

JONAH AND THE ELEPHANT

By **BELLA V. DODD**

ELECTIONS in New York City have a way of overflowing the bounds of their locale and affecting national politics. This is more true this year than ever before. For instance, nowhere among the candidates will the name of Thomas E. Dewey be found. Yet Dewey, the titular leader of the Republican Party, is very much a part of the New York City election. It was Dewey, in fact, who picked one of the candidates for mayor. And what Dewey and his mentor, Herbert Hoover, represent can, if the voters permit it, emerge triumphant from the election. That might very well set the stage for a GOP victory nationally in 1946 and 1948.

New York's election has more than local importance in other ways. It will determine whether the American Labor Party is here to stay as the political arm of organized labor and other progressive elements in New York State, or whether it is destined to disappear as have so many other third parties in this country.

The election will also help determine whether the CIO Political Action Committee on a nationwide basis is a mere "flash in the pan," or will become the core of a united national movement that will express the political aspirations of the millions of American workers and their allies, the rural and urban middle classes and the Negro people. The election will likewise determine whether a clique of Social Democrats, led by David Dubinsky and Alex Rose through their political instrument, the Liberal Party, will in combination with the reactionary Dewey-Hoover wing of the Republican Party succeed in dividing labor and the progressives, and lead them into the quagmire of Russia-hating and Red-baiting.

It was to have been expected that with the end of the war the political coalition around President Roosevelt, which cut across the two-party system, would be changed considerably. In New York City a desperate attempt was made by the leaders of both major parties to establish a coalition of a different kind—a united front of reaction for the purpose of destroying the political effectiveness of organized labor and its various divisions. The gentlemen who control both major parties had agreed that the former Tammany Hall mem-

ber, Judge Jonah Goldstein, was to be their joint candidate.

However, it was not so easy to hamstring the progressive voters of New York, who have been trained through twelve years of the independent La Guardia administration, who have helped create the achievements of the Roosevelt administration, and who have won victory after victory through the election of such men as Congressman Vito Marcantonio and Congressman A. Clayton Powell. For that reason it was impossible for the reactionary leaders of the two major parties to carry through their plan. Failing to achieve formal coalition, the Democratic leaders determined to put up a weak slate against their real choice, Judge Goldstein. These plans were once again frustrated by popular pressure, acting this time through Brig. General William O'Dwyer who, with the support of organized labor, fought inch by inch against this plan and demanded a slate worthy of the people of New York.

THE coalition of the Social Democrats with Thomas E. Dewey around the person of Judge Jonah Goldstein is intended to do two things. The selection of a Jewish candidate by the Republican and Liberal Parties is intended not to give the people of this city a really outstanding Jewish candidate who might become mayor of New York, but, instead, to so split the progressive Jewish vote as to assure Dewey's election as either governor or US Senator in 1946. Likewise, the Liberal Party hopes that a demagogic appeal to the Jewish people and their rightful aspiration to full political recognition in the city in which they poll the largest number of votes will catapult the Liberal Party into a position second only to the Democratic Party. If these forces are successful in the progressive, labor-conscious city of New York, they will set the pattern throughout the country.

In recent days, a new element of confusion has made its appearance. The so-called No Deal Party under the leadership of Newbold Morris, president of the City Council, and Mayor La Guardia has created a great deal of confusion in the ranks of progressive voters. Much as one may sympathize with both Morris' and La Guardia's desire to remain in the political picture so

that they may be effective in the 1946 elections, their action in setting up a fifth political party that will further split the independent progressive voters is hardly constructive. At first blush it seemed as if the No Deal Party had entered the political arena for the purpose of taking Republican and independent votes away from Jonah Goldstein. The leaders of the Liberal Party were quick to denounce the new political venture. However, Mayor La Guardia's sober statement that this was not true must make every progressive voter re-evaluate the No Deal move. While the party is called a No Deal Party, we should keep in mind that this group is in reality a No-Deal-Yet Party. Rest assured that the lieutenants of Thomas E. Dewey will not overlook even a remote possibility of striking a bargain with these two important political leaders.

La Guardia had been put forward by President Roosevelt as a possible candidate for US Senator on the Democratic ticket in 1946. With the death of Roosevelt, a strong hand was removed from the New York State Democratic Party. Fiorello La Guardia can hardly expect the Flynn-Kelly leadership of the Democratic Party to exercise political wisdom in naming him to so important a post as US Senator. The progressive and independent forces of New York City and state certainly ought to utilize the services of men like La Guardia and Newbold Morris. At the same time it is necessary to make them recognize that their path to continued political eminence is not through the division of the labor-progressive vote.

LET us look at the three candidates for mayor. All three—Brig.-Gen. William O'Dwyer, Judge Jonah Goldstein, and Newbold Morris—have good items in their records. All three have certain negative features.

Newbold Morris is essentially an independent Park Avenue Republican. He believes in good government, in honest administration. He has fought discrimination and has at times flirted with organized labor. Essentially he represents the people who own real estate and the business people of the city.

Judge Goldstein was associated with the old leaders of Tammany Hall, of the Alfred E. Smith vintage, with the

good and bad which that implies. He has at times shown a degree of independence of the Tammany machine by fighting them for political power. His election to the General Sessions bench was the result of independent political action. He has on occasion fought against racial discrimination, but has been guilty of some violent statements as a proponent of political discrimination. Jonah Goldstein is so frightened of having the Jewish people called radical that he prefers to associate himself with the reactionary elements in order to prove that the Jews are not radicals. It was this kind of political thinking which led him to the extreme harshness with which he served as judge in the Morris U. Schappes case, which was an aftermath of the Rapp-Coudert witch-hunt. The sadistic act of sending a radical Jewish intellectual to jail for a period of two years was in no way commensurate with the crime that was charged. But Goldstein was washing his hands of those Jews who are Communists or have allied themselves with the Communists. On the other hand, it is amazing how popular the name of Jonah Goldstein is among certain underworld machines.

Brigadier-General O'Dwyer, who is the candidate of the PAC, the ALP, and the Greater New York CIO, as well as of the Democratic Party, has the opportunity of re-welding the healthiest parts of the coalition which assured the election of President Roosevelt. His first action in this election was to thwart the plans of the leaders of his own party, who were ready to sell out the party to Thomas E. Dewey in order to get rid of labor's independent organized political power. O'Dwyer's fight for the nomination against such powerful leaders as Ed Flynn of the Bronx and Frank Kelly of Brooklyn and his subsequent battle against their attempts to cripple the campaign by nominating weak running mates have won the respect of independent political thinkers.

This does not mean that one ought to place a halo over the brow of O'Dwyer. Politicians do not emerge as full-fledged leaders of the people except through struggle. They are molded best by the forces that support them and work with them. On the debit side of the O'Dwyer ledger can be placed the fact that four years ago, when he ran for mayor against La Guardia, he had in his entourage members of the Christian Front and other politically unsavory individuals; that he permitted himself to be used for Red-baiting and that he failed to bring forth a real program for the people.

There are today many positive things to be said about Bill O'Dwyer, in addition to the fact that he is the candidate of organized labor and of the progressive voters. O'Dwyer knows our city. He has served it well as a rank-and-file policeman, as a judge of the Magistrates Court, as a judge of the County Court, and as Brooklyn's outstanding district attorney. His service as presiding judge of Brooklyn's experimental Adolescent Court indicates his understanding of the problems of our young people. He knows the organized labor movement and for a long time himself carried a card in the AFL Plasterers' Union. He did brilliant work in smashing "Murder, Inc." His record as a special envoy of President Roosevelt to Italy, where he was in charge of the Economic Section of the Allied Control Commission, received high commendation from the newly-emerging leaders of that badly-shattered nation. While critical of other Americans on the Italian scene, Premier Bonomi and other Italian leaders were highly appreciative of O'Dwyer's work in supporting the newly-emerging Italian democracy. It was a confidential report from General O'Dwyer that made it possible for President Roosevelt to speak frankly and sharply to Churchill on Allied policy toward Italy. It is now known that the policy of Churchill in Italy was characterized by O'Dwyer as one of "Egyptianizing" the Italian people. It is also known that Bill O'Dwyer was the candidate of President Roosevelt for mayor of New York.

BUT this is an election in which the individual is less important than the program, policy, and the groupings which are now emerging around the several candidates. The task of independent voters is to weaken the Dubinsky wing of Social Democracy and to strengthen the labor and progressive forces. While it is important that O'Dwyer be elected, it is especially important that he be elected with a large number of labor votes. In order to strengthen the healthiest sector in the organized labor movement, it is important to raise the slogan of "Vote Labor for Mayor of New York." For even if O'Dwyer receives a large number of Democratic votes and the ALP loses its preeminent position as the independent political arm of labor, the progressive forces in this city will have suffered a serious defeat.

The forces in the O'Dwyer campaign must before long bring forth a genuine people's platform to shape the course of the city during the period of post-

war reconstruction. This will require an overhauling of the civil service apparatus, a reexamination of the health, educational and welfare facilities, and the projection of a new type of service by making the city government responsible for helping assure a program of full employment.

For the reestablished Communist Party the coming elections are a real test of its understanding of the import of its recent discussion and of the resolution adopted at its national convention. The failure of the ALP to designate Councilman Ben Davis, Jr., for the City Council and the opposition of O'Dwyer to Davis as a designee of the Democratic Party are both actions which weaken the progressive-labor coalition. Without relieving O'Dwyer of responsibility, the Communists understand that both of these actions reflect the failure of the labor movement boldly to undertake the responsibility for ending the Hitler tactic of Red-baiting. This failure ought to be remedied during the course of this election campaign. The Communists for their part, while recognizing that their first task is to elect their own City Council candidates, Ben Davis in Manhattan and Peter V. Cacchione in Brooklyn, will redouble their efforts for all the nominees of the people's coalition.

The people of Harlem—and for that matter, of Manhattan as a whole—face a particularly serious situation. Ben Davis, because of his leadership among the Negro population and his outstanding record in the City Council, had reason to expect the united support of all political parties. Nevertheless, three other Negroes have been nominated in an effort to stop Davis. Thus the failure of the ALP and the Democratic Party to recognize the need of uniting around a single Negro candidate jeopardizes the election of even one in the city with the largest Negro population in the world. The responsibility for reelecting Davis now rests not only on the people of Harlem, but on all enlightened citizens irrespective of political affiliation.

The nation looks to New York in the coming months. Dare the voters of New York fail to set the pace which must be followed in every city and hamlet of America if the peace is to be worthy of the great sacrifices made during the great people's war against fascism?

In a future article Dr. Dodd will present portraits of the three mayoralty candidates, all of whom she knows personally.

DEAR SENATOR BILBO

By JOSEPHINE PICCOLO

This is an open letter written by the young Brooklyn war worker whom Bilbo addressed as "Dear Dago."

SENATOR BILBO: This is an open letter to the people of our country. I save you the trouble of publishing my letters. From now on I will do that myself.

"Private First Class *Carmine D. Piccolo, Jr.*, 32424465, Medical Corps, for heroic action against the enemy near Diersfordt, Germany, on March 24, 1945. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Private First Class *Piccolo* left his covered position and comparative safety to go to the aid of five wounded men over open terrain which was exposed to heavy machine-gun and small arms fire. After giving as much assistance as possible under fire, he fearlessly assisted and carried the men to a covered position where he could complete the first aid treatment and evacuate the men to an aid station. His actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Military Service."

Mr. Bilbo, reread this paragraph. What do you feel? Again the name of Piccolo has crossed your path. Again a "dago" stands before you. We, the American people, demand in the name of Soldier *Carmine Piccolo* that you withdraw your slanderous attack against our people. I have always been proud of my name. Today I am doubly proud.

My brother did not question the race, color or creed of the men he gave assistance, which might have cost him his life. He only knew they were men and they suffered pain. By chance, Mr. Bilbo, you might have been one of those men.

All of my brothers are fine, clean young men. They did not have to go to war to prove it to their family. Perhaps they had to go and give real proof to you. And now that you have read a statement of General Orders from the Headquarters of the 17th Airborne Division—*what have*

you to say? Might I recall two telegrams that arrived at our home, not too long ago.

"The War Department regrets to inform you that your son *Arthur Piccolo*, has been killed in action."

"The War Department regrets to inform you that your son *Ralph Piccolo* has been wounded in action."

I am not proud because they are my brothers. I am proud because they are men—and there are millions of them, Mr. Bilbo—millions of them.

PERHAPS you would like to know the reaction to your attacks. Or need it be said at all—you must have felt it already. But there are a few twisted mentalities, like your own, who have sent me letters and neither signed their names nor included an address. I do not blame them—they must hide even from themselves the blackness that is in their hearts. What cowards they are to strike and run! One good person from Jackson, Mississippi (no return address) has informed me my ancestors were garlic peddlers in the streets of Rome. To this person I say, I am not ashamed if my ancestors did that—I would be very much ashamed if they had peddled your racial poison. This Carter person has invited me to "find a berth in a colored bawdy house, if your price is low enough." Mr. Bilbo, do seek this Carter out, you have much in common. *It* speaks of the "ignorant foreigners of Brooklyn, who try to offer advice to the *real citizens* of our country."

Then too, among your followers you have those who claim America belongs to them because of ancestry. Yes, one of them asked, "Where were the Dagos when the Declaration of Independence was signed?" Since when do men live on the work of their ancestors? As a matter of fact many of our emigrants were trying to forget "ancestors" and came to build "a new world where men were created free and equal."

No, my dear letter writer—this is not done by American people. We have become great because year in and year out, generation after generation has contributed with the sweat of their brows and the blood of their veins to every road and every rock that has built our country. We want no fat, self-contented pigs, sitting on their ancestry and feeding like vultures on our people.

Bilbo, if America were to disown me tomorrow I could walk proudly among the Negroes of Africa, the people of Italy, France or England because people who believe in freedom have friends all over the earth—but I can think of no cave on earth that would be dark enough to welcome you.

On the day of victory of the war against our foreign fascist enemies, we take up the challenge of the enemies of democracy—yes, even those who stand on the floor of the United States Senate. To the people of Mississippi I say, disown this man. You can have no worse fate than to have him for a representative. You need but to raise your voices as one—and Bilbo will be but a ghost of the past.

And to Bilbo I say, the FEPC will come. We will fight you bravely because we have strength in the knowledge that what we do is right. Our Italian Americans, our Negroes, our Jewish people, our Catholics are on the march—and we will not stop until every child born under the American flag has "real freedom."



Pen and ink drawing, by Alzira.