

**Upton Sinclair defines his positions in the 1934 election for governor, *The Literary Digest*, October 13, 1934**

Democratic Candidate for Governor of California

The meaning of our movement to End Poverty In California and its polling the largest vote ever cast in a California primary, is that our people have reached the saturation point as regards suffering. We are just about to begin the sixth year of the depression. We have one-and-a-quarter million persons dependent upon public charity, and probably as many more who are able to get only one or two days' work a week or who are dependent upon relatives and friends. That is too heavy a burden of suffering for any civilized community to carry.

A man's attitude toward this situation depends upon one factor. If he believes that private industry is "coming back," he is willing to wait and endure and patch things up. But finally it must occur to him to wonder whether the thing called "prosperity" will ever come back again. If he makes up his mind that it is not coming back, then his whole attitude changes and he is ready to consider some new procedure, thoroughgoing and drastic.

I have been telling the people of California for the past year that this is the permanent crisis, the one which does not pass away. I claim to speak with authority, because I have devoted my whole thinking life to the study of depressions, their cause and their cure; I proved my knowledge by predicting thirty-one years ago, and continuously ever since, this particular crisis, the "permanent" one. I assert that it is caused by the overproduction not merely of consumption goods such as food and clothing which are quickly used up, but of production goods, the great machines and factories, which do not get used up but stay right where they are.

"The Permanent Crisis"

I am telling the people of America that we have ten million unemployed who will never work again while the present system endures. For the past year I have been telling the people of California that the burden of supporting their permanently unemployed million-and-a-quarter is driving cities, counties, and State directly into bankruptcy. I have told them that in some hundred and fifty mass meetings, attended by from one thousand to fifteen thousand persons. I have told them in some three hundred thousand pamphlets and some five million copies of weekly newspapers. And in August some four hundred and fifty thousand of them went to the polls and said that they agreed with me.

Just what is to be done? No more important question confronts the American people today. If we do not find an orderly solution, we are going straight into the course of horrors which we have witnessed in Germany. I have believed all my life in democracy, the right and ability of the people to govern themselves. I am now offering the people of my home State a plan and a technique of procedure which will remedy the depression

by gradual stages in a peaceable and human fashion, without violence and the overthrow of our political, industrial, or social system.

The "EPIC" (End Poverty in California) movement proposes that our unemployed shall be put at productive labor, producing everything which they themselves consume and exchanging those goods among themselves by a method of barter, using warehouse receipts or labor certificates or whatever name you may choose to give to the paper employed. It asserts that the State must advance sufficient capital to give the unemployed access to good land and machinery, so that they may work and support themselves and thus take themselves off the backs of the taxpayers. The "EPIC" movement asserts that this will not hurt private industry, because the unemployed are no longer of any use to industry.

We plan a new cooperative system for the unemployed. Whether it will be permanent depends upon whether I am right in my belief about the permanent nature of the depression. If prosperity comes back the workers will drift back into private industry. No harm will have been done, because certainly the unemployed will produce something in the meantime, and the State will be that much to the good.

#### New Cooperative System

To meet the immediate emergency in our State and get the money to start our new cooperative system, we propose what we call an "EPIC" tax. That is an *ad valorem* tax on property assessed above \$100,000, which means about \$250,000 of actual value. This tax will fall almost entirely upon our great corporations and utilities, and to make it easier for them we shall make it payable at the option of the State, in goods and services. That will give us most of the raw materials and all of the utility services which the unemployed will need to get production started.

We have a great irrigation and power project known as the Central Valley Project. We propose to send fifty thousand unemployed into this work and ask the farmers of the Central Valleys to bring their surplus food crops, taking credits which will be good for water and power when the project is completed. The "EPIC" tax will give us the needed lumber, cement, rock and gravel, steel, etc., and light, heat, power, and transportation. The project will be carried out by our Public Works Department, and it will bring industry back to life in California.