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THE NATIONAL NETWORK OF GRANTMAKERS

NETWORK NEWS

Philanthropy, Electoral Advocacy and Citizen Participation: Lessons for the Next Decade

Daniel Levitas, David Hunter, Wendy Johnson, Rob McKay and Jennifer Warburg. Special thanks for editorial assistance provided by Dan Cantor, Dr. Marian Meyers and Leonard Zeskind

The ascendancy of the radical right and the Republican victory in the November 1994 elections pose a challenge for grantmakers and grantseekers alike. Many of the gains of liberals and progressives since the 1930s are at risk.

Some argue the Republican victory was largely the result of a volatile and "ungovernable" electorate – one which is equally capable of defeating the Republicans in 1996

The assault on unions, communities of color and the poor, the backlash against civil rights, the campaign against abortion rights, the attack on public education and the arts and the dismantling of environmental protection have prompted many funders and grantee groups to ask themselves "How did this happen" and "What is to be done?" This article examines these questions, outlines a response and makes the case for increased foundation support of citizen participation and electoral advocacy.

Causes and Outcomes

Political pundits differ in their analysis of what happened last November. Some argue the Republican victory was largely the result of a volatile and "ungovernable" electorate — one which is equally capable of defeating the Republicans in 1996. Others contend that the elections were more the combined product of a long-term radicalization of a significant sector of the white electorate and sophisticated organizing by the religious right. Many progressives echo one or both of these themes yet emphasize that the Democratic party has contributed to its own demise by failing to offer a program that appeals to workers, the middle class and disaffected voters.

Many factors have fueled the rise of conservatism since the mid-1970s, but the following merit special attention:

1) The organizational and intellectual weakness of liberals and the left and the accompanying poverty of progressive, new ideas;

2) Inadequate foundation support for liberal/progressive think tanks capable of developing ideas and framing messages that can reach large blocs of potential voters;

3) The reluctance of philanthropy to support efforts that can impact the electoral arena such as non-partisan candidate recruitment and training;

4) The lack of resources for direct organizing, particularly in low-to-moderate income communities and communities of color;

5) Voter apathy and declining rates of political participation among important sectors of the electorate, particularly the poor and the failure of the Democratic Party to persuade these voters that they count;

6) Significant long-term financial investments made by conservatives and the GOP in developing an infrastructure of think tanks and organizations capable of influencing the media and large blocs of targeted voters;

7) Successful efforts by the GOP to mobilize conservative Democrats and independents as well as fundamentalist Christians and evangelicals.

While a reactionary trend has always existed in American politics, the current wave of conservative growth began after the defeat of Barry Goldwater in 1964 and gained momentum with George Wallace's independent populist presidential campaign in 1968 and the backlash against the civil rights movement. Richard Nixon institutionalized the process of getting white working and middle class voters to defect from the Democratic Party; an approach that has become well-known as the Southern Strategy.

A combined total of 57 percent of the electorate cast votes for Nixon and Wallace in 1968. Republicans have won five out of the past seven presidential elections by further expanding this political base and nationalizing the Southern Strategy.

This right-wing constituency will play a significant role in the next presidential election and beyond:

The 1995 National Network of Grantmakers Annual Conference will be held November 16-19, 1995 at the Albuquerque Hilton in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This year's theme is : Gender & Power: Challenges to Effective Grantmaking (Indigenous, National and International Perspectives).

It has the potential to capture the Republican Party and drive it further to the right, thereby dragging Democrats along with it. It will mobilize in support of wedge ballot initiatives to end affirmative action, scapegoat immigrants and deny basic human rights to lesbians and gay men.

It will continue to advocate for the transfer of power to the states and support the GOP's "new federalism." Although this trend may present progressives with organizing opportunities at the state and local level, it also poses a threat to civil rights, environmental protection and human services where federal remedies and programs are still needed.

The right's ability to define and win elections on wedge issues is, in part, a direct result of the failure of liberals and the left to connect with working class whites. At the same time, white progressives have not been very successful organizing in communities of color.

Over the past 25 years, progressives and nonprofit organizations have come to rely more and more on public interest advocacy (as opposed to direct organizing) which emphasizes strategies for pressuring liberal elites. These approaches will have even less impact on public policy as the elites they rely on constitute the very people and groups that Republican conservatives are systematically removing from power.

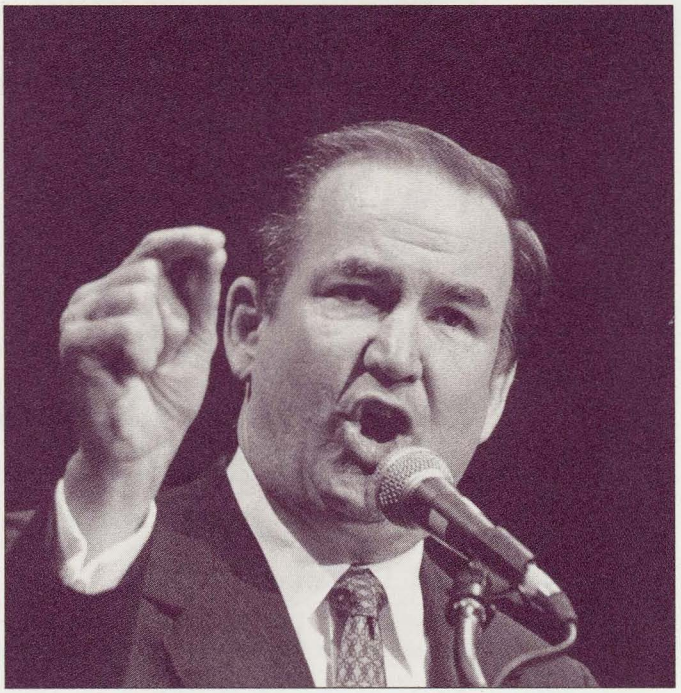

Photo by Jennifer Warburg

Patrick Buchanan will campaign aggressively against immigration, affirmative action and abortion in his quest for the GOP presidential nomination. Buchanan has hired the former national field director of the Christian Coalition to help him gain support from the religious right.

Building Constituencies and an Electoral Agenda

Funders and grantee groups must work to transform the political style of the social and economic justice movement. The dominant, almost exclusive emphasis on issue advocacy must be changed and approaches adopted which more fully include electoral strategies and methods. Progressive constituencies must be identified, organized into permanent democratic organizations, and mobilized in elections and ballot initiative fights.

This can be achieved only if both funders and grantee groups shift a significant portion of their resources — we suggest a target of at least 10 to 25 percent — to operating in the electoral arena. The success of such a shift in strategy should be quantitatively measurable in terms of electoral outcomes.

Efforts to increase foundation funding for voter registration, education and citizen participation are not new. The Funders' Committee for Citizen Participation (formerly the Funders' Committee on Voter Registration and Education) has worked extensively in this area for more than a decade.

According to the Funders' Committee, a 1991 survey of more than 100 private foundations found that support for citizen participation was "thinly spread." The survey found that 26 funders contributed a total of $6.9 million in their previous fiscal year for legal backup work, media, research, organizing, and voter registration and education. Four foundations were responsible for $5 million (72 percent) of the total. $6.9 million from just 26 foundations was considered inadequate then and it would be even more so today. Given current conditions, at least two or three times this amount is needed from a larger number of foundations for a wide range of citizen participation efforts including base-building organizing that is linked to voting.

If NNG "affiliated foundations" — institutions whose executive director, board president or both are NNG members — allocated just 10 percent of their grantmaking for citizen participation, the amount would be approximately $12.8 million annually, according to data contained in the NNG 1994 membership directory.

Foundations and tax-exempt organizations should consult the available literature and their attorneys as many activities can be conducted within IRS guidelines. For example, private foundations may fund groups organizing around citizen ballot initiatives provided the grants are made for general support and not earmarked for lobbying. Public charities and individual donors are under fewer restrictions.

Social and economic justice organizations — and the foundations that fund them — must invest in the education and training of organizers, activists and grassroots leaders who will work in the areas of political education and electoral participation.

For organizations with very limited funding and few staff, it may not be possible to shift resources to

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1995 Annual Conference November 16-19

This year's theme: Gender & Power: Challenges to Effective Grantmaking (Indigenous, National and International Perspectives) was first suggested at the 1994 Women's Caucus of NNG in Seattle, Washington and presented to the larger membership of NNG at the Business Meeting. Together, the Conference Co-Chairs, Donna Chavis (Lumbee) from Native Americans in Philanthropy and Gary Schwartz with The Fund of the Four Directions, formed a conference committee that has been actively working toward having the 1995 Conference compliment the UN Conference on Women (Bejing, China), the regional flair of indigenous communities and organizing in the Southwest, as well as more recent political moves in the Beltway which directly and indirectly assault women and children in this country. It is hoped that the 1995 Conference will promote new dialogues between men and women in philanthropy, highlight important regional work in communities of the Southwest and finally, continue essential dialogues between grantmakers and grantseekers (an important commitment begun at the Seattle Conference). Should you have further questions or comments about the 1995 Conference, we invite you to call Donna (910) 618-9749 or Gary (212) 768-1430 x12. We look forward to seeing you in Albuquerque.

Common Grant Application Reflections

Ronald M. White and Carol Mollner, Co-Chairs, Philanthropic Reform Committee

With NNG's Common Grant Application (CGA) securely launched on its maiden foray into the world of grantmakers, this seems an appropriate point to reflect on the potential impacts and potential fault lines that our endeavor may have.

Since the articles written by Robin Kroft to the Chronicle of Philanthropy and by Jodi Williams for Foundation News and Commentary, along with postings on Usenet and Handsnet, the NNG office has received literally hundreds of requests for the application. Grantmakers have made up one-third of the inquirers. The remaining requests were primarily from grantseekers.

Of the grantmakers requesting the CGA, some were new foundations seeking models and the rest were established foundations looking to renew their grantmaking processes. To date 25 foundations have adopted the CGA. There is also a burgeoning number of potential adopters in the "seriously considering" category.

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From the Co-Chairs

Six months into 1995 and much is happening within the nation and our network. As the conservative Republicans plan strategies to divide the country across race, gender, and class as well as disinherit the most needy, NNG is looking inward to devise the ways and means to deepen our impact and influence as a network of progressive grantmakers.

We began the year with renewed energy and commitments to our mission when the NNG Board participated in a two-day retreat at the Highlander Center in Tennessee. One of the desired outcomes of the weekend was to clarify NNG's focus for 1995 and general direction for the next several years. As we struggled with issues of planning, organization and program development, there was a constant acknowledgement of wanting to include the membership in shaping the future of NNG and its programs.

As such, the Board made a commitment to begin a new phase of long range strategic planning. A Strategic Planning Committee will be convened in 1995 at our annual conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This letter serves as an open invitation to the NNG membership. The Committee will have a year of work in developing the plan with expected release of the final document to the membership in late 1996. The Board will continue to be involved in the strategic planning process. Please contact either of us or the office for more information and to indicate your interest in participating.

April 4-9 brought some 25 funders from around the country to participate in NNG's Tour of the South. With the theme "The Unfinished Civil Rights Agenda," more than thirty community-based groups dialogued with funders about the obstacles and opportunities facing their communities and region. The briefing session, presented by a panel of regional activists before the tour began, helped set the political and economic contexts in which activist groups are working. The Tour concluded with a debriefing session which offered a number of opportunities for funder education and support. Written results of the Tour will be made available by summer's end.

As the ante is upped in Washington, the need has never been greater to allocate more resources in support of grassroots campaigns and initiatives that stand in support of justice, workers rights, people of color, women, affirmative action, rights for gays and lesbians and nurturing an alternative to our current two party system. Navigating the road ahead demands that we hold fast to our hopes and imagination for building a new future.

Wendy Johnson Larry Kressley

Open Hiring

Vicky Nuñez

Many people I've met in the past five years have been interested in knowing how I got my job. I saw a job announcement and I applied. I've heard the most interesting stories about how people came to their jobs in philanthropy since I came to this field. Most of these stories conform to traditional ideas about networking and, on some level, we would all agree that networking is an important job search strategy. Unfortunately, this type of networking coupled with most foundations traditional reluctance to invest the time and effort to carry out formal job searches, tends to favor individuals with some sort of "in" to what is still largely a closed system built around wealth and power.

The implementation of fair and consistent hiring practices represents one of the greatest challenges for organized philanthropy today. What creates even greater urgency around this challenge is that philanthropic institutions are often in the position of prodding their nonprofit grantees to conduct their business using open, fair and accountable practices.

The recent appointment of Susan Berresford as President of the Ford Foundation presents the philanthropic community with an example to consider. The intention of this article is to critique the process which the leadership of Ford (its board of directors) undertook in choosing Ms. Berresford, and is in no way intended as a critique of Ms. Berreford.

Ford's board was direct in stating that it did not undertake a search for the President's position because it was sure that Ms. Berresford was the best candidate. Obviously, the position of leading the world's largest foundation is complex and one can imagine that the internal candidate would clearly have the edge in a job search. However, I was surprised that the Ford board would act without demonstrating even a little curiosity as to who else might want the job, and dismayed at the message that it sends to the field: it's ok to hire for a position as important as the president of your foundation without conducting a search.

On the importance of open job searches, Ronald White (Campaign for Human Development) shared, "I think it's always a good idea to do a search. At the CHD we have an open search for every position. It can surface a good number of qualified candidates. Searches can have a beneficial effect on the foundation and the field at large by helping keep talent within the field, instead of people burning out in their foundation positions and leaving the field. Searches give a sense of movement and possibilities."

In the field of philanthropy, where professional staff routinely stay in the same job for fifteen years or more, that "sense of movement and possibilities" is vital to maintaining a vibrant community of foundation staff. Curiously, Ford itself has a relatively well known commitment to undertaking job searches, and further is one of the few foundations that hire staff on time limited contracts, specifically with the goal of maintaining some movement in and out of the foundation. What seems to be lacking at Ford is the commitment to apply the same process for a job search for a program officer to a job search for a foundation president. I know that Ford is not alone in creating one hiring process for lower level positions, and a separate process for hiring senior and management level staff.

Diversity is a crucial element to consider in this discussion of hiring practices. Because it is only in the recent past that foundations began hiring people of color in substantial numbers, we are often the newer employees. This becomes an issue when we are interested in at least considering leadership or management positions because chances are good that our white counterparts have been in their positions for longer and may tend to look like the stronger candidates from the perspective of foundation experience. Further, if people of color are more commonly applying for program officer positions for which foundations may conduct open searches, the impression may be given that people of color have to go through a more arduous process as open and competitive job searches take longer and involve more interviews. Whites who may still predominate the pool of candidates for senior and management positions, may be hired without having to compete against other candidates.

Many foundation managers who are trying to lower unnecessary barriers to employment in philanthropy have reconsidered what have traditionally been thought of as the required qualifications for a job in philanthropy and have worked to broaden the qualifications. The message that the Ford board gives is that the only person who is qualified to run the Ford Foundation today, in 1995, is someone who has already been running some aspect of the Ford Foundation for a number of years.

Most foundations which routinely use an open job search process begin to view it as an indispensable practice for creating a competitive pool of candidates for job openings and the best hope for expanding diversity in the field. However, successful searches require increased effort. Mike Roque (Chinook Fund) commented, "Widening the pool of candidates for positions in philanthropy is an important challenge for progressive funders as well. Too often we use the traditional search techniques which we know don't work, and aren't stimulating interest among enough candidates of color." Roque pointed to the small number of Latino and Native American men in leadership positions as a sign that our diversity efforts have not gone far enough.

"Funders are often in the position of nudging their grantees to run agencies in an open and democratic

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Martin Bunzl and Harriet Barlow are gathering information about outreach, grants and other projects which you feel have been particularly successful in bringing new donors to progressive work or in enabling grantees to raise significant new funds or attract new donors. Please direct material to Allison Barlow at the HKH Foundation office, 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10175-1699.

The Unfinished Civil Rights Agenda: NNG Members Tour the South

Ravi Khanna of the Peace Development Fund, with contributions from Michelle Lord of the Norman Foundation and Jodi Williams of the Public Welfare Foundation

The root cause of hunger in this country is poverty. It is as simple as that. Hunger is an economic justice issue. So is environmental racism. So is racial tracking in our schools, and the lack of recreational facilities for our youth. All the issues in the South stem from one root cause-poverty.

A striking moment of the NNG/Funders Who Fund in the South Tour, The Unfinished Civil Rights Agenda, came when grantmakers visited the Newtown Florist Club in tiny, Gainesville, Georgia. Established 30 years ago to provide flowers at funerals within the African American community, the group has transformed itself into a unique community environmental organization. Several years ago the women in this low-income township began noticing that an unusually high number of people were dying of rare cancers and other inexplicable diseases. They began investigating and discovered that a large percentage of the homes in town had been built on a toxic waste dump which was polluting the water and the ground around the homes.

"This is where our children played, where we planted our vegetable gardens and our fruit trees," one older resident recalled. "My peach trees were my pride and joy. Now, of course, no one can enjoy them. I go at harvest time and knock all the fruit to the ground to make sure kids won't eat them and get poisoned. I feel so angry."

The Newtown Florist Club has also emerged as a leading civil rights group in this north Georgia town, opposing KKK activities, researching and exposing environmental racism, and unifying the African American community.

Members of the Newtown Florist Club with Georgia/Carolina Southern Tour participants.

Newtown Florist Club was one of 23 groups in Georgia, and North and South Carolina visited by NNG members.

Participants in The Unfinished Civil Rights Agenda Tour gathered in Atlanta, at the beginning of the tour, to hear about the "unfinished civil rights agenda" from regional leaders, including State Sen. Hank Sanders of Alabama, Selwyn Carter of the Southern Regional Council, Elaine Hill of the Cobb Citizens Coalition, Lorretta Ross from the Center for Democratic Renewal, June Rostan of the Southern Empowerment Project, Connie Tucker of the Southern Organizing Project, and Deborah Warren of the Southern Regional Development Initiative, among others. The larger group then divided into three groups of between six and twelve. In addition to the group which went to Georgia and the Carolinas, another group went to Mississippi and Alabama-the area known as the Black Belt- and the third group visited the Central Appalachian regions of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Western North Carolina.

"What left the deepest impression on me," said Michelle Lord, of the Norman Foundation, "was the presence of fear in the region, and how this fear dominates the lives of so many of the communities of color we visited during those four days." A participant in the Black Belt segment of the tour, Michelle learned that others shared her assessment.

The fear became real for them, according to Michelle, when they spent time with residents of Tutwiler, Mississippi. An organizer from the Tallahatchie County Organizing Committee described Tutwiler as one that the civil rights movement had forgotten. Despite its black majority, the town is run by a white mayor, who also owns most of the stores in the area.

In January of this year, the mayor chased two young African American teenagers through town with a deer rifle for setting off some firecrackers near a convenience store the mayor owns. After threatening to kill them, and reminding their parents that he "owned the town," he had one of the youths arrested for assault and disturbing the peace. Charges were later dropped for insufficient evidence.

The incident seemed to be a watershed moment for the African American community of Tutwiler, which had let so many similar incidents and insults slide by because of the real fear of retribution. The residents called for help from Southern Echo, an organization working to develop grassroots leadership throughout Mississippi. Southern Echo's organizers gave the community the confidence to finally take a stand. The result? Residents organized a boycott of the mayor's gas station, laundromat, car wash, whiskey store, car dealership, and the convenience store. They are continuing to develop additional strategies to advance their

The Lambi Fund of Haiti invites NNG members to a funder's delegation in Haiti. View grassroots projects with other funders and participate in discussions about effective grantmaking inside of Haiti.

September/October delegation planned: (202) 833-3713

twin goals of empowering the members of their community, and holding Tutwiler public officials accountable for their actions.

In Central Appalachia, most of the counties are overwhelmingly white. This fact creates barriers for organizations which want to be more inclusive, according to Jodi Williams of the Public Welfare Foundation. Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM), in Lake City, Tennessee is a predominately white organization which has taken conscious steps to address the racial barriers which separate people in the region. They have established strong ties with JONAH, a rural, primarily African American organization in Western Tennessee. Since 1990, SOCM and JONAH members have held joint training and leadership retreats, conducted membership and staff exchanges, and worked and lobbied together on issues of mutual concern.

Over time the demographics have shifted in this and other areas of the South. Young people have moved, leaving behind communities largely comprised of older folks. Finding ways to keep young people in these communities, and providing opportunities so they can assume the mantle of leadership, is an ongoing challenge.

SOCM and JONAH are meeting this challenge by sponsoring youth encampments which bring young people together for leadership development and organizing training and cultural sharing. Two years ago, one of these encampments helped launch a youth organizing effort in Roane County, Tennessee, where youth formed a group to combat racism in the schools. Skilled organizers, they have already begun to implement some strategies.

In all three segments of the Unfinished Agenda of Civil Rights Tour funders not only witnessed how much truly is unfinished, but also were struck by the systematic dismantling of the gains made in the 30 years since the passage of the first voting rights act. Racial-based school tracking (the Sylvania, Georgia school committee recently pled guilty to these charges); segregated and unequal education; toxic dumping; lack of economic opportunities; the legacy of bigotry; and being disenfranchised by the electoral process continue to deny most African Americans their fundamental civil rights.

Many civil rights activists are concerned about the future. The basis for redistricting in many parts of the country, especially the South, resulted in the creation of majority

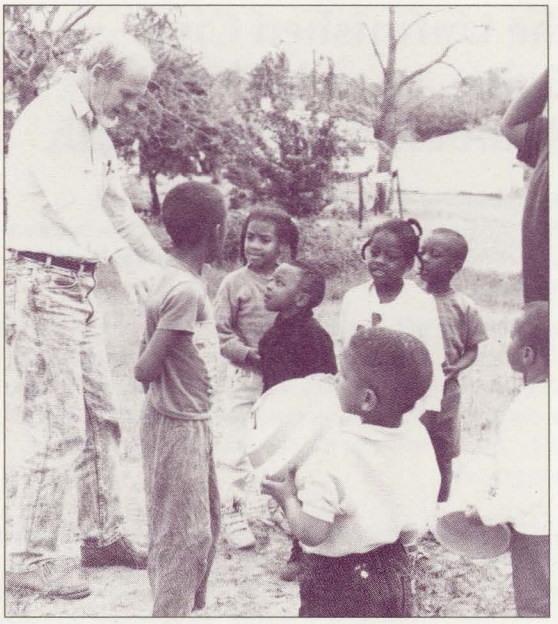

Photo by Millie Brobston

Charles Demeré, Debley Foundation, with children from Keysville Concerned Citizens program in Georgia.

African American or Latino districts, and helped elect many of the current African American and Latino officials. Those gains are being threatened currently and a case is pending before the Supreme Court.

Another piece of legislation that would have catastrophic effects on communities all over the country, but particularly in the South because of the enormity of the problems the region faces, is the so called "takings bill." Versions of this bill have been passed in several southern states and one is being considered at the national level.

Such laws would require state or federal government to compensate individuals or corporations for any loss of revenue they sustain because of restrictions in the use of their property. Such restrictions would include environmental protection laws and zoning laws, among other regulations. If passed, the law would essentially require everyday people to pay companies not to pollute. More importantly, it would weaken the rights of communities to protect themselves from being poisoned when a company disposed of toxins in their

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Toward an Organizing Partnership

NNG and the National Organizers Alliance (NOA) are planning a joint project to strengthen the relationship between organizers and funders into a more effective partnership. Our mutual goal is to move more money into progressive grassroots organizing. Our explicit understanding is that to be successful, funders and organizers must be working together from the start.

An effective partnership between organizers and funders is predicated on clear understandings of shared goals, conflicting interests, and underlying assumptions. It also requires building relationships of trust and integrity. To facilitate that process we are proposing a series of regional meetings between organizers and funders. We are planning, and have acquired seed funding from the McKay Foundation, for a pilot process in California.

In building organizer participation in the gatherings, NOA and NNG will seek to draw from a wide range of experience levels, organizing disciplines, issues, and backgrounds. NNG will recruit funder participation from among our members, and over time, from other grantmakers as well. For more information and involvement, please call the office.

Philanthropy, Electoral Advocacy . . . Continued from Page 2

support quasi-electoral activities. However, for larger organizations it should be done.

Funders and organizers should experiment with new methods of electoral organizing such as the creation of state coalitions of 501(c)(4) groups and use old ones that work. Although foundation support for 501(c)(4) groups is rare, many of these groups and coalitions do work closely with 501(c)(3) organizations that are eligible for foundation funding.

One model developed over the past 10 to 15 years can be found in the efforts of groups allied with the Northeast Citizen Action Resource Center (NECARC) in Hartford, Connecticut. These organizations, with appropriate 501(c)(3) training from NECARC, have been very successful at bringing together diverse coalitions of labor unions, women's, lesbian and gay, environmental and consumer groups to mobilize and coordinate membership political activities and jointly run and support candidates in state elections. Like the efforts of most progressives, however, these coalitions could do better enlisting more people of color.

Another example is that of ACORN, the 25-year old community organization of low-to-moderate income families now active in 20 states, primarily in urban communities of color. Since its earliest days in Arkansas, ACORN has linked electoral work with issue-oriented community organizing. ACORN's members have registered their neighbors to vote, put issues on the ballot through citizen initiatives, built coalitions around electoral issues such as tax reform and campaign finance reform, and trained leaders in low-income communities in the skills to run for elected office.

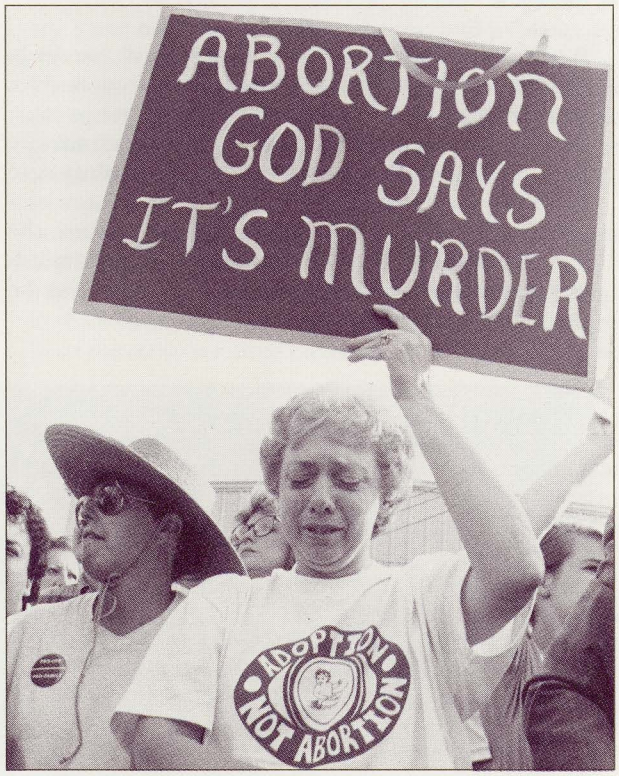

Photo by Jennifer Warburg

Conservatives have been successful using issues like abortion to politicize and mobilize large numbers of voters since the mid - 1970s.

Yet another example of the value of combining progressive ideas with practical electoral work can be found in the 5,000 member New Party (NP). In three years NP candidates have won more than 70 out of 105 races. The NP combines electoral work with issue organizing and, like the right, it also focuses on city, county and school board elections. Although foundations cannot fund political parties per se, efforts like those of the NP can be supported through tax-exempt entities like the New Majority Fund or by supporting 501(c)(3) organizations like the Center for a New Democracy that work to improve citizen participation through changes in ballot access laws and campaign finance reform.

Previous Shortcomings, Future Obstacles

Some advocacy groups have significant experience with electoral politics. For the most part, however, these groups have been unable to maintain the membership base, mailing lists, communication apparatus and staffing levels to sustain their involvement. If grassroots groups are going to be successful using electoral tools and building membership organizations, they will need more resources to strengthen their internal infrastructure and bridge the gap between election cycles.

Many social change organizations also must overcome their often self-imposed marginalization by developing new strategies and programs to reach wider audiences. While many groups speak of enlisting larger liberal and progressive institutions, few have coherent strategies or adequate resources to actually do so.

Progressives must learn from the past three decades of conservative success and develop comparable ways of using the mass media, alternative media, direct mail and other communication strategies to build large constituencies on the basis of issues that have mass appeal. This will require effective political education programs that genuinely address the needs and concerns of disenfranchised people and promote progressive values over the long-term.

The Road Ahead

The radical right did not achieve success overnight, nor will it disappear anytime soon. Grassroots organizing by Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition and others will expand the Christian right's political and electoral base, allowing it to dominate the decision-making apparatus of the Republican party in a majority of the 50 states.

The percentage of white, self-described "born again" and/or "evangelical" and "fundamentalist" Christians voting Republican has increased from 57 percent in 1980 to 65 percent in 1984 to 76 percent in 1994. According to exit polling done last year, religious conservatives accounted for one-third of all votes cast, compared with only 24 percent in 1992 and 18 percent in 1988. This increase reflects both greater participation by conservatives and decreased participation by other voting groups.

Ultra-conservative elements within the GOP other than the religious right will use these next two years to gain control of the reins of government and expand their influence within both the party and the electorate. Self-described "paleo-conservatives" such as Patrick Buchanan and lesser-known ultra-right think tanks like the Rockford Institute may be dismissed by the media mainstream, but they will continue to drive the debate on immigration, affirmative action and other racially charged issues.

Photo by Jennifer Warburg

Sophisticated ultra-conservative strategists like Paul Weyrich have used their skills in marketing, mass media and political organization to outdistance their competitors in the Democratic Party and the left.

Right-wing attacks on liberals and their constituencies will nurture (and perhaps expand) the same political base that delivered the House and Senate to the Republican party in 1994. The stage could be set for a Republican presidential victory in 1996.

Initiative Campaigns and Elections

As conservatives move aggressively to further divide the already badly fragmented New Deal coalition that has been the mainstay of liberalism for decades, they will concentrate pressure along the key faultlines of race and values as well as rights and taxes. These battles have been and will continue to be played out in two principal areas: 1) citizen ballot initiatives and 2) electoral campaigns. Funders, organizers and advocacy groups must analyze how one feeds the other and devote resources to return the initiative process to its progressive roots.

At the moment, however, the right is more effective using ballot measures to attract visibility, members, contributions and to win concrete changes on its issues. Conservatives also have demonstrated how to use ballot initiatives to influence the outcome of elections in favor of Republican candidates. Most recently, California Governor Pete Wilson rode the anti-immigrant tide of voter support for Proposition 187 to victory against his Democratic challenger, State Treasurer Kathleen Brown. A new round of citizen initiatives that attempt to do away with affirmative action are likely to attract support from large numbers of conservative, independent, and even Democratic voters in 1996 who, in turn, may be more likely to vote for a Republican presidential candidate.

Think Tanks and New Ideas

Progressives must construct a framework for generating new ideas and resurrecting old ones that work. Such an effort will require a thorough analysis of the core beliefs of liberals and progressives, especially those which have been under attack. The hard work of both rethinking and reframing these ideas — and developing new ones — must transcend the specific agendas of individual organizations if these ideas are to have broad-based appeal and be capable of moving larger constituencies. Although it is important for these efforts to be informed by the authentic experiences of people at the grassroots, the process should be carried out in a scholarly and intellectual environment.

A variety of models should be explored for how to create and fund such think tanks and how, once created, they should pursue the tasks of research, analysis and information dissemination and at what cost.

Work Smarter, Not Just Harder

Historically, the success or failure of right-wing and ultraconservative movements has often depended upon the nature and strength of their opposition. The prospects of the political right in the United States will continue to be determined in a large measure by whether, how, and to what degree progressives engage in electoral politics.

It will not be enough for us to simply work harder in the face of adversity or to leverage more money for social change. Both funders and grantee groups must change the way they actually work and definitively enter the electoral arena. The long-term solution to defeating the radical right lies in the emergence of a social and political movement that can capture the imagination of millions of Americans. To accomplish this, progressives must develop both the ideas and the political skills to reach them. ■

Resources for Advocacy

For more information about the newly-formed Electoral Working Group of NNG contact either Rob McKay (415-554-0166) or Jenny Warburg (919-286-1721). For more information about philanthropy and citizen participation contact the Funders' Committee for Citizen Participation by calling either Geri Mannion at Carnegie Corporation of New York (212-207-6257) or Anthony Romero at the Ford Foundation (212-573-4957). For information about restrictions on tax-exempt organizations and foundations contact the Alliance for Justice at 1601 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 601, Washington, D.C. 20009. Tel. 202-332-3224. The Alliance has recently published Myth vs. Fact - Foundation Support of Advocacy, which is available from them for $20.

Common Grant Applications . . . Continued from Page 3

The question we turn to now is, "What might this mean?" Of course the answer is, "We don't really know!" But already some users and potential users have speculated about the types of issues likely to be raised by widespread adoption.

When talking to CGA Committee members such as Robin, Jodi, Christopher Mogil and Kathy Partridge, who made the initial synthesis of the eight RAG common applications, it was impressive to hear how much process went into the formulation of NNG's CGA. So when the Committee encouraged the adoption of NNG's CGA by suggesting that millions of dollars would be saved by community groups, they were reflecting the views of a diverse group of grantmakers and grantseekers who had spent considerable time talking this through.

Nevertheless, one of the questions we've heard is, "Who does this really help?" Concerns have been bandied about which suggest that those already good at proposal writing, now have a powerfully concentrated means of reaching even more grantmakers and squeezing out the weaker, less literate competition. Others suggest just the opposite. By the latter scenario a fledgling group already expends enormous energy on grantwriting. Now it can make that expenditure worth many times more the effort and use it to secure not just the large sustaining grants but smaller grants as well, from grantmakers who accept the CGA. The availability and adoption of the CGA might, then, make an enormous difference in whether they would even have contacted the grantmaker to begin with, and in any case it allows them to develop new relationships with grantmakers comparatively easily. The bottom line is that grantmakers may have to rethink whether all grantseekers, sophisticated and beginners, are best served by being treated the same.

A different concern was raised by a grantmaker who was worried about being inundated with new requests, raising the percentage of requests which they now deal with but lack the resources to fund. Essentially, the question is how open do we as grantmakers want to be to new requests. If we want diversity and newness in our grantmaking so as to better serve the public trust and respond to new issues and trends, it may be well worth the additional effort to consider CGA applications from new groups.

We challenge you to ask your grantseekers about this new form and whether they view it as a help or not. Ask yourself, what impact it seems to be having on your grantmaking, or what barriers you face in adopting it. Step back and ask are new social change groups contacting you because of the ease of the CGA's use? Please let us know what you think, and bring NNG one step closer to living out its mission. ■

Open Hiring . . . Continued from Page 4

fashion, and we need to walk our own talk," summed up Isabel Olivera Morales (Needmor Fund).

As NNG members, our responsibility is to work for change so that this field continues to move forward and is not conducting its business in a 1970's fashion as we move into the next century. We wish the best for Ms. Berreford, the first woman President of Ford, and strength to her in continuing to change that institution. The message to the Ford board: our field needs to conduct open job searches for each and every position!

Vicky Nuñez has worked at the Hyams Foundation for the past five years, a foundation which is committed to open searches and to promoting this practice within Boston's philanthropic community. For those of you who may think that Vicky was secretly hoping to be chosen as Ford's next president, you're wrong! In fact, as she moves on from the foundation field, Vicky would like to thank her NNG colleagues for their inspiring commitment to social change and justice in the field of philanthropy. ■

Members Tour of the South . . . Continued from Page 6

town if they did the dumping on their own property. Imagine how much more difficult would be the struggle of communities like Gainesville, Georgia, and organizations like the Newtown Florist Club, if a proposal like this became law!

This overview may whet readers' appetites to learn more about the struggles and victories unfolding in the South. A more comprehensive report on The Unfinished Civil Rights Agenda Tour is in the works. It will be available from NNG later this summer. In addition, all those who participated in the tour have said they would welcome the opportunity to discuss individual experiences with you, or to provide additional information on the groups visited and their funding and technical assistance needs. ■

Changes in the Office

■ We are saddened to say goodby to Suenghee Cha, our first Membership Coordinator, and wish her the best. Her successor will be announced in an upcoming member mailing.

■ Executive Director Terry Odendahl is pregnant. She will be on maternity leave August through October.

■ Ellen Furnari, former Director of the Ben & Jerry's Foundation, has been appointed by the Board to become the temporary NNG Executive Director while Terry is on leave.

This newsletter was conceived by Suenghee Cha, Vicky Nuñez, Isabel Olivera Morales, and Communication/Publication Committee Co-Chairs Mike Roque and Jenny Warburg.
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Graphic Designer: Jill Pittsford

Donald T. Warner, Chairman of the Public Welfare Foundation and NNG member, died on Tuesday, the 11th of April, 1995. This issue of Network News is dedicated to his memory.

Keep me on your mailing list. Yes! I want to be a member!

☐ Enclosed is a check for $100 made payable to the National Network of Grantmakers for 1995 membership

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