

Actually those who shout against non-essential expenditures are mostly concerned with continuing politics-as-usual, and not with the war effort. Their tactics are clearly obstructionist. As an instance, Representative Rich told the House that "if we just dilly-dally a little longer, and cut this [an appropriation for an inland waterway] down from \$144,000,000 to \$80,000,000, and then cut out the \$80,000,000, we will be doing a grand job this afternoon."

THUS, the leading "blocs" are all part of the same cabal, assuming a specialized vocabulary to confuse and obscure their purpose. Each "bloc," for all its decorative self-description, is devoted to the same end; each is a sub-section of the reactionary junta, which in one form or another obstructs the war program.

To be sure, a dangerous number of reactionaries sit in Congress. But the pro-war supporters of the government still predominate. So far, this majority has lacked organization and initiative; it has allowed the diversionists to monopolize the floor and to prevent debate on crucial issues. The diversionists hardly look forward to the test of the coming elections. And Congress as it is now constituted is composed of a nucleus that can press the war effort despite all reactionary opposition. The picture is neither gloomy—nor anything to write home about. There is a job to be done to revive and rehabilitate Congress. I want to discuss the good chances of achieving this reformation in the subsequent articles.

(In an early issue, Mr. Minton will continue his analysis of the 77th Congress, discussing lobbies and pressure groups.)

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I AM not speaking officially and the opinion I am about to air is entirely my own. But can this war ever be won until we shall have decided who happen to be our friends and who happen to be our enemies? Not infrequently these last few months I have had more or less illiterate young men approach me with a desire to be informed about the character of divers citizens who had applied for an official position. They invariably wanted to know about possible "subversive opinions" upon the part of those candidates. As a rule I could assure them that the gentlemen under discussion hated Hitler and all his evil works, hated Mussolini and all his evil works, hated Ham Fish and all his works, were staunch patriots, and had never indulged in isolationist activities. But they always wanted to know what these future servants of the state thought about Bolshevism. To which I was then forced to reply that it would be very bad taste indeed on my part to speak against our most useful ally, the only one who thus far has done any effective fighting, the only one who has defeated the Nazis for us and who in return for these services has been rewarded by Washington by being granted very liberal lend-lease loans.

I might now go one step further and inquire what we are supposed to take as the official attitude of other countries toward their Moscow allies? The one thing in the world that happens to interest me personally more than anything else is to see the country of my birth set free from the obscene Nazi yoke. That most desirable purpose can only be brought about by killing so many Nazis that the others will surrender and will allow themselves to be conducted (none too politely) to the gallows on which they belong. Up to the moment of writing this article the only success along this line has been achieved by the followers of the late Nicolai Lenin. They are killing Nazis at such a rate of speed that the day of delivery for the people of the Netherlands and the Netherlands East Indies is no longer a vague hope and a futile dream but an actual possibility. And when a man is saving me from drowning I do not feel that it is up to me to inquire into his taste in neckties or whether he is a faithful member of the Church I myself happen to attend.—HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON.

NM *June 30, 1942*

NEW MASSES

ESTABLISHED 1911

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THE ANSWER TO TOBRUK:

A Second Front Immediately

THERE is an old Chinese proverb: beware the claws of the wounded beast. Last week saw the sorely pressed Axis armies—bleeding from the wounds of a year's fighting on the Eastern Front—lunging forward desperately on all the war-torn continents. Before the historic gates of Sevastopol, the attackers were losing sixty percent of their men—an estimated 100,000 in eighteen days—in their effort to storm the Black Sea stronghold. The enemy had wedged into the outer defenses of the city; the defenders were prepared to fight block by block within the city. In North Africa General von Rommel's armies plunged forward into Tobruk which fell after a previous siege of nearly eight months. Hitler's scouts stood at the borderline of Egypt. Halfway across the world, Kiska Island, some 600 miles west of Alaska's Dutch Harbor, was invested by Japanese troops, and the North American Pacific coastline—in Canada and in Oregon—was shelled by a Japanese submarine. In Hawaii Gen. Delos C. Emmons urged all "non-essential citizens" to leave the island.

It is not at all accidental that the conjuncture of Axis assaults bursts upon the world this first anniversary of Russia's entrance into the war. The Axis, harassed by its weakened internal setup, its terrific losses in manpower and materiel, and by the increasingly improved relations among the United Nations, must press for an early decision, for the early success of its grand strategy before it is altogether too late. The strategy of the fascist powers envisages a breakthrough in the Near East, the swastika over the oilfields of Batum and Syria, and the Axis powers ultimately joining banners somewhere in India. Hitler is sticking by his strategy; his principal problem today is to disrupt ours.

OURS is the result of a year's tragic experiences, which, however, taught us much. We learned that Hitler's objective is to keep our strengths scattered, to keep our land, naval, and sea forces dispersed across the seas and continents. We learned that concentration is the essence of military success, and that drove home the concomitant political

lessons—the increased cordiality of the United Nations. These lessons resulted in the historic second front agreements of Roosevelt, Churchill, Molotov.

Hitler's task was to frustrate that alliance, to disrupt our plans, to disorient our painfully acquired equilibrium. He sought and seeks frantically to retain the initiative; to choose the fronts and to conduct the fighting on his terms. To date his strategy has been upset by the tremendous resistance of the Red Armies; he sees his last chances go a-glimmering altogether if the Soviet armies, which occupy ninety percent of his strength, are joined in a great pincer action via a Western Front. How to disrupt that strategy? It was felt weeks ago by the strategists of the Wilhelmstrasse that a Nazi success in Africa might provoke a storm of debate over the Western Front issue. Hitler knew it would hearten his concealed partisans within the United States and Great Britain; he knew it would confuse many within the anti-fascist camp. He gambled on political reverberations and hoped to benefit from all consequent turmoil. The Axis geopoliticians recalled the fears engendered when Singapore fell—the arguments that arose then against the second front.

Viewed in this light one can readily see why Hitler commanded his generals to take Tobruk and Sevastopol at all costs; why he gave the signal to the Mikado to drive toward the Aleutians, to begin a series of token shellings of the West Coast precisely at this moment when the faint-of-heart and the concealed fifth columnists are clamoring about Tobruk. The strategy is manifest for all with eyes to see. *Now*, if ever, the enemy believes, is the time to divide and dissipate the profound sentiments of our people and of Britain toward the Soviet Union, toward the understanding about a Western Front.

In Britain, as in America, frantic voices of the cautious, the confused, and the covert fifth column rise to sow panic, to cast doubt upon the second front agreements. The Scripps-Howard press here leads with warnings of another Dunkirk; the appeasement newspapers have a field day spreading defeatism.

Totally missing from their columns is the

essential reality: Hitler's all-consuming fear of an invasion while nine-tenths of his army is occupied in the East. Totally missing, too, is the fact that von Rommel requires replenishment of his forces to continue his drive into the more powerfully fortified area of Egypt to Suez. Totally missing is the fact that a Western Front would prevent those reinforcements from ever being sent to Africa. Speculation is rife that Hitler's pincer movement may be successful—that his forces may join in the Near East by smashing through the Caucasus and meeting von Rommel somewhere east of Suez. Suddenly these gentlemen forget the tremendous resistance and staying power—nay, the increased fighting power—of the Red Army, and they overlook the problem Hitler faces even should Sevastopol fall (as Colonel T. points out elsewhere in this issue) in bridging the Kerch Straits, in breaking through at Kharkov and forcing his way down into the Caucasus through the Rostov lines. He failed when he was stronger, last fall. And Soviet President Kalinin points out, according to the Associated Press, that "the German Army does not have the strength to launch an offensive all along the front." The Nazis, he said, in marking the first year of successful Soviet resistance, "are considerably enfeebled, both physically and morally."

MISSING, too, from the columns of the defeatist press is the fact that Europe seethes with rebelliousness and readiness to rise in support of British and American troops landing anywhere on the Continent. Stockpiles of materiel rise mountain-high on the British Island; American and British troops there are eager for action. Air superiority in Western Europe has been overwhelmingly won by the United Nations. Lord Beaverbrook put it this way at Birmingham the other night: "The army in my opinion is adequately equipped for opening a second front; it is waiting for it and wanting to do it; the need is for urgency." And he said the word that must be said: "*There must be no unnecessary delay in sending forthwith a second expeditionary force to fight on a second front.*"

Fortunately the world can credit the American and British leaders with greater military and political astuteness than the "go-slow" commentators. The Churchill and Roosevelt conferences have before them the popular mandates for a second front; they had already agreed upon this endeavor, put their signatures to agreements on it. These agreements were made after all facts and eventualities were taken in consideration. Among these eventualities was, undoubtedly, the possibility of local defeats and defeats of great magnitude. But the lessons of the past year pointed to the concentration of our combined strengths, namely, the opening of a second front while Hitler is desperately engaged in the East.