

advocated the election of Davis, and many loyal craft-unionists voted Republican. Green was the first to chortle at the Republican victory.

The state's farmers, already dissatisfied with the New Deal because of the inadequacy of the Wallace farm program, became more so when the graft charges continued to be hurled. Many of the state's Negroes, especially hard hit by the economic crisis, were led back to Republicanism by Robert L. Vann, Pittsburgh Negro publisher.

Although political and labor unity was maintained in the two great industrial cities, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, the upstate vote carried the Republicans to victory. Allegheny County, where Pittsburgh is situated, went Democratic by 35,000 votes. Philadelphia was

Republican by a trifling fourteen thousand votes, but the Democrats actually made gains over the 1934 election, when the Republican majority was twenty thousand.

In their sweep the Republicans regained control of the congressional delegation and of the lower house of the Legislature. But in Philadelphia, where unity was maintained, five of the seven congressmen elected were Democrats, and so were twenty-five of the forty-one legislators. Thirteen of the seventeen legislators elected in Allegheny County were Democrats.

The lesson of unity is an old one, and has been taught before. If there is any consolation in Pennsylvania, it is that the lesson will not have to be repeated very often before it is learned.

3: La Follette's Debacle

HAROLD DOUGLAS

Madison, Wisc.

LARGELY as a consequence of Gov. Phil La Follette's splitting venture into national politics with his National Progressives of America, the Republicans took command of the Wisconsin state administration, legislature, and the delegation to Capitol Hill. Not even the regimes of Philip of pre-Roosevelt days, and Kohler, in 1929-30, saw so many Republicans in the state apparatus. Almost complete returns gave industrialist Julius P. Heil 528,975 votes against 336,202 for Phil La Follette and a mere 73,605 for reactionary Democrat Harry Bolens. Only a little less sweeping was the victory of Republican Alec Wiley, candidate for United States senator, over Progressive Ekern and New Dealer Ryan Duffy.

The campaign was marked by a failure on La Follette's part to face the issues squarely. It was the reactionaries who held the offensive, based on wild spending and streamlined demagoguery. Wisconsin progressives generally did not take the Republican threat seriously. Only the Wisconsin Communist Party kept hammering away throughout this campaign on the very real danger of a reactionary victory.

The NPA, launched last April by La Follette, opened the way for the Republican steamroller this November. Started as a movement with a vague, demagogic program directed first of all against Roosevelt's New Deal and making little distinction between Republicans and Democrats nationally, the NPA undoubtedly helped the success of the coalition maneuver of Wisconsin Republicans and reactionary Democrats.

Robert K. Henry, Democrat, running in the primaries on both Democratic and Republican tickets, won handily in the Democratic column, but withdrew and threw his support to Heil, the Republican lead-off man. State Senator Bolens was then selected by the

Democratic Committee to fill the gap, but he carried on a quiet campaign, directing what little fire he showed against La Follette.

La Follette's following did not show the same enthusiasm that marked previous Progressive campaigns. Unable to allay mounting dissatisfaction among farmers, caused by low milk prices, La Follette took a beating in farm areas that were formerly Progressive strongholds. The extent of the disillusionment in Progressive ranks is clearly indicated by William Evjue, editor of the influential Progressive paper, the *Madison Capital Times*, Thursday, November 10:

The *Capital Times* also believes that Governor La Follette's attempt to organize a new party was a major factor in Tuesday's result. This venture on the part of the governor alienated thousands of Roosevelt liberals and left thousands of Progressives lukewarm. . . .

Thousands of Progressives were stunned when they saw the Hitler trappings with which Phil invested his new movement and they were astounded when they saw the imitation of the swastika which was to be the emblem of the new party.

The manner in which Phil developed the NPA

gave validity to the charge of his enemies that the governor was developing a dictator mentality. . . .

All this was translated into the indifference, resentment, and soreness *within* the Progressive movement which left this campaign without the customary spark of a Progressive battle. . . .

The lamentable NPA venture, throwing the Progressives out of gear with the main movement of liberalism throughout the nation, had internal state consequences as well. La Follette was led into courting the wealthier circles of the Wisconsin middle-class farmers and business men for support for the NPA. This dabbling in the muddy waters of quasi-fascism left him in no position to meet the Republican assault with a plain, outspoken affirmation of real Progressivism based on unity of the farmers, the middle classes, and labor.

The lack of an aggressive stand based squarely on the real issues left the Progressives virtually helpless in the face of the Republican smear campaign. The Republicans effectively exploited La Follette's use of state franking rights in letters to the aged on pensions, and were able to drum up the old hostility toward the "ins" and sympathy for the "outs."

Wiley received 427,000 votes against Ekern's 240,000 and Duffy's 218,000. The fact that Duffy's vote was lower than Ekern's can be largely ascribed to the coalition maneuver of Henry and the deliberately weak campaign of Bolens, an anti-New Dealer. Duffy's and Ekern's vote together, not to speak of the magnetic power of a unified Progressive-New Deal campaign, would assuredly have blocked Wiley's entrance into the Senate.

Undoubtedly the same factors which enabled Republicans to gain power in other states played a role in Wisconsin. Only unity of liberal, progressive elements on a carefully worked out program can thwart the threat of reaction. The mistakes of La Follette show us what must not be done. Almost the *reductio ad absurdum* of La Follette's line comes after the election with his announcement that the NPA is needed more than ever today to fight against "two national parties equally reactionary" (*sic*)!

4: Watch California

AL RICHMOND

San Francisco.

ANYONE with a yen for political pyrotechnics had better keep his eye on California. In the wake of the New Deal election sweep will come an "era of good feeling" which for acrimony and bitterness will make the corresponding period after the Roosevelt 1936 landslide look like a Democratic harmony dinner.

In the first place, the scope of the victory was not expected by the reactionaries. This

was particularly so on the anti-labor Initiative Proposition 1, which would have outlawed the labor movement. As late as election day, prevailing odds were quoted at two-to-one favoring its passage, and there was plenty of money in sight. There was also the hope that Ellis E. Patterson, the most outspoken progressive on the Democratic ticket, would be defeated in his race for lieutenant-governor. Reaction attempted to crucify Patterson be-

cause he had defended sitdown strikes and had greeted the launching of the *People's World*, a left-wing daily paper. Patterson was swept in by the Democratic landslide although he trailed Gov.-elect Culbert L. Olson and United States Sen.-elect Sheridan Downey.

The big showdown for the first Democratic state administration in forty years will come when it tackles the unofficial semi-fascist dictatorship established in California's rural communities by the Associated Farmers, Inc. In California's largest industry, agriculture, controlled by the state's most important capitalists, a vigilante reign exists which tolerates neither unionism nor any liberal expression.

Heartening Governor-elect Olson in the impending battle with Associated Farmers, Inc., is the fact that the rural communities joined in the New Deal landslide. Despite predictions, the farm regions voted for New Dealer Downey as against Republican Philip Bancroft, a phony farmer and an Associated Farmers leader.

Even more important as far as the rural vote is concerned was the fact that the anti-labor initiative failed to receive a majority there.

The election battle was marked by Red-baiting which, although not quite as lurid and extensive in scope as that in the 1934 Upton Sinclair campaign, was more insidious. Prize Red-baiting stunt was the sending of Harper Knowles, Associated Farmers secretary, to Washington to tell the Dies committee and the nation's press that the Democratic candidates were either Communists (Patterson) or under the direction of Communists (Downey and Olson). The vote, of course, was a severe repudiation of this Red-baiting.

Most complicating factor of the campaign was the “ham and eggs” \$30-Every-Thursday pension plan. Its importance can be gauged by the close to 900,000 votes it received even though it went down to defeat.

The Republicans tried their damndest to reduce the campaign to that sole issue. The press continually referred to the Democratic ticket as the ham-and-eggs ticket. Thousands of dollars was spent in ridiculing the plan, not only with its defeat in mind, but also with the aim of smearing the New Deal ticket with reflected ridicule.

Fortunately, the progressives did two things:

1. They did not alienate the million pension followers. (A million persons can't be crackpots, NEW MASSES cartoonists to the contrary.)

2. Although Downey had endorsed the plan, they frustrated Republican strategy to make "ham and eggs" *the* issue, and fought it out along progress-versus-reaction lines. Downey was elected not so much because he endorsed the plan as because he was a thoroughgoing liberal and New Dealer.

Fortunately, also, the leaders of the pension movement did not follow the sad path of Dr. Francis Townsend, and realized that any

mass movement for social security, if it wished to endure, would have to tie up with the progressive forces.

The decisive factor in the New Deal victory was the unity of the labor movement. In spite of William Green's endorsement of Republican Gov. Frank F. Merriam, labor in this state, including some of the most conservative sections, united around Olson. Aiding this unity was the threat of the anti-labor initiative. None of the Republican candidates would take a public stand on that issue whereas every one of the Democrats campaigned against it.

What next?

1. Thomas J. Mooney will be a free man on January 4.

5: Mistakes in Michigan

ARTHUR CLIFFORD

Detroit.

WHEN a mistake is committed once, it can be laid to inexperience. That was the verdict after the defeat of the Labor ticket in the Detroit municipal election of 1937. But when the same mistake is repeated, and not merely repeated but aggravated, the cause for it must be sought deeper.

Treachery defeated Governor Murphy of Michigan. He was waylaid in the shadow of his own house, and slugged—*by members of his own political family.*

The gravest mistake of the recent Michigan election, as of its predecessor, was the failure to bring forward the standard-bearer of progress and the New Deal as the *people's* candidate. To be sure, there was a general slogan to that effect; but the slogan was never projected in the marrow of the campaign. Governor Murphy tried to do this in his speeches, but speeches alone don't win an election. The Murphy campaign was under wraps.

There was a conspiracy on the part of the Garnercrats and even some within the ranks of labor to make Murphy simply the labor candidate. The dominating issue of the election was his handling of the sitdown strikes. To some extent this could not be avoided, since the issue was raised by the Republicans. It was necessary that the Murphy labor policies be justified.

It was neither necessary nor advisable that these policies—standing alone—should be the sole basis for choosing between Frank Murphy and his victorious Republican opponent, Frank D. Fitzgerald. Yet that is exactly what it became. Clever Republican demagoguery, aided and abetted by the determination of Murphy's running mates to rid the party of his leadership, convinced a majority of the people of Michigan that the election was purely and simply a plebiscite on the sitdown strikes.

On his record alone, Murphy stood to win reelection. Since Fitzgerald had preceded him

2. A genuine social-security have to be launched. The 90 eggs" votes cannot be ignored.

3. There will be a battle for the restoration of American democracy in the state.

4. There will be a "purge" of corrupt and subservient app country.

5. There will be a wide pro for self-aid cooperatives. TI few prospects. Just how far tl go depends upon the unificatio forces in the campaign—labo movement, and the farmers.

But it will be one of the to
in the country.

as governor, there was a basis for
between them. It was all in favor
He had, by numerous measures
purchasing power, given the farm
dle class generally a feeling of s
as they had not possessed in yea
folks, the teachers, the unempl
course, labor all were better off un
than they had been under Fitzge
clearly an open-and-shut case.

Nevertheless, step by step, the proceeded to throw this advantage began by conceding the farm vote of the small townspeople. Before t grew warm they freely gave F. plurality in the outstate returns, to make it up in Detroit and Warr There was no concerted attempt these outstate votes. They did not in the country papers; they made to the farmers. They simply assume cause Michigan farmers had been I in the past, so would they be this ti

Issues of broad appeal to the people concerning security and prosperity were pushed into the background. Even tens of thousands to work in the auto industry were a windfall to the Democrats if there was only one—was completely ignored! No wonder Fitzgerald called this "the most unpatriotic campaign in the annals of our state!"

Attempts will be made to inter Michigan setback as a rebuke Deal. They won't hold water. Murphy is the nation's number Dealer, yet the New Deal was not in Michigan. It was not permitted Murphy was under wraps, and the N with him. An infamous coalition of cans and anti-New Deal Democrats to confine the question to that of the sitdown strikes—succeeded in keeping there.

It will hardly happen again.