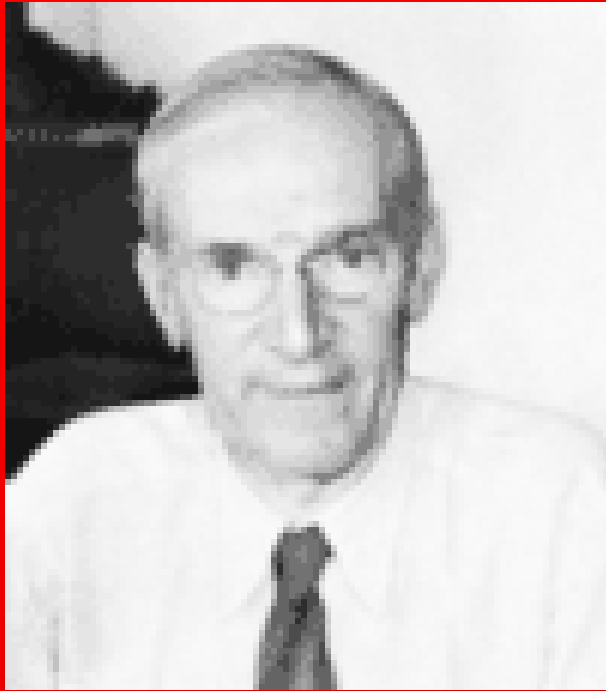


Upton Sinclair & *The Jungle*



Upton Sinclair as he looked when he ran for Governor of California in 1934.

Bio.& Career of Upton Sinclair

- Lived 1878-1968
- Came from a poor family-alcoholic father. Sinclair's dislike of drinking may have begun with this.
- Earned B.A. at the age of 18
- First book published in 1901.
- 1904: Commissioned by the widely read Socialist paper *Appeal to Reason* to investigate labor conditions in Chicago stockyards. This report became the basis of *The Jungle*

- Unlike most American Socialists Sinclair supported American entering WWI. Why?
- Sinclair was a frequent candidate for public office, running for the House and Senate. He was very narrowly defeated when he ran for Governor of California in 1936.

Frame of Reference for *The Jungle*

- *The Jungle* is both a product of and a commentary of it's time.
- 1880s-1920s saw rapid industrialization & laissez-faire economics. In this business dominated society the situation of the working classes deteriorated.

Sinclair & The Jungle Frame of Reference contd.

- Populist politics & muckraking journalism began to challenge the business-elite dominance of political and economic power.
- Unions grew and began to clash with business interests.
- Socialism as a political movement was at its height in the United States during the era when *The Jungle* was written. (1880-1930s) The Socialist Party elected members of Congress, several state governors, and finished a respectable 3rd in most Presidential elections. The Socialist Party only faded away as a political power in the United States because both the Democratic and Republican parties began to adopt many of its views during the 1920s-1930s.

Purpose of The Jungle

- Sinclair used the novel as a means to convey his ideas about or criticism of society.
- Sinclair was a moderate Socialist, but used *The Jungle* as an appeal for Socialism vs. capitalistic “slave labor.”
- Sinclair sought to portray the dangerous and exploitative working conditions of men who worked in the packing and other heavy industries. *The Jungle* was written in a simplistic form that was intended to portray a struggle between ruthless capitalistic scoundrels vs. oppressed hero workingmen.
- “*I aimed for the heart but instead hit the stomach.*”

Major Conflicts of *The Jungle*

Man vs. Man

Man vs. Environment

Man vs. Himself