

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.

INSIDE FASCIST ITALY - II

Sicilian Peasants and Sulphur Miners

MARGARETA WEST

LATE at night I arrived in one of the sulphur towns of South Sicily—I need not mention its name—and rose very early the next morning. There were very few people in the street. The town was still asleep. When I had arrived the night before, I had stopped the car in front of the brightly lit bar. The boy who had sold me a packet of cigarettes at midnight the night before now stood in the doorway with a broom in his hand, whistling a tune. In the course of conversation I discovered that he was twelve years old and his father was a laborer in a village fourteen kilometers away. He started work at six o'clock in the mornings and finished at midnight. This brought him two lire weekly plus food and shelter. Better at least, said he, than having to work in the mines as *caruso* (hauler). "For the poor *carusi* are so worn out in a few years"—his gesture left no doubt as to his feelings on this point. This is what work in the mines looks like to this son of the people. He laughed as he said it, but it was a very unchildlike laugh.

This main street and the adjacent piazza form the actual town. Here are a few dozen handsome buildings, the headquarters of the authorities, the mines management, the bank branch, the tourist organization, the fascist party. Behind these another world begins. Here whole families live closely crowded together, three and four generations in one room, in cellar basements and in houses built half into the rock. In the gray dawn the men pack their tools on the ass, or carry them on their own backs, and start on the walk to the place of work, often two or three hours' journey distant. Only the women and small children remain at home. At harvest time these too go out to work, and everyone who has legs and arms to move takes a share. For weeks they camp out of doors in straw huts, or lie on the bare ground, wrapped in shawls. Sicily counts over four million inhabitants, the eleventh part of the total population of Italy, and while in Italy the average density of the population is 133 to the square kilometer, in Sicily it is 151.6. But what does "average" mean? In many rural districts the density of population rises to as high as twelve hundred inhabitants per square kilometer. In other districts the landscape is like an uninhabited desert: dreary heights bare of forest, mighty stretches of primeval land. Here the peasants live in town slums. There are scarcely any villages. Official statistics

show that in Sicily nine-tenths of the population live in towns and townlike settlements, although more than one-half of the adult working population live from agricultural pursuits.

The uninhabited countryside begins immediately outside of the town. People may be seen working in the fields far away, and further still a flock of sheep are browsing. The town stands high on the hill, and the downhill road may be seen for miles.

This morning I could see a small red dot moving on the road: a little girl. I overtook her. The child was going to her father out in the fields. We walked side by side, and I heard the usual tale of a wretched home and under-nourishment, of a growing family, of lessening income, of illness, fear, and death. Soon we reached the father at his work in the fields, and two younger peasants came up, his brothers. Of course they were somewhat distrustful at first, but soon we were deep in conversation.

We talked of agricultural labor in Sicily. It is hard work, but not equally hard for all. A complicated structure, that of the Sicilian rural population. First come the large landowners, called *baroni* or *cavalieri* by the people. So far as I could learn, the *baroni* are the actual large estate owners, who live in the cities and only visit Sicily a few times yearly. The *cavalieri*, on the other hand, live in the capital of the province, and are a kind of rural nobility. Then come the *cavallacci*, tenant landlords, who rent the land from the *cavalieri* but re-rent it immediately to the tenant farmers.

The conditions of tenancy are various. As a rule the landlord supplies the seed corn to the tenant farmer. The tenant and his family cultivate the land and deliver up a certain proportion of the crops as rent. Where the landlord supplies the sub-tenant with implements and draught animals, the tenant not having any of his own, or not sufficient, the quantity to be surrendered in rent increases proportionately and can amount to one-half of the crops or more. This sub-tenant may belong to the *burgisi*, a sort of intermediate stage between tenant farmer and agricultural laborer. But to be classed as a *burgisi* he must at least own a few mules, and a little money, and must possess a piece of land at least as large as that rented. If he owns less than this, he belongs only to the lower order of sub-tenants, the *bumm-ulari*, who are, how-

ever, still a little higher than the laborers, the *giornalieri*, who possess nothing at all.

The field on which we stood was owned by a *barone*. The great vine plantations in the direction of the town were also his property. I asked, apparently incidentally, if any of them had heard of limitations placed by the fascists on the right to own land. No, they did not think such a thing possible. Abruptly the conversation died down. The eldest peasant looked fixedly at me for some time. Then he pushed the two younger men on one side, and the little girl, too, disappeared into the straw hut.

"Tell me," he began, hesitatingly, "tell me quite honestly why you ask all these questions. What do you want from us? Where do you come from?" I could not deny that I came from abroad. We soon understood one another without many more words. And now it was his turn to ask questions. He wanted information about everything: about the war in Spain, about the People's Front in France, about the Soviet Union. The two younger peasants returned. He explained something to them in rapid dialect, and the questions continued without end.

Presently other land workers joined us. Many of them had traveled as far as the industrial towns of Northern Italy during the hunger years, and had returned as unemployed to Sicily. Never, in the past thirty to forty years, had conditions been so miserable here or the taxes so high. Where was the small tenant farmer to find the two hundred to three hundred lire in cash for the taxes? And then the other fees and levies. The compulsory inoculation of the sheep is certainly good, but dear: two lire per sheep. And if the animal is ill after the inoculation, or has to be slaughtered, this is a great loss which has to be borne by the peasant owner himself. In the old days less money was earned, perhaps, but the prices were lower, and they lived on a better scale. Now the children cry with hunger. There is no unemployment benefit for agricultural laborers. If the regular farm hands are out of work they get three lire per day for themselves and family, but only for the first three months. Those who have no land, and no relations in America to send money, must send their children into the fields to seek herbs so that the mother will have something to make a soup with.

And what do these people earn? As a rule it is six or seven lire daily, up to fourteen lire at most, for the laborers. In the case of the tenant farmers, it is difficult to calculate their earnings. They see very little ready-money, although the whole family shares in the work. But it is only necessary to look at them and their wretched holes of homes to see their want and misery. When I took leave, one old peasant shook my hand heartily. "Signorina," he said, "you come from another country. You know much more than we do. Tell me only one thing. How long are things here going to go on like this? How long can it continue?"

A year ago the Duce was in Sicily. The newspapers and the reception speeches were