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### **Internet Source**

<https://www.biographyonline.net/writers/john-steinbeck.html> (Accessed on 26<sup>th</sup>  
April, 2019).

<http://www.supersummary.com/in-dubious-battle/summary/> (Accessed on 26<sup>th</sup>  
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## APPENDICES

### Synopsis of *In Dubious Battle*

The setting for *In Dubious Battle* is the fictional Torgas Valley, California. Mac McLeod is a labour organizer who, along with Jim Nolan, a young man to whom he becomes a mentor, sets out to develop a strategy for planning and implementing a labour strike against the capitalist owners of apple orchards. An actual labour uprising that took place against the owners of a peach orchard in Tulare County, California is an event that is frequently thought to have inspired Steinbeck's novel. Steinbeck's critics frequently accused the author of being a communist, citing not only the events that occur throughout *In Dubious Battle*, but also his frequent thematic reference to group behaviour, social injustice, and the power of the individual to band a group together against an oppressive system.

The novel begins by focusing on a labour conflict between migrant workers who are employed as apple pickers and an association of local growers. Jim Nolan is new to the workings of these systems. His perspective matures as he becomes active in the labour movement and begins to understand the grassroots organizing it requires and the implications of workers' actions against management. Once Jim is accepted as a member of the Party, Mac McLeod, who is a very experienced field worker, takes Jim under his wing and mentors him in

of the Party. A conflict over wages is going on between the owners of orchards in the Torgas Valley, and Mac is sent to the site. Mac takes Jim as a way to provide the younger man with first-hand experience in doing



fieldwork. Mac explains to Jim that it is essential that they remain vigilant and use the situation as an opportunity to convince the workers to support them and their mission, and to agree to organize.

Mac has a knack for recognizing chances to prompt workers to take action and is not above manipulating situations to achieve what he is looking for. London is the leader of one of the groups of men that Mac and Jim are working with. Mac finds out that London's daughter-in-law is soon to give birth at the makeshift camp where the pickers live. He puts the girl's life at risk in an effort to establish a relationship with London. Once he has forged that relationship, he uses it to convince the workers on three of the sites to stages strikes against the growers. Next Mac procures private parcels of land on which the workers can set up camp. He also has a doctor, who has done work for the Party in the past, help set up and assure that conditions can be made sanitary for the workers.

Jim finds himself anxious to become involved in the strike but Mac uses him sparingly. Generally Jim's role is to put himself among the men and get a feeling for the workers' reactions to what is going on. Jim attends a picketing action with some workers and is wounded. At this point Mac limits Jim's involvement even more. Jim, meanwhile, pays careful attention to how Mac works, in particular to how he is able to manipulate the men. Jim finds that his mindset, like Mac's, has become one of centering everything around the Party and

the needs of the individuals.



The strike becomes doomed to fail when the man who let the workers set up camp on his land is the victim of a vigilante action. He ends the offer of his land as a refuge, leaving the strikers without a place to live. They are then faced with the decision of staying to fight until it is no longer possible or leaving without incident. Jim and Mac are duped into going to the orchard, where Mac realizes too late that an ambush awaits them, and Jim ends up being killed. Mac forces himself to remain stoic and brings Jim's body back to the camp. He places it on a platform for the strikers to see and to use as an incentive to stay united (<http://www.supersummary.com/in-dubious-battle/summary/>, accessed on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2019).

### **Biography of John Steinbeck**

John Steinbeck was born on 27th February 1902 in Salinas, California. His family were descendants of German immigrants and lived in a small rural town. Steinbeck had a comfortable but modest upbringing. In the summer, he spent his time working on the nearby ranches to help with the harvest and earn money. His work on the farms gave him an insight into the life of migrant workers, and his experiences would later provide material for his greatest works.

Steinbeck studied at Salinas High school, and then went to Stanford University in Palo Alto. Despite staying there for five years, he left without a

degree. In 1925, he left university and sought to establish himself as a writer in San Francisco. However, he was unable to make a career for himself and he was forced to support himself doing odd jobs. In 1928, discouraged, Steinbeck



returned to California where he got a job as a caretaker in Tahoe city. Despite working full time, in 1929, he was able to get his first novel, *Cup of Gold*, published.

However, after a few years, Steinbeck received some financial support from his father, this allowed him to give up his full-time job. Steinbeck was able to devote more time to writing from his father's cottage in Pacific Grove, Monterey, California. He also married Carol Henning in 1930. In 1935, the novel '*Tortilla Flat*' was published to critical acclaim. The novel was set in Monterey after World War One and portrays a bunch of homeless and classless men who reject the social mores of society. This novel was his first major breakthrough and gave him the financial income and confidence to pursue writing other novels.

This period led to some of his most productive writing years. In particular, his short book '*Of Mice and Men*' (1939) and the epic novel – *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) established his reputation as one of the pre-eminent modern American writers. *Of Mice and Men* was a short story about two migrant workers, George Milton and the mentally retarded Lennie Small who seek employment during the Great Depression. *The Grapes of Wrath* is a deeper discussion of the social, economic and cultural implications of the Great Depression. It focuses on a family of poor tenant farmers and their difficulties during the Great Depression; it offers a sympathetic account of migrant workers and is critical of capitalism. *The*

*of Wrath* became the best selling book of 1939, and it led to Steinbeck  
awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.



Both books captured the despair and personal cost of the Great Depression, and have become a classic literary account of this period. As well as the social implications, Steinbeck also captured a poignant reference to a mystical element of American farming land. The tragedy of the Great Depression heightened the missed opportunities to enable the American dream of cultivating the most fertile soil of the country.

Steinbeck's subtle political commentary was also controversial. The book, *The Grapes of Wrath*, was banned by the Kern County board of supervisors from 1939-41. Steinbeck was an active supporter of the FDR's Liberal New Deal and had strong contacts with left-wing writers and labour union figures. In 1967, he went to Vietnam and wrote strongly in support of the war, which many felt was compromising his earlier liberal ideas. Steinbeck complained of government harassment because of his political views, arguing J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI encouraged the tax authorities to harass him.

In 1942, he divorced his first wife and remarried, Gwendolyn Conger, they had one child – John Steinbeck IV. During the Second World War, Steinbeck wrote a novel inspired by the spirit of resistance to German occupation – *The Moon is Down* (1942). He also served as a war correspondent; he saw action in the Mediterranean and North Africa. In 1944, he was wounded after a munitions explosion and returned home. After the war, he visited the Soviet Union with

photographer, Robert Capa. He published his experiences in '*A Russian* it was a rare American insight into post-revolutionary Russia.



In 1948, Steinbeck experienced a period of mental depression after a close friend, Ed Ricketts died in a motor accident, and his second wife insisted on divorce shortly after. Ricketts had encouraged much of Steinbeck's writing during his most productive period in the late 1930s. Steinbeck remarried for the third time in 1950. In 1952, he wrote his last great masterpiece, *East of Eden*. In 1962, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. The Nobel Committee cited his great works *Of Mice and Men*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and a recent novel '*The Winter of Our Discontent*'. Steinbeck was typically modest, questioning whether he really deserved it. After 1962, he didn't write any more novels until his death in 1968 (<https://www.biographyonline.net/writers/john-steinbeck.html>, accessed on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2019).

