

**Democratic Socialists of America  
National Political Committee  
Meeting of January 30-31, 2010  
Minutes**

Present: Theresa Alt, David Duhalde, Stuart Elliott, Virginia Franco, Paul Garver, David Green, Tatiana Guerrero (Young Democratic Socialists), Barbara Joye, Frank Llewellyn (National Director), Michael McCabe (Young Democratic Socialists) (Saturday only), Simone Morgen, Erik Rosenberg (Youth Organizer), Jason Schulman, Joseph Schwartz, Herb Shore, Maria Svart. Absent: Seth Hutchinson, Michele Rossi, Rannfrid Thelle (all excused).

Maria Svart chaired Saturday morning.

**National Director's Report**

Most of Frank Llewellyn's written report covered topics for treatment later in the meeting. Discussion focused on electoral work and the support to locals that it might require.

Theresa Alt moved that the Program Committee explore using PAC funds to hire organizer(s) to help locals do electoral work. Jason Schulman seconded. This passed unanimously.

Joseph Schwartz moved that the Local Development Committee and the National Director should identify areas or locals to support with electoral organizers. This was seconded and passed unanimously.

Maria Svart moved that all members should be automatically added to the DSA News list, that phonebankers should routinely ask people for their email addresses, that the national office send lists to locals three times a year with new members flagged, and that Democratic Left carry a notice to members to send their email addresses to the National Office. This was seconded and passed unanimously.

There was brief discussion of the location for the 2011 National Convention.

**Youth Organizer's Report**

We discussed the Erik Rosenberg's written report, and he provided many more details.

Joe moved that the Budget and Finance Committee work with the Youth Organizer to come up with a budget that he could spend at his discretion for travel and conferences. as well as texting. This was seconded and passed unanimously.

Joe then moved that the Youth Organizer with the help of the New York local get as much publicity as possible at Hunter and Columbia for the winter conference. This was seconded and passed unanimously.

Joe also moved that in conjunction with the travel budget the Youth Organizer and leadership explore tabling at major progressive student gatherings. This was seconded and passed unanimously. (It is in the YDS five-year plan.)

### **Budget and Finance**

There was extensive discussion of the report of the Budget and Finance Committee and of related questions of expenditures and renewals and fundraising.

Joe moved that David Green, Paul Garver, Stuart Elliott and Frank Llewellyn discuss getting John Sweeney or Bob King to sign the letter asking unions to place ads in Democratic Left. The letter is to go out early and be followed up by skilled phoning. This was seconded and passed unanimously.

Maria Svart moved that locals solicit ads for *Democratic Left* and work to increase the organization's membership. This was seconded and passed unanimously.

The fundraising schedule proposed by Frank Llewellyn passed unanimously.

David Green nominated Theresa Alt as Secretary-Treasurer, and she was elected unanimously.

The NPC considered how the organization could get a credit card or possibly a debit card; this question was unanimously sent back to the Budget and Finance Committee.

Paul Garver chaired Saturday afternoon.

### **Committee Memberships**

After some discussion and a few changes, the list of NPC committees stood as follows:

#### **NPC Committees – NPC 1/30/10**

##### **Steering Committee**

Theresa Alt (coconvener)  
Virginia Franco  
Paul Garver  
Barbara Joye  
Joseph Schwartz (coconvener)  
Tatiana Guerrero as YDS co-chair/rep

##### **Budget & Finance**

Theresa Alt (convener)  
David Duhalde

David Green  
Joseph Schwartz  
(Bill Barclay)

##### **Personnel Committee**

David Duhalde (coconvener)  
Tatiana Guerrero  
Michael McCabe  
Simone Morgen  
Michele Rossi  
Joseph Schwartz

Maria Svart (coconvener)

(Bill Barclay, Milt Tambor)

**Program Committee**

Theresa Alt  
David Green  
Simone Morgen  
Herb Shore  
Maria Svart (convener)

**Local Development Committee** (Keeps track of local contacts and local activity. Encourages new locals. Should relate closely to Program, as Program's main goal is to get locals to take up activist projects around program? Needs strong liaison with Program and Economic Justice committees.)

Theresa Alt  
David Duhalde  
Virginia Franco  
Tatiana Guerrero  
Seth Hutchinson  
Barbara Joye (convener)  
Michael McCabe

**Interim Working Group on Hearings on Economic Bill of Rights** (if and when materials, organizing guides, strategic/tactical guidance has been developed, some of committee could join Program, and we could have Program divided into various projects/issue working groups – anti-foreclosure; state budget crises/second stimulus; Economic Bill of Rights/Justice project)

Stuart Elliott  
Virginia Franco  
Paul Garver  
David Green  
Seth Hutchinson  
Simone Morgen  
Michele Rossi  
Joseph Schwartz (convener)  
Herb Shore

**Political Education Committee**

(Should strongly liaison with and work to produce lit and educational materials relevant to Program and Econ Justice project).

Seth Hutchinson  
Michele Rossi  
Jason Schulman  
Joseph Schwartz  
Herb Shore (convener)  
Rannfrid Thelle

**Democratic Left Magazine**

Barbara Joye  
Simone Morgen  
Jason Schulman (convener)  
Joseph Schwartz  
Rannfrid Thelle  
(Michael Baker, Duane Campbell, Jeffrey Gold, Michael Hirsch, Chris Maisano, John Strauss, Corey Walker)

**Electronic Communications/Cyber Modernization**

Stuart Elliott  
Tatiana Guerrero  
Herb Shore (convener)  
(Eric Ebel)

**International Affairs Commission Liaison/Working Group**

Virginia Franco  
Paul Garver (convener)  
Herb Shore  
Rannfrid Thelle

**Labor Commission Liaison**

Stuart Elliott (convener)  
Paul Garver  
Michael McCabe  
Jason Schulman

Additionally, Democratic Left will designate Duane Campbell as managing editor of the next issue; Electronic Communications will invite Bhaskar Sunkara and Tim Varro; International Affairs will invite Jorge Lawton and Marc Silberman.

Joe moved the slate; it was seconded and passed unanimously.

### **Political Discussion and Action**

The NPC had an extensive discussion of the political lay of the land.

Jason Schulman volunteered to help draft a resolution about wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

We then discussed the main issues around which to do our active work, planning for forums or hearings around an Economic Bill of Rights, and the literature and educational work this would entail.

Mike McCabe will send his YDS website piece on war, privatization of war, and the economic draft to the NPC, as a step toward a written piece on Afghanistan.

David Green chaired Sunday morning, starting at 10:00.

### **Budget**

Theresa moved that the NPC adopt the budget for 2010 with instructions to the Budget and Finance Committee to separate out the Youth Section budget. David Duhalde seconded this, and it passed unanimously.

### **Personnel**

Herb Shore moved to go into executive session, and the NPC agreed unanimously, to discuss next steps in the evaluation of National Director Frank Llewellyn. The NPC returned to open session. According to a unanimously adopted motion by Joe Schwartz, Joe will within two weeks write up the evaluation of the National Director based on over 20 individuals' inputs. [Deadline February 14]

It will be circulated to the NPC for corrections within one week. [Deadline February 21]

It will be given to Frank, who will then have two weeks to write a response. [Deadline March 7]

Both report and response will be circulated to the NPC for online or telephone discussions and decisions.

Erik Rosenberg had announced his intention to leave after the summer conference, allowing a month of overlap with the new organizer. The opening will be announced immediately.

### **Electronic Communications**

We discussed numerous ideas for volunteer help and better outreach but left it to the committee to work on them.

### ***Democratic Left***

Problems and ideas for improvements, and themes such as Afghanistan and a green issue, as well as a labor issue were discussed. Jason Schulman volunteered to serve as managing editor for one issue after the next.

### **Talking Union/Labor Network**

Stuart Elliott reported on the successes of Talking Union. He promised to send DSA activists a post on how to join Union Book. He will also seek ads for Talking Union. Many ideas were exchanged.

### **Left Forum**

The National Director's report covered plans for Left Forum, and more plans were suggested.

### **US Social Forum**

David Green had sent memos and summarized them. The deadline to submit workshop proposals is March 15. We discussed the forum extensively. The following persons will take responsibility for workshops or events:

Foreclosures - ACORN, Peter Dreier, Atlanta DSA -- **David Green**

Jobs - Jobs with Justice - **David Green** to talk to JwJ and Bill Barclay

Fiscal Crisis of the States and cutbacks in higher education -- AFSCME, YDS, AFT, AAUP, USSA - **David Green** to find a union person and a student on affordability

Green Energy - **Frank** will invite Van Jones, but we will not be the prime organizer

Socialism for the 21st Century - **Joe** will contact David Schweickart

Possibly an Economic Insecurity Hearing - Jobs with Justice may be doing one; **Frank** will ask JwJ.

Reception - **Frank** will contact our notables, West, Ehrenreich

David Duhalde chaired Sunday afternoon.

### **Next Meeting**

The next NPC meeting will be May 15-16; May 22-23 is a backup date. [The first date has been called into question.]

### **Local Development Committee**

Barbara Joye reported on attempts to encourage new locals and revitalize old ones. Many ideas and leads were exchanged.

### **DSA - YDS Relationship**

We took up the Building Bridges resolution, which the National Convention had referred favorably to the NPC. Frank agreed that he would be able to send lists of new members monthly to the Local Development Committee.

## **Building Bridges between YDS and DSA**

WHEREAS, Democratic Socialists of America faces an organizational crisis due to inadequate inter-generational dialogue and participation, alongside coherent ground organizing strategy.

WHEREAS, To preserve the largest socialist voice in America, it is necessary to build an organizational framework to stabilize and grow.

Be it Resolved that:

- 1) National Office via staff must give Local Development Committee and National Organizing Committee Facilitator new contacts monthly. The volunteers can follow-up with new recruits and facilitate grassroots democratic socialist organization. The national staff is overwhelmed; we must assist them in building new locals and chapters.
- 2) YDS's National Organizing Committee Facilitator (NOCF) must join DSA's Local Development Committee to facilitate connection between youth chapter building and non-youth local building. The NOCF must be willing to commit time to building DSA and YDS.
- 3) The Young Democratic Socialists should work on DSA's national priorities such as the Renegotiate NAFTA petition.
- 4) Chapter leaders should be mandated to send contact lists to National Youth Organizer to expand connections between the base and the national leadership.
- 5) Quarterly calls between YDS and DSA activists on programming actions and ideas.
- 6) Establishment of a key-list email listserv of DSA and YDS members for email discussion.
- 7) College graduates must both seek and be provided information on DSA locals in their areas. If there is no organized group, they should start one.
- 8.) DSA must build a short-term organizing plan with tenable goals and discuss them in the quarterly calls.

Paul moved to implement the resolution; Jason seconded it, and it passed unanimously.

### **Immigration**

Joe promised to circulate an existing statement and a paragraph to add to the Priorities Resolution. He urged the Steering Committee to discuss Gutierrez HR 4321.

### **Vacancies for Vice Chairs and NPC**

Frank had not received responses from nominees he reached out to. The issue was referred to the Steering Committee.

### **Keylist**

There is an existing keylist to which delegates from the last two conventions and new local leaders and YDS activists can be added. We will issue a letter of invitation so that

people will make an affirmative decision. David Duhalde has agreed to moderate. He also volunteered to draft the invitation with help from Frank.

### **Division of Labor**

The Program Committee will plan how to organize around jobs, foreclosures, financial regulation, and federal aid to states and localities. It might draft leaflets for action, if there is activism around single payer or EFCA. It will oversee closure of Renegotiate NAFTA. It will reach out to locals to urge action.

The Economic Bill of Rights working group will refine the EBOR and the backgrounders on key issues. It will begin to conceptualize the project. It will also write short backgrounders on the rights in EBOR.

The Political Education Committee creates the literature for action, in conjunction with the Program Committee.

The Steering Committee will help coordinate.

After evaluations the NPC adjourned.

Notes:

Three matters were probably consensually agreed on but escaped votes:

NAFTA closure - consensus but no vote

Afghanistan literature - volunteered but not voted

Financial transactions tax - probably consensual but not voted

Can we include these in the minutes?

Frank thought there had been agreement to oppose funding for the war in Afghanistan. I could find no such decision in either Steering Committee or Program Committee notes.

Submitted by Theresa Alt