

Democratic Socialists of America
National Political Committee
Minutes of Meeting of January 20-21, 2007

Present: Theresa Alt, Virginia Franco, David Green, Michael Hirsch, David Knuttunen, Simone Morgen, Michele Rossi, Joseph Schwartz, Herb Shore, John Strauss, Maria Svart; David Duhalde (Young Democratic Socialists Organizer), Frank Llewellyn (National Director). Absent: Tim Sears (excused), Corey Walker (excused)

Michele Rossi chaired Saturday morning.

The National Director's report was discussed.

David Knuttunen made a procedural motion that at this meeting there be just one round in the discussion of reports, unless the body asks for a second round. This motion passed with David Green voting nay and Theresa Alt abstaining.

After Frank Llewellyn responded to questions, Joe Schwartz moved to accept the report, and it was accepted unanimously.

David Knuttunen presented the report of the Budget and Finance Committee, which was discussed with particular attention to the need for broad participation in fundraising. David Green moved to accept the Budget and Finance report, and it was accepted unanimously.

David Duhalde gave the YDS Organizer's report, filling in details about the upcoming conference. The report discussion touched not only on the upcoming conference and chapter organizing but also on the relationship between DSA and YDS. John Strauss moved to accept the YDS report, and it was accepted unanimously.

David Green chaired Saturday afternoon.

Evaluation of the Sanders house party project was discussed, leading into a discussion of the follow-up.

Joe Schwartz presented his report on the politics of 2007 including what we might expect from the new congress, and there was discussion about how DSA should respond. Discussion also centered on perceptions of the 2008 presidential primaries. Joe later mentioned the idea of a piece of literature giving a perspective for action in the primaries, but there was no motion.

Frank Llewellyn reported in greater detail about planning for the Social Forum in Atlanta.

Mike Hirsch reported on DSA plans for a session to present the economic justice project at Left Forum in New York in March, and there was discussion about who might present at it.

Michele Rossi reported for the Personnel Committee. The six-month evaluation of the Youth Organizer will begin in early March. The National Director evaluation will go to Frank Llewellyn within a week of the NPC meeting. The Committee will then discuss it with Frank; he will respond. The Personnel Committee will rewrite it, and it will be sent to the NPC in time for a discussion at the next NPC meeting.

John Strauss reported for the *Democratic Left* Editorial Committee and there was discussion.

Herb Shore reported on the website, and there were suggestions.

Mike Hirsch reported from the Political Education Committee and there was discussion mainly about what a DSA-YDS leadership retreat might cover and who would attend. Consensus was that the retreat should focus on existing DSA documents: history of the organization, *Where We Stand* (a.k.a. *Building the Next Left* or *Political Perspectives*), Joe Schwartz and Jason Schulman *Towards Freedom: Democratic Socialist Theory and Practice*, and *What Is Democratic Socialism?* with discussion aimed at discovering what has been left out of the documents. It was agreed unanimously that the Political Education Committee is to draft a program for the retreat.

John Strauss chaired Sunday morning.

Frank Llewellyn reported on plans for the DSA National Convention, to be held November 9-11 in Atlanta, focusing on the need to motivate members to attend. The Atlanta local is planning both a dinner and an outreach meeting. Mike Hirsch moved that the Steering Committee plus Milt Tambor serve as the convention planning committee. Michele seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Mark Levinson of the Economic Policy Institute gave a presentation on their Agenda for Shared Prosperity, a program that they are developing. It has considerable similarities to the kind of economic justice legislative program that DSA plans to develop, although EPI does not call for single payer, whereas DSA presumably will. Discussion followed.

Mark agreed to appear on DSA's panel at Left Forum.

David Green moved to adopt the budget that was proposed by the National Director and the Budget and Finance Committee. John Strauss seconded it, and the vote was unanimous in favor.

We then discussed DSA's own economic justice agenda and whether to focus first on the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA).

John moved to endorse EFCA; Joe seconded; the motion passed unanimously. David Green will call American Voice at Work of the AFL-CIO to get our name listed as an endorser. Mike will contact CTW about our position and interest in working on the issue.

Joe moved that 1) the NPC authorizes Detroit to move forward on EFCA and produce an organizing manual to help other locals do various levels of EFCA organizing projects with the economic justice community; 2) it authorizes Joe to complete the draft of “Toward Economic Justice” for the discussion at Left Forum, the Atlanta Social Forum and other events; 3) the NPC will work to enable the National Convention to adopt an economic justice agenda and organizing project; 4) the economic justice task force will publicize other locals’ efforts to advance our economic justice agenda as well as campus efforts, including immigrant and labor rights organizing, so as to help other campus and adult locals engage in economic justice efforts at a level of activity appropriate to their organizational capacity; 5) Mike Hirsch is authorized to continue working on plans for Left Forum with the economic justice task force; and 6) the National Director will send a letter of congratulations to Sanders with a general suggestion of working together; the National Director will work with the NPC, SC, and Economic Justice Task Force to develop an effective way to approach Sanders’ staff as to the best ways in which we can work together to advance an economic justice agenda. This was seconded and passed unanimously.

Simone Morgen chaired Sunday afternoon.

The NPC recessed its meeting for thirty minutes.

David Knuttunen moved that the name of the project be “Toward an Economic Justice Agenda”. John seconded this. There was discussion with some proposing the alternative words “social democratic”, but no amendment was actually moved. The vote was eight for, with Herb Shore and Virginia Franco voting nay.

The next NPC meeting will be June 9-10; the one after that September 15-16. [There were alternate dates, but the preferred ones have already been confirmed.]

The Steering Committee will make sure that there is an activist retreat, even if the YDS CC does not choose to participate.

Submitted by
Theresa Alt