

FUNDING EXCHANGE

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PAUL ROBESON FUND
FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA

OUT: A FUND FOR LESBIAN
AND GAY LIBERATION

The Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media

April 12, 1995

Dear Paul Robeson Fund Applicant,

During the weekend of March 17-19th, 1995, The Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media Funding Board met and allocated \$150,000 in grants to independent social issue film, video and radio production. Paul Robeson Fund Board members represent a diverse group of social issue media experts, including independent and NPR radio producers, film and video distributors, activists and educators from all over the United States.

I am sorry to inform you that your project was not awarded a grant this cycle. We received 307 completed proposals for funding and awarded 50 grants (36 for film and video and 14 for radio). Obviously, with the amount of money available for grants, even with a number of small grants, less than 20% of projects submitted received funding. A list of this year's grantees is included.

As outlined in the Robeson guidelines, funding is given to projects that address critical and timely social and political issues from progressive perspectives that effectively reach a broad or targeted audience and that combine intellectual clarity with creative use of the medium.

HIGHEST PRIORITY is given to those projects that have a thoroughly developed distribution initiative. As the guidelines state, we seek distribution initiatives that go beyond the traditional channels of television or radio broadcast, film festivals or theatrical release. **Top funding priority is given to producers who are clear and specific on how their project will be used at the grassroots level and can demonstrate its effectiveness as a "tool" for progressive social change organizing.**

There were many projects the Board would have liked to support. Unfortunately, lack of funds limited the Board's selection to 50 projects.

(see other side)

The most common reasons why a project wasn't funded were:

- * project did not fit within the guidelines or application was incomplete;
- * project was a repeat of existing media on the same subject with no new perspective;
- * project not as politically critical as others;
- * project description was not clearly developed;
- * producer did not have a distribution initiative for organizing and/or did not present an initiative that went beyond the usual distribution channels;
- * experience of producer did not indicate ability to effectively complete the project;
- * producer did not present realistic budget and/or had a weak fundraising strategy;
- * sample material (either prior work or current) was not strong in content or style, was not engaging or interesting to watch, was technically inferior, was not relevant to the proposed project (i.e. submitted a 1/2" video documentary and wished to produce a narrative feature film).

You may request, **in a telephone discussion only**, specific information on why your project did not receive funding (include project title, your name and day phone number). Please call the Funding Exchange and ask for Noeleen or Joy to make an appointment for 15 minutes; then call me at the scheduled time. In most cases the feedback you receive will be one or more of the above. Because of our limited staffing, this is the only way we can respond to your request. Thank you for your understanding.

You may also request, until May 15, 1995, the return of your video or radio tape sample work by sending us a self-addressed padded envelope mailer with the following postage:

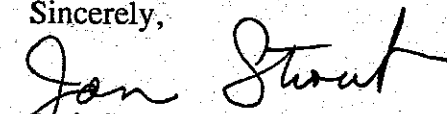
\$ 3.00 for video tape (1 or 2)

\$ 1.05 for radio cassette tape; \$ 1.50 for 2 cassette tapes

Any unclaimed sample tapes will be donated to a non-profit organization for erasing and recycling.

I wish you the best in your fundraising efforts to produce media for progressive social change. Thank you for applying to The Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media.

Sincerely,


Janis L. Strout
Program Officer

enclosure -- 1995 Robeson Grants Awards Listing

**1995 FILM AND VIDEO AWARDS
THE PAUL ROBESON FUND FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA**

ACE AGAINST THE ODDS

\$ 3,000

Producer: Debra Levine

San Francisco, CA

This tape documents women inmates in a maximum security prison organizing their lives to provide AIDS education and social support services to other inmates while examining the lack of AIDS services for poor and previously incarcerated women on the "outside."

AMERICA AFTER ATTICA: STORIES FROM BEHIND THE WALL

\$ 4,000

Producer: Barbara Zahm

New York, NY

A feature-length video documentary which explores New York's massive prison build-up in the light of three individual prisoner's lives, their communities and their work as activists inside and outside the prison system.

ANIMATED ACTIVIST VIDEOS

\$ 1,500

Producer: David Mendoza & Ruth Hayes

Seattle, WA

A series of one-minute videos to focus on "wedge issues" in the current "Culture Wars" for organizing and education by the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression and its network of progressive coalition partner organizations.

BACKBONE OF THE WORLD: THE BLACKFEET

\$ 2,000

Producer: Pamela Roberts

Bozeman, MT

Filmed in the Blackfeet homelands of Canada and Montana's northern Rockies, this is the untold story about the Blackfeet Indian struggle to heal themselves and to reforge their identity amidst the turmoil of 21st century demands and fading cultural mores.

THE BARBIE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION NEWS

\$ 4,000

Producer: Igor Vamos

Loudonville, NY

The story of a small activist group that created a national news media event by switching the electronics in talking Barbie and GI Joe dolls and placing the altered toys back on store shelves before Christmas, 1993; this is an educational tool that examines gender stereotypes and acts as a model for accessing mainstream news media with limited resources. NYSCA Challenge grant recipient.

BREATHING LESSONS: THE LIFE AND WORK OF MARK O'BRIEN

\$ 3,000

Producer: Jessica Yu Yu

Glendale, CA

The film will examine the life of Mark O'Brien, the acclaimed poet and essayist who has lived for four decades in an iron lung since contracting polio at age 6, from his point of view, exploring his daily struggle not only to live, but to control the life he lives, and his outspoken efforts on behalf of rights for the disabled.

COMMON GROUND: THE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

APPROACH TO HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

\$ 2,000

Producers: Debra Chasnoff & Helen Cohen

San Francisco, CA

The Institute for Community Economics, in collaboration with Women's Educational Media, is producing a video about the community land trust approach to affordable housing and community organizing, to be used for public education and organizing around affordable housing and progressive land reform in the United States.

FAMILY NAME

\$ 3,000

Producer: Macky Alston

New York, NY

Documentary film that examines the legacy of slavery in America today, focusing on three contemporary families, two African American and one white, who share the same last name; it is through the filmmaker's eyes and his search that we explore the bitter history of America's most shameful secret.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Producers: Gini Reticker & Pernessa Seele

\$ 5,000

Yonkers, NY

An award-winning film about an African American woman with AIDS will form the centerpiece of the Comprehensive Black Church HIV/AIDS Education Kit. In collaboration with The Balm in Gilead, a re-edited version of the film will be distributed to 2,000 African American Churches nationwide. NYSCA Challenge grant recipient.

IN WHOSE HONOR?

Producer: Jay Rosenstein

\$ 3,000

Champaign, IL

A video documentary about the struggle to eliminate the use of Native American mascots and symbols in sports and the reasons why it must be done: the fight for self-determination and racial justice.

THE JANES

Producers: Diane Kate Kirtz & Nell Lundy

\$ 3,000

Chicago, IL

"Jane" was a Chicago-based group of women who performed close to 12,000 safe illegal abortions between 1969 and 1972. THE JANES, an hour-long documentary focusing on the political and personal experiences of some of the 150 members of this underground collective, tells the story of this radical group of ordinary women in the words of the women who ran and were served by it.

LYDIA'S TRIALS

Producer: Frances Negrón-Muntaner

\$ 5,000

Philadelphia, PA

A 90-minute film that tells the story of Puerto Rican TV personality and theater actress Lydia Echevarria, who, in 1986, was accused and convicted to life in prison for masterminding the murder of her estranged husband and popular TV producer, Luis Vigoreaux. LYDIA'S TRIALS explores cultural representations of the family, the role of men and women in defining these representations, the impact of American popular culture and the social expectations of women as they get older.

MY LIBERATION...WRAPPED UP IN YOURS

Producer: Deborah Zubow

\$ 3,000

Philadelphia, PA

A collaboration with the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom, this video will document the efforts of grassroots women to interrupt racism in their communities. In addition, grassroots women will be given the chance to build their knowledge and skills in video production, build alliances with independent video producers in their communities and ultimately learn the techniques for effectively disseminating a politically challenging video.

NEGOTIATING WHITENESS

Producers: Amanda Berger & Joel Katz

\$ 3,000

Brooklyn, NY

One-hour videotape about the formation of "white" or Caucasian racial identity in America, turning the magnifying glass around from its usual orientation on the targets of racism. In doing so, it will also examine some of the root constructions of racism and privilege. A special focus will be placed on white youth, who, at an early age, receive overt and nuanced messages about their racial identity and how this places them in relation to people of color.

NEW ON THE JOB

Producers: Kyung Sun Yu & Rhian Miller

\$ 3,000

Oakland, CA

A series of four 10-minute videotape programs addressing critical workplace issues directed at young people who are already participating in or prepared to enter the workforce, geared for use both within the high school setting and also as part of youth organizing initiatives conducted by unions and community groups.

NO COUNTRY IS AN ISLAND

Producer: Stephanie Black

\$ 5,000

New York, NY

A feature-length documentary on the impact of debt repayment and the attached "structural adjustment" policies on the day-to-day lives of the people of Jamaica, who have over twenty years of involvement with the IMF, World Bank and other international lending institutions.

NO NOS TIENES (Don't Tempt Us)

Producer: Christine List

\$ 4,000

Chicago, IL

A 52-minute video documentary that tells the story of the student movement for progressive social change in Guatemala which will be distributed in conjunction with a speaking tour by some of the Guatemalan students in the United States.

NOT JUST PASSING THROUGH

Producers: Polly Thistlethwaite, Jean Carlomusto, Dolores Perez, & Catherine Saalfield

\$ 1,000

Brooklyn, NY

This 53-minute videotape about the community-driven uses and construction of lesbian history, along with a companion Activists Guide offering information about preserving lesbian history through archival, theatrical, and media projects, will be distributed to community-based lesbian history, political, and arts organizations.

ORGANIZING FOR JUSTICE: HOTEL WORKERS IN LOS ANGELES

Producer: Julia Meitzer

\$ 1,000

Los Angeles, CA

Set against the backdrop of an active campaign by Local 11 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union to organize workers at the new Otani Hotel in downtown L.A.'s Little Tokyo district, **ORGANIZING...** will be an anatomy of a class struggle which pits a largely immigrant workforce against a powerful multinational construction company.

PEER EDUCATION, NOT FEAR EDUCATION

Producer: Ioannis Mookas

\$ 2,500

Brooklyn, NY

Examines the current challenge facing comprehensive sexuality education and HIV/AIDS education in the form of fear-based, "abstinence-only", curricula which the Religious Right is aggressively promoting, **PEER EDUCATION** also presents a variety of New York City teens involved in peer education around HIV and AIDS. NYSCA Challenge grant recipient.

PLANTATION MYSTERIES

Producers: Dana Briscoe & Zeinabu Davis

\$ 2,000

Chicago, IL

Half-hour experimental video documentary which incorporates personal essays, anecdotes and computer graphics to investigate the glorification of Plantation culture utilized in the promotion of private luxury and exclusive residential communities being developed in the Southeastern U.S.

THE QUESTION OF EQUALITY

Producer: David Meieran

\$ 2,000

New York, NY

From the Stonewall Riots to the recent onslaught of anti-gay referenda, this four-part series, produced by Testing the Limits for ITVS, portrays the efforts of lesbian and gay men throughout the U.S. to secure equal rights protections and live openly without fear of violence or discrimination. NYSCA Challenge grant recipient.

ROUGH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

Producer: Tami Gold

\$ 3,000

Montclair, NJ

Tells the story of Clarence Fitch, an African American Vietnam veteran and anti-war activist who overcame a 13-year drug habit to bring his awareness about racism, militarism and human perseverance to his work in the movement for justice and peace before his death from AIDS in 1990. The video has accompanying study and viewer guides designed to reach young people, especially youth of color.

SKIN DEEP

Producers: Deb Ellis and Alexandra Halkin

\$ 3,500

Chicago, IL

A one-hour documentary about the development, testing and utilization of the long-term contraceptive, Norplant, that explores the socio-economic climate which fosters its development and distribution, and the racial and cultural perspectives that have informed and shaped family planning programs.

SLAVE GIRLS

Producer: Ellen Bruno

\$ 4,000

San Francisco, CA

An examination of the social, political and economic forces which have led to a rapid increase in the trafficking of young Burmese girls into prostitution in Thailand.

- ¡SOY CUBANO!** \$ 2,000
 Producers: Media Benjamin & Rick Tejada Flores San Francisco, CA
 This full-length video is a part of the Global Exchange's Campaign to Exempt Food and Medicine from the Trade Embargo of Cuba. The video will follow a group of North Americans who -- as a challenge to the trade embargo and as an act of civil disobedience -- are investing in a Cuban soy factory producing food for children.
- STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART** \$ 2,000
 Producer: Dee Mosbacher San Francisco, CA
 Made in response to the Christian Right's **THE GAY AGENDA**, this 24-minute video presents moving accounts of parents' struggles with homophobia upon learning that their child is lesbian or gay, and uses a variety of distribution mechanisms including: online marketing, direct mail, card packs, and catalog services.
- TAKING IT TO THE STREETS** \$ 3,000
 Producer: Barbara Trent Chapel Hill, NC
 A video about the social and political impact of media distribution strategies in collaboration with a strong organizing and mobilizing effort (used by the filmmaker with **COVER UP** and **THE PANAMA DECEPTION**) in order to inspire filmmakers, activists, and organizations to use this model for their own work.
- TALKING ABOUT RACE** \$ 5,000
 Producer: Frances Reid Berkeley, CA
 A set of two short videotapes that present college students from across the country examining their attitudes about race, the tapes will be distributed along with a facilitator's guide, and will be used by educators in schools, corporations, unions, churches and community groups, to help break down barriers to communication and begin interracial dialogue.
- TRIEF (That which is not Kosher)** \$ 3,000
 Producers: Alisa Lebow & Cynthia Madansky New York, NY
 A video to draw together the strains of assimilated Jewish culture with the ambivalence, nostalgia, shame and pride of its lesbian daughters, all from a uniquely queer Jewish, politically progressive perspective.
- TROUBLESOME CREEK: A MIDWESTERN** \$ 4,000
 Producers: Jeanne Jordan & Steven Ascher Cambridge, MA
 Distribution for a public education program about the survival of American farms and the rural communities that rely on them. The centerpiece, a documentary film portraying the Jordan family's successful attempt to save their Iowa farm from foreclosure, drives an eight-state, grass-roots screening program to focus discussions among rural and urban Midwesterners to explore new solutions to rural problems.
- THE UPRISING OF '34** \$ 3,000
 Producers: George Stoney & Judith Helfand New York City, NY
 Through the story of a massive labor uprising by southern textile workers during the Great Depression, is film raises crucial issues about class, race, memory and power in the South today. The 1934 general textile strike is a major event in U.S. history that explicitly questions how critical the control of history is to the struggles of present-day working people. NYSCA Challenge grant recipient.
- WESTERN SHOSHONE MINEWATCH VIDEO SERIES** \$ 3,000
 Producer: James Bell Crescent Valley, NV
 Because of the past, present, and future mining occurring on Western Shoshone lands and the potential effects of these activities on the balance of life within these lands, the **MINEWATCH** series will document and solicit support in response to these threats.
- WHERE CREDIT IS DUE** \$ 1,000
 Producer: David Wilson Scott Brooklyn, NY
 A collaboration between an independent producer and a support organization for community development, the National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions, this distribution strategy will (1) promote public awareness on the issue of bank redlining/disinvestment and alternative means of meeting credit needs in low-income communities; and (2) reach out to potential credit union members and organizers locally and nationally. NYSCA Challenge grant recipient.

WITNESS TO THE FUTURE

Producer: Branda Miller

\$ 2,000

Averill Park, NY

An experimental documentary video project about individuals who have been transformed from so-called "ordinary" citizens into activists, **WITNESS**. . . seeks connections which unite people of all cultures, communities, races and economic classes, as they struggle for environmental and social change.

WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR: PRISON LIBRARY PROJECT

Producer: Jeanne Kracher

\$ 4,500

Chicago, IL

WIDC will create a video library and distribution program for incarcerated women, youth and peer educators in prisons around the country.

Total Film and Video Awards: \$ 108,000

**1995 RADIO AWARDS
THE PAUL ROBESON FUND FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA**

CAREFULLY TAUGHT: CLASHING VALUES IN THE CLASSROOM

\$ 6,000

Producer: Barbara Bernstein

Portland, Oregon

A four-part series of half-hour documentaries that explore how the future of public education is being threatened by right-wing movements, such as the Religious Right, and how classrooms have become one of the frontlines of the so-called "Culture Wars", as the curriculum becomes more inclusive.

CORPORATION CORPORATION

\$ 2,000

Producer: Evelyn Tully Costa

Brooklyn, NY

A four-part, 30-minute national radio documentary that explores how local communities can and are taking back economic, political, legal, environmental, educational and spiritual power from corporations and reinvesting those energies into locally accountable and democratic economies. NYSCA Challenge grant recipient.

DIVIDING LINES

\$ 3,000

Producer: Conrad Bishop

Philadelphia, PA

13 half-hour series about social divisions, combining interviews and documentary elements with short dramatic sketches, that reflect social/political issues as they really happen: intermixed in individuals.

FROM DEATH ROW: THIS IS MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

\$ 2,500

Producer: Noelle Hanrahan

Brentwood, MD

A series of 52 short commentaries, written and read by death row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, they are produced, promoted and distributed by the Prison Radio Project to: (1) humanize those on death row and in prison, challenge current law-and-order policies and spark public action; and 2) defy censorship and defend the First Amendment rights of prisoners.

HANFORD, OUR OWN HIROSHIMA

\$ 1,500

Producer: Michael Honke

Gresham, OR

An investigative report and oral history that is the culmination of 18 months of interviews with "downwinders", the people who are victims of four decades of radiation releases to the environment from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington State, this documentary includes the health affects, claims by whistleblowers and scientists that the U.S. government and private contractors have committed crimes against the environment and the public, and have engaged in an overt conspiracy to cover-up their actions.

LIVE COVERAGE OF THE UN CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

\$ 6,000

Producer: Gail Christian

Washington, DC

The Pacifica Network's News Director, Assignment Editor and Anchor will provide daily coverage from Beijing, China, of the UN Conference on Women in September, 1995, and also produce a one-hour special report on the status of women throughout the world upon their return.

NO MORE DAM LIES

\$ 2,500

Producers: Merrilly Weisbord & Ellen Coon

New York NY

A one-hour documentary about the battle raging over Arun III, a massive hydroelectric project in Nepal promoted by the U.S.-dominated World Bank and resisted by indigenous groups and environmentalists. The issues come alive when Cree activist Diane Reed, veteran of the struggle against Quebec's Great Whale hydroelectric project, travels to the threatened forests of the Arun Valley in Nepal to discuss strategy with the native peoples there.

OLYMPIC OLIVE, OLYMPIC GOLD

\$ 2,000

Producer: Regine Beyer

Staten Island, NY

A 2-part half-hour series on women in the (Summer) Olympics and the Olympic Movement, the series will be distributed by NPR's HORIZONS prior to the centennial Atlanta Games in 1996 and by the Women's Sports Foundation to address equity in athletics. NYSCA Challenge grant recipient.

THE PORT CHICAGO 50

\$ 1,500

Producer: Dan Collison

Silver Spring, MD

A half-hour documentary about the 50 African American seamen convicted of mutiny and imprisoned for refusing to return to work loading ammunition following the 1944 munitions explosions at the Port Chicago Naval Base near San Francisco. The blasts, which killed 320 men, and the mutiny trial were pivotal historical events that led to desegregation in the Navy following WWII, still resinate today with members of Congress who have asked that the mutiny convictions be set aside and with Navy officials who have refused.

THE RACISM PROJECT

\$ 2,000

Producers: Adi Gevins & Bari Scott

Oakland, CA

An independent radio initiative to work with people from a variety of fields to originate innovative program formats which powerfully address the enduring crises concerning racism and intergroup conflict in America.

rites of passage

\$ 1,500

Producer: Milton Lee

Rapid City, SD

An hour-long documentary for public radio exploring adolescent "rites-of-passage" in American society showing how gang culture, drug use and sexual mores are negative substitutes originating from the absence of positive cultural "rites." The show will be the pilot for a longer series.

THE ROSEWOOD MASSACRE CONTINUES

\$ 1,000

Producer: Alan Lipke

Tampa, FL

A one-hour documentary on the destruction of Rosewood, Florida -- the 1923 racial massacre in which at least eight (some believe many more) men, women and children were killed -- and its continuing implications, including the controversial process whereby Florida recently agreed to compensate the victims.

UNCLE SAM WANTS YOUR BACK YARD

\$ 1,500

Producer: Malcolm B. Howard

Brooklyn, NY

Six-part limited series on the impact of military training and weapons testing on rural communities which investigates: illegal Pentagon seizures of public land; military abuse of environmental law and national security secrecy provisions; illegal and accidental bombing of public and Native lands; the psychological effects of low altitude and super-sonic fighter training on people; the effects of tank maneuvers and bombing practice on desert ecosystems; and the cost of clean-up. NYSCA Challenge grant recipient.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE: TEENAGE DIARIES

\$ 9,000

Producer: Joe Richman

New York, NY

A series of radio features by and about teenagers, the project will put tape recorders in the hands of six teenagers, from around the country and different backgrounds. These teenagers, with the help of the series producer, will create regular stories for NPR's ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.

Total Radio Awards: \$ 42,000

Total All Robeson Awards: \$ 150,000