{Proletariat} Working Conditions under Capitalism #1

*The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair

Chapter 26

**“All day long the blazing midsummer sun beat down upon that square mile of abominations: upon tens of thousands of cattle crowded into pens whose wooden floors stank and steamed contagion; upon bare, blistering, cinder-strewn railroad tracks, and huge blocks of dingy meat factories, whose labyrinthine passages defied a breath of fresh air to penetrate them; and there were not merely rivers of hot blood, and carloads of moist flesh, and rendering vats and soap caldrons, glue factories and fertilizer tanks, that smelt like the craters of hell—there were also tons of garbage festering in the sun, and the greasy laundry of the workers hung out to dry, and dining rooms littered with food and black with flies, and toilet rooms that were open sewers.”**

Chapter 14

**Then “the meat would be shoveled into carts, and the man who did the shoveling would not trouble to lift out a rat even when he saw one—there were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was not a big deal. There was no place for the men to wash their hands before they ate, and so they made a practice of washing them in the water that was to be made into the sausage. There were the butt-ends of smoked meat, and the scraps of corned beef, and all the odds and ends of the waste of the factories, that would be dumped into old barrels in the cellar and left there. Under the system of rigid economy which the packers enforced, there were some jobs that it only paid to do once in a long time, and among these was the cleaning out of the waste barrels. Every spring they did it; and in the barrels would be dirt and rust and old nails and stale water—and cartload after cartload of it would be taken up and dumped into the hoppers on fresh meat, and sent out to the public’s breakfast.”**

Chapter 10

**“Here was a population, low-class and mostly foreign, hanging always on the edge of starvation, and dependent for its opportunities of life upon the whim of bosses every bit as brutal and corrupt and crooked as the old-time slave drivers; under such circumstances immorality was exactly as unavoidable, and as prevalent, as it was under slavery. Things that were quite unspeakable went on there in the packing houses all the time, and were taken for granted by everybody; only they did not show, as in the old slavery times, because there was no difference in color between master and slave.”**