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**"LABOR IS WITH ROOSEVELT:"
THE PENNSYLVANIA LABOR NON-PARTISAN
LEAGUE AND THE ELECTION OF 1936**

HISTORIANS and New Deal scholars generally agree that the 1936 presidential election was the culmination of a political realignment that saw women, progressives, labor, farmers, black Americans, and ethnic groups coalesce in support of Franklin Roosevelt and the Democratic party. Though they may disagree over when this shift began, attributing much of the credit to Al Smith's presidential candidacy in 1928, historians seem to concur that all of these groups contributed significantly to Roosevelt's landslide reelection in 1936.¹ A vital element in this coalition was labor. Labor unions contributed over \$750,000 to the Roosevelt effort in 1936 and their activity for him was on a scale unprecedented in previous elections.²

Most of the labor activity for Roosevelt in 1936 was conducted by labor's Non-Partisan League, a large independent political committee consisting primarily of CIO unions and organized in April 1936 by United Mine Workers' President John L. Lewis and Amalgamated Clothing Workers' head Sidney Hillman. Both Lewis and Hillman supported Roosevelt out of a desire to keep the benefits

1. See for example, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Politics of Upheaval* (Boston, 1960), pp. 424-443, 586-600; Donald R. McCoy, "The Election of 1936," *Crucial American Elections* (Philadelphia, 1973), pp. 71-72; Samuel Lubell, *The Future of American Politics* (New York, 1952), pp. 44-54; James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York, 1956), pp. 264-288, and *The Deadlock of Democracy: Four Party Politics in America* (Englewood Cliffs, 1967), pp. 156-161; William E. Leuchtenburg, "The Election of 1936," in *A History of American Presidential Elections*, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. and Fred Israel, 4 vols. (New York, 1971), III, 2845-2847.

2. 75 Congress, 1 Session, Senate Report 151, *Investigation of Campaign Expenditures in 1936* (Washington, 1937), p. 127.

and influence which labor had achieved during Roosevelt's first administration. Since Roosevelt had come into office, labor had participated in the making of labor policy, and they believed that a continuation of the president's policies would provide greater opportunities for organized labor in the years ahead.³ Their purpose in organizing the league was to help reassure Roosevelt's reelection, to counteract anti-New Deal organizations that were considered a threat to both labor and the president's legislative program, and to offset the influence of their rival, the American Federation of Labor, within the Democratic party.⁴ Considering themselves to represent the forces of liberalism opposed to reaction, league leaders agreed to support Roosevelt in 1936, but talked of the possible establishment of a third party in 1940.⁵

The League claimed to be nonpartisan in that it was open to members of all parties and both wings of the labor movement. Letters were sent to labor leaders, Republicans, Socialists, and Democrats, regardless of whether they were members of industrial or craft unions. Unorganized workers were also invited to join. John L. Lewis made it clear that the League was not asking its followers to support the entire Democratic ticket, and indicated that members were free to support the congressional candidates of their choice.⁶

3. C. K. McFarland, *Roosevelt, Lewis and the New Deal* (Fort Worth, 1970), p. 57; Mathew Josephson, *Sidney Hillman: Statesman of American Labor* (Garden City, 1958), p. 396.

4. Among the organizations listed as anti-New Deal or "reactionary" were big business and its adjunct, the American Liberty League; the Supreme Court, which invalidated the National Industrial Recovery Act; and conservative, renegade Democrats who later formed the Jeffersonian Democrats to oppose Roosevelt. The Labor Non-Partisan League was also considered one way to counteract third party groups such as the Union and Socialist parties. See Labor Non-Partisan League, *Labor's Non-Partisan League: Its Origin and Growth* (Washington, 1937), p. 3; Donald R. McCoy, *Landon of Kansas* (Lincoln, 1966), pp. 269-271; Arthur Krock, "Labor Move an Offset to Anti-New Dealers," *New York Times*, 19 July 1936. The rivalry with the American Federation of Labor for influence within the Democratic party began in 1935 when those who favored industrial unionism as opposed to craft unionism split with the AFL to form the Committee for Industrial Organization. When Democratic National Committee Chairman James Farley formed the labor division of the Democratic party in 1936, he appointed Dan Tobin of the AFL as its chairman. It was reported that Lewis and Hillman, leaders of the CIO, formed the Non-Partisan League to counter the influence and appointment of Tobin. See *Nation*, 15 April 1936, p. 471; *Time*, 24 August 1936, p. 17.

5. *New York Times*, 11 August 1936; *Nation*, 15 April 1936, p. 472.

6. *New York Times*, 2 April 1936; Josephson, *Sidney Hillman*, p. 395; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1 November 1936.

The titular chairman of the Labor Non-Partisan League was George Berry. At the time of his appointment Berry was associated with the International Pressman's Union and had been recently appointed by Roosevelt as head of the Council for Industrial Progress. Berry was regarded highly by many in the American Federation of Labor and had a reputation for impartiality in the differences between the A.F.L. and C.I.O. He also had valuable campaign experience. In 1924 and 1928 he was supported by some for the Democratic vice presidential nomination and in 1928 he headed the Labor Committee for the Democratic party.⁷

Under Berry's supervision, plans were made for league activity in the forthcoming campaign. The league obtained the support of nearly 30,000 union officials, raised funds for campaign expenditures, prepared a large amount of campaign literature for distribution, and obtained speakers for nationwide radio broadcasts and campaign tours. One of the early activities of the League was the establishment of state Labor Non-Partisan Leagues. It was through the well organized state chapters that the league carried out much of its extensive publicity and canvassing activities. The league claimed representatives in all forty-eight states, but a special effort was made in the highly industrialized states of Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, and Illinois.⁸ These states had large union populations and their large number of electoral votes made them vital to the Democratic effort.

The most important of these industrial states was Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania was a traditionally Republican state that in 1932 awarded its thirty-six electoral votes to Herbert Hoover. The Democrats were encouraged by victories in the 1934 Senate and gubernatorial races, and by voter registration statistics that showed an increase in the number of registered Democrats, but a tough battle was still expected. Party leaders admitted that an underlying motive in having the Democratic national convention held in Philadelphia was to help the Democratic campaign in the state, and it was reported that one of the reasons for establishing Democratic national headquarters in New York City was to assure that special attention could

7. Schlesinger, *The Politics of Upheaval*, p. 386; Frank Kent, "Three Job George Berry is Even More Versatile Than Nimble Mr. Farley," *Kansas City Times*, 25 August 1936; Vaughn Davis Bornet, *Labor Politics in a Democratic Republic: Moderation, Division and Disruption in the Presidential Election of 1928* (Washington, D.C., 1964), pp. 238-239; Josephson, *Sidney Hillman*, p. 395.

8. *New York Times*; 2 April, 12 May, 16 July 1936; *Labor's Non-Partisan League: Its Origin and Growth*, pp. 6-7.



Photograph taken at the John Mitchell Day celebration in Kingston, Pennsylvania, 29 October 1936. From the left: John Kmetz, Luzerne County Chairman of the Labor Non-Partisan League; Lt. Gov. Thomas Kennedy; Governor George Earle; John L. Lewis; Senator Joseph Guffey; and Democratic State Chairman David L. Lawrence. (*Scranton Times*.)

be given both to New York and Pennsylvania.⁹ The importance of the state in the election, and the large number of United Mine Workers, textile workers, and other union members, made Pennsylvania an ideal environment for the Labor Non-Partisan League to prove its worth.

The Pennsylvania Labor Non-Partisan League was organized following a statewide convention of labor leaders in Harrisburg on 22 and 23 August 1936. The purpose of the convention, attended by 1250 delegates, was to affiliate as part of the national Labor Non-Partisan League and establish a permanent organization.¹⁰ The league was to be organized around three committees that were to conduct most of the campaign activities. A state executive committee consisting of representative labor men from various unions throughout the state, was given complete charge of the campaign. Members

9. *New York Times*; 10, 11 January, 14 March, 23, 29 May 1936.

10. Report of Labor's Non-Partisan League of Pennsylvania to 5 September 1936, Box 1, Pennsylvania Labor Non-Partisan League Papers, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania. Hereafter cited as PLNPL Papers.

of the state executive committee represented a large number of important unions including the International Ladies Garment Workers, American Federation of Labor, United Brewery Workers, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, United Textile Workers, and many more.¹¹ Other committees established were a county executive committee, composed of laborers from the unions in each county, and a county committee, made up of ward leaders from each ward in the county. In counties where the industrial population was slim and unions scarce or non-existent, efforts were made to appoint a trustworthy individual who had shown interest in doing work for the league.¹²

Leadership of the league was entrusted to well-known union leaders throughout the state. Chairman of the Pennsylvania league was Patrick Fagan, President of District Five of the United Mine Workers. Other officers included Vice Chairman Charles Weinstein of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Executive Secretary Joseph Cohen of the Typographical Union, Secretary Thomas Etzrodt of the Printing Pressmen and Assistants, and Lester Thomas, league treasurer, who was associated with the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor.¹³ As was the case with the national organization, unions provided most of the support for the Pennsylvania league. The names of all unions in the state were put on index cards and arranged by counties to assure an extensive grass roots organization, and funds were raised primarily through the purchase of fifty cent membership cards by union members. Provisions were also made for nonunion members who wished to join.¹⁴

Once its offices were established at Pennsylvania Federation of Labor headquarters in Harrisburg, the league went about the important task of distributing literature, holding rallies, and canvassing voters. During the course of the campaign, the league's publicity division distributed a massive amount of literature to Pennsylvania voters. Seventeen thousand five-hundred one sheet posters were supplied to county chairmen along with large quantities of window cards and Roosevelt buttons. Pamphlets and handouts were also issued in great numbers, some of which were obtained from national

11. Ibid. For a list of officers and Executive Committee members see the pamphlet, *Labor's Non-Partisan League of Pennsylvania: 1936 Campaign*, Box 1, PLNPL Papers.

12. Reports of Labor's Non-Partisan League of Pennsylvania for Weeks Ending 25 September and 3 October 1936, Box 1, PLNPL Papers.

13. *Labor's Non-Partisan League of Pennsylvania: 1936 Campaign*, Box 1, PLNPL Papers.

14. Report of LNPL of Pennsylvania to 5 September 1936, Box 1, PLNPL Papers.

headquarters in Washington. Among the pamphlets issued by the Pennsylvania League were *He Fights for Labor*; *How to Organize for Legislative Work*; *Roosevelt and Labor*; and *Labor's Non-Partisan League*.¹⁵ The most popular of these pamphlets was *He Fights for Labor*. This sixty-page publication was highly laudatory of Roosevelt and extolled the president's labor record. Broken into eight chapters, the pamphlet dealt with Roosevelt's policy on collective bargaining, shorter hours and higher wages, child labor, youth care, and economic security.¹⁶

Another popular piece of labor literature distributed by the Pennsylvania league was a small four-page newspaper entitled *The Labor Voter*. This paper was distributed throughout the country by various state leagues and was especially popular in Pennsylvania. By early September the paper was in great demand with 500,000 copies already printed. In one special edition, fourteen separate issues of the paper were distributed in the districts of fourteen state senators whose candidacies the league opposed. This was in keeping with the policy of the national organization of opposing those local candidates considered unfriendly to labor. The issues listed the reasons why the particular senator should be defeated and they were distributed in sufficient quantity to reach all the voters in the district. In all fourteen cases, those opposed by the league were Republican incumbents.¹⁷

In addition to distributing much literature during the campaign, the Pennsylvania league sponsored a number of rallies and speeches that featured a wide variety of prominent persons. Between 2 October and 1 November, fifty-five meetings were held in the state that were either sponsored or arranged by the Pennsylvania Labor Non-Partisan League. Most of these meetings were held in the industrial, steel, and coal mining areas, and some were carried over the radio. In instances where national speakers were used or meetings were sponsored by the Democratic National Committee, county chairmen were kept informed to assure that local league meetings did not conflict with the larger Democratic rallies. It also enabled

15. Report of LNPL of Pennsylvania for Week Ending 18 September 1936, and Report of LNPL of Pennsylvania to 5 September 1936, Box 1, PLNPL Papers.

16. Memorandum to the President from Labor's Non-Partisan League, 6 June 1936, President's Personal File 3627, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

17. Reports of LNPL of Pennsylvania to 5 September 1936 and 16 October 1936, Box 1, PLNPL Papers; List of Special Editions of *The Labor Voter*, 1936 Presidential Election Folder, Box 1, PLNPL Papers.

them to publicize these larger rallies and to arrange for someone to be on hand to distribute literature. State Chairman Patrick Fagan emphasized that teamwork was the key and he urged all to "pull together" for a successful effort.¹⁸

Many prominent political figures delivered speeches in the state during the campaign, including President Roosevelt. On 29 October the president delivered a major address in Wilkes-Barre on John Mitchell Day. The rally was sponsored by the Labor Non-Partisan League and an estimated 50,000 people were in attendance. In his address, the president praised the accomplishments of the former labor leader and extolled the benefits of the Social Security Act that was presently coming under heavy attack by Republicans. Before leaving, labor leaders presented Roosevelt with a floral decoration made from 4,000 red, white, and blue carnations and decorated with a ribbon that said "Labor is With Roosevelt."¹⁹

Other prominent speakers who appeared in the state were Mayor LaGuardia of New York, Wisconsin Senator Robert LaFollette, Jr., Senator George Norris of Nebraska, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, and Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace. Their speeches were not always sponsored by the Labor Non-Partisan League, but the speakers often spoke on topics of interest to labor, and league representatives frequently accompanied the speakers on their tour.²⁰ The most active speakers who appeared under league auspices were Governor George Earle, Lieutenant Governor Thomas Kennedy, and United Mine Workers' President John L. Lewis. Thomas Kennedy spoke throughout the state on twenty-four of the thirty-one days in October, while Governor Earle was even more active and delivered addresses on twenty-seven days of the month and in sixty-three of sixty-seven counties in the state. Earle addressed a number of major Labor Non-Partisan League rallies and most of his speeches were directed at the working man. In September he addressed over 225,000 people at a huge Labor Day demonstration in Allegheny County. It was said to be the largest gathering of labor people ever held in the country. The rally was cosponsored by the league and featured another popular league speaker, Pennsylvania

18. List of Meetings Arranged by Labor's Non-Partisan League of Pennsylvania in 1936, PLNPL Papers. Patrick Fagan to County Chairmen, 30 September 1936, Box 1, PLNPL Papers.

19. *Wilkes Barre Evening News*, 28, 29, 31 October 1936.

20. Patrick Fagan to County Chairmen, 30 September 1936, Box 1, PLNPL Papers; *New York Times*, 31 October 1936.

Senator Joseph Guffey. In October Earle addressed a labor gathering in Indiana, Pennsylvania and praised Roosevelt for what he had done for the working man by making collective bargaining absolute law. Later in the same month, Earle addressed a large league sponsored rally in Wilkes-Barre that also featured John L. Lewis and Joseph Guffey.²¹

Popular as Earle was with working men in the state, he could not surpass the popularity of the major speaker for the league in Pennsylvania, John L. Lewis. Because of Lewis' importance as a labor leader and cofounder of the Non-Partisan League, he was selected as a feature campaigner in the state. As one of the founders of the league, he had more than just a passing interest in the campaign. Lewis had reportedly staked his future prestige on the outcome of the vote in Pennsylvania and he had predicted that miners, industrial workers, and farm laborers would put the state decisively in the Roosevelt column. The tour also afforded him the opportunity to assess his personal strength with union members in the state.²²

The first of several Lewis speeches in the predominantly coal mining areas of the state came on 20 September in Pottsville. The address is important for it points out many of the major themes and issues emphasized by the league in their literature and speeches. In his speech Lewis praised Roosevelt's record and attacked his opponents. Lewis stated that the industrial and financial interests of the country were opposed to Roosevelt's reelection because they realized the president would revive his original program of reform. He charged that the Morgans, duPonts, Rockefellers and others prominent in the industrial and financial world were out to elect Landon because they felt they could dictate the policies of his administration. He further added that he considered organizations such as the Liberty League and Jeffersonian Democrats as "anti-American" and called Landon the puppet of big business.²³ On 20 October Lewis echoed many of these same themes in a speech before 3,000 people in Scranton. He attacked former President Hoover, who had been campaigning for Landon, and urged people to elect their

21. Patrick Fagan to County Chairmen, 30 September 1936, Box 1, PLNPL Papers; Report of the LNPL of Pennsylvania to 12 September 1936, Box 1, PLNPL Papers; *The Bradford Era*, 5 October 1936; *Scranton Times*, 27 October 1936; *United Mine Workers Journal*, 15 October 1936.

22. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 September 1936; *Harrisburgh Daily Telegraph*, 21 September 1936.

23. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 September 1936; *New York Times*, 20 September 1936.



Prominent visitors to Scranton pose before a rally on 21 October 1936. From the left: Governor George Earle, Congressman Patrick Boland, Lt. Governor Thomas Kennedy, John L. Lewis, Democratic County Chairman Hugh J. Brady, and F. Clair Ross, Democratic nominee for state treasurer. (*Scranton Times*.)

friend (Roosevelt) and not someone who was a puppet for the New York bankers, duPonts, munitions makers, or Hearsts.²⁴

The practice of attacking pro-Republican big businessmen was practiced by the Democrats and other pro-Democratic groups throughout the country, but it had special significance in Pennsylvania. The alleged coercion of workers by pro-Republican employers became a major issue in Pennsylvania during the campaign and the Labor Non-Partisan League made sure the public was aware of it. The League charged that Republican employers were threatening workers with the loss of their jobs if they did not vote the Republican ticket. George Berry claimed that the Labor Non-Partisan League had information that more than one company in Pennsylvania had deducted \$1.00 from each worker's pay envelope to contribute to the Republican campaign. He also stated that some employers were forcing their employees to attend a film put on by the National Association of Manufacturers. Joseph Guffey added to the controversy when he charged that the Duquesne Club of Pittsburgh was intimidating its employees to vote for Roosevelt. In a league sponsored press release, Guffey claimed that employees of the club

24. *Scranton Times*, 21 October 1936.

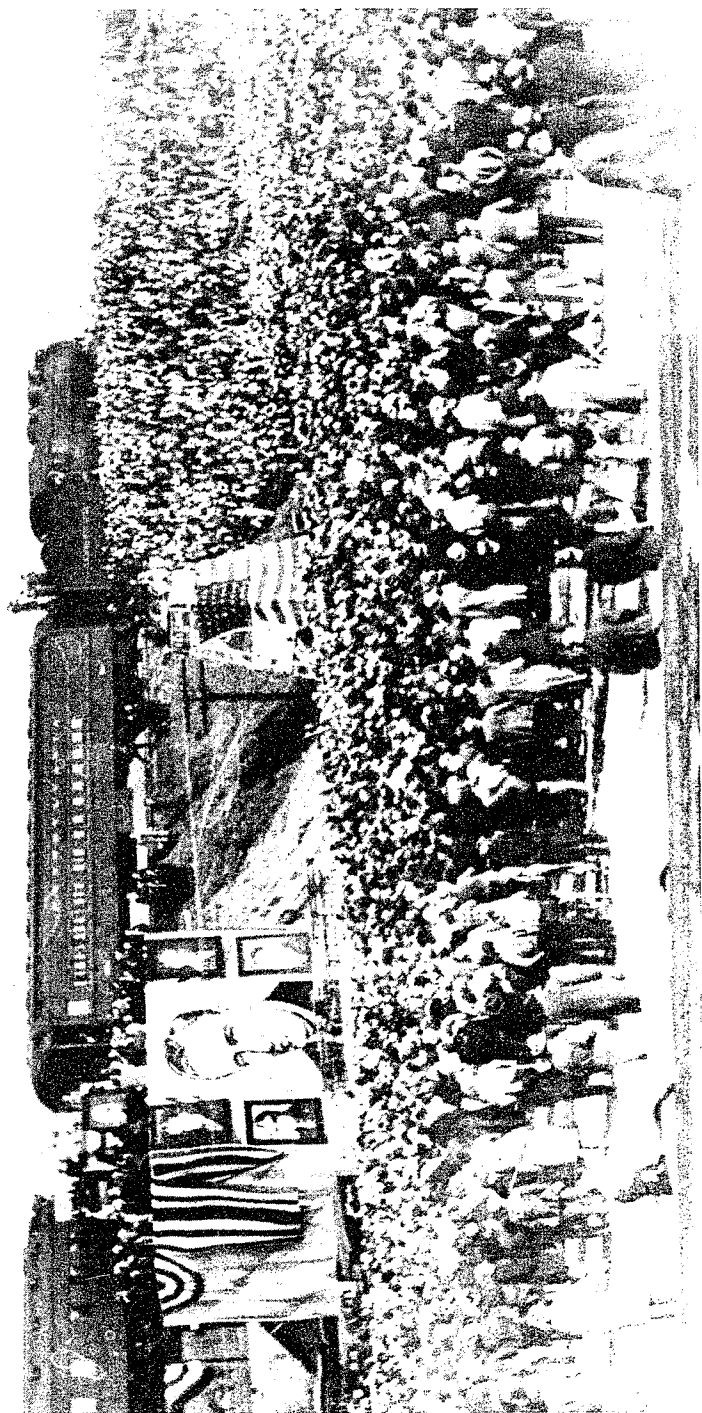
were asked to write on the back of their pay receipts whom they intended to vote for. Those voting for Roosevelt were asked not to return.²⁵

Republicans countered this allegation of coercion of voters with serious charges of their own. They charged that the Works Progress Administration was forcing its workers in a number of states, including Pennsylvania, to contribute to the Democratic campaign fund. This, along with the Democratic claim of Republican wrongdoing, became a controversial issue in the Pennsylvania campaign. Both sides denied the charges, but the Senate Campaign Committee investigating expenditures in the 1936 campaign studied the issue and recommended that all such types of coercion be made unlawful.²⁶

The state Labor Non-Partisan League reached many voters in the state through its massive distribution of literature, press releases and numerous statewide rallies, but much of the important organizing and campaigning was undertaken by local and county leagues. Throughout the state, county and city organizations were busy organizing workers, conducting meetings, and distributing pro-Roosevelt material. In the hard coal district of Luzerne County, a Labor Non-Partisan League was set up in each of the seven legislative districts of the county under the direction of John T. Kmetz, executive board member of District One of the United Mine Workers. A women's division was formed within the county league and a number of rallies were held. Lebanon County likewise had a well organized league. The league registered workers and distributed a large amount of literature and buttons. A special Non-Partisan League motor caravan was organized to travel throughout the county to canvass votes for Roosevelt, and league representatives were on hand at the Myertown County Fair, as they were at nineteen other county fairs across the state, to distribute League literature. The Lackawanna County league was composed of members from over forty unions and was headed by William Brennan, former president of the United Mine Workers in District Five. The Lackawanna league held numerous rallies, sent circular letters to thousands of citizens urging them to participate and cooperate in the campaign, and issued a press release defending the construction of federal

25. *New York Times*, 24 October 1936.

26. *New York Times*, 6 October 1936; SR 151, *Investigation of Campaign Expenditures in 1936*, p. 137.



An estimated 60,000 appeared at the baseball park in Kingston, Pennsylvania to hear President Roosevelt speak on John Mitchell Day. 29 October 1936. (*Syracuse Times*.)

dams.²⁷ In Philadelphia County a number of offices were opened up under the direction of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. The Philadelphia County league helped with the intensive voter registration drive in the area and it was reported that by the end of the campaign rallies were being held every night in all parts of the city. Even women workers were involved. At one Philadelphia rally, 150 women from the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union formed a group known as the "Laborettes." Dressed in blue trousers, white blouses, and red berets, they served as usherettes for the rally. Nor was the league peculiar to only a few counties. By the end of the campaign the Labor Non-Partisan League claimed active organizations in fifty-one Pennsylvania counties with contact points in a number of others.²⁸

On 7 November Pennsylvania voters went to the polls and cast their votes decisively in favor of Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt scored an impressive victory in the state by gathering 2,350,788 votes to Alfred Landon's 1,690,300. He increased by over 1,000,000 the number of votes he received in Pennsylvania in 1932 and his popular vote total exceeded by nearly 300,000 the number of registered Democrats in the state. Roosevelt was the first Democrat to carry the state since James Buchanan in 1856.²⁹

It is not surprising that given the size of the Roosevelt victory in Pennsylvania, the Labor Non-Partisan League would claim much of the credit for the President's victory. By the conclusion of the campaign the league had enrolled nearly 150,000 members from various trade unions in the state and collected over \$81,000 in union contributions. The major union contributors were the United Mine Workers, Ladies Garment Workers, Hosiery Workers, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor. The league spent approximately \$75,000 in its effort to reelect Roosevelt and this did not include money spent by local leagues whose expenses were met by unions in their particular district. Over 7,500,000 pieces of literature were distributed from

27. *United Mine Workers Journal*, 15 October 1936; *The Advance*, November 1936 (A publication of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers); Report of LNPL of Pennsylvania to 12 September 1936, Box 1, PLNPL Papers; Joseph E. Cohen to Major George L. Berry, 29 October 1936, Box 1, PLNPL Papers; *Wilkes Barre Evening News*, 9, 13, 20, 26 October 1936; *Scranton Times*, 1, 8, 15, 16, 23 October 1936.

28. *The Advance*, November 1936.

29. Edgar Eugene Robinson, *They Voted for Roosevelt: The Presidential Vote 1932-1944* (Stanford, 1947), p. 147; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 18 October 1936; *The Pennsylvania Manual*, 83 (1937:174-175).

the league office in Harrisburg and nine sound trucks were employed to cover the key counties in the state.³⁰

It is difficult to determine exactly how many voters league propaganda and activities directly influenced, but the contribution of the Labor Non-Partisan League to the president's victory in Pennsylvania was significant. In the heavy industrial and coal mining areas of Allegheny, Luzerne, Beaver, and Lackawanna counties Roosevelt's margin of victory was overwhelming. He carried Allegheny County by nearly 300,000 votes, Philadelphia County by over 200,000 votes, Beaver County by nearly 17,000, and Luzerne County by 24,000. In Lebanon County, where the Non-Partisan League was also active, he won by only 587, but the influence of the league could very well have been the deciding factor in the county. In a number of other areas such as Bucks, Perry, Juniata, and Pike counties, Roosevelt's margin of victory was within 206 votes and the league's intensive propaganda campaign may have helped swing those areas to the president. In Philadelphia, where the league conducted a vigorous registration drive, figures late in the campaign showed a trend away from Republicanism. Roosevelt carried the city by 210,000 votes and South Philadelphia, where a large number of garment workers lived, supported him four to one. It was reported to be the first time South Philadelphia had gone against the Republicans. Even more impressive were the results in the fourteen districts of the state senators the league opposed. Ten of the fourteen Republican incumbents were defeated and two of the four survivors were reelected by less than 3,000 votes. The league may have played a decisive role in these elections as well.³¹

In the final evaluation, the Labor Non-Partisan League contributed much to Roosevelt's victory in Pennsylvania through its large financial investment and extensive propaganda and voter canvassing drives. The enormous amount of literature they distributed, the large number of rallies that were staged, and the extensive organization undertaken among union members all helped to assure a sizable victory for the president. There were other factors that contributed greatly to the president's victory. Roosevelt's legislative record during his first term as president was a solid one and many people, especially those benefiting from the many relief and work relief programs had much to gain by keeping Roosevelt

30. Joseph E. Cohen to Major George L. Berry, 29 October 1936, PLNPL Papers, Box 1; *Labor's Non-Partisan League of Pennsylvania; 1936 Campaign*, pp. 6-8.

31. *The Pennsylvania Manual*, 83 (1937):192-195, 204-337; *The Advance*, December 1936.

in office. Still, even when this is taken into account, the role of the league was vitally important. The league helped publicize Roosevelt's record on a massive scale through its literature and speakers, and it organized and registered thousands of workers who may not otherwise have participated or even voted. In this way it contributed immeasurably to Roosevelt's victory.

Most importantly, the activity of the Labor Non-Partisan League in 1936 established labor as a potent force in American politics for years to come. This was the first time labor participated in a campaign for a candidate as an independent political committee and its enormous success in Pennsylvania and other industrial states throughout the country made labor a force to be reckoned with in future campaigns.

After the 1936 campaign the Labor Non-Partisan League continued to lobby for workers' rights. In 1937 they supported the President's "Court Packing" plan and canvassed members of the House and Senate to urge them to vote for the measure.³² In 1943 the Labor Non-Partisan League was superseded by the CIO's Political Action Committee. Under this organization labor has continued to make its presence felt. In 1976 labor was credited with helping Jimmy Carter carry the crucial states of Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania.

Nineteen thirty-six remains a watershed year, both for labor's political participation and for Pennsylvania politics. For the first time labor's political impact was clearly established, and for the first time since the Civil War, Pennsylvania voted for a Democratic president. Pennsylvania, with a large union population and a strong Republican tradition, provided an excellent testing ground for the Labor Non-Partisan League. The league, in turn, showed by its extensive activities and expenditures that labor was with Roosevelt.

32. Labor's Non-Partisan League, *Labor's Non-Partisan League*, p. 8.