

INTERNATIONAL LONGSHOREMEN'S & WAREHOUSEMEN'S UNION

C.S.F.
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

November 30, December 1, 1948

STATEMENT OF POLICY

THE 1948 ELECTIONS

The Executive Board approves, commends and adopts as its own statement of policy on the 1948 elections the editorial statement published by the ILWU officers in the November 12 issue of the official newspaper, THE DISPATCHER, as follows:

The elections are over to the complete confoundment of the experts, particularly the poll takers, radio commentators, newspapers, and even the Democratic party itself.

Now the thing to do is to examine the results in the light of what they mean to us and take full advantage of the results in the interests of our union and all labor.

Certain basic things stand out clearly.

1. President Truman, fighting just about single-handed, spurted from way back in the rear and won in the stretch. He did this with much of his own Democratic machine working against him.

2. The election results were a victory for labor and the American people. The people voted for a return of the Roosevelt New Deal and showed by their vote that poll takers, newspapers and big business cannot stampede them into accepting reaction and enslavement, such as the Taft-Hartley type, and that they were fed up with the reactionary 80th Congress.

3. The Republican defeat can be attributed as much to their double talk as to their phoney program against labor and the American people.

4. The election proved that with a correct program the Democratic party can win both the presidency and the Congress without making any deals with or appeasing Southern Democrats and big business by embracing jimcrow and the open shop.

5. It was the last two or three weeks of the campaign that turned the tide. President Truman took off against the Wall Streeters, the war-makers, the big business lobbies, the Taft-Hartley supporters and the phoney 80th Congress that stood for all these things, and went to farmers, labor and the people squarely on these issues. He pledged himself and his party to fight them, and to bring about far reaching changes.

6. It was these issues that Henry Wallace had been bringing out into the open for months prior to the final phases of the election campaign. In the home stretch, Truman more and more emphasized these issues and so did even Dewey to some extent. It can truly be said that Wallace, packed the ball, did the broken field running, and Truman scored the touchdown as a result of many voters on one hand agreeing with Wallace, but voting for Truman as the candidate of a major party with the best chance of carrying out the campaign pledges.

7. Henry Wallace and his Progressive Party following also ran interference in another important respect. All the Republican and Southern Democrats red-baiting, labor baiting and race baiting was turned against and heaped upon Wallace and his supporters. Wallace became the scapegoat, the handy whipping boy, and thus got all the poisonous publicity that would otherwise have been directed against Truman and the Democratic party, even as it was in 1936, '40, '44 and '46. Remember

the last presidential election, when FDR was the candidate. The American people were told at that time that the Democratic party and its candidate were dupes and agents of Moscow. Even more vicious were the attacks and smears against Sidney Hillman and the CIO-PAC, which he headed, than the lies and smears directed against Henry Wallace in the recent campaign.

8. The light Wallace vote was due to millions switching to Truman at the last, rather than risk election of the reactionary, double-talking Dewey, and because Truman came out slugging. The tweedledee and tweedledum element vanished, and Truman emerged as the fighting champion of the New Deal which the people and labor wanted. Truman won; Wallace pointed up the issues which won for him.

Harry Truman is still in the White House. He has a liberal and Democratic Congress. He has a mandate from the American people. He has made solemn pledges to farmers, veterans, housewives, and labor. He is on his own and no longer has reason to kow-tow to Wall Street and the military brass.

He won a hard fight. He deserves a chance with the support of our union and all labor to produce on what he and his party promised.

But we cannot for a moment forget the typical American attitude toward election campaign promises as matters to be talked up before elections and played down afterwards. We must guard against any such happening this time.

Every Democratic Senator and Congressman pledged to carry out the party's election promises was elected with the help of labor, and in some cases with the help of Third Party votes. These Congressmen must

be constantly reminded, and if necessary, strongly pressured to repeal the Taft-Hartley Law and reinstate the Wagner Act, to lower prices, to extend social security, to deliver on housing and veterans and work for peace, civil liberties and security against war, witch-hunts and minority persecutions.

President Truman has the chance of a lifetime. Maybe his campaign pledges were made in the best of good faith. Anyone can change, and everyone is entitled to a chance to change. Time, and President Truman's own words and actions in the next few months will determine whether or not once again labor and the people have been taken for a political sleigh ride.

So much for the future of Truman and his party, and what we think our union should do regarding them. What Dewey and the Republicans will do in the future isn't worth wasting time or paper to figure out.

More important is for our union to realize that the Progressive Party forces that Henry Wallace organized are strongly pro-labor, despite the poor showing in the election returns. The Progressive Party should in our opinion, now turn its energies toward helping labor and the American people secure the benefits promised during the election and remain on the political scene as an observant and watchful group to help guarantee that campaign pledges will be fully kept.

The knowledge that American voters, even if only a handful, have some place to go other than to the two major parties can be a powerful weapon to use in day to day practical politics, and in seeing that politicians keep their promises.
