

# LABOR IN POLITICS

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There are now more American trade unionists actively involved in political affairs than ever before in the history of the nation.

It is the constant and continuing purpose of the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education (COPE) to broaden the base of the electorate. We believe that as each American citizen benefits from assuming an active and responsible role in political decisions, so the nation benefits from a dedicated and informed electorate.

This job will never be finished. Each year thousands of youngsters reach voting age. Each year millions of families change residence and face the problem of re-registering under different and sometimes restrictive laws. As technological discoveries affect employment opportunities, our members are often forced to move in order to find work. As the nationwide residential pattern shifts from the city to the encircling suburbs, our members move across city, county, and sometimes state lines.

The problem of maintaining contact with our mobile membership is growing in complexity. Only a small fraction of the total can be reached at regular union meetings. We are exploring new techniques for communicating with our members and providing them with the tools they seek and the information they demand as the basis for mature political judgment.

## I

### LABOR'S TRADITIONAL POLITICAL ROLE

American workers have been in politics since the 1730's when they joined with artisans and shopkeepers to elect Boston town officials. The form of labor organizations and the character and degree of labor's political activity have changed many times in the intervening years. Alliances have formed, separated, and re-grouped. Influence has waxed and waned. But there has never been a time since that colonial beginning when American working men have not known that they can bargain successfully with their employers only in a favorable political climate.

There has not been, and is not now, complete unanimity in labor's political efforts. The debate continues within the labor movement as to the scope of political activity appropriate to a labor organization, and answers differ from time to time, from place to place, and from union to union. There are still those who believe that labor has no proper concern with a political question not directly and immediately

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related to wages, hours, and working conditions. The more widely-held view is that there is no political question which will not, in the end, have such an effect.

Until the formation of the Political Action Committee (PAC) by the CIO in 1943, political activity on the part of most trade unions in this century consisted mainly of lobbying and supporting candidates by endorsement at union meetings and in publications. The PAC introduced the concept of grass roots organization, including collections of small, individual, monetary donations, registration drives, massive distributions of literature on issues and candidates, election-day organization, rallies, and all the rest. In 1947, the American Federation of Labor created Labor's League for Political Education (LLPE) along the same general lines.

Both PAC and LLPE learned painfully and expensively that there are no easy short cuts to political success. In non-federal elections, where it is legal for a union to contribute from its treasury, such a contribution, while relatively easy to obtain, is not worth half a contribution of the same amount from individual donations. A man who gives a dollar to a political campaign has a personal stake in the outcome of the election. He will very likely vote, and he may do more in terms of working in the campaign or just talking about it. Labor learned that filling Madison Square Garden for a political rally, filling the air with exhortations from sound trucks, grinding out miles of mimeographed press releases, and buying prime time on radio and television do not win elections. Nothing takes the place of personal contact.

PAC and LLPE achieved a large measure of cooperation even before the AFL and CIO merged in 1955. Starting in 1950, United Labor Committees in more than twenty states coordinated the efforts of these two groups and, in some instances, brought them together with the United Mine Workers, the Railroad Brotherhoods, and various farm organizations. In other areas, cooperation on endorsement of candidates and legislative programs was achieved informally. Infrequently, one or another of the labor groups was at variance with the rest, and labor support was split between opposing candidates. The situation still occurs occasionally with regard to an individual union within the AFL-CIO; and, in a number of instances in 1960, the Teamsters and the United Mine Workers opposed candidates supported by the AFL-CIO.

The Committee on Political Education was established at the December 1955 convention, merging the AFL and CIO. Physical merger of the two national staffs was not completed until the spring of 1956, and merger of the state organizations was not completed until 1961. The 1960 election was the first presidential election in which national and state merger was sufficiently advanced to judge the organization as a cohesive unit.

The AFL-CIO's concern with politics was defined by George Meany to a COPE conference in May 1962 as "labor's most important activity at this time," encompassing legislative programs which will "advance the interests of the entire people."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> AFL-CIO News, May 5, 1962, p. 1, col. 2.

## II

## NEW TRENDS

A study of the 1960 election returns directs attention to four conclusions of particular interest in COPE's assessment of its performance in that election and in planning for elections to come:

1. Our population is increasingly centered in metropolitan areas; but, while the population of many central cities has dropped or remained the same, a population explosion has occurred in the surrounding suburbs.

2. The minority vote (Negro and Spanish-American) is increasingly concentrated in northern cities. Negroes have moved from the South in large numbers and have found homes in the central cities recently abandoned by whites of the same or a slightly higher economic group. There are new leaders in the Negro community and better educational opportunities are reflected in a new, sophisticated view of the issues.

3. The Republican Party is a real and growing factor in southern politics. A half million more southern voters turned out for Nixon in 1960 than for Eisenhower in 1956, his best year. The 1961 election of Republican John Tower to the Senate from Texas demonstrated that the 1960 Republican strength cannot be attributed to the religious issue, although religion undoubtedly played a part in this area.

4. A new pattern may be emerging with regard to the relationship between presidential and congressional voting. Kennedy, trailing the Democratic slate in many areas, was less able than Eisenhower to extend coattails to other candidates. (While Eisenhower led his ticket, his popularity did not extend to other Republican candidates.)

## A. The Suburban Vote

In the period 1950-1960, the population of central cities showed an over-all increase of only 10.7 per cent or 5.6 million. In the same period, the population of the suburban, fringe areas increased by 48.6 per cent, or 17.9 million.

All but one of the fifteen largest metropolitan areas (with populations of 1,500,000 or more) actually lost population in the central core city between 1950 and 1960. From the Atlantic to the Pacific the pattern was repeated. Los Angeles, differently structured from the beginning, was the single exception.

Historically, trade union membership has centered heavily in cities and often in certain clearly defined sections within the cities. While it is still possible to identify "labor precincts" in some cities, the trend is toward dispersal. The city remains as the major location of employment, but trade union members live and vote in increasing numbers in areas outside the city.

In 1958, 73.8 per cent of the total number of industrial employees worked in 212 metropolitan areas. In 1959 and again in 1960, sixty-nine per cent of all housing starts occurred in these areas. But the auto worker in Detroit may now live in Macomb or Oakland county. The carpenter in Manhattan may live in New Jersey

or on Long Island. The packinghouse worker in Kansas City may live in Johnson County.

The 1960 election returns illustrated the impact of new voters on the suburban voting pattern. When the suburbs were reserved for families with higher than average income, they provided a predictable majority for conservative candidates. New families moving into established communities in small numbers usually adopted the political coloration of their new surroundings, even if they had voted differently in their old, city residence.

Now whole suburban towns spring up and are entirely populated in weeks or months. Since most of the residents of the new community moved from the same city at about the same time, they are not subjected to social pressures any different from those they left.

Liberal successes in a number of suburban areas in 1958 gave advance notice that the suburbs were no longer "safely" conservative. In 1960, Kennedy's vote rose dramatically over the 1956 Democratic vote in the suburbs of Baltimore, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Minneapolis-St. Paul, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco.

The *New York Times* reported that the Republican National Committee, alarmed by the trend away from the Republican Party in fast-growing suburban areas, had undertaken a study revealing that Nixon made as poor a showing in nineteen important suburban areas as he did in the adjoining cities. In many such areas the actual Republican vote did not decline, but the Republican ticket received a smaller share of the greatly increased turnout.<sup>2</sup>

Our members are numbered among the most mobile in the voting population. The implications for COPE are clear. Local COPEs, structured under city or county central bodies, must work out entirely new techniques to locate their members for the purpose of registration, get-out-the-vote, and educational programs.

National COPE has undertaken a pilot project in one such area. It has two main objectives—to develop organizational techniques coordinating the activities of existing COPEs across geographical or political boundaries and to identify issues which may have been unimportant to our members as city dwellers but are important to our members as suburban home owners.

About 100 union leaders and COPE representatives from twenty-one states and thirty major cities attended a conference in May 1962 to study the problems of the 1962 registration drive as it relates to major cities and their suburbs.

### B. Minority Groups

The non-white population of major cities has increased tremendously over the past ten years. Between 1950 and 1960 the increase in Chicago was 64.4 per cent; in Los Angeles, 97.2 per cent; in Cleveland 69.3 per cent; in San Francisco, 66.8

<sup>2</sup> N.Y. Times, April 9, 1961, § 1, p. 1, col. 2, at p. 47, col. 1.

per cent; in Milwaukee, 189 per cent; in Dallas, 129 per cent; in San Diego, 143 per cent; in Buffalo, 94.7 per cent.

Not only are there more non-white Americans of voting age than ever before, concentrated more and more in major cities, but, particularly in the Negro community, there is a new political climate. The "Negro vote" has slipped out from under the control of old-line leaders. American Negroes cannot be bought. They want information, not dictation. They demand action and will not accept promises. They eagerly accept the responsibilities of citizenship, even when the simple exercise of the franchise may entail humiliation and physical danger, as it sometimes does in the South. In 1960, COPE planned its campaign with minority groups with respectful attention to these facts.

In this situation, COPE is fortunate in having its credentials in order. Tempers may be short, but memories are long. Trust and respect are the treasure piled up by COPE over years of fighting unpopular battles for civil rights and equal economic opportunities for all Americans.

The heavy Democratic majorities scored by Negro and Spanish-American voters can be counted as the deciding factor in several crucial, industrial states in the Northeast and Midwest. Negro voters are credited with swinging South Carolina to the Democratic column and were important to Democratic victories in North Carolina and Texas.

Under COPE direction a task force of volunteers worked in ninety-seven cities, towns, and villages in seventeen states. Approximately 9,100 workers participated in this campaign. More than ten million pieces of literature were distributed, including special literature directed to Negro and Spanish-speaking voters.

Minority voters gave President Kennedy lop-sided majorities in northern industrial cities: 81.2 per cent in Hartford; 72 per cent in New Haven; 78 per cent in Chicago; 74.4 per cent in Baltimore; 81.1 per cent in St. Louis; 77.3 per cent in New York; 60.6 per cent in Cleveland; 77.1 per cent in Pittsburgh; 73.7 per cent in Milwaukee.

It is interesting that this pattern was repeated in the South (with the exception of Atlanta) where local Democratic politics are not associated with civil rights or economic advances for Negroes. In Houston, for example, colored precincts gave Kennedy 86.4 per cent of the total vote.

We believe that this great reservoir of liberal votes has still barely been tapped. In New York City where Puerto Rican voters gave Kennedy an eighty-eight per cent majority, it is estimated that only twenty-two per cent of the potential actually voted. This was after a hard-driving, round-the-clock registration drive conducted in connection with a general "crash" registration program discussed below. A similar situation exists with regard to the Latin-American vote in several southwestern states and potential Indian voters in the Southwest and in the Dakotas. The Negro vote will be a tremendously important factor in those congressional districts in the South where there is a hope of electing liberals in the 1962 primaries.

## C. Southern Developments

Nixon made the most dramatic gains of his 1960 campaign in the South—where trade union membership is smallest.

The broad base of Republican support in this area rests with conservative, anti-civil rights, anti-union, states'-rights Democrats. Over the years, this affinity has been reflected in Congress by the Republican-Dixiecrat coalition.

With a few striking exceptions, old-line organization Democrats have held tightly the reins of political control in a one-party situation where serious contests, if any, occurred in primary elections. The primaries were regarded as a private, party affair, and the rules were designed to limit the franchise to voters who could be relied on to perpetuate the system. (25.6 per cent of the citizens 21-years-old and older voted for President in Mississippi in 1960; 30.9 per cent in Alabama; 34.4 per cent in Virginia.)

The 1960 senatorial primary in Tennessee was typical of the liberal-conservative struggle in a one-party state. Senator Estes Kefauver won renomination against bitter, heavily-financed opposition, marked by the irresponsible use of scurrilous literature designed to inflame voters on the segregation issue.

This campaign provided a clear example of what COPE can achieve against the organized forces of big business when the basic work of getting our members registered and voted is pitted against a flood of corporation money (in this instance the drug industry).

Particular emphasis was placed on the COPE drive among minority groups. Women's Activities Departments functioned efficiently in major cities. The proportion of AFL-CIO members registered increased from fifty per cent in April, when the drive started, to eighty per cent on July 15.

The *Chattanooga Times* reported,<sup>3</sup>

Kefauver showed strength in many areas where he normally would have expected to be swamped if the segregation sentiment had prevailed. . . .

The returns in those areas indicated that organized labor exerted more influence than usual on the voters.

Until the 1961 election of Republican John Tower to fill Lyndon Johnson's seat in Texas, analysts tended to attribute Republican stirrings in recent presidential elections first to Eisenhower's personal popularity, and then to religious bias.

The Tower election was a classic of its kind. Liberal candidates killed each other off in the first primary, leaving only a conservative Democrat to face a conservative Republican. Organization Democrats called Texas labor and other liberals to the colors on grounds of a party loyalty they had seldom honored on questions of platform or legislation.

The Texas COPE declined to participate in the run-off election. There were 173,000 voters in the first primary who failed to appear for the run-off—only 16.7

<sup>3</sup> *Chattanooga Times*, Aug. 5, 1960.

per cent of the potential vote and 43.3 per cent of those qualified through poll tax payments or exemptions voted when the choice was limited to two reactionaries.

The ability of a conservative Democrat to win in Texas has been effectively challenged. The ability of a liberal Democrat to win over a hard-riding Republican candidate may eventually be put to the test, but not in 1962.

This year Texas has once again exhibited an infinite capacity for exotic variations on the theme. Former Navy Secretary John Connally, who placed first in the first primary, carefully accentuated his differences with the Administration in his campaign (chiefly on medical care for the aged and federal aid to education). However, he is generally regarded as a youthful carbon copy of his political mentor, Lyndon Johnson, and, like Johnson, is viewed by liberals with some reservations but not with violent distaste. Second man in the first primary was Don Yarborough, who was supported by labor and who campaigned vigorously for the Administration's program.

Connally gained 160,000 votes in the run-off over his first primary total. Yarborough gained 240,000, not enough to catch Connally who won by about 26,000 votes. Connally's position was sufficiently equivocal to split the Negro and Latin-American vote which is always almost solidly for the liberal in any clear test between a liberal and a conservative. In Bexar County (San Antonio) Yarborough ran 31,000 votes behind the labor-backed candidate for lieutenant governor—more than enough to lose the run-off.

Hopes for a clear-cut battle between a liberal and a conservative in the 1962 run-off primary for the congressional seat at-large evaporated when the liberal candidate was indicted, shortly before the election, for failure to file income tax returns for the previous ten years.

The long-range prospect of a real choice between political philosophies is exciting to southern liberals. A number of important Texas Dixiecrats have announced their affiliation with the Republican Party, and one ex-Democrat is the 1962 Republican candidate for governor. Congressional incumbents, with impressive seniority at stake, cannot be expected to join a large-scale shift of affiliation or to encourage it; but they may not, in the end, be able to prevent it. The Republican Party is already a factor to be reckoned with in Florida. The North Carolina legislature eliminated the state's only Republican district in redistricting, but Democratic incumbents in the same area of the state are nervously studying the Republican strength in the counties which were added to their districts.

In primaries occurring in early May 1962, liberals recorded several breathtakingly near misses and a few solid gains. In Texas, Representative Dowdy, opposed by a liberal candidate, won renomination by forty-one votes out of a total of more than 62,000. Longtime Alabama Representative Frank Boykin defeated a labor-backed opponent by an eyelash in the first primary and then lost in the run-off. (The 1962 Alabama run-off was used as a device to eliminate one incumbent as required by

the state's loss of one congressional seat following the 1960 census. All incumbents ran at-large with the low man losing out.)

Also in Alabama, COPE-endorsed candidates either won outright or placed in the run-off for every state-wide office except the office of governor (where support was divided); and loyal Democrats recaptured control of the State Democratic Executive Committee by a comfortable margin.

Growing industrialization in the South may have long-term implications. While unionism in the South is still relatively limited, southern trade unionists are exhibiting a willingness to exert and tax themselves to build politically and legislatively to an extent which should be an inspiration to their stronger, more numerous brothers in other areas.

A thoughtfully conceived "Program of Progress" has already been adopted by the Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana COPEs and is under study in other southern states. The program lists a number of specific legislative goals for each state, and details the organization required and the activities prescribed to attain those goals. In each state convention to which the program has been presented the delegates have voted overwhelmingly to assess themselves a sizable per capita payment to put the program into effect.

In the three states operating under the "Program of Progress," COPE has attained a new maturity and a new respect in the community. In 1961, in Mississippi, for example, candidates for the state legislature publicly sought COPE endorsement for the first time in history.

#### D. Congressional and State Elections 1960 and 1962

The historical American pattern of electing a large congressional majority to support a new President has been suspended for the past three presidential elections. Eisenhower got a bare majority in 1952 and lost the Congress in 1956. Democrats lost two Senate seats (one to a COPE-supported Republican in Delaware) and twenty-one House seats in 1960.

Nineteen of the twenty-one had been traditionally Republican until the 1958 Democratic sweep, which extended to midwest farm areas, and ten were in sections where anti-Catholic sentiment was strongest. But, whatever the mitigating factors, supporters of liberal legislation have no grounds for complacency in a realistic appraisal of the 1962 Senate, House, and gubernatorial elections.

The party in power has lost congressional seats in every off-year election in this century except the 1934 election. While COPE is non-partisan and supports liberal candidates of both parties, it is a simple fact that many more Democrats than Republicans qualify for COPE support. The success of liberal legislation in the immediate future will depend on the ability of Democrats to hold the seats they have and, if possible, to increase their margin.

Present liberal majorities in both houses of Congress may best be gauged by close votes on vital issues. Temporary unemployment compensation legislation passed



the Senate in March 1961 by a margin of two votes. The Rules Committee change in the House passed by five votes on January 31, 1961. By August 1961, the Republican-Dixiecrat coalition had reformed to defeat the President's aid-to-education recommendation in the House by seventy-two votes and in the Senate by five votes.

#### E. COPE's Score in 1960

Candidates endorsed by state and local COPEs for state or federal office fall into one of two categories: (1) those with a reasonable chance of winning who are given maximum assistance by their respective COPE organizations, and (2) candidates with almost no chance of success who are endorsed as a protest against their opponents.

In the first category, fifteen out of nineteen senatorial candidates, fourteen out of nineteen gubernatorial candidates, and 157 of 258 House candidates who were endorsed by COPE won election—or 73.7 per cent.

Fifteen Republican candidates for the House of Representatives, one Republican candidate for the United States Senate, and one Republican candidate for governor were endorsed by COPE in 1960. A preliminary survey of endorsements for lesser offices (state legislature, state offices other than governor, and so on) indicates that the total number of labor-backed Republican candidates in that election exceeded 400.

The number of successful labor-backed candidates of both parties for the state legislature was substantial, but conservative shifts in a number of states have already made themselves felt through the passage of weakening amendments to unemployment compensation laws and other measures.

### III

#### 1961 ELECTIONS

Broad prognostications about the 1962 congressional elections, based on 1961 local or special elections, are fallacious, but some conclusions may legitimately be drawn.

Bossism continued to be an effective issue. Mayor Robert F. Wagner apparently gained more by repudiating Tammany Hall in New York City than he lost in losing organization support. Bossism was Wagner's major issue in both the primary, where he fought the organization directly, and in the general election.

A long-entrenched Democratic machine was turned out of office in Louisville, as Republicans took City Hall for the first time in twenty-eight years and elected their candidates to every local office voted on. A sharp reduction in the Democratic margin in Philadelphia resulted in the defeat of the COPE-backed candidate for the state supreme court. Anti-organization sentiment in Louisville and Philadelphia could affect the outcome of two important elections—those of Senator Joseph Clark (D., Pa.) and Representative Frank Burke (D., Ky.). A high degree of sophistication on the part of the voters will be required if they are to distinguish between

liberal representatives of integrity and stature and unpopular local politicians of the same party.

Municipal governments were overturned in many New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania cities, but without a constant partisan pattern.

Bossism is an issue, but it is not yet a magic word, as "communism" and "corruption" were in the 1950's. It cannot, if used indiscriminately, touch a raw nerve and elicit an automatic voter reflex. Republican charges of boss control against Democratic gubernatorial candidate Richard Hughes did not move New Jersey voters.

A conclusion to be drawn from the New Jersey gubernatorial election and the special congressional election in Texas is that the effort to please too many people results in failure to please a bare majority. Former Labor Secretary James Mitchell was widely advertised as a "new look" Republican. His principal sponsors represented the liberal wing of the party and he made a determined effort to secure labor support. At the same time his major campaign line was keyed to fiscal "responsibility" in the face of the large and growing problems of an industrial, urban-suburban complex.

John Goode, the Republican candidate against victorious Representative Henry Gonzalez (D., COPE) in San Antonio, proclaimed himself a Goldwater Republican. Senator John Tower (R.), who carried the district in May 1961, campaigned vigorously for Goode. But the image blurred when former President Eisenhower was brought into the district, where he made more liberal statements than he had made in behalf of the Republican mayoralty candidate in New York.

In each instance the Republican candidates were either uncertain about their identity or were grabbing for every voter in the spectrum from hard-backed conservative to liberal independent. At the same time, Hughes in New Jersey and Gonzalez in Texas both unswervingly supported the Administration and the Democratic platform. Both received and welcomed the support of the President.

Labor support was an important factor in New Jersey, New York City, and San Antonio. While there was no official endorsement in New Jersey, individual unions contributed time and effort in support of the Democratic candidate. In all three, the minority vote was heavily in favor of the Democrats.

#### IV

##### LABOR EXPENDITURES IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Labor expenditures have always been relatively minor when compared with the total expenditure in any given political campaign. In the 1944 campaign, the total of labor contributions, including individual and treasury contributions, accounted for only 7.7 per cent of the total spent by both parties in the election. (The National Citizens Political Action Committee was ruled not to be a labor union and, therefore, eligible to receive treasury contributions.)

Another interesting arrangement of the same figures revealed that 242 individuals representing sixty-four well-heeled families made direct contributions of nearly \$1.3 million, compared to the union contributions of \$1.6 million, representing millions of workers.

With minor deviations, the ratio has remained approximately the same through the years. Since treasury contributions to federal elections have been outlawed, the mechanics of collecting voluntary, individual contributions have steadily improved. There is still vast room for improvement.

The collection machinery is cumbersome, since it is necessary to record each dollar contribution and retain a receipt. Most large unions are in charge of their own collections. Receipt books are sent from national COPE to the various national and international unions. There they are remailed to local unions where the shop steward is expected to take charge of collections in addition to his other duties. At this point collections are turned over to volunteers. It has been found that the number of union members who refuse to contribute when they are asked is negligible. The number who are never asked, however, is enormous. As a result no more than a small fraction of the goal of \$1 per member has ever been achieved.

Constant and continuing charges of labor "slush funds" and "war chests" find credence with our opponents and implant blissfully unrealistic notions of financial assistance in the minds of candidates. A COPE-endorsed candidate for the Senate in New England in 1958, when publicly accused of accepting a \$25,000 contribution from the United Automobile Workers, telegraphed Walter Reuther, "Please deny story or send money."

Today maximum COPE contributions are normally \$10,000 in a senatorial campaign and \$2,500 in a House race. Some individual unions retain a part of the voluntary COPE dollar and make separate donations from these funds, so that the total union contribution to a single candidate may exceed these figures.

COPE expenditures in 1960 totalled just under \$800,000, less than five per cent of the money spent on the campaign. All union expenditures totalled slightly more than \$2 million. (This includes Teamster contributions which, in some instances, went to candidates opposing candidates supported by COPE.)

Two million dollars in labor expenditures represents contributions from approximately two million trade unionists. At the same time, 3,400 wealthy people contributed over \$5 million to the 1960 campaign in chunks of \$500 or more.

## V

### COPE PLANS FOR 1962

COPE's plans for 1962 center in the following areas:

1. A careful selection of areas of concentration.
2. Extension of the successful 1960 registration and get-out-the-vote campaign. (The application of this project in suburban areas and among minority voters has already been described.)

3. Expansion of educational facilities on issues and on the records of candidates for public office.

#### A. Selection of Areas of Concentration

Because the margin is so slim and the stakes so high, it is more than ever necessary to pick areas of concentration with the utmost care. COPE must husband its resources and pinpoint its efforts to achieve maximum support for liberal incumbents in danger of defeat and liberal candidates with the best chance of defeating conservative incumbents.

The conservative forces can count as accurately as we can. In some instances they have generously announced which liberals they have marked for political extinction. In March 1961, Republican National Committee Chairman Thruston Morton announced the creation of a special task force to study ways to build Republican strength in cities with a population of 300,000 or more.

The political activities of business are on the increase. In many instances, industry is going beyond management and reaching out to the workers, our own union members, with courses of instruction on political techniques and indoctrination on management's view of political issues. In a clear attempt to find a chink through which to drive a wedge, the Chamber of Commerce ordered a study of the attitudes of union members toward their leaders and the attitude of the general public toward unions and union problems. This privately circulated study by the Opinion Research Corporation reached two conclusions of great interest to us:

1. There is room for improvement in the relationship between our leadership and our membership to a sobering degree.
2. While the general public will not tolerate a threat to the fundamental right to bargain collectively, the public image of trade unions has been seriously damaged by unfortunate publicity in recent years.

The National Right to Work Committee has redoubled its efforts in support of so-called "right-to-work" legislation and referenda and has embarked on a nationwide "educational" campaign in an attempt to reach school, civic, and religious groups.

On September 19, 1961, the Chamber of Commerce announced the creation of a "Special Committee for Voluntary Unionism" to work for passage of state "right-to-work" laws.

In such states as California, Ohio, and Washington, where so-called "right-to-work" referenda were blamed for the poor showing of conservative candidates in 1958, more sophisticated conservatives may be inclined against such frontal assaults in favor of more subtle and devious attacks.

In July 1961 the American Medical Association established the American Medical Association Political Action Committee "for more effective participation in political and government affairs."<sup>4</sup> The Colorado State Medical Society is raising an \$80,000 war chest, and the New York AMA has formed the Empire Political Action Committee to support candidates for public office.

<sup>4</sup>The Denver Post, July 20, 1961.

### B. Registration Campaign

In any election as close as the 1960 presidential election, every group which participated to any degree in behalf of the winning candidate can claim with some justice that it was the deciding factor.

However, there is general agreement that President Kennedy could not have won in the important industrial states which provided the bulk of his electoral vote without the tremendous outpouring of new voters resulting from the AFL-CIO registration program. While some segments of the press credited city "machines" with "delivering" the vote for Kennedy, anyone familiar with American politics knows that the shadowy remnants of these once-powerful organizations are historically uninterested in extending the franchise to new, untested, uncontrolled and uncontrollable voters. This points up one of the principal, philosophical differences between the old-line, out-moded political machines and the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education. We believe without qualification that Americans can be trusted to vote and that our function is to assist our members into the voting booth through the labyrinth of legal voting requirements and through the smoke screens beclouding the issues.

The *Washington Daily News* reported that,<sup>5</sup>

. . . Dick Nixon's political strategists today cited several factors which they believe cost him the big industrial states of the Northeast and the White House. And the one which led most of their lists was the power and effectiveness of COPE (the Committee on Political Education)—political arm of the AFL-CIO.

The *New York Times* said,<sup>6</sup> "Republican leaders . . . added their belief that the labor federation's registration drive had counted more [than the Catholic vote] in the defeat of Vice President Nixon."

Former Republican National Chairman Thruston Morton told the National Federation of Republican Women, on January 4, 1961, "We must build a real professional organization that is just as big and as good as anything labor's COPE . . . can put up."

The total presidential vote of 68,836,385 was the highest in history, both numerically and by percentage of the potential vote. Kennedy's vote exceeded Nixon's by 19,450; but, like Truman in 1948, he polled less than fifty per cent of the total presidential vote including that for minor candidates.

Seldom has an election contained more compelling illustrations of the old thesis, "Your vote is the one that counts." A switch of 27,546 votes in Illinois and Texas would have given the election to Nixon. A switch of 38,442, variously distributed between the states of Alaska, California, Montana, Washington, and Wyoming, would have given Kennedy a landslide electoral vote of 345 to 168.

In August 1960, the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO voted to undertake a non-partisan crash registration program. This program was under the direction of

<sup>5</sup> *Washington Daily News*, Nov. 10, 1960.

<sup>6</sup> *N.Y. Times*, Nov. 11, 1960, p. 23, col. 1.

President Meany's office and operated largely through the COPE structure with state and local COPE personnel and volunteers in charge of field operations. Where possible, other non-partisan citizens groups were assisted in their registration drives. The crash registration program originally centered in fourteen key states and, to a lesser extent, was expanded to include an additional fourteen states. Thousands of volunteers participated.

COPE produced a record amount of registration and get-out-the-vote material which found gratifying acceptance, not only in the labor movement, but generally. One hundred and twenty-two television films containing ten-second spot announcements were distributed to stations covering more than ninety per cent of the television market outside the South. Four hundred and fifty-six radio stations used COPE recordings of six registration and get-out-the-vote spot announcements. Three radio scripts designed for local delivery and three sample leaflets for plant-gate distribution were sent to each state and local COPE.

State and local COPEs were provided with 630,000 posters, of which 140,000 were printed in Spanish. Three hundred labor papers received three different registration mats. A thousand mats for use in regularly-placed department store advertising were sent to the advertising managers of the nation's leading retail stores.

The Executive Council of the AFL-CIO recognized the value of the 1960 registration campaign at its February 1961 meeting by authorizing a similar program for 1962. George Meany told COPE's Big Cities Conference in May 1961 that "the most important part of political action is at the local level."<sup>7</sup>

An analysis of the 1960 election returns by Louis Harris shows labor still has farther to go to realize its full voting potential than any other economic group. The following table is taken from that study:

Work Classification	Per Cent of Voting Age Population	Per Cent of Total Vote Cast by Group	Differential
Professional, Executive.....	18	26	+ 8
White Collar.....	26	26	—
Labor.....	37	26	-11
Farmer.....	9	11	+ 2
Retired.....	6	8	+ 2
Other.....	4	3	- 1

C. 1960 Registration Results

Industrial states showed dramatic registration gains over 1958, and, in most instances, over previous records scored in 1956. In spite of a population drop in major cities over the previous four years, 1960 registrations held and often exceeded the 1956 figure in these areas.

Illinois registrations increased 450,000 over 1958 and more than 280,000 over 1956. In Cook County there were more than 100,000 new registrants over the 1956

<sup>7</sup> AFL-CIO News, May 5, 1962, p. 1, col. 1.

figure. (Kennedy carried Illinois by 9,801 votes.) Maryland registration jumped by some 139,000 over 1956. (Kennedy carried Maryland by 78,282 votes.)

In 1960, Michigan registered 200,000 more voters in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties than in 1956. That was one new voter for each fifteen persons who voted in Michigan in 1956. The new voters were registered mainly in heavily Democratic Wayne County and in the predominantly Democratic communities of southern Oakland and Macomb counties. These three counties cast more than two-thirds of the state's total vote. (Kennedy carried Michigan by 70,000 votes.)

In Missouri, registration in St. Louis County jumped to an all-time high of 707,000, including 85,000 voters who registered on a single day when the Citizen's Non-Partisan Registration Committee had 407 workers in the field. (Kennedy carried Missouri by 26,000 votes.) New Jersey registration increased by about 227,000 over 1956, with major gains scored in industrial cities and surrounding suburbs. (Kennedy carried New Jersey by 22,000 votes.)

New York City showed a spectacular gain of 958,000 new registrants over 1958 and 332,000 over 1956, the previous presidential election year. That gain was produced chiefly through the efforts of the Greater New York Committee on Registration (COPE). Erie County (Buffalo) scored an increase of 70,000 and Onandaga County (Syracuse), 20,000, over 1956. Long Island trade unionists worked diligently to reach members who had moved to suburban Nassau and Suffolk counties. These two counties showed a registration gain of 131,000 over 1956. (Kennedy carried New York by nearly 400,000 votes.)

Two hundred and sixty-six thousand new registrants were added to the rolls in Pennsylvania over the 1956 figure. (Kennedy carried Pennsylvania by 128,000 votes.)

In six other states under the crash registration program, striking gains were made in the number of registrants. While Kennedy failed to carry California, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Ohio, or Wisconsin, the total number of new registrants over 1956 in these states reached an estimated 1,700,000 (including increases of 1,056,000 in California and 444,000 in Ohio). These states, which gave Eisenhower a combined margin of 60.8 per cent in 1956, voted for Nixon by only 54.6 per cent.

The Republican margin in California, Nixon's home state, dropped from 608,000 in 1956 to 36,000 in 1960. Outstanding work was done by the Community Services Organization, an association devoted to helping Spanish-Americans take their proper place in the political life of the nation. With financial aid from the Citizens' Non-Partisan Registration Committee, the organization registered 139,000 new voters, most of whom lived in Southern California and in the Central Valley.

While many other forces were at work in the 1960 presidential election, it is a simple fact that President Kennedy could not have been elected without the broad base of the continuing COPE registration program. The AFL-CIO crash registration program, which was superimposed in selected areas on the regular COPE organization, provided the extra push in important industrial areas; but, in the

excitement over electoral votes, some equally striking gains in smaller states went almost unnoticed.

In Delaware, for instance, registration increased by 58,000 (nearly one-third) over 1956. In Wilmington alone, registration was up 33,000. Maine registration rose 52,000 over 1956; Rhode Island, 32,000; Tennessee, 200,000; Utah, 39,000.

#### D. Women's Activities Department

No last-minute drive, no matter how well financed or ably conducted, can replace the steady, laborious, constant work of checking registration lists, assisting the unregistered to qualify, and finally, urging and helping registered voters to vote on election day.

This responsibility rests mainly with the Women's Activities Department (WAD). In every area where the effectiveness of COPE participation is demonstrable, there was such a WAD program, working with the support, and, in some instances, the active participation of the COPE officers involved. In 1960 there were 440 WADs as compared to 288 in 1959. In many instances men volunteered for this work. (In Meriden, Connecticut, the Civil Liberties Union president, unable to enlist women, set up a "Male WAD" in which twenty men contributed 425 voluntary hours to process the names of nearly 4,000 potential voters.) Other areas have found additional manpower among retirees.

In every section of the country devoted men and women members of the AFL-CIO and wives of members worked long hours at no pay to achieve the successes in industrial centers which resulted in the election of the labor-backed candidate for President.

More than one million supervised telephone calls were made by WADs from COPE offices into union homes and union neighborhoods reminding trade union members to register and to vote on election day. Mailings by WADs from COPE offices totaled well over a million. In San Diego, California, 10,000 volunteer hours were contributed during the 1960 campaign. A Kansas group piled up 1,309 hours in a single week.

Although WAD has proved itself in every area where it has been given a fair trial, there is still reluctance on the part of some local unions to participate even to the extent of making their membership lists available. An interesting case in point occurred in Broome County, New York, in 1960.

The WAD program in New York State is comparatively new. It operated for the first time in the 1960 elections under the direction of a newly appointed state WAD director. Concentrating on labor wards in Binghamton, Chenango, Dickenson, and Union, the Broome County COPE and WAD reduced the Republican margin in Broome County from 44,000 in 1956 to 18,000 in 1960. President Kennedy carried four wards in Binghamton, a city which is traditionally two-to-one Republican. Of forty-four local unions affiliated with the Broome County COPE, only seventeen participated in this program.



In 1961 the Women's Activities Department maintained most of its existing organizations and added new, local WADs. Off-year interest was sustained at a high level by the formation within these groups of "letter lobbies" to study and express themselves on federal and state legislation. At the same time, in preparation for 1962, the work of indexing and processing membership and registration lists continued.

#### E. Area Conferences

At the annual COPE Area Conferences members of the staff of the national AFL-CIO go into the field to meet with trade union leadership and rank-and-file membership from every state in the union.

A format has been devised which permits a maximum of interchange between national COPE and the delegates. The information gleaned by the national staff from group discussions and reports on the part of the delegates is no less important than the material developed in Washington for instructing the delegates on issues and techniques. Visual materials and other techniques of presentation are used which can, in turn, be adapted for use by local COPEs.

Sixteen area conferences were held in 1961. They were attended by a total of 5,683 delegates from fifty states. The 1962 conference discussions center around the important elections taking place in each area in November 1962. Techniques of organization and issues are explored as they apply locally, with new emphasis on suburban problems.

### V

#### REAPPORTIONMENT

The implications of the Supreme Court's decision in the Tennessee reapportionment case<sup>8</sup> are salutary for labor. State legislative and congressional districts based on unequal divisions of the population have worked to devalue urban and metropolitan votes, including, of course, the votes of most trade union members.

President Eisenhower's Committee on Intergovernmental Relations reported, in June 1955,<sup>9</sup> that in a majority of states "city dwellers outnumber the citizens of rural areas. Yet in most states the rural voters are overwhelmingly in control of one legislative house, and overweighted if not dominant in the other. . . ."

Rural-dominated legislatures in many states have drawn congressional district lines in such a way as to repeat, as far as possible, the same pattern in the United States House of Representatives. As a result, the votes of a hundred or a thousand union members living in an urban district may have a par political worth no greater than a single vote in a rural district.

Labor has consistently supported proposed national legislation to require state legislatures to apportion United States Representatives' districts on the basis of population. State AFL-CIO officials have made the same appeal doggedly, year after year, before state legislative committees. The Supreme Court remanded the case

<sup>8</sup> *Baker v. Carr*, 369 U.S. 186 (1962).

<sup>9</sup> COMMISSION ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS, A REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT 38 (1955).

of *Scholle v. Hare*<sup>10</sup> to the Michigan Supreme Court for a re-examination of the fairness of the state's apportionment on April 23, 1962. (Augustus Scholle is president of the Michigan AFL-CIO.) Resolutions have been passed on this subject repeatedly at state and national labor conventions, and reapportionment has been the subject of countless pamphlets, leaflets, and articles in the labor press.

Curiously, this was an issue which never before really caught the imagination of the membership. Even sophisticated unionists, quick to recognize and take vigorous action against a fast count in other areas, have been, in the main, singularly unmoved. If the courts had not opened an avenue of relief, it would be difficult to estimate when, or if, reapportionment might have emerged as a full-blown, mass-supported issue in labor ranks. This lethargy may have been attributable to despair of redress, since more concern has been evidenced in the months following the decision than in all the years preceding it. Although no formal arrangements or announcements have been made, it can be assumed that labor will play a role proportionate to its interest in future reapportionment actions.

## VI

### LABOR'S ROLE IN AMERICAN POLITICS

The American labor movement has changed the face of American politics. By insisting that it is every American's right and duty to participate in the political process, COPE (and PAC and LLPE before it) broke the ground for the citizens' groups which have become the rule, rather than the exception, in the nation's political life.

By insisting that campaigns be fought on issues, instead of personalities or party loyalties, COPE has directed a clear, bright light of publicity on the legislative process. It is no longer possible for a congressman to claim that he has supported a liberal measure when he has, in fact, voted to gut it by amendment before voting for passage. By the careful compilation and wide distribution of the records of public officials, COPE has made the politician's performance match his promise.

We have not attained, and cannot hope to attain, perfection in politics any more than in any other field of human endeavor. We can and do honor our priceless heritage and work unceasingly to be worthy of it—as Americans and as trade unionists.

<sup>10</sup> 369 U.S. 429 (1962).