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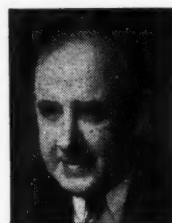
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While Time Remains

by Raymond Moley



IT MAY be of passing interest to a reader of this piece that since the issue of April 2 I have made only a passing reference or two in these essays to Adlai Stevenson or his collaborator, Estes Kefauver. At that time, under the title "Fragile Statesman," it seemed that I had written all that need be said. Among other things, there was this sentence: "It was probably destined, when nature wove together the strands that became the personality of Adlai Stevenson, that 'at some disputed barricade' his rendezvous would be not with glory but with bitter frustration." Perhaps that is where, on the eve of the election, we should leave the subject.

My neglect of the Democratic candidate was not merely because of a feeling that he lacked what it took, but also because there have been two parties of opposition in this campaign—the Stevenson-Kefauver front and the vastly more concentrated and portentous drive of an organized effort by the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education and its egghead shadow, the ADA, to elect members of Congress. The nominal party affiliation of such members would be Democratic, but their obligation would be to COPE. As it seems now, the name Stevenson will fade back among those shadows in which there lives his grandfather together with James Middleton Cox and Alton Brooks Parker. If by chance he escapes their fate, his obligation will be due to strength borrowed from local candidates with strong organizations and coattails broad enough to sustain the burden of his inadequacy.

DEMOCRATIC FUTURE

There is more of Walter Reuther in the future of the Democratic Party than of any of the characters now regarded as its official ornaments. For Reuther and his associates have what none of them have—neither senators nor governors nor local statesmen of importance: A powerful organization limited by no state lines, with tentacles over the nation, and flush with money and captive workers.

In eight articles in this space I have attempted to describe the potential of COPE, its methods and objectives,

and the extent to which it has infused itself into the soft, pervious organism that is the Democratic Party in the states. I have shown how in the 37 states outside the South Democratic senators have toed the COPE line to the extent of 73 per cent, while members of the House have made an 80 per cent score. Even such allegedly independent figures as Kennedy of Massachusetts and Pastore of Rhode Island deviated only to vote against 90 per cent parity, a matter of no importance to their constituents. The circumstance that impends, whoever wins the Presidency, is the ultimate transformation of the Democratic Party into a British-model Socialist-labor party. In short, what happened to the Liberal Party in Britain 30 years ago is the fate that almost certainly lies in the future of the party of Jefferson and Wilson.

DISFRANCHISED

There will be plenty of time after the election to discuss the necessity of reconstructing the Republican Party to provide a genuine alternative to this new party. My concern here, with only a few days before election, is to underline the extreme importance, despite the deadly opiate of confidence, of getting out the vote for conservative candidates for the House and Senate and for the State Legislatures. For every vote cast for them is not only another vote for the national ticket but an assist for candidates who are fighting an uneven contest with little organized support on their side.

It is true that millions of potential voters are not registered and cannot vote at the election. But the figures for 1952 show that 14,680,000 registered voters failed to cast a ballot on Election Day. In some states the absenteeism was appalling. In California there were 856,000; in Illinois, 822,000; in Missouri, 607,000; in New York, 695,000; in Ohio, 1,299,000; in Texas, 261,000; in Wisconsin, 592,000.

This year these numbers will be larger. They can easily spell the difference between victory and defeat for dozens of candidates. There is still time to see that these millions of Americans do not deliberately disfranchise themselves.