

STRATEGY FOR NOVEMBER



Standards by which to judge the candidates for Congress. What the primaries held thus far indicate. The place of labor on the ballot battlefield. Last in a series of articles by Bruce Minton.

Washington.

IN THE congressional elections a few months hence—and in the primaries which many states will hold within the next few weeks—nothing can be gained by setting unrealistic goals. The task ahead should be seen as an attempt to rid Congress of fifty or sixty of the worst defeatists. This would immensely encourage the majority, who support the war, and would greatly alter the activity of Congress. Such a change would give tremendous impetus to the war effort.

To achieve this shift in Congress will require much greater activity on the part of organized labor and on the part of all other groups anxious for a speedy victory over fascism. Unfortunately, the primaries already held saw the renomination of too many defeatists who opportunistically paid homage to the anti-Axis struggle, though in action they consistently undermined the war effort. Likewise, the light vote in most localities testified to the insufficient emphasis placed by win-the-war candidates on major issues.

There remains, however, the excellent prospect of eliminating some of the worst incumbents—among Republicans, Senators Brooks of Illinois and Lodge of Massachusetts, and Representatives Bishop and Wheat of Illinois, Pfeifer of New York, Mundt of South Dakota, Johns, Keefe and Thill of Wisconsin. A young liberal prosecuting attorney definitely threatens the defeatists and labor-baiting Clare Hoffman of Michigan. Though Will Rogers, Jr., has just been drafted, his friends announce their intention of pushing his candidacy against Leland Ford in southern California—with a real expectation of success.

Party allegiance, of course, cannot be the basis of judging a candidate. Among the Republicans in Congress there are active supporters of the government's policy like Joseph Clark Baldwin of New York and Welch of California. This does not imply that the remaining Republicans can be dismissed as defeatists. Fortunately only a few fall into that category. But as a whole the Republicans have gone little beyond the stage of voting war appropriations. Inadequate leadership and the habit of opposing anything and everything favored by the Roosevelt administration quite clearly has determined the attitude of most of them. So far, the vigorous example of the Wendell Willkie wing of the Republican Party has caused little perceptible shift among the incumbents.

In addition, despite the anti-isolationist resolution adopted last April by the Republican National Committee, many party bigwigs consistently fail to draw the full lesson from the reversal of the Landon-Hoover-Taft appeasement clique. Clarence B. Kelland, the committee's newly appointed executive director, declared that "It is not a party war; it is a national war," and then contradicted himself by announcing: "When political unity comes in at the door, human liberties go out the window. It is political unity that plunged this world into war." The House minority leader, Joseph Martin of Massachusetts, announced that he and his followers would "rather win the war and win it quickly, than win an election." But Martin did not

carry this sentiment into practice: he urged his party in Congress to vote against every administration proposal except war appropriations. Thomas Dewey, influential Republican spokesman, still cannot bring himself to give unambiguous support to the war or to take firm issue with the unspeakable Hamilton Fish. Landon and Hoover go on repeating stale obstructionist formulas. As Wendell Willkie remarked, too many Republicans "would risk even national defeat in order to discomfit the party now in power. . . ." They are "imbued with partisanship which blinds them to all other considerations."

FOR their part, the Democrats have not purged their ranks of all appeasers. In New York the struggle to weed out the obstructionists is directed against such men as O'Leary, Barry, and Martin J. Kennedy; in Ohio, Sweeney (called by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* "one of Hitler's little helpers in Congress") is the main enemy; in Colorado, Senator Johnson; in Michigan, Rabaut, and Tenerowicz, Negro-baiter supported by the Ku Klux Klan; in Montana, O'Connor. Among Democrats there is the added problem of reactionary poll-taxers, who can be ousted only in the primaries. This special task must be achieved piecemeal; against those most vulnerable must be concentrated the strongest opposition. The fact that Martin Dies will be unopposed is a serious set-back; the fact that Howard Smith of Virginia is challenged by the AFL machinist official and former mayor of Alexandria, Emmett C. Davison, is of utmost significance. That Cox of Georgia and Woodrum of Virginia face considerable opposition in their districts is enormously encouraging to the entire South. Add to this the good prospect of defeating Senator O'Daniel of Texas. The political demise of even one influential poll-taxer can serve as a warning to the whole extremely sensitive clan.

Moreover, the country must be protected against candidates like the fascist Gerald L. K. Smith of Michigan and the anti-Semite Jacob Thorkelson of Montana. Positive action alone can return to office men with constructive records—such as Robert Ramspeck of Georgia, just appointed majority whip in the House, who has a difficult contest ahead of him now that the anti-New Dealers are out to knife him. Former Rep. Jerry O'Connell of Montana has defied the Wheeler machine in the western part of his state—his strong progressive voice should be heard again in Congress as it was heard against reaction and appeasement in 1937 and 1938. Each member of the win-the-war coalition who is reelected will mean a stronger, surer policy in the drive for victory over the Axis.

In particular, the forthright, courageous Vito Marcantonio of New York deserves at all costs to be returned to Washington. Representative Marcantonio has the proud record of fighting in the interests of the people, without lag, without wavering, providing essential leadership to the war effort. He resisted Munich and appeasement from the very first, supporting the people's struggles in China, Ethiopia, and Spain. He was the first congressman to urge the opening of a Western

Front. He has uninterruptedly defended labor against attack; he has fought for civil liberties unremittingly. It was Marcantonio who most vigorously and continually struggled against the Dies committee. He of all the congressmen urged the freedom of Earl Browder. Marcantonio has championed the oppressed—the Negro people, the Puerto Rican and Cuban people, the Spanish and other anti-fascist refugees, the victims of discrimination and intolerance everywhere. Marcantonio is more than a leading House progressive: he is the outstanding advocate in Congress of the most vigorous prosecution of the people's anti-fascist war on every front, with every weapon and energy at the nation's command.

IN THE five southern states, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and North Carolina, voting in the primaries was particularly light. Except for the defeat of Rep. Luther Patrick of Alabama, who had a good war record, none of the results in the southern states was especially revealing. In Patrick's case, his vote in favor of the anti-strike bill lost him the sympathy of the labor movement. Patrick's attempt to mix his votes in such a way as to ingratiate himself both with the reactionaries and the majority of his constituents resulted in his falling heavily between two chairs. His defeat should serve as something of a warning to wavering congressmen. But the loss of Patrick is nevertheless unfortunate—his victorious opponent, John Newsome, is certainly no improvement and probably less liberal than Patrick. Most revealing in the Alabama fight was the manner in which John L. Lewis exploited Patrick's faulty labor record to defeat him—because Patrick took a forthright position in support of the war effort.

In a few primaries the defeatists were unable to stand up when openly challenged. James C. Oliver failed by a wide margin to win renomination in Maine; his opponent, Robert Hale, strongly supported the war. In South Dakota Sen. William J. Bulow, with a bad war record, was also dropped. Unfortunately this kind of challenge to the appeasers was made in too few communities.

The most interesting primaries, those held in Illinois, Indiana, and Pennsylvania, are worth a quick review:

Illinois. While the vote proved the smallest in twelve years, the Democrats outpolled the Republicans in the state by 100,000, three-fold in Chicago. The Democrats nominated for senator the progressive and victory-minded Representative McKeough, with an excellent record in the House. They defeated three Democratic incumbents who had shown consistent hostility toward labor. The Republicans by and large offered only appeaser candidates—the light Republican vote indicated that many party supporters refused to participate in the primaries because of the candidates they were asked to endorse. While attempting to use the anti-isolationist resolution of the Republican National Committee to cover up its true views, the Illinois Republican machine accepted the endorsement of the Coughlinites, the defeatist, "We, the Mothers," the appeasing Colonel McCormick and his *Chicago Tribune*, and the Bundists. Sen. C. Wayland Brooks, whose franking privileges were used by the Nazi agent George Sylvester Viereck, managed to be renominated. Along with him, Rep. Stephen Day, friend of Gerald L. K. Smith, Pelley, and other fascists, was designated as Republican choice for congressman-at-large.

Nevertheless, the Democratic opponents of Brooks and Day received substantially greater votes. The CIO, except for the Lewis bureaucracy, backed McKeough, Benjamin Adamowski, and other win-the-war candidates. Because of Day's vote against the Smith anti-strike bill, William Green and A. F. Whitney, of the Railroad Brotherhoods, made the mistake of supporting him solely on a mechanical reading of his voting record. Since the primary the AFL has withdrawn its support and all labor is backing McKeough and Adamowski. John L. Lewis proved a powerful ally of Brooks and Day and all other appeasers,

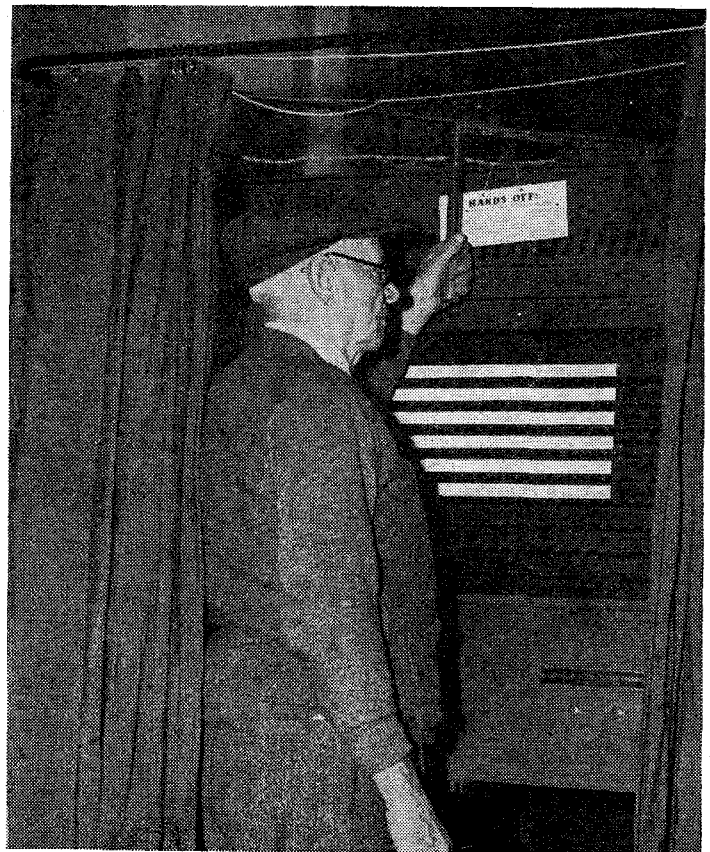
helping to confuse by raising the false slogan, "Kelly-Nash Is Our Foe," inveighing against the administration, and ignoring the issues—or rather, misrepresenting them.

An encouraging aspect was the rallying of the Negro vote to win-the-war candidates, and the progressive position taken by the foreign-born and national groups. The main need in preparation for the elections is to present the central questions with extreme clarity—the question of defeatism vs. full support of the war.

Indiana. The incumbent William T. Schulte lost the Democratic nomination to Roy J. Madden. Both candidates took a win-the-war position, but Madden was more outspoken and militant. Madden can expect labor endorsement. Democratic nominees piled up a three-to-one majority over Republican adversaries, obstructionist in outlook. A prominent commentator remarked: "The defeatist policy of the Indiana Republicans was a millstone around the necks of their candidates."

Pennsylvania. Elmer J. Holland won a special election against a defeatist Republican to fill a vacancy in Congress. Holland has a genuinely progressive record. He ran on a platform to Smash Hitler in 1942, full support of the administration and the war effort.

Mostly because of the efforts of organized labor, Reps. Charles Faddis and Guy Moser, two of the worst reactionaries in Congress, were eliminated in the primaries. With the voluntary retirement of the die-hard Robert Rich, labor-baiter and defeatist, the Pennsylvania delegation in the coming Congress cannot but be improved. Primary voting was light—too light—but a considerable number of John L. Lewis henchmen worked to split the labor vote. Lewis hopes to aid the obstructionists in the November elections. The gubernatorial situation is not nearly so favorable. True, Sen. James J. Davis, with pronounced appeasement tendencies, was turned down for the Republican nomination, but his opponent, General T. Martin, is hardly an improvement. Since the Republicans outpolled the Democrats in the primary, it is clear that the win-the-war forces gathered around the Democratic candidate, Ross, have much work to do between now and November.



John Q. Public goes to the polls. The country's destiny is in his hand.

TO COPE with reaction, the win-the-war forces have first to achieve unity. To this end, organized labor can exercise important leadership. The national front for victory of necessity is rooted in an awakened people's desire for a speedy routing of the Axis, and in this national front labor plays a responsible role, just as it does in the race for maximum production.

Nationally the CIO has called for a Victory Congress, and AFL unions have passed resolutions urging a Congress that will press a Western Front and act decisively in support of the war. In the election campaign itself, the national offices of both the CIO and the AFL have remained too passive toward the election. But locally, the unions are on the job. In Virginia the AFL and CIO jointly support Emmett Davison's race against Howard Smith, cooperating with the growing small business and professional groups endorsing Davison. Together the AFL and CIO are fighting Senator Wheeler's attempt to prevent the progressive Senator Murray from gaining reelection in Montana. In California the CIO held a "Votes for Victory" conference in Fresno to support win-the-war candidates; it seems likely that the AFL and Railroad Brotherhoods will cooperate. In Illinois both the CIO and AFL are pledged to defeat Brooks and Day. In New York the CIO has seriously entered the campaign against the reactionary Dewey and Bennett; the Greater New York Industrial Council has glowingly endorsed Vito Marcantonio, and vigorously opposed O'Leary, Hall, Pfeifer, Barry (backed by the Christian Front), and Martin J. Kennedy, all of them with very poor records. The president of the New Jersey CIO council, Irving Abramson, is running for Congress. The Indiana appeaser Robert Grant is opposed by both the AFL and CIO. The automobile workers in Michigan are attempting to unite all progressive forces in and out of the labor movement behind candidates clearly devoted to the war effort. The Washington Commonwealth Federation is rallying the Northwest behind win-the-war aspirants for state and congressional offices.

Despite these actions, labor has still not fully mobilized its forces. The anti-Hitler elements are not yet unified, and with the defeatists giving lip service to the war, the campaign to expose them needs sharpening and broadening. While organized

labor exercises a greater influence on the political stage than ever before in the history of America, it remains true that labor has not achieved its most effective unity on the political front. As yet, labor is inclined to approach politics too narrowly, often thinking in terms of limited economic problems rather than in the all-embracing terms of victory over the Axis. Today as never before the nation requires the full political participation of all the people. The unions have their responsible and decisive part to play.

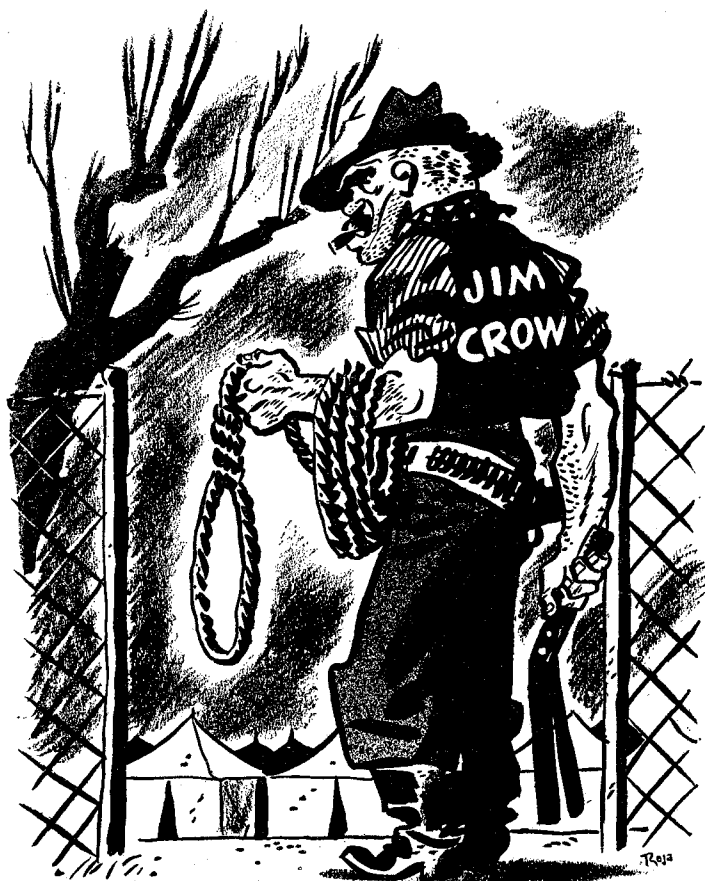
IN THIS respect, John L. Lewis, leading labor appeaser, is quite conscious of the crucial character of the elections. He has managed to capture a section of Labor's Non-Partisan League, using the apparatus which once fought for labor's interests to throw a fake aura of "labor" endorsement over appeasers and pro-fascists. In a few places, however, in New Jersey and Connecticut, for example, Labor's Non-Partisan League is in the hands of win-the-war people who are utilizing it for the progressive objectives for which it was originally founded. In Illinois Lewis will undoubtedly attempt to elect Brooks and Day. He is not above deals with Coughlinites or flirtations with the Ku Klux Klan or working agreements with the Christian Front. Lewis has taken a definite political stand: the bona fide labor movement has the task of countering his betrayal with the strongest political opposition.

In addition the small, venomous Norman Thomas group of "Socialists" eagerly talks defeatism and negotiated peace. What slight influence these "Socialists" possess they throw into the service of Lewis, McCormick, and the Hearst-Patterson press. The Norman Thomasites, with their Trotskyist friends, have tried desperately to disrupt the pro-war program enunciated by the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota at its recent conference. To their chagrin, the Farmer-Labor Party went its way despite them, rebuilding political fences, welcoming Representative Coffee of Washington who made the keynote address, and adopting a unity program. This program greeted the Anglo-Soviet alliance and the US-Soviet pact, called for the opening of a Western Front, and pledged the party not to dissipate win-the-war strength by entering more than one Farmer-Labor candidate in crucial contests.

In striking contrast to the Socialist Party, the Communist Party pledges every energy without reservation to the war effort. The Communists have entered candidates in many states; the party lends all aid to strengthening national unity, to encouraging ever closer collaboration of the United Nations, to implementing the principles enunciated by the Roosevelt-Molotov-Churchill conversations and the resulting pacts. Certainly no party more clearly enunciates the people's stakes in the war. Certainly no party more tirelessly presses for the opening of the Western Front, for increasing production, for forwarding the vital interests of the people—workers, farmers, small business enterprisers, every class and group. The Communist campaign, with its emphasis on victory and on resolute action, on opening the Western Front without delay, on national unity in which every stratum of society and every minority, Negro and foreign-born, shall participate, crystallizes America's passionate and real desire for a speedy and complete victory.

BOTH the campaign and the results of election voting have a most important bearing on the war effort. Nor can the activity of the people cease with the casting of ballots. A good man voted into office and thereupon forgotten cannot be expected to perform his tasks effectively. He needs—and is entitled to—support and encouragement.

Recently thirty union delegates met in the ornate caucus room in the House office building to discuss with their congressmen the pending tax bill. The union men spoke for their brothers back home in western Pennsylvania, and for the miners, neighbors, and friends of those they represented. The



News Story: Negro soldier murdered by police officers at Flagstaff, Ariz.

gathering, carefully arranged by these delegates from the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers locals mightily impressed the congressmen. The legislators promised to support the people's tax program carefully outlined to them by the union spokesmen.

With labor expressing such political initiative, Congress will become increasingly conscious of the mass support to be expected by those who challenge reaction. Thus the unions can become focal points of political organization not only for their membership, but also for the people of their communities. The advantages are two-fold: organized political activity can assure quicker and more sympathetic response in Congress to the people's needs; in addition, it can prepare future election campaigns in which people's candidates can hope for success at the polls because they are backed by established organizations.

IN THE present House sit more than thirty men who have shown that they most clearly understand the implications and necessities of an anti-fascist war. Of this nucleus the following are most conspicuous: Marcantonio of New York, Eliot of Massachusetts, Fitzgerald and Kopplemann of Connecticut, McGranery, Sacks, Bradley, Scanlon, Weiss, and Wright of Pennsylvania, Folger of North Carolina, Dingell and Hook of Michigan, McKeough and Sabath of Illinois, Coffee and Hill of Washington. But aside from these forthright leaders, the House includes over twice as many win-the-war congressmen who may at times be unclear on how labor matters or farm issues affect the war program, but who nevertheless accept administration leadership and consciously strive to press the war effort to speedy victory. Between the win-the-war coalition and the defeatists are the "neutrals" who can be won by that camp which puts up the strongest fight for their allegiance. The weakness of the present war bloc in Congress has been the failure to win over sufficient numbers of the "neutrals." Yet, given the proper encouragement, the war coalition can easily dominate debate. With political perspectives clearly drawn by constituents, the win-the-war members can achieve greater cohesion among themselves and in turn develop shrewder strategy.

Just suppose the thirty-odd most alert anti-fascists had taken the floor in Congress during the past year to fight reaction at every turn. Just suppose during the OCD rumpus, they had pointed out clearly and loudly how the obstructionists undermine the morale of the country. Just suppose that Smith's anti-strike legislation had been met with the challenge: "Name one strike interfering with war production. Name one union not cooperating to the full degree with the war effort." What would have happened to Byrd and Tydings had their "economy" pleas been countered with explicit information of how they were plotting to limit and delay the fight against Hitler? But the war coalition held back—and the defeatists made hay. It is well these days to remember how much was accomplished even by the loosely organized liberal bloc in 1937 when during the Spanish war Marcantonio, Coffee, Maverick, O'Connell, Bernard, and others dramatized as well as discussed the anti-fascist struggle and successfully pushed reaction on to the defensive.

SO FAR, Congress has failed to satisfy the needs of America at war. The responsibility for congressional success or failure rests with the people who alone can see to it that Congress smashes the appeasers and prosecutes the war without surcease. And in this drive for victory, the elections are an important first step. Through the election campaign, national unity can be expanded. Congress can be made more sensitive to the will of the majority which today is pledged to the complete annihilation of the Axis and to the maintenance of a secure and free America.

BRUCE MINTON
(with the assistance of Charles Humboldt)

NEWS OF INDIA

This is an extract from the correspondence of NEW MASSES' foreign editor with a friend in Scotland who follows Indian developments closely.

I TAKE pen in hand to correct some misleading impressions I left with you in my last letter.

At that time it seemed clear that the mass movement in India was at a low level, that its leadership was in jail, underground, or otherwise immobilized. These impressions, which seemed valid two and a half months ago, are now shown by fresh evidence to have been *quite wrong* at the time they were uttered:

(1) The most dramatic evidence that has turned up is an address to the Indian people by the individuals imprisoned as a result of the raid on the Chittagong armories back in the Civil Disobedience Campaign of 1930-32. These men, who successfully seized the armories in Chittagong in an effort to take over the local government, were subsequently captured and put in jail where they have languished ever since. Yet in February 1942 they showed remarkable political consciousness in addressing an appeal to the Indian people to join the people's war against fascism and cooperate with the Chinese people, the Russian people, and the other democratic powers. In fact, they have asked to be released so that they may take arms against Japanese fascists.

(2) The Kisan Sabha, which is the Peasant Union, had a national executive committee meeting in February or March, in which it called upon the Indian people to join in a people's war against the fascist invader.

(3) Persons who were in India as late as the middle of April report that the radical students, youth, and Communist leaders are working with their customary assiduousness and indefatigability.

(4) There are distinct signs of mass activity in support of cooperation with China and Russia—parades, conferences of Friends of the Soviet Union.

(5) There is widespread agitation for release of political prisoners. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, head of the National Kisan Sabha, erroneously reported to have died in jail two years ago, was released from jail at the end of March or early April, and is now active in politics again.

(6) Reliable sources are responsible for the following story. At the time of the Cripps Mission, Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, was asked why so many left wing Indians were kept in jail in view of their declarations that the main enemy was Japan rather than the British raj. In the only flash of Scottish humor manifested during his six-year sojourn in India, Lord L. replied: "Well and good. We'll release all who can prove themselves members of the Communist Party in good standing." This humorous incident reveals that the Indian government and the British War Cabinet—while not willing to grant the substance of political power to the Indians—are not entirely averse to permitting known and authentic radicals to rally the people against the Japanese.

June 30, 1942,
Edinburgh, Scotland.

H. V.

