

Will Winning War Lose the Election?

By WM. Z. FOSTER

It is one of the strange anomalies of this war that the reactionary and defeatist Republican leaders are calculating confidently that an early end to the war against Hitler would defeat Roosevelt and elect Dewey. Typically, on August 24, the New York Sun carried an A. P. dispatch saying:

"Prospects that the European war may end before American voters choose their next President provided an undisguised lift to the spirits of Governor Thomas E. Dewey's supporters today."



Thus, a pre-election victory over Hitler, the Republicans are certain, will bring defeat to Mr. Roosevelt at the hands of the very people whom he has headed so ably in their fight against fascist enslavement.

This will seem a pretty ghoulish way to size up the effects of victory in the war: to conclude that our national success would cause the political downfall of the man who has done more than any other in our country to achieve that victory. On the face of it, the proposition would appear to be ridiculous and self-contradictory, but when one looks at the matter in the light of the treacherous policy of the reactionaries, it is found to bear an element of plausibility and not a little danger.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN?

Let us see, therefore, just what would happen in the event the war in Europe should come to end before election day. Would the American people, thereupon, rise up and smite down Roosevelt for his war record? Of course not. On the contrary, a great wave of happiness would expand far and wide among the people in the United States; a profound sense of joy that Hitler and the Axis had been finally smashed and that before very long the whole global war would be over and our boys return to their firesides. And we may be certain that the prestige of Mr. Roosevelt, our successful war leader, would rise accordingly. Nobody, not even the gigantic anti-Roosevelt daily press, could rob the Commander-in-Chief of the historical credit due him.

But, of course, other events will take place at the end of the war besides victory celebrations. For

one thing, almost overnight war production will be cut by an estimated 50 percent, a slash which would at once set many millions of workers looking for new jobs. Even under the best of circumstances the change-over from wartime to peacetime production would be an immense task, with much lost motion and unemployment; and this time, in view of the Republican Party's sabotage of the government's economic program, obviously the reconversion of industry to civilian production will not be made under the most favorable conditions. Hence, the probability of a very considerable army of unemployed upon the end of the war against Hitler is pretty certain.

GOP HOPES FOR CRASH

Republican Party leaders are hoping and planning that there shall be mass unemployment in big measure. To this end they are laying every obstruction in the way of legislation that would reduce unemployment to a minimum and give the displaced workers substantial financial protection. Witness, thus, their defeat of the Kilgore Bill and passage of the George Bill in the Senate.

Many Republican spokesmen, with ill-concealed enthusiasm, are prophesying that from 10 million to 20 million workers will be thrown out of work as soon as Nazi Germany surrenders. They hope to reap advantage from such a situation, because they figure that if the election should be held in the midst of an economic condition, when a vast body of workers are unemployed, it would surely go bad with Roosevelt; for, with their widespread control of the press and radio, they believe they could make it appear plausible to millions of people that Rooseveltian mismanagement was responsible and had thrown the country into a terrible economic crisis.

SERIOUS DANGER

It is obvious that there is danger in such possibilities. Everybody knows that great masses of war workers are worried already

regarding their securing of new jobs after the war production ends or is cut down substantially. And it would be folly to think that the fears of these workers could not be exploited for vote getting purposes by pro-Dewey demagogues, were large masses of workers to be walking the streets on election day unemployed and with no definite prospects before them of securing new jobs.

The Republicans, although primarily responsible for creating the unemployment situation, would bend every effort to take advantage of it by blaming the whole business upon Roosevelt and by double-stressing their own demagogic program of "free enterprise." In what threatens to be a close election such tactics might be most dangerous.

The pro-Roosevelt forces need, therefore, to be very conscious of this danger and to take steps to intensify and strengthen the fight for a well-developed reconversion — full production — full employment program, especially as embodied in the Kilgore, Celler Bill.

Besides this, the responsibility of the Republican leaders for sabotaging the Administration's reconversion and general economic legislation must be brought home convincingly to the masses, so they will see where the responsibility will rest for any sagging of production that may take place upon the capitulation of Nazi Germany.

Moreover, as part of the realistic program of the Roosevelt forces, the masses should be forewarned that there may well be extensive unemployment in the change-over period. They must be given financial protection against this unemployment and also shown clearly that the way unemployment is to be countered will be by working along the lines of the Administration's program. The masses of the American people must be made to understand that the Roosevelt Administration that is leading us to victory in the war will also be the instrument for winning the victory in the peace.

Worth Repeating

ROBERT E. KENNEDY in his column in the Chicago TIMES of Aug. 24: You might well ask why the federal government must have 3,000,000 employees. I saw 50,000 of them—and their families—last Sunday at the Philadelphia navy yard. They were calloused-handed skilled workmen—not "payrollers." They had helped construct the cruiser Chicago, the cruiser Los Angeles and aircraft carrier Antietam, launched all in one day. These workmen are the "payrollers" the GOP insults by stating they'll vote for F.D.R. merely to hold their jobs. . . . The GOP has a much better "political machine" in its employes of 26 Republican states.