

**Democratic Socialists of America
National Convention November 11-13, 2005**

DSA Priorities Resolution

1. The Low-Wage Justice Project

Since 2001 the national organization has focused our political work on combating global capitalism's 'race-to-the-bottom' development strategy. This 'Walmart-ization' of the global economy has depressed the quality of life of the world's working people, including those residing in the United States. DSA has "added value" at the national and local levels through efforts to build the community component of a citizen-labor alliance to fight the low-wage economy, which also negates the conservative argument that organized labor's efforts are 'self-interested'.

DSA has engaged in public political education aimed at illustrating that 'Walmart-ization' is not caused by the actions of one particular rapacious corporation but by a systemic and irrational model of global capitalist development. As an alternative, DSA has highlighted local, national, and transnational efforts to construct an alternative model of fair trade, global labor and human rights, and equitable development strategies.

Therefore, this convention endorses a continuation and deepening of the organizational focus and coordinated activism that the "Low Wage Justice" campaign (initiated at the 2001 DSA convention) has brought to the organization. In particular, the focus on Wal-Mart – as an exemplar of the corporate "race-to-the-bottom" economic strategy – will continue.

Thus, this convention commits itself to:

- a. The DSA NPC and national office continuing to provide resources and information to aid locals in living wage campaigns, immigrant justice activism, and labor support work.
- b. The NPC and national staff monitoring closely the nascent national labor and community-based campaigns(s) fighting Wal-Mart. The NPC and staff will assist locals, YDS chapters, and members who wish to plug into relevant local and national campaigns. .
- c. The NPC and national office aiding DSA and YDS groups that wish to conduct (well-publicized) public educational events that highlight the inegalitarian and unjust consequences of corporate globalization.
- d. DSA paying particular attention to working with communities of color and feminist groups in fighting this economy, as the disproportionate burden of the low-wage economy falls on women and people of color.

2. *****

This section of the Priorities Resolutions represents "express advocacy" in relation to a Federal election and cannot currently be posted on the web site with out violating rules established for non-profit organizations like DSA. There are steps that DSA can take to change that and we are in the processing of doing that. We hope to be able to post this section of the resolution sometime in January.

3. Public Socialist Education

A staple of viable DSA locals and campus chapters has been visible, well-publicized socialist education. Socialists understand that ideological struggle is political work, and that socialist agitation and education must focus on the health and perspectives of movements opposing corporate domination as well as "imagining" socialism and sketching what a better world would look like.

Over the past few years, however, particularly on campus and areas where DSA has numerous members but weak (or no-longer existing) locals, the organization has engaged in little public educational work. This work remains imperative, as, given the weakness of liberalism, the critique of individualist marketplace ideology and the defense of social solidarity and public provision is only coherently done by socialists. There remains a popular audience open to a critique of the stifling center-right consensus that dominates American politics. Such work provides a viable way for even small DSA groups to reach out to others who share our politics and those open to a radical analysis.

Thus, this convention commits itself to:

- a. Increasing the amount of internal and public education done at all levels of the organization in regard to the relevance of democratic socialist vision, analysis, and program to contemporary politics and to popular democratic resistance movements at home and abroad.
- b. The NPC and staff working to develop a speakers' bureau of DSA members who can speak at locals and YDS-sponsored public meetings, thus providing a socialist perspective on key issues of the day.
- c. The NPC and national staff continuing efforts to improve *Democratic Left*, the website, e-mail announcements, and other forms of public communication.
- d. The NPC and staff organizing a working retreat of key DSA and YDS activists to address revitalizing a socialist political and intellectual center in the United States
- e. The NPC and staff using the organization's international ties and other contacts to facilitate a dialogue between progressive elected officials in the United States and in other countries that would focus on policy alternatives to the "Washington consensus."
- f. The NPC and staff opposing neoliberalism and other forms of pro-corporate ideology and dominance within the Democratic Party and elsewhere.

4. Building Organizational Infrastructure and Capacity

The challenge over the next two years is to increase the amount of organized public activity in the organization's name (whether it be by locals, commissions, campus chapters, or 'networks') To do this the national organization at all levels will try to increase its financial, staff, and activist capacity. The following steps can realistically be taken to strengthen YDS and our campus presence; improve national finances and grow our small staff; and to help build (and revive) locals, commissions, and networks of DSA members.

Thus, this convention commits itself to:

a. Support for YDS

The national staff, NPC and DSA activists will work to increase their support for YDS. The organization will work to expand its list of faculty and campus contacts who can identify and support potential campus activists. National DSA and locals will work to support nascent and existing YDS chapters by building stronger relationships with our campus groups and providing relevant off-campus political connections (while also respecting the need for younger socialists to create their own relatively autonomous culture and activity).

b. Local Development

The national staff, NPC, and Local Development Committee will work to encourage the organization of new locals and revival of dormant ones. The LDC should try to maintain a list of local contacts in areas where there is no local or OC. Such local contacts should be notified of persons in their areas, especially including direct-mail recruits, who express interest in local activity. They should also be notified in advance of direct-mail solicitations so that they may prepare to contact interested persons;

c. Supporting the Development of Networks and Redevelopment of Commissions

The NPC working with and responding to relevant DSA members across the country, shall establish coordinating bodies composed of members already involved or interested in being involved as individuals in specific types of movement work. and who wish to function with a degree of national cohesion via DSA. Such networks can include electoral activity, such as work with the Progressive Democrats of America, the Sanders campaign, the Working Families Party, and similar organizations and efforts. Efforts will also be made by the NPC to establish anti-war and labor networks, as well as others interest areas in which a need is demonstrated. To the degree these networks take off, they should be institutionalized as commissions.. The general purposes of networks and commissions are as follows:

- i-. Bringing DSA's political analysis to network participants and commission members and other persons working in the relevant movements;
- ii - Keeping network participants and commission members and others informed of significant developments in other movements;

iii- Encouraging movements to pursue their goals in ways that support the work of other movements and challenge corporate domination of the economy, society, and politics.

d. **Enhancing Fundraising** Efforts (or ‘you can’t fight capitalist trash without socialist cash’)

i. the national staff, NPC and local DSA leadership will work together to increase significantly the number of monthly “sustainer” donors to the DSA Fund.

ii. in part, the goal of such fundraising should be to increase the size of our national staff so we can better accomplish the political and organizational goals outlined above.

e. **The National Office will communicate** monthly with the activists and the locals via the internet and dsamember. The reports shall include:

i. What DSA national is doing,

ii. What campaigns we are engaged in,

iii. A sampling of local reports.