

# WHY THE DONKEPHANTS LOST

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**A**BOUT a year ago, a citizens' committee speaking for labor, women, civic and small business organizations called on Rep. John M. Costello of Hollywood. The delegation was anxious to discuss the Congressman's voting record with him and his consistent opposition to President Roosevelt. Mr. Costello responded brusquely, with a fine show of contempt for his visitors. He informed them that he didn't give a damn whether or not they approved his actions in Congress; he voted in a way he deemed best for his constituents and he had no interest in the opinions of presumptuous "special groups" who dared question his behavior. He had never had any trouble getting himself elected, and he anticipated no trouble in the future, certainly none from such people as those forming the delegation. It was clear enough that to Mr. Costello defeatism and sabotage of the administration always paid off.

Representative Costello, active member of the Dies Committee, the man who has made a career out of persecuting second-generation Japanese-Americans, the ranter against labor and United Nations unity, the out-and-out defeatist who thought he had a stranglehold on his district, will not return to Congress in 1945. Mr. Costello went the way of his colleagues, Dies and Starnes. He swallowed as his due the praise lavished on him by the Hearst and McCormick press, and he believed what he read about the "anti-Roosevelt" "trend" sweeping the country. Mr. Costello convinced himself that the voters were suckers for anyone like himself who obstructed the administration and the war. Mr. Costello was wrong—very wrong.

His defeat highlighted the California primaries late in May. But the failure of this outstanding reactionary does not tell the whole story. Out of fifty-six candidates in the state endorsed by the California CIO Political Action Committee, twenty-three were nominated on both the Democratic and Republican tickets, and the remaining candidates won the nomination on one ticket, with a good chance of election this fall. The California primaries represented no narrow labor victory; rather, success grew out of a broad coalition of voters cutting across class lines and special interests.

In the far-off days when I was still in Washington—about three months ago—the Republicans counted California among the "sure" anti-Roosevelt states. Two years ago Earl Warren was elected governor,

one of the score of Republicans who captured office in the 1942 elections and supposedly prepared the nation for a change of national administration in 1944. Not so long ago Warren was a leading contender to head the Republican ticket. He is slick, capable, and cagey. He has refrained from committing himself on issues, he has leavened his administration with some good appointments, and his eyes have never wavered from their fixed stare on the main chance. Second place on the ticket wasn't good enough for him. Meanwhile there were rumors that GOP popularity in California was waning. But the nabobs around Spangler and Hoover shrugged off such alarmist gossip—until the primaries came along and the Republicans woke up to a morning-after hangover.

**T**HE primary results were no accident. Last February, Vice-President Wallace spoke at the huge Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles to a meeting organized by a united labor committee. The regular Democratic machine moaned that such a rally could have no good results—no one would come, they predicted, and the whole affair would be a frost which would only chill the voters. The AFL-CIO-Railroad Brotherhoods committee disagreed. And to the open-mouthed astonishment of the ward

heelers Mr. Wallace packed the auditorium, with a thousand standing in the aisles and five thousand standing outside to listen to his speech over hastily rigged-up loudspeakers.

Labor considered this enthusiastic interest in Wallace a good sign. But before participating in the campaign for President Roosevelt's reelection, the unions formed a united labor committee, with firm unity established among the AFL, CIO, and Brotherhoods. They rejected any suggestion that the coming election struggle should be considered an exclusively labor-led or labor-directed campaign. Rather, labor resolved to take its place alongside all groups in a common drive to beat back the reactionaries and to advance a program rallying the very broadest support throughout the communities and the state. The unions sent Roy Leheney of the united AFL committee, Philip Connelly of the CIO Political Action Committee, and Frank Pellett of the Railroad Brotherhoods to address the semi-official Democratic Luncheon Club. The labor spokesmen all stressed one point: "Listen," they said to the Democratic party leaders. "We have built unity within our own group. We did this because we realize the deep need of electing progressives to Congress, of putting men and women into office who are pledged to prosecute the war



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and to win a democratic peace after the war. We are not here to tell the Democratic party whom it should nominate or how to elect candidates. But we are going to participate in this all-important struggle behind President Roosevelt and the war, and we insist on one thing from you: unity. We won unity for ourselves, and it wasn't easy. Now we feel we have the right to demand that you also win unity within your party."

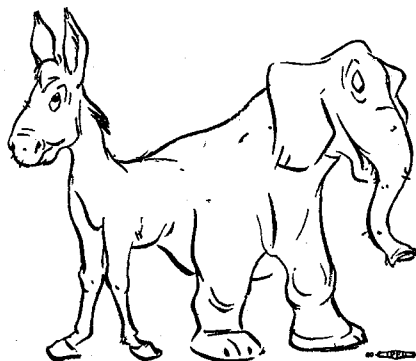
This insistence made a deep impression. In the primary race, the Democrats almost without exception eliminated all candidates in each district except the one who could command the broadest support; and to this candidate went the united backing of the party, of labor, and of all those who understood that Republican reaction threatened victory and national security.

The pay-off in the primaries was frankly astonishing, even to those who had most confidence in the solidity of the coalition behind Roosevelt and the war. Sen. Sheridan Downey was overwhelmingly nominated for reelection, with the added filip that Jack Tenney, chairman and inspirer of the California legislature's notorious "Little Dies Committee," was snowed under and buried politically, perhaps for all time. Against Red-baiting and sabotage by a turncoat county chairman of the Democratic party, and an opponent's unprincipled attempts to build up racist hysteria, Helen Gahagan Douglass won a tough race. Mrs. Douglass is beautiful, and an able actress and singer, but she won the nomination not on glamor but on her unqualified and militant support of the administration and the policies of President Roosevelt. Ellis Patterson, rancher, schoolteacher, and former lieutenant governor, successfully opposed Jesse Kellems. Kellems is married to a South American fascist, is the brother of the Nazi sympathizer Vivien Kellems of Connecticut, who staged a one-woman sit-down against tax legislation, and vice-chairman of the Tenney "Little Dies Committee." Patterson, rough, tough, and outspokenly pro-Roosevelt, met Kellems' Red-baiting squarely and ran it into the ground.

**T**HIS was only the beginning. It must be understood that in California any candidate, regardless of party, can run in the primaries under more than one party designation. (He must, of course, win the primary of his own party in order to participate in the November elections—failure to do this was Costello's undoing.) For years men like the reactionary Democrat incumbent, Norris Poulson, swept through both primaries with ease. Now, however, Poulson must face a run-off in November against the very able vote-getter Ned Healy, a small businessman. Likewise the reactionary John Z. Anderson, to his astonishment, must fight for his political life against Arthur Johnson in the

## MEET THE DONKEPHANT!

THE DEMOCRAT WHO VOTES  
LIKE A REPUBLICAN



Which Is Congressman Costello?

**DEMOCRATS** LET'S QUIT TRYING  
TO GUESS — AND  
**ELECT HAL STYLES**

A favorite creature appearing in literature distributed by the Hollywood Democratic Committee in California's primaries.

peninsula district south of San Francisco. Incumbents with good administration records, such as representatives Engle, Izac, Tolan, Holifield, and Outland, won their nominations handily. Cecil King, a consistent administration supporter, took both nominations. Richard Welch, Republican of San Francisco, whose performance in Congress is by far the best of the entire California Republican delegation, who has consistently supported the war, went unopposed. His San Francisco colleague, Tom Rolph, with a miserable record of oppositionism, was unable to prevent the nomination of Frank Havenner, despite Rolph's avid Red-baiting.

Obviously, California cannot be counted as safely in the anti-Roosevelt camp; the chances of carrying the state for the administration in November are better than good, and California's large electoral vote is of vital importance. California voters underlined the very simple political lesson that the electorate is not dumb; if the people want Roosevelt—which becomes increasingly clear as the results of state primaries roll in—then the people also want a Congress willing to support the President. In California every candidate who made no bones about his forthright partisanship for President Roosevelt, every candidate who openly expressed his all-out determination to support the war and to achieve a democratic peace, won a clear-cut primary victory.

True, the ultra-reactionary Gearhart was elected from Fresno, and the Republicans are by no means out of the running. The tasks ahead of the united labor and community groups are neither insignificant

nor easy. Political clubs must be built in the precincts, and entrenched more firmly than they are now. The vote must be brought out in November—only forty percent of the electorate participated in the primaries for the state, and the smaller the total vote, the better the prospects for reaction. The hard, plodding work of carrying the campaign deep into the communities still lies ahead. But the start has been made, a propitious start.

**I** WOULD like to mention a few of the methods used in the primaries which proved so successful. Mailings of campaign literature were profuse—100,000 items in Patterson's district, for example, and as many to nominate Hal Styles over Costello. The sound truck in Ned Healy's district was dragged through the streets by neighborhood kids (Healy refused to use gasoline needed by the armed forces). The American Newspaper Guild brought out a four-page tabloid which enlisted the aid of the best-known columnists in the Los Angeles area; and no one in the district could pick up the paper without seeing the picture of a neighbor urging Healy's election. Probably the most interesting publicity—which can supply pointers in technique to the rest of the country—was the energetic job done by the Hollywood Democratic Committee.

The HDC is "an association of voters which has its origins in the motion picture community, formed to insure political victory on the home front as well as military victory on the battlefields." It cooperates with any other organization with the same general purposes. The HDC is particularly interested in pushing ahead programs for democratic rationing, adequate housing, labor's rights, farm labor, and proper care for children, and in eradicating juvenile delinquency and racial discrimination. The committee entered into the primary campaign with energetic enthusiasm. It raised money from the film community, it involved neighborhood people, it persuaded the AFL to donate \$2,000 to defeat Costello. Above all, it made what the Los Angeles *Daily News* called "the million dollar campaign contribution of volunteer talent."

In the ten days before the primary the committee organized a telephone brigade which rang up 14,000 registered voters in the Costello district and urged them to support Styles. The telephoning was conducted almost exclusively by housewives—although scare headlines in the Los Angeles *Times* and the Hearst press labelled the campaign a labor "plot." Actually, electioneering in support of Roosevelt was no more the property of labor than of women's organizations, church societies, Negro groups, business men's associations, fraternities, and just ordinary citizens who wanted to be represented in Congress by win-the-war spokesmen. In middle-class districts,

middle-class people took leadership; in working-class districts, the unions were the spark-plug. But cooperation existed among all the various groupings—the coalition was real and equal.

The Hollywood Democratic Committee, commanding the services of leading writers, actors, musicians, radio technicians, cartoonists, artists, publicity experts, and a wealth of other talent, perfected many methods that proved effective in the campaign. The Screen Cartoonists Guild contributed biting posters, throwaways, handbills, and the popular symbol of the "Donkephant." Actors and radio writers, musicians and dramatists collaborated in a series of dramatic Hollywood Town Meetings. The theme song, "Let's Go and Ring Doorbells," came close to displacing the leaders of the Hit Parade. Most telling were the two-minute radio spots throughout the day and evening over leading stations. For example, a favorite skit went in part as follows:

Record: What a record, what a record, what a record . . .

A Guy: Hey, buddy! That needle is stuck!

Announcer: Nothing wrong with the needle, mister. If you live in the 20th Congressional District, you're the one who's stuck . . . with your Congressman's record.

Record: What a record, what a record, what a record. . . .

Or alternately:

Record: Higher prices . . . higher prices . . . higher prices . . .

Woman: What is that?

Announcer: That, Mrs. Housewife, is from the record of Congressman Hinshaw.

The skit continues, emphasizing Hinshaw's (or Costello's, Poulson's, Ward Johnson's) consistent stand against price control. Still another example:

Record: I vote no . . . I vote no . . . I vote no . . .

Woman: Please, turn that broken record off!

Announcer: Not a broken record, madam. . . . Just the *voting* record of Congressman John M. Costello. On the Federal Ballot for Soldiers, he voted—

Voice: No!

Announcer: On lend-lease to our fighting allies—

Voice: No!

. . . and the skit goes on to give the full record of the offending Costello.

Butchers slipped leaflets into parcels pointing out that if Hinshaw (or Costello, Ward Johnson, Jesse Kellems) had his way, meat prices would rise abruptly. Milk drivers left throwaways with the morning delivery, informing the housewife that Republican opposition to price control would force milk up to twenty cents or even thirty

cents a quart. The attempt was to dramatize *issues*—the war and President Roosevelt, inflation, lend-lease, discrimination.

Costello's defeat was no accident. The victory of pro-Roosevelt candidates was not the result of miracles. Hard work won the election—hard work and intelligent, diligent use of every possible technique to involve the people themselves. Now, with the primary over, one hears from labor leaders, from precinct captains, from anyone involved in the primary, reiteration of one idea: "The people themselves won the elec-

tion. Our job was to bring the issues to them—and we know now that when we do, we don't have to worry about what the decision will be."

No one in the win-the-war camp, however, is foolish enough to be content with the results of the primaries. "Just wait 'till we get started on the November elections," almost everyone tells me. "The invasion makes our job all the clearer. We've got a war and a peace to win—and California wants a President and a Congress who can do it."

## ART FOR ART'S SAKE

### I

When Homer sang (and sure enough he did),  
He sang to eat. Barbaric chiefs did not  
Retain those bards that faintly made no bid  
To fitly hymn the tribal warlord's lot.  
Yet though he sang for shelter and for clothes,  
To call him bought and sold is too inept;  
He sang and men were brave. He sang of woes,  
Homesickness, shipwreck, toil; Odysseus wept.  
Well, what a fool he'd look to play before  
A mob of trees or seek to move to tears  
The sea waves washing on a sandy shore:  
The poet's song has meaning but to ears.  
A lot insensate earth could care to hear  
The noblest music compassed in its sphere!

### II

Did Shakespeare sin that he should write to bring  
The common groundlings thronging to the pit,  
Each with his petty cash to drop and ring  
Praise to dark tragedy and bawdy wit?  
When Shakespeare filled and thrilled the vulgar ear  
With fire and thunder, sounding poetry,  
What matter some esthetes profess to fear  
That Shakespeare's plays paid off commercially?  
The scholars' adulation does endorse  
That which the people knew. And here's the sense:  
The poet lacks significance and course  
Unless completed by an audience.  
When he emblazoned English history,  
His auditors swept Spaniards from the sea.

### III

Now—now we do not know the names. By night  
He moves, perhaps hid by a Christian friend,  
Or to the partisans; still he must write,  
With acid ink and flame at his pen's end.  
His own scorched heart knows the mute people's word  
Of dedicated hate; he knows the faith  
Of people's unity he's seen and heard  
Grow great and mighty from a once-cursed wraith.  
He may set up the type himself, may live  
Beside the hidden hand press—To the fight  
A hard integral part he knows to give;  
His sharp-edged work is read all right, all right!  
With knowledge mounting over salt-stung sorrow,  
His pay is in the coinage of tomorrow.

AL GOEDEL.