

Book claims nonprofits collude on poverty

The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex

Edited by Incite! Women of Color against Violence; South End Press; Paperback; \$18; 272 pages ISBN: 0-89608-766-8

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

"Many White-led social justice non-profits proclaim, in everything from their mission statements to their funding proposals, that they are committed to improving the social and economic conditions of the oppressed communities in which they operate. But... the White leadership of the progressive philanthropy movement actually protects White wealth and undermines the work of oppressed communities of color... They act as brokers between the capital and the oppressed people of color

who were exploited to create it...

They simply help [the rich] manage their money—and assuage their guilt for having wealth accrued from the stolen and exploited labor of people of color... More specifically, White people become more invested in protecting White wealth than in advancing oppressed people of color's movements to reclaim and redistribute wealth." —Excerpted from Chapter 5, "The Filth on Philanthropy"

Have you ever wondered why poverty persists in America, despite the existence of so many incredibly wealthy charitable organizations, some of which boast billion-dollar endowments? For instance, after Hurricane Katrina, non-profit corporations undoubtedly benefited from a fundraising bonanza, given that the entire country

had been moved to open their wallets by the failure of FEMA and every other federal and state agency to respond to the disaster effectively.

Yet, here it is over 20 months later, and the poorest folks from the Gulf region remain unable to return to their homes and are probably permanently dislocated. To get a clue into understanding the woeful performance of philanthropies, read "The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex."

This anthology of revealing essays was edited by Incite!, a collective also known as Women of Color against Violence.

This incendiary tome brilliantly blows the covers off the non-profit racket, indicting it as being in bed with a power elite whose primary interest is in maintaining the

status quo.

As proof, the authors point out that in 1955, charitable giving totaled just \$7.7 billion, but by 1998 (the last year that such statistics were compiled), that figure had risen to \$175 billion. One of the unintended consequences of this generosity is that foundations now strategically direct how their grants get disbursed, which means that most money is allocated with strings attached.

Apparently, some charities even masquerade as progressive while pushing an arch-conservative agenda, such as The Rockefeller Foundation, which has been misleading in its supposed effort to fight world hunger, an organizations started 30 years ago when there were less than a million starving people on the planet. According to this eye-opening opus, the foundation's true mission

was to control political insurgency and population growth.

The upshot is that today there over 800 million people who go to sleep hungry daily, and the book blames the Rockefellers for using contributions to bankroll a "massive global restructuring of agriculture" that "destroyed the livelihoods of millions of farmers and villagers that had been in existence for hundreds of years."

"The Revolution Will Not

Be Funded" indicates that "critical to the success" of such schemes is the deliberate "use of people of color as endorsers of these tactics."

In sum, the sisters behind this enlightening exposé earn high marks for compiling a critical inquiry into an unregulated industry long-presumed to be dedicated to the public interest, which unfortunately, more often than not, ostensibly functions as a pawn of big business and the ruling class.

R. Kelly

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send Kelly to prison for up to 15 years, and presumably halt his fast-track career.

His spokesperson, Mayer, says Kelly fully realizes how much is at stake and is eager as anyone to get his day in court finally.

"It's a terrible thing to have hanging over you," Mayer said. "But he's confident that, when all the facts come out, he's going to be shown to have been not guilty."

Ne-Yo

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Rihanna's "Unfaithful" and Beyoncé's ubiquitous "Irreplaceable"—you realize that not only is Ne-Yo qualified to make such a diagnosis, but that he may be the one who can provide the cure.

"He has a lot to say, he has so much to say," Island Def Jam Chairman Antonio "L.A." Reid says. "He's grown musically, he's grown as a performer, he's grown into his image as a star."

And he has an increasing number of outlets in which to express his artistry. His sexy sophomore album, "Because of You," in stores now, while on the songwriting front, he's working with Usher, Jennifer Hudson, Whitney Houston, Britney Spears and Celine Dion, who, according to Ne-Yo (born Shaffer Smith), told him: "I am going to be the one person this year that is not going to ask for you for 'Irreplaceable.'"

Surely, Dion couldn't be blamed if she did. The ultimate brush-off song, "Irreplaceable" cemented itself at No. 1 on Billboard's Top 100 singles chart for 10 weeks. While Ne-Yo credits Beyoncé for the song's vocal arrangement and helping with the song's melody, he penned the clever words, including what has now become a catch phrase: "To the left, to the left."

"Anybody that wasn't paying attention to Shaffer The Songwriter definitely started after they found out I wrote that song," he said.

But the main reason why Shaffer The Songwriter was being obscured is because he was being upstaged by Shaffer The Artist. With the release of his debut album last year, Ne-Yo became a bright new face on the pop scene: the ballad "So Sick" was a big hit, and it was followed by successful singles like "Sexy Love."

The album has sold more than 1 million copies.

His success in music has even led to other opportunities: This year, he had a supporting role in the hit dance flick "Stomp the Yard," and he is reading other scripts.

"I've been blessed, because there are a few other writers trying to come out as artists and it hasn't happened as fast for them as it did for me, and I really don't know what to credit that to, other than I love what I do and I think that shows in my music," said Ne-Yo. "I've never wanted to do anything else but sing and music, music, music, music."

But just a few years ago, his experience with the industry left him so shaken he considered giving it up entirely.

While Ne-Yo is now signed to Def Jam, he got his first break at Columbia Records, and had finished his debut album for the label when he started butting heads with execs over the direction of it: "I started rebelling... So they ended up shelving me for two years."

To get off the label, he

ended up giving them the record and the songs he had recorded during his tenure there. But he was confused about what his future would be.

Then one day, he turned on the radio and heard the song that he had written for his Columbia debut, only this time it was being sung by Marques Houston — somehow, Houston was given Ne-Yo's song.

"It kind of added insult to injury...I'm not good enough as myself but he's good enough to sing a song that's definitely not him?" he recalls.

"I was listening to it like, 'Aw, see, he didn't even hit that note like I did!'"

But the frustration over hearing Houston sing his music eased as others started looking for the songwriter behind the Houston song. Soon, he was writing for others.

"I looked at that like, 'OK, I definitely want to do music but God has made it perfectly clear that he don't want me to be an artist, so maybe he wants me to be a songwriter, so all right, let's try the songwriting thing.'"

And it worked. Among the songs he wrote was the megahit "Let Me Love You" for Mario. Still, the desire to be a singer was still there — and it revealed itself after a chance meeting with then Def Jam executive Tina Davis, now manager to another platinum R&B singer, teen sensation Chris Brown.

After listening to one of Ne-Yo's songs, she told him to perform on the spot — and he took her up on it. A half-hour later, he was in front of Reid, with a record deal to follow.

Despite the huge success he has enjoyed since his record debut, Ne-Yo insists that the songwriter in him will always be paramount: "If I just had to choose one, I'd probably choose songwriting."

Of course, now he doesn't have to. In fact, his biggest problem these days is trying

to divide his time between his own career and writing for others.

He does have his priorities, however. While recording "Because of You," he refused to write for any other male artists: "I'm not going to give somebody else the hit that's supposed to be mine."

But that doesn't mean that he won't write for the perceived competition. He's penning songs for Usher's next record, as well as buddy Chris Brown's project.

While some have dissuaded him from doing so —

"don't give someone your gun to shoot you with," he recalls being told — he has a different view.

"Say my album comes out, I debut at No. 1, I stay there for two weeks, three weeks. Usher's album comes out, goes to No. 1, which knocks me down to No. 2. Chris Brown's album comes out, he goes to No. 1, knocks Usher down to No. 2, which knocks me down to No. 3," he said. "If they all go to No. 1 with a song I wrote, doesn't that make me No. 1, 2 and 3?"

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