

Union are merely the latest and most extreme manifestations of a tendency which has been apparent for the greater part of a century—for nations and groups, capital as well as labor, demand a larger measure of security than can be provided by a system of free competition.

With the collapse of the London conference the drift toward economic nationalism, as well as toward rigidity and planning, has continued unchecked. While there has been a certain degree of domestic recovery in many countries, international trade has not shared in the improvement. This has meant continued hardship for those sectors of the economy which are dependent on the world market. In the United States the pinch has been felt primarily, though not exclusively, in agriculture. The Administration's crop-reduction program has been matched by increased production abroad, so that its net effect has been far from beneficial. In recognition of this fact, those in charge of agricultural policy have increasingly come to realize that the United States must make a definite choice between its present nationalist policies and a restoration of the world market. The experience of the last few years has abundantly revealed the pitfalls besetting the nationalist path. A permanent loss of export markets not only would involve tremendous hardships during the transition period, but would entail lower living standards and a degree of regimentation wholly unpalatable to the average American. Yet restoration of the old order is beyond possibility.

The obvious solution of this dilemma lies in the extension of the principle of planning to the international sphere, which is essentially what has been suggested in the memorandum presented at Rome. While this entails grave difficulties, as illustrated by the vicissitudes of the international wheat agreement, it is the one road on which progress has been made during the past few years. Plans for international commodity control have been either formulated or actually put into effect in the case of sugar, wheat, rubber, and tea. In regard to other commodities, agreement has been blocked by the failure to win the cooperation of enough producers. But it is now widely recognized that there can be no solution of the anarchy existing in the production of basic raw material except through international cooperation.

The American memorandum not only recommends a thorough study of the results and possibilities of national and international production control, but suggests that agricultural planning on a world scale may be the means of avoiding a repetition of the events of recent years, and proposes that this planning be coordinated with long-range economic planning in other fields. It has the additional virtue of recognizing that little progress can be made toward international control as long as present trade barriers continue to exist, and that these in turn are closely bound up with monetary instability. It advocates a frank reexamination of current trade policies in order to determine whether they serve to increase international commerce, or whether they obstruct trade or divert it from its normal channels. But perhaps the most encouraging feature of the American proposal lies in its tentative nature. By no stretch of the imagination can it be charged that this is merely another utopian plan which the Brain Trust is seeking to impose on an unsuspecting world. It is flexible and exploratory in character, accepting the fact that the field of international economics has as yet scarcely been touched, even by so-called experts. Moreover, the

scheme has the great advantage of having been presented unobtrusively—in striking contrast to the pitiless glare of publicity that attended every move at the London Economic Conference and made necessary concessions virtually impossible.

There can be no assurance that the memorandum will receive favorable consideration from the various foreign countries at the present time. Any proposal by the United States purporting to be in the interest of the world as a whole is bound to encounter suspicion. Recent developments in Germany, France, and the Far East indicate that the forces of economic nationalism are more powerful today than ever before. But the very extremes to which they have gone have created the necessity for a return to international cooperation. This will not be easy; it may not even be possible in view of the warlike passions which the economic struggle has engendered. But if it is to come at all it will be through patient study and research such as has been suggested at the International Institute of Agriculture.

## The Epic of Upton Sinclair

**I**F the opponents of Upton Sinclair have left any stone unturned to prevent him from becoming Governor of California, we have not heard about it. As a result the State, and the nation as well, is fairly swarming with the low forms of life generally to be found under stones long unturned. Perhaps the most notable single specimen is the literature poured out by the United for California League, which calls itself non-partisan, presumably because it does not care who beats Sinclair. In a propaganda campaign that must be costing somebody a great deal of money, the league quotes from Mr. Sinclair's voluminous works to prove that he is an atheist who advocates revolution, communism, free love, and the scientific care of children. Like the Bible, the vast writings of Upton Sinclair can be cited to prove almost anything, but even one Bernice H. Johnson, who issues a leaflet in exactly the same format as those of the United for California League, has a hard time proving moral turpitude against the last American Puritan, Upton Sinclair.

The substantial opponents of Sinclair—the press, big business, and the Republican Party—are using other methods which have grown at once more hysterical and more unscrupulous with the approach of the fatal day, November 6. The Republican Party of California (and of Herbert Hoover) went to the length of making a friendly reference to the fantastic Townsend plan by which every worker past sixty would receive a federal pension of \$200 a month, to be spent in thirty days if our present so-called economic system could stand up under it that long. What is much more serious, the Republican Attorney General has instigated actions in Los Angeles County to strike from the registration rolls 100,000 or more names, most of them from downtown working-class districts. The burden of proof rests upon the registrants and it is physically impossible to hear anything like 100,000 cases before election day. As a result thousands of voters are likely to be disfranchised—with violence at the polls certain to follow.

To describe this hair-raising opposition would, in the case

of any other candidate, be equivalent to recording his defeat. But Upton Sinclair happens to know a thing or two about propaganda himself, and his counter-attacks, marked by the ingenious simplicity which is his special talent, have turned what might have been a sordid political dog fight into an enlightening and almost gay affair. When the flight of capital was announced, *Epic News*, Sinclair's weekly news sheet, reported that Mr. Sinclair (like St. Therese) was "not interested" in the results of a Wall Street manipulated stock market. To the accusation that he was an atheist, *Epic News* replied with an overwhelming resolution from the Methodist Preachers' Meeting of Southern California to the effect that Upton Sinclair "believes in a personal God." To the report that thousands of "hobos" were heading for California, *Epic News* replied that the statement was untrue, while Sinclair said in effect "What of it?" and went on to say that his policy was assuredly different from that of his opponents, who were determined to keep the people in California so poor that no one would be tempted to move in.

If Sinclair, during his campaign, has not proved that his own economic ideas are workable, he has proved that prevailing economic methods are definitely not workable, and in the process he has shown, in sometimes amusing and always vivid terms, who benefits by their non-workability. His analysis of California's present condition, in his latest campaign document, "Immediate Epic," is unanswerable. It also represents Sinclair's most ingenious achievement to date. When the Democratic Party took him under its nervous wing, it assumed that he would stay put, and the statements of leading Democrats supporting his candidacy were hopefully based on that assumption. He was persuaded to drop his idea of a \$300,000,000 bond issue. But he has already flown over the capitalist fence again. In "Immediate Epic" he proposes a heavy tax payable in cash, goods, or services on all corporations assessed at \$100,000 or more, without regard to income. In a blithe paragraph he says:

Let us take the Southern Pacific Railroad as an example. The Southern Pacific is now burdened with a great bond issue whose interest must be met. It is compelled to maintain its rights of way, tracks, and rolling stock. It has a far-flung executive organization. Its capacity to do business is vastly more than the business being done. If it paid a tax in the transportation of new freight, this would mean only hooking on to existing trains an occasional car for the State, and such new business would necessitate but a small amount of additional labor, fuel, and upkeep. Careful study makes it appear that the railroads of the State could pay an Epic tax for not more than 20 per cent of value measured in their customary rates.

We are sure that the Southern Pacific will be delighted if and when Mr. Sinclair takes it as an example.

Given the average American legislature and the endless network of legal devices by which the owners of the country's wealth are able to escape "confiscatory" taxes, Mr. Sinclair, as Governor, would find it almost impossible to put EPIC into effect. But if he proves that even his cheerful brand of social planning cannot be imposed upon a capitalist State, that will be worth finding out. Meanwhile the rights of workers would receive more consideration than they have had for some time in California. Tom Mooney, who would go free one half-minute after eleven on the morning of January 7, is one of the workers we have in mind.

## An Ellis Island for Books

"LITERARY Expert Made Censor of Book Imports." Thus runs the headline in the New York *Herald Tribune*, but the fact is not really as bad as it is made to sound. Thanks largely to the effort of Morris L. Ernst and others, the Customs Department has learned that it cannot really have a censor however much it might like the privilege, and the courts with whom the final decision on any book lies have recently shown an encouragingly liberal tendency. In the now famous case of "Ulysses" the guardians of our portals proposed but the Justices Hand disposed, and the surprising adventures of Mr. Bloom are now to be had at any bookstore.

What the new appointment really means is that the authorities of the Treasury Department have decided henceforth to consult some literate person before making a decision which is likely to be called into open question before a federal court. In the past it has worked in mysterious ways. Officially, at least, no one knew who read the books which were denied admission, and the common suspicion that the office boy was glad to oblige seemed justified by some of the odd proceedings—as when, for example, copies of the "Decameron" were held up, despite the fact that it had been printed and sold in this country for many years. In the future the authorities propose to look before they leap, and if any silly moves are made we shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing who is responsible. Huntington Cairns, a Baltimore lawyer, is the bearer of the new and odd title "literary expert attached to the Collector of Customs." He is said to be a gentleman of cultivated and literate tastes, and we probably have good reason to rejoice that the appointment did not go instead to some prominent Nice-Nellie or to some Board of Snoopers appointed by the D. A. R. and the Federation of Women's Clubs.

This is not, however, to say that we envy Mr. Cairns his job or think that he or anybody else is needed. We see no reason why the prosecution of books printed abroad should not be left to the District Attorney's office, which is responsible for action against allegedly obscene works printed in this country. In the first place, the latter arrangement puts both the initiative and the burden of proof up to the prosecution, instead of, as is the case with foreign books, allowing an arbitrary action against which the proprietors of the confiscated works have merely the power of making a legal protest. In the second place, the whole assumption that some special precaution has to be taken against wicked foreign influence seems to us a remnant of the ancient theory that Europe is a wicked old man bent upon corrupting the innocent youth of America. Nevertheless, we have some hope for Mr. Cairns and a good deal of faith in the power of publicity. He is not, we understand, the kind of man likely to take a Comstockian pleasure in exhibiting himself as one of those pure to whom all things are simply terrible. Any time that he feels himself slipping and begins to get that after-all-we-must-draw-the-line-somewhere feeling, we suggest that he pay a visit to the Columbia University library, which has just accepted as a historical treasure the very copy of "Ulysses" which the Customs Bureau held impounded for several years.