

COALITION IN OHIO

Davey Can Be Stopped

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Cleveland, O.

Ohio is distinguished among the states for the tenseness of its political life. It is regarded as a pivotal state politically and has given the United States five Presidents.

THIS *World Almanac* description of Ohio sums up the political situation in this fourth-largest industrial state as candidates swing down the home stretch in the now nationally significant race for nominations in the August 9 primaries.

The sharp fight between progressives and reactionaries is centered on the struggle for the gubernatorial nomination on the Democratic ticket. In this race, the nationally notorious Red-baiter and anti-CIO champion, Gov. Martin Luther Davey, rushes up and down the state behind a uniformed guard of honor, made up of state-highway patrolmen, campaigning on the issue of "Down with the CIO!" Pitted against him is Charles Sawyer, conservative but consistent New Dealer, who handled Roosevelt's Ohio campaign in 1936.

In the soft-spoken words of Elmer Fehlhaber, tall, sparse-haired secretary of the Ohio Labor's Non-Partisan League, the election situation is this:

If you let Davey get reelected, you condemn the people of Ohio to another two years of misery . . . you guarantee two years of even worse starvation to the tens of thousands of unemployed now slowly starving to death under Ohio's nationally scandalous relief crisis . . . you fire a signal for every governor in the United States to call out the National Guard for strikebreaking service.

The results of the Ohio elections are of national importance. Because they will have such an important bearing on the crucial 1940 elections, this one Democratic primary is of international importance.

There are other races. And there is the campaign of Charles Sawyer. But the storm center is Gov. Martin Luther Davey.

Davey is one of the most colorful politicians ever to grace the chair in the spacious, high-ceilinged governor's office of Ohio's State House.

Previous governors have won votes following the "regular feller" homespun pattern of political personality. Vic Donahey, champion vote-getter, former governor, and now a senator, used to show up at every county fair, asking the farmers for a "chaw of terbaccy."

But not Martin Davey. The dapper, luxury-loving governor does everything on a grand and lavish scale. He is the "best-dressed governor Ohio ever had." His gouges of graft are known as "the biggest" in Ohio history. His vindictive statements are the most sneering and bitter of any Ohio politician.

His stupendous ego insulating him from the miserable cries of Ohio's hungry, he strutted into office in the atmosphere of an \$8,000 inaugural ball. One of his first acts was to acquire a brand new Lincoln sedan. To favored visitors he passed out—not prosaic cards—but silver name plates, costing \$4.50 apiece. He cast a disdainful eye at his office, demanded a new \$1,000 rug. When the State Legislature refused the appropriation, he called for "public subscription to buy the rug." Many men and women sent in nickels and dimes. One sent a few postage stamps. Along with the contributions were pitiful appeals for "any kind of work" from these people who felt that such a sacrifice for such a big man as the governor would surely bring fruit.

The later history of Davey's administration saw the governor going hog-wild in his eagerness to increase his personal fortune. He organized, among other things, fake coal companies with nothing but letterheads. The state purchased coal which sold for over twice its cost. The highway department (popularly known in Ohio as the highway-robbery department) paid twice as much for "hot mix" road material as Ohio cities paid for the same material. Millions of dollars flowed into the Davey machine and into the pockets of various individuals friendly to the administration.

As a veteran journalist expressed it during one of the governor's lavish parties for capital newspaper correspondents: "He hasn't any more conception of state government than a newly arrived South African savage. He honestly believes that the election victory means that the state is now his personal property to be used as a feudal baron would use his domain."

The glib governor was easily transformed into a political adjunct of reaction. He campaigned for reelection on the slogan "I never call out the National Guard in any strike." But once elected by the decisive labor vote, Davey turned the bayonets and machine guns of the National Guard against Little Steel strikers. And for this service to Tom Girdler in 1937, he expects the Liberty League nomination for president in 1940.

To Davey's credit, his strategy in breaking the Little Steel strike in Ohio was cunning in the extreme. With the strike at its height, Davey dispatched thousands of Guardsmen into the Youngstown area to "maintain the status quo." The strikers, who were defending themselves against the terroristic attacks of deputized thugs, greeted the Guardsmen with

cheers. As an indication of their willingness to cooperate the strikers retired from the gates of the silent steel mills which housed only a few company guards and cold furnaces. No sooner had they left the picket post than the Guardsmen herded every available scab into the mills.

The long-planned "back to work" movement was on. That night hundreds of strike leaders were jailed without bond and without formal charges.

With airplanes flying overhead and machine guns in strategic positions, the leaderless strikers were unable to reestablish a picket line. In similar fashion Davey assured the dictatorship of the steel trust in Cleveland, Canton, and Massillon. From then on, Davey's office in Columbus became the publicity headquarters of the most reactionary section of monopoly capital.

The steel strike had put Davey on the front pages of the newspapers throughout the country. He determined to remain there. Every speech, every action of the governor is designed to keep Davey in the public eye.

Accordingly, when he went to New York as guest of the utility magnate Wendell Willkie, the governor denounced the "Communist CIO" on a nationwide radio broadcast. He told of Communists marching in armed hordes into the steel areas and of how he, the governor, had saved America from revolution. When the rubber workers sat down briefly in Akron, he lost no time in offering to send in the National Guard. He had hardly issued his Red-baiting statement to the assembled reporters and had just asked, "Do you think this will make the big wires?" when the announcement came through that the dispute was settled.

It is easy to understand why Wall Street would like to continue Davey's rule. He has been of immeasurable value in solving some of the most pressing personnel and tax problems that arise from the operation of giant mills, auto plants, and other industrial enterprises. Moreover, Davey is almost as colorful a front as Mayor Hague for the propagation of violent near-fascist propaganda. In a state where the Ku Klux Klan and the Black Legion have long been entrenched, where the Rev. Gerald K. Smith has recently arrived to bray his intentions of enlisting 100,000 Ohioans in his Committee of One Million, the reactionaries are anxious to hold their power. In addition, Ohio is a pivotal state in the all-important 1940 election.

Yet the Liberty League campaign in Ohio dares not put all its eggs in one basket. Its goal is to continue at any cost the rule of the "old Ohio gang"—the Harding political pirates who climaxed their manipulations in the Teapot Dome scandals. Despite Davey's service to the sixty families, he is not a perfect candidate. Nominally, the main camp of reaction is rooted in the Republican Party, and it is necessary to build a Republican machine for 1940. Also, the diversity of Davey's opposition makes him anything but a good bet.

So the same interests who so long ago dic-

tated, through Ohio's Mark Hanna, who would be President, now are attempting to confront voters with the charge of two Liberty Leaguers in the coming election. With Davey the Democratic nominee, they have named John W. Bricker, the handsome attorney general, the Republican nominee. Since Bricker is running without opposition in the primaries, maximum forces can be mobilized behind Davey.

Only the firmest unity of all progressives behind Sawyer can beat Davey. To split the coalition, the present governor screams against the Reds, Revolution, and the CIO, hoping to win farmer and middle-class support. Above

all, he is attempting to split the all-important united front of labor by winning Bill Green's approval. Davey figures that Green will be friendly to any candidate fighting the CIO.

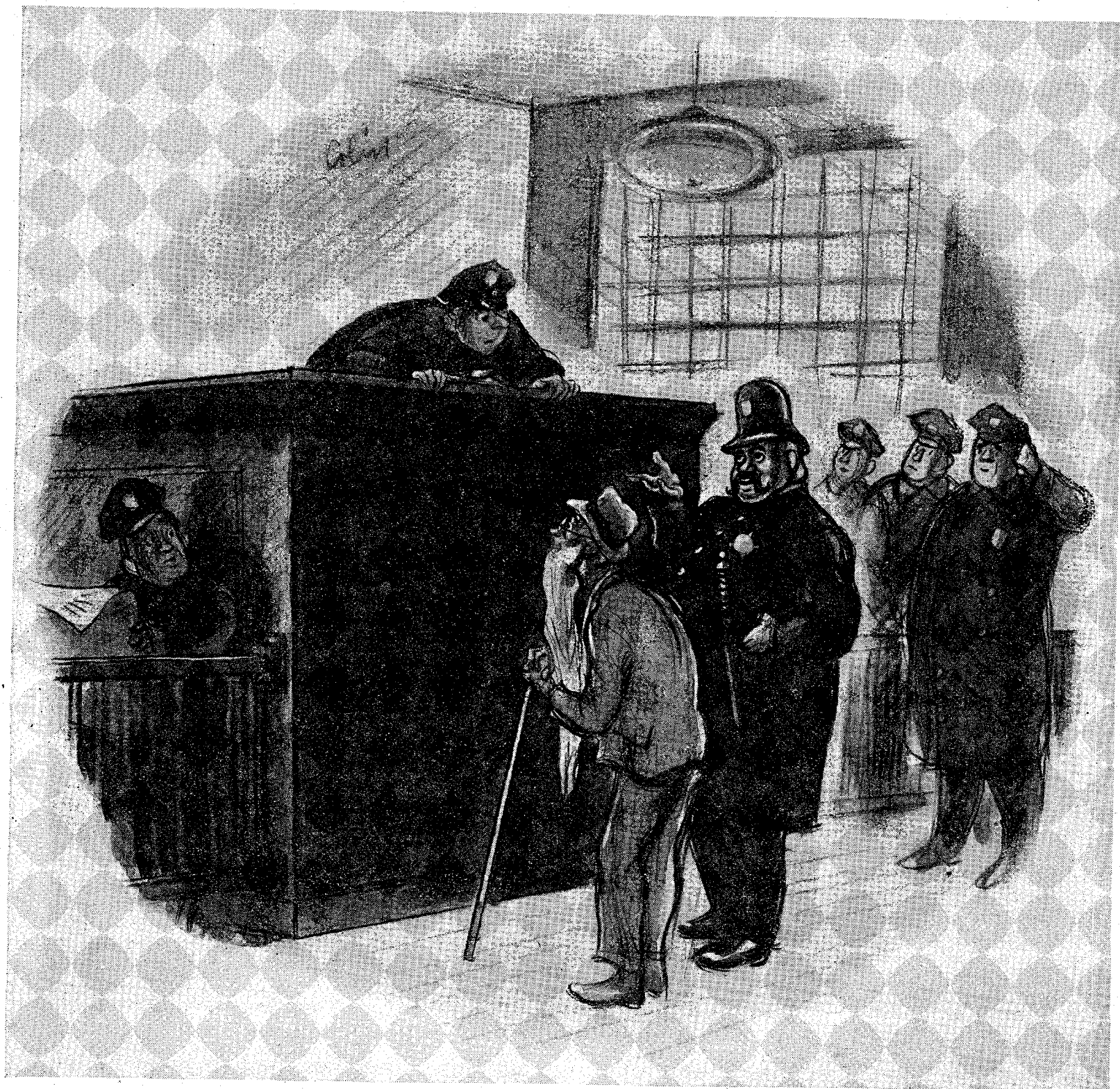
But Martin Davey has miscalculated somewhat.

The CIO is organizing its 250,000 Ohio members for political action—something that has never before been done by any Ohio labor organization. It has behind it tremendous victories on the industrial field. It has fought successfully to put tens of thousands of unemployed on WPA. So the CIO is not as weak as Davey thought.

Farmers and many middle-class citizens may

be suspicious of the CIO, but efforts to stir up a violent, crusading hatred have fallen pretty flat. The CIO is not the issue. And the "wild radicals" who lead it have not been "wild" enough to let the campaign become a fight between the CIO and Davey. On the contrary, they have rolled with the punches and disregarded most of the Davey slanders. John L. Lewis, most bitterly attacked, has said nothing during the campaign. He has declined invitations from infuriated union militants who wanted him to "come into Ohio and blast hell out of this tin-horn fascist."

The coalition developing against Davey is similar in many respects to that which defeated



"I finally nabbed the ringleader of these twelve-hour-day agitators."

Colin Allen

Tammany Hall in the last New York municipal election. Progressive Democrats are rallying behind Sawyer. In some localities like Toledo, where progressives and anti-Davey Democrats are strong, they have taken over the entire Democratic machine against the incumbent. In most other large communities the regular Democratic organizations are split. Especially in trade unions and in sections where Labor's Non-Partisan League is strong, many Republicans are changing party affiliation to vote against Davey in the Democratic primaries. Farmers, who place economy as their main demand, have been alienated from Davey in large numbers by graft revelations.

When Davey came to a small town to speak recently, the Democratic leader in that rural area sent a \$1 contribution to the Communist Party organizer in that section, suggesting it would be very nice if a picket line could be arranged to demonstrate against Davey. The not very reliable Scripps-Howard poll shows a close division between Davey and Sawyer in the farm areas.

No small factor in welding farmer-labor unity on this issue has been the activity of John Owens, head of both the Ohio Industrial Union Council and the Ohio Labor's Non-Partisan League, whose guttural drawling voice has been heard again and again conversing with leaders of farm organizations over the dining-room tables of Columbus hotels. Action by CIO and LNPL in behalf of farm measures has made many friends among Ohio farmers and rather dimmed the outlines of the Red bogeyman of the CIO.

Large sections of middle-class citizens, revolted by the Davey maladministration, are demanding a reform government through Sawyer. In addition there are all those unorganized progressives—civil-liberties defenders, the Cleveland followers of Tom Johnson, the thousands who have rallied to the aid of Spain and China. They recognize another Davey term would be twice as arrogant and terroristic. They campaign against such a contingency on the slogan that reelection means converting the entire state into an enlarged Jersey City.

Optimistic backers of the man who wants to be Liberty League President in 1940 claim they have the Negro vote in the bag. Nice jobs have been given to some prominent Negroes, and insiders explain Davey has bought up most of the Negro newspapers.

But here again there is no clear split away from the anti-Davey coalition. The majority of the Negro votes are still undoubtedly Republican on any issue except Roosevelt. And many of the thousands now swinging against Republicanism explain they are through selling their votes for the old political bunkum. Many were in the steel strike and cannot be bought, coerced, or clubbed into voting for Martin Davey.

Bill Green tried to fulfill Davey's dreams of a hopelessly split labor movement. Characteristically, the AF of L bureaucrat came into Ohio, beamed at the governor sitting beside him on the platform at the biennial convention

PRAYER AGAINST INDIFFERENCE

When wars and ruined men shall cease
To vex my body's house of peace,
And bloody children lying dead
Let me lie softly in my bed
To nurse a whole and sacred skin,
Break roof and let the bomb come in.

Knock music at the templed skull
And say the world is beautiful,
But never let the dweller lock
Its house against another knock;
Never shut out the gun, the scream,
Never lie blind within a dream.

Within these walls the brain shall sit,
And chew on life surrounding it;
Eat the soft sunlight hour and then
The bitter taste of bleeding men;
But never underneath the sun
Shall it forget the scream, the gun.

Let me have eyes I will not shut;
Let me have truth at my tongue's root;
Let courage and the brain command
The honest fingers of my hand;
And when I wait to save my skin
Break roof and let my death come in.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

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of the International Association of Stage Employees and Motion Picture Operators (AF of L) and pompously praised that great friend of labor, Martin L. Davey, "who has backed every piece of pro-labor legislation."

But the applause was scattered.

Then old Tom Donnelly, secretary of the Ohio Federation of Labor, called a statewide conference of AF of L delegates. He had already virtually endorsed Davey and there was little secret about the expectations of certain AF of L chiefs that the governor would be endorsed with little or no opposition. But when the motion came to invite Davey to speak, it was greeted with groans, jeers, hoots, and hisses. And there was no endorsement.

George Harrison, president of the AF of L Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, and T. C. Cashen, president of the Switchmen's Union of North America, both endorsed Sawyer without qualification. And then, when Daniel Tobin, president of the powerful Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Stablemen, and Helpers, with fifty thousand Ohio members, added his voice to the anti-Davey chorus, it became obvious that the Davey-Green strategy of splitting the AF of L away from the CIO on the primary election issue could never be carried out to any important extent. The rank-and-file pressure was evident.

A. F. Whitney, president of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, stepped forward to damn Davey as a "stooge of big business" who has slandered "decent leaders of labor" and "attacked the entire labor movement."

In many sections, LNPL will put on a genuinely significant campaign for Sawyer. It has county organizations in almost every large community. While few AF of L unions are affiliated, LNPL workers reach rank and filers in the AF of L when they work up and down the street in the wards and precincts. A large number of railway brotherhoods and AF of L members belong to LNPL. President of the Cleveland League, for instance, is Ber-

nard McGroarty, president of the Stereotypers Union (AF of L) and a candidate for state senator.

In Southern Ohio, where thousands of organized miners are active, the League penetrates farming communities. Broad groups are affiliating. For instance, the Belmont County organization has as an affiliate a rod-and-gun club.

Throughout the campaign, LNPL workers struggle to master the difficult technicalities of practical ward politics. In Cleveland, it is estimated by LNPL Secretary A. E. Stevenson that one thousand workers go from door to door in their precincts two or three nights of every week.

Some county organizations already have their independent councilmen in office and enjoy the experience of the 1937 municipal campaigns.

The coalition is forming. It is handicapped by one factor which did not hamper the New York anti-Tammany campaign. In New York the progressives had a colorful, crusading candidate in La Guardia. But in Ohio, candidate Sawyer has not been a vigorous crusader. As one veteran daily newspaper political commentator wrote for his anti-Davey newspaper:

So far, however, the interest in the primary campaign is at fever heat only among politicians. There are citizens in Ohio who don't know there is going to be a primary. . . . Most . . . have heard of Davey, either favorably or unfavorably, but there are some who never heard of Sawyer.

He was wrong in limiting the fever heat to politicians—thousands of citizens, especially working people, are working at fever heat, working against time to bring into fuller development the democratic-front coalition which can retire the Wall Street figurehead to private life and strike a stunning blow to the 1940 presidential strategy now being developed in the "best" clubs. And, while the picture is not yet clear enough to give odds, the political death of Gov. Martin L. Davey is a good even bet.