. MAN IN SILK HAT claps it sideways on head.)*

MAN IN SILK HAT: Yes, I have a meeting . . . Law and order, Sheriff . . .

*(He hurries off nervously. PHILLPOTS runs out of Cohen's shop.)*

PHILLPOTS: Who was that?

SHERIFF: That's the President a' the Law an' Order League. (PHILLPOTS laughs. SHERIFF produces both guns.) Do you prefer to be tarred an' feathered or run out on a rail?

PHILLPOTS: Don't make me laugh!

SHERIFF: You're under martial law. We can investigate, search, enter an' strip you.

PHILLPOTS: Oh, Sheriff!

SHERIFF: *(To BILL)* Search him, boy.

PHILLPOTS: Don't search me. Here it is.

*(He produces large silver flask and hands it to SHERIFF, who smells it and takes a long drink.)*

SHERIFF: *(With manner of a connoisseur)* Not bad.

PHILLPOTS: Johnnie Walker. *(He takes a drink himself.)* I want to get to know you better, Sheriff.

SHERIFF: *(Pointing to camera)* What you doin' with that picture machine?

PHILLPOTS: Do you a big service, put your physiognomy on the front page in fourteen cities, badge and all.

*(He takes out handkerchief and polishes the Sheriff's badge.)*

SHERIFF: *(At once becoming very civil)* That's different. What paper do you represent?

PHILLPOTS: The best . . .

*(He unfolds copy of New York Evening Journal. The soldiers salute.)*

SHERIFF: The open hand to friends an' a short gun for strangers. Shake. *(They shake hands.)* They call me the Big Sheriff with the Big Heart.

PHILLPOTS: *(Opening camera)* Good, now look pleasant, point your gun—not at me, point it at him.

*(He indicates BILL. SHERIFF has struck a very funny attitude. As PHILLPOTS is about to take the picture, MACCARTHY drags in PSINSKI.)*