

# Of Mice and Men, by John Steinbeck

## A Radical Introduction

John Steinbeck (1902) was a trained biologist and active in politics as a socialist. He wrote about the tragedy of human life in Capitalism, U.S.A. during the Great Depression. His stories do not expose how America's upper class creates poverty; doing *that* might make a book treasonous or unpublishable.

*Of Mice and Men* is a fable. The mentally deficient and powerful Lennie symbolizes our mentally deficient and powerful upper class and the American Imperium. Lennie, or Leonard, is a *leo*, a lion who – like any upper-class predator – eats too much; kill innocents; crushes ethnic minorities like brown-skinned, curly-haired Curly; and burdens poor white folk like George Milton. Lennie kills everything he touches, feels no remorse and seems only dimly aware of the gravity of his actions. Indeed, he does not even remember what crime he committed at the ranch in Weeds.

*Of Mice and Men* is a greater tragedy than any tragedy written by Shakespeare. George Milton is the true tragic hero *because he must kill his friend, Lennie, the friend who tormented him and ruined his life, the friend who symbolizes government power, corporate power, the capitalist class and the whole of civilization.*

*Of Mice and Men* is a condemnation of the imperialist-capitalist system that privatizes land and concentrates land ownership in the hands of a few idiots who know nothing of land and life management. Only Slim, whose name means *smart*, seems to understand euthanasia and execution are necessary and that the poor masses must unite and *leave* the capitalist 'farm.'

Steinbeck died from America's first cash crop, tobacco, and the chemicals used by America's stupid, reckless and murderous farmers.