

Although Clementis, the former Czech Minister, was a life-long, devoted party member, a "good" Communist, his career was not unblemished in the eyes of Moscow. At the same time he commanded little respect from his comrades in the Czech Communist Party, who always disliked his overbearing ways; nor did he have the character or the moral and intellectual courage to be a true schismatic.

AFTER Hitler occupied Prague in 1939, the Comintern sent Clementis to Paris, where he made no effort to hide his bitterness from his comrades in exile. He strongly criticized the Hitler-Stalin pact. In 1945, at a time when the Communists were primarily concerned with consolidating their control over the post-war Czech government, he paid a visit to Moscow in his capacity of secretary of state in the Foreign Affairs Ministry. Clementis himself told me that Stalin asked him, in the presence of Molotov, whether he still believed that the pact Molotov had concluded with Ribbentrop was such a grave mistake, implying that the pact was Molotov's, not Stalin's, personal project. Embarrassed by Stalin's ironical though shrewdly phrased question, Clementis admitted having given an evasive answer. Later, however, Stalin invited him to his country villa and there apparently assured him of absolution. At any rate, until he fell from grace last March, Clementis thought of

persistent war-time resistance hero. There is a persistent rumor that when Sverma, suffering from tuberculosis, was leading a partisan group in the Slovak mountains, his chief rival, Rudolf Slansky, secretary general of the Czech party and a member of the special staff that directed Communist partisans in Central Europe during the war, did not evacuate him, although Sverma's life depended on it. The implication is that Slansky was responsible for Sverma's death. Both Mrs. Svermova and her husband were immensely popular in the Czech Communist Party; Sverma is said to have been second in prestige only to Gottwald. The fact that her husband had so promising a future in Czechoslovak politics made his loss all the more bitter for Mrs. Svermova; and in all probability back-stage rivalries played a part in her arrest.

The specific charges against Clementis and Sling mask an offense considered far more serious in Moscow—membership in a clique known as the "London group," a tight little circle of Communists who were in England during the war and who have since been particularly devoted to Gottwald. Clementis and Sling are not the only "London Communists" who face liquidation. The group is being systematically sifted for men who, though loyal party members, can no longer be counted on to go along with the ultimate phases of a Moscow-conducted revolution. Among those who have already been elim-

Clem Whitaker & Leone Baxter

## Government by Whitaker and Baxter

BY CAREY McWILLIAMS

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ON AUGUST 16, 1949, Senator James E. Murray of Montana was boiling mad. A fantastic new weapon had just been added to the arsenal of the American Medical Association, something called "Whitaker and Baxter"—"a chromium-plated publicity firm" the Senator called it, "the biggest, most powerful, most unscrupulous lobby in Washington." The occasion of the Senator's anger was the defeat of the Administration's proposal to transform the Federal Security Agency into a Department of Welfare, as recommended by the Hoover Commission. The plan had seemed to be having smooth sailing when suddenly, out of nowhere, came a flash flood of telegrams condemning it; eloquent spokesmen against public health insurance appeared on the last day of the hearings as if by magic; and the propaganda of the opposition circulated a photograph of the rather portly Oscar Ewing, Federal Security Administrator, who was believed slated to head the new department, with the caption "Don't Make Ewing Any Bigger—He's Too Big Already."

In handling the A. M. A.'s \$3,500,000 campaign against the Administration's health-insurance program for an annual fee of \$100,000, the husband-and-wife firm of Whitaker and Baxter is making its debut in national politics, but Californians have long been familiar with government by Clem and Leone. Beyond any doubt, these talented hucksters have had more direct influence on California's legislation in the last fifteen years—and I speak of influence, not of power—than any combination of politicians or of special-interest groups, including the entire trade-union movement. In the last fifteen years Whitaker and Baxter, sometimes functioning as Campaigns, Inc., has won fifty-five out of sixty state-wide political campaigns in California. The first public-relations firm to specialize exclusively in political public relations, Whitaker and Baxter is, indeed, something new in American politics. Having discovered from a wealth of experience some of the sub-surface changes which have been taking

old-fashioned boss and lobbyist completely obsolete. Whitaker and Baxter has ushered in a new era in American politics—government by public relations.

Clem's father was a Baptist minister and a Republican; his uncle, Robert Whitaker, was a Baptist minister and one of California's best-known Socialists. Poet, speaker, pamphleteer, Robert Whitaker was for some years field secretary for the American Civil Liberties Union. Clem became a journalist at an early age. One day his mother went to the editor of the *Willits News*, in the little town of that name in Mendocino County, and said, "Can't you do something to get my boy off the streets?" Thus at the age of thirteen he was given a chance to write his first story at a type case. A few years later he went to work for the *Sacramento Union* and was covering the state capitol before he was eighteen. After a brief period in the army in the First World War he was back in Sacramento as city editor of the *Union*, earning \$25 a week and feeling rich.

Sacramento is famous for its shade trees, floods, and political intrigues. It was here that Clem received his undergraduate training in politics, first on the *Union* and later as daily columnist for the *San Francisco Call-Bulletin* under Fremont Older. From 1921 to 1930 he also operated the Capitol News Bureau, a service which he organized to provide a string of eighty-odd California newspapers with political news from Sacramento. Later the bureau was sold to the United Press.

He had never thought of politics as a career until one day his barber told him of the trouble this talkative profession was having with a bill to create a State Board of Barber Examiners. Though lobbyists even then outnumbered legislators in Sacramento four to one, Clem undertook to get the bill through the legislature for a contingent fee of \$4,000. With some adroit steering, the bill passed with only seven dissenting votes. Instead of lobbying the legislators, Clem had lobbied the principal backers of the legislators in their home districts.