Ella Baker

and the Black Freedom Movement

A RADICAL DEMOCRATIC VISION

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much as possible and to approach local communities with deference and humility. She stressed the need to resist organizational chauvinism or any attempts to make proprietary claims on political campaigns that might emerge from their efforts. Finally, she rejected the notion that the black middle class had special claims on leadership of the black community. Even though most of the black youth who were attracted to SNCC in the early 1960s were not wealthy, and some came from very modest means, virtually all of them were college-educated and consequently had social, if not material, capital. Baker appreciated the skills and resources that educated black leaders brought to the movement, but she urged SNCC organizers to look first to the bottom of the class hierarchy in the black community, not the top, for their inspiration, insights, and constituency.[1] Baker influenced SNCC's emergent politics and values primarily by exposing the young activists to people and situations that represented alternative adult leadership: people who would demonstrate to them first-hand the willingness, ability, and determination of oppressed people to resist and overcome their oppression while speaking for themselves; people who were not lawyers or ministers but just as capable as a Martin Luther King or a Thurgood Marshall.[2] Nothing made this point more dramatically than the struggle in Fayette County, Tennessee.

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SOLIDARITY WITH THE BLACK POOR IN FAYETTE COUNTY

In the fall of 1960, SNCC's national leadership, with Ella Baker's strong encouragement, began building ties to the constituency that soon became the focal point of its southern organizing efforts: the rural and small-town black poor. In August 1959, a group of impoverished black tenant farmers in Fayette County (and later in adjacent Haywood County), a cotton-producing region of southwestern Tennessee, had begun an intense and protracted struggle that was as much about economics as it was about segregation and citizenship. This conflict between black sharecroppers and white landowners was precipitated by black people asserting their right to participate in elections. The response of whites to this political initiative revealed the extent to which land ownership and economic prowess determined the racial hierarchy of the South. White landlords evicted dozens of sharecropping families from the land they had worked and lived on for years because they dared to go down to the county courthouse and attempt to register to vote. Unbowed despite their tactical defeat, the landless farm families had refused to leave the community, opting to stay while they petitioned the federal government for redress. In an unprecedented act of collective resistance, they built makeshift homes on a 200-acre plot of land donated for their use by a sympathetic black landowning farmer, Shepard Towles. The encampment was dubbed "Freedom Tent City."[3]

The struggle in Fayette County received wide coverage in the African American press. The NAACP, CORE, and other civil rights and social justice groups, along with several labor unions, raised funds and collected donations of food and clothing to sustain and support the Tennessee activists. Before he joined SNCC, James Forman helped establish the northern-based Fayette County Emergency Relief Committee and spent many months going back and forth between Chicago and Tennessee with supplies and advice. Forman saw the struggle in Fayette County as a kind of "watershed" in the movement because, in this instance, an indigenous leadership had emerged and was connecting demands for full citizenship and civil rights to economic issues. Forman became so immersed in the Fayette County struggle that at one point he was accused of trying to take it over from the local people. Whether or not this charge was justified, he took it seriously and brought the lessons he had learned in Fayette County with him into SNCC.[4] Ella Baker shared this concern, and from the outset SNCC strove to avoid even the perception of trying to dominate local struggles. SNCC activists publicized the Fayette County struggle through the *Student Voice* and conducted a food drive to provide material aid.[5]

Baker followed the Tennessee story closely, and in the early months of 1961 she urged Ed King, who was then the executive secretary of SNCC, to travel to Tennessee to explore ways in which the young people could lend greater support. The newly formed organization provided both material and moral support to the Fayette County "freedom fighters." For SNCC staff person Jane Stembridge, the struggle graphically illustrated "the connection between poverty and civil rights."[6] In addition to collecting food and clothing, SNCC's leadership cosigned a statement directed at the federal government demanding intervention and relief aid for the embattled former sharecroppers. The significance of this struggle and the heroism of the local people became the topic of many informal discussions around the SNCC office from the fall of 1960 through the summer of 1961.[7] John Lewis recalled that the example of Fayette County was a sobering one for many young SNCC organizers and gave them a glimpse of what lay ahead.[8]

The *Student Voice*, SNCC's newsletter, highlighted the courage and suffering of Fayette County activists and cast them as pivotal forces in the struggle for freedom in the South. The SNCC newsletter covered the issue quite

differently from the *Crisis*, the NAACP's journal. Perhaps encouraged by Baker's editorial guidance, the *Student Voice* emphasized the leadership, courage, and oppression of the evicted sharecroppers. Although the *Crisis* also described the desperate conditions of the tent dwellers, it stressed the fact that respectable, middle-class blacks as well as semiliterate sharecroppers had been denied the ballot in Fayette and Haywood Counties. In praising the Justice Department for filing suit in November 1959 against nineteen white Democratic Party officials for excluding blacks from the local primary, Gloster Current, the NAACP's director of branches, pointed out that among those who were denied the right to vote were a "well-to-do grocer," a teacher, and a minister. Current described another would-be voter as a "high school teacher, educated at Iowa State University, and possessor of a master's degree."[9] These four individuals, however, were certainly not representative of the 100 illiterate and semiliterate tenant farmers who were at the center of the struggle in Tennessee.[10]

Ella Baker visited Fayette County in January 1961, met with residents of the tent city, and wrote her own story about the conditions there for the *Southern Patriot*, the newsletter of the Southern Conference Education Fund (SCEF). Baker's report, like the coverage in SNCC's newsletter, differed sharply in tone and emphasis from how the NAACP portrayed the situation. Baker conveyed vividly to her readers the depth of southern black poverty and the harshness of white reprisals against activists. The sharecroppers she visited lived in "olive-drab tents without floors, surrounded by inches of mud and mire: the darkness within these tents that are lighted by kerosene lamps and heated by wood stoves; the not-too-well-clad children crowded into the tents or squashing around in the mud; and the hungry shivering dogs wandering about; all of this painted a picture of anything but hope for the new year."[11]

While the *Crisis* applauded the small steps taken by the U.S. Justice Department, Baker's article in the *Southern Patriot* expressed outrage at how little government intervention there had been. Indicting any notion of American progress that would leave destitute black farmers behind, Baker wrote that "the real tragedy is that in the wealthiest country in the world, in the jet-propelled atomic age of 1961, human beings could honestly say that their mud-floored tents were more comfortable than the shacks they formerly called 'home' for five, ten or 30 years." The material hardships the activists suffered in Freedom Tent City were similar to those they had endured during their entire lives as sharecroppers; and once they had undertaken this act of resistance, their outlook and morale had actually

improved. Baker was optimistic that the resolve of the oppressed themselves, rather than the benevolence of the government, meant "a new dawn of freedom [was] breaking through the age-old social, economic and political discrimination that blighted the lives of both whites and Negroes in the South."[12]

The Tennessee activists founded their own independent group, the Fayette County Civic and Welfare League, which was led by John McFerren, a store owner who had become a militant. The McFerrens had a home of their own, so they did not live in the tent city; but they strongly sympathized with the evicted families because they had previously been tenant farmers themselves. The White Citizens Council orchestrated a campaign of harassment and intimidation against the league. White merchants refused to sell medicine, food, or supplies to tent city residents, and McFerren and his wife, Viola, were subjected to constant surveillance and harassment, including many threatening phone calls.[13] Moreover, John McFerren was deliberately run over by a truck and nearly killed. Despite these reprisals, neither the McFerrens nor the members of the Fayette County Civic and Welfare League gave up their crusade to document and protest political and economic discrimination against blacks in the county.

Baker had known some of the Fayette County activists before their struggle hit the national press. On the eve of the Greensboro sit-ins in January 1960, she and Carl Braden had brought John McFerren to Washington, D.C., to testify at the civil rights hearings cosponsored by SCEF and SCLC. His emotional testimony was one of the most compelling moments of the hearings. As she did with many of the local activists whom she met during her years of organizing, Baker adopted the McFerrens into her political family and kept in touch with them long after the struggle in Fayette County had subsided.[14]

Baker introduced young SNCC activists to the McFerrens so that they could learn from the example, experiences, and perspectives of poor black people.[15] The struggle in Fayette and Haywood Counties was in crucial respects a model of indigenous black defiance and self-defense. The Tennessee tenant farmers were the victims of enormously exploitative and repressive conditions. Once moved to act, however, they were not afraid to stand up for themselves with unrelenting courage and defend themselves forcefully if necessary. When shots rang out one night from a passing carload of white men, a group of armed black men immediately mobilized to defend the tent encampment. Early B. Williams, who had been shot, was transported to a nearby hospital under armed escort.[16] For Ella Baker, this

which so many rural black people suffered but also, perhaps more important, the depth of the determination that resided in such communities. Poor black southerners were not downtrodden victims; they were eager to fight to improve their lot.

Baker was rarely surprised by an upsurge of protest in places like Fayette County because, as a keen observer of southern black culture, she could detect rumblings beneath the surface of seemingly calm situations. As she talked with people like Papa Tight in Shreveport and the sharecroppers in Tennessee, they sometimes spoke about things only tangentially related to politics, but she was collecting valuable information all the same. In such seemingly casual conversations, she listened for what historian Earl Lewis calls the "semi-public transcript" of opposition within oppressed communities. Building on the work of political scientist James Scott, historian Robin Kelley, and others, Lewis suggests that what people laugh at, the songs they create and listen to, and the slang they use are all subtle indicators of a nascent political consciousness. A careful, reflective listener can ascertain what those people, if organized, might be prepared to do politically.[17] Ella Baker wanted the young activists in SNCC to hear the stories of Tennessee sharecroppers, to look to them as sources of inspiration, and to extract lessons about the potential, and the dangers, as they could be applied to similar struggles in the future.[18]

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DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHY FROM PRACTICE

Between 1960 and 1962, as the historian Clayborne Carson's organizational biography of the group demonstrates, SNCC underwent a dramatic evolution in its politics, culture, and personnel. Many of the students who had attended the Shaw meeting dropped out to pursue other interests or to return to their studies. Those who remained with the organization were augmented by a new cadre of activists who were more determined and more politically savvy than their predecessors. One of them was James Forman. A thirty-three-year-old former teacher from Chicago, Forman joined SNCC's staff in 1961 after he had gained a reputation for his organizing skills in Fayette County. Years later, he recalled that he was told by Charles Jones that he had to meet with Ella Baker's approval before SNCC would make a final decision to hire him. Of course, this practice was entirely unofficial; Baker did not believe that any leader should exercise veto power. But because SNCC staff held her in such high esteem, her

the obligatory pilgrimage to Baker's Harlem apartment to discuss the job, the organization, and politics in general. She sized him up and authorized the hire.[19]

With the skills and passions that Forman and other new recruits brought with them and the help of Ella Baker's subtle, yet powerful guidance, SNCC grew far beyond what its founders had envisioned. Explicit references to religion gradually gave way to a more secular and militant rhetoric, and nonviolence was increasingly viewed as a necessary tactic rather than as a sacred philosophy. Most significantly, the SNCC activists' involvement in struggles like the one in Fayette County directly impacted their class politics, grounding them firmly with black people who were rich in wisdom and courage but poor in terms of economic assets.

When SNCC members went into small towns and cities throughout the South, for example, they first paid their respects to the clergy and to others who might cast themselves as the leaders and representatives of the black community. But then the activists knocked on doors in the most run-down parts of town and in the most remote and impoverished rural areas. Gradually, those doors creaked open. The activists sat down with individuals who had little formal education and asked them to analyze the situation around them and help shape the agenda for change. This was a major departure, both in substance and in style, from the practices of national and regional groups like the NAACP, CORE, and SCLC, which operated on the assumption that leadership came from an educated, professional, or clerical class.[20] Baker understood, however, that small-town black communities were often polarized by class differences, even as they were united by Jim Crow segregation. She had learned from experience that using local elites as conduits to the masses could actually backfire, lessening the credibility of outside organizers who were trying to gain access to a particular community.

In pursuing a more egalitarian political practice, SNCC broke new ground. According to the Mississippi historian John Dittmer, "Not since Reconstruction had anyone seriously proposed that illiterate sharecroppers had the same right to the franchise as did teachers, lawyers and doctors."[21] This radical departure from the approach favored by liberal civil rights groups was heavily influenced by Ella Baker's ideas and organizing style. Through her own life, teaching, and example, she connected the young activists to a tradition of black radicalism that hearkened back to the early twentieth century and before.

In the early 1960s, SNCC organizers were not only challenging white supremacy; they were contributing to the dismantling of the caste system that existed within many black communities.[22] At every opportunity, Baker reiterated the radical idea that educated elites were not the natural leaders of black people. Critically reflecting on her work with the NAACP, she observed, "The leadership was all from the professional class, basically. I think these are the factors that have kept it [the NAACP] from moving to a more militant position." She urged SNCC, as she had urged SCLC and the NAACP, to seek out "indigenous leaders," ordinary people engaged in struggle, regardless of credentials or social class, and to affirm their right to define the politics and direction of the movement.[23]

Local autonomy was the cornerstone of a meaningfully engaged democratic practice. If local people did not have ownership of the struggle they were engaged in, they would be beholden politically to others who would not necessarily experience the consequences of that struggle. Julian Bond observed that the goal of SNCC organizers in local struggles was to help generate "a community movement with local leadership, not a new branch of SNCC."[24] Jane Stembridge, who spent time in the Greenwood office after working closely with Baker in Atlanta, put it this way: "The field staff saw itself as playing a very crucial but temporary role in this whole thing. Go into a community. As soon as local leadership begins to emerge, get out of the community, so that the leadership will take hold and people will not continue to turn to you for guidance. You work yourself out of a job rather than trying to maintain yourself in a position or your organization. It doesn't matter if you go in and call yourself a SNCC worker or a CORE worker or just a person who is there."[25]

The real test of a democratic leadership was whether groups and individuals could downplay their partisan and personal interests for the greater good. Proprietary claims to or by an organization, or to any position within it, were corrupting, Baker believed, arguing instead for placing the ideals and politics of the movement above the interests of any one organization, including SNCC itself. This approach stood in contrast to that of the NAACP, which sought to exert tighter control over its branches despite, and sometimes because of, aggressive local leadership and resistance to centralized authority.

Baker recognized that an organizer's own personal interests and desires might readily become conflated with the larger goals of the group, and the group's partisan interests might get conflated with the goals of a larger movement; so she took deliberate steps to prevent such confusion. Her motto was "I was never working for an organization. I always tried to work for a cause. And that cause was bigger than any organization."[26] Having repeatedly built, let go, and rebuilt movement groups, on some level, Baker considered the process healthy and rejuvenating.

This philosophy accounts, in part, for Baker's rather nomadic political existence and explains why she never stayed with any one organization for very long. Although she maintained a home base in New York City for most of her adult life, she was on the road more often than not. From 1957 on, she had a sparsely furnished apartment in Atlanta's all-black Wallahuje residential hotel. Aside from the family photographs she brought with her from New York, the apartment revealed little about the tastes, preferences, or private life of its occupant. Her interests were revealed primarily by the papers, magazines, books, reports, clippings, and letters that accumulated in piles awaiting her attention. This was a place to read, to catch up on what was happening in other places, and to reflect on the struggle. Except for fixing her signature lamb stew occasionally, she did not cook much, and her refrigerator and cupboards were usually bare. She also paid little attention to other domestic tasks.[27]

Baker's mobility and her belief that organizational loyalties should remain fluid made for a migratory political existence. Before she became involved in SNCC, her political ties were tenuous at best. Because she never stayed in any one organization for very long, she was never able to influence how an organization like the NAACP or SCLC would evolve politically or structurally, as she had once hoped to do. At the NAACP and SCLC, she worked around the centers of power, organizing those who remained on the margins. Yet her identity as a political vagabond helped her because she was always perceived as an independent person without vested interests in one faction or another. This earned her enormous credibility with the young people of SNCC, as it had done with grassroots activists. In the early 1960s, SNCC became the political home and family that she had sought for so long. She was finally settling down—at least temporarily.

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SOUTHWEST GEORGIA: POLITICAL DIFFERENCES AND PERSONAL LOYALTIES

As SNCC became a more visible and formidable political force, the more established civil rights groups viewed the upstarts as naive and cocky. They resented SNCC for encroaching on what they regarded as their political turf. These tensions came to a head in the small town of Albany, Georgia ("all

From Barbara Ransby, Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement

economic structures of white supremacy from their students. Discovering the enormous power of people acting together to confront injustice and inequality, SNCC volunteers and staff felt reassured of the vision that had drawn them to the organization.

One of the critical organizing principles that Ella Baker taught, and SNCC absorbed, was the meaning of self-determination in the context of grassroots organizing in the South. For Baker, this principle was not an exclusively racial proposition, as it was often deployed, but simply the democratic idea that an oppressed group, class, or community had the right to determine the nature of the fight to end its oppression. Such self-control of the movement's leadership by those it purported to represent was essential to Baker's view. Most of SNCC's Mississippi work in the summer of 1964 was carried out under the auspices of a loose coalition called the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO). So, through COFO and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), SNCC worked to advance the right of poor black Mississippians to determine their own future.

The decision by SNCC to conduct a major grassroots voting rights campaign in Mississippi in 1961–64 was audacious. From Baker's long experience in the state and from the local activists with whom she had put them in contact, SNCC activists knew that Mississippi's notorious reputation was well earned. Some within the organization dubbed the project the "Move on Mississippi," as if an invasion of enemy territory were being planned. Some of the most brazen and vicious southern segregationists in the South were at the helm of state government there, and Mississippi had a long history of unchecked, often officially sponsored racial violence toward the black population. Many national civil rights leaders had simply written off the state. As Andrew Young, then an SCLC staff person, put it: "We knew the depths of the depravity of southern racism. We knew better than to try to take on Mississippi."[1]

Baker's perspective on Mississippi was precisely the opposite of Young's. She felt that the movement had to organize within the belly of the beast of southern racism rather than on its safer margins. This viewpoint was an expression of her class politics as well. In her words, "If you were supposed to be interested in bettering the lot of the have nots, where . . . [would] be a better start [than] . . . in the rural areas . . . [where] people had the hardest lives?"[2] Baker taught SNCC activists to look to the rural towns and plantations of Mississippi—"areas of greatest direst need . . . where people had [the] least"—as their central organizing challenge.[3] This was not a challenge to be undertaken lightly or quickly. The project that burst on the national stage in 1964 as Mississippi Freedom Summer grew out of years of less publicized, but no less arduous, work throughout the state.

Ella Baker's contacts with grassroots activists in Mississippi stretched back for decades, and she kept in close touch with her friends and allies there even when her work centered on other places. As SNCC sought to extend its organizing efforts into rural and small-town communities across the South, Baker turned to veteran activists in Mississippi to teach a new crop of organizers about mobilizing the masses of people to confront the power of southern elites.

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AMZIE AND RUTH MOORE

Amzie and Ruth Moore were SNCC's first real contacts in Mississippi in 1960, and Bob Moses returned to the South to reconnect with them in 1961. Ella Baker had known the Moores for years. In many ways, they were exceptional people, but their story was not unlike that of many other militant local activists scattered throughout the region who had long fought racism and repression without much support from outside the South. As Charles Payne put it, they "had been accumulating political capital for a decade, in the form of contacts, networks, knowledge of resources, and personal credibility, capital they were able to transfer to the younger activists" whom Bob Moses and Ella Baker would introduce them to.[4] They were eager to receive the help that SNCC was offering, especially with the understanding that local leadership would remain in charge.

Amzie Moore had grown up dirt poor and left Mississippi for the first time when he was drafted into the military during World War II. He had joined the Black and Tan Party, a group of Negro Republicans active in the South during the 1930s, and later he helped found the Regional Council for Negro Leadership. After the war, Moore served as the head of the Cleveland, Mississippi, chapter of the NAACP. As the owner-operator of a small gas station, he had a greater margin of economic independence from whites than most black people in and around Cleveland. But even independent black business people were hardly immune to racist discrimination. During the 1950s, Amzie and his wife, Ruth, suffered constant harassment and economic reprisals as a result of their activism. Ruth Moore, a beautician whose small business also gave her a certain independence, was as active, committed, and fearless as her husband. Ella Baker and Ruth Moore maintained a close relationship, even when Ruth's and Amzie's marriage fell apart during the early 1960s.[5]

Amzie Moore, like Ella Baker, had numerous run-ins with the national office of the NAACP. He felt that the officers in Washington and New York were sometimes insensitive to the perilous conditions faced by organizers in the Deep South. An outspoken militant, Moore often slept with a gun under his pillow.[6] He was as intolerant of the snobbery of local black elites as he was of the vitriolic racism of Mississippi whites. In 1955, he complained: "The Negroes with money are in a world of their own here in the State of Mississippi. They live to themselves and they don't want things to change . . . they are not interested in the freedom of the common Negro of Mississippi, but they buy their fine cars, furs, homes and stay very much to themselves."[7] Despite their slight degree of economic independence, Ruth and Amzie Moore never enjoyed much financial stability, and by the mid-1950s they had been pushed to the verge of financial ruin. White-owned banks and businesses, in a carefully concerted effort, threatened them with foreclosure and bankruptcy. After Amzie Moore insisted that these problems were the result of his NAACP activities, the national office had offered some help, but the couple's financial situation remained precarious. It was, in part, the desperate plight of organizers like the Moores that had led Baker and her New York allies to form In Friendship in 1956. Amzie and Ruth Moore were among of the first recipients of In Friendship's aid.

Ella Baker made frequent visits to Mississippi during the 1950s and 1960s, often staying at the Moores' home in Cleveland. The bustling household felt more like an office, meeting place, and movement hotel than a private residence. In a letter to Ruth expressing gratitude for her hospitality, Baker joked, "Thank you for the very lovely stay in your home. It meant so much to me to be able to 'rest' for a few days. I say rest advisedly because there is not too much difference between your home and my office [as far as] the number of calls and requests for information and assistance are concerned."[8] The Moores, like the Shuttlesworths in Birmingham and the Simpkinses in Shreveport, were the kind of fervent and unwavering fighters Baker was always drawn to. She wanted the young people in SNCC to meet them and learn from their example.

More than any other person in SNCC, Bob Moses benefited from Amzie Moore's political tutelage. Baker knew that Moore, who had only finished two years of high school, had much to teach the Harvard-trained Moses about the politics and economics of racism in the Delta and how to organize against it. Years later, Bob Moses acknowledged his debt: "Amzie was my father in the movement . . . that was how I learned to organize . . . I heard my way through the world. I listened to Amzie. I just listened and listened. I watched him, how he moved."[9] Moses was immediately convinced that the national movement had to support the kind of work that Amzie and Ruth Moore had been doing in Mississippi. The initial contacts between Moses and the Moores were the organizational beginnings of the efforts that would peak in the summer of 1964 with the national focus on the Mississippi movement, Freedom Summer, and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

When Bob Moses said, "We did for the people of Mississippi what Ella Baker did for us,"[10] he meant that SNCC field organizers and volunteers tried to absorb the wisdom of indigenous leaders, to build respectfully on the preexisting strength within the communities where they organized, and to provide whatever was lacking—funds, time, youthful energy, and certain skills. In other words, Moses followed the example that Baker had set within SNCC. She never professed to having created SNCC's ideology; rather, she identified and nourished the radical democratic tendencies apparent in the thinking of many of those who were drawn to the organization.

When Bob Moses returned to Mississippi in the summer of 1961 to lend his services to the fledgling movement there, Amzie Moore advised him that conditions were not right for a campaign centered in Cleveland, Mississippi. Moore felt that there was not enough local support there, even though he was personally eager to work with SNCC, having been impressed by what he saw and heard at the newly formed organization's Atlanta conference the previous October. So Moses looked around for another home base from which to launch the Mississippi organizing drive. He settled on McComb, a small town in the hilly southwest corner of the state, to be the headquarters for SNCC's voter registration project. An activist in the town had read about Moses's plans to register voters in Mississippi in *Jet Magazine*; he contacted Amzie Moore, who suggested that Moses look to McComb for a more promising start.[11] Moses enthusiastically agreed. This would be his first real attempt at organizing and the first major community-based campaign for SNCC's voting rights initiative.

The McComb campaign proved to be a baptism by fire. Within a few months of Moses's arrival, there were mass arrests, beatings, expulsions from school, and at least one murder—that of Herbert Lee on September 25, 1961. Lee—an illiterate black dairy farmer, the father of nine children, and a longtime member of the local NAACP—had driven Moses around town to meet local people. According to movement observers, he was singled out

for retribution by local racists and was shot dead on a public street by a local white man, allegedly over a personal dispute.[12] After the controversy and violence of those first few months, the people who had initially welcomed Moses with open arms began to pull away. C. C. Bryant, the person who had invited Moses to McComb, was a railroad worker, part-time barber, NAACP branch leader, local bibliophile.[13] But after arrests, beatings, and confrontational protests, especially the unpopular arrest of some 100 high school students, Bryant took a step back and distanced himself from the organization.[14] Moses and the volunteers who came to work with him in McComb nevertheless persevered, even when support from their initial contacts began to wane.

What kept Moses in McComb was the support that SNCC received from groups that had previously been on the margins of the town's black society and had been largely ignored by its civil rights leaders. Perhaps SNCC's greatest accomplishment in McComb was its ability to recruit local young people into its ranks. Brenda Travis, the intrepid teenager whom Baker protected and guided, was a native of McComb and joined the movement there. Hollis Watkins and Curtis Hayes, two teenagers from just outside McComb, also joined forces with SNCC as a result of the 1961 campaign; they eventually became two of the movement's strongest local organizers.[15] Watkins had grown up on a farm in southwest Mississippi, gone off to California after high school, and returned south after witnessing the Freedom Rides on television.[16] The local teenagers participated in desegregation protests at the local Woolworth's drugstore and the Greyhound bus station, leading to their arrest. Brenda Travis was expelled from school for her participation in the movement, an action that triggered a walk-out by sympathetic classmates. Impressed by the boldness and courage that SNCC organizers demonstrated, impatient youths were inspired to join the movement and soon provided inspiration to others.

Another variable that sustained SNCC during its difficult early campaigns was the unwavering moral and material support of Ella Baker. While one-time supporters like C. C. Bryant criticized SNCC for endangering children, Baker obtained financial resources from SCEF, offered strategic advice and encouragement at meetings, and aided individuals whose personal lives were thrown into turmoil because of their involvement. She also reminded SNCC organizers to involve parents and seek parental permission before working with minors in order to minimize opposition. Time and again, Baker expressed her confidence in SNCC's leaders, encouraging them to go forward despite their inevitable mistakes. Such reassurance from the voice of experience was essential to young visionaries just entering the vicious fray of race politics.[17]

According to John Dittmer, one of the lessons SNCC learned from the McComb campaign was that "the black middle class was under severe economic constraints and could not be counted on to support the assault against segregated institutions."[18] This observation points to a pivotal factor in the campaign.[19] Although SNCC was initially welcomed by the local black middle class—the people with education, reputations, and clout—as the struggle intensified that support quickly evaporated.[20] Dittmer concludes that during the course of the McComb campaign SNCC "intuitively grasped a vital part of its future mission in Mississippi: developing a sense of worth and leadership among people who had never been held in high regard in their communities."[21]

The SNCC organizers shook hands with sharecroppers who had dirt under their fingernails and sat at the feet of workers with dust on their boots. They sat on the front porches of ramshackle tenant houses not only to teach but also to learn. Their attitude, like Baker's, was based on the understanding that expertise and wisdom could emanate from outside a formally educated cadre of leaders. According to one SNCC activist, Baker taught the young people in the movement who had achieved some level of formal education that they were no smarter, and certainly no better, than the uneducated farmers and workers in the communities where they were organizing.[22] Barbara Jones (Omolade), a black SNCC worker from New York City, saw in Baker an example of how educated black organizers should comport themselves. "There was no room for talking down to anyone," she recalled. "There was never the expressed attitude that a person who was illiterate had something less to offer." Rather, Baker set a tone that said, "you've got your education, now sit and learn . . . learn what the conditions are that people have around . . . and it was hip to do that at that time."[23]

As she had done in the past, Baker emphasized that when the privileged took it upon themselves to speak for the underprivileged, the whole movement was in danger of losing its direction. Referring to whites with class and racial advantages and to blacks with "good positions," she argued that "those who are well-heeled don't want to get un-well-heeled. . . . If they are acceptable to the Establishment and they're wielding power which serves their interest, they can assume too readily that that also serves the interest

of everybody."[24] This perspective on oppression and leadership crystallized during SNCC's early years in Mississippi and became a critical component of SNCC's work from that point on.

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DRIVING DEEPER INTO THE DELTA

The McComb campaign led SNCC organizers to conclude that the struggle had to be intensified if any meaningful change was going to occur. But how that should be done was the subject of ongoing debate. Those who joined Bob Moses in McComb—including Reggie Robinson, John Hardy, Chuck McDew, Charles Sherrod, Ruby Doris Smith, Travis Britt, and Marion Barry—had varying views on what route the Mississippi movement should take. A lingering source of disagreement, which had only been temporarily resolved at the Highlander Folk School meeting on August 11, 1961, was the question of whether SNCC should focus on direct action desegregation campaigns or on the voter registration drive that Bob Moses had initially envisioned. Slowly surfacing was another issue: what should be the future role of northern, mostly white, volunteers? Some SNCC activists reasoned that rural Mississippi's isolation was itself part of the problem of engendering significant change; from their point of view, SNCC needed to draw the glare of media attention to the conditions of disenfranchised blacks in places like McComb and lean on their northern white liberal allies, who professed to be great believers in black freedom, to take a firmer stand in defense of civil rights. One possible scenario was to bring in more outside supporters whose presence would attract such attention. But there was not unanimity on this. Some SNCC staff felt that the initiative should remain with the local people themselves. If SNCC focused on strengthening their skills, confidence, and resolve, they argued, all else would flow from that strength.[25]

SNCC undertook its massive voter registration campaign in Mississippi under the umbrella of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), a Mississippi-based coalition that was originally organized by Aaron Henry as an ad hoc group in 1961 and was reconstituted a year later by the new constellation of organizations active in the state. It included SNCC, CORE, a somewhat reluctant NAACP, and an even less active SCLC.[26] Much of the personnel and leadership came from SNCC and CORE. In 1962, COFO received a $14,000 grant through the Voter Education Project (VEP) administered by the Southern Regional Council, with funds provided by the Field and Taconic Foundations. The money helped defray the costs of purchasing supplies, printing literature, and providing subsistence-level stipe (in some cases ten dollars a week) to organizers, who were called f staff.[27] While COFO was most visible to the campaign's northern, w supporters, SNCC and, in some places, CORE represented the campaig black Mississippians.

Of the nearly two dozen local projects that SNCC initiated in Mississ during the early 1960s—including ones in Canton, Holly Springs, Natc Harmony, Clarksdale, and Jackson—the movement in the Delta commu of Greenwood perhaps best reflected the spirit of organizing that Ella Ba advocated. Here, in what would become SNCC's state headquarters, lu tive cotton plantations were thriving while white vigilantes carried ruthless repression. In the summer of 1962, young Sam Block, a nativ Cleveland, Mississippi, and one of Amzie Moore's protégés, arrived on scene and began the tedious process of meeting people, building relat ships, trying to identify local militants, and earning people's trust thro his dogged perseverance, thus following Baker's edict that activists n people where they are. Block walked the streets and met local people. not only talked to people about SNCC, voting rights, segregation; he a listened to the locals talk about their fears, concerns, and aspirations. Ev tually, he asked people to come together in small meetings at the Elks H where at first all they did was sing freedom songs. He gradually introdu political topics to the discussion. The project was slow to gain momentu but after a while Greenwood would produce some of SNCC's most talen and hard-working local organizers, such as Laura McGhee and Ji Johnson. Julian Bond, a SNCC leader, described Sam Block's organiz style as essentially the formula for SNCC's day-to-day work: "SNCC or nizers spent their first weeks in a new community meeting local leaders formulating with them an action plan for more aggressive registrat efforts, and recruiting new activists through informal conversation, pa taking house to house canvassing, and regular mass meetings."[28]

While Greenwood remained a vital center of movement activity throu out the 1960s, SNCC's work in Ruleville, Mississippi, in adjacent Sunflo County, attracted a middle-aged black woman who would come to pers ify the heart and soul of the Mississippi movement: Fannie Lou Hamer. C of twenty children born to impoverished sharecroppers in Montgom County, Mississippi, Hamer never had the opportunity to obtain m formal education, but she was acutely aware of the world around her a the injustices that defined it. A woman of deep religious faith, she o remarked that the civil rights movement appealed to her as much as it

because she was simply "sick and tired of being sick and tired." When in August 1962 SNCC's James Forman and SCLC's James Bevel held a meeting about voter registration in Ruleville, Hamer was in attendance and volunteered, along with seventeen others, to travel to nearby Indianola, the closest courthouse, to register to vote. On her return home, she was fired from the plantation she had worked on for eighteen years; later, she was harassed and shot at by local vigilantes. These attacks only steeled her resolve, she allied herself with SNCC and began to work full time for the movement. In 1963, on her way back from a voter registration workshop in Charleston, South Carolina, Hamer and several others were jailed in Winona County and beaten in retaliation for their activism, an experience that Hamer would never forget and would often talk about. Buoyed by her strong religious faith, she was undeterred. What did she have to lose? she reasoned. "The only thing they could do to me was to kill me and it seemed like they'd been trying to do that a little bit at a time ever since I could remember."[29]

The first statewide campaign that SNCC and COFO carried out in Mississippi, and in which Fannie Lou Hamer and Ella Baker were intimately involved, was Freedom Vote. Held in November 1963, this was a mock election campaign meant to prove that the black electorate would cast their ballots if they were not blocked or intimidated from doing so. The campaign was carried out with the aid of student volunteers, most of whom were white, many of them from elite northern universities. Bob Moses, Ella Baker, and Amzie Moore had long understood that bringing outside resources to bear on the situation in Mississippi was necessary if things were ever going to change. Who, when, and on what terms were always in question. Allard Lowenstein, an eccentric white liberal activist and part-time academic, became the controversial figure at the center of the effort to get some of the attention and human resources the movement so desperately needed. Unfortunately, he made every effort to try to define the terms on which that support would be provided, which meant that he wanted the focus to be on him and his own liberal Cold War agenda. With some reservations, Moses agreed to allow Lowenstein, who had been introduced to SNCC through Clarksdale activist Aaron Henry, to recruit some of his former students from Yale and Stanford to work on the Freedom Vote mock election.[30] The decision to accept the role proposed for Lowenstein and this new cohort of volunteers was not made lightly. It would have far-reaching consequences, both positive and negative, for the evolution of the Mississippi movement.

The plan was to have volunteers travel around the state collecting b lots in an unofficial election process free of intimidating and uncooperat registrars and other deterrents that typically thwarted black participati A successful turn-out would expose the fact that vigilante violence, e nomic harassment, and blatant corruption, not apathy, were the obstac that rendered 98 percent of the state's black electorate voteless.[31] Or nizers ran an interracial slate in the November election, in part to dem strate that the campaign was not solely about race but about buildin more inclusive democracy in Mississippi. The gubernatorial candidate v Aaron Henry, the black Clarksdale pharmacist and state NAACP preside and Ed King, the antiracist white chaplain of Tougaloo College, ran lieutenant governor.[32]

While there may have been some rationale for a biracial gubernato ticket in 1963, the reason that two men headed a political campaign which women formed the largest base of local support is more complex foreshadowed the intricate gender politics of the late 1960s.

Some men and women in SNCC felt that black men should be the titu heads of black freedom organizations, thus serving as a counter to racist culture that sought to systematically relegate them to the denigra status of boys.[33] Some also felt that black women, long denied the "pr sions" and "protection" ostensibly afforded to southern white ladies, served to be shielded from the harshest aspects of political combat. Th sentiments notwithstanding, there were inclinations and ideological in ences pulling SNCC and local activists in another, more egalitarian, di tion. Passionate new democratic tendencies pushed hard against old triarchal habits. The determination to allow each individual to mak contribution and play a role in his or her own emancipation; the emph on giving voice and space to those who had previously been excluded fr leadership; and the desire to "free men's minds" as Charles Sherrod o put it—all of these sentiments (none of which were articulated specific in terms of gender) informed the creation of a fluid structure in wh women's leadership could and did thrive.[34]

The inclination toward inclusion and a genuinely participatory dem racy militated against the tendency to replicate the dominant socie concept of proper gender roles, which most black southern colleges tively encouraged. Even though the violation of dominant gender r may have seemed an awkward form of racial transgression (black wom who challenge sexism to this day are sometimes made to feel like betray of black men), it was a violation many women in SNCC made in th

actions, if not in their verbal or written expressions. This nonsexist climate was attributable in no small measure to Ella Baker's influence. Writer Carol Mueller argues that Baker actually introduced the concept of participatory democracy to the progressive movements of the 1960s.[35] Others attribute it to Tom Hayden of the Students for a Democratic Society. Whether or not Baker technically introduced the idea, she lived and breathed and modeled it. It was the practice of a new type of inclusive, consensus-oriented democracy, which opened organizational doors to women, young people, and those outside of the cadre of educated elites. Baker helped mold a political environment that did not offer any explicitly feminist rhetoric but in practice countered overt sexist practices and rigidly circumscribed gender roles. This does not mean that sexism did not exist—but it was not institutionally supported or encouraged.

There were chauvinist comments, to be sure. The most often-cited is Stokely Carmichael's off-handed remark in 1964 that the role of women in the struggle was "prone." Even so, there was no serious language, consistent with SNCC's ethos, that allowed Carmichael or anyone else to justifiably exclude women, especially black women, from work they wanted to do.[36] This was one of the points he wanted to make emphatically in an interview in 1995 when he was deathly ill and bedridden. "I would not have been taken seriously as a leader of an organization like SNCC if I had not taken seriously the leadership of women," he insisted. "A woman like Ella Baker would not have tolerated it," he added.[37] Carmichael's actions back up his words to a large extent. He appointed several women to posts as project directors during his tenure as chairman and applauded and occasionally deferred to the leadership of women like Ella Baker and Fannie Lou Hamer.

Some sociologists and some historians argue that as the 1960s wore on and militancy increased, a certain macho rhetoric began to undermine the full participation of women. This is only partly true. There was indeed more macho rhetoric, but militancy and radicalism, if defined broadly, were not masculine domains. In fact, in the latter half of the 1960s more women were in charge of SNCC projects than during the first half. Those sectors of the movement most prone to subjugating and marginalizing women were those individuals and organizations that portrayed women in a "black nation" as supportive complements to male political and decision-making roles. It was this kind of romanticized male dominance that Ella Baker worried about, although this was not a commonly held view in SNCC. Still, she felt it was important enough that she made a public statement about it. In a 1969 speech to the Institute of the Black World in Atlanta, she raised a concern that she discussed more in depth in an interview with John Britton a year earlier. This was the idea that a distorted view of black history led some in the movement to argue that women were beholden to men. Baker argued against the "concept," prevalent after 1965, "that black women had to bolster the ego of the male." In her words, "This implied that the black male had been treated in such a manner as to have been emasculated both by white society and by black women because the female was the head of the household. We began to deal with the question of the need of black women to play the subordinate role. I personally have never thought of this as being valid."

By the late 1960s, SNCC embodied many variations of nationalism, but the more sexist formulations of cultural nationalists that Baker pointed to never materialized. Women like Muriel Tillinghast, Fay Bellamy, and Ruby Doris Smith Robinson were vocal in bringing the organization's popular chairman, Carmichael, down a notch or two when he began to make statements without consulting the organization.[38] From 1960 until the organization's demise, many committed and capable women organizers found the expression of their political ambitions in SNCC, in ways that were simply not possible in SCLC or even the NAACP. As Charles Payne put it: "Women obviously represented an enormous pool of untapped leadership potential. . . . SNCC, despite the traditional expectations of sex roles held by many of its members, was structurally and philosophically open to female participation in a way that many older organizations would not have been."[39] And if any place was fertile ground for the growth of black women's leadership, it was Mississippi.

While the struggle for political power in Mississippi represented a landmark in the southern-based struggle for black freedom, that forward movement came at a hefty price. Violence, harassment, and intimidation escalated, and movement leaders lived with the constant threat of attack.[40] And women were not spared. Homes and offices were routinely firebombed, and arrests, beatings, and death threats were commonplace. Regular acts of violence directed at so-called uppity or dissident black individuals had kept the old order in place. As the black resistance movement grew, violence was increasingly directed at it.

Ella Baker got a first-hand look at the political terrorism that dominated the local scene when she traveled through the state drumming up support for the Freedom Vote campaign in the fall of 1963. On October 31, Halloween night, Baker and two of her young colleagues had a frightening

encounter with a gang of local white thugs. Baker had just delivered a speech to a group of black businessmen in Natchez, Mississippi. The engagement had not been a rousing success. Baker was anxious to move on to her next appointment in Port Gibson, some forty miles away. Two volunteers, George Green, a twenty-year-old African American activist from Greenwood, and Bruce Payne, a twenty-one-year-old white political science graduate student from Yale University, were assigned to escort her from Natchez to her next stop. Even though she virtually lived on the road, Baker had never learned to drive; so she often relied on others to help her get from place to place.

When Payne arrived to pick Baker up at the house where she had been staying, he told her he was being followed. In an obvious gesture of intimidation, the two cars that had been following him circled the house while he was inside. After some hesitation, Baker, Payne, and Green decided to take their chances and travel as planned. When they started off, the cars continued to follow them; and when they stopped for directions at a gas station outside of Natchez, Payne was attacked and brutally beaten. As he got out of the car, the men jumped out of their car and punched and kicked him; they banged his head against the gas pumps before jumping back into their car and speeding off. Although Payne suffered facial lacerations and bruises, he did not need to be hospitalized, and the threesome drove on to Port Gibson, where they immediately filed complaints with the U.S. Attorney General's Office and the FBI. Several days later, Green and Payne, who were both warned to stay out of town, had another run-in with the two same men and were shot at and run off the road.[41]

Ella Baker had seen the ugly face of southern vigilantism many times, yet every encounter was horrifying. The beating she witnessed that Halloween proved to be a preview of the even more deadly violence that awaited SNCC activists as their campaign for racial and economic justice in Mississippi shifted into high gear. Baker was both fearful and determined. Despite harassment and intimidation by local officials, between 80,000 and 85,000 Mississippians cast their ballots for Freedom candidates. The mock election contradicted the myth that blacks in the state were politically apathetic and would not vote even if given the opportunity.

Despite the relative success of Freedom Vote that year, 1963 was marked by escalating violence against the southern-based Black Freedom Movement and in the society in general. The type of assault Baker witnessed outside Natchez was not uncommon. Between February and May 1963, SNCC workers and supporters in Greenwood were under constant threat, enduring shootings, firebombings, beatings, and arrests. In June, protesters in Danville were so brutally beaten by local police after a series of desegregation protests that observers labeled the event "Bloody Monday." Medgar Evers, an NAACP organizer, was shot to death in the driveway of his home that same month. His assassination sent anger and fear ricochetin through movement circles and elevated Evers to the status of a nationa martyr.[42] Headlines across the country blazoned the brutal force that Bir mingham's police chief, Eugene "Bull" Connor, unleashed against youn civil rights demonstrators and the racist recalcitrance of Alabama's newl elected governor, George Wallace, who made a personal pledge to bloc school desegregation in the state. The violence in Alabama peaked in Sep tember 1963 with the bombing of Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Churcl resulting in the tragic deaths of four young black children. The year wa also punctuated by events that put civil rights on the national politica agenda. The widely publicized March on Washington was held in Au gust 1963, and President Kennedy met with key black leaders before th march. Some civil rights leaders were optimistic, while others saw the cor tinued violence as the prelude to a second Civil War. The assassination c President Kennedy in November struck many as a culmination of the cre scendo of violence that had been building up the whole year. While the na tion mourned the death of the president, movement activists mourned th growing number of those wounded and killed within its own ranks. Civ rights advocates wondered whether the new president, Lyndon B. John son, a liberal Texan, would be more or less sympathetic to the growin black freedom struggle and willing to defend it against the attacks it wa suffering.

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REFLECTING ON EXPERIENCE AND SETTING A COURSE

In November 1963, a week after the Freedom Vote, COFO leaders, includin members of SNCC, came together for a meeting in Greenville to reflec on their experiences in the voter registration campaign and the even of the year and to make plans for the group's future work.[43] One of th most contentious topics of discussion was the role of white students withi COFO, particularly the upper-middle-class whites who had been recruite by Lowenstein to work on the November campaign. It was at the Greer ville meeting that the idea for Freedom Summer began to percolate. Eve though Bob Moses supported the idea of utilizing white volunteers in th project, there was not unanimous support. John Dittmer reported tha

"many of the veteran organizers favored, at best, a limited future role for white students," and some were opposed even to that. Ivanhoe Donaldson, a SNCC staff person, made his feelings known: "I came into SNCC and saw Negroes running things and I felt good." Inviting an influx of whites, he concluded, would mean that they would be losing "the one thing where the Negro can stand first." The heated discussion included accusations that the presence of rich white students might reinforce a deferential "slavery mentality" in southern blacks. This meeting was the continuation of a long and layered process of grappling with the movement's internal racial dynamics.[44]

At year's end, the SNCC staff met again, this time in Atlanta, in order to revisit some of the issues that had been debated so passionately in Greenville and to confront other dilemmas as well. As was SNCC's practice by 1963, the five-day meeting was divided into two parts. For the first four days, there was open discussion involving staff, ex-staff, and advisers, which presented an opportunity to discuss any issues of concern that people wanted to raise. The final day was "a closed executive committee [meeting] in which final decisions and implementation were decided upon, based on the consensus of the larger meeting."[45] Ella Baker participated actively in both parts of this important gathering.

The marathon meeting in Atlanta proved, if nothing else, that SNCC's members had moved decidedly to the left. While the events of 1964 would further radicalize some individuals within the organization, transforming them from reformists into dedicated revolutionaries, the tone and substance of the discussions at this key meeting indicate that by December 1963 a core element of SNCC's leadership was already there. Those in attendance included Bob Moses, Charles Sherrod, Frank Smith, Gloria Richardson, John Lewis, Courtland Cox, Michael Thelwell, Stokely Carmichael, Jim Forman, Dottie Zellner, Ivanhoe Donaldson, and Joyce Ladner, along with a host of staff and volunteers who floated in and out. Gloria Richardson's presence is particularly significant because she had just led a pitched battle with police in the streets of Cambridge, Maryland, in which shots were fired on both sides, protesters were teargassed, and many feared for their lives. The demands of the Cambridge activists were economic as well as political; the large number of unemployed workers there wanted jobs, as well as elected officials who were accountable to community needs.[46]

The scope of the questions that the group wrestled with over the course of the five-day gathering was posed by Howard Zinn in a presentation on the first day. Having consulted with Baker beforehand about the state o the movement and the proposals that would be considered, Zinn presente their joint views when he spoke. Sounding much like Baker, he posed th questions: "What is our economic and political goal? What kind of revolu tion do we want?" Pushing SNCC to clarify and more clearly articulate it priorities, Zinn asked, "Do we compromise on some questions to achiev other goals?" He went on to juxtapose long- and short-term goals an suggested the importance of having an organizational structure that coul help realize those goals. Baker immediately seconded Zinn's commentar and urged that there be a more in-depth and focused political discussion o some of the points he had raised before any policy decisions were made This was Freirean teaching by two masters of the technique. Through a se ries of probing questions, the two veteran activists challenged their youn counterparts to tap their own experiences in order to come up with th answers.[47] At the same time, they did not hesitate to put their own views or the table. Zinn was very specific in his attack on "the profit motive"; he emphasized that "the race problem, where SNCC got its start, has emerge into a different and bigger issue." Baker had always believed that the figh against racism was a "bigger issue," with economic, cultural, and inter national implications that could serve as a catalyst for more comprehensive social change agendas.[48]

Baker reminded those at the Atlanta meeting that the purpose of vote registration efforts was not simply to enable black people to cast a ballot fo one political party or the other. For her, voter registration, like integration, was never an end in itself, even if the campaign's outside funders may have thought so. "We got into the Voter Education Project program as a conve nient method of organizing and working in the field, knowing we might lose the money because we weren't serving VEP's purpose," she argued.[49]

The role of whites in the upcoming summer project was also taken up again. Moses pointed out that the earlier COFO meeting in Greenville had decided to limit the number of white volunteers to 100, but the plan being "pushed by Al Lowenstein [was to] pour in thousands of students and force a showdown between local and federal governments in an election year."[50] Joyce Ladner then questioned whether "there might be a negative reaction from local Negro leadership because of this outside invasion."[51] Marion Barry "argued in favor of the saturation proposal," insisting it was SNCC's "big chance to force Johnson to commit himself."[52] Moses declined to give a "personal opinion" because it was "a divisive issue," stating he would defer to the will of the group.[53] Ella Baker too was silent at this point,

allowing the group to air its feelings; she would weigh in on the issue at a subsequent meeting.

There were disagreements on this and other issues, but what was most palpable in this lengthy discussion was that no one on SNCC's core staff was thinking along the narrow lines of integration and gradual, legal reform, as most had been in 1960. Instead, they were considering broader goals and strategies that would empower the masses of black people. Activists espoused competing visions of the specific goals and objectives of the movement, but all were looking for a longer-term, more radical perspective. Their political ambitions had swelled along with their courage and determination. Frank Smith's comments in the meeting are but one example of the militant positions that were being put forward: "We need to get more hungry people to be massed to turn over the government . . . what we need on February 1 is not a demonstration but a general strike."[54]

As the discussion grew more intense, Moses intervened to suggest that what the group really needed was a systematic program of study to assess the implications of one course of action versus another. Zinn and Baker had hoped that such a program would come out of the meeting, not as a way to delay a move toward greater militancy but rather to ensure that the move was a steady and sober one. Following up on Moses's suggestion, Zinn urged SNCC to "enlist some of the best minds around" to explore ways of transforming or reordering the society. Zinn further pointed out that many academics had historical and theoretical understandings but lacked the close contact with grassroots people and struggles that informed SNCC activists' views. After several hours, "Ella Baker expressed the consensus of the group, that SNCC develop a formal program of economic education for its staff."[55]

Zinn later led a discussion on internal staff education and posed the dilemma of activist-intellectuals: "Education in the classroom tends to be removed from the real problems because educators are by nature removed from where most people live. That is the nature of academic life and why most SNCC workers have left it."[56] Zinn proposed a different type of education and scholarship, one grounded in political struggle and everyday life. A priority for Ella Baker was to ensure that the group was thinking through carefully the political implications of the actions being planned. She gently criticized the group for placing "too much value on action and not enough on planning," strongly supporting the proposal for expanding internal education, and later requesting permission to pull together a broader group of advisors, beyond just herself and Zinn, to help the young activists navigate their way forward. The group agreed.[57]

The December meeting was intense and exhausting. Many sessions lasted well into the night; even on New Year's Eve, the group did not adjourn until 9:30 P.M.[58] The meeting proved to be a pivotal moment in the life of the organization, and Ella Baker was actively engaged in pushing the process along. The leadership group emerged with a deepened commitment to the poor and working class and to the economic issues that plagued their lives; a more open and flexible, although still ill-defined, policy on self-defense, reaffirming the tactical efficacy of nonviolence while factoring in local traditions of self-protection; and finally a reiterated commitment to the importance of education within the movement.

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FREEDOM DAY, JANUARY 1964

January 22, 1964, was designated Freedom Day in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and SNCC's leadership convened again, this time for a day of action rather than of talking. Freedom Days were frequently organized as a specific time to orchestrate massive voter registration efforts in a public fashion. Cleveland Sellers remembered these events as affirming and proud moments for the young organizers: "There is nothing so awe-inspiring as a middle aged sharecropper trudging up the steps to the voter registrars office clad in brogans, denim overalls, and a freshly starched white shirt—his only one. I grew to love Freedom Days. More than anything else they provided the motivation that kept me going."[59]

A medium-sized city by Mississippi standards, located in the southwest quadrant of the state, Hattiesburg had a resistance tradition that dated back to the 1940s and before. During the late 1950s, NAACP militants such as Vernon Dahmer and Medgar Evers, two movement martyrs, had worked to build an NAACP youth chapter in the city. Joyce and Dorie Ladner, who became legendary SNCC organizers, grew up in Hattiesburg and were mentored by Dahmer and other local activists. Both women also acknowledged Ella Baker as an empowering role model who inspired, taught, and encouraged them as they matured politically. Despite the efforts at activism, there had not been much progress in Hattiesburg by 1962. So blatant was the disenfranchisement of blacks there that the federal government had indicted the local registrar, Theron Lynd, for his persistent refusal to register qualified black voters. Injunctions notwithstanding, Lynd continued to hold his post in defiance of federal mandates and continued to deny Negro citizens the right to vote.[60]

In the spring of 1962, SNCC workers Curtis Hayes and Hollis Watkins

THE THIRD RECONSTRUCTION

How a Moral Movement Is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear

The Reverend Dr. William J. Barber II

with Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

Beacon Press
Boston

down. If God had given me the strength to walk, then I was determined to hit the streets, spreading the good news of fusion coalitions to raise a cry of moral dissent and transform the systems of this world into a society of justice and peace.

Some friends of mine had encouraged me to run for state chapter president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The oldest antiracist organization in America, the NAACP was founded as a fusion movement in 1909, when Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, a highly educated African American, came together with white allies to say that the problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the color line. America could never achieve its promise of "liberty and justice for all" until it dealt with the legacy of slavery. Rooted in this racial analysis, the NAACP was and always had been a justice organization. Through the long days of Jim Crow, it built organizational power to challenge lynching and win the franchise for African Americans in the South. North Carolina's greatest organizer, Ms. Ella Baker, was a field secretary for the national NAACP office through the 1930s and '40s, establishing chapters throughout the South. In so many ways, there could have never been the fruit of a civil rights movement without the tilling and planting those NAACP chapters did at the grassroots level in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and the Black Belt of North Carolina.

But I noted that, though it had this legacy of grassroots fusion coalition justice work, the NAACP in the twenty-first century had become a top-heavy social club for civil rights elites. Due to its long tenure, it was organizationally established, claiming more members than any other antiracist justice group in the country. But if the NAACP was to lead a twenty-first-century justice movement, it would have to reclaim its legacy and expand capacity through fusionist organizing.

In the summer of 2005, that same year I got off my walker and started to walk again, I ran for president of the North Carolina NAACP, campaigning to move us from "banquets to battle." We were not, I said, the National Association for Colored People. Our organization did not

exist to hold fancy banquets where black folks could eat, drink, and be merry, remembering what the movement had done fifty years ago. No, the NAACP existed in 2005 to carry out the same work we'd been founded to do a century earlier—the work so many of our elders had sacrificed life and limb to carry forward. We were the National Association for the *Advancement* of Colored People. Our mission, I said, was to move forward, not backward.

The prophet Amos helped me name the situation we found ourselves in, both as an organization and as a nation at the beginning of the twenty-first century. A farmer in Israel in the eighth century before Christ, Amos was not a "court prophet." He wasn't an insider with the political elites of his day, but rather, in our modern language, a grassroots scholar and activist who had seen what bad social policy in Jerusalem could do to folks back home. When Amos spoke to his nation, his message was clear: "Woe unto you who are at ease in Zion." The great danger of achievement, Amos taught us, is that it leads to social amnesia.

In the course of my campaign, I made clear that black people did indeed have much to celebrate in 2005. We had survived the Middle Passage and endured 250 years of slavery to see that great Jubilee when, by the executive order of President Lincoln, all slaves were declared free. And though that freedom was curtailed and the promise of forty acres and a mule denied, we kept our eyes on the prize and defeated Jim Crow, dispelling the fear of lynch mobs and White Citizen Councils. When Jim Crow decided to go back to law school and become Mr. James Crow, Esquire, we fought him in the courts and in boardrooms, advocating for affirmative action and anti-discrimination policies. Yes, we could remember back in the day when we ate cucumber and tomato sandwiches because we couldn't afford any meat. But I told the members of the NAACP that we must, in the words of the young folk, keep it real. Most of us had more than enough for ourselves in 2005.

Our greatest temptation was to forget where we'd come from. Amos warned that, when we are at ease in Zion, we face two dangers. The first is to accommodate ourselves to an "acceptable" amount of injustice,

conceding that things will, after all, never be perfect in this broken world. The second temptation is to not stand up against those forces that inevitably rise up to say, "We must go back to Egypt, where we lived as slaves."

I pointed out to the good people of the NAACP that although many of us were doing fine, the poor people we'd met in the neighborhood surrounding our church in Goldsboro had a different story to tell about the state of justice in America. Though some of us had crossed over to the American Dream, the gap between the median income of African Americans and the median income of whites had not changed at all since 1968. If a room full of black folks knew they were doing better than they had been doing fifty years before, then simple math made clear that, somewhere, there was another room full of black folks doing worse. I told them how the city schools in Goldsboro had essentially resegregated fifty-one years after *Brown v. Board of Education*. Although this was rooted in a history of racial injustice, I also pointed out that this injustice wasn't just about black people. Twelve percent of children in North Carolina had no health insurance.[2] That wasn't just black kids. Red and yellow, black and white, poor children were suffering from what Dr. King called the greatest injustice in the modern world—a lack of the basic care we all need to be well. Meanwhile, the single greatest institution shaping black life in America at the beginning of the twenty-first century was the prison industrial complex. More black men were in prison in 2005 than had been in slavery in 1850. Most of them would be coming home at some point, but the collateral consequences of their convictions meant that they could not go to college, find housing, gain employment, or vote.

Amos warned Israel in his day that when we are at ease in Zion, we too easily ignore the cries of hurting people, participating in what I've come to call "attention violence" by failing to respond to real people's real needs. But I told the delegates to the North Carolina NAACP convention that we who believe in freedom cannot rest. We know, as Amos knew, that our well-being is connected to the well-being of those who suffer. And we know that those who want to "take back America" don't

have a point in history to take us back to where we experienced greater freedom. Even the strides forward that have been made cannot be preserved without vigilance. A justice movement can never circle camp and make celebrating past victories its primary function. No, the future of the NAACP must be as a militantly pro-justice, antiracist, antipoverty fusion coalition. If we were to have a future, I said, then it must be as a leader in helping America realize the promise of justice that had not yet been fulfilled.

Some were put off by this call to action. At the convention where the election was to be held, my wife sat down next to someone who was campaigning for one of the other candidates. He began to tell her about how I was trying to take over the NAACP and use the organization for personal gain. She listened politely, then smiled and said, "Well, if he were that bad, I can promise you I would have never married him."

Not everyone was immediately excited by a call to change, but Amos's message struck a chord with many and we won the election that summer. My task, then, was to pull together a team that could reflect this vision for what the NAACP should be. If we were going to go into battle as leaders of a new fusion coalition, we needed a leadership team to reflect our vision. We needed our veterans—black folks who'd sacrificed for generations to see the progress we could now enjoy. But we also needed faces that didn't look like us—young people and white folks who understood what it means to work with others as laborers for justice.

I asked Al McSurely, a white civil rights attorney who had worked with the Southern Conference Education Fund in the 1960s, to serve as legal redress chair for the NAACP. Al had fusion politics in his DNA. While organizing during the most intense years of the civil rights movement, he had seen his house blown up with dynamite in the North Carolina mountains and faced sedition charges in the state of Kentucky. Al defended himself all the way to the Supreme Court and became a constitutional lawyer in order to understand how our society's foundational laws protect the people's right to moral dissent. Al was a white

man, but he was just the sort of white man we needed to help lead the NAACP into battle.

Although my first task as president was to travel the state, presenting our vision to NAACP chapters and reengaging the membership, from the beginning Al and I were talking about how we needed something more—a coalition that extended beyond the base of the NAACP to include others who were concerned about justice and the good of the whole. The advancement of colored people had to be central because so much of American injustice was rooted in our history of slavery. But the NAACP's own history showed us that black folk can never move forward by ourselves. We had to find a way to stand with others, acknowledging their connections with us and our issues. Dr. King had understood this. Civil rights could not be separated from worker's rights, so his Southern Christian Leadership Conference had worked with many unions and with the AFL-CIO. King's turn against the war in Vietnam and toward the Poor People's Campaign in the last year of his life was an acknowledgement of America's deep need to recognize how military spending abroad was connected to lack of funding for the War on Poverty at home. King was gunned down just as he was beginning to articulate our need for a fusion coalition to work for the reconstruction of America.

I wrestled with these hard realities as I worked out a rhythm of traveling the state while my wife was at home during the week, then returning to Goldsboro to be with the church and our kids on the weekend, when Rebecca worked back-to-back shifts at the hospital. The state presidency of the NAACP is a volunteer position, but I wasn't just volunteering my own time. Our whole community was involved. For over twelve years, I'd practiced doing nothing alone. Members of my church volunteered to drive me everywhere I went for the NAACP. We'd visit twenty-five people in a fellowship hall down east, then drive one hundred miles to an NAACP chapter meeting at a Masonic Lodge in the Piedmont. All the time I was looking for connections, showing up to support any group in the state that was standing for justice. In a year of almost nonstop travel, I learned something important about North Carolina: there

wasn't a huge crowd standing together in any one place, but if you added up all the different groups who were standing for their justice issue, the potential base for a coalition was large—bigger, I thought, than anything North Carolina had seen before.

Sometime during my travels in 2006, I started reading the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel was a dreamer who wrote about what he saw, speaking to the issues of his day even as he invited people to think about their shared future. In the last chapter of his book, Ezekiel concludes his prophecy with a grand vision of that great day when all of Israel's divided tribes would come together in Jerusalem. From east and west, north and south, he saw them streaming in to become a great congregation. And then, in the final verse, Ezekiel declared that when we all get together, the great city of Zion will itself be renamed. "And the name of the city henceforth shall be, The LORD is there."[3]

Thinking about the people I'd met across the state, I started to sketch a list of fourteen justice tribes in North Carolina. We had folks who cared about education, folks who cared about living wages, and others who were passionate about the 1.2 million North Carolinians who didn't have access to health care. We also had groups petitioning for redress for black and poor women who'd been forcibly sterilized in state institutions, organizations advocating for public financing in elections, and historically black colleges and universities petitioning for better state funding. I included on my list groups concerned about discrimination in hiring, others concerned about affordable housing, and people opposed to the death penalty and other glaring injustices in our criminal justice system. Finally, I noted the movements for environmental justice, immigrant justice, civil rights enforcement, and an end to America's so-called "war on terror." Any one of these "tribes" had several highly committed people who'd been working on their issue for years. Some of them had been able to mobilize thousands of people for a particular event, especially when their issue was a hot news item. But Ezekiel's bold vision got me thinking about what could happen if we all came together for a People's Assembly in our state capital, to show the members of the

General Assembly who their constituents are. What if the people most concerned about these fourteen different issues could form a twenty-first-century fusion coalition? Might such an assembly even give us new language and vision for the place where we gathered?

In December of 2006, we called a meeting of potential partners for this new coalition. Representatives of sixteen organizations showed up. We started with a blank sheet of butcher paper and asked each group to write the issue they were most concerned about. Then, on another sheet, we asked them to list the forces standing in the way of what their organization wanted. We learned something important at that first retreat: though our issues varied, we all recognized the same forces opposing us. What's more, we saw something that we hadn't had a space to talk about before: *There were more of us than there were of them.*

Just a couple of weeks later, I preached at a church in Raleigh. I talked about our recent retreat and read from Ezekiel's text, saying how his vision was inspiring a new movement in North Carolina. When I was finished, an older woman in that congregation stood up and said, "Did you hear how the Scripture ended? It says, 'The Lord is there.' It doesn't say he's going to be there. It says he's already there." She stood up in that church and told the people that the Lord was already on Jones Street, where the North Carolina General Assembly meets, and we needed to join God there.

Our new coalition partners decided to call a major teach-in and a march for citizens on the second Saturday in February 2007, declaring it North Carolina's first People's Assembly. Professor Jarvis Hall of North Carolina Central University led the committee, laying out a forum for citizenship education. We asked not only what the key issues were but also what our agenda should be. What action steps would be transformative for North Carolina? We came up with a fourteen-point agenda that outlined eighty-one action steps (complicated, for sure—but our coalition partners had been working on these issues for years). Then we chose a symbol for the movement that was based on our state constitution, because we knew our movement had to be deeply rooted in North

Carolina's most basic constitutional values and in our deepest moral values. We decided we would start the teach-in with "Did you know?" questions, making people aware of poor people's reality. Then we would outline the action steps under each agenda item, showing how we could achieve what we knew was good and right.

The night before that first People's Assembly, I spoke at a rally out in Henderson, about an hour's drive north of Raleigh. It was cold that night, and I was worried. People had warned us that we were crazy to try to rally people in the middle of the winter. Would folks really come out and march in the cold? I'll never forget showing up that next morning in Raleigh and seeing a few thousand people standing outside the Progress Energy Center (now the Duke Energy Center), where we were gathering for the teach-in. When we got inside the two-thousand-seat performance hall, it was a packed house, all the way to the back row of the balcony. After coalition partners presented each item, Stella Adams stood up and called for a vote, and the fourteen-point agenda was adopted unanimously. Then we marched through downtown Raleigh to Jones Street and stood in front of the State Legislative Building to publicly present our agenda. Like Martin Luther nailing his ninety-five theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg at the beginning of the Reformation, we posted our fourteen points outside the State Legislative Building on a fourteen-foot-high placard. Black and white, young and old, the coalition we had only imagined fifty days earlier was standing before us on the Fayetteville Mall. It was an astounding sight.

Al McSurely had come up with a name: Historic Thousands on Jones Street (HKonJ). He said our movement was historic because such a diverse coalition had never gathered to stand together before a statehouse. It was focused on Jones Street because we knew we couldn't change America without changing states. And we were thousands because people needed to see with their own eyes the diversifying electorate of our state and of America. Publicizing HKonJ had been more or less an act of faith for us—not knowing who all would show up. But here we were—it was Historic Thousands on Jones Street. It was almost as if the people

were out in front of us, showing us something we could hardly find language to describe. I'll never forget the scene of all those people coming forward to sign their names to the fourteen-point agenda. A woman came to me with tears in her eyes and said, "I want to thank you for calling us together. I didn't know. I just didn't know."

Indeed, we had not known the extent of others' pain and suffering until we came together to listen. We did not know how much we had in common until we told our stories of struggle to one another. What's more, we didn't know our own power until we gathered as one coalition with a moral agenda. We could not have known as we stood on the Fayetteville Mall that cold Saturday morning what our movement would become. But six and a half years later, after Moral Mondays had become a national news story, reporters asked me to explain how thousands of people had spontaneously decided to protest, risking arrest and escalating our resistance every week for thirteen weeks. Where had this movement come from?

I didn't pretend I could explain *how* a movement had been born. But when people asked where it came from, I told them about that first HKonJ. We had first gathered on Jones Street when Democrats were in power. We had said from the beginning that our agenda wasn't Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative. We weren't advocating for left or right, but for all that is good *and* right. We had studied our history. We knew that fusion politics were central to our state's history. In 1868, before the Fusion Party won seats in an election, a black preacher named J. W. Hood and a white preacher named Samuel Stanford Ashley had worked together to rewrite our state constitution. Echoing Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, they wrote that all people are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights." But in view of North Carolina's history of race-based slavery, they made a significant addition to Mr. Jefferson's list. "Among them," they insisted, "are life, liberty, *the enjoyment of the fruits of their own labor*, and the pursuit of happiness" (emphasis mine). When men whose labor had been stolen through chattel slavery had a say in writing a new constitution, they declared

that a just compensation for labor is an inalienable right. They went on to say that "beneficent provision for the poor, the unfortunate . . . is among the first duties" of our state. And they affirmed, as a matter of democratic principle, that all power of our state's government is derived from the people.[4]

These lofty notions were not proposals for the future of North Carolina. They were constitutional guarantees that had been on the books for nearly 150 years. It didn't matter what the polls said or what campaign promises a politician made. Anyone who took the oath of office swore to uphold this constitution. From the very beginning, the HKonJ People's Assembly insisted that we were going to hold our elected officials to their oath and stand for North Carolina's deepest constitutional values.

Because our agenda was comprehensive, covering fourteen issue areas where we could move forward together with specific action steps, many asked us in the weeks following our assembly on Jones Street, "Which issues are your priority for this session? What do you want to achieve first?"

We explained that, for us, every issue was equally important. In a fusion coalition, our most directly affected members would always speak to the issue closest to their own hearts. But they would never speak alone. When workers spoke up for the right to organize and engage in collective bargaining, the civil rights community would be there with them. And when civil rights leaders petitioned for the expansion of voting rights for people of color, white workers would stand with them. Again, we knew our history. The power of the abolitionist movement through the nineteenth century, the fusionist movement in the post-Reconstruction era, and the civil rights movement in the mid-twentieth century was always the same: a diverse coalition of people with shared moral concern, refusing to be divided by fear or intimidation. In the 1960s, the white power structure of the South had resisted fusionist power in direct ways, allowing the terrorism of the Klan and employing explicit language of hate and fear. When George Wallace lost the Alabama gubernatorial race to John Patterson in 1958, he famously promised to "never be out-niggered

again." Wallace became an icon of overt racism, declaring after being elected governor four years later, "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever!"

But by the late 1960s, mainstream America had sided with the civil rights movement on the issue of desegregation, making clear its distaste for the language of hatred and fear. Those who wanted to maintain power shifted gears, adopting for the Republican Party what Richard Nixon's advisor Kevin Phillips dubbed "the Southern Strategy." The goal, as always, was to divide and conquer. But the language was not as overt as the segregationists'. Rather than talking about segregation and "our Southern way of life," politicians called for "law and order." They began to attack "entitlement programs," playing on the fears of poor whites who had themselves benefited from Social Security and the GI Bill. As long as the movement's coalition could be divided by other means, racist language wasn't needed. The Southern Strategy protected white power while appearing to be color-blind.

But after forty years of wandering in the wilderness, isolated in our issue-based tribes, our HKonJ coalition found others to stand with them on Jones Street. Like a cloud by day and a fire by night, our common agenda, rooted in North Carolina's deepest moral and constitutional values, promised to lead us forward. We did not know how long we would have to struggle or how many obstacles we would have to overcome. But we made three commitments to one another after that first HKonJ: (1) we would stay together until we saw our People's Agenda become the agenda of North Carolina's government; (2) we would go home and gather People's Assemblies in our cities and towns, building up this fusion coalition; and (3) we would come back next year on the second Saturday in February.

We had held up our vision and sent out a battle cry; now we had an army. But our troops were more like the ad hoc militias of the American Revolution than the well-trained battalions of modern militaries. A boot camp would have benefited most of us, but in the event, our lessons in nonviolent struggle would come on the field of battle.

ORGANIZING
FOR
SOCIAL CHANGE

MIDWEST ACADEMY
MANUAL FOR ACTIVISTS

KIM BOBO · JACKIE KENDALL · STEVE MAX

2

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF DIRECT ACTION ORGANIZING

How many times have you heard an organizer say something like, "People around here are so apathetic, no one wants to do anything." Yet, if you walk around the block, you will find that everyone is out industriously doing what they need to do. Most are hard at work, or going to school. A few are searching for deposit cans or hustling. Hardly any are apathetically sitting around waiting for good things to come to them. If organizers encounter people who seem apathetic, it is because we haven't been able to convince them that organizing is one way to get what they need. In fact we usually don't know what they need because we don't understand their self-interest. For that reason, this chapter on the fundamentals of organizing starts with a discussion of self-interest.

Understanding Self-Interest

An underlying assumption behind direct action organizing is that you, the leader or organizer, are working with people who are primarily motivated by self-interest. That is, they are making the effort to organize in order to get something out of it for themselves, their families, or their community. The concept of self-interest also includes motivation by a sense of moral justice or by an ideology that leads people to want to help the poor, or to seek opportunities to fight racism, curb the power of transnational corporations, or protect the environment among many other things.

Self-interest is one of the most important and misunderstood concepts in direct action organizing. It is sometimes thought of in the narrowest sense: people want more "stuff," and will organize to get it (often to get it away from someone else). But self-interest is actually a much broader concept. The word interest comes from the Latin *inter esse,* which means to be among. (There is a similar word in Spanish.) So, self-interest is self among others. That is, where do my needs fit into those of the larger society?

The concept of self-interest applies to an individual's material needs such as better housing, education, health care or wages, but it also applies to the need for friends, for respect or recognition, for being useful, important, or feeling part of a larger community. Self-interest generalized is often class-interest. Self-interest can mean the good feeling that comes from getting back at the landlord, standing up to the boss, or knocking an unaccountable politician out of office. Self-interest also applies across generational lines as people are motivated to fight for what helps their children or grandchildren. Self-interest, then, applies to what makes people feel good about themselves, as well as to what materially benefits them.

More broadly still, many people feel a need to take on the responsibilities of citizenship and to play a role in shaping public affairs. People want interaction with the larger community and often enjoy working collectively for the common good. Sometimes the self-interest is a desire to work with people of a different race or culture in order to broaden ones own perspective or to combat prejudice. Other people may be drawn to an international project, such as fighting foreign sweatshops, because they want to make a global difference.

The point here is not to make a list of all the forms of self-interest, and particularly not to imply that all of them apply to everyone. As an organizer, you can assume *nothing* about a person's self-interest that isn't actually expressed to you by that person. One of the worst mistakes an organizer can make is to say, "This is an issue about which everyone must care," or "This is an issue about which you must care because you are a _____ (vegetarian, ballet dancer, fill in the blank)." It is risky enough to act on what the polls tell you people care about. Caring is one thing, acting on it is quite another. Understanding self-interest is the key to getting people to take that step. Listening is an essential way for an organizer to learn what people's self-interest truly is. One-on-one interviews are an excellent way to get to know the values and concerns that motivate people. However you do it, organizing is the process of finding out what people want as individuals, and then helping them find *collective* ways to get it.

The Importance of Relationships

The personal is political: organizing is overwhelmingly about personal relationships. It is about changing the world and changing how individuals act together. The relationships organizers develop are their most important resource and

most important talent. To form good relationships it is essential that an organizer like people. A good organizer is motivated by strong feelings of love and caring. This should not be forgotten, because a good organizer is motivated, as well, by strong feelings of outrage and anger at how people are treated. Forming relationships with people is based on trust and respect. It is based on doing what you commit to do, and being honest and straightforward in order to advance the members' goals through building an organization.

One's ability to build relationships reflects one's basic values. In the long term, you will be known by your values. Characteristics that will enable you to build strong relationships include:

1. Caring about others. People around you can tell if you really care about them or just view them as a means to doing your job.
2. Treating everyone respectfully regardless of status or lack thereof. Those who are gracious only to the powerful will be noticed.
3. Judging not. (Judge not that ye be not judged.) Give everyone the benefit of the doubt. Try to understand why people do certain things. Develop a reputation as someone who refuses to talk negatively about other people and other organizations. (It's OK to talk negatively about the target of your campaign, in fact it's necessary.)

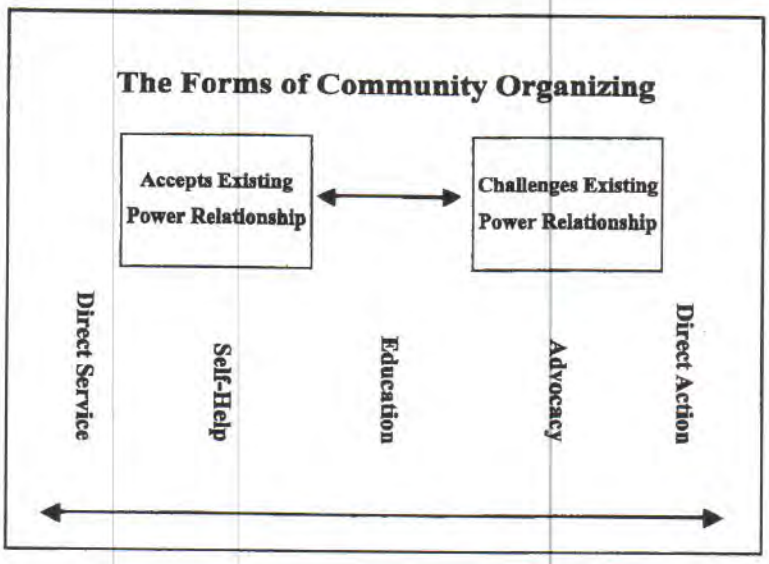
Relationships between organization members are also critical. The long term lesson that successful direct action and labor organizing teaches is that everyday people can make their own decisions, manage their own organizations and rely on each other to work for the common good, and that they can do it across lines of race ethnicity and gender. This is just the opposite of the view that we must all be guided by the economic and intellectual elite. All too often, a bad organizational experience reinforces the wrong lesson. Anyone who sets out to organize others should remember that the political implications go far beyond the immediate issues.

There are, of course, many highly successful internet based organizing efforts that do not entail any personal contact between the organizer and the people at the base. These are none-the-less based on relationships of trust and mutual interest. In order to distinguish between the two types of organizing, we will refer to primarily web based campaigns as mobilizing rather than organizing. Although there is no data to substantiate this, it seems that far more people have been mobilized to take some action via the internet than regularly attend the meetings and events of all social change organizations (including unions.)

Much organizing then is based on relationships and self-interest, broadly defined. With this foundation, we will proceed to the ways in which direct action organizing differs from other forms because not only is the personal political, the political is also political.

How Direct Action Differs From Other Types of Organizing

Different types of groups apply the word organizing to what they do although their actual functions and activities are quite different. The techniques in this book are intended to apply primarily to Direct Action Organizing and are less useful for other forms. Many organizations have a combination of programs and the staff often moves from one to another so it is useful to sort them out. **Keep in mind that there is no implication that one is better than the others, only that they are separate and different principles apply.** The main types of citizen organizations are shown in the chart.



Here is an illustration of the differences using the example of unaffordable housing and homelessness. There are many ways that people can approach this problem.

Direct Service. A service organization could operate a shelter, or build subsidized housing, make referrals, or help people apply for assistance. All of these are services done by staff for clients.

Self-Help. People who need housing could get together to provide some of the above.

Education. An education organization might study the loss of affordable housing, the rising foreclosure rate or the role of real estate development and publish its findings. A different type of education organization might prepare materials on how to read a lease.

Advocacy. An organization might advocate for people who need housing by giving testimony about the problem to a committee of Congress, or the City Council. The people who need the housing probably won't know that the advocacy group is doing this. The definition of advocacy only requires that you have a good idea, not necessarily a large base of support.

Direct Action. The people who need affordable housing organize. They agree on a solution that meets their needs. With the strength of their numbers, they pressure the politicians and officials responsible. The people directly affected by the problem take action to solve it. They might demand rent control laws, limits on luxury construction, voting rights for homeless people or the conversion of empty buildings into affordable housing, to mention just a few examples.

As the chart indicates, the forms of organizing on the left hand side tend to accept existing power relationships as they are. The forms further to the right hand side challenge power relationships.

The question of the importance of direct service work, such as feeding the homeless or caring for the aged, comes up repeatedly when direct action organizing is discussed. Often the point of an issue campaign is to win just such programs. In general, we do not recommend combining service delivery with direct action in the same organization. Funding for the service often must come from sources such as a Mayor or County Executive, who the group is trying to pressure. The officials typically retaliate by with-

drawing the funding. Often in such organizations, a split develops between those who see the service aspect as most important (or whose jobs depend on it) and those who see the direct action part of the program as being most important. Both are needed, but not as functions of the same group.

The Three Principles of Direct Action

Direct action organizing is based on three principles which give it its character and distinguish it from other forms. These three principles will be referred to throughout the manual.

1. Win Real, Immediate, Concrete Improvements in People's Lives

Whether the improvement is national health care, extending unemployment insurance benefits, street lighting, or police protection, a direct action organization attempts to win it for large numbers of people. Even when the problem being addressed is very large or long term, crime, unemployment, discrimination, or world hunger for example, it must be broken down into short-term, attainable goals called issues. Without winnable issue goals there is no reality principle, no a way to measure success. If the goal of an organization is educating people, changing the framework of their thinking, or working only for very long-term goals, there is rarely a way to measure progress or even to determine if any is actually being made. How many people had their thinking changed, and by how much? How do you know? To take a preposterous example, if your goal is to require that horses wear pants, at least there is the possibility of a city council vote which allows you to measure your support or lack thereof. On the other hand, if your goal is to convince people that naked horses are wicked beasts, then there are very few benchmarks by which to track your rate of conversion. If the opinions of horses themselves are to be considered, the whole thing becomes totally impossible.

2. Give People a Sense of Their Own Power

Direct action organizations mobilize the power that people have. In doing so, they teach the value of united action through real-life examples, and they build the self-confidence of both the organization and the individuals in it. Direct action organizations avoid shortcuts that don't build people's power, such as bringing in a lawyer to handle the problem, asking a friendly politician to take care of it, or turning it over to a government agency. Giving people a sense of their own power is as much a part of the organizing goal as is solving the problem.

3. Alter the Relations of Power

Building a strong, lasting, and staffed organization alters the relations of power. Once such an organization exists, people on the "other side" must always consider the organization when making decisions. When the organization is strong enough, it will have to be consulted about decisions that affect its members. The organization further strives to alter power relations by passing laws and regulations that give it power, and by putting into public office its own people or close allies, (although groups to which contributions are tax deductible, are prevented by law from endorsing candidates.) Winning on issues is never enough. The organization itself must be built up so that it can take on larger issues and play a political role. The three main ways to alter the relations of power are to:

- Build strong lasting organizations
- Change laws and regulations
- Elect people to office who agree with us

Community and citizen organizations are democratic institutions; their very existence helps to make the whole political system work better and opens avenues for ongoing participation. Without such democratic institutions, our concept of politics would be limited to voting every few years, a necessary but only rarely inspiring activity.

Building an organization is not a natural by-product of good programs. Groups cannot assume that the organization will grow if they just win on issues. There is a difference between mobilizing people during a campaign and actually organizing them into an ongoing structure for which they take responsibility. Concrete plans must be made and steps taken to assure that the organization grows (e.g., money is raised and members are recruited and retained). This point is particularly important in light of the growing use of email mobilization. Changing the structure of society can be won by demanding reforms for accountability, transparency and democracy.

How A Direct Action Organizing Issue Campaign Works

In organizing, the word campaign has several meanings. An *issue campaign* is waged to win a victory on a particular issue. It is different from an *election campaign.* It is also different from an education campaign to raise public awareness, a fund raising campaign to support a cause, or a service delivery campaign such as providing legal help to stop mortgage foreclosures. An issue campaign ends in a specific victory. People get something they didn't have before. Someone with power agrees to do something that s/he previously refused to do. Implied in the word campaign is a series of connected events over a period of time, each of which builds the strength of the organization and brings it closer to victory. Few organizations are strong enough to win a major demand just by asking.

When used in organizing, the word "issue" has meaning that is different from everyday usage. *An issue is a specific solution to a problem.* For example, passing a law requiring sewage treatment is one solution to the problem of water pollution. The proposed law is the issue. The distinction between the problem, what is wrong, and the issue, a solution to the problem, is made to keep the group focused on wining something and not merely expounding upon the problem. An issue campaign has a beginning, middle, and an end. It is seldom a one-shot event, nor is it simply a series of events linked by a common theme. It is a method of building power and building organization.

The Use of Power in an Issue Campaign

Power generally consists of having a lot of money or a lot of people. Citizen organizations tend to have people, not money. *(The term "citizen organization" is not intended to imply that the members are necessarily American citizens. It is just that there is not really another term for this kind of group. Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is too broad, Direct Action Organization is too narrow, and Unions do something different. There are two dictionary definitions that imply what we mean by citizen: 1) An inhabitant of a city or town; especially one entitled to the rights and privileges of a free person. 2) A civilian as distinguished from a specialized servant of the state.)* Thus, our ability to win depends on our being able to do with people what the other side is able to do with money. For citizen organizations, power usually takes one of three forms:

1. *You Can Deprive the Other Side of Something It Wants.* Examples: A public official is directly or indirectly deprived of votes. A corporate executive is deprived of a promotion because you cost the company money

when you forced a regulatory agency to come into the picture. A landlord is deprived of rent because of a rent strike. A city department head is deprived of a job when you show him or her to be incompetent. Conflict of interest is exposed, and corrupt people are deprived of the ability to do business as usual, or better, sent to jail.

2. *You Can Give the Other Side Something It Wants.* Examples: A business gets a Green seal for converting to all electric vehicles. Your organization's approval counts with key groups of voters. Your voter registration work creates a base of support for specific issues or candidates.
3. *Your Organization Can Elect Someone Who Supports Your Issues.* Often, having power means that your organization finds a way to stand on someone's foot until you are paid to go away (by being given what you want.) Often the targets of such campaigns are people who have shown a serious disregard for our well being, or worse, are doing us actual harm.

Of course, a real-life issue campaign doesn't start out with high-pressure activities. It starts out with reasonable people asking nicely for things to which they feel entitled. Efforts are made to persuade on the merits, facts, and morality of the issue. It is after people are refused things for which they shouldn't even have had to ask in the first place, that power must be applied.

A Tactical Guide to Power

While consulting with many groups over the years, we on the Midwest Academy staff have often heard organizers make shaky assumptions about the power of their own organizations. "We have people power." "We have consumer power." "The Law is on our side." "We have lost so often I just know we will win this time." Such assumptions are made on the basis of principles that are true in general, but that may not hold up when applied to a particular situation. Here are some brief guidelines for measuring the power that you actually have.

Political/Legislative Power: Getting Something Passed by an Elected Body

Many local groups work to pressure un-elected government administrators or regulators to do what is needed. Their success depends, in large part, on how such people perceive the group's ability to bypass them and take the case directly to the elected officials who appoint them. It also depends on their estimation of the organization's ability to directly or indirectly influence the outcome of elections.

What Matters:

- *Primarily:* Voters, especially those who care strongly enough about an issue to vote for candidates on the basis of their position on that issue.
- *Secondarily:* Money that can help you reach voters. Earned (unpaid) media that can influence voters.
- *Timing:* Most effective prior to an election.
- *Key Questions to Ask:*
  Regarding the legislative body as a whole:
  - Is the decision made in committee or by the leadership or on the floor?
  - If the decision is made by leadership, how strong are you in their home districts, are they seeking to run for higher office, and will they someday need votes in areas where you are strong?
  - If the decision is not made by leadership but by a vote, then you need half plus one of the voting members. Count up how many are firmly with you and how many will never support you. Look at

who is left. Are there enough for a majority? Where do they come from? Can you influence them? Do term limits apply? How many people can't run again in the next election? (It is difficult to influence legislators who aren't running for re-election, that is why term limits is a profoundly anti-democratic idea. Increasingly, legislators simply run for the other house when limits are applied.)

Regarding a single elected official:

- How close was the last election? (Look at the actual numbers as well as at percentages.)
- Is this seat usually contested?
- What is the number of supporters you have in the district?
- Are there organizations that might cooperate?
- Who else doesn't like the person and for what reasons?
- Who can you get to lobby the elected official from among:
  - Key contributors
  - Leaders of primary voting blocks
  - Religious and opinion leaders
  - Party leadership

Consumer Power: The Ability to Conduct a Boycott

What Matters:

- *Primarily:* Cutting profits or demonstrating ability to cut profits by changing consumer choices.
- *Secondarily:* You can reach customers who purchase a major portion of the company's products including purchases made by government agencies.
- *Timing:* Most effective during times of stress for the company, such as during a merger, a strike, or tight financial times.
- *Key Questions to Ask:*
  - What is the company's profit margin?
  - Is it a local, regional, national, or international market?
  - Who, or what, really owns it?
  - Is it public or private?
  - Can you really hurt profits?

Legal/Regulatory Power: The Ability to Win in Court or in a Regulatory Process

What Matters:

- *Primarily:* Clear laws and tight regulations.
- *Secondarily:* Money for lawyers or having volunteer lawyers, or the ability to get a public agency to carry the case for you. Media to make it a political issue.
- *Timing:* You must be prepared to carry on for several years. Sometimes you are doing this to delay and actually want the process to last many years.
- *Key Questions to Ask:*
  - Are laws or regulations clearly on your side?
  - Have similar cases been won elsewhere?
  - What are the politics of the judges or regulators who will hear the case? Who appointed them?
  - What are the extra costs, e.g. fees for experts, or duplicating thousand-page transcripts? Who pays?

Strikes/Disruptive Power

What Matters:

- *Primarily:* Cutting profits or income by stopping a company or agency from functioning.
- *Timing:* Most effective during times of stress for a company or agency, such as during a merger, boycott, or tight financial times.
- *Key Questions to Ask:*
  - What is the company's profit margin?

- Can you make a significant dent by stopping work (strikes) or disrupting work or customers (usually by civil disobedience)? How costly will it be to replace you or get rid of you?
- Do you have a strike fund sufficient to outlast the company by one day?
- Do you have people willing to get arrested and money to bail them out?
- Does the company have the ability to really pick up and leave?

Illusions about Power

All too often groups believe that they will win because:

- They are right.
- Truth is on their side.
- They have the moral high-ground.
- They have the best information and it is all spelled correctly.
- They speak for large numbers of people.

Of course we need all of these, but very often our opponents, who have none of them, win anyway. What matters is the ability to bring direct pressure on decision makers. When we claim to speak for large numbers, we need to show that we can mobilize those people and that they respond to us through rallies and demonstrations, letter writing campaigns, email, petitions, and through their ballots. At the same time we need to avoid another common misconception about power which is that everyday people can never gain power over the special interests and large corporations. Underestimating our power is as bad as overestimating it. It is true that the larger battle to secure economic justice and to end exploitation will take the mobilization of forces that can not even be conceived of today. Nonetheless, we can and do win smaller issues when we mobilize what power we now have.

The Stages of an Issue Campaign

Power is built through issue campaigns. Campaigns last for various lengths of time, and an organization can, by carefully choosing its issue, influence the length of its campaigns. Frequently, new organizations want short campaigns and sometimes choose relatively "fixed fights" for their first issues. They ask for information that they know they are entitled to, or ask for something to be done that would probably have been done anyway, but at a later date. The purpose of the fight is to have a visible win. These quick victories build up the members' confidence in their ability to accomplish something and also gain public recognition for the new organization. Later, longer campaigns, say of six months duration, provide an opportunity to recruit volunteers, build a committee structure or give the organization's leadership experience. Issue campaigns may be timed either to coincide with elections or to avoid them.

Both long and short issue campaigns go through a series of steps, although shorter campaigns involve fewer tactics than described below:

1. *Choose the Issue and Develop a Strategy.* The people who have the problem agree on a solution and how to get it. They may decide to define, or "cut", the issue narrowly: "Make our landlord give us back our rent deposits when we move out." Or, they may define it more broadly: "Make the city council pass a law requiring the return of rent deposits." The strategy is the overall plan for wining the issue, building the organization and changing the relations of power. A strategy is always about a power equation. It is how you assess the strengths and weaknesses of the decision maker. (See the chapter on strategy.)

2. *Open Communication with the Decision Maker.* Next, communications are opened with the person who has the power to give the group what it wants. Requests are made and arguments are presented. At this point, the problems are sometimes resolved and the organization's requests are met. When they are not resolved, however, the person with the power becomes the "target" of an issue campaign. The target or "decision maker" is always the person who has the power to give you what you want. (If no one has such power, then you have a problem not an issue, or you haven't cut the issue correctly, or likely you are describing the problem, unfair treatment of tenants, and haven't defined the issue. Of course there can be multiple decision makers as in a legislative body.)

A decision maker is always a person. It is never an institution such as the government, the corporation, the bank, the legislature, the board, or the agency. Break it down. Even the most powerful institutions are made up of people. Having already addressed the institution itself through the official channels, the campaign now moves outside that framework to focus pressure on one or more individuals who make up the institution and have the power to give you what you want. These people are actually the institution's weak point. As individuals, they have goals, aspirations, and interests that don't coincide completely with those of the institution. For example, the state insurance commission may be set up to support the industry, but the commissioner may hope to run for governor someday, and thus want to establish the appearance of independence.

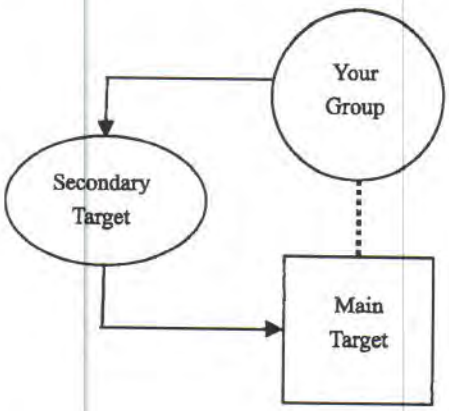
3. *Announce the Campaign.* Frequently a media event announces the start of the campaign. A study may be released, or people may simply tell of their experiences and their efforts to correct the problem. If the campaign is to be a coalition effort, then most of the coalition's member organizations need to sign on to the campaign before the announcement, and be present at the event.

(NOTE: A coalition is an organization of organizations. The Coalition for Interspecies Relationships does not become a true coalition because one member owns a hamster and another a turtle. Even if the members *are* hamsters and turtles it is still not a true coalition. Only if the coalition is made up of *organizations* of hamsters and turtles, or *organizations* of their owners, is it a real coalition.)

4. *Begin Outreach Activities.* Because every campaign is an opportunity to reach new people, you now start outreach activities. In a statewide or national campaign, other organizations may be enlisted. When the organization has a local focus, individuals and local groups are brought in. Often a petition drive is used both to find supporters and to build a group of active volunteers who circulate the petition. Speakers may be sent out to meetings of such groups as senior clubs, unions, churches, or PTAs. The kickoff of each of these activities can be done at a press event, at least in smaller cities where press is easier to get.

The outreach drive builds toward a large turnout event such as a public hearing sponsored by the organization. The event establishes legitimacy and brings in more allies and volunteers. It is also fun and a media event. A major consideration in outreach is the power the organization has over the decision maker. If no one in the group ever voted for the decision maker and never will, they have very little power.

5. *Stage Direct Encounters with Decision Makers.* Now the organization is ready for direct encounters with the people who have the power to give it what it wants. Large face-to-face meetings are set up with the decision maker. At this stage, the organization carefully considers what power it has over the decision maker. It usually has more power over elected officials than over appointed ones, and it usually has more power over anyone in government than in private corporations, unless the corporations are heavily dependent on local customers.



Although several months may have passed, it is still early in the campaign, and the group is probably too weak to challenge its main decision-maker directly. Attention may shift to "secondary targets." These are people over whom the organization has more power than it has over the main target. In turn, the secondary target has more power over the main target than does the organization. For example, the mayor might be the main target and the local ward leader (district leader) the secondary target. Because the organization's members are a large percentage of the voters in the ward leader's district, but only a small percentage of the voters in a citywide election, the organization usually has more power over the locally elected official than over the one elected city-wide. And, because the local official helps to get the mayor elected, s/he has more influence at City Hall than does the group. The organization therefore puts pressure on the ward leader to get her to pressure the mayor to meet the group's demands. (The terminology of organizing is often confusing on this point. The "secondary target" is not the same thing as the second target, the person to whom you would go second when you are done seeing the person to whom you went first. A better term for secondary target might be "indirect target." That is, a person to whom you go to put pressure on someone else indirectly.)

6. *Organization building.* A series of meetings with secondary targets builds support for the issue. Each meeting is an opportunity to recruit new supporters, train spokespersons, and try for media coverage. They are also fun. To demonstrate power, an elected official might be shown more signatures on petitions than the number of votes by which she won in the last election. The director of a local housing authority might be told that he is in violation of HUD regulations or local building codes, and that outside agencies will be called in to investigate if he doesn't make repairs. At this stage real power is shown, not just good arguments and facts. (Not every event needs to be a direct confrontation. A community parade, picnic, or even a party to celebrate a victory can also build the group and become a show of numbers. Invite allied elected officials to join you.) But, the main reason for holding such events is often to develop the strength of the organization.

Every planning session for an event should include a discussion of how to use the event to build the group. Often people become so focused

on what they will say to the decision maker that organization building is forgotten. Planning to build the organization must be specific. How many new people will be recruited, where, how, and by whom? Must the event be held after six o'clock so that working people can come? Must it be before 3PM so that mothers of school age children can come? How will new people be integrated into the group? How will all the members be told what happened? Perhaps a telephone tree should be activated, an evening leaflet distribution planned, or an email blast sent. In general, each event should be larger than the last one. If this isn't happening, then you are not building the organization. Another measure of organizational strength is the experience level of its leaders and members. A local organization that can hold two events at the same time is quite well developed. Plan leadership training into each event. This means practice beforehand and evaluate afterward.

In the course of the issue campaign an election may occur. This offers the organization a fine opportunity to build more strength. (The events described so far have probably taken four to five months to unfold.) During the election season, the organization may do some combination of the following depending on its tax status. (See chapter on Financial and Legal Matters):

- Hold or attend a candidates night and ask candidates to take a position on the organization's issue. This can be done even if the winner of the election can't really give the group what it wants. Candidates take *symbolic positions* supporting all sorts of things, such as world peace. Usually some form of material support can be gained as well.
- Allied candidates can be asked to campaign on the issue and mention it in their literature (if it is cut broadly enough to really win votes).
- The organization can register voters as a show of strength in specific areas.
- Some organizations, depending on their IRS tax status, can make endorsements and campaign for or against candidates. Others can't (see chapter on Financial and Legal Matters).

7. *Win or Regroup.* After a series of successful buildup events, the organization takes on its main decision maker. Sometimes this is done in a meeting or confrontation, and sometimes in a negotiation. Often a victory is won or a compromise is reached. If not, the organization must be prepared to escalate its tactics. This may mean large demonstrations and picketing, a return to other secondary targets, or the selection of a new main target. Sometimes the issues have to be broadened to attract still more supporters and the campaign taken to a new level. The refusal of a locality to control toxic dumping leads, for example, to a broader fight for statewide legislation or enforcement. At other times, the organization may decide that it has reached the limit of its strength and that it will have to lower its demand and accept less.

At each of these stages, the organization is being strengthened internally in addition to power being built. The leadership is growing and gaining experience, skill, and media recognition. The membership is growing. Other organizations are moving into closer alliance. Money is being raised. The staff is becoming experienced in organizing and electoral tactics.

Tricks the Other Side Uses

In the years since this manual was first published, citizen organizations have grown more experienced and more creative. At the same time, our opponents have become more skillful at countering our efforts. Here are some of their tricks:

Let's Negotiate. Often what your opponents most want is to get you to stop organizing in the community and to start spending hours sitting around a table with them or someone they pay to babysit you. Of course, they say, you can't add new people as the negotiations progress because new people wouldn't know the background. Of course you can't talk to the press or anyone else because that would be a breach of confidence. Of course you have to stop doing actions and public events because that creates a bad atmosphere for the negotiations. The campaign comes to a stop. Meanwhile, weeks go by. You lose momentum. The members who are not "at the table" feel left out, and are sure that some awful sellout is developing when they hear you referring to your opponents by their first names. Allies begin to draw back.

What's wrong with this picture? What's wrong is that you began negotiations with no power. Negotiations, by definition, are what go on between parties of equal power, each of whom has something the other party wants, and each of whom is prepared to give up something in order to get something. If that is the real situation then fine, keep negotiating. In fact, most direct action campaigns do end in some form of negotiations after the organization has actually won. However, when the offer to negotiate comes early in the campaign, it is usually just a tactic to delay and to divide you. It also gives your opponents a chance to size you up, find the weaknesses in your coalition and buy off your leadership.

You are invited to the "stakeholders" meeting. We have seen this one a lot in recent years. Consumer and environmental groups are invited by a representative of the Governor or a department of the state to participate in a long series of meetings with other "stakeholders", including representatives of business or industry, and state agencies. The goal, you are told, is to frame legislation that will "please everyone" on a particular issue. Why are you invited? Why do they care if you are pleased or not? They don't! They are simply buying your silence for a year, which is about how long it would take to prepare the legislation anyway. You play by their rules in the hope of getting some small measure of your program into the legislation. You may even succeed, but meanwhile the time is lost during which you could have been out mobilizing people or spreading the alarm. Then, the bill goes to the legislature but, not having built your base during the negotiations, you are unprepared for the fight. Some of your people want to support the bill because of the crumbs you have been given and because they worked so hard on it. Others want to oppose it because the crumbs don't deal with the big picture.

Here is the test of whether you should participate in a process of this type. Tell whoever invites you that you will go to the meetings, but you intend to continue your public campaign on the issue and that, as a citizen watch-dog group, nothing can be confidential. In fact, you feel it is your *duty* to make public anything and everything you hear at the meetings. If the invitation still stands, and you are really able to conduct a public campaign at the same time, then go and participate. An inside/outside strategy can be very powerful if you use the information you get at the "stakeholders" meeting to fuel your campaign. Just remember, and we say this because so many

have forgotten, when you get into a room with powerful corporations you are not one "stakeholder" among equals, and never will be.

"I Can Get You On The Governor's Commission." Commissions, study groups, round tables, and panels exist at every level of government. Many are established to genuinely promote discussions of public policy and reach consensus. Once your organization succeeds in applying pressure to elected officials it is likely to get offered seats on some such body. Ask yourself, is our opinion genuinely desired, or is this a ploy to swing us over to an insider strategy? (Trying to influence from within instead of pressuring from without.) Is this yet another way to tie us up in endless deliberations? Sometimes you will be asked not to discuss the work of the commission publicly, nor even to comment on its direction. Months can be spent producing a report that comes to nothing. Your group can be divided between people who think that they are now really making policy, and those who want to work independently.

Go work it out among yourselves. Perhaps you are interested in a patient bill of rights? "So are a lot of other groups," says the Chair of the legislative committee and, "We don't want to bring a bill to the floor and have it lose. So, get together with the other interested parties, hospitals or HMOs and come up with something upon which you all agree." The next thing you know, you are meeting with representatives of the industry and professional societies, groups over which you have absolutely no power. The elected officials, over whom you do have power, have conveniently gotten rid of you even though they are the only ones who can actually give you what you want. Your job is to force them to do the right thing, or else to get them thrown out of office, not to compromise away your position in meetings with people whose interests are opposed to yours.

I'm the wrong person. "I would love to help you, but I'm not the right person to see." This response is usually a shabby trick to make you feel stupid for having not known who to see. Often it is the start of a process in which no one will admit to being the right person and you will get sent from one official to the next. The police will say it is a Parks Department problem. The Parks Department will say it's really a Traffic Department problem, etc. Some groups have responded by holding a community meeting and inviting all of the "wrong" people. Once in the same room it is harder for them to pass the buck. Usually though, this response indicates that you are talking to appointed rather than elected officials. The City Council member from your neighborhood may not alone be able to deliver what you want, but can't claim to be the "wrong person."

This could affect your funding. Perhaps this line ought not be listed under tricks, because it may very well be true. Organizations that receive money from any level of government, often in the form of a contract for some community service or education program, will quickly have the money taken away if they rock the boat. As we have noted, it is very difficult to combine service and direct action in the same organization. Often these two functions need to be divided out. Foundations will also pull your funding if you venture into policy areas of which they do not approve.

"You are reasonable but your allies aren't. Can't we just deal with you?" This should be seen for just what it is: an attempt to divide your coalition and make you think you will win something if you dump your more militant partners.

A business consultant speaking to a group of corporate executives once laid out how this trick works:

"Activists fall into three basic categories, radicals, idealists and realists. The first step is to isolate and marginalize the radicals. They're the ones who see inherent structural problems that need remedying if indeed a particular change is to occur. To isolate them try to create the perception in the public mind that people advocating fundamental solutions are terrorists, extremists, fear mongers, outsiders, communists or whatever. After marginalizing the radicals, then identify and educate the idealists – concerned and sympathetic members of the public – by convincing them that changes advocated by the radicals would hurt people. The goal is to sour the idealists on the idea of working with the radicals. Instead get them working with the realists. Realists are people who want reform but don't really want to upset the status quo; big public-interest organizations that rely on foundation grants and corporate contributions are a prime example. With correct handling, realists can be counted on to cut a deal with industry that can be touted as a 'win-win' solution, but that is actually an industry victory."

"I agree with everything you say, but you have to understand, there just isn't any money. There is nothing I can do." If there is one lesson from the recent bailout of the financial industry, it is that where there is the political will there is the money. (As of this writing, $1.2 trillion in gifts, loans, and the purchase of potentially worthless stock.) It is true that cities and states can't just print money the way the federal government does, but they do decide whether money goes to an after-school program or to build a new jail. If the political will is there the money will be found.

3

CHOOSING AN ISSUE

Problems are Different from Issues

In direct action organizing there is a difference between an issue and a problem. A *problem* is a broad area of concern. For example, unaffordable health care, pollution, and unemployment are all problems. An *issue* is a solution or partial solution to a problem. Passing national health care, enacting a green energy quota, or instituting a federal jobs program are all issues.

Because direct action organizing is about winning issues, the first step is to analyze the problem and decide what solution to work toward. Some people have the luxury of choosing the problems on which they work. For others, the problem chooses them and can't be avoided no matter how long or difficult the effort; poverty, an oil spill, and racial discrimination are examples of problems that choose people. In both cases, however, organizations and individuals must still choose the issue. That is, they must define a solution to the problem.

There are many approaches to solving any problem and the implications of each must be thought through carefully. It isn't enough to ask which is the most far-reaching solution (or for that matter, which is the most serious problem.)

Cutting the issue

Equally as important is "cutting the issue," that is, deciding how to frame the issue in a way that will gain the most support. For example, an organization was working to get the city to build more low-income housing. The group realized that if they demanded housing only for people with the greatest need, those with the lowest incomes, they couldn't gain the necessary political support. Instead, they spoke of "affordable" housing, and wrote their proposed bill to benefit lower wage working people in addition to the poor and homeless. Because the construction would create many jobs, some of which could go to community people, they called their campaign the Affordable Housing and Jobs Campaign. They won $750 million dollars for housing over five years, which represented a 50% increase. The program was so successful that the Mayor proposed a five-year extension.

An organization in a conservative farm state was working for a program to foster the development of electricity from wind power. They could have spoken of this as a purely environmental issue stressing the air quality benefits of burning less coal. However, other groups had tried and not made progress. Instead, the organization talked about the economic benefits of using a native resource, wind, instead of importing out-of-state coal. They said that the money spent on importing coal should be kept in the local economy, and they highlighted the advantages to farmers of being able to rent out their land for wind turbines. There are now 46 commercial wind turbines in the state.

An organization was working to have a vast tract of timberland converted into a national park. They cut the issue as one of restoring the woods to their former beauty, but much of the local population sided with the timber companies against the environmentalists.

Had the organization been more sensitive to people's fear of job loss, it could have shown that the cutting practices of the timber companies would inevitably lead to the end of both the sawmill and logging jobs, whereas a national park would create a whole new tourist industry.

A group opposing the license extension of a municipal waste incinerator started out by speaking of it as a pollution source. They gained more support by pointing out that the incinerator didn't pay for itself and there were other more economical solutions.

The impact of the issue on the organization

The organizational implications of any approach must be carefully thought through. To put it another way, think organizationally. Ask: what impact will taking up this issue have on our organization? What will happen to the organization if we ignore the problem? Don't think only about problems and solutions.

The ability of leaders to think *organizationally* in addition to thinking about *issues* is a major factor in the group's development. It is also a major cause of internal friction between members who come at things from these two different directions. In general, new members are attracted to an organization because of the issues, and are not particularly conscious of the structure and mechanics of organizing. There was once a volunteer in a neighborhood organization who, after three months of faithfully coming twice a week to the office to make phone calls, looked up and asked, "What did you say the name of this group was?" She was probably asked the question by someone on the phone, but it was nonetheless the first step toward thinking organizationally.

Members who think only about issues are often frustrated by the amount of time and effort that goes into organizational maintenance. Occa-

sionally you will hear leaders accused of being "empire builders." While that may be the case, more often they are organization builders being criticized by someone who hasn't yet learned to value organization. An organization is able to win victory after victory, to protect victories already won from being taken away, and to build political power so that winning becomes easier.

Virtual or online organizations are attractive because they eliminate the need for organizational maintenance, but they also eliminate leadership development by eliminating leaders, and they dispense with recruiting beyond those people who opt in because they already agree with the program. In any case, it is unwise to rely solely on a structure that can be literally turned off with the flick of a switch. Building an organization and winning issues are two interdependent sides of the same process. Current technology can enhance both.

It is necessary to consider the impact of the issue on the organization separately from the social value of the issue itself. For any given organization at a particular stage in its development, some issues will be better for organizational development and more winnable than others.

The following examples show how the choice of issue can change the nature of an organization. A group trying to get a progressive income tax law through the state legislature found that it lacked a sufficient base to pass the bill. It put the state bill temporarily on hold and started building more winnable local campaigns on city and county tax issues. This detour created two challenges. The members who joined to work for the state bill had to be reoriented to a local issue, and people who joined because of the local issues had problems shifting to the state bill. In addition, the areas of the state where victories on local tax issues were possible were the same areas that already supported the state bill. The group gained some depth but not a great deal of breadth.

In another situation, an organization of people with disabilities that had been working to make public places such as stores and restaurants more accessible, decided to switch emphasis to expand transportation for the disabled. They were surprised to see a drop off in member activity, but the members who were interested in accessibility already had transportation, and the members without transportation had a more difficult time getting to the meetings.

A campaign for an ordinance empowering a municipality to sue companies that had manufactured lead based house paint attracted a more policy oriented constituency. A campaign by the same group to get homes tested for lead poison on demand drew in families with small children.

The main point is that more than anything else, the issue you choose determines the kind of people who join and organization you build.

The following checklist is an aid to evaluating issues. We recommend that before a group starts to choose among issues, the members be asked, "What are the criteria for a good issue for our organization?" List what people say on a blackboard or large sheet of paper and try to develop a mutually agreed upon list similar to this one but not much longer. It will make the choice of an issue much easier, and it will be a sounder choice as well.

A good issue is one that matches most of these criteria. The issue should:

1. Result in a Real Improvement in People's Lives

If you can see and feel the improvement, then you can be sure that it has actually been won. For example, a transit rider organization won a commitment for more frequent equipment inspections. Perhaps, over a period of years this led to improved service, but perhaps not. Riders could not tell. On the other hand, when the group

asked for and won printed train schedules, they had a visible victory and also a performance standard to which they could hold the Transit Authority accountable.

2. Make People Aware Of Their Own Organized Power

People should come away from the campaign feeling that the victory was won by them, not by experts, lawyers, or politicians. This builds both their confidence to take on larger issues and their loyalty to the organization. The word "empowerment" sometimes appears in this context, but usually implies a different concept, that of making individuals aware of their own *abilities*. (Women can actually repair jet engines as well as men for example.) Citizens either have organizational power in a particular situation, or they don't. If they do, they can be made aware of it. If they don't, they can often, but not always, be shown how to gain it.

3. Alter the Relations of Power

There are three ways in which power relations between citizens and decision makers are changed:

- Building a strong, ongoing staffed organization creates a new center of power that changes the way the other side makes decisions.
- Changing laws, regulations and social structures in ways that increase our power or diminish that of the other side.
- Electing people to office who support our positions.

4. Be Worthwhile

Members should feel that they are fighting for something about which they feel good, and which merits the effort.

It is better to end the campaign having won less than you wanted, than to scale back your demands from the start and ask for too little. Groups often make this mistake in the name of "realism" when they depend on the advice of professional lobbyists or elected officials who know how to measure the legislative support for a piece of legislation, but don't understand the ability of grassroots pressure to change the picture.

5. Be Winnable

The problem must not be so large or the solution so remote that the organization is overwhelmed. The members must be able to see from the start that there is a good chance of winning, or at least that there is a good strategy for winning. Ask who else has won on a similar issue and how. Then, call on people with experience and ask for advice. Ask what their strategy was, not just what they did.

It is useful to figure out how much money your victory will cost the other side. Will the cost make them want to hold out against you? This gives you an idea of how hard they will work to defeat you, and how much money they are likely to spend. Test it out, but we never really know if something is winnable. That is why strategic planning matters.

6. Be Widely Felt

Many people must feel that this is a real problem and must agree with your solution. It is not enough that a few people feel strongly about it.

7. Be Deeply Felt

Some people must not only agree with you, but feel strongly enough to do something about it. It is not enough that many people agree about the issue if none feel strongly.

8. Be Easy to Understand

It is preferable that you don't have to convince people that the problem exists, that your solution is good, and that they want to help win it. However, such convincing is sometimes necessary, particularly with those environmental issues where the source of the problem can't be seen or smelled, or with economic problems where the basic cause is not always obvious. In general, a good issue does not require a lengthy and difficult explanation. It should be sufficient to be able to say something like, "Look at all those dead fish floating in the water. That didn't happen before the chemical plant opened."

9. Have a Clear Decision Maker

The decision maker, as he or she is often called, is the person who can give you what you want. A more difficult campaign usually requires several clear decision makers. This allows the campaign to have a longer time to build up strength, even if some of them refuse your demands in the early months. If you can't figure out who the decision maker is either you don't have the right issue or you may be addressing a problem, not an issue. Remember that the decision maker is always a person, such as the Mayor or a number of other people, not an institution, corporation or elected body. The public is never the target. It is the Mayor, not the public, who can give what you want.

10. Have a Clear Time Frame that Works for You

An issue campaign has a beginning, middle, and an end. You should have an idea of the approximate dates on which those points will fall.

Some key dates for events are *internal*, that is, set by your organization. Some are *external*, set by someone else. The timetable of a campaign to win legislation is almost entirely external, as is the timetable of an election. The timetable for a campaign to get a stop sign in your community is almost totally internal.

Will the dates of major efforts in your campaign fall at particularly difficult parts of the year, such as mid-August or Christmas week? The spring and fall are best for most groups in most places.

Even if your organization does not have specific electoral goals, you want the time frame to fit the electoral calendar. You usually have more power just before an election than just after one. Consider how the issue's timetable can be legally aligned with the electoral timetable.

11. Be Non-Divisive

Avoid issues that divide your constituency. Don't pit neighbor against neighbor, old against young, race against race. Don't be content to get the traffic or the drug pusher off your block and onto the next block. (This is not just being "liberal" both will soon be back on your doorstep.)

Look down the road several years. Who will you eventually need to bring into your organization? Will this issue help or hinder you in reaching them?

12. Build Leadership

The campaign should have many roles that people can play. Issue campaigns that meet most of the other criteria also build leadership if they are planned to do so. In a coalition organization, building leadership has a different meaning than in a neighborhood group, because the people who represent organizations in the coalition already are leaders. They don't need or want you to develop them. Often, however, they

do need to learn to work with each other, to use direct action, and to align electoral and issue campaigns where appropriate.

13. Set Your Organization Up for the Next Campaign

A campaign to pass the Employee Free Choice Act leads to other workers rights issues. On the other hand, a campaign to make the city catch stray dogs generally leads only to catching stray dogs. People who want to organize unions are likely to have other economic problems in common. People whose link to each other is a dislike of stray dogs may not have a second issue in common and will fall to arguing when the dogs are gone.

In addition to thinking about future issue directions, consider the skills the group will develop in the campaign and the contacts it will make for the next one.

14. Have a Pocketbook Angle

Issues that get people money or save people money are usually widely and deeply felt.

15. Raise Money

One big test of an issue is will your constituents contribute to the campaign? Ask also, what problem is the hot item in the foundation world? It changes almost from year to year.

16. Be Consistent with Your Values and Vision

The issues we choose to work on must reflect our values and our vision. Yes we do want money for more police, but is an endlessly increasing number of police and prisons the direction in which we want our society to go, or might education, housing and jobs be better investments?

In addition to these, you may very well have organizationally-specific criteria. For example, if your area has many new Latino residents who are not represented in your organization, one criterion may be that the issue has to have strong appeal to the Latino community.

After developing your list of criteria, review the issues under consideration. Some issues will drop from the list very quickly. For the remaining two or three, indicate whether each criterion has a high, medium, or low application to the issue. Then, take a vote. Of course you can always work on the second most popular issue after you win the first, but if the vote is close more discussion may be needed to avoid splitting the group. In general, at least two-thirds of the group needs to be enthusiastic about any issue chosen.

Checklist for Choosing an Issue

A good issue is one that matches most of these criteria. Use this checklist to compare issues, or develop your own criteria and chart for choosing an issue.

Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Will the Issue
			1. Result in a real improvement in people's lives?
			2. Give people a sense of their own power?
			3. Alter the relations of power?
			4. Be worthwhile?
			5. Be winnable?
			6. Be widely felt?
			7. Be deeply felt?
			8. Be easy to understand?
			9. Have a clear decision maker?
			10. Have a clear time frame that works for you?
			11. Be non-divisive?
			12. Build leadership?
			13. Set your organization up for the next campaign?
			14. Have a pocketbook angle?
			15. Raise money?
			16. Be consistent with your values and vision?

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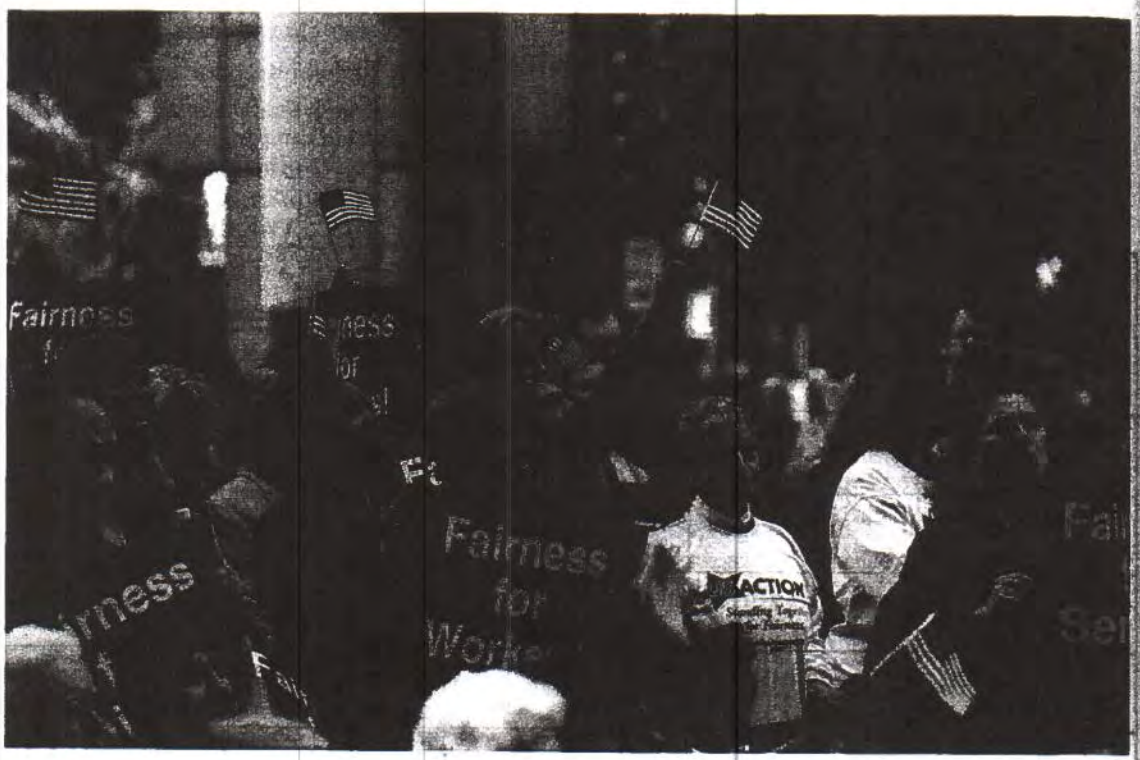

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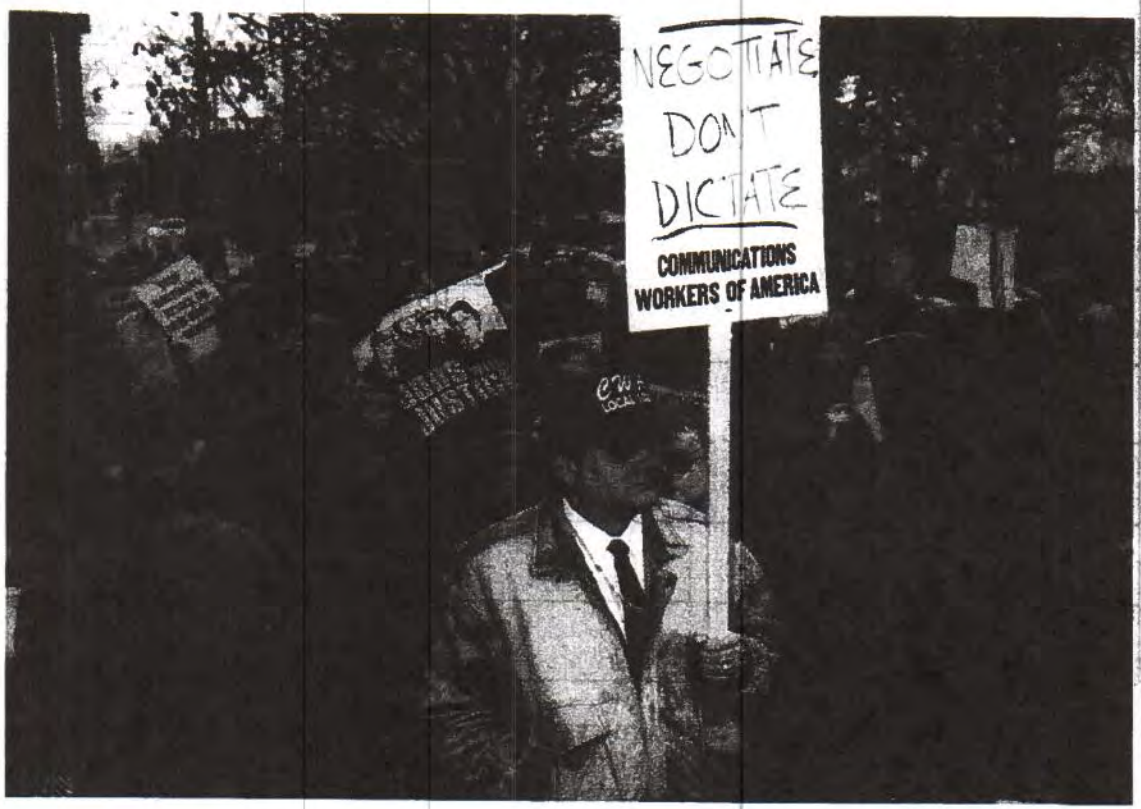

4

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

The Difference Between a Strategy and a Plan

The word strategy is so much in use these days that it can mean almost anything. Little children are taught "strategies" for shoe tying and later for doing homework. As life progresses, we learn "strategies" for success in marriage, finding work, Chinese cooking, and breeding tropical fish. No wonder the word is confusing. Even in the more limited arena of citizen organizing, the language often causes confusion. People talk about a "media strategy," a "legal strategy," an "electoral strategy," or a "public education strategy," but all of these are usually tactics not strategies. We can use the media, the courts, the electoral system or public education as specific ways to apply pressure to someone, but a strategy is the design of the campaign combined with an analysis of power relationships. Tactics are the individual steps in carrying out a strategy. If the use of the media, electoral or legal system alone were sufficient to win the issue, only then could one speak of a media, electoral or legal strategy. *Brown Vs. Board of Education* was part of a legal strategy.

Strategy:
A method of gaining enough power to make a government or corporate official do something in the public's interest that he or she does not otherwise wish to do.

In Direct Action Organizing, the strategy is given a more precise definition.

If your objective is anything other than making an official do something, say to have a fundraising picnic, then you don't need a *strategy,* you only need a *plan.* The difference is that a plan is about the steps you will need to take for any project, while a strategy involves the relationship of power between you and the official. In fact, the word strategy comes from the Greek *strategos,* meaning the rank of General in the army.

Whatever you are trying to win or however you want an elected official to vote on a bill, it is always better if the decision maker voluntarily agrees and doesn't need to be pressured. For that reason the initial tactics in any campaign usually start with writing a letter and trying to have a meeting and a conversation. Explain how the facts are on your side, why you are morally right, and how much people need the change you are advocating. Even talk about how much it will advance the elected official's career to see things your way. Sometimes this works. Often it does not.

When persuasion fails, it may be because the decision maker simply holds a strong opinion that is contrary to yours, but more often, it is because as you were going into his or her office, another group was coming out that was applying pressure from the opposite side. More than likely, the other group represented some private interest. Much as public officials like to pretend that they make up their own minds on policy issues, they are usually bowing to the wishes of special interests that can spend large sums of money to get what they want. When pressure is applied to prevent justice from being done, we must apply counter pressure to ensure that justice prevails. For this you need more than a plan, you need a strategy.

A strategy is the overall design for building the power to compel someone to give your organization what it wants. Short term strategies can cover a period of days or weeks, long term strategies can continue on for many years.

The strategy chart that follows is an extremely useful tool for campaign planning. It lends itself both to overall campaign strategy, and planning specific tactics such as a public hearing or an accountability session with an elected official. (Yes, you can have a smaller strategy for carrying out a particular tactic.) The chart is valuable as the focal point of a group planning process because it poses the necessary questions in a logical order and moves people through the planning process step by step.

When *Not* to Use the Chart

The chart is intended for campaigns aimed at winning something from someone. It is not useful for election campaigns or referenda where the goal is to get a majority of voters to vote a certain way, nor for educational campaigns, the goals of which are to get people to think a certain way. If, when using the chart, you find yourself writing "the public" or "voters" in the targets column there are probably tools that are more effective than the strategy chart for that purpose. The chart is also not intended for dealing with the internal problems of your own organization where its use will exacerbate conflict and lead to a major meltdown.

Preparing to Make a Chart

Developing a strategy chart assumes that your group has already chosen an issue (see previous chapter). In your strategy planning meetings, display the chart prominently on a blackboard or large sheets of paper in the front of the room. Have the following resources on hand to complement the chart:

1. A large map of the area, city, or state in which the campaign will take place. There are often critical relationships among issues, groups, neighborhoods, geography, and political districts that only become apparent when you look at a map.
2. Overlays for the map to show political districts (or use separate district maps).
3. Election returns for relevant races for the last several years. Knowing voting patterns and totals in primaries and general elections is important to understanding the strength of allies and opponents, even if your organization is not involved in electoral work.
4. When the decision maker or target is a member of an elected body, it is necessary to have someone on hand who knows how that body is actually organized internally and how it works. For example, does your city council member really have any influence or the ability to move a bill, or is s/he just one vote among many?
5. The Yellow Pages to identify potential constituent and opponent organizations.
6. A list of your own board members and, if you are a coalition, your affiliates by address. This suggests people to involve at different points in the campaign.
7. Someone who knows the major institutions in the area, major employers, banks, corporations, public buildings, etc.
8. Online internet connection. Google can answer many questions and help you find potential constituent organizations.
9. See what the *Almanac of American Politics* says about background and demographics of the congressional district in which your activity will take place. You can learn a great deal even if the issue has nothing to do with Congress.
10. Because the organizational considerations column requires making decisions about the allocation of staff and money, someone with that authority needs to either be present for the discussion or to have been previously consulted.

Allow several hours to go systematically through the chart, filling in the required information. Some groups take half a day or longer. A good facilitator is important.

If the group is large, split into a few smaller groups. Ask each group to develop a strategy and then incorporate the best ideas from each group in the final chart.

The Five Columns of the Strategy Chart

There are five major strategy elements to consider. Each has a column to fill in on the chart.

1. Long-Term, Intermediate, and Short-Term Goals
2. Organizational Considerations
3. Constituents, Allies, and Opponents
4. Decision Makers (Targets)
5. Tactics

At first glance it appears that the chart is a series of lists. What we are unable to show on paper, but what becomes clear when you actually use the chart in planning, is that it is more like a

spreadsheet. Whenever you change anything in one column, corresponding changes need to be made in the others. For example, adding another decision maker may require finding another constituent group that would employ a different tactic. There are also mathematical relationships in the chart. Goals must equal power, and tactics must have a cost to the target, for example.

To help illustrate the use of the chart, we will use, among other examples, a hypothetical campaign to stop cuts in the school lunch program. This is a state budget campaign in which a local group has taken responsibility for getting the vote of their State Representative.

Let's say that you are the organizer in charge of the campaign. Like many other states, yours had a major economic downturn in recent years. Now, as difficult economic conditions have cut into state tax revenue, just about all programs are being cut. The Governor, a middle-of-the-road Democrat, would favor improving services and particularly education, but he keeps saying that there is just no money. He will not raise income taxes on the rich because he fears they will leave the state.

The base of your organization, Gotham City Parents United, is made up of groups of parents whose children attend the same public schools (K-7) throughout the city. The organization is also working to build local informal coalitions of community organizations, churches, and unions whose members' children also attend the local schools.

Column 1: Goals

Long-Term Goals

These are the goals that you eventually hope to win, and toward which the current campaign is a step. Nothing goes in this column that you can't win from someone. Gaining 100 new members is not a goal because you can't win it. You can accomplish it, so it goes in the Organizational Considerations column. Using our example, your long-term goals might be to have free breakfast and lunch available for all students. (This example is a little tricky because your constituents are parents who don't actually have to eat the stuff. Kids would probably rather have breakfast at home.)

The current campaign won't accomplish this, it will only keep the situation from getting worse, but we always want to hold out a vision of what can be accomplished and to prepare people for a longer fight.

It is important to set a goal that will get you to what you want to achieve, not set goals and strategies based on what you think can be accomplished according to insider assessments or conventional wisdom or past history. If you don't know where you want to go, you will never get there. Groups often make the mistake of asking for less than they want, scaling back demands from the start and asking for too little. Starting small means that you will surely not get what you want.

But it is also important to assess your power in realistic terms. Just as setting goals too low can prevent greater gains, setting goals too high without regard to on-the-ground realities and the actual power of opponents and proponents may result in no gains at all. It may be that you can't get everything you want initially, but you can create the structure or pathway to achieve your ultimate goal down the line. These assessments – and the decision whether to accept partial victories or hold out for greater gains – are difficult but they are essential (both in designing a campaign and implementing it).

One caution is that an assessment of what is possible can change – and change quickly. Insider experts can often miss major changes in public opinion and political trends – which can come

MIDWEST ACADEMY STRATEGY CHART

After choosing your issue, fill in this chart as a guide to developing strategy. Be specific. List all the possibilities. Develop a timeline.

GOALS	ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	CONSTITUENTS, Allies & Opponents	TARGETS (Decision Makers)	TACTICS
Goals are what we want to WIN! 1. List the long-term goals of your campaign. 2. State the intermediate goals for this issue campaign. What constitutes victory? **How will the campaign:** • Win concrete improvements in people's lives? • Give people a sense of their own power? • Alter the relations of power? 3. What short-term or partial victories can you win as steps toward your long-term goal?	1. List the resources that your organization brings to the campaign. Include: money, number of staff, facilities, reputation, canvass, etc. **What is the budget, including in-kind contributions, for this campaign?** 2. List the specific things you need to do to develop the campaign and ways in which the campaign will strengthen your organization. Fill in numbers for each. • Expand leadership group • Increase experience of existing leadership • Build membership base • Expand into new constituencies • Develop Issue Campaign Message • Develop Media Plan • Develop a Fundraising plan – how can you raise money for and through this campaign? 3. List the internal (organizational) problems, that must be considered if the campaign is to succeed.	1. Who cares about this issue enough to join or help the organization? • Whose problem is it? • Into what groups are they already organized? • What do they gain if they win? • What risks are they taking? • What power do they have over the target? 2. Who are your opponents? • What will your victory cost them? • What will they do/spend to oppose you? • How strong are they? • What power do they have over the target?	**1. Primary Targets** A target is always a person. It is never an institution or an elected body. There can be more than one target but each need a separate strategy chart as your relationships of power differs with each target. • Who has the power to give you what you want? • What power do you have over them? 2. Secondary Targets (You don't always have or need secondary targets) • Who has power over the people with the power to give you what you want? • What power do you have over them (the secondary target)?	1. For each target, list tactics that each constituent group can best use to put pressure on the target to win your intermediate and/or short-term goals. **Tactics must be:** • In context • Directed at a specific target • Backed up by a specific form of power • Flexible and creative • Make sense to members **Tactics include:** • Phone, email, petitions, LTE, OP ED, • Media events • Actions for information • Public Hearings • Non-Partisan Voter Registration and Education • Non-Partisan GOTV • Accountability Sessions • Negotiations • Elections • Law Suits • Strikes

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about as a result of events (such as the rise in foreclosures or the Wall Street collapse), elections or the ability of grassroots pressures to change the picture.

Intermediate Issue Goals

These are the goals that you hope to win in this campaign. In this example, it is to defeat the budget cut. In this case your group isn't planning the state wide strategy. You are just doing your part in one district. A statewide organization would have a long list of representatives to win over. In that case it is fine to name them all in the first draft of the chart, but a separate chart then needs to be made for each person as the circumstances in each district will be different.

Goals must be very specific. The word "goals" is shorthand for issue goals. An issue is the solution to a problem that you want to win. If members of a housing group said their goal was fair housing, or an environmental organization said ending greenhouse emissions, they would only be restating the problem, not saying exactly what they want to win. Saying that the goal is, "to educate the public," is to mistake a goal for a tactic. Public education is really a tactic and goes in the last column.

(Note: Educating the public can be a deceptive concept. How do you know when you have accomplished it? When is the public educated and how educated has it become? Beware of any activity that requires spending money with no way to measure the result.)

Remember a goal is always something that you win from someone. Test the intermediate goals; are they specific steps toward your long-term goals? Do they meet the three major criteria for choosing an issue? Do they:

1. Win real improvements in people's lives?
2. Give people a sense of their own power?
3. Alter the relations of power?

What does it mean to win? How will you know when you have won?

Short-Term Issue Goals

Short-term issue goals are steps toward your intermediate goals. Short-term issue goals can apply either to legislative bodies or to public agencies. A legislative short-term goal might include voting to get a bill out of committee, keeping it in committee, or holding hearings. Organizing short-term goals might include making an agency compile or release information. For example, a citizen organization concerned about crime against seniors had to make the police department keep crime statistics by age just to prove that the problem existed. Sometimes, as in the example, just getting the decision maker to meet with you or attend an event becomes a short-term goal if the decision maker is reluctant to do so. Short-term goals can also be electoral. A specific person must be removed or more forceful leadership elected.

It is not always necessary to have short-term issue goals, but in big issue campaigns they are useful for two reasons: First, few groups are strong enough to win a major campaign without a period of building power. The support of individual officials must be won, and power gathered at local levels of government. Second, just to sustain your organization in a long campaign, people must see small victories along the way.

For a local community organization working on a neighborhood issue, the short-term issue goal might be something you are quite sure you can win anyway, but you do it to establish the effectiveness of your organization in the eyes of community members. An example: getting a meeting with the city council member. When the people see that the organization can do that much, they will be ready for the next step, perhaps a meeting with the mayor. (If someone gets up at

your first meeting and says, "Oh the mayor is a friend of mine, I can get you a meeting any time," don't accept. The point is that the group must feel that it collectively won the meeting because of its strength. If the meeting comes about because of one person's personal relationship, the stature of that individual is built up, but the group isn't strengthened. And, it is likely that nothing will come of the meeting.)

While listing goals, consider what the cost to the target will be if you win. Who will pay? What is it worth to someone to defeat you? Knowing this helps you to get a sense of how much money is likely to be spent on defeating you. It also gives you some better idea of who will end up as allies or opponents.

When you are finished listing your goals, have the group put them more or less in the order in which they will have to be achieved.

Column 2: Organizational Considerations

This column is essentially an organizational expense and income statement. You will list what resources you have to put into the campaign (expenses), what organizational gains you want to come out of the campaign (income), and internal problems that have to be solved.

Start with resources. This is essentially your campaign budget. Consider these to be expenses or better yet, investments. Be very specific, particularly about staff time and money. List names. Make sure that the people working on your campaign are in the room when you talk about how much of their time is going into the campaign. "Full time" for example, means that a person has no other responsibilities. Don't be one of those groups where the organizer works "full time" on each of five campaigns at once.

List the amount of money you are putting into the campaign and the amount that needs to be raised. Then, put a fair market cash value on the in-kind contributions you are making, including staff time, rent and postage. Unless you do this, your allies, affiliates and members will never have any idea of the size of your real contribution and neither will you.

In the second part of the column, list everything that the organization wants to get out of the campaign in addition to winning the issue. Consider this income and plan to make a "profit," that is to build your organization through both internal development and fundraising. Again, the point here is to be very specific. *The rule is that an organization should come out of any campaign stronger than when it went in, even if it loses the issue.* How many new affiliates, new members, or leaders do you want? Name them if possible. How much money will be raised? Put in an amount. Do you want more media recognition for your group? Where? How often? The purpose of being specific goes beyond setting objectives. To make these things happen, there will need to be corresponding tactics, and sometimes corresponding targets and constituencies. If one organizational objective is to get into the papers once a month, then in the tactics column you will need to have at least one media hit a month and maybe more. If the local paper is politically partisan and the Mayor is of that party, then your attacks on the Mayor may not be covered. You will have to find an additional decision maker, perhaps a City Council committee chair, in order to meet the objective of increased media coverage. If another organizational objective is to increase by four the number of people of color in leadership, then more organizations to which people of color belong may need to be added to the constituency column. All of the columns of the chart are wired together in these ways.

The last part of this column lists internal problems that will have to be considered or solved in the course of the campaign. Here, "internal"

implies problems within your organization (staff or leadership relationships), problems within your coalition, problems within constituent organizations, or financial problems.

Column 3: Constituents, Allies and Opponents

CONSTITUENTS AND ALLIES

This column is where you answer the questions: who cares about this issue, what do they stand to win or lose, what power do they have, and how are they organized? A constituency is a group of people, hopefully already organized, who you can contact and bring into the campaign. In filling out this column, be expansive, even far fetched. The idea is to come up with a long list of potential constituents. During the campaign you may not actually be able to get all of them, but start with the longest possible list. The difference between *constituents* and *allies* is that constituents are potential members of your organization, while allies are not. Students might be allies in a senior led campaign for more frequent bus service. Other seniors would be constituents.

Even if your organization has individual members rather than being a coalition, it is still useful to think of people as part of groups. For example, you are working on a public transportation issue and decide that senior citizens are a possible constituency. You could list seniors on the chart, but that won't tell you how to reach them. Instead, be more specific. Say, "Seniors who ride the #104 and #7 buses." That at least leads you to leafleting bus stops on those lines. It would be much better, however, to look at the transit map or the Yellow Pages to see what senior centers are served by those lines. Don't overlook congregations that might have senior clubs. Mark them on a map. Put them on the chart by name. Go and visit them.

As an experiment, we entered into Yahoo Maps the avenue that is the main route of the # 7 bus. Yahoo returned a list of each zip code through which the avenue passed. After choosing one, we put the word "seniors" in the Find Local Business box and got a large, though not complete, list of senior citizen services near the route of the #7 bus.

Look for constituencies that are less than obvious. On the tax issue, realtors or real estate associations might join with you because value is added to the houses they sell if property taxes don't rise and/or there is a good school system.

Think of each constituent group as the hub of a wheel. Then look at the spokes. Who cares about these people? Who does business with them? Who provides services to them? Who lends them money? Who borrows their money (banks, insurance companies?) For whom do they vote? If they had more money to spend, where would they spend it? Who would get it (local merchants or Swiss banks)? To which organizations or congregations do they belong? Looking at your possible constituents in this way, it is easy to see that the self-interest of one group affects the self-interest of many others and may create still more constituents for the campaign.

While it is necessary to think about potential areas of conflict between the groups, remember that people don't all have to love each other, agree on tactics, or even sit in the same room in order to support the same issue. In fact, sometimes the issue brings them together. This was the case in the classic campaign against the Chicago Crosstown Expressway. The proposed expressway route ran through different ethnic communities. One White group came with signs saying, "Black Roads, White Lines United Against the Crosstown."

Mark your list according to whether the constituency is organized or unorganized. That is, homeowners associations in the Humboldt Park area, as opposed to individual homeowners. Then, rank each group according to the power they bring to the campaign. Consider the following:

- How many members do they have?
- Did they work or vote for the incumbent office holder?
- Do they make political campaign contributions?
- Will they give money to your issue campaign?
- Do they bring special credibility? (Clergy)
- Do they have special appeal? (Children)
- Are they part of a larger organized network? (Veterans) Do they have a reputation for being tough? (Unions)
- Do they have special skills? (Lawyers)
- Are they considered particularly newsworthy? (Penguins)
- What powers have they over the decision maker?

Last, examine the weakness of each constituency. Look at their reputation, past history, and the enemies that you might inherit by linking up with them. *If the target is an elected official, then constituents will have very little power over someone they never voted for her and never will.* Think outside the box. Local elected officials know the strengths of your organization at least as well as you do. If they aren't responding to you it is because they don't believe you can either help or hurt them. Always look for constituents who are part of the office holder's core vote. If nothing else, focus your efforts in the wards or precincts (election districts) where the official got her highest vote. Similarly, if consumer power is to be used against a corporation, then constituents must be customers of that company.

OPPONENTS

List all the groups, individuals, and institutions that stand to lose or be very upset if you win. What will your victory cost them? Try to evaluate how actively each will oppose you, and what they will do or spend to defeat you. In a few cases you may find ways to neutralize them, but even if there is nothing you can do, it is best to have some idea of what to expect as the campaign unfolds. List the power of each opponent. How does the strength of your constituents stack up against the strength of your opponents in the eyes of the people who can give you what you want? Generally, avoid engaging opponents during the campaign. They can't give you what you want, and you have no influence over them anyway. Don't even hold debates with them unless you expect to win over larger numbers of their base. In most campaigns, your opponents have you outspent and out-staffed; spending time on them just diverts you from the real targets. This is not to say that opponents don't matter or that we should not be concerned about their strength, but only that challenging them directly can be a diversion.

Often, in analyzing power relationships groups, focus so much on the strengths of the opposition that they convince themselves that they can't win. The Academy advises putting more emphasis on researching the opposition's weaknesses and developing strategies that maximize your strengths.

Column 4: Decision Makers (Targets)

PRIMARY DECISION MAKERS

The person with the power to give you what you want is sometimes referred to as the "target" of the campaign. This does not necessarily imply that the person is evil. It simply means that by virtue of having the power to give you what you want, that person is the focus of the campaign. Usually the term is "decision maker."

The decision maker is always a person. "Personalize the target" is a fundamental rule of organizing. Even if the power to give you what you want is actually held by an institution such as a city council, a board of directors, the legislature, the police department, or the Environmental Protection Agency; personalize it. Find out the name of the person(s) who can make the decision or at least strongly influence it. Make that person the target. Not only does this help to narrow the focus of the campaign, but it makes your members feel that winning is possible. A campaign to change a person's mind is much more believable than one to change the policy of a big institution. In addition, individual decision makers have human responses such as fairness, guilt, fear, ambition, vanity or loyalty. These do not exist in institutions or formal bodies as a whole. Such responses can only come into play if you personalize the target.

When filling out this column, list all the possible people who can give you what you want. It helps if there is more than one of them because where power is divided there are usually more weak spots and openings. Also, multiple decision makers provide an opportunity to sustain the campaign over a longer time. This allows you to build strength. In many types of campaigns, time is on your side if you can hold out. This is particularly true if you are trying to stop expensive things from being built, or large sums of money from being spent. A long campaign may also help you to keep the issue alive until an election intervenes or a court decision comes down. List the reasons that each target has to oppose you as well as to agree with you. List your power over each decision maker. Go back to the constituency list and consider how to match the power of each constituency against the vulnerabilities of the decision maker. In campaigns aimed at legislators, identify the pro, anti, and swing-vote legislators. Sometimes it is sufficient to win over the swing legislators if they are the balance of power. In that case, you don't have to reach everyone.

SECONDARY DECISION MAKERS OR TARGETS

A secondary target is a person who has more power over the primary decision maker than you do. But, you have more power over this person than you have over the primary decision maker.

Tenants in public housing wanted their buildings painted. The tenants made several members of the city housing authority their primary targets. When the tenants discovered that old lead paint was peeling off the walls, they made the head of the Health Department a secondary target. She didn't care about the tenants' dispute with the housing authority, but lead was a health hazard that had to be corrected. She told the housing authority that the walls must be scraped and repainted.

When you list secondary targets, write down what power you have over them, and what power they have over the primary target.

When dealing with corporations, a large purchaser can be a good secondary target. Look to see if the corporation has government contracts. If so, the public officials who can end the contracts become secondary targets.

Column 5: Tactics

Tactics are steps in carrying out your overall plan. They are the specific things that the people in the Constituency Column do to the decision makers to put pressure on them to win the goal. When you list tactics, put down who will do what and to whom.

The Tactics Column is always filled out last. This is to avoid the common tendency to jump to tactics as soon as the issue is chosen. (Let's all go to Mayor Gold's office with a goldfish and a sign that says, "All that glitters is not gold.") Tactics should never be planned in isolation from the larger strategy of which they must be a part. For every tactic, there must be:

- Someone who does it.
- Someone to whom it is done.
- Some reason why the person to whom it is done doesn't want it done and will make a concession to you if you stop doing it.

Tactics should be fun. They should be within the experience of your members, but outside the experience of your targets. Every tactic should have an element of power behind it. None should be purely symbolic. Different tactics require different levels of organizational strength and sophistication to use. For that reason, some work better at the beginning of a campaign and some can only be used later after a certain level of strength is reached.

Notes on Tactics

Media Events

Media events are designed to get press and TV coverage. As stand-alone events, they are usually used at the start of the campaign to dramatize the issue and announce that the organization is working on it. A media event might consist of releasing information or a study, demanding information, having victims tell their story, and making demands on the target. A media event is a stand alone tactic that is different from getting media coverage for some other activity like a demonstration or rally.

The press usually responds well to something visual and funny or dramatic. A citizen organization wanted to dramatize that the rising cost of auto insurance was forcing people to choose between paying for their homes or their cars. The group built a home into a car with curtains on the window and the toilet in the trunk. The press loved it.

If the media event features groups such as low-income people, the homeless, the unemployed or striking workers, be sure that they are presented with dignity and as whole people asking for the same rights that others enjoy. They are not objects of pity, nor are they looking for a handout.

Meetings with Elected Officials

This type of meeting, sometimes called an action, is used as a show of power and an opportunity to make demands on a decision maker. It is not the same as a meeting to exchange information or provide expertise. It is not the first meeting with the elected official nor is it usually the last. It is conducted after the decision maker has either refused to take a position or has said no. The meeting is a particularly useful tactic for local organizations, especially toward the start of a campaign. In this type of meeting, a group of people confront a decision maker and make specific demands. They expect to get an answer on the spot. Organizations usually start with procedural demands such as asking for an appointment with someone, or that a hearing be held. They also might ask for the release of information, the publication of rules, or time on the agenda. Later when the group is stronger, this tactic might be used to win some of its main demands.

These meetings often involve the media, but they are not media events. That is to say the objective is not simply to get covered in the media, but to use additional power to win something. The organization's power may be the number of participants or the size of the constituency they represent, their ability to embarrass the decision maker with information they have uncovered, or their ability to cause the decision maker political harm if a public official, or financial harm if a business person.

Public Hearings

You might demand that the decision maker hold an official public hearing, but consider holding your own hearing with a panel of community leaders and allied political leaders who listen to testimony from your constituency. Often a report is issued. The hearing serves to educate, get publicity, put opponents on the spot, and establish your organization as a leading force on the issue.

Accountability Sessions

Accountability sessions are large meetings with elected officials. They are sponsored by you and held on your turf. Several hundred people come to tell the official what they want done. The official is asked to respond at once. (See Chapter 8 for how to organize an accountability session.)

Elections

Depending on the type of organization you are, you may actually endorse candidates. Even if you don't, you usually have more leverage in the weeks before an election because candidates are more vulnerable then. (Always check state and federal laws for any restrictions on the timing of issue advocacy as these laws change frequently. The state laws vary widely from state to state.)

Negotiations

Issue campaigns usually end in some form of negotiation. You must have shown considerable power to get the other side to agree to talk. If your target offers to negotiate too easily or too soon, watch out! It may be a device to make the other side look reasonable without any serious concessions being made. (But don't automatically assume that every offer is some kind of trick. There are groups that snatch defeat from the jaws of victory because they can never believe that they actually won.)

The next chapter explores some of these and other tactics in greater detail.

Using the Chart

The strategy chart can be used to plan organizational development as well as issue campaigns. The starting point in the chart is determined by the type of planning you are doing. For example, to plan an issue campaign, work from left to right. To plan the start-up of a new organization, say a new coalition, begin at the lower half of the Organizational Considerations column and put down how many organizations you want to have affiliated and specific goals to make the coalition diverse and inclusive. Then, skip to the Constituents column and list all the existing organizations that could potentially join the coalition. Note the ethnic characteristics of each. Next, go back to the Goals column and with the objective of diversity in mind, decide which issues would appeal to potential members. From there, go to the Targets and then to the Tactics columns.

To plan the ouster of an elected official, start in the Decision Maker column, then go to constituents and then to goals to plan an issue campaign that will unite the constituents and embarrass the elected official. The only thing you can't do is start with Tactics.

One reason that the chart works in so many ways is that an organization is literally the product of what it does. Once you are clear on what you want it to be, you can work backwards toward shaping the group in the desired direction.

The two questions most frequently asked about the strategy chart:

Question: In which column do I put an activity such as getting more publicity for my organization? Is that a Goal, an Organizational Consideration or a Tactic?

Answer: Nothing goes in the Goals column unless you intend to win it from someone. Tactics are always done by someone to someone, so a media event aimed at a target goes under tactics. Getting publicity in general is an Organizational Consideration.

Question: Exactly what is the relationship between the columns of the chart'?

Answer: Tactics are what people in the Constituents column do to the Decision Makers to make them give the organization the Goals in a way that builds the organization as outlined in the Organizational Considerations column.

Timelines

To finish off the planning process, make timelines for the campaign. Include all the major campaign events and deadlines for preparing the publicity for each. Be sure to include the key dates in the electoral process. Even if you are not involved with candidates, note such information as when voter registration starts and ends, when nominating petitions start circulating, when petitions must be filed for major party candidates and independents, when candidate fundraising reports must be filed (you may want to look at them) and of course, all election dates. Also note when appropriate legislative bodies are in session, when members of Congress and the State Legislature are home for recess, and when major civil, religious and school holidays occur. Timelines also help you sort through your many good ideas and prioritize and even eliminate some. The first tactics list that most groups create is a brainstorm list with little relationship to the group's limited resources. A timeline that includes "who will do what by when" helps the group be more realistic about what it can do. It is also helpful to have a multi-tiered timeline. This can help in planning activities that build on something already scheduled, or indicate where too much is going on at one time and something needs to be rescheduled.

An outline for such a timeline follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Organization												
City Council												
State Leg.												
Congress												
Elections												
Fundraising												
Other												

Training participants to develop a strategy chart.

Midwest Academy Strategy Chart Example for Free School Breakfast and Lunch Program

GOALS	ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	CONSTITUENCY	TARGET	TACTICS
Long Term Free breakfast and lunch for all students **Intermediate** Defeat H-35. The bill that cuts the funding by getting Rep. Mazur to vote no. (Vote likely in three months. It is now the first week of December.) **Short Term** Get Mazur to agree to attend a large district-wide, community meeting.	**Inputs For Mazur's District** 1 staff – Winfield Scott 1/3 of Sup's time Office good copier e-mail blast service group has website 4 phone lines DSL networked meeting space for 15 $1,000 3 leaders Jubel Early Bedford Forest James Longstreet **Outcomes** Build education issue coalition in the State Rep. District. Potential members: see Allies. Build up our own chapters at 5 individual schools. (4 months – 30 new parent members.) Train 4 more leaders Jeff Haydes Elysian Fields Olympia Jones Kim Max Be in *West Side Spirit* monthly and in *New York Times* and *Daily News* at least one time.	**Constituents** Parents at 5 schools in district and individuals in areas served. **Allies** PTAs Teachers Union St. Elbert's St. Hubert's St. Norbert's All Saints NAACP Branch Latino Civic Association Block Assn's. Approx. 15 active in area. Need contact name for each. Jewish Single Parents 3 Democratic Clubs in district. Douglass Houses Tenants Assoc. City Council Members Ruth Courier and Odette Swan	**Rep Mazur** **(D-8)** Home: 35 W. Divigate Rd. (321) 666-6666. Dist. Office: 121 Wander Blvd. (312) 200-6000 **Elections:** **2 Yr. Term** 2011 13,389 Mazur 12,174 McLaws 2009 14,765 Mazur 12,099 Hood Next Democratic Primary will be in two years. Says he is undecided but thinks it irresponsible to vote for something when the Gov. says there is no way to pay for it. Suggests parents hold bake sales to pay for school lunches.	Overall approach is to show that defeating the cuts is a popular issue. (Mazur might be challenged in the primary). Hold parent leaders' strategy meeting. Schedule meeting with Mazur for parents and allied group representatives. If negative, start petition drive with media hit at district office. Parents to speak at all allied group meetings. Media hit to announce Children's hunger march converging on Mazur's office from each school. "Feed kids not banks." Present petitions. Each child carries an empty cereal box on a stick, led by parents and high profile community leaders. Major district wide "Mazur's Last Chance" community meeting at largest church. Demand his support.

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Midwest Academy Strategy Chart

Goals	Organizational Considerations	Constituents, Allies, and Opponents	Targets	Tactics

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5

A GUIDE TO TACTICS

We are somewhat reluctant to present a guide to tactics for the same reason that we would not read biographies of characters in movies. The characters have no real existence that is independent of the movie script. Similarly, tactics have no meaningful existence outside the strategy of which they are a part. Standing alone, it is impossible to say that a given tactic is right or wrong, good or bad, clever or dumb. That's why tactics come at the end of the strategy chart.

All too often, organizations allow a tactic to take on a life of its own, independent of any strategic context. A group will hear of a clever tactic that worked someplace else, and use it without considering either why it worked the first time, or how their situation might be different. For example, word arrived from a nearby state that people had mailed Band-Aids to their legislators, causing progress to be made on a bill to lower auto insurance rates. Mailing Band Aids became the new "in" tactic. All sorts of groups started doing it. No one realized that in the nearby state the legislature was up for election, while their own state elections had been completed just before the Band-Aid frenzy began. Tactics do not work just because they are smart or funny, although it helps. *The worst mistake an organizer can make is to act tactically instead of strategically.*

Criteria for Tactics

Having placed a tactic in its strategic context, there are five basic criteria for a good tactic.

1. *It is Focused on the Decision Maker or Secondary Target of the Campaign.* The tactic is not focused on someone else.
2. *It Puts Power Behind a Specific Demand.* The weakest tactic is one that is not aimed at anyone and makes no demand; for example, a candlelight vigil to save the whales which doesn't call on anyone to do anything in particular.
3. *It Meets Your Organizational Goals as Well as Your Issue Goals.* That is, it builds the organization as well as helping to win the issue. As far as we know, the Boston Tea Party dramatized the problem of taxation, but did not help to build an organization. No group took credit for it because it was illegal. Since then, many organizations have used the tea party tactic by dumping something into an appropriate body of water. Usually the press is called and the group's name is prominently displayed, indicating that the practice of this tactic has improved over the years.
4. *It is Outside the Experience of the Target.* An organization demanding equal access to Postal Service jobs for Latinos made hundreds of copies of job application forms for people in the community to fill out. The local Postal Service administrator was taken off guard as this tactic was outside his experience. He blundered by disqualifying the copied forms, insisting that only original Postal Service forms would be considered. This seemed so unfair and so prejudiced that he was forced to back down, thus handing the organization an easy first victory. In another example, the new owners of a hotel laid off the workers and refused to honor their union contract. The workers called on a coalition of labor and religious organizations for help. The coalition decided on a tactic that was definitely outside of the hotel management's experience. They came and prayed in the hotel lobby. After four days of lobby prayer, the hotel manager called the union and asked if recognizing the union would end the praying. The union won and the workers were rehired.
5. *It is Within the Experience of Your Own Members, and They are Comfortable with It.* A citizen organization brought several hundred members to a meeting at a church, from which they were to march to the office of a state official. The members, it turned out, were not comfortable with the idea of the march, which they associated with "protesters." They refused to leave the church. Had the organizers better understood the members' attitude, they might have arranged to have the state official meet with the group at the church.

Considerations in Using some Popular Tactics

Petition Drives

If you haven't already heard it, you soon will. A politician will tell you, "Don't bring me petitions. I would rather see one or two well thought out, spontaneous, handwritten letters than one thousand signatures from an organized group." This is the truth. In fact, what the politicians would *really* rather see is *no* signatures, *no* handwritten letters and *no* organized group, because then they could do just as they please. Of course they want you to talk to two or three thoughtful

people instead of thousands. When used properly, petitions are very powerful, and collecting signatures is a good organization builder as well. Petitions and letters in which people pledge to vote on the basis of a politician's stand on your issue are the strongest kind, especially when they are delivered by a large number of people with media coverage. Petitions that are simply mailed to a politician are basically useless.

The Power of Petitions Come From the Following:

A. Numbers.

B. Strategic Location & Timing.

C. Organized Follow up.

- Signatures gathered from around the state and sent to the clerk of the legislature have very little impact unless their number is really overwhelming. Signatures gathered in one district where the state Rep. won by a *narrow* margin have considerable impact on that Rep.
- Signatures presented to an *elected* government official have much more impact than those given to *appointed* officials. (Unless the person is likely to run for office in the future, or was appointed by, and is identified with, someone elected who will be embarrassed.
- Signatures presented to a store owner matter a great deal if they come from *customers*. But, if the community petitions the owner of a wholesale plumbing supply company, the signatures will have very little impact.
- Petitions presented a month before an official is up for election are much more powerful than twice as many signatures presented a month after the election.
- Every official to whom petitions are presented should be made aware that the names come from a well organized group, and that the signers will be informed of the response that their petition received.

PETITION TIPS

- Keep the message short and simple. Just a couple of sentences followed by two or three bullet points are enough. The idea is to enable people to quickly read the petition, not to spell out every detail for the person receiving the signatures. That can be done in a separate letter.
- Not more than ten signature lines on a page. If you use the petitions in a media event, you will want the pile to look large. This is not the time to save trees by cramming twenty names on one page. You want the names to be legible in order to contact those signers interested in participating.
- Ask everyone who signs if they want to volunteer. Take phone numbers and email addresses of those who do. (After being called, probably only one in ten will actually show up, but that's fine.) Leave everyone with a piece of literature. You can also ask for a contribution.
- Petitions on which you are collecting both phone numbers and email addresses need to be printed landscape (sideways).
- Watch your petition sheets carefully. If any person omits a piece of information such as a phone number, everyone who follows will omit it as well.
- Emphasize quantity not quality. You are going for numbers, so don't spend a lot time trying to "educate" one person.
- Go out in teams. It's more fun. An organized petition day is much better than asking

everyone to do it individually at their own pace. People can meet at a common location, get briefed quickly, go out for a set time and then meet back for refreshments and to exchange experiences.

- Never give away signed petitions without having made copies. They are useful for follow-up (e)mailings and phone calls. The same petitions can be used on another occasion with a different decision maker.

Letter Writing

The power of letter writing comes from the same sources as does that of petitions. The letter represents a slightly larger commitment on the part of the writer and, where appropriate, it gives you a longer period of contact in which to recruit the person as a volunteer, or to get a contribution. Whenever you have a meeting with an official, get dozens of letters written beforehand. Mail in half during the week before the meeting and bring the rest with you. It always makes an impression. Remember though, that many officeholders actually answer letters, and thus will have the last word with your supporters. They may use it to portray you as wrong.

How many is many?

We say many letters, signatures, or people, but we don't say how many. It depends on the number of people who voted in the last election, and the margin by which the official won. How many signatures do other groups usually get?

Choose letter writing over petitions whenever an audience is sitting down. Congregations, for example, will often agree to do letter writing for you, either in the lobby or actually in the pews. Letter writing also works well on a busy street corner if you set up a card table. By themselves, form letters (on which people sign their names to pre-printed letters) have the same impact as petitions. Handwritten letters show a greater commitment by the writer.

- Have a sample text of not more than three sentences. Print it on slips of paper with the address, and tape it to the clip of the clipboards on which people will write their letter. Tell each person that they can use the sample or put it in their own words. When working with a group or congregation, consider bringing a laptop so that people can dictate short letters.
- Tell the writer to put down a return address, and the decision maker will probably send a reply. This may give the decision maker the last word, but it also keeps people engaged.
- Ask each person to address an envelope after finishing the letter. Then say, "We'll mail it for you. Would you make a contribution for postage?" Many people will give more money than the postage costs. Collect and mail all the letters yourself. Discourage people from walking away with their letters; they won't make it to the mailbox.
- Combine petition and letter writing drives with selling something, such as buttons or T-shirts, and you can keep the petty cash box full. When you mail the letters, spread them out over a week. They are more likely to be noticed.
- An outdoor letter writing table requires a minimum of three people. More is better. One person should stand (not sit) behind the table and handle the clip boards. The other two should be in front of the table with leaflets engaging passers-by and steering them over to the table. Groups have tried outdoor email-

ing with only modest success. The screens are hard to see in full daylight and the height of a card table makes typing awkward. If you try it, you don't need an internet connection, just save the emails and send them later. On a commercial street you can usually pick up a signal.

Turnout Events

Getting people to come is the core of organizing. It doesn't matter how good your ideas are, the groups that get attention are the ones that get people to come and keep them coming back. For a community group, getting people is almost entirely a matter of good telephone work. This means developing lists of everyone who has ever shown interest and writing down the date and nature of every contact and attempted contact with them. Phoning is best done from a home or office with several phone lines or where people bring cell phones. Use evening or weekend minutes. The advantage of group calling is that it is more fun and you can coach the callers. (Borrow an office for a few hours in the evening if necessary.) Having people call individually from home will also work as long as everything is explained beforehand, but it is not as good as having a central location. You have no quality control. The central location helps you develop a team.

Every organization develops its own telephone success rate over time. The general rule is that of the people who say on your second (confirming) phone call to them that they will come, half will actually showup. The calculations that you need to make for a turnout event appear in the chart that follows. Of course, the number of calls you need to make to get one person will be different from group to group. Seven calls to get one "yes," as shown here, is a good average. Don't count anyone as a "yes" who says, "I'll try to come." That means no. The chart shows the necessity of putting calling on a factory basis. It can't be left to a few people to do when they get a chance. The calling may need to include an appeal for volunteers to make more calls. This is a good to do in any case.

Meeting with Council Member	Goal: 60 People
Your regulars	15
From other groups	10
From phones	30
Necessary confirmed twice (home)	75
Number of calls to get 70 confirmed	490 (70 x 7)
Number of calls per person, per hour	20
Number of person hours calling	25
Number of calling nights and people	5 people a night for 5 nights

TURNOUT TIPS

- Don't start with the words "Hello Mrs. Smith, your name appears on a list in our office." This is traditional but deadly. Neither should you open with, "Did you get our letter?" A person who is standing there with the letter in hand may still say no. Instead, you should say:

  "Hello Mrs. Smith, this is Steve from United Parents. Two weeks ago you signed our petition to get eye disease screening for the children at Public School 165. As a result of the petition, we have a meeting with a member of the School Board, Mr. Bookish. It will be a chance for you to show him how you feel about the screening having been cut in our community. Of course, the more people who come, the more he will have to listen to us. He'd better listen, he *is* elected. It is next Tuesday, the 17th at the school. The room is

315. We will all meet outside the building at 5:30 PM, and go in together. We will be finished by about 6:30. I'll be there, can you come?"..."Oh that's wonderful. We'll give you a reminder call a day or two beforehand if that's all right."

Notice the following elements in the call:

- Stress the past connection, the petition.
- Mention a previous success of the campaign, getting the meeting.
- Indicate that the person will play a role, even if it is not a speaking role. By being there you can show him how you feel.
- Talk about why the person is needed, numbers matter: "Mr. Bookish is elected."
- Everyone will go in together as a group.
- Ask for a definite commitment, can you come?
- Indicate a reminder call and be sure to make one. (Of the people who say *twice* that they will come, half will come.)
- In addition to phoning people, try to get the same message to each individual in at least three other ways. For example, send a mailing, send email, put up posters and have someone make an announcement at the PTA meeting. Mail, email, posters, leaflets, advertisements, or public service announcements will reinforce the phone call and remind people, but they are no substitute for the call. The more times people hear the message, the more likely they are to come.
- At the event, every caller should make an effort to meet the people they called and introduce themselves. Name tags help.
- If your events are fun, exciting and get press, people will come back. For example, you could tape the petitions to the back of a six foot eye chart and give it to Mr. Bookish. (OK, so they don't really screen for eye disease with a chart, but you get the idea. Have something unusual at every event that people will talk about afterward.)

Visits with public officials

Nothing beats actual face to face meetings between your members and public officials. These can be done with between fifteen and twenty-five people. If you can, show larger numbers of supporters through petitions or letters. The meetings are usually held in the official's office. Most elected officials hate these meetings but can't avoid agreeing to hold them if you have sufficient community support.

- It is usually better to meet with elected officials than appointed ones.
- Know what the election results were (general and primary) so that you have an idea of how secure the seat is. Look at whole numbers as well as percentages. Look at party registration. Analyze where the vote came from both in terms of geography (precincts) and constituency (people).
- Because the meeting is small and everyone must be with the program, don't recruit people whom you don't really know.
- Have a single spokesperson who may call on two or three other people to speak. The rest of the group should be introduced indicating which other organizations or congregations they represent. (Don't say, "I'm a home owner." Say, "I belong to the Bergen Park Homeowner's Association.")
- Come with a specific demand, usually that the elected official support some legislation. Have a fall-back demand. (Hold a hearing. Do a study.)

- Think of the forms of power that you have.
  - Numbers
  - The support of campaign contributors or workers.
  - The support of influential people in the community.
  - Ability to embarrass the official for not acting in the interest of the community.
  - Conflict of interest on the part of the official.
  - The official is yielding to pressure or money from special interests.
  - Try to pin the official down to a specific agreement.
  - If you can't get an agreement, get another meeting.

Famous Elected Official Lies

- ***I was just about to do what you want, but because you came here like this, now I won't.***
- ***I never respond to pressure. I always make up my own mind.***
- ***Look, I'm your friend.***
- ***There is just no money.***
- ***I didn't know it was illegal.***

Public Hearings

There are two kinds of public hearings, those that you sponsor and "official" ones held by public agencies.

HOLDING YOUR OWN PUBLIC HEARING:

The first victory in holding a public hearing lies in getting the public official to come. The virtue of this tactic is that it is very difficult for an official to refuse such an invitation. To do so would be an admission that the community's opinion doesn't count. To your own members, the appearance of an important decision maker at *their* event is a sign of growing power. Often, a group uses smaller meetings with the official and other pressure tactics just to force the person to attend the hearing. If an official does refuse to come, the hearing can be held anyway with a panel of prestigious allies listening to testimony. These might include members of the clergy, other elected officials, educators, heads of organizations, or people from special fields connected with the issue. There are several advantages to holding your own hearing:

- It establishes your group as a force/authority on the issue.
- It is an opportunity to do outreach to other groups, individuals, or neighborhoods.
- It shows off your influential supporters or leaders. They can sit on the hearing panel or testify.
- It can showcase a potential candidate.
- It is a display of numbers.
- You control almost every aspect of it, which makes it a fine forum for your point of view.
- It is fun and not very hard to do.
- It is good training for your own leaders.
- It will probably get media coverage.

In planning your hearing, write and practice all testimony in advance. It need not be "expert" testimony, in fact, better that it not be. People telling their own story of how the issue affects them is just fine so long as each person also represents a larger constituency and says so. Make the physical setting attractive both to participants and to the TV. A good job of decorating, using banners or signs naming the organizations present

is one way of showing strength. As with most tactics, a really large turnout makes up for what is lacking in execution, so don't spend so much time writing testimony that you neglect recruitment.

Hearings, like any other meeting, should be over within two hours. The trick is to avoid having the hearing dribble away at the end. Save your strongest speaker until last, and end with a call to action and an announcement of the next step in the campaign.

TIPS FOR HOLDING YOUR OWN HEARING

- This is not a "town meeting" where all points of view are represented; it is to present your case to the public, to public officials, and to the media.
- To use this tactic your group must be able to turn out a crowd of at least 100 people.
- Pick a hall that you know you can fill to overflowing. Take out any extra chairs. The goal is to have every seat filled and a few people standing in the back.
- Get the name, address, phone, and email address of everyone who comes. Testimony should be prepared in advance and given by people who represent organized groups. A few individuals can also be recognized to speak.
- Bring letters and petitions to show support from people who couldn't come. Conduct voter registration in the back of the room. Read messages and greetings from allied groups. Appoint one press person who gives out your release and points the media toward other spokespeople for interviews.
- Because LCD projectors are increasingly common, consider including a visual presentation such as a PowerPoint presentation, or video of people telling how the problem affected them. A simple but effective approach is just to show digital pictures.
- Close with a rousing statement and give everyone something to do when they leave. It could be a leaflet to hand out, a poster to put up, or another event to attend.

A variation on the organization's own hearing is the Workers Rights Board, created by Jobs with Justice to parallel the National Labor Relations Board. Workers Boards', of course, have no legal authority, but they do have moral authority. Respected community leaders, such as a business ethics professor, a Bishop, or the head of the local League of Women Voters are recruited to serve on these boards. The boards hear cases and make "rulings" about what should be done. The boards are a tactical vehicle for recruiting new people and helping to publicize worker grievances at specific companies.

ATTENDING AN OFFICIAL HEARING

As a result of organizing activity during the 1970s, there was a great expansion of legally required citizen participation in government decision-making processes. Often this takes the form of an official public hearing. Although the hearing is usually meaningless and the decision makers intend to ignore it, it can still be a useful arena in which to move the campaign forward. Where not required by law, groups often demand hearings as a way of opening the debate, delaying a decision, or creating an arena in which to show their strength.

Try to get the hearing held on your own turf at a time when your people can attend. Most official hearings are held downtown at 9 a.m. Fighting for neighborhood, evening hearings is often a good way to build the campaign. It is the type of demand that is hard for a public agency to refuse. If you win, however, you are obligated to produce a crowd.

When you are stuck with the morning time slot and downtown location, try to get on the agenda at the very opening of the hearing. That is when the media will come, and they will not stay long. Also, your people will get tired. Often you must register to speak weeks or months in advance. (This is particularly true for environmental hearings on big state or federal projects.)

Official hearings are boring. Do not plan on keeping a crowd at one for long. Consider having a picket line, press event, or demonstration outside until it is time for your spokesperson to testify. Technical hearings are super boring. It is often not useful to bring large groups to them.

Use tactics that are humorous, but that are also in good taste and make a political point. This is particularly important for gaining media coverage at an otherwise un-newsworthy event. A leader of a citizens' group, for example, appeared at a utility rate hearing dressed as King Com the Electric Gorilla (Commonwealth Edison). A public housing tenants' organization appeared in the city council chamber with mice that had been caught in their apartments. Gimmicks like these are good for morale and press, but have little inherent power. They are no substitute for large numbers of people.

If the goal of appearing at the hearing is to get media coverage for your position, avoid appearing at a time when opposition groups will also be present. A confrontation between rival organizations will be covered, but the substance of your position is likely to get even more lost than usual. If you want television coverage, you will need to have something "visual" for the cameras.

The assumption here is that hearings are theater. Occasionally this is not true. Some legally mandated hearings can be used to build up a case for later court action or to win major delays. Some technical hearings really can modify the rulings of regulatory agencies. Someone on your team should know how to play it straight, which often requires expert technical and legal advice. If very technical testimony is required, try to find a public interest or advocacy group to provide it. And at any hearing, have printed copies of your testimony available for the media, the official record, and for general distribution.

A group fighting a utility rate increase discovered that the hearing was being held so far out in the suburbs that people from the city couldn't even find it. The organization called the press and TV news to an event where it released homing pigeons, which the media was told were being sent to search for the hearing. The point was made. The stunt got good coverage and embarrassed the utility.

TIPS FOR GOING TO AN OFFICIAL HEARING

- Everyone should be easily identified. If your group has buttons, T-shirts or hats, wear them. Print out your group's name or a slogan in large type on big computer labels that people can stick on their clothing.
- Set up a literature table outside the hearing room or on the street. That way you can find supporters among the crowd whom you did not know. Give them a sticker to identify them with your group inside the hearing.
- Prepare a fact sheet or a leaflet to hand out at the hearing in order to explain to everyone just who your group is and what you want. Have the same information in the form of a press statement with quotations from your spokespeople.
- At really big events, appoint one or two "applause managers" to make sure that your people support speakers with whom you agree.

- At events where there are several floor microphones, line your people up at all of them. Give them an index card with talking points or questions to ask. The first person to be called on makes the first point on the list, the next person the second point and so on.
- If your group feels it appropriate, don't hesitate to bring large signs or posters. The idea is to turn the hearing into your event.
- If the crowd is really with you and the decision makers are actually present, try to push them into making commitments on the spot even though that is not the official purpose of the hearing. Ask that the audience be allowed to go on record by voting on the issue. Let the presiding official tell people that they aren't allowed to vote.
- Before you make plans, find out who the actual person conducting the hearing will be. Sometimes it is a low level employee whose only role is to turn on a tape recorder and then sit there until the tape runs out at which point the hearing is over.

Mass Demonstrations

Mass demonstrations are a good show of numbers, but they are also a lot of work. If you hold more than one during an issue campaign, each must be larger than the preceding one or you will appear to be losing support. This tactic works best when a single individual is the target. When aimed at a legislative body, it can lose focus and fail to apply pressure to individual members. Consequently, such demonstrations should be combined with direct lobbying.

The nice thing about a mass demonstration is that it is like money in the bank. Once you have produced a thousand people, (or a million) you do not need to do it again for a long time. Your reputation will carry you. Location is critical. You want a place where passing street traffic will feed the event. It is cheating, however, to claim that everyone eating lunch on the mall at noon was part of your demonstration. Eventually, the truth will catch up with you. (What is actually considered large depends on where you live, and on how many people usually come to such things.)

Marches

A march is a mass demonstration on foot. Many participants prefer it because it is seen by more people on the street than a stationary demonstration. It is also more fun and avoids the necessity of listening to speeches. One advantage of a march is that, up to a point, it makes a smaller crowd look somewhat bigger as it is more spread out. Good visuals are a key. Everyone should have a large sign to hold. Bold black type on a bright orange or yellow background is best. Depending on where you are located, some way to make noise will add to the event. This can be a drum and a couple of other musical instruments. Lots of people hitting empty soda (pop) cans with chop sticks works well, so do whistles of all kind. The biggest problem with a march, if it is on the sidewalk not in the street, is that it gets cut up by traffic lights and the people get separated in little groups. Someone responsible needs to be at the front and other organizers with cell phones at different points in the line. Whenever they see that the line is broken, they call the person at the head, who then holds up the march until everyone catches up.

Accountability Sessions

These are meetings that you hold with elected officials, and where you control the agenda. During the session, people from your constituency present information and say why they expect the official to support a certain measure. Then, a panel of your leaders makes specific demands on

official. An immediate and positive response is expected. This tactic's ability to succeed is directly proportional to the numerical strength you can show in relation to the elected official's margin of victory in the last election. High numbers count, as do having speakers who represent large groups. Often, petitions or letters are presented to demonstrate even wider support. The assumption, of course, is that the official is vulnerable and that many of your people either voted for him or her, or did not vote at all but will now. If all of your people always vote for the opposing party anyway, you will have much less leverage. Because this is such a useful tactic, an entire chapter of this book is devoted to it.

Educational Meetings and Teach-Ins

An educational event should not be designed solely to inform people. It should also generate publicity and show strength. The measure of successful education is that it leads to action, and this should be built into the meeting. One speaker should present the organization's plans and tell the audience how it can become active. Everyone should leave the meeting with something specific to do.

You are under no moral obligation to represent the other side's position at an educational meeting (or at anything else you do.) The only reason to hold a debate is if you think you can trounce an opposition spokesperson or win over his or her followers. As with all events, whenever you get more than five people in a room, take a collection.

Civil Disobedience and Arrest

This tactic, like all tactics, should never be seen as an end in itself, but always as a way of moving forward a larger strategy. In the early part of this century, when the legendary Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or "Wobblies") packed the jails of the Northwest during the free speech fights, they were not simply assuming a moral posture. Packing the jails in response to the arrest of their organizers really did create a crisis for many towns that had no place to put additional prisoners, and no budgets to cover all the extra food and guards. This tactic also brought publicity and built solidarity among the members, who might otherwise have been isolated and intimidated.

In the civil rights movement, civil disobedience often took the form of exercising legal rights, registering to vote for example, that were recognized nationally but not locally. One part of the movement's strategy was to force the federal government to intervene and protect local activists. When students protesting a tuition increase seized college buildings, their strategy was to force the governor either to increase funding or to risk disruption by causing the arrest of students who were asking for no more than an affordable education. In part, the strategy worked because the governor had presidential ambitions and was very image conscious. In the Pittston coal miners strike, the miners sat on the road to stop the trucks from moving coal. They took over a breaker building to attract national media attention to the injustice of the use of strike breakers. Both acts of civil disobedience were part of a careful strategy to cut the company's profits and build national support for the miners' demands. Civil disobedience works as part of a well thought out strategy. It is not an end in itself, as some romantics might suggest. In fact, in many organizing situations civil disobedience frightens people and may hinder your ability to recruit members and consequently your ability to win on an issue.

There is a long history in America, and elsewhere, of government agents infiltrating citizen organizations and advocating violence. This is done to create a pretext for arrests or to limit the

public appeal of an otherwise popular moment. Civil disobedience and violence are two different things. Civil disobedience is doing something that is morally right and is either legal or ought to be; but is wrongly interpreted as illegal by the authorities; blocking loggers from clear cutting a forest for example. Civil disobedience can also mean challenging the illegitimate authority or immoral acts of the state; not paying taxes for war for example. If violence ensues from such challenges, it usually is initiated by the authorities. Legitimate violence by citizen groups is always a defensive response. Symbolic demonstrations of violence, such as throwing rocks at the police or breaking windows, are altogether different and not justified. Recent years have seen the reemergence of self-styled anarchists whose main interest seems to be in getting other people arrested as a form of protest and radicalization. Such groups are easily infiltrated by police and agents provocateur who want to get people arrested for entirely different reasons.

You must carefully consider whether civil disobedience is an appropriate tactic for your group.

Civil disobedience can be effective when:

- Your constituency is comfortable with the tactic.
- Visible roles are available for those who don't choose to participate directly in civil disobedience (many people can't because of family obligations, health, immigration status, etc.).
- The tactic demonstrates power to the target. Civil disobedience shows your power by cutting into a company's profits or demonstrating the ability to do so. Civil disobedience shows power if large numbers of people participate or express support. Politicians realize that if people feel strongly enough about an issue to get arrested, they will feel strongly enough to vote against them on Election Day. Civil disobedience can also betray a total lack of power and support by larger constituencies. The three people who block traffic in order to free the Chinese silk worms will probably never gain a fourth member.

Legal Disruptive Tactics

With tactics such as strikes, picket lines, or withholding rent, the power actually lies in the implementation of the tactic itself. Such tactics are qualitatively different from those designed to imply an electoral threat by showing numbers. Picketing, when it succeeds in keeping people out of a place of business, goes beyond the symbolic to create financial loss. These forms of economic/consumer power, rather than political power, must be carefully focused on specific targets.

Boycotts

The popularity of the Montgomery bus boycott, the United Farm Workers' grape boycott, and the Nike boycott among others, make this one of the first tactics that many groups consider. In general, however, most national or international boycotts against products don't work. A careful analysis of the product and your ability to actually affect the company's profits is required. As corporations merge and become larger, the requirements for a successful boycott are being raised. They include:

- A moral issue of national or international importance.
- A product that:
  - Everyone buys frequently.
  - Is easily identifiable by a brand name which the company spends a great deal of money promoting, or is at least easily identifiable.

- Is non-essential, or better, for which there are competing brands or substitutes

It should be clear from the above that if someone suggests that you boycott cement, there is a good chance that you are talking to a silly person.

Boycotts of a local retail business are more manageable than are boycotts of products. Communities have successfully taken action, for example, against franchises that put locally owned stores out of business.

A boycott, like a strike, is similar to a revolver with one bullet in the chamber. The threat of using it is more powerful than the weapon itself. But don't make the threat unless you are prepared to go through with it.

Boycotts often bring legal retaliation and under some circumstances are actually illegal. Get legal advice.

A Method for Planning Tactics

The strategy chart is as useful for planning individual tactics as it is for planning your overall campaign. To use it in this way, simply place the tactic (holding your own rally, for example) in the first column (Goals). The Long Term goal is to make the Decision Maker do what ever it is your organization wants. The Intermediate Goal is to have a rally that will contribute to the Long Term Goal in specific ways. The Organizational Considerations column becomes the budget and organizational goals for the event itself (organizational goals are always considered separately from issue goals). The Constituents column becomes the turnout plan for the event. The Targets column is used to identity the people with power at whom the event is aimed. Pay particular attention to secondary targets who you may want to involve. The Tactics column then becomes a list of the things you will do at the event to show your own power, make the target uncomfortable, get media attention, and create an exciting activity.

Checklist for Tactics

All tactics must be considered within an overall strategy. Use this checklist to make sure that the tactics make sense given your strategy.

_____ Can you really do it? Do you have the needed people, time, and resources?

_____ Is it focused on either the primary or secondary target?

_____ Does it put real power behind a specific demand?

_____ Does it meet your organizational goals as well as your issue goals?

_____ Is it outside the experience of the target?

_____ Is it within the experience of your own members and are they comfortable with it?

_____ Do you have leaders experienced enough to do it?

_____ Will people enjoy working on it or participating in it?

_____ Will it play positively in the media?

_____ Can you raise money with it or at it?

Using the Strategy Chart to Plan a Tactic
Newton Save Our Schools Rally

After using the strategy chart to plan an overall campaign, any tactic from the last column can become the basis of a new chart that is used to plan that particular tactic. The following chart demonstrates how this works.

Goals	Organizational Considerations	Constituents	Targets	Tactics
1. Long-Term Pass Fair Tax Plan. 2. Intermediate Force Rep. Hide to support the Fair Tax Plan. 3. Short-Range Hold rally of 400 people.	1. Resources to Put In Budget = $300.000 $100.00 from coalition. Rest to be raised locally. Fred: 3 weeks (half time first 2 weeks, full time for 3rd week) Liz: 3 days Board Member—Kim Max (lives in Newton) Newton office—2 phones 2. What We Want to Get Out Closer relations with teachers organization and Newton PTAs. Build toward affiliation of Newton Black Issues Committee.	Teachers organizations (200)* Black Issues Committee (50) Fed. of Puerto Rican Home Town Associations (30) Kensington/Johnston Action Council (40) CWA Local 72 (30) Newton Parents United (45) Newton Real Estate Association (5) Newton Civic Association (20) Individual parents and students (50) Unorganized homeowners (40) *These numbers are the turnout goals for each group.	1. Main Target Rep. Harry Hide 2. Secondary Targets School Board Members: Penny Black, Allison Vandyke Judge Thomas—strong school supporter Sarah Kendall—Hide contributor, big on education. Has millions of dollars. Melvin Elvin-Rep. candidate for Supervisor. Wants ticket to win.	Hold rally outside Rep. Hide's office. Kids march up with symbols of discontinued school programs drawn on posters, e.g., basketball hoop, band instruments, theater masks, computers, microscopes. Each child calls to Hide through PA system to come down and save program. When he doesn't come, poster is thrown in big trash can labeled "Hide's Hope Chest." Petitions taken up to Hide's office. Speakers: Heads of major groups. Collection taken. Major push for press and TV. Meet with all school board members. Ask them to attend the rally. Promise empty chairs on platform to those who don't show.

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6

ORGANIZING MODELS

The Model is the Architecture of the Organization

Leaders lead people but organizers organize organizations. The role of an organizer is to construct an organization. An organizer who neglects the structure and rushes to work with individual people is like a taxi driver who picks up customers in his arms and carries them from place to place without the cab. Some members love to have the organizer carry them because they are relieved of the burden of thinking about and maintaining an organization. Many organizers who do realize the importance of building a structure pay little attention to the model, the architectural plan for the structure.

Imagine a group of people building a house without a plan. One person lays concrete for the slab under the house, while the next starts digging a basement. The walls go up, half of wood and half of brick. Someone is roofing over the second story while another person builds a staircase to the nonexistent third story. The toilet is installed in front of the fireplace. Fortunately, the building inspector will quickly call a halt. Unfortunately, there are no building inspectors for organizational structures. Many leaders and staff members organize without a building plan. Not only are they unable to say exactly what the structure they are creating should look like when finished, but they often create conflicting structures within their organizations.

- A nonprofit community development corporation sets up and staffs a tenant organization in buildings that it owns and manages. The tenants then start to fight "the landlord," and the staff is told to make them stop.
- The board of an organization for people with disabilities includes both representatives of the disabled and their service providers, although many of the disabled consider the providers to be part of the problem.
- A legislative coalition, in order to get funding for a special project, is compelled by the funder to create a whole new project board, which is different from the "real" board.
- A federation of senior clubs organizes a group of seniors who don't belong to any of its member clubs.
- An organization, which operates on both a community *service* model and a community *organizing* model, finds that when it organizes people to fight City Hall, City Hall retaliates by cutting off the funding for the service program.

The Model is a "What," Not a "How" or a "Why"

The organizing model is the answer to the question, "Exactly what are we building?" For any organization there can be many ways to build successfully, but there is only *one thing* being built. When asked, "on what model are you are building?" people often state the *function* that the group is to serve. "We are building an organization to which environmentalists in the Great Lakes region will turn for coordination." The function is implicit in the model, but they are two different things. If the inquiry is about the model, then the answer should be, we are building a *coalition* of groups that organize on Lakes related issues, or we are going to recruit 30,000 *individual members* from around the Lakes; or we will be a *staff* of four, all of whom will monitor state programs in the Lakes region. Each of these different organizing models could serve the same function of building a group toward which environmentalists look for coordination. Obviously, there is no one right model of organizing, but experience indicates that the range of successful possibilities is more limited than might be imagined, particularly among groups that have survived more than ten years.

An organizational model, or architectural plan, is a conception of the essential skeleton of the organization. It is not necessarily the same as the organizational chart or by-laws, although they are related. For example, an organization might develop a very successful committee structure although none is provided for in the bylaws. The organization's program, its formal leadership bodies, and its staffing pattern are all derived from its basic architecture.

The organizational model is influenced by the following four elements:

1. *The Function of the Organization.* Is the function to win issues such as getting a traffic light installed? Is it to pass legislation, to win elections, or to provide direct services? Is it to advocate, educate, or some combination of the above?
2. *The Geographic Basis of the Organization.* Is the organization based in a neighborhood, a housing development, or a political district such as a congressional district? Is it citywide, countywide, statewide, regional, or national? Obviously, the geography relates directly to the function. (Beware of organizing on a regional basis, regions do

not appear on the map, they are not political entities as states are, nor, with a handful of exceptions, are there regulatory agencies that operate on a regional basis.)

3. *The Basis of Membership.* Do individual people join, or is it a coalition of organizations? If the members are individuals, are they organized into chapters, (branches, and locals) or are they at-large? Is it a formal coalition that groups actually vote to join and put their names on the letterhead? If so, then those groups are the members. Is it an informal coalition where staff or leaders from other groups join the board as individuals? In that case, the board is usually the membership. There are models in which a coalition builds an at-large base of individual members through its door-to-door canvassing. In yet another model, the staff is basically the membership. In another model the members of the organization are religious congregations that hire an organizer to work for them. Once again, the point is not that any of these are better or worse than others, but simply that the model, the basis of membership, and the location of decision-making power must be clear.

4. *The Funding Base of the Organization.* The funding base is a major influence on the model because, more than any other single factor, it determines how the organization works and what it does. What percentage of the funds is actually to be raised by the members? How much is to come from foundations or outside donors? How much will come from contracts with public agencies? Are there many foundations and donors that contribute, or only a few? Is there a field or phone canvass, and what percentage of the budget comes from it? Many organizations, which appear on paper to be controlled by the members, are actually controlled by their funders. Will the organization chose a tax status that restricts lobbying or one that doesn't?

The Model Must Be Clear and Internally Consistent

A model is clear when the board and the staff can see what it is that they are building. It is internally consistent when all the pieces fit neatly into the basic concept and reinforce each other. None should appear to have been tacked on like tail fins on a Volkswagen Beetle. The best way to illustrate this point is with case histories that are actual composites of our own experience.

The Case of the Ambiguous Tenant Organization

A housing organization was unclear about the difference between a service model and an organizing model. The staff did a little of both, considering them to be the same thing.

A man from a building, to which an organizer had been assigned, came into the office. After being interviewed about his problem, he was advised to go to Legal Assistance and get a lawyer. The man said, "That's too much hassle," and he left. The organizer remarked, "See, that's why we can't ever get anything going in the building, nobody cares enough to do anything." The organizer didn't make the distinction between an individual problem requiring a lawyer and a building-wide issue that could be addressed by organizing. More to the point, the organization as a whole made no such distinction because its underlying model was neither clearly *service* nor clearly *organizing*. If something could be called "housing," they did it.

Had there been a clear *organizing* model, the staff member would not have made a referral. Instead, she would have gone back to the building with the man, talked to the other tenants, and seen who had the same problem. Even if the problem was an individual matter, such as eviction for non-payment of rent, if many other people were also behind, then the tenants might have tried to negotiate a payment plan in exchange for improved conditions. If legal action to improve building services was required, all the tenants, not one individual, should have brought the action. If all else failed, then helping the man to get a lawyer would have been appropriate.

On the other hand, if the organization had a clear *service model*, not an organizing model, then the staff should have phoned Legal Assistance at once, explained the man's case, had the man talk about the case over the phone, and then made an appointment for him. Perhaps someone would even have driven him there.

Unfortunately, because the staff was unclear about what was being built, the man's request for help was handled inappropriately. The result was neither service nor organizing.

The Case of the Superfluous Office

A national organization, based on a model of individual membership in local chapters, had as its major function the passage of national legislation. This required building chapters to lobby in key congressional districts. The organization decided to set up a regional office with organizing staff to service a major metropolitan area in which it had a very large membership. It thought that the members would be enthusiastic about the office and would easily raise the money for it. As it turned out, the members never fully saw what purpose the office served, and didn't support it.

A basic problem emerged here because there really was no programmatic role for a regional office. The efforts of the chapters were focused on the congressional districts in which they were located. Because a region isn't a political district of any kind, there was no regional political decision maker. Without a common target there was no common, region-wide program in which all the chapters could participate together. Without such a program, the only role for regional staff was to help the individual chapters in their own congressional districts. Rightly or wrongly (probably wrongly), the chapters didn't feel that they needed "outside" help, and declined to raise the money to pay for it. Had a critical vote been coming up in the U.S. Senate, they would have given money for a statewide campaign office, but they couldn't see the logic of a regional office.

This is a very typical situation in which the *model* and the *program* do not coincide. In order for them to coincide, some meaningful program must exist at each geographic level of organizational structure be it a neighborhood chapter, a district committee, a citywide board or organization by region, county, or state. In direct action organizing where the purpose is to win something, useful structures can only exist at geographic levels where there is actually something to be won, and someone from whom to win it. For example, environmental groups from a number of states could form a regional organization, the target of which was a regional director of the Environmental Protection Agency. Setting up unnecessary regional structures is one of the most common ways in which organizations create internal problems for themselves. Without regional decision makers, it is usually impossible to have a region wide program and often meaningless to send regional representatives to sit on a board. Regions are just fine for recreational purposes such as determining the regional champion hockey team, cheerleaders, cow or Rumba dancer.

The Case of the Statewide Coalition with Local Chapters

A statewide citizen organization had a formal coalition membership model. That is, organizations voted to join the coalition and placed one of their officers on the coalition's board. Its function was to pass legislation and to elect (through a PAC) legislators who would support its program.

After a number of years, the board voted to set up several community chapters, which were to work on local neighborhood issues. On the surface, little appeared to have changed; however, a second organization with a different model had actually been created within the first.

Eventually, a number of problems became apparent with the dual model structure. Because the chapters dealt with very local issues, they neither strengthened nor drew strength from the statewide campaigns. Had the chapter's turf conformed to legislative districts, and had the chapter members been organized to pressure their legislators to vote for the organization's program, it might have been a better fit.

The local leaders, whom the organizers tried to involve, were naturally suspicious. They saw resources coming in, but had little interest in the statewide issues. They had been working on local issues all along, and didn't want to be diverted to someone else's agenda. Their attitude was to take what they could get from the state organization, but to keep their distance from it. The organizing staff was drawn into the local activity, which took them away from the statewide efforts. Much of the staff's work amounted to a subsidy to neighborhood groups, but when the coalition tried to raise funds for its community work, it found itself in competition with the same local organizations it was helping, and was resented for it. Launching the local chapters was a classic case of creating structures and program that were at odds with the basic model.

The Case of the Coalition That Started a Coalition

A statewide citizen organization had an informal coalition model. That is, leaders of other organizations sat on its board, but their groups did not formally vote to join the coalition. The coalition's function was passing legislation.

When funding became available for a state Family Medical Leave Act campaign, a decision was made to set up a new coalition just for that issue. The hope was that groups not then a part of the state organization would join the campaign through this new structure. The money was channeled through the state organization to the new coalition, and some of its staff members were assigned to the new group, which was called the Family Coalition.

The first task of these staff people was to recruit some of the state organization's own board members to the board of the new Family Coalition. Next, they recruited additional Family Coalition board members from among the leaders of other organizations interested in the issue. The Family Coalition then held media events, published studies, and began lobbying in its own name. It was a big success. Although the state organization had started it, raised funds for it, and staffed it, the Family Coalition listed them on the letterhead as just another of seventeen member groups. Before long, the board of the Family Coalition asked the organizers if they could apply for foundation grants independently, so that funds would no longer come through the state organization. They said they wanted to hire their own staff and go their own way.

When the state organization's leadership started the Family Coalition, they thought they were simply creating another program and another campaign. But, by not respecting the integrity of its own model, the state organization had set up another coalition that could and did

become a competitor. Their model could not accommodate a coalition within a coalition. Because the board created a free floating, self-governing program not anchored in its underlying coalition board structure, a typical thing happened. The program took on a life of its own. It happens every time. Committees, locals, chapters, regions, temporary coalitions, and special programs all naturally tend toward having an independent existence. Even field offices that are not closely supervised do this.

It is generally a bad idea to set up any structure that is not integral to your organizing model or that doesn't use your group's own name. The same principle applies to setting up independent organizations that you intend, some day, to absorb or merge into your own group. For example, an organization built local committees to campaign for a specific piece of state legislation. The connection between the committees and the organization was left ambiguous. Each was, in effect, independent of the other. If such organizations have real people in them, they will develop their own identities, and will resist change. People who would readily have joined you, had they been asked to do so in the first place, will become suspicious and hostile if, after setting up an independent group, you then suggest a merger. Often, the fact that you raised the money and staffed the independent group only deepens their resentment and fear of a hidden agenda. Never expect ambiguity to lead to gratitude.

Another organization, let's call it the Great Plains Citizens Network, handled this type of situation with far better results. Great Plains was *not* designed to be a coalition, but it needed to build a coalition structure through which other groups could support its renewable energy program. Avoiding the word "coalition," which implied a more formal structure than was needed, Great Plains created the "Sustainable Power for Economic Development" (SPEED) Campaign. Over twenty groups joined. The SPEED Campaign's letterhead and literature always contained the line, "A project of the Great Plains Citizens Network" with the Great Plains address. In this way, the organizational relationship was always kept clear and open. The SPEED Campaign affiliates knew that they weren't joining Great Plains itself, nor were they setting up something independent. They were part of a single purpose, time limited issue campaign sponsored by another group. The model was clear.

The Case of the Inconsistent Board

A community-based organization described itself as an alliance of organizations and service agencies dealing with poor people. Its model was that of a very, very informal coalition.

As the group expanded, it added to the board individuals who were active in its programs, but who did not come from any organization. It also kept on the board people who had once represented organizations, but who were no longer connected with those groups. Everything went well enough until the organization received a very large grant. The board at once fell to fighting over how and where the money would be spent. In the process, board members from real organizations found themselves being outvoted by people representing no one but themselves. They complained that they had joined an alliance of *organizations,* and now the rules were changed. The alliance didn't last a moment longer than the money did, then it self-destructed.

This organization was unclear about the basis of its membership, a critical aspect of the model. A group is either an organization of *individuals,* or an organization of *organizations.* Trying to be both, a mixed model, can create problems in many kinds of organizations. (Service agencies seem to be an exception and are often well served by boards composed of people from allied groups, funders, and prominent individuals.)

In direct action organizations, such mixed boards may work until a crunch comes. Then, be it the conflict over program, finances, or politics, different categories of board members are likely to question the legitimacy of decisions made by others. Structure matters most when the chips are down and the question is who has the votes.

Another difficulty in mixing individuals with group representatives on the board of a coalition is that they come with different viewpoints and are subject to different pressures. For example, an individual board member may have nothing to lose by attacking the mayor or taking on an unpopular issue, but an organizational board member may fear losing city funding or dividing the membership of the group he or she represents. Similarly, an organizational member may want the coalition to target someone with whom an individual board member happens to have an important business relationship. Of course, the same problems can and do occur on boards with either all individual or all organizational members, but they are less likely to get out of hand when all voting members have the same institutional relationship to the group.

Organizations that deal with the needs of such constituencies as seniors, children, the disabled, or the homeless, often have boards composed of representatives of the particular constituency, service providers, and government agencies. Such groups are supposedly united in their desire to work for their constituents and get programs funded, but because their institutional interests are so different they tend to block each other and allow the government agencies and service providers to keep the actual constituents under control. A coalition of disabilities groups wanted to start a campaign to win the right of the disabled to fire their own home health aides. The agencies that provided the aides sat on the coalition's board and blocked the campaign.

Concluding Thoughts

Each of these cases has been presented to emphasize flaws in the conception of the model. In day-to-day organizing, such flaws may not be so obvious. Problems with the model can come disguised as personality conflicts, feuding between member organizations, financial trouble, debates over philosophy, political rifts, and criticism of the director. It is the role of the organizer to look past the surface problems, no matter how serious, and determine if these are symptoms of a discordant model.

Model-related problems are present in every organization. Like the flu, they lurk about looking for a chance to strike. Unlike the flu, they often appear as something else. For example, staff members will complain that the director does not spend enough time with them, and therefore they don't understand what they are supposed to be *doing*. Frequently, what they are really saying is that they don't understand what they are supposed to be *building*. They sense that the model isn't clear, even though they may not say it that way. When the model isn't clear, no amount of time with a director can compensate for it.

An unclear model results in day-to-day organizing tasks becoming complicated policy matters instead of being part of a repeatable plan. If, for example, there is a clear individual membership chapter model, then when the chapter does a media event, it is *always* the elected leadership of the chapter who are the main speakers. But, if the group is made up of some individual members, some institutional members, some people with a real base in the community and others with none, a member of the clergy to whom everyone defers, a candidate for city council, and a college professor who really knows the issue, then who speaks at the media event? The answer differs according to the day of the week, and no one is ever happy with it. No wonder the staff never seems to

get enough direction and the director never has enough time. When the model is not clear, very little else will be clear.

Board members will complain that there is not enough communication, and they no longer know what is going on in the organization. Often they are right, but sometimes it is a symptom of the program having moved away from the basic model so that board leadership is less directly involved. This often occurs in a coalition where the program is supposed to be carried out through the affiliates, but, usually in response to a funding opportunity, the staff has gone off and started some other project involving different people. Once that happens, increased communication will seldom bring the original affiliates closer to a program that isn't theirs. People hear what they want to hear. No matter how much an organization communicates with affiliates or board members, if the communication isn't about something they are actually doing or want to do, they won't hear it. Then, they will complain that there isn't enough communication. The program must either be brought back in line with the model - that is, with the way the organization was set up to operate, or the model itself must be changed to integrate the new activity. In a similar way, organizational problems are often attributed to a lack of training. The Midwest Academy staff is frequently called upon for training, only to find that over the years a group has added so many bits and pieces of program and structure that no one understands where it is all going. Training will only help after the program has been realigned with the model. Any given model affects the organization's program. It makes some types of campaigns easier to win, and some harder. It encourages the participation of some groups while discouraging others. It either enhances or diminishes the political power of the organization. It advances certain types of fundraising, and holds back others.

There are organizers who say that they believe in free form organizing. They have no model, want no model, and need no model. They are wrong. *There is always a model.* If you don't create it, it evolves on its own, often influenced by funding. It will always operate just as the force of gravity always operates, even upon those who believe that they have transcended it. Organizers, you have the choice: learn to understand and use the concept of the model, or be blindly led by it.

Strategic Concepts in Organizing & Policy Education

Ending Structural Barriers to social & economic opportunities for poor & working communities

- ✓***Grassroots Organization*** *(AGENDA)*
- ✓***Regional Alliances*** *(L.A. Metropolitan Alliance)*
- ✓***Strategic Research & Analysis***
- ✓***Training & Capacity Building***
- ✓***Civic Participation***
- ✓***State & National Alliances***

WHAT IS POWER?

the ability or capacity to achieve a collectively agreed upon goal.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF POWER ANALYSIS

1. **Power relationships in our society are unequal, and this is one of the primary reasons for the conditions of oppression and other problems our communities face.**

2. **There is a conscious political, economic, and social agenda at work causing these problems, and power is being actively exercised to promote and implement that agenda. We must develop strategies that address these realities.**

3. **A more systematic way of understanding power is essential in our efforts to work for and win social change.**

PURPOSE AND USES OF POWER

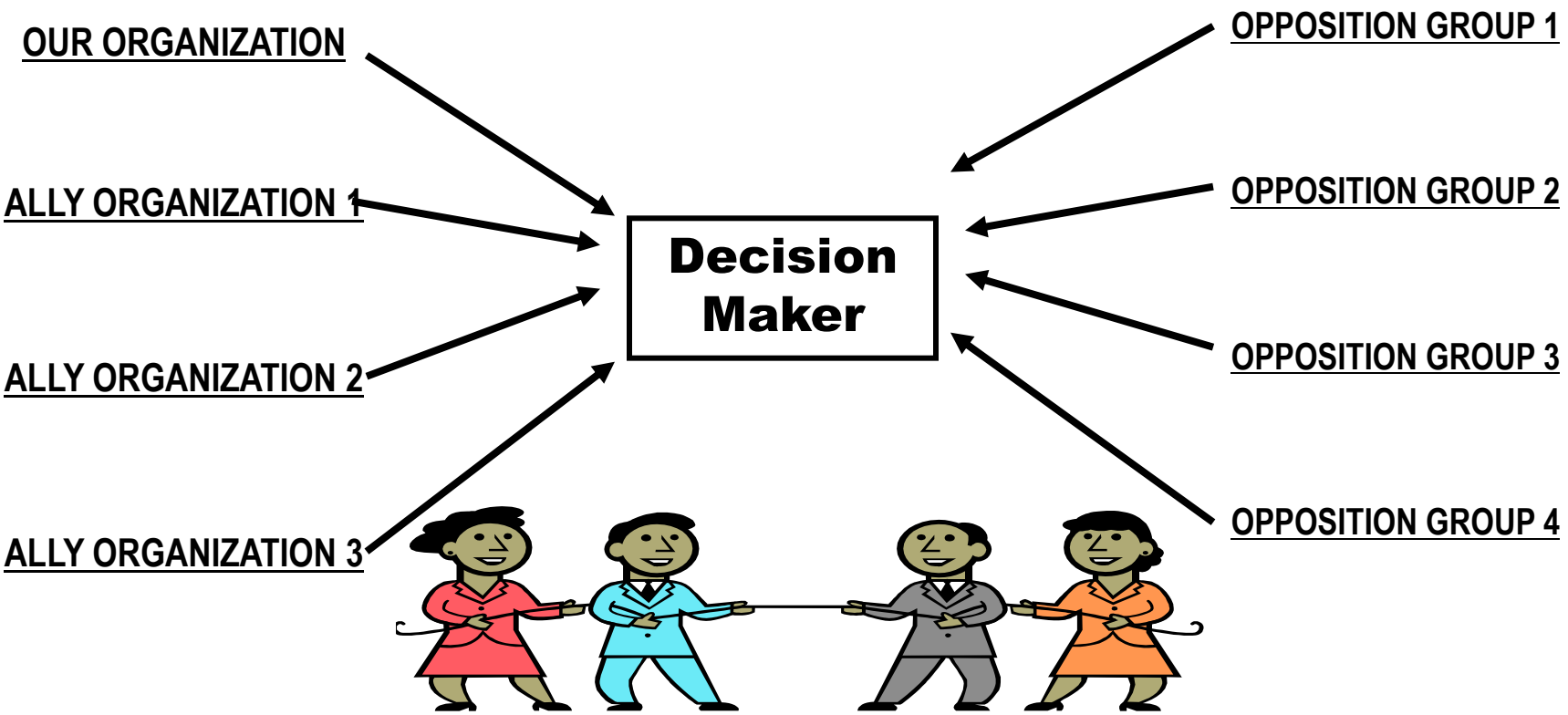
1. **To create a picture of the political/power landscape in order to understand how & by whom power is exercised to cause and maintain problems we seek to change.**

2. **To develop more effective strategies for…**
   - → Winning progressive social change.
   - → Permanently altering power relationships in favor of the people suffering from the problems & conditions we seek to change.
   - → Selecting issues & campaigns that both help build power and win social change.
   - → Tracking and refining campaign strategies.

3. **To provide political education and training for grassroots leaders, members and allies.**

TRADITIONAL POWER ANALYSIS

US **VERSUS** **THEM**



What if there is more than one Decision-Maker?

Are all our Allies equally invested?

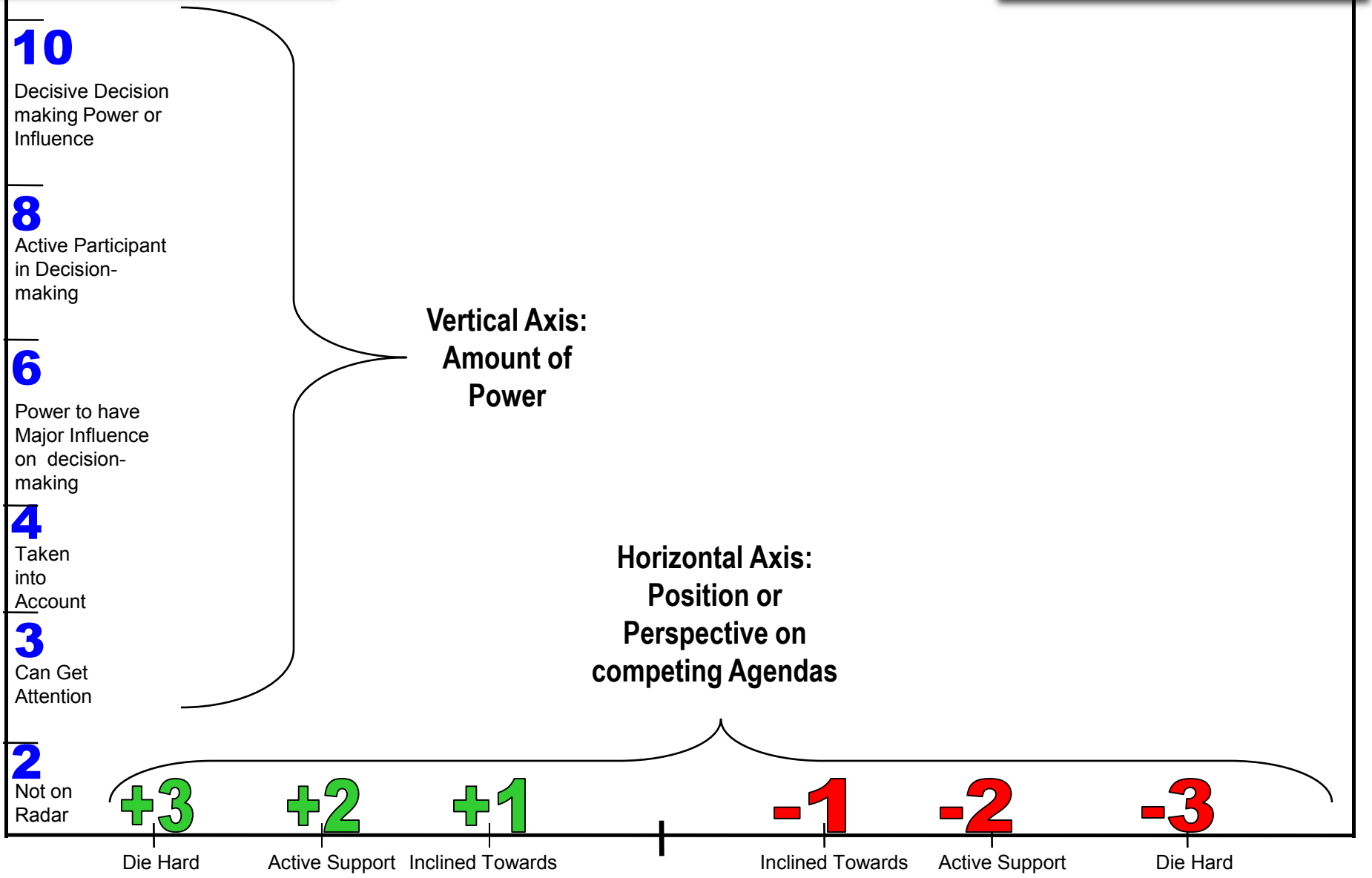
Are all Opposition equally opposed?

POWER ANALYSIS GRID

SOCIAL JUSTICE AGENDA

Competing Agenda, Positions, Policies, etc.

STATUS QUO/ OPPOSING AGENDA



STEPS TO DEVELOP A POWER ANALYSIS

Social Justice

STEP 2: Sketch the **Competing Agendas**. The agenda of those who are causing or perpetuating the problems, and your agenda (the conditions you want to bring about)

Opposing Agenda

STEP 4: Sketch the major centers of **Decision-makers** over the problem conditions

10 Decisive Decision making Power or Influence

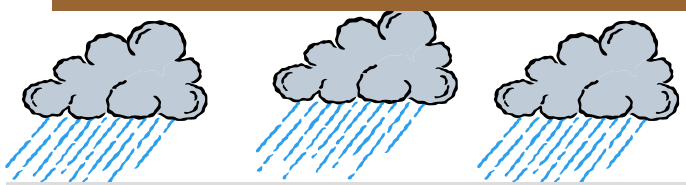
8 Active Participant in Decision-making

6 Powe have Influe decisi makir

4 Taker into Account

3 Can Get Attentio n

2 Not o Rada



STEP 1: Define the major Problems or Conditions which are negatively impacting primary constituencies

State Legislature

Board of Supervisors

City Council

STEP 3: Sketch Major **Issue/Policy** s related to problem conditions are going on

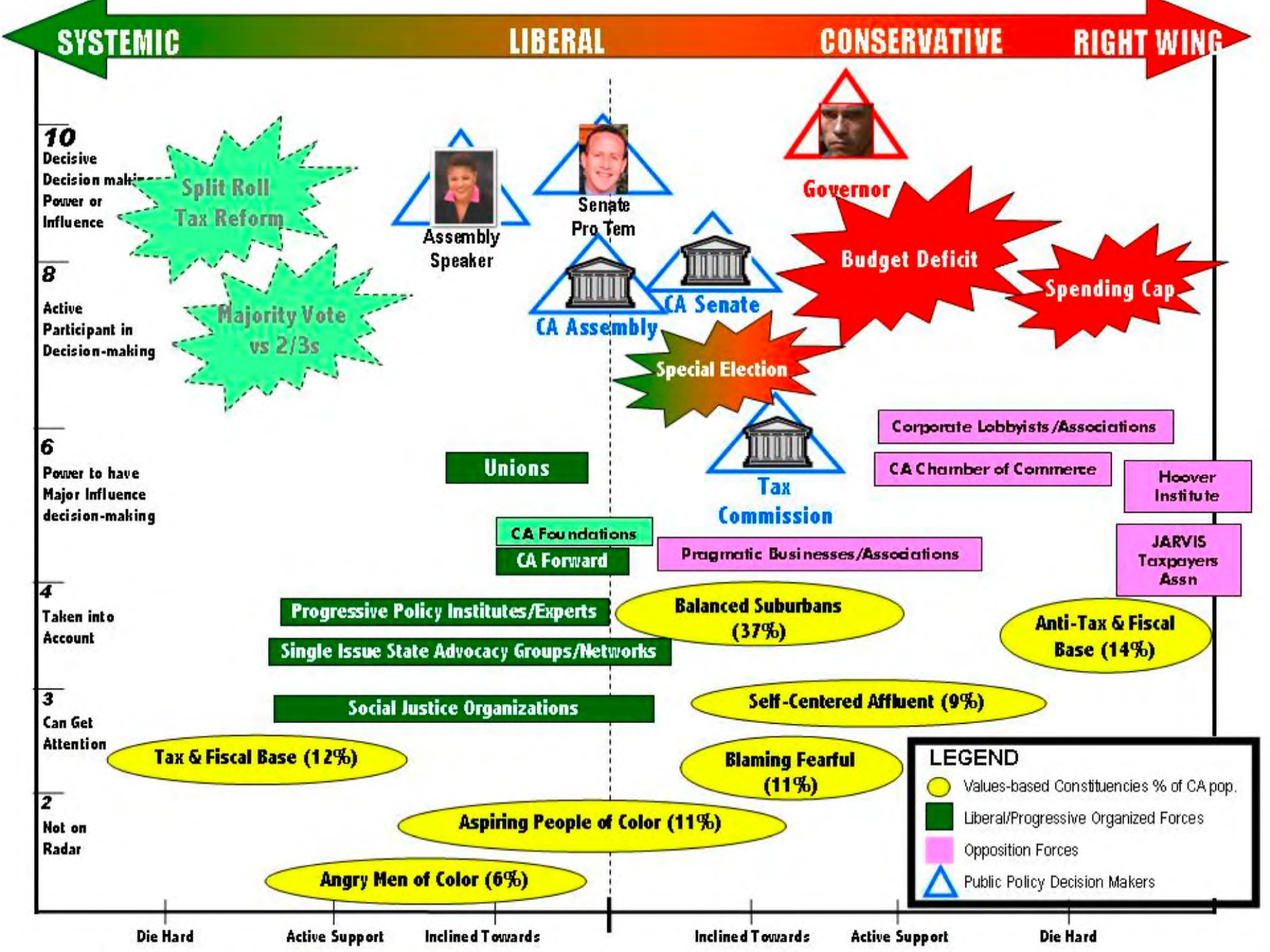
STEP 5: Sketch major organized **Opposition**

STEP 8: Analyze the picture, develop strategies for changing the equation

STEP 6: Sketch Organized **Progressive Groups**

STEP 7: Sketch key **unorganized** social sectors

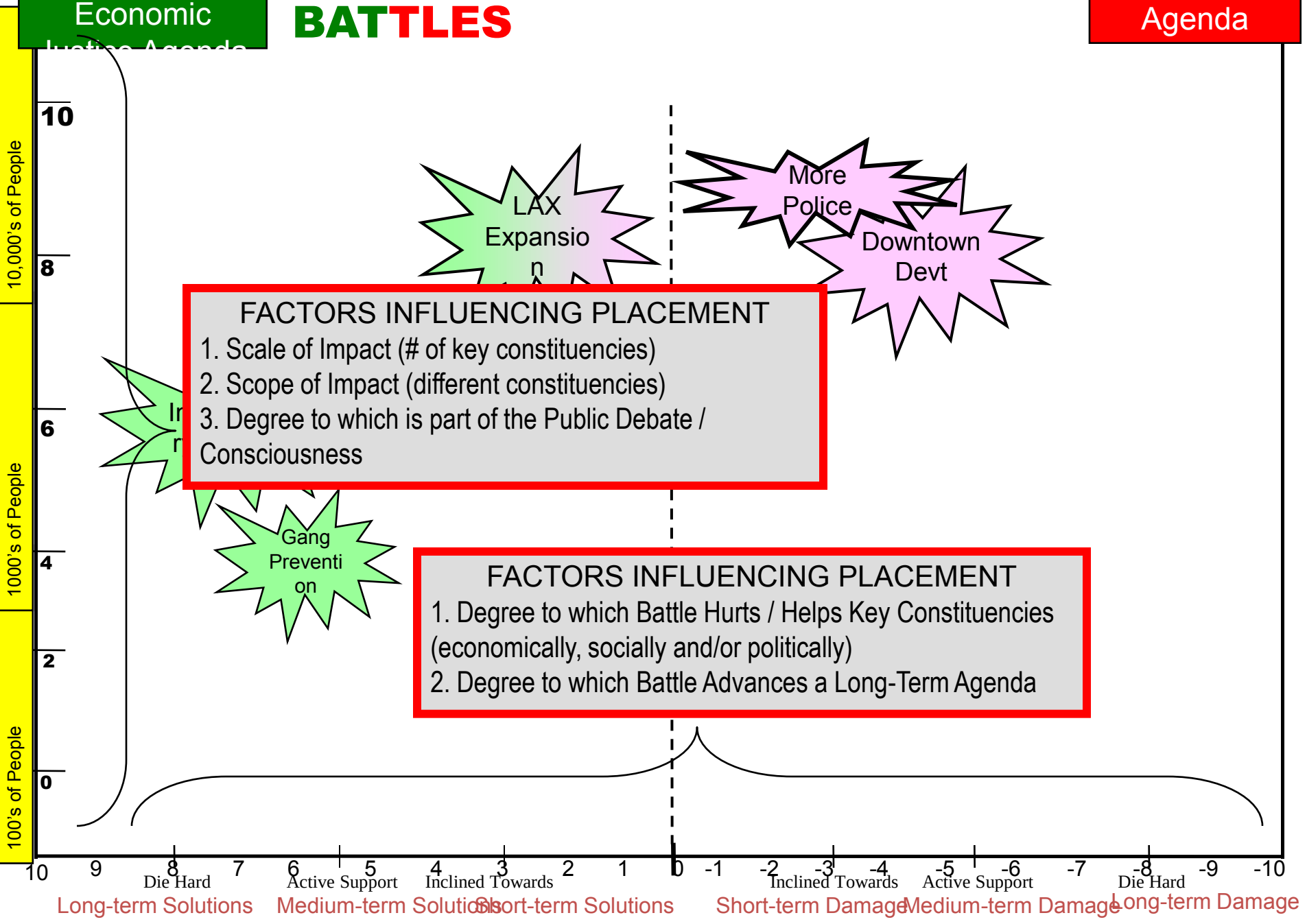
Die Hard | Active Support | Inclined Towards | Inclined Towards | Active Support | Die Hard


SYSTEMIC
LIBERAL
CONSERVATIVE
RIGHT WING
10
Decisive Decision maki
Power or Influence
8
Active Participant in Decision-making
6
Power to have Major Influence decision-making
4
Taken into Account
3
Can Get Attention
2
Not on Radar
Split Roll Tax Reform
Majority Vote vs 2/3s
Assembly Speaker
Senate Pro Tem
Governor
Budget Deficit
Spending Cap
CA Senate
CA Assembly
Special Election
Tax Commission
Corporate Lobbyists/Associations
CA Chamber of Commerce
Hoover Institute
Unions
CA Foundations
CA Forward
Pragmatic Businesses/Associations
JARVIS Taxpayers Assn
Progressive Policy Institutes/Experts
Balanced Suburbans (37%)
Anti-Tax & Fiscal Base (14%)
Single Issue State Advocacy Groups/Networks
Social Justice Organizations
Self-Centered Affluent (9%)
Tax & Fiscal Base (12%)
Blaming Fearful (11%)
Aspiring People of Color (11%)
Angry Men of Color (6%)
LEGEND
Values-based Constituencies % of CA pop.
Liberal/Progressive Organized Forces
Opposition Forces
Public Policy Decision Makers
Die Hard
Active Support
Inclined Towards
Inclined Towards
Active Support
Die Hard

Factors Influencing Placement of BATTLES

Social & Economic Justice Agenda

Corporate Agenda



Social & Economic Justice Agenda

Factors Influencing Placement of DECISION MAKERS

Corporate Agenda

10 Decisive Decision making Power or Influence

8 Active Participant in Decision-making

6 Power to have Major Influence on decision-making

4 Taken into Account

2 Can Get Attention

0 Not on Radar

FACTORS INFLUENCING POWER

1. Legal Power / Authority
2. Demonstrated Influence (demonstrated success in moving their agenda)
3. Institutional Positions (Committees, Boards, Offices)
4. Base of Support
5. Relationships / Allies (political, organizational, social)
6. <District Composition (size of electorate, level of organization>

FACTORS INFLUENCING POSITION

1. Explicit Agenda
2. Demonstrated Action (voting record, history)
3. Composition of Staff / Office
4. Relationships / Allies
5. <Politics of Electorate>

County Board of Supervisors

Boards & ommission s

Other Regional Bodies

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 -1 -2 -3 -4 -5 -6 -7 -8 -9 -10

Die Hard | Active Support | Inclined Towards | Inclined Towards | Active Support | Die Hard

Social & Economic Justice Agenda

Factors Influencing Placement of ORGANIZED GROUPS

Corporate Agenda

10 Decisive Decision making Power or Influence

8 Active Participant in Decision-making

6 Power to have Major Influence on decision-making

4 Taken into Account

2 Can Get Attention

0 Not on Radar

FACTORS INFLUENCING POWER

1. Legal Positions / Authority
2. Financial Resources
3. Demonstrated Success
4. Ability to Influence Media / Public Consciousness
5. Electoral Power (ability to persuade / mobilize voters)
6. Coalitional Power (ability to mobilize other groups w/power to influence decision-makers)
7. Relationships (political, organizational, social)
8. Mobilizable Base
9. Expertise (access to information, research/analysis)

BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

MAJOR CORPORATIONS

DEVELOPERS

BANKS

FACTORS INFLUENCING POSITION

1. Explicit Agenda
2. Demonstrated Action (voting record, history)
3. Composition of Board / Staff
4. Relationships (political, organizational, social)

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GRO

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 -1 -2 -3 -4 -5 -6 -7 -8 -9 -10

Die Hard | Active Support | Inclined Towards | Inclined Towards | Active Support | Die Hard

Social & Economic Justice Agenda

Factors Influencing Placement of UNORGANIZED CONSTITUENCIES

Corporate Agenda

10 Decisive Decision making Power or Influence

8 Active Participant in Decision-making

6 Power to have Major Influence on decision-making

4 Taken into Account

2 Can Get Attention

0 Not on Radar

FACTORS INFLUENCING POWER

1. Financial Resources
2. Political Power
3. Level of Organization
4. Size

FACTORS INFLUENCING POSITION

1. Voting Record
2. Public Opinion Polling
3. Demographics

Affluent Communities

AFRICAN AMERICAN

API Communities

Immigrants/Refugees

Low Wage Workers

Welfare

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 -1 -2 -3 -4 -5 -6 -7 -8 -9 -10

Die Hard | Active Support | Inclined Towards | Inclined Towards | Active Support | Die Hard

HOW WE USE THE POWER ANALYSIS TO INFORM COMMUNICATIONS

SYSTEMIC | LIBERAL | CONSERVATIVE | RIGHT WING

10 Decisive Decision making Power or Influence

8 Active Participant in Decision-making

6 Power to have Major Influence decision-making

4 Taken into Account

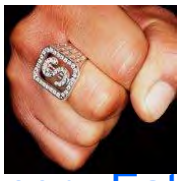
3 Can Get Attention

2 Not on Radar

Current parameters of debate:

1. Reforms that result in revenue neutrality
2. Stabilize state revenues & decrease volatility
3. Update the tax system to attract, retain, and expand businesses
4. Changes that can be easily implemented

Base (15% of pop.)



Angry Fatalists (7%)

Aspiring People of Color (15%)

Balanced Suburbans (27%)

SYSTEMIC | LIBERA | CONSERVATIVE | RIGHT-WING