

AN ANALYSIS OF THE OHIO ELECTIONS—WHAT NEXT?

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IN THE numerous recent election analyses carried by the daily press, the state of Ohio has been pointed to as "the average state" which, it is claimed, "shows the country took a swing to the Right and away from the New Deal." There is no denying the fact that the candidates sponsored by the tory reactionary forces were victorious in Ohio as far as the statewide vote is concerned. Not only was the complete Republican state and U. S. Senatorial slate elected, but the Republicans have majorities in both state houses.

These newspaper commentators come to ready conclusions because they see these results contrasted with 1936 when Roosevelt carried the state by a 600,000 majority; or the primary results in August of this year when the infamous Davy was defeated in the Democratic primaries. While it would be wrong to underestimate the tory victory in Ohio, a deeper analysis of the election results is necessary, in order to draw the lessons for the immediate future. Two developments are important in this connection.

1. An examination of the election figures demonstrates that the Republican Party did not win many addi-

tional voters, but rather that a substantial number of previous supporters of Roosevelt abstained from voting. This was true in both rural and urban counties. A comparison of 1936 with 1938 voting figures shows the following:

DEMOCRATIC		
	<i>Gov.</i>	<i>Pres.</i>
1936.....	1,539,461	1,747,140
1938.....	1,147,395	
REPUBLICAN		
	<i>Gov.</i>	<i>Pres.</i>
1936.....	1,412,773	1,127,835
1938.....	1,265,652	

A further analysis of these figures, for six industrial counties and six typical rural counties (using the vote for Governor in both years), shows the following:

	1938	
<i>Industrial City</i>	<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Rep.</i>
Cleveland	216,774	152,841
Akron	56,693	49,284
Youngstown	43,377	37,806
Toledo	45,685	59,793
Bellaire	20,197	15,378
Cincinnati	103,112	118,621
Total	485,838	433,723
<i>Rural</i>		
Logan County	4,639	8,042
Knox	5,316	7,963
Wood	6,630	13,032

	<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Rep.</i>
Williams	4,460	7,096
Hardin	6,553	7,543
Warren	4,173	7,394

Total	31,771	51,708
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1936

<i>Industrial City</i>	<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Rep.</i>
Cleveland	220,921	234,552
Akron	80,015	52,092
Youngstown	54,982	33,625
Toledo	68,474	60,674
Bellaire	29,085	15,833
Cincinnati	132,699	141,781

Total	586,176	538,557
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<i>Rural</i>		
Logan County	6,970	8,858
Knox	7,596	8,867
Wood	11,342	13,118
Williams	5,529	7,578
Hardin	8,055	8,150
Warren	6,650	7,873

Total	46,142	54,444
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These figures show that while the total vote was slightly smaller in 1938 than 1936, the "stay at home" vote was much larger among the New Deal than among the Republican supporters. This is a reflection of the dissatisfaction of large numbers of middle class people, especially farmers, with the New Deal results in Ohio, or of confusion as a result of the terrific bombardment of anti-New Deal Red-baiting which was carried on in the rural communities. These people, in their great majority, did not support Taft and Bricker, but stayed at home demonstrating their dissatisfaction with the New Deal results in Ohio, and also their skepticism with the Tory Republican candidates.

2. The other main development which demonstrates that the people of Ohio have not been won over to a reactionary position is the type of campaign of the Tory candidates. In

the first days of the campaign, Taft started out on an open anti-New Deal platform, declaring:

"Nowhere else is the issue so clearly defined as in Ohio. Our principal opponents, Sawyer and Bulkley, are 100 per cent New Dealers who have never said a word in opposition to the most radical measures of regulation and government spending and do not hesitate to say that they will support whatever policies are proposed by the President. It is not too much to say that the result in Ohio will determine the history of the nation for years to come. If a New Deal Congress is elected, that will assure the passage of every radical measure which so far has been blocked, and would make it exceedingly difficult to effect a change of administration in 1940."

The strategists within the Republican Party were quick to recognize the fallacy of this type of campaign. The *Cleveland News* declared:

"There are Republicans in the state, particularly in the smaller communities, who are hostile on this question [relief]. We urge them to consider . . . the political facts of the election. If the Republicans are laggard or grudging on this issue, they can whistle for their chances in Cuyahoga County."

While this advice did not help the Republicans in Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), both Taft and Bricker changed their tune and began talking about "agreeing with the social aims of the New Deal" but "differing on its administrative methods." Taft began to champion the Townsend plan and many Republican Congressional candidates openly spoke of the need of an \$80 monthly minimum on W.P.A. instead of the present \$60. This was the technique developed in the industrial areas, while in the rural communities criticism was made of the farm program of the New Deal and a particularly vicious Red-baiting cam-

paign was carried on, raising the bugaboo of "the C.I.O. and Lewis domination of the Democratic Party" and "Communist endorsement of Sawyer and Bulkley." It is clear that although the Tory Republicans made important gains, this does not demonstrate that the people of Ohio have consciously and demonstratively gone into the reactionary camp. The *Cleveland Press*, on the day after the election, declared:

"Mr. Taft helped his cause... by appearing not as a bucking reactionary, but of the Bruce Barton School of streamlined Republicanism."

NEW DEAL COULD HAVE BEEN VICTORIOUS

The election results could have been different in Ohio. It was possible to unite the anti-reactionary, anti-tory majority and decisively defeat the tory Republicans and their agents, like Davey, within the Democratic Party. That would have been possible on the following basis:

1. If the unity of the farmer and laborer behind the progressive New Deal platform had been maintained. This would have been possible in the first place, if the New Deal had offered a satisfactory program to meet the problems and needs of the farming majority. The weakest point in the New Deal legislation, generally, is the farm program, and the A.A.A. is particularly disliked in Ohio, because of the character and size of farming. The average farmer in Ohio felt he was "let down" by the New Deal, while the worker got all the benefits. This general complaint was accentuated because the conservative New Dealers, Sawyer and Bulkley, felt "everything was in the bag" and it

was not necessary to win the farm vote. They depended upon an endorsement of Senator Vic Donahey, himself a middle-of-the-road Democrat, to win the farm vote. To win the support of the farmers, it was necessary to be critical of these particular weaknesses of the New Deal and come out openly for a farm program that answered the needs of the farmer. It was also necessary to expose the fakery of the "Red" issue that was raised in all farm communities.

2. A tory defeat also required still greater trade union collaboration behind the New Deal. While the splitting tactics of reaction were less effective on the trade union field than elsewhere, nevertheless, the fact that important leaders of the Ohio State Federation like Briedenbach, Myers and Dalton campaigned for Bricker and Taft, with unlimited Republican money at their disposal, had some effect. They organized an election organization called The A. F. of L. Affiliates. They circularized all locals. They printed half-page advertisements in all newspapers, they printed their own paper in several million copies for a free distribution, they resorted to forgery of "Communist" leaflets, and committed downright fraud.

Despite the harm of this tory clique of A. F. of L. leaders, labor in Ohio supported the New Deal more unitedly than ever before. The great majority of A. F. of L. local unions declared in favor of the New Deal. Important central bodies, such as Cleveland, Youngstown, Canton, Warren, Columbus, Bellaire, Steubenville, etc., voted down endorsement of Taft and Bricker and supported Sawyer and Bulk-

ley. Wherever there was a semblance of joint action by the A. F. of L., the C.I.O. and Railroad Brotherhoods, as in Cleveland, Akron, Youngstown and Ohio Valley, there the New Deal ticket was victorious.

A bright spot in the election campaign was the demonstration of joint trade union action in Cleveland when A. F. of L. leaders Murphy and Rorick (teamsters), and C.F.L. Secretary Lenehan spoke at a Labor's Non-Partisan League rally with C.I.O. leaders for the New Deal and trade union unity. A further demonstration of the effectiveness of joint action of the trade unions and placing of issues squarely, was the two to one defeat of the infamous appointive judiciary amendment. Here was an example of unity of labor being the cornerstone of a greater unity of all democratic forces. The state conference against the appointive judiciary amendment called by the A. F. of L., the C.I.O. and other progressive forces brought together over 1,000 delegates and helped guarantee defeat of this reactionary measure. It is clear, however, that the lack of complete trade union unity and the vicious campaign of the small tory clique of the A. F. of L. building trades leaders helped to alienate middle class and farming support to the New Deal.

3. An aggressive New Deal crusade was necessary to combat reaction and organize the progressive majority to proper action. Instead, the leading candidates vacillated on decisive issues and allowed themselves to be maneuvered into a defensive position. They did not even take the Democratic state platform, which was on the whole a progressive document,

and popularize it. The series of debates between Taft and Bulkley lost votes for the New Deal. Instead of proclaiming the progressive features of the New Deal; instead of pleading guilty to being a yes-man, if by that is meant supporting the Wages and Hours Bill, the Relief and Recovery Bill, the W.P.A., the Anti-Lynching Bill, the Wagner Labor Act and such New Deal legislation which was in the interest of the American people, Bulkley resorted to explaining that he hadn't always supported Roosevelt. Such type of campaigning did not arouse enthusiasm.

DAVEY TREASON WITHIN DEMOCRATIC PARTY

4. The New Deal camp had traitors within its own ranks. These were headed by the stooge of Girdler, Governor Davey. This Liberty League Democrat who consistently opposed Roosevelt, who fought against every New Deal measure, who starved the unemployed and shot down steel strikers, who sabotaged the W.P.A., and who was exposed for graft and corruption, was defeated in the Democratic primaries. The proceedings of the State Convention of the Democratic Party verified the Communist charge of "Davey and Bricker being twins of reaction."

At that time, Davey proposed "peace" on three conditions: (1) that the convention by resolution approve unconditionally all the acts of his administration; (2) that the platform condemn the C.I.O.; (3) that he be given fifteen minutes at the convention on a statewide hook-up to speak on any subject of his own choosing. These conditions were rejected and

the Republican Bricker immediately proclaimed: "I think they are purging the best men out of the [Democratic] Party. We want the purgees to come into the Republican Party."

Nevertheless, all the conclusions were not drawn. Daveycrats, some in the positions of county chairmen, continued to stab the New Deal and its candidates after the primaries, and there was hesitation to expose these Daveycrats, who made a 70-30 patronage deal with Bricker after the primaries. This treason within the Democratic Party, and the failure to expose it openly and sharply, contributed to the election results.

5. While an outstanding feature of the campaign was the beginning of independent labor action on the political field through Labor's Non-Partisan League, there were evident certain weaknesses which everyone should note. The primary campaign of Labor's Non-Partisan League against Davey involved more trade unionists and reached higher levels than the final campaign against Bricker and Taft. While the state officers of Labor's Non-Partisan League gave a lead in their radio talks and directives, there was not the same consciousness below. The need of unity between labor and all other progressive forces, especially the importance of labor championing the interests and demands of the farmer and middle class, was not appreciated. The New Deal victories in the majority of the industrial cities, especially Cleveland, demonstrate the growing influence of the L.N.P.L. It is clear that if the issues had been placed sharply, if the demagoguery and fake issues of the Republicans had been exposed, if the

weaknesses of the New Deal (especially in reference to Ohio farmers) had been recognized, if an aggressive crusade had been conducted by the New Deal candidates, the majority of Ohio voters would have supported Roosevelt and the New Deal as decisively as they did in 1936.

We Communists entered this campaign under the slogan of uniting every progressive and labor force into a great democratic front behind one progressive candidate in order to guarantee the defeat of reaction and its candidates. We worked with all our might towards this aim. We gave the best that we had to further trade union unity, the L.N.P.L. and the unity of the people. We made no special demands, raised no conditions. Our only interest was the interest of the people, the interest of democracy, of true Americanism.

In Ohio, the Communist Party demonstrated its ability to place its candidates on the ballot, but in accord with our primary declaration, we withdrew our candidates, in order to do everything which would help achieve unity of the progressive labor-New Deal front. While withdrawing our candidates, we did not endorse Sawyer or Bulkley, despite the newspapers and the Republican Party. Was our policy correct?

By and large, our policy was correct. Today, it is clear, however, that we should have left at least one state candidate in the field and placed one or two Communists on the ballot in various localities for State Representative or Senator. This would have given our Party branches greater possibilities to conduct an effective election campaign and would also have

demonstrated our independent strength as a part of the developing democratic front movement. The Party conducted a more effective agitation campaign (radio, leaflets, newspaper, interviews and letters, etc.), than ever before, although there was not enough independent Communist election activity of our branches and individual Party members. There were 800,000 pieces of literature issued, a special election edition of the *Midwest Record* of 40,000 copies and nine radio speeches. The Party, as an organization, had a new and improved relationship with the democratic mass movement and came through the campaign as an organization on a higher plane than ever before.

PREPARE FOR 1940

The meaning of the election results must be brought to the people. The election results dictate new tasks, to reunite the great majority of the progressive people of Ohio in preparation for 1940. The immediate needs of the moment are:

1. Unity of labor and progressive forces to defend the New Deal legislative program and laws and the gains of labor, especially the wage levels and W.P.A. This should be combined with taking steps to convince the unions of the need of organizing the

unorganized, particularly "Little Steel."

2. A new movement for trade union unity, with every local union and Central Labor Council greeting the actions of the C.I.O. convention and such leaders as Tobin at the A. F. of L. convention. Pending national action, local coordination committees of A. F. of L., C.I.O. and Railroad unions, on immediate issues, would be effective.

3. Holding of a statewide conference in support of the New Deal progressive measures, at the time of the convening of the newly elected State Legislature. Such a conference should unite all trade unions together with all other progressive forces. In working out the legislative demands of the Ohio people, special attention to the demands of the farmers is necessary.

4. Preparing *now*, in such cities as Cleveland, Youngstown, Akron, and towns in Ohio Valley, to transform and enlarge the New Deal majorities of 1938 into landslide majorities for progressive municipal administrations and clean out the tory municipal administrations in these cities.

5. To help make possible the general advancement of the trade unions and the entire democratic front movement, intensify the building of the Communist Party in Ohio, reaching our goal of 5,000 Communists in Ohio by January, 1939.

BOOK REVIEWS

A SIGNAL BOOK BY A NOTABLE NEGRO LEADER

THE NEGRO AND THE DEMOCRATIC FRONT. By James W. Ford. 222 pp. International Publishers, New York, 1938. \$1.75.

THE recent book by Comrade James W. Ford, *The Negro and the Democratic Front*, is a much needed and most valuable contribution to the literature of our Party. Comrade Ford traces not only the development of the struggle for the unity of the Negro people, but the whole policy of the Communist Party in building the democratic front. Every member of our Party and every anti-fascist interested in the preservation of democracy and peace must not fail to read this most timely and authoritative work.

Comrade Ford approaches the struggles of the Negro people as a son of the working people of the South, who has throughout his life been intimately connected with the struggles of the Negro people for liberation.

The plight of the Negro people is in this book revealed to us in all its glaring aspects in the course of the economic crisis. Much as the whites have suffered, the Negroes have suffered far more. Of the approximately 12,000,000 Negroes in the country, according to the 1930 census, the majority are in the South, working on the farms and plantations.

"In 1930," declares Comrade Ford, "there were 40,000 fewer Negro farm-owners than in 1910. Between 1920 and 1930, Negroes lost about 2,750,000 acres of land."

While funds were advanced by the National Farm Credit Administration, little, if any, reached the Negro sharecroppers and farmers. Statistics show that nearly 50 per cent of the Negro workers were unemployed, in 1934, as compared with 20 to 25 per cent of the white workers. Relating these facts

to the system of cruel social oppression—discrimination, segregation, denial of civil rights, lynching in the South—one confronts the appalling misery of the Negro people in the United States.

Does the fact that out of 13,000,000 Negroes today, only 56,829 could rise to the status of teachers, that in the whole country there are only 6,825 Negro physicians, lawyers and dentists, confirm the propaganda of Hearst, Hitler and Mussolini, that the Negro represents a lower stage of human development? The fact that more Negroes do not occupy positions in the professions is due, as Comrade Ford shows, to the great limitations placed on their admission to the high schools and universities of the country. Clearly, the reason is not biological "inferiority," but economic super-exploitation coupled with social ostracism.

Similarly, Comrade Ford points out, big capital has not permitted the development of Negro industrial enterprises to any extent, thus holding the Negro people as a whole in an inferior economic position among the population in the United States.

What is the key to this situation? Comrade Ford clearly shows that it lies in the program of the democratic front for the entire Negro people. He stresses the organization of the Negro workers into the trade unions, in unity with the white workers in the industries. He calls for the building of the unity of the Negro people, as part of the democratic front in the struggle for social and national security.

To what degree has this been accomplished? The leadership of the A. F. of L. and the international unions affiliated to the A. F. of L. refused to organize the mass production industries, in which there are hundreds of thousands of Negroes. In the craft unions where they were accepted, they were accorded an inferior status. With the organization of the C.I.O. unions, however, their