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DRAFT WORKING PAPER- NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR DISTRIBUTION
The following draft excerpt will form part of a background chapter for my dissertation entitled "Party Building in the Obama Era". This section, which looks at the historical relationship between the Democratic Party and social movements, focuses on the structural and organizational aspects of movement/party relationships. It is meant to foreground a closer case study of party life in late 1960's California.

Introduction

Earlier this year, in a series of speeches, communiqués and media appearances, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka called for increased "independence" from the Democratic Party on the part of labor's political activity. Focusing on perceived capitulation by the Obama Administration on employment policy and an anemic economic stimulus strategy, Trumka vowed to invest labor resources outside of the Democratic Party and chart a separate path focused on mobilizing working class voters directly. In one online article bearing the sensationalist title "Labor to Ditch Democrats", Trumka was quoted as follows:

"We're going to use a lot of our money to build structures that work for working people" Trumka said. "You're going to see us give less money to build structures for others, and more of our money will be used to build our own structure."

Conservative commentators largely responded with scoffs and shrugs, skeptical that labor would jeopardize a relationship that they largely characterize as union dominance over Democratic policymaking. On the left, however, critics of the labor movement's alliance with the Democratic Party were also dismissive. *In These Times* contributor Mike Elk opined that:

"Every single labor leader in the history of the labor movement has beat his chest about organized labor declaring its political independence the way Trumka is now, but never delivered on the declaration of political independence."[1]

What is not clear from President Trumka's somewhat vague pronouncements, is what, exactly, this political independence would mean *operationally*. Structurally, labor is already wholly independent of any political party- unions and their federations endorse, fund and support candidates directly, and support for party organizations and party-coordinated campaigns differs dramatically from region to region. Rarely does such support for the Democratic Party *per se* outweigh independent expenditures by unions, direct contributions to labor-backed candidates (of both money and volunteers) or labor-to-labor voter mobilization.

More generally, it is difficult to speak concretely about the relationship between labor and the Democratic Party because of the radically diffuse, candidate-driven political structure of American electoral politics. State, national and local party organizations are famously weak in the United States, and, apart from a relative handful of targeted campaigns for partisan offices, most campaigns receive no coordination or support from State and National Party Committees. On the always crucial question of candidate selection, the rise of primary elections has meant that the party organization has a diminished capacity for control over who carries the Party banner in elections, and, once nominated, there are no strong, party-institutional mechanisms for holding those candidates accountable to a party platform or program. For more than half of the elections held in the United States, generally those below the State Legislative level, contests are formally non-partisan, meaning that the Party does not control access to

[1] http://www.inthesetimes.com/working/entry/7284/

the ballot, even among Democrats. What, then, does independence for labor really mean when, for all intents and purposes, elected Democrats themselves are independent of the Democratic Party? Furthermore, what does operational independence mean in the era of “SuperPACs” and so-called “537” organizations, non-party institutions which labor, along with business and other conservative forces, have been utilizing for some time?

For polemicists of the left and right, these operational questions are secondary. What matters most are two competing narratives: from the Right, one of unfair dominance over a political party by an interest group, and from the Left, a story of ideological and programmatic betrayal of a key constituency at the hands of elites. In both cases, the Democratic Party is seen as a monolith, its candidates, elected officials, organizations and constituent organs all knitted together into a coherent singularity. This approach ignores or undervalues the insights of social scientists into the nature of political parties themselves, most crucially the distinction, particularly strong in the Untied States, between the party in government, the party in the electorate, and the party as an organization. It also assumes, fatefully, that the labor movement itself is single-minded, or that its political strategy is nationally coordinated. It is not. [2]

These structural, legal and operational issues are crucial in shaping the relationship between labor and the Democratic Party. While the overarching questions of ideology and policy outcomes are justifiably the most interesting to scholars and political actors alike, no serious debate about labor strategy can take place without a grounding in the mundane world of actually existing labor organizations and political parties. With such an approach, it becomes clear that the relationship between these two decentralized, dynamic institutions (or sets of institutions) is contradictory and multi-dimensional and cannot be easily crammed into a spatial analogy of “distance”. While organizationally distinct, labor’s political strategies have evolved in response to

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[2] To the extent that Trumka’s missive was a threat to withhold political support for the Obama Administration in order to boost bargaining power, the classic “pluralist” approach, it was undermined just months later by the announcement from the country’s largest union, SEIU, that it had endorsed the President, and would be supporting his campaign.

transformations within the Democratic Party. Moreover, social, political and legal changes have cut across both institutions, and their responses, far from happening in a vacuum, have shaped one another organically.

In terms of political theory, this organic connection argues for an expansion of the "tripartite" schema of political parties established by V.O. Key and others. It is arguable that in addition to government, popular/electorate and organizational spheres, American parties also include a "social movement sector", the "party in the movements". Such a schema was somewhat prefigured by party scholars advocating a "strong party" model, as well as major theorists of labor politics observing mid-century labor-Democratic Party relations. For example, in the introduction to his seminal study of labor's political role, J. David Greenstone quotes party theorist E.E. Schattschneider:

> "…A shift in the locus of power or a revision of party functions may leave the formal structure untouched, or new structures may arise without being recognized as parts of the party system. Thus pressure groups may become so partisan that they m ight properly be described as ancillary organizations of one or the other of the major parties." (Greenstone 1977)

Many commentators have compared the relationship between the Democrats and labor to a dysfunctional marriage. A better metaphor, however, is that of siblings raised in the same household. Like sisters, labor and the Democrats have been shaped by the same environment, have influenced one another's development, and, on occasion, fight viciously. This paper will examine one of those inter-sibling battles by surveying the historical and political science literature surrounding the period of Party upheaval and reform in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

In the space of a mere decade or so, labor and their allies would undergo a radical transformation in response to both external and internal pressures. It is a period of time that many historians and commentators look to as a "breaking point" in which the traditional coalition at the base of the Democratic Party began to visibly fracture. Indeed, the reform era saw white working class men moving steadily away from allegiance to the Democrats, and a significant shift in the organizational base and

“cultural flavor” of the Party. The larger social and cultural trends that contributed to this dynamic are somewhat outside the scope of this brief essay- our focus here is on the organizational side of the story, and the shared history of reorganization and strategic changes experienced by both labor and the Democratic Party. While the actual electoral impact of the battle between elements of the labor movement and the insurgent wing of the Democratic Party are still very much contested, the conflict no doubt played an important role in shaping both internal and external perceptions of the Democratic Party.

In addition, this period offers an opportunity to examine the reality of labor “independence”. Despite the aforementioned claims of leftist journalists, much of labor did indeed briefly “ditch the Democrats” in 1972, though not on the terms hoped for in progressive fantasy.

Prehistory: From Pluralism to Realigment

Historians would be justified in taking some exception to the analogy I used above. Certainly, the notion that labor and the Democrats are siblings needs an important caveat, given the fact that American unions were born fiercely non-partisan, even apolitical, at a time in which the Democratic and Republican parties scarcely resembled their contemporary selves. The point, however, is that both the modern labor movement, with its bases in industrial, service and public sector workers, as well as today’s Democratic Party were both born out of the realignment that transformed American politics during the depression and its aftermath. In the lead up to that process, however, the labor movement developed two political “habits of mind” that continued to influence union political strategy and approaches to working with and inside the Democratic Party.

The first, most prevalent in the older craft unions of the American Federation of Labor, is a suspicion of ideology, parties and grand political programs. At the dawn of the 20th Century, America’s unions, almost exclusively craft-based, white and male, were

heavily influenced by AFL founder Samuel Gompers' steely-eyed pragmatism. At first rejecting political activity altogether as part of a larger argument for the autonomy of labor-capital relations from state interference, Gompers later encouraged political participation on a case-by-case basis. As the guilded age produced a rough cleavage between the increasingly pro-business Republican Party and populist, big city Democratic machines established dominance in the major population centers of the North, as early as the 1900's, unions began to support Democratic candidates over Republicans, but never fully shook their non-partisan posture (Key 1958). Throughout this period, AFL unions engaged in a variety of political strategies, from forming local labor parties to supporting independents and Republicans when they were assured of support on important issues.

A second major tendency in labor before the New Deal, and one that Gompers clashed with directly, was the argument by socialists and other radicals that labor needed its own political party. The Debsian dismissal of the two major American parties as identical evils was influential among the generation of younger trade unionists who would successfully launch the CIO in the 1930's. This more ideological rejection of close association with the major political parties was never dominant, but taken together with the pragmatic ethos of the craft unions, labor leaders developed a culture of ambivalence toward parties and partisanship that shaped their thinking even as American politics and society fundamentally realigned around them.

The pre-New Deal approach to politics on the part of labor followed what political scientists refer to as a *pluralist* model, one of competing interest groups vying for influence with political elites. Gompers' economy of "reward" and "punish" was brought to bear on politicians of both parties, as well as independents. However, the social and political changes marked by the Roosevelt era produced a paradigm shift: labor joined the Democratic Party. Instead of standing on the sidelines and intervening in politics as an interested but independent force, unions began to build electoral machinery that was integrated into the Democratic Party, both in terms of funding and on-the-ground political work. This is not to say that the old ways were eliminated.

Pluralism still holds in the work of national, local and state-level union political activity. In fact, John L. Lewis of the Mineworkers endorsed Republican Herbert Hoover for President twice, even as his union gave a previously unprecedented $50,000 to Roosevelt's campaign. In general, however, what had been a semi-aknowledged bias toward Democrats gradually gave way to a functional integration as the New Deal progressed (Greenstone 1977).

Three major factors contributed to the shift from pluralism to integration. First, with its shift toward welfare-state policies in response to the economic crisis, the Democratic Party began organizing and appealing to a broader, more diverse industrial working class *at the same time* as labor's CIO renegades broke ranks to organize the factories and mills at the heart of this growing constituency (Cohen 2008). Second, New Deal policies themselves directly benefited the growth of the labor movement, and defense of these policies in Congressional, Legislative and Gubernatorial elections became critical for meeting the organizing goals of the new industrial unions (Buffa 1984) . Third, the further entrenchment of big city machines meant that even for the more conservative craft unions, playing in Democratic politics became the key to securing favorable agreements for the building trade and light industrial sector that provided their base of power (Greenstone 1963).

As a result, argues Greenstone, "the union's effective political constituency in national politics (widened) far beyond that anticipated by pluralist theory and now includes most of the walfare-state oriented supporters of the Northern Democratic party."

In a sense, then, the new labor movement and the new Democratic Party became intertwined in one of the three main spheres of the party apparatus, the electorate. Over the course of decades, however, this integration would translate into an operational overlap as well.

The Political Action Committees launched by the CIO and its constituent unions augmented, and in many cases replaced a core function of a political party, a trend that continued after the merger of the AFL and CIO and the founding of the Committee(s) on

Political Education, or COPE. However, the various on-the-ground operations differed considerably from region to region based on election law and the relative strength of the Democratic Party's own organizational base. In general, COPE efforts were dominated by the industrial and service unions that had emerged during and after the New Deal.

These regional differences had political implications. Here, Greenstone is again useful, as his 1969 study investigates three COPE operations, in Detroit, Chicago and Los Angeles. Where the regular party organization was insufficiently liberal, but the party well organized, CIO unions used their electoral prowess to replace party leadership with union members and allies from within the precinct-based party organizations, as was the case in Michigan. In Chicago, the strong and relatively pro-New Deal Democratic machine stymied a bottom-up, Detroit style political strategy through sheer institutional fortitude. In Los Angeles, governed by California's regime of weak party organizations made it impossible to "find the fulcrums of political power", even though it was in the City of Quartz that labor's substitution of COPE for a party ground operation was the most complete.

It is interesting to note, however, that the old "habits of mind" initially hampered the development of integrated political work, even in places where it would eventually result in substantial union power. In Michigan, where the Democratic Party was effectively taken over by a coalition of labor activists and liberal allies, UAW leader Walter Reuther was initially skeptical of partisan engagement. As a former Socialist, Ruether argued for independent political action, even the creation of a labor party well into the 1940's, and despite early successes by the union's political arm, the Community Action Program(Buffa 1984; Lichtenstein 1997). However, August "Gus" Scholle, the talented leader of the state's CIO, prevailed upon Reuther to put UAW muscle behind a long-term effort, launched in 1947, to integrate into the Democratic Party. One key to convincing Ruether of the strategy was a threatening power play by the state Teamsters union headed by James Hoffa to capture Democratic Party leadership in order to stave off federal indictments. The Teamsters effort, however, was thin and concentrated on

strategic donations and payoffs rather than grassroots organizing. Scholle's commitment, eventually embraced fully by the UAW leadership, was for a deeper relationship between the union and the Party that grew out of the mutual interest of liberal democrats and trade unionists for political realignment:

"Sensing very early what Marx and Engels had noted in the nineteenth century, that workers, whether organized or not, were unlikely to throw away their votes on candidates of minor parties, Scholle viewed the involvement of labor in the state Democratic party as his main objective. This involvement, he believed, would strengthen the party's prospect for electoral success, and, at least as important, would bring it into compliance with the political principles prominently articulated in the New Deal." (Buffa 1984)

Meanwhile, AFL unions that did not participate fully in the COPE strategy and that were focused more on the local dynamics of contracts, patronage and leverage, continued to integrate with the Democrats at a more elite level. Party machines brought labor leaders into their government/party apparatus, and as the craft unions grew in influence, the loyalty of their leadership to the Democratic establishment grew.

It is important to emphasize that this process was *mutual*- that labor's developing political strategy was as influenced by its imbeddedness within the Democratic Party as it was influential. The CIO (COPE) unions, in accepting party leadership, had to contend with one another core function of political parties in democratic politics: the *aggregation of interests*. On questions ranging from platform to candidate selection, the transcendence of the pluralist model meant that the whole of the party's majoritarian coalition had to be accounted for. Getting in the game meant taking responsibility for winning elections for Democrats, even if that meant supporting candidates who were not unions' first choice. This responsibility for aggregation also meant that labor unions often took up the cause of articulating the rights and interests of sections of their membership which were disenfranchised or marginalized. Both Buffa and Greenstone point to the UAW's embrace of the civil rights movement, as well as California unions' early advocacy on the part of Latino citizens as examples of this

dynamic. Again, labor's political constituency broadened alongside that of the Democratic Party, making them natural allies.

The responsibility of aggregation applied to the craft unions, as well. As they had built strong relationships with Democratic machine leaders, it became paramount that the autonomy of these leaders in choosing candidates that appealed broadly would not be compromised, so long as basic assurances were met in regards to labor issues (Greenstone 1963; Buffa 1984; Cowie 2010).

The cogenesis of a modern, pro-government, working class party and an allied labor movement had a massive impact on American political life. A relatively durable arrangement that lasted for generations, labor and the Democratic Party pursued and won a spate of reforms at every level of government, and, for a time, established the cultural/symbolic connection between liberalism, activist government and working class identity (Brinkley 1999). In many communities, to be a worker was to be in a union, and that was to be a Democrat. More specifically, to be a union activist or officer more often than not meant that you did double duty as a Democratic activist as well- an arrangement that is still quite common today.

However, the New Deal coalition was not without its contradictions or fragility. Several points of stress emerged socially and politically. Nationally, the Party was still dependent on the suffrage of the anti-union and racist South to ensure victory at the Presidential level, creating a divided house that was unlikely to stand forever. The labor-liberal alliance, as this coalition is sometimes called, was also substantially white and male-dominated a situation that would provoke a challenge from within. New organized constituencies of women, blacks, LGBTQ, as well as a cadre of issue-oriented middle class citizens began to demand a seat at the table. Furthermore, the tremendous electoral strength that labor brought to the Democratic dinner table did not go unnoticed by Republicans. By the late 1960's, the opposition had begun to develop strategies that helped to exacerbate the growing tensions within and between the constituencies mobilized and represented by our two "siblings".

Dual Crises: Representation and Aggregation

By the mid 1960's, the American labor movement had become entrenched in the Democratic Party at multiple levels. Unions that emphasized mass participation and organizing continued to parlay their ground operations into considerable influence as they continued a pattern of contesting party offices, while the craft unions strengthened their relationships with Party power brokers. At the end of the decade, however, both the Party and the unions faced two related crises: one of representation and the other of aggregation.

The representational crisis, as described by Taylor Dark, came as "the brokered politics of the post-New Deal era, which relied on large hierarchical organizations bargaining on behalf of relatively docile constituencies proved to be remarkably unstable in the face of demands for greater participation." This dynamic emerged simultaneously within the Democratic party and labor unions themselves, particularly the large, diverse industrial and service unions that had integrated most comprehensively into the Democratic Party through the COPE strategy. The emergence of minority and women's caucuses within unions, and the creation of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and the Coalition of Labor Union Women were concurrent with the push for more access to political power by these same constituencies within the Democratic Party (Dark 2001).

The late 1960's, however, was also a crisis of aggregation. The demands of the various Democratic constituencies, both old and new or newly mobilized, became harder and harder to reconcile- particularly on issues of race and the war in Vietnam. What is significant is that these crises hit the shared political constituencies of the labor-Democratic establishment. The crises affected voter behavior within the labor movement's membership, a key component of the Democratic electorate, they affected the shared campaign organizations of labor and the Party, and they affected the close-knit leadership cadre made up of party officials and labor leaders.

Simply put, before the late 1960’s, liberalism and its main institution, the Democratic Party, found its base in the working class. This was true both in terms of concepts of identity (solidary affiliation), as well as voting behavior. After the 1968-72 period, however, liberalism became identified with middle class and minority issues. More recently, the Democratic Party has drastically weakened its commitments to the welfare state policies that had provided the main tool for aggregating the interests of its varied constituencies. Searching for explanations, commentators have looked often to the very visible fight within the Democratic Party in the late 1960’s. One can distill these arguments to three major frameworks:

1. Neoconservatives and others have argued that the defeat in 1972 of party regulars and their labor allies by middle-class “new politics” radicals signaled the capture of the party by elements obsessed with race, gender and sexuality at the expense of bread and butter issues that appeal to white workers (Radosh 1996; Kuhn 2007).

2. Conservatives argue that *both* labor and the Democrats, by defending welfare-state policies, have both lost touch with (white) working class voters who have become increasingly dedicated to free market principles (O'Reilly 2003; O'Reilly 2006)

3. Leftists have asserted that the Democratic Party and labor have *both* abandoned liberal commitments, alienating workers of all races, and have been captured by bureaucratic and/or pro-corporate elites (Hedges, Schreiber et al. 2010).

Broadly speaking, all of these analytical frames are probably useful in telling one or more parts of the story of political realignment since 1968. However, none of these approaches takes very seriously the issues of organization, or the difficulties faced by labor and the Democrats in confronting the representational demands of a changing Democratic base.

The organizations confront the crises

Organizationally, the dual crises discussed above had been developing for some time in the grassroots of the Democratic Party. Beginning in the early 1950's, researches began to document and analyze a new wave of activists had begun to inhabit local and state party organizations. These activists built new Democratic clubs and challenged the authority of existing, "regular" Democratic leaders. Many of them had been drawn into political activism though work on the Adlai Stevenson presidential campaigns, and they distinguished themselves from previous generations of party volunteers in at least two important ways:

Purposive, rather than solidary or material motivations

The new activists were keenly interested in issues, and explicitly critical of party operations that de-emphasized issues, or were seen to be insufficiently committed to liberal policy positions (Wilson 1962; Eldersveld 1983). They scorned the use of patronage as a party tool, and engaged in work for free and as a self-conscious exercise in civic expression. The overarching goal of these reformist elements was the creation of a more ideological Democratic Party- one that used political criteria to make endorsement decisions and carried ideological commitments into governance. Their ranks were made up of largely Jewish and "WASP" activists, educated, middle class professionals, who were not attracted to the Democratic Party in the same solidary way that "white ethnic" or even urban African-American communities had been.

Ambivalence toward party organization

While the new activists entered and engaged in formal party work, they often proposed reforms or rules changes that transferred power away from formal party organs and leadership toward more diffuse polities- favoring, for example, primary elections over caucuses or conventions for the selection of candidates. This point should not be over-stated, however, as in cases where parties were legally marginalized by practices such as cross filing or non-partisan ballots, the new activists engaged in efforts

(such as the California Democratic Council) to strengthen partisan aspects of the electoral process (Ware 1985; Bell 2006). The point then, is not that the new, issue-focused activists were less "loyal" than the "regulars", simply that in terms of organizational forms, they emphasized "openness" and "participation" as well as cohesion around issues rather than organizational strength or centralization (Abramowitz, McGlennon et al. 1983; Abramowitz, McGlennon et al. 1983).

In addition to these two main characteristics, the "Amateur" or reform Democrats were remarkably energetic and committed. As the 1950's rolled along, they created a giant network of party clubs as well as extra-party allied groups, including national ideological formations like Americans for Democratic Action and People for the American Way. This new constituency changed the face of the Democratic Party in many respects, demanding ideological rigor, even, as detractors noted, their rise to prominence began to dilute the working-class cultural hegemony of the party at the grassroots level. Throughout the 1950's and early 1960's Democratic bastions were embroiled with fights between these new Democratic activists and traditional party leaders. Scholars have documented these skirmishes in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Cleveland, Minneapolis, San Franscisco, Boston, and Detroit (Carney 1958; Wilson 1962; Buffa 1984).

The relationship between labor and the club activists varied widely from region to region and union to union. In Michigan, for the most part, the new party activists were allies of the labor coalition constructed by Scholle and Reuther, as they shared a desire for a more ideologically coherent party and were committed to building and maintaining a precinct-level structure for the organization (Buffa 1984). According to Greenstone, a similar dynamic emerged in Chicago, where "Pro-COPE unions…favored much more attention to explicit issues criteria and formal endorsing procedures in selecting candidates than did the professionals", a dynamic that allied some unions with the reform activists in a battle against machine regulars (Greenstone 1977). In California, again, the weakness of party structures made the terrain far more complex,

and the intra-party fights less salient. While COPE unions were part of the club movement, sometimes helping to found their own, labor clubs, the “style” of the middle-class leadership of the club movement often alienated labor leaders (Wilson 1962; Greenstone 1977), who felt that they signaled a weakening of the Democratic Party’s only recently established working-class base. As a result, in intra-party battles, labor often allied itself with the clubs’ enemies, including the powerful Assembly Speaker Jess Unruh (Greenstone 1963; Boyarsky 2008).

For the non-COPE unions, the craft unions who were more active at the top rather than the bottom of the party, the reform insurgents were anathema. The insurgents’ calls for weakening the prerogatives of party leaders, particularly in machine-controlled cities, drew them into conflict with unions that derived their power from strong, centralized party organizations. In Chicago, craft union leaders helped maintain machine control- often pitting themselves against COPE-endorsed reform candidates in city elections (Greenstone 1963).

At the national level, the new Party activists did not at first cause as much of a ruckus- in part due to the basic fact that the national Party organizations are weak to begin with. The one institution that really does exist at the Federal level, the Convention, was designed by party rules to guarantee dominance by machines and elected officials. To keep them out of the way in national campaigns, the Democratic National Committee created “Volunteers for Stevenson” organizations that cordoned off the zealous activists away from the adults (Schattschneider 1960).

That was about to change. On the heels of the “Amateur Democrat” came a second wave of energy and activism into the Party that largely allied itself with the 50’s generation. The unrest created by the Vietnam War, an upsurge in activism and political consciousness on University campuses and the rise of the civil rights movement brought young activists and a more forthright and demanding cadre of African-Americans into the Party. Unlike the 1950’s activists, this second wave was less engaged in local battles over control of the Party, and focused their energies primarily on the Presidential nomination process and the national platform debate, recruiting delegates to the 1968

Democratic Convention who were committed to nominating an anti-war candidate and adopting an anti-war platform plank.

At the 1968 Democratic Convention, the crises exploded into public view. Floor battles over the war issue and the nomination fight between Hubert Humphrey, Eugene McCarthy and George McGovern coincided with a bloody crackdown on street protests outside of the Chicago convention hall. For the most part, labor supported Humphrey and opposed a strong anti-war statement by the Party. This was true of both the more conservative craft unions chiefly represented by the AFL-CIO and its President George Meaney and the unions who had invested in the COPE strategy, including the Communications Workers (CWA), the UAW and the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers. While many of these more "progressive" unions had openly supported or were generally favorable to Robert Kennedy's insurgent campaign, the consensus had swung back toward Humphrey after Kennedy's assassination, with a few straggling local and International leaders supporting the rump candidacy of Eugene McCarthy.

In the electorate, the 1968 election itself revealed the growing rift within the Democratc/labor base (Converse, Miller et al. 1969). While Nixon was unable to garner a majority of working class votes in 1968, his 30% showing in union households was alarming to labor leaders, especially given the closeness of the election. Among middle income voters, Nixon led Humphrey by one percent, 44% to 43%. Even more threatening, perhaps, was the 10% showing among union members by once-and-again Democrat George Wallace, running as an independent segregationist in 1968. By way of contrast, the African American vote for the Vice President was upwards of 94%. Election statistics are only part of the picture. In the popular culture, this rift was embodied in the "Hardhat" demonstrations in New York and elsewhere (Gitlin 1987; Perlstein 2008). As documented by Perlstein and others, Nixon's narrow victory in 1968, as well as well as the "opening" demonstrated by the turmoil of 1968 and the alienation of white working class union members from the left of the Party, emboldened his campaign handlers to pursue the creation of a "New Majority" that captured elements of the New Deal coalition away from the Democrats (Rusher 1984; Perlstein 2008).

In the aftermath of 1968, the issues of representation and aggregation were focused into a debate over party rules. Angered by their treatment in Chicago and the boss-dominated process of candidate selection that rewarded Humphrey with the nomination, anti-war, reform and new politics forces in the party led an effort to dramatically change the process of delegate selection. Between 1968 and 1972, the party embarked on a remarkably public discussion of party rules, housed in a series of commissions, the most important being the McGovern-Frasier commission, field hearings and debate in local and state party organizations. State party organizations also underwent significant rules adjustments to varying degrees based on the strength of reform elements (Crotty 1983).

The battle over party rules was, to a large extent, a proxy battle over the party's position on Vietnam, and reformers hoped to create a system that was more advantageous to anti-war candidates. However, their demands were based in a broad critique of party governance. In my Master's Thesis, I documented strategic approaches taken by activists in an effort to reform and revitalize a local Democratic Party organization. My key finding was that activists vacillated between two paradigms that were often at odds. On the one hand, there was a desire to "close ranks" in the party, to give it a sharper ideological profile, and to strengthen its ability to make political choices. On the other hand was a desire to open the party up as broadly as possible to participation from an expanded network of people with less attention to ideological rigor. Both of these approaches, which I referred to as "empowerment" vs. "enlargement" were attempts to strengthen the party, and to correct perceived failings. However, they emphasized different aspects of the role of the party.

Bringing this framework to bear on the reform debate is knotty, but I believe ultimately fruitful. The goals of the reformers were twofold: On the one hand, to create a party that was more issue focused, clearer ideologically, more homogenous nationally, and more "progressive" or "liberal". On the other hand, they wanted an "open party", both in terms of broad, easy participation in party organization, but, on the question of candidate nomination, they favored primary elections kept out of the hands of party

organs or local bosses. Specifically, the reform proposals came down to three important points. First, state party organizations could no longer select their own delegates in a closed process. Delegates had to be elected either by caucus or primary election. Second, delegates had to state their Presidential preference before being elected. Third, delegations were required to meet a standard of representativeness for women, youth and minorities that reflected their states' population.

The regulars, in contrast, favored a largely heterodox, diffuse and decentralized party at the national level, with strong, boss-run organization at the local level. They believed that "say" in the party should be awarded for sweat equity, and emphasized party service as the quid pro quo for influence. Most crucially, nomination of candidates, they believed, should be carried out by the party organization itself. Primaries, in particular, were derided as "beauty contests" (Crotty 1983). As such, they opposed the direct election of candidate-pledged delegates, preferring to select an army of delegates loyal to delegation leaders who could then "broker" nomination decisions.

The reform debate was, significantly, derided and effectively boycotted by the AFL-CIO, who's representative on McGovern-Frasier did not attend a single meeting. Machine leaders, most notably Chicago's Richard Daley, engaged in sometimes violent tactics to disrupt the momentum of the reform movement (Crotty 1983), behavior that was often supported by AFL-CIO operatives.

In contrast, the UAW's representative on the board participated actively. At the local level, in their stronghold in Michigan, the UAW tolerated or supported the adoption of guidelines for increased opening the party to new activists, setting goals for recruitment of minority, youth and female delegates to party decision-making bodies. While sometimes clashing with the "new politics" activists, they did not employ the "scorched earth" tactics favored by regulars and their AFL-CIO allies. As such, as internal memos documented by Buffa demonstrate, one of the UAW's main lessons from the 1968 election was the need for the Democratic Party to broaden its appeal to issue-driven, middle class voters and activists (Buffa 1984). Opening the party up to them

organizationally was an important first step. This approach by the UAW harkened back to the union's complex history of working with "new left" activists dating back to the early 1960's (Levy 1994).

While UAW leaders supported reform generally they did not agree across the board. For example, the principle of representational guidelines for delegates chafed, not because the UAW didn't share an interest in including minorities or women, but because the guidelines called for proportionality in comparison with the population, as opposed to share of the Democratic electorate or union members. African Americans, only 12% of the Michigan population, were closer to a third of the Democratic voter base (Buffa 1984). In essence, the proposals would diminish the representativeness of the party structure for the party's actual base in favor of an abstract notion of fairness. In addition, while the UAW approved in general of delegate selection through caucuses, they did not approve of the introduction of direct primaries, an important point I will return to below.

The differences in the two union approaches to reform can be attributed to their differing methods of integration into the party. While cultural and ideological factors certainly played a role, with Meany famously decrying the inclusion of "open fags" in state delegations to the post-reform 1972 convention, the main issues were organizational. Meany's political strategy hinged on a close relationship with the decision-makers in the party organization, the delegation leaders that brokered deals at convention backed by unpledged delegates. In contrast, the UAW had built power throughout the Democratic organization in Michigan and elsewhere, and could be assured of influence, even dominance in caucuses or precinct-based convention systems. Where devolving power was a direct threat to the AFL-CIO model of political engagement, it played to the strengths of the UAW strategy.[3]

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[3] I have focused on the differing organizational models of the UAW and likeminded unions versus the AFL-CIO. However, some theorists have pointed to the more direct organizational rivalry between union leaders Walter Reuther and George Meany, who feared a potential UAW/Teamsters challenge to his leadership Battista, A. (1991). "Political Divisions in Organized Labor, 1968-1988." Polity **24**(2): 173-197, Dark, T. E. (2001). The unions and the Democrats : an enduring alliance. Ithaca, N.Y., ILR Press..

From the standpoint of aggregation, too, there was a sharp distinction between these approaches. As mentioned above, the UAW had come to see the electoral potential of including middle class activists and voters more strongly into the Democratic fold. Meany and his allies saw such elements as threatening to the interests of workers (Crotty 1983; Dark 2001).

As the reforms were adopted at the national level, the battles moved to the state level as party organizations and legislatures grappled with implementation. Here, the UAW was uncharacteristically outmanoevered by reform Democrats and opponents in State Government who successfully implemented a primary election. Buffa attributes the UAW opposition to the primary process to fears of an increasingly strong campaign by George Wallace for the 1972 Democratic nomination. Not only did Michigan move to a primary for the first time, but the 72 vote was both open and direct, allowing non-Democrats to vote in either party's election. With no Republican contest, the fear on the part of the UAW was that conservative voters could flood the poll. Furthermore, the UAW and its allies in the state AFL-CIO, sensing that Wallace's message was resonating with significant portions of their own membership, knew that a party-organizational process, even one relatively open to participation at the grassroots, would lock Wallace out of the contest for Michigan delegates. Outdoing even UAW's fears, Wallace won the Michigan primary election, and did well in several other Primary states as the campaign continued (Buffa 1984).

This incident is significant for a number of reasons. Overall, it illustrates that the UAW, unlike the AFL-CIO, or the new politics reformers, recognized a dangerous cleavage in their shared electoral base. Where the AFL-CIO refused to acknowledge the importance of the middle class and African American constituencies' demands for representation and shifts on Foreign Policy, the insurgents discounted the Wallace threat, and the working class revolt it signified. For the proponents of the new politics, the inclusion of millions of new voters in 1972 after the extension of the franchise to 19-21 year olds would outweigh any defections from the seemingly moribund traditional working class base of the Party.

McGovern triumphed at the 72 convention largely based on delegates won in direct primary elections, and garnered the support of the UAW and the CWA. Meany and the AFL-CIO worked hard to re-nominate Humphrey who had not entered a single primary election. At this point, the divisions that had developed through the years of the reform debate combined into a perfect storm of disunity and acrimony. Invoking both pluralist and socialist arguments for the independence of labor, Meany quickly forced a vote for neutrality in the 72 Presidential race through the AFL-CIO board. "If only old Norman Thomas was running", Meany quipped, though all evidence suggests he never voted for the perennial socialist candidate when he had the chance. To justify the abstention of the federation, the first of its kind in the modern era, Meany focused on a handful of "bad votes" McGovern cast in the Senate, despite the fact that the Democrats' nominee had a stronger COPE voting record than Lyndon Johnson and had penned his Doctoral dissertation about the mine wars in the American west. This cynical deployment of "the myth of nonpartisanship"(Rogin 1987) flew in the face of decades of partisan cooperation and, instead of boosting labor's bargaining power with policy makers, it merely provided a further opening for Republicans to appeal directly to union voters.

Meany was only partially successful in pulling labor out of the Democratic campaign in 1972. Unions representing nearly half of the AFL-CIO's membership, along with organizations like the UAW which had left the Federation campaigned actively for McGovern. While it is difficult to precisely assess the effect of the abstention on an election as decisive as 1972, there is no doubt that the highly publicized feud helped further Nixon's successful narrative of the "new majority" with profound long-term consequences. McGovern was never able to appeal to white working class voters throughout the campaign, a consequence both of the AFL-CIO's absenteeism and his own campaign's blithe confidence in the power of the new, young electorate. Operationally, however, labor's boycott helped insure that less than $100,000 was spent by the McGovern campaign on outreach to working class voters, while Nixon spent over

two million (Dark 2001). If 1972 was the death of the New Deal coalition, it was, at least in part, a suicide.

Legacy

Moving forward from the Nixon landslide in 1972, the divergence in union strategy continued for the next several years before a general reconciling in the 1980's, when Democrats and labor faced the energetically anti-government and anti-union Reagan administration. In the intervening years, the Democratic Party's organizational structure continued to weaken under the further proliferation of primary elections and non-partisan elections at the local level. Democrats elected in the successful 1974 campaign, the so-called "class of 1974" had been elected largely through primary systems, and owed far less allegiance either to the Democratic Party organization or to labor. This new crop of Democrats included McGovern campaign manager Gary Hart, who defeated a powerful, statewide union leader in the Colorado primary. These candidates began the trend of direct appeals to voters, including union members, in order to secure the party nomination, a process that undermined the ability of the organizations to play their role of interest aggregation or hold candidates to some degree of ideological cohesion. Instead of relying on the traditional coalition of working class whites and minorities, or even an expanded version that included appeals to women, youth and middle class liberals, these candidates cobbled together their own coalitions based on electoral expediency. This cadre of Democrats is often marked for their ambivalence to core labor issues and willingness to compromise on economic issues. In many respects, they could be seen as proto-Clintonites (Archer and Whitehorn 1990; Dark 2001; Bernstein and Dominguez 2003).

Meanwhile, on the right, conservative leaders and candidates built upon the gains made by the Nixon administration in appealing to working class voters by including a strong ideological attack on the welfare state policies and ethos that had held the Democratic majority together. Between Nixon and Reagan, conservatives moved from

accommodating to the popularity of statist economic policies to directly attacking them in an appeal that tied together classical liberalism and the appeals to cultural, class, gendered and racial anxieties that Nixon had pioneered.

As the 1990's approached, the middle class whites of the McGovern campaign generation began to lead the party, and, arguably, take it in a decreasingly pro-union direction- justified by the success of the right in undermining the ideological basis of the New Deal coalition. New majorities had to be built, it was argued, based in "new" issues such as education, gun control, environmental protection and equal opportunity.

The question is, was role did the erosion of the party organization play in the sidelining of union issues? If there are neither bosses nor powerful precinct organizations to work with, *and* candidates can go directly to the members, *and* the labor base is divided and shrinking, it stands to reason that labor's issues would lose their salience for politicians. Returning to Schattschneider, it seems possible that there was a contradiction between the organizational demands of the reform movement, and the ideological or programmatic aspirations. Both labor and the Party insurgents wanted a realigned party that would reliably defend core values. By removing party organization from the process of candidate nomination, the reformers undermined their own ability to influence the outcome or demand a politics of substance. Money came to dominate primaries, and primaries themselves begat open primaries, which is, in essence, a form of non-partisan election. (Ware 1985; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000) .[4] In part, then, the party regulars, the Meanyites, and the "progressive" wing of the labor movement may all have been right about the preservation of party strengthening measures, even if they disagreed about many of the details.

Today, labor confronts an existential attack from right wing forces. Not content with dividing the Democratic base, conservatives have moved toward the liquidation of public sector unionism and the radical circumscription of unions' ability to engage in political advocacy. There is no doubt, however, that these attacks are aimed not only at

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[4] However, others have argued that informal networks of party leaders still wield considerable power in the Presidential nominating process, as well as candidate selection at lower levels, stating that these efforts are operationally "beating reform" (Cohen, Karol et al. 2001).

unions themselves, but are an attempt to eliminate Democratic competitiveness in elections generally. It is a clear partisan move.

In response, in battles in Ohio and Wisconsin over public sector collective bargaining rights, labor and the Democrats worked together seamlessly to dispel a mutual threat. The same is expected next year in California, where a ballot measure aimed at barring unions from making political donations has been resurrected after numerous defeats. There is an awkwardness, however, in labor and the Democrats waging existential battles together. The frustrating compromises by the Obama administration and general unreliability of the Party in Government have renewed cries for independence precisely as the right wing challenge illustrates the continued overlap between labor and the Democratic Party's fortunes. Furthermore, the erosion of Democratic Party support among the membership base of the traditional unions gives labor a clear incentive to emphasize it's quasi mythical "non partisanship" in fighting off attacks.

At the same time, labor cannot win these fights alone, and the clear and obvious allies is the institution with the most to lose- the Democratic Party, as well as the broader progressive constituencies that orbit it. "Ditching the Democrats" in such circumstances, while compelling from a narrow point of view, could spell a disaster not unlike 1972.

Instead of pursuing the red herring of "independence", then, it may be more fruitful to return to the idea of the integration of the Democratic Party and labor. The notion of strengthening both of these institutions, in terms of operationality, inclusiveness and effectiveness, should be re-asserted. Strategies that recognize the shared interests, overlaps in membership and mutual enemies make more sense than a renewal of fratricide.

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