

Where does NCPAC's money actually go?

by Anita Gallagher

Lyndon LaRouche's National Democratic Policy Committee proved the most effective political action committee in the 1982 national general election, following stunning showings of between 20 and 40 percent of the vote in four Democratic primaries earlier this year. On Nov. 2, the NDPC's mobilization was the decisive element in defeating zero-growth symbol Jerry Brown in the California senatorial election and Lew Lehrman's right-wing variety of fascist economics in the New York gubernatorial contest.

The other leading "independent" political action committees (those not affiliated with trade or labor union associations such as the National Conservative Political Action Committee [NCPAC] not only failed abysmally in their election objectives, but have been exposed as spending in some cases over 90 percent of their contributions for "overhead"—running in some cases into millions of dollars.

NCPAC raised \$9 million in 1982 and contributed only 2 percent of that sum directly to candidates for federal office. NCPAC also spent over \$400,000, or 45 percent of its income, on "independent expenditures"; that is, TV ads and direct mail efforts targeting incumbent liberal Democrats. All of NCPAC's targets were re-elected handily except for Sen. Howard Cannon (D-Nev.), the victim of a two-year Abscam-style targeting in the press because of his opposition to trucking deregulation.

NCPAC elects Sarbanes

NCPAC's prime target, Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.), was reelected by a 65 percent margin, after NCPAC spent \$660,000 in a long TV advertising campaign against him.

Prince George's County Executive Larry Hogan, Sarbanes's Republican challenger, blamed NCPAC publicly for his election loss. Hogan's Montgomery County campaign manager, Anne Bastian, explained: "If NCPAC had stayed out of Maryland, Larry Hogan would have won the election." First, said Mrs. Bastian, "NCPAC's commercials promoted Sarbanes's identity . . . Sarbanes then very cleverly used it [NCPAC] as the only issue he would speak to when Larry tried to debate him."

NCPAC's ads not so cleverly proclaimed in heavily Democratic Baltimore that Sarbanes had "voted to give away the Panama Canal" and that "Sarbanes voted for busing but he sends his daughter to a private school." The Baltimore TV networks then ran NCPAC's off-target ads back-to-back with

Hogan's own ads, ignoring complaints from Hogan's staff.

In contrast, Hogan's main campaign thrust, said Mrs. Bastian, was to dredge Baltimore's port to revive its shipping, and educate the voters that Sarbanes had abstained on a funding vote for the dredging. NCPAC enabled Sarbanes to elude this, the Hogan staff charged, and also enabled him to gain a sympathy vote and raise much more money.

NCPAC failed nationally as well. It failed against Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) on whom NCPAC spent \$520,000; and against Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-Texas), whom NCPAC targeted with \$300,000 as a "free-spending liberal" (even Texas Republican Gov. Clements was embarrassed enough to declare "I've known Senator Bentsen a long time, and he's not a free-spending liberal." Other NCPAC targets who won include: Sen. John Melcher (D-Mont.) (\$220,000) the sponsor of a bill to reduce interest rates; Sen. Quentin Burdick (D-N.D.) (\$69,000); Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) (\$300,000); Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D-Oh.) (\$77,000); and Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan (D-N.Y.) (\$70,000). Only Senator Cannon was defeated (\$170,000).

The pattern

Sen. Jesse Helms's (R-N.C.) National Congressional Club, the number-one fundraising PAC with over \$9 million in 1982, has a policy, according to its press spokeswoman Anna Knight, of "not talking to reporters about our activities." However, the Nov. 3 *New York Times* reports that Helms's PAC gave only 1.4 percent of the \$9 million it raised to candidates for federal office. All the Republican congressional challengers it supported in North Carolina lost.

The same pattern prevails in "liberal" PACs. Sen. Ted Kennedy's Fund for a Democratic Majority raised \$2.1 million in 1982, and dispensed only 6.3 percent of its money in direct contributions to candidates for federal office. Although all PACs make some "in-kind" contributions to candidates, such as poll-taking, advice, and perhaps campaign appearances, Fund for the Majority spokesman Michaela Fanning said, "The reason we gave out such a small percentage of the money [to candidates] relative to what we raised is that we were working this year to develop our direct mail program." The majority of the Kennedy PAC's \$2.1 million went to Richard Parker and Associates, a San Francisco direct mail consultant—on the Richard "50 Percent" Viguerie model.

Walter Mondale's Committee for the Future of America did little better, distributing only 12.3 percent of its money directly to candidates. None of the 10 largest independent PACs number among the top 10 PACs that did so.

Lyndon LaRouche's National Democratic Policy Committee, by contrast, has raised \$630,000 in 1982, approximately 85 percent of which has gone to produce policy papers on issues, such as beam-weapons development, fusion energy, interest rates, and anti-depression policies. Nevertheless, the NDPC contributed 6.4 percent, proportionally more than NCPAC or the Helms and Kennedy PACs, to candidates.