

# **STRENGTHENING CDC IN THE 60's**

**REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**to the BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC COUNCIL**

**January, 1965**

**Fresno, California**



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## 1. THE NATURE OF CDC

The question of what kind of organization CDC should be was raised in most of the Committee's hearings, is always a part of any serious discussion of CDC's future, and the answer to it directs one's approach to program planning, organizational structure, and methods of operation. The Committee views the great concern with the question as evidence of CDC's maturity and vitality.

In the beginning CDC was an effort to strengthen and make an effective political force of a long dormant and disunited Democratic party. It encouraged volunteer activity. It satisfied the party's need for pre-primary endorsements in the struggle with long-established Republican practices. It worked for the abolition of cross-filing. Since there was no general statewide organization or effective pre-primary endorsing procedure in the party, the relationship of CDC with the remainder of the party was not the primary concern; the primary concern was winning state and local primaries and general elections, which the Democratic party had been losing so regularly. As this original objective was achieved, CDC's concern broadened. It spent more time on issues. It concerned itself more with the kind of Democrat it supported instead of simply concentrating on the election of Democrats. At the same time, Democrats were winning elections; the Democratic party became the majority party. The question of CDC's purpose, of its role within the party, once more or less accepted, became a matter of concern.

One factor on the California political scene has become clear within the past few years. The theme "volunteers in politics" has taken on a new meaning. The word "politics" in light of today's events is involved with the broadest area of activity encompassing not only the development, identification, and support of candidates for office, but also the creation and establishment of governmental programs. Politics should be defined as political activity devoted to aspirations greater than the achievement of personal ambition. Even the preposition "in" carries the significance of political activity closely involved with political organization and governmental operation. It does not

connote the debating society approach nor an attitude which looks at politics or governmental affairs from above the battle.

We should be clear therefore about what we think CDC can and should be. At one end of the spectrum we can be a pressure group within the party concentrating on issues and striving to get them adopted. To the extent that we reduce the number of these, the more effective we will become with respect to those issues, but the less effective with respect to political activity of the broad nature. At the other end of the spectrum, we can concentrate on election activities only, submerging issues altogether or taking positive stands only when the consequences can be calculated. Among the people with whom the Committee discussed the question, there was agreement that neither extreme is acceptable.

New significance must be infused into the words "volunteers in politics." With that purpose in view, the Program Planning Committee submits this report and has formulated the following statement of principle, which it suggests be adopted in lieu of the statement of purpose in the By-laws:

*Proposal 1.* The California Democratic Council is a volunteer political organization working within the framework of the Democratic party to provide an opportunity for large numbers of citizens to participate in a significant way in the conduct of public affairs.

It achieves its objective primarily by influencing the selection of public officials, both in working to nominate candidates whose excellence is a credit to the party and whose views generally accord with those of the club members, and in working to elect the party's nominees when chosen by the party's electorate.

It achieves this objective secondarily through participation in policy formulation and implementation and by ensuring the operation of democratic procedures and practices in party affairs.

(By-laws change)

## II. CDC AND POLITICAL ACTION

If an organization wishes to influence a political party, it must act in the primary. CDC has set a standard for open pre-primary endorsements made democratically and in full public view. The Committee believes that the open pre-primary endorsement is a fundamental activity for CDC and must be continued. If the practice is often divisive, if it tends to create schisms, then that is the price CDC must pay for continuing to function as a political organization.

Certainly the endorsements could be more effective. Too often endorsements are made for the sake of endorsement without full appreciation of the need to convert the paper accolade in to the hard currency of political activity.

To this end the Committee suggests the following:

*Proposal 2.* No endorsement should be made with less than 55% majority of the endorsing convention.  
(By-Law change)

*Proposal 3.* Endorsements should be made only where CDC has sufficient strength to make the endorsement meaningful. As a minimum no endorsement for other than statewide office should be made in 1966 in any assembly district which does not have 500 bona fide club members (as defined in the CDC By-laws) or in any other jurisdiction larger than an assembly district which does not have an average of 500 members per assembly district; and in 1968, 750 members; and in 1970 and thereafter, 1000 members. (By-laws change)

In the hearings, much concern was expressed about the practice of the Board's ratification of local endorsements. While no one questioned the right of the Board to refuse to ratify endorsements which failed to meet prescribed standards, there was objection to the Board's becoming a second endorsing convention. CDC is a grass-roots organization; once the standards have been set, the local conventions should have the right to decide whom to endorse.



*Proposal 4.* Board action on local endorsements should be limited to instances in which there are allegations of procedures which fail to meet CDC standards. A hearing procedure should be adopted.  
(By-laws change)

The Committee was struck by the lack of awareness shown in the hearings of changes in campaigning techniques. Almost without exception, political action was discussed in terms of precinct activity of the most unsophisticated type. There appeared to be little understanding of the differences between statewide and local races, of the uses of electronic equipment, or of the need for and uses of opinion polling. CDC appeared to have made few changes over the past decade. Because many of the methods used in the period 1954-1960 were successful, it does not follow they are so today and in the future. With the exception of the Neighborhood Headquarters technique of the last campaign, it is difficult to cite a contribution which CDC has made to the art of political campaigning.

CDC needs to rethink its approach to the problems of campaigning. We suggest:

*Proposal 5.* The Political Action Committee should consist of competent individuals with specialized skills important to campaigning. It should be charged with developing new campaign techniques along with developing new campaign techniques including the following:

1. Uses of electronic equipment in campaigns.
2. Uses of selective techniques in campaigning.
3. Uses of opinion polling.

The P.A.C. should be relieved of any responsibilities for implementation of political action, which should be the function of the line organization as discussed below in Section V.

### III. CDC AND ISSUES

The issues program as now conceived is a basic function of CDC and should be continued. Basically it needs more time and effort at the state level, but it appears not to need any basic structural changes.

*Proposal 6.* The present practice of adopting issues for discussion during the ensuing year should be modified by leaving at least one of the issues open to be selected later by the Board. Greater effort should be made to enlist the participation of legislators and other public officials in the discussion process.

*Proposal 7.* We propose that direct action committees be limited to Election Reform and Human Rights, these two areas appearing to be most appropriate to CDC's present interests. The Committees should be strengthened and charged with developing an action program which can be implemented through the basic organization.

### IV. CDC AND THE COMMUNITY

Participation by CDC in local non-partisan, civic activities is a desirable activity, the nature and extent of which must be dictated by local discretion. The attempt to impose a statewide program on diverse local conditions.

*Proposal 8.* The Community Service Committee at the state level should be continued but its charge limited to the preparation of information and materials which will be of use in stimulating and assisting local activities.

Another facet of CDC's relationship with the public is the image which we have been able to project particularly in the press. The Committee is not so much concerned by our sometime failure to answer politically motivated attacks as by our continuing failure to tell the story positively and forcefully.

*Proposal 9.* Consideration should be given to employing on a continuing basis outside public relations assistance. If this is not feasible, then the proposed Chief Administrative officer (see Proposal 21 below) should have as one of his major responsibilities the mounting of a positive public relations program.

## V. CDC's INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

The Committee has heard many criticisms of CDC's organizational structure, particularly at the state level. While organizational deficiencies may not be solely responsible for all the ills attributed to it, there seems to be a sufficient number of weaknesses to require some changes. In approaching this subject the Committee is aware that all organizations, whether politically liberal or conservative, are conservative in the matter of changes in their own organization. The Committee hopes the following proposals will be viewed in true liberal spirit.

Among the most persistent and significant complaints heard by the Committee are the following:

1. There is a hiatus between the state organization and local groups seen in communications and identity. In part this seems to result from the fact that the local council chairman, who is at the top of the local organizational pyramid, has no direct line of communication to the state organization. Instead the line of communication is filled by the director, who has a somewhat different constituency than the council and normally has no organizational resources at his disposal. Local clubs frequently regard local councils as their own, but the state organization as something foreign.
2. There is an ambiguity between the function of the director and the local council, in good part resulting from the arrangement discussed in 1, above. This has led to much dissatisfaction with the manner in which many directors have performed their functions.



3. The present committee system is completely ineffective. Typically committee membership has existed on paper, if at all. Attendance at Board meetings is more often based on who is interested in that locale than upon the director's appointees, which destroys most continuity in committee discussion and leads to meaningless repetition of committee reports and little or no action. In some cases, particularly the issues program, there has been an effort to constitute the committees on the basis of specialized skills with somewhat greater success. These and other criticisms lead to the following proposals:

a. The President.

The president is necessarily the most important source of leadership within the CDC. Organizational arrangements should be so constructed as to relieve him as much as practical of internal administrative matters so that he may devote a greater portion of his time and energy to representing CDC with the official party and the public. The proposals for election given below, two senior vice-presidents and the employment of a Chief Administrative Officer who would administer the staff aspects of CDC's program, should do much to free the President for more important functions.

b. The Vice Presidents.

*Proposal 10.* The offices of Senior Vice President, North, and Senior Vice President, South, should be established with the general responsibility to assist the President with the internal administration in each section, both to be elected at the same time as the President from the state at large. (By-laws change)

*Proposal 11.* The title of the present Vice Presidents should be changed to Regional Vice Presidents and the present Regions should be re-examined after Senate re-districting to determine whether a more effective division of the State can be made. (By-laws change)

c. The Secretaries.

*Proposal 12.* The title and office of Administrative Secretary should be changed to that of Secretary to the Board of Directors (including the Board's Executive Committee) and relieved of duties in connection with administration of staff or business offices. (By-laws change)

*Proposal 13.* The title and office of Organizational Secretary should be changed to Program Secretary, with duties to be assigned by the President so as best to implement CDC program. (By-laws change)

d. The Treasurer.

The Treasurer should continue duties as now assigned.

*Proposal 14.* The President should appoint, subject to Board approval, an assistant Treasurer from the section of the state opposite to the elected Treasurer, who shall be charged with assisting the Treasurer in performance of his duties. (By-laws change)

e. The Controller.

*Proposal 15.* The Controller should be appointed by the President with approval of the Board with duties to establish and administer a system of accounting and budgetary controls. (By-laws change)

f. The Board.

*Proposal 16.* The Board of Directors should consist of the officers and one Director from each assembly district. In 1965, assembly district directors should be elected at convention caucuses. Thereafter they should be elected in odd numbered years for two year terms by an assembly district council within a 90 day period prior to the convention. Directors should also serve as chairmen of the assembly district councils. Local council elections should be

appealable to the Convention Credentials Committee. (By-laws change)

*Proposal 17.* Clubs in each assembly district should be encouraged to form councils within the district both as a solid organizational base and to conform with Proposal 16. These councils shall meet the minimum standards as provided in the By-laws. These councils in addition to selecting the director, should be responsible for coordinating the activities of three or more clubs; removing directors for cause; resolving questions of due process within any club; calling assembly district endorsing conventions, carrying out campaign activities and carrying out statewide programs of CDC. (By-laws change)

h. The Executive Committee of the State Board of Directors.

*Proposal 18.* The Executive Committee of the State Board should consist of the officers and one director elected by the Board from each region. (By-laws change)

i. Committees.

The State-wide committees system should be modified to provide for different types of committees according to function and method of operation:

*Proposal 19.* Convention Committees, whose functions are primarily organization of the Annual Convention — such committees should consist of a chairman appointed by the President and a member from each assembly district appointed by the director. They include: Rules, Credentials, By-laws, and Convention Resolutions.

*Board Committees,* whose functions should be primarily the dispatch of the Board's business. Membership should be by appointment of the President

in such numbers as he determines. Membership on Board Committees shall be limited to Board members. They include: Board Resolutions, Planning, Convention Site, Budget and such others as may be required.

*Program Committees*, whose functions should be to prepare programs for action in specifically assigned areas, which programs when adopted should then be carried out by the line organization and not the Committee. Each committee should consist of two co-chairmen appointed by the President from each section and such other members as the President may select after consultation with the officers and directors. Such committees should include: Finance, Political Action, Legislative Action, Organization, Issues Development, Direct Action Committees, and such others as the Board may determine. (By-laws change)

j. AD and SD Reps.

*Proposal 20.* The positions of AD and SD Representatives should be abolished as incompatible with a system of AD directors.

k. Staff.

Over the years, CDC has developed a staff operation which has attracted good people who have served the organization well but which has not been well planned or coordinated to best operate a statewide program. The Committee believes that statewide professional administration can best develop a structure and program which will offer the greatest potential for volunteers in politics.

*Proposal 21.* The office of Chief Administrative Officer should be created and filled by a full-time, paid employee. The C.A.O. would be charged with the statewide administration of the staff aspects of field operations, publicity, research, publications, pro-



grams, and services to clubs. He would operate under the direction and supervision of the President. He would consider and make recommendations regarding other staff functions and personnel, including publicity and public relations.

## VI. COMMUNICATIONS

One of the most frequent complaints the Committee heard was inadequate communications throughout the organization. In part this is a problem of organization, which should be remedied by the proposals in Part V. But there also is a need for improvement in CDC's media.

*Proposal 22.* There is a need for information about CDC, its history, organization and objectives for old as well as new members. A single item is not apt to be sufficient. An extensive effort should be made to prepare flyers, pamphlets, slides, movies, tapes, etc. in sufficient copies for wide distribution.

*Proposal 23.* There should be a systematic and continuing medium for communicating with the entire membership on both administrative matters and substantive programmatic information. A tabloid paper published 10 to 12 times annually and combining material now included in the Bulletin, the Reporter, and the Legislative Newsletter, as well as much of the ad hoc mailings, and sent to the entire membership, should provide a more effective coverage than is now being obtained, and at a lower cost.

## VII. CDC'S FINANCES

The subject of CDC's finances at the State-level has been so widely discussed that it needs little elaboration. Obviously, also a number of the above can be effected only with an enlarged budget and sound continuing sources of income. In the hearings, the Committee noted a generally sympathetic response when an explanation was given of the scope and uses of the



State's annual budget; lacking such explanation, few discussants brought the subject up on their own initiative or were at all inclined to consideration of financing problems. All of which leads the Committee to the conclusion that much of the State organization's problem, though by no means all, has been a failure to "sell" the need for additional funds. This is particularly true of the perennial effort to raise dues.

*Proposal 24.* A further effort should be made at the 1965 Convention to raise the club assessment to \$2.00 per member. Such a proposal must be accompanied by a thorough campaign by the officers and directors to explain why the increase is necessary. This increase should be made without changing the \$1.00 per member dues requirement in the By-laws (see Art. IV, 2a, 5). The By-laws on assessment (Art. V 1. b.) should be modified to make it clear that the State assessment need not be drawn from the clubs dues. (By-laws change)

Most of the Committee hearings were held before the conduct of the Dollars for Democrat's Drive last fall. The success of that drive where it was held despite the late start argues that with diligent effort this type of fund-raising by CDC can become a major source of income for CDC, Satewide and locally.

*Proposal 25.* The Dollars for Democrats Drive, now that it has become a CDC function, should be planned as an annual activity throughout the state with an annual goal of \$1000.00 per assembly district as the State CDC's share.

The Champions program has been among our best sources of funds, producing as much as \$30,000.00 per year.

*Proposal 26.* The Champions Program should be considered as the third major source of funds and should be provided with the necessary resources and emphasis to realize an annual goal of \$50,000.00.

CDC must realize that until the time when election reform laws prohibit the domination of American political life by the over-funded special interests, volunteers in politics must constantly struggle with fund raising.

*Proposal 27.* An effort should be made to make as many of CDC's projects as possible, self-supporting. For example, advertising might pay for the tabloid. Regional issues conferences can raise money to help pay for expenses of printing, etc.

*Proposal 28.* Special fund raising events should be programmed so as to occur regularly each year with due reference to other events on the political calendar. Further the 1963 report of the Program Planning Committee on fund raising should be reviewed and the ideas therein considered for future implementation.

These sources can produce in excess of \$200,000.00 annually (about twice the current income) and should provide an adequate operating income for the foreseeable future.

## VIII. THE CRISIS IN LEADERSHIP

Without question, many of CDC's problem, as they are of any organization, are those of leadership. Given good leadership, few problems are insoluble; without it, changes in organizational structure, shifting of responsibilities, drafting of call to action, which are of little avail.

The Committee has no easy formula for the problems of identifying and developing leadership; and indeed it doubts if any existed. But in one area at least it appears that some kind of institutional action might be helpful, particularly at the time when CDC is facing a change in its State leadership. As a volunteer organization, CDC suffers from the tendency of individuals of leadership caliber to drop into the background or out of the organization altogether after a period of service. Such

individuals are most likely to be known to past presidents or other officers with whom they have previously worked. Therefore,

***Proposal 29.*** A Committee of past officers should be established to assist the incoming administration in recruiting personnel of leadership caliber for committee chairmen and other services.