

"End Poverty in Civilization"

By UPTON SINCLAIR

Los Angeles, September 12

I AM writing this brief statement after five crowded days in New York and Washington. Our friends all want to know how we wrought our "political miracle" in California; they also want to know whether we are going to be victorious in November; and they want to know what they can do in the East to help us.

It is a movement of the whole people, and the people are doing the work. I have explained to them everywhere that I am not hankering for the job of being governor of a State; but we are confronting a crisis, and it just so happens that I have been giving my whole lifetime to the study of that crisis and the remedies and efforts at remedies which men all over the world have worked out and presented. We have a plan, a perfectly definite and concrete plan; we have put it before the people; and 450,000 voters have gone to the polls and said that they were for it.

It is an American plan. It has been especially worked out from that point of view. It is in line with our traditions of self-help and self-reliance. It makes use of no long foreign words and it says nothing about class struggle. It takes note of the fact that almost everybody in California is middle-class; even those who belong to the working class don't know it or won't admit it.

Many people question whether the plan will work. We who are promoting it intend to make it work. Thirty years ago I wrote, "Socialism is not a theory but an act of will." And we of the "End Poverty in California" movement know that we can do it, because we know ourselves and we know the people of our State. All through these dreadful five years of depression the people have been organizing and helping themselves. They have formed barter groups, and have managed to produce a little bit of this and that; they have overcome all the obstacles which business men and politicians have been able to put in their way. Now we are going to put the credit power of the State of California behind them, and they are going to expand into a giant cooperative in which 1,250,000 persons will take care of themselves.

We know something about the preparations our enemies are making to try to frighten the people. A confidential friend of ours has been inside the two rooms where they have prepared hundreds of forged photographs, showing, for example, such things as "Upton Sinclair trampling on the American flag at San Pedro." During the primary campaign it was charged that I was an agent of Moscow, and I have no doubt that before long they will produce plenty of letters to prove that I am directly in the pay of Stalin. They have charged that I am an atheist—and does it make any difference that several years ago I wrote the sentence, "An atheist is as dogmatic as any theologian"? They have been saying that I am a millionaire, and they will go on saying it—despite the fact that I was afraid to write a small check in New York, not being sure that I had the money in the bank at home. They have accused me of the dreadful offense of being a vegetarian—despite the fact that I abandoned this evil practice twenty-five years ago. I suppose I ought to be

happy over the fact that the only true charge they have been able to bring against me so far is that I am a "believer in telepathy."

How much all this will frighten the people, who can say? To win the general election on November 6 we shall have to get about twice as many votes as we got at the primaries. We shall get a good many of the votes which went to our Democratic rivals, but three of the old-time Democratic politicians have already gone over to the enemy, and each will take a few of his followers with him. To make up for this we shall have to get the votes of the progressive Republicans; and of course we shall get many votes from persons who believe in our program but who didn't trouble to vote in the primary. Only 55 per cent of the registered voters voted in the primary, but in the general election the number ought to run to 75 per cent.

What can our friends in the East do for us? A few enthusiasts were all set to start a caravan of automobiles across the continent. I telegraphed our campaign committee to ask about that, and the answer was, "Newspapers already carrying the story 'Red Invasion Begins.'" You see, the only chance they have to beat us is to fasten the "red" label on us; and of course, to the California newspapers, anybody who comes from the East is a "red" if he brings any sort of an idea in his head. It is quite all right for our enemies to get millions of dollars from Wall Street to influence the California voters, but it would be a grave offense for any friend of social justice to come in and make speeches for us.

What our committee asks is that our friends in the East organize where they are and spread the good word in their home cities and States. We will send you the books at \$50 per thousand, and we will send you our weekly newspaper, *Epic News*, at 2 cents a copy wholesale, profits all for the campaign.

Also, and above all, you can raise some money for us. We need money desperately, for it always has to be spent before we get it. Nobody in any of our headquarters gets any pay, but there are rent and telephone bills and postage and printing, and, above all, radio time. Our opponents have hired most of it, but there is still a little left—if we are quick. In order to engage time we have to pay cash in advance—no favors are granted to disturbers of the social order. The radio is the most powerful of all campaign weapons. The newspapers don't mention our Epic programs, but we get word to our clubs all over the State and they get busy on the telephone and so we have large audiences. What we need is to have a regular quarter-hour period every evening on a certain station; then gradually we can teach the whole State to listen in at that hour. Our friends in New York are proceeding to organize a New York Epic Committee. Once a group is started it will grow rapidly. At least it will unless there is a very great difference between the people of New York and those of California. Our name Epic means "End Poverty in California," but there is no reason why the slogan cannot be changed to read "End Poverty in Civilization."