

Upton Sinclair

In 1878, Upton Beall Sinclair was born in Baltimore, Maryland. When he was born his family was of the ruined Southern aristocracy so they moved to New York when he was ten years old. Throughout his childhood, he wrote many dime novels and hack fiction articles for magazines which enabled him to finance his education at New York City College. From there he continued his education at Columbia University in 1897 and was able to produce one novellette per week (Upton).

In 1906, Upton Sinclair shocked the nation with the publication of his novel *The Jungle*, which exposed the harsh working conditions in the Chicago stockyards, and instigated an investigation and correction of food inspection laws (Sinclair). Because of *The Jungle*, the Federal Government was in charge of conducting an inspection which led to the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906.

After Sinclair reached his fame through *The Jungle*, he was led to write more novels based on studies of groups or industries. In 1917, he wrote *The Profits of Religion* which was based on a study of religious groups. *The Profits of Religion* is the first of a series of volumes. These books are an economic interpretation of culture and now include "The Brass Check," "The Goose-step," "The Goslings," and in 1925 he wrote "Mammonart".

Sinclair wrote two books which addressed the school system. They are *The Goose-step* and *The Goslings*. These two books are a continuation of each other and address the school system. They impacted the way Americans view the education system because he strove to prove that schools are run by under-qualified teachers and they restricted their students to the same level. H.L. Mencken says: "He proves all this by an immense accumulation of facts. He not only toured the country, inspecting innumerable schools himself; he also entered upon relations with many rebellious school-marms (Mencken).

Sinclair was a member of a party in favor of social reform. The Socialist political party of the United States was founded in 1901 in Indianapolis, Indiana. This was the first political party in the U.S. that promoted socialism. Although Sinclair was a member on and off, he believed that socialism was of importance. Most of the books Sinclair wrote dwell on socialist topics and therefore express his beliefs to the American public.

Upton Sinclair also was a member of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) which is, according to Online Encyclopedia, an organization devoted to defending the rights and freedoms of all individuals in the United States of America. This organization was founded in 1920 and is a nonprofit law organization. The purpose of the ACLU is to protect the liberties provided to individuals by the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights. This protection is acquired through litigation, legislation, and public education (American).

In 1934, Sinclair ran for the governor of California as a democrat and used his "End Poverty in California" movement (more commonly called EPIC) as a springboard. Thousands of people rallied to his bold plan to end the Depression in California by taking over idle land and factories and turning them into cooperative ventures for the unemployed (I, governor). Toward the end, he ruined his chances and lost by a minimal amount. He did, however, change the way Americans perceived depression and poverty.