

Progressive Politics

To the non-convention -going, non-politically - organization- joining Republican perhaps things are rather normal. Backroom deals rarely surface beyond the environs of the small political circles. Especially now with the leaders preaching unity dissension is more than discouraged.

Two years ago certain people in most of the counties, Orange excepted, held meetings to consider the Parsky Plan for the reorganization of the California Republican Party (CRP) Parsky is a liberal Republican and President Bush's point man in California. The Plan for reorganization was passed by voice at a hastily called convention in October 2002. A voice vote thus eliminated the proxy count. After opposition to the Parsky Plan started to arise, within a few days LA area popular talk show hosts, Hugh Hewitt and Warren Duffy devoted programs to the "Parsky plan." Callers mostly expressed opposition to it. (John Gizzi, Human Events, 2001)

A restructured Republican State Party diluted the state chairman's authority and gave major donors a seat on the executive board (Martin Wisckol, Orange County Register, 1/24/02) This resulted in eliminating the grassroots influence. In addition the President of the United States or his designee, who could be from a different state, would become an automatic member of the State Central Committee and control as many appointments as the state chairman (John Gizzi, Human Events, 2002)

Parsky is a member of the New Majority, a "moderate" well -funded group who support abortion, gay rights and gun control. The organization has 110 members who are charged \$10,000 annually. Besides Parsky some other New Majority members include George Argyros, a Bush appointee as ambassador to Spain, Donald Bren, Chairman of the Irvine Company, Thomas Tucker, Newport Beach venture capitalist, Paul Folino, Emulex Executive, and Henry Samueli Broadcom co-founder (Martin Wisckol, Orange County Register, 1/24/02)

John Kurzweil, editor of the California Political Review, wrote a 14 page scathing account of the events leading up to and following the take-over of the CRP. Kurzweil calls the new arrangement a GOP disconnect from the real people of California. The

"moderates" have joined in with the liberal Democrats calling conservatives, mean, narrow, and other similar derogatory verbiage.

After the Republicans lost so many elections in 2002, the New Majority said the party must move quickly to groom women and minority candidates besides changing course on the environment, gun control, and abortion. They gave \$150,000 to Riordan's losing primary drive and out of nine legislative primaries picked only three winners despite investing \$277,4000 in the races. A bid by the "Majority" (some aren't even registered Republicans) to take over the Orange County Central Committee resulted in the established Republicans winning 35 of the 43 seats in the election (Martin Wisckol, Orange County Register, 3/9/02)

Some Republicans formerly opposed to the New Majority, such as Senator Dick Ackerman, are having second thoughts. A shortage of money from other sources places the New Majority in the driver's seat. Perhaps the last CRP convention on 9/15/03 was a good gage on the progress made by the moderate group. Mario Rodriquez, a renegade beat a long time volunteer, Lois Godfrey for vice chairman of the CRP. Rodriquez was picked by Bush's California director, Gerald Parsky (Orange County Register, 8/4/03) CRP Chairman, Duf Sundheim, informed the Republicans at the convention's general meeting that he was in daily contact with Karl Rove at the White House. The CRP was asked to hold only one convention rather than two in 2004 in order to spend more time on the Bush/Cheney re-election. Also, at Rove's suggestion for more focus on women, the CRP will have a woman liaison to the White House. Brooks Firestone, a former liberal legislator will be encouraged to run in the Santa Barbara area. He was very involved with Parsky in the reorganization of the CRP. Of course the New Majority are supporting Arnold Schwarzenegger. David Drier, on "staff" with Arnold has recently become a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Parsky is also a member of that organization as well as a member of the Trilateral Commission.

Nancy Thomson
September 2003