

Memories of '62 Campaign

SACRAMENTO—(AP) — A Richard Nixon election campaign a decade ago triggered a controversy over campaign funds similar to current disputes over his 1972 campaign—but on a smaller scale.

The campaign was in 1962 when Nixon, then the out-of-office former Vice President, sought a political comeback by running for governor of California.

Democrats went to court in the fall of 1962 to seek an injunction halting operations of a polling organization called the Committee for the Preservation of the Democratic Party in California.

After a two-year legal fight, Superior Court Judge Byron Arnold in San Francisco signed a stipulated judgment holding that the Nixon for Governor Committee contributed \$70,000 to the support of the committee.

The decree held that Nixon and his campaign chairman, H. R. Haldeman, now a White House aide, approved a committee circular addressed to registered Democrats. The decree said Nixon felt the postcard poll circulated by the committee would help him by reflecting adversely on candidates endorsed by the California Democratic Council, a liberal-oriented grass roots volunteer organization.

The decree said the postcard poll conducted by the committee was "revised, amended and finally approved by Mr. Nixon personally."

The judgment said the poll was misleading in two main respects: that it failed to disclose that the mailing was supported and financed by the Nixon for Governor Finance Committee, and it purported to express the concern of Democrats for the welfare of their party and fears it would be destroyed if CDC-backed candidates were elected.

Then-Gov. Edmund G. Brown, who had the endorsement of the influential CDC, defeated Nixon in the general election.

Judge Arnold's decree also said that the results of the poll were publicized as reporting the "voice of the rank and file Democrat" while the \$70,000 was paid to a San Francisco firm for a statewide mailing "to 900,000 conservative Democrats."

The case was settled in late October 1964. Arnold awarded nominal damages of \$100 to the Democratic State Central Committee and Roger Kent and Elizabeth Gatov, then the national committeeman and committeewoman from California.

The court also assessed the Nixon committee \$268.50 in court costs.