

Humboldt State University

Digital Commons @ Humboldt State University

Ina and Noel Harris Collection

Special Collections

9-10-1948

Memorandum on the 1948 Election

State Legislative Committee
Communist Party of California

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/harris_collection



Part of the [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), [Law Commons](#), [Public Affairs](#), [Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#), and the [Social Justice Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

State Legislative Committee, "Memorandum on the 1948 Election" (1948). *Ina and Noel Harris Collection*. 12.

https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/harris_collection/12

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections at Digital Commons @ Humboldt State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ina and Noel Harris Collection by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Humboldt State University. For more information, please contact kyle.morgan@humboldt.edu.

MEMORANDUM
ON THE
1948 ELECTION

COMMUNIST
PARTY
OF
CALIFORNIA

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF CALIFORNIA

September 10, 1948

TO ALL BRANCHES
TO SECTION AND COUNTY COMMITTEES

MEMORANDUM ON THE 1948 ELECTION CAMPAIGN OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CALIFORNIA

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the general approach to the election activities of our Party and to offer suggestions on the basis of which concrete plans may be developed by the Counties, Sections and Branches.

Our Party, tho it is not on the ballot this year and will not run candidates, will conduct the most intensive campaign around its program and in the fight for its legal existence. This campaign will bolster and strengthen the people's coalition around the new party and candidates and will effectively aid in developing mass movements on every vital issue.

Our National Convention, particularly in the report by Comrade Dennis, adopted a basic political approach which determines the direction and character of our election activities. We quote herewith the pertinent excerpts from the Dennis report:

"Desirous of helping to promote a people's anti-war and anti-imperialist coalition, under labor leadership, capable of checking and defeating the fascists and warmakers, we Communists will support the peace and anti-monopoly program of the Progressive Party and will help build the new party as a non-Communist, people's united front mass organization and movement.

"But we Communists have no desire to 'take over' the new party, nor could we if we would. We are also determined to launch the most intensive Communist election campaign in our Party's history. Even though we have no Communist Presidential ticket and even though we are putting forward only a limited number of Communist Congressional candidates, we intend to wage our most extensive Communist political-election campaign. We intend to and will advance our immediate program which coincides in many respects with that of the new party and with that of certain CIO Unions and other progressive groups. At the same time, we will popularize, advance and win support for our socialist objectives. We will energetically build our Party and its press, and everywhere forge united labor-progressive action to defeat the candidates and parties of war and fascism.

"This determination is not dictated by partisan considerations. It is based on our political-theoretical understanding that never does a working class so need a strong, organized, Marxist detachment at its head as when it is entering into an anti-fascist and anti-war people's coalition and party, into an alliance with other classes and their political representatives."

The application of this approach requires the maximum mobilization of all our forces for a two-fold task within the general frame-work of the election struggle:

- (1) To help win a mass vote for the Wallace-Taylor ticket and to help elect progressive candidates to Congress and the legislature.

- (2) To defeat the reactionary aim of outlawing the Communist Party and railroading our leaders to prison -- to win broad support in defense of the civil rights of the Communists and growing understanding of what the Communists really stand for.

ACTIVITIES OF BRANCHES AND MEMBERS IN THE ELECTIONS:

- (1) Keeping the general political approach in mind, our Branches and individual members can easily determine the specific character of their election activities. As members of their unions and other organizations they will set an example of vigorous, determined electioneering for the coalition, people's candidates and program. Section and Branch Executive Committees shall be politically responsible for the mobilization of all members for united front and election work.
- (2) In addition to these united front activities, every Branch and member of the Party shall also undertake a maximum program of activities around the Communist Party campaign for popularization of its position on the most important questions before the people, of its full program for democratic liberties and economic security, for peace and its ultimate aim of socialism. The red-baiting attacks of the employers and their agents in government, press and radio must be effectively answered during this period.

A mass campaign of the most intensive nature is required -- every member shall carry his or her share in the mass visiting of workers in concentration industries, in the working-class precincts in every community, the Negro and Mexican-American communities -- precinct work with our platform, literature, press and leaflets. Participation in mass actions, meetings and open-air demonstrations is also expected. All Branches will plan such activities, during the next several months particularly.

- (3) There is no contradiction between this activity in the name of the Communist Party and general election activities and precinct work for progressive candidates. One strengthens the other, the major problem being one of so co-ordinating and planning both phases of election activity in order to obtain the maximum results.

POPULARIZATION OF OUR PLATFORM AND PROGRAM

- (1) The election platform of our Party is a very important document, presenting our Party's position on the most vital issues of the day: war and peace, the attack on labor and our living standards, civil rights, Negro rights. In addition, the platform clarifies a question of wide-spread interest -- the difference between the Communist Party and the Progressive Party. In explaining our approach to the new party, the socialist aims of the Communist Party are clearly reiterated in an extremely clear and popular manner.
- (2) The platform deserves the broadest popularization -- through public discussion at forums, street meetings, through Communist speakers appearing before organizations of all kinds, mass mailings to selected lists of people. PLAN SUCH ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR COMMUNITY, INDUSTRY OR AREA.
- (3) The MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF MAKING KNOWN THE POSITION OF THE COMMUNISTS ON ANY ISSUE IS THROUGH MASS ACTIONS such as precinct work, meetings, leaflets, picket lines, delegations to public officials, petitions, resolutions.

County, Section and Branch organizations shall select a specific issue for such action -- an issue of particular importance to the community or industry, and with which the Communist Party can itself become identified and develop a campaign to include broader circles in the community as well. (Examples: support of the Maritime and oil strikes, police brutality cases, high prices, jobs for Negroes and other minorities, draft repeal, etc.)

ELECTION CAMPAIGN MATERIAL AND SPECIAL EVENTS:

(1) A series of mass meetings are being organized in California during the latter part of September (dates publicized in each locality). These mass meetings will protest the arrest of our national leaders and constitute an important phase of the actions to be organized by our Party throughout the State. BUILD THESE MASS MEETINGS INTO MILITANT DEMONSTRATIONS IN DEFENSE OF THE PARTY.

(2) One million copies of the Dennis pamphlet on the Wall Street conspirators have been printed for free mass distribution.

A quarter of a million copies of the 1948 Election Platform will be printed likewise for free mass distribution.

In California, we shall see to it that these two important pamphlets which point out WHAT THE COMMUNISTS REALLY STAND FOR shall find their way into the hands and homes of longshoremen, warehousemen, railroad workers, teamsters, aircraft, oil and rubber workers, building trades and agricultural workers and all other industrial workers, as well as into the hands of the Negro people, farmers, youth, women and others. THIS CAN ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY CAREFUL ORGANIZATION AND CONSISTENT FOLLOW-UP.

(3) The PEOPLE'S WORLD is publishing a pamphlet written by Steve Murdock entitled "THE MAN BEHIND THE WARREN MASK". The aim is to distribute a minimum of 75,000 copies in California by Election Day. To arm the thousands of Wallace precinct workers with the facts on Warren's record on labor, farm problems, veterans' needs, housing, Negro rights and civil liberties, this pamphlet will be indispensable. It can be sold in unions and other organizations, and particularly to registered Democrats and Republicans who have strong illusions about Warren's "liberalism". It can be sold in large quantities at all major political meetings throughout the State.

(4) All Branches should plan to use the week-end edition of the PEOPLE'S WORLD for organized bundle distribution and house-to-house routes during the campaign. Large bundle orders of all special election editions should be planned for, as well, beginning with the issue of September 25th, the first issue of the new, enlarged PEOPLE'S WORLD. A special election subscription offer of 5 weeks for \$1.00, beginning October 1st and continuing until November 2nd, has been announced by the PEOPLE'S WORLD. Our members should strive to get subs for this special daily subscription among trade unionists, members of the IPP, Wallace supporters and others.

(5) Other election leaflets and pamphlets will be announced from time to time. We are informed that the National Committee shall publish a number of special election pamphlets. Plans for the utilization of these may be made as soon as publication date, title and other facts are known about such literature. IN THE MEANTIME, THE CONCENTRATION CAMPAIGN MATERIAL IS AS LISTED ABOVE.

POLITICAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE CAMPAIGN:

- (1) If this has not yet been started, every County Committee, Section and Branch shall organize political discussions based upon the Convention decisions. The September POLITICAL AFFAIRS contains all Convention reports and should be made available to all members as quickly as is possible. Eugene Dennis' report "The Fascist Danger and How to Combat It" is now available, as is the 1948 Election Platform, at least in mimeographed form.
- (2) In order to have sufficient time to concretize plans in relation to local political developments and problems, it may be necessary to schedule two or possibly three or four discussions on the major convention reports. (Outlines for Branch discussions are being prepared by the State Education Commission).
- (3) Steps should be taken to guarantee that every member of the Party receives a copy of the September POLITICAL AFFAIRS, the Dennis report, the pamphlet "Eugene Dennis INDICTS the Wall Street Conspirators", and the 1948 Election Platform of the CPUSA.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CAMPAIGN:

County Committees, Sections and Branches should work out a calendar plan of election activities which will detail --

- How many and what kind of meetings will be organized during the next two months;
- How many precinct workers will be lined up and where they shall concentrate their work;
- How many P.W's shall be distributed during the campaign -- week-end bundles, special daily election subs (5 weeks for \$1), special election editions, etc;
- How many pieces of literature will be distributed -- how many of the Dennis indictment of Wall Street -- how many election platforms -- how many of the Warren pamphlet -- how many special county or branch leaflets -- when and where;
- How many new members will be recruited into the Party during the next two months by the County, Section and Branch;
- And all other plans of similar nature.

The plans should detail what will happen every week between now and election day and who shall do it. It should be remembered that less than two months remain before election day and that every minute counts.

STATE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE