

Negro Vote to Go to Herbert Hoover

Survey Reveals Deflection to Democrats Negligible; Race "in the Middle" in Vicious Southern Politics.

By Albert Anderson

Staff Correspondent for the Associated Negro Press Washington, D. C., Oct. 31—(By the Associated Negro Press)—With the casting of ballots in the presidential election only a week away, this unusual campaign of 1928 keeps up its interest and uncertainty clear until its end. The mixed issues of religion and liquor, race and color, the effort to crack the solid south, as well as the cry of "Tammany" or "Ku Klux Klan" have well nigh drowned out the old reliable political arguments and eloquent slogans of the years past and created a puzzling situation for many a voter.

It is this attitude which for once makes even the Negro vote interesting. While white republican leaders pretend to scoff at the idea that any appreciable number of black ballots will be cast for Smith, the actual position of colored people this year, undoubtedly has the political dopesters guessing. Democratic activity on a scale heretofore unknown, unrest, and admitted dissatisfaction with the present day republican party keeps a question mark behind the Negro until the final votes are counted.

Republicans Confident

Quiet confidence seems to reign, however, in the republican headquarters at the Barr building here. Reports received by Chairman John R. Hawkins from his workers scattered throughout the "voting states," are to the effect that whatever tendency there was to stray from the fold has been checked and that a substantial majority of Negroes will vote for Hoover and Curtis.

In the meantime, a spirit of watchful waiting is to be felt at the Colored Smith-for-President league headquarters in New York City, where the youthful chairman of organization, Julian D. Rainey, and chief of publicity, Lester A. Walton, sit back with the feeling that they have put forth a slashing effort and therefore are half hopeful that results will at least be encouraging enough to make a dent in the one party fealty of the colored hosts and encourage the democratic moguls to continue their efforts to proselyte the black vote in elections to come.

Stop Activities Early

A recent survey through the east, middle west, and border states, reveals, according to the intelligence brought to Dr. John R. Hawkins, that the situation is safe. The early discontinuance of work in the western branch at Chicago, as well as the tapering off of the work in the east would seem to bear out this attitude of confidence. But it is no secret that four or five weeks ago, the democrats, who had their publicity going earlier than their rivals, and who in most instances had organizations actively in the field before the republicans got started, made a noisy display of strength and following which startled old campaigners. The democrats have been aggressive and the general Negro discontent furnished fertile soil for them to plant. As the G. O. P. swung into action, however, the real truths about the issues began to seep down to the voting masses. The old distrust of the democratic emblem and its southern associations began to assert itself. The result seems plain, therefore, that while a good start was made, the Negro is not yet ready to vote the democratic ticket nationally, especially with a Robinson tied to its tail.

How the States Stand

Harlem will vote for the party of its fathers. The chief reason appears to be that there they know Al Smith and his entirely negligible attitude toward Negroes too well. Tammany has carried Harlem in the past because of organization and indifference on the part of the republicans who do not even attempt to register the vote there.

In Philadelphia, quite a little ripple has been created by Negro democratic workers. It has been a long time since Pennsylvanians have been flattered by having anybody assume they could vote for anything but a republican ticket, so they have treated it as a novelty, being naturally as E. T. Atwell says, "jiners." When the Vire steam roller, fired by the petty jobs they ladle out in Quaker-town, gets through rolling and the Pittsburgh ward bosses pass the word down the line, the usual majorities will be counted, according to those who are in the know.

Maryland is putting up an interesting fight. Tom Smith has gangs of Negro democratic workers rounding up the vote, in the manner which is his wont. This is the first time he has felt free to support a presiden-

tial candidate, because though the democratic boss of Baltimore, he is an ardent "race man." His influence is wide. It had been rumored that Negro Roman Catholics would not support Smith, but a white priest brought fourteen colored nuns to a Baltimore polling place and registered them last registration day.

Smith Wins, Then Loses East

Republican activity has been usual and normal. Democratic activity because it is unusual, is news. Al Smith and Chairman Raskob have not shown the same ability that the republican chieftains have. At one time it was conceded that coupled with the popularity of Senator Walsh he had Massachusetts sewed up and New Jersey the same way. That made the colored vote a big factor, but the brand of political sense which can win in New York City does not suffice for the "big game" and in both states the republicans are now confident, even though in Boston 10 days ago under the direction of Dr. "Shag" Taylor, democratic leader, the largest colored political meeting in the history of the city was held. The confidence of the republicans is perhaps reflected in the pitifully small appropriation which was made for State Chairman Larkland Hewitt and Walter Foster, the recently arrived Moses, to carry the 32,000 Negro votes which, while all the state boasts, still in a close race, have a decisive voice.

West Safe From Start

There has never been any doubt in the west, unless it is in the state of Missouri. There the resentment against the present republican state ticket which has been most shoddy in its treatment of colored people, is great. Governor Sam Baker, outgoing governor, has the hatred of nearly all Negroes who follow state affairs. Congressman Dyer is trying to have him appointed federal commissioner of education, where he will have a finger on our land grant colleges.

St. Louis, republican stronghold, is wet. The Negroes are expected to follow their German bosses in voting dantly, except in Dyer's district, where McLemore, the colored democratic candidate, is opposing him. If the Negroes voted by race and the white democrats supported McLemore, his election would be a certainty, but present indications are that neither course will be followed and Dyer will win.

Indiana is another state where Negroes are opposed to the state government, which is said to be totally Klan. But headquarters takes the position that if the entire Negro vote went against it, the intolerant Hoosiers would still beat the Roman Catholic Smith by a wide margin.

In Chicago, Oscar DePriest is certain of election, in spite of the indictment hanging over him. In fact, it is proving an aid, for by posing as a martyr, people readily proclaim that his indictment was for the purpose of keeping him out of congress. The opposition to DePriest is weak and poorly financed. "Judge" Harrison has little strength aside from that of L. K. Williams' church following.

Some funny things are happening in Chicago, though. Powerful influences are trying to defeat the state and county republican tickets. The Chicago Tribune articles, declaring that the republican party was holding out the bait of a white party in the south, has stirred Negroes as nothing ever printed in their own organs has. The leading newspaper there after a long period of waiting is carrying Smith propaganda, though not with the vim and dash it would put behind it, if its convictions followed its other interests. Leaders, however, declare that the migrant vote which hates the word democrat, will make the famous second and third wards safe for Hoover.

All Negro Districts for Hoover

In fact, if reports made to Washington headquarters can be relied on, not a single Negro center, including the border states of Kentucky and Tennessee, will go for Smith. The Negro is republican at heart and this campaign has not materially changed him. It has just stirred him up and left him dizzy. More than that, the country is republican and Protestant and while many Negro communities may have been apprehensive because of the new democratic trends, the white leaders are said to have felt that while they did not wish to drive them from the party in the last analysis, save in certain doubtful sections, it does not matter which way the Negro votes.

Republicans Work at Disadvantage

"Colored republicans have been at a painful disadvantage this year," said a spokesman at the Barr building, who refused to have his name used, but who was a leader in activities there. "As much as we love our party and her traditions, and with

the reverence and fine confidence which we have in the man Herbert Hoover, it has been next to impossible for us to put the usual pep and confidence into our work.

"In times past, the democratic party has been an ogre and there seemed absolutely no reason to support it. But this year, with the republicans bidding for the solid south, with our bewilderment at their program of white leadership in Dixie and with a growing sense of helplessness in a situation where both parties were bidding for our support above the Mason and Dixon line, and both of them using every type of scurrilous propaganda calculated to incite racial hatred below it, we seemed 'to be between the devil and the deep blue sea.'

"Those of us who live in Washington know that the present lily white program started two years ago under the leadership of former Senator Irvine Lenroot of Wisconsin, and bore fruit at the Kansas City convention. Hoover personally, probably does not believe in it, but many of the advisors about him are steeped in it deeply. Under the circumstances, Chairman John R. Hawkins and Secretary A. L. Holsey, together with their associates from top to bottom, have done an exceptional piece of work. Not only have they discouragement with the republican party on the part of the colored people to fight, but also apathy on the part of white officials who were willing to let the Negro run his own little circus over in the corner, so long as he did not spend too much money or get in anybody's way.

Campaign Activities Guarded

"On both sides campaign activities among Negroes were carefully guarded. Four years ago, Clarence Matthews worked directly under Chairman William M. Butler of the national committee and conferred with him frequently. This year Chairman Hubert Work, whose detractors say he has little liking for close contact with Negroes, has had practically no conferences or direct associations with colored workers. Walter F. Brown of Toledo, Ohio, master strategist of that state and a high-calibered gentleman, assumed the post of contact man between the colored division and Dr. Work. Under his direction it was organized and functioned capably. Later, when his other duties made the difficulties attendant thereon too numerous, the load was shifted to Ray Benjamin of California, friend of "Bob" Church and former state chairman of California and an assistant of Dr. Work.

"The democrats operated in the same way. On account of the solid south, they scarcely dared own that they had a colored division. It had separate quarters from the national committee and assumed the name, 'Smith for President Colored League.' It was financed by William Gaston of Boston, a young blueblood who actually had charge but who brought as chairman of the organization committee, his friend and schoolmate, Julian D. Rainey. Lester A. Walton of the New York World, was drafted as publicity man. The result was two Negro divisions made up of competent men, who, putting forth their best efforts for their respective causes, were at the same time conscious of entirely different activity insofar as their racial groups were concerned, in the south where frank appeals to hillbillies and red-necks were being made in the only language those gentry understand, that of Negro hatred.

Party's Future in South Puzzling

"Southern democracy of course had nothing to offer the Negro. Perhaps they were a little more vicious than usual, if that is possible, because their territory was being invaded. Republicans, however, set up a separate campaign organization and wherever there was Negro control or influence the regular republican groups were ignored or turned aside. How much of this has been abetted by the selfishness of our Negro leaders there by their attitude in the past we can only conjecture. Perhaps the white republicans cannot be blamed for desiring to see a vigorous republican party in the south by whatever means they might obtain it. If successful and it leads to a two-party system, eventually the Negro may come into his own. In the meantime, the colored voter will be in a mighty bad way politically unless some unforeseen development proves that his vote is more important than it at present appears. That is why many of us are praying that Hoover will win, but not by a landslide.

"The only way I see out, is for them to solidify and start getting in members of the group elected to congress, where they can form a block that will command respect. The election of Oscar DePriest in Chicago most of us have looked upon as a

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