

- ACORN members delivering the Platform to Carter at a reception in Davenport and a member breaking through police lines to hand him the Platform on the docks in St. Louis.

- A series of meetings and negotiations with state Party officials seeking their support for the People's Platform and access to the state Party process. These meetings have produced commitments in Texas, for example, to allow ACORN to present the Platform to the state Democratic Party convention next June, to place an ACORN member on the state Platform committee and to circulate the Platform to Party members. The Colorado Democratic Party co-chair agreed to hold Platform hearings around the state, to print the Platform in the Party newspaper and to support ACORN's demand for a special committee on representation of low and moderate income people at the national Party level.

Strategy and Next Steps

As the introduction and activities thus far suggest, the People's Platform campaign is aimed at forcing the politicians and the Parties to recognize and deal seriously with the issue of representation of low and moderate income people.

The track records of both Parties are poor. In 1976, 67% of the delegates to the Republican convention earned \$25,000 or more. The Democrats did only slightly better with fully half of the delegates earning more than \$25,000. The median income for Democratic delegates exceeded \$18,000 while the national median was under \$6,000. 53% of the Democratic delegates had post-college education while only 9% of the Democratic rank and file had education beyond college. 51% were professionals and less than 5% were blue collar or clerical workers. Only 6% had incomes under \$10,000 while 44% of the rank and file earned less than \$10,000.

While the Democratic Party has, in the last 10 years, established a variety of study commissions on Party process and implemented some major reforms including a "quota" for women and affirmative action for minorities, it has not dealt seriously with the question of participation of low and moderate income people.

There are, however, a few Party policies and rules which provide handles for the campaign. The 1980 delegate selection rules prohibit "discrimination on the basis of economic status" -- a hollow promise, but a point of leverage. In addition, each state is mandated to develop and implement a program to achieve full participation of under-represented groups in Party affairs, including remedial action to overcome the effects of past discrimination. That rule gives us an angle for moving on local and state Party officials with an interpretation that low and moderate income people have been grossly under-represented.