

**Democratic Socialists of America  
National Political Committee  
Minutes of Meeting of September 26-27, 2009**

Present: Theresa Alt, Virginia Franco, David Green, Mike Hirsch, Barbara Joye, David Knuttunen, Frank Llewellyn (National Director), Simone Morgen, Erik Rosenberg (Youth Organizer), Joseph Schwartz, Herb Shore, John Strauss, Maria Svart (visiting and hosting). Absent: Michele Rossi, Tim Sears, Corey Walker (all excused); also absent: youth members Tatiana Guerrero and/or Mike McCabe.

Barbara Joye chaired Saturday morning.

**National Director's Report**

Frank Llewellyn had submitted a written report and gave his take on the political situation and what DSA can and should do. Discussion led to the suggestion that the leaflet for flyering the Michael Moore film be titled "An Alternative to Capitalism is Socialism." DSA will participate in the US Social Forum to be held June 2010 in Detroit. We intend to host a reception for socialists and to cohost panels on the banking crisis, on socialism as an alternative, why Obama is not a socialist and perhaps history of the class struggle in Detroit; YDS might do one on free higher education. Planning for the US Social Forum was referred to the Steering Committee.

**Youth Organizer's Report**

Erik Rosenberg had sent out a written report covering the summer conference, chapters, and the newly-adopted five-year plan. He added his impressions from the G-20 protests in Pittsburgh, where over 20 YDSers had marched and leafletted. We discussed the reports, exchanging potential contacts and pondering whether anarchists are potential recruits for DSA.

**Blog**

Duane Campbell had proposed that DSA have a blog and volunteered to do the technical work. We considered the idea. David Knuttunen moved that the NPC supports the idea of establishing a blog. We are asking the Youth Organizer to explore with the Coordinating Committee of YDS whether there is support for making the *Activist* a joint DSA/YDS blog. Failing that, we will table further discussion to the first full meeting of the new NPC. John Strauss seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Vice Chairs**

We brainstormed who could replace Ruth Spitz and one other opening for a woman among the vice chairs. Suggestions were: Teresa Ghilarducci (at times a member), Katha Pollitt, Christine Kelly (joined at conference), Judy Deutsch, Theda Skocpol (if Joe approaches her to ask her to rejoin), Juliet Schor (a member on and off), less likely: Holly Sklar, Peg Stroble. All names were referred to the Steering Committee.

### **Priorities Resolution**

Joe introduced a discussion of a draft Priorities Resolution for the convention and the motivation for it. There was extensive discussion in which we decided to add action priorities on free higher education and antiwar work. Rather than cut now we will make it clear that actual action depends on the political situation. David Knuttunen moved to refer the draft Priorities Resolution to the Steering Committee with the charge that they complete it within ten days and post it. This passed unanimously.

Mike Hirsch chaired Saturday afternoon.

### **Budget and Finance Report**

David Knuttunen recapped the report he had sent out. We speculated about the large number of members who do not renew, reasons for fundraising shortfalls, who sustainers are, and the role of errors in the database. Frank requested that locals send errors they spot in the database to the National Office. Consensual suggestions were:

- bequest campaign
- membership drives by locals
- test a direct mail letter signed by Cornel West
- a You-Tube video by Cornel West on why I'm a democratic socialist
- ask Ed Asner to contact Robbins and Sarandon about a benefit
- fundraisers with big names
- Debs Club letter goes out

David Green volunteered to contact Dave Marsh, Springsteen's agent.

Joseph Schwartz moved that first Debs Club mailing go out with follow-up phone calls; second the National Director will analyze whether we are doing enough phoning and report on both to the Budget and Finance Committee. John Strauss seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. We also discussed Mike Hirsch's proposal for hiring a development director. This suggestion as well was referred to the Budget and Finance Committee on a unanimous vote.

Frank asked about getting research done on members who could afford to give more. This too was referred to Budget and Finance.

### **Convention Schedule**

We discussed Convention plans including confirmed speakers and potential invitees, venue for outreach Friday night, auxiliary events (e.g. Rose Feuer and video Thursday night), time allotted for NPC candidates, discussion of resolutions, implementation, and workshops. Some adjustments were proposed and will be taken up by the Steering Committee.

### **Personnel**

In Executive session including Frank we discussed a verbal report about Erik. Frank will ask him whether he wants to stay on for a third year. If not, the search for a replacement should begin.

Regarding Frank's evaluation, Joe moved that the Personnel Committee issue a draft report to the NPC. After NPC discussion it will be sent to Frank for a response. This was approved without dissent.

David Green chaired Sunday morning.

### **Program**

We talked about what action the Program Committee should be encouraging between now and the convention. We have been emphasizing the Weiner Amendment, the Kucinich Amendment, and perhaps state single payer, as well as learning more about economic issues and war. There was no call for a change.

David Knuttunen moved to instruct the next NPC that the members of the present Program Committee should continue as an interim committee of the new NPC until its January meeting. Theresa Alt seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. [did it? I didn't record a vote, but also no opposition]

We also discussed a proposal by Frank to add more local representatives to the Program Committee.

We need one-to-two-page documents around each of the issues in the Priorities Resolution. We divided up responsibility:

- foreclosures - Joe (Atlanta may produce an article and send it to him)
- state budget crisis - Maria (she can ask Duane Campbell and use Dean Baker's website)
- healthcare - Program Committee
- banks - Joe
- EFCA - Mike
- restructuring the economy: aftershocks, jobs, retirement - Mike and Joe
- PAC and electoral work - Program Committee
- opposing war in Afghanistan - Erik (he can talk to Jason Schulman)
- funding higher education - Youth Section (existing document plus a transitional program)

All these materials should be posted to NPC2005 by October 15 for consideration by the Steering Committee.

We discussed the advantages of electoral work by the PAC, e.g. by hiring an organizer to work with locals, vs. the need for disclosure and the risk of red baiting that could lead to resentment.

The NPC adjourned to allow time for a meeting of the DSA Fund Board. A half hour later the NPC reconvened.

### **Convention Planning**

We further discussed convention planning, numbers of delegates expected, subsidies, housing, publicity potential, a listserv for preconvention discussion. The Steering Committee will meet for further planning on Thursday, October 8 at 8:00 pm.

**Media**

We discussed putting DSA materials on You-Tube and other ways of getting video materials out.

**Democratic Left**

We discussed ideas beyond what is already in the plans.

**Local Development Committee**

We exchanged news and leads about new, reviving and potential future locals.

**New Business**

We discussed who was running for NPC and thought of people to ask.

Submitted by Theresa Alt