

**Democratic Socialists of America  
National Political Committee  
Minutes of Meeting of September 16-17, 2006**

Present: Theresa Alt, Virginia Franco, David Green, Mike Hirsch, David Knuttunen, Simone Morgen, Michele Rossi, Joseph Schwartz, Tim Sears, Herb Shore, John Strauss, Corey Walker; Frank Llewellyn (National Director), David Duhalde (Young Democratic Socialists Organizer). Visiting: Lucas Shapiro, Jason Schulman.

Simone Morgen chaired Saturday morning.

The agenda was revised to include a report from the Personnel Committee and an announcement and to drop the PAC item.

**National Director's Report**

There was discussion about picking future projects, about growth in membership, and about phonebanking.

**YDS Organizer's Report**

David Duhalde reported on tabling at Columbia, travel plans, potential helpers and work on the Winter Conference. Discussants were generally pleased with what was reported. They brought up the need for DSA fundraising on behalf of YDS, perhaps through house parties or appeals to Youth Section alumni, the need for coordinating YDS organizer travels with locals, potential projects and DSA-YDS relations.

John Strauss moved that DSA would welcome a YDS changing its name back to DSA Youth Section. Herb Shore seconded. While no one was against such a change, people cautioned that such a resolution might be taken as a directive. The motion was defeated with only Tim Sears and John Strauss voting for it.

**Budget and Finance Committee Report**

David Knuttunen summarized his Committee Report with some additional remarks. The NPC discussed approaches to fundraising and recruitment.

John Strauss chaired Saturday afternoon.

Joe Schwartz reported from the Personnel Committee. He will write up the evaluation report incorporating Committee feedback and get it to Frank Llewellyn by October 20, who will be able to respond. Then the Committee will produce a final report to go to the NPC by mid-November.

**Joint Retreat on Socialist Theory**

Joe proposed a joint retreat on socialist theory bringing together invited DSA and YDS leaders (20-25 adults and 15-20 youth) in late May or early June. Dates, content, reading list and audience were discussed. The retreat was referred to the Political Education

Committee to work out content, consult with YDS, and come back to the next NPC meeting with a proposal.

The discussion continued around the educational needs of the organization and what kind of literature is needed.

### **Electoral Politics**

Frank summarized DSA PAC work around Sanders. Nine house parties raised just over \$30,000, and there will be five more. Nearly a thousand people have contributed either to DSA PAC or to Sanders. David Green told about Nancy Skinner's house race in Michigan and Simone Morgen told about Mary Jo Kilroy's house race in Ohio. DSA members in both places are interested and involved.

Corey Walker moved that the NPC affirms the electoral strategy in Michigan and the politics of the Detroit and Central Ohio locals. This resolution passed unanimously.

The discussion of electoral politics continued, touching on the possible need for literature.

### **Low-Wage Justice**

The idea of doing a new round of economic insecurity hearings, like those of a decade ago, was discussed, and doubts were raised about our capacity.

### **Latin America**

David Knuttunen noted that in several Latin American countries parties that call themselves socialist or that resist neoliberalism have taken power. DSA needs to respond to these developments, since our members are interested. The discussion noted that local events are always a possibility, but locals may have problems selecting appropriate speakers. A conference or a speakers' tour would be more ambitious. NPC members are clearly interested.

Corey Walker chaired on Sunday morning.

David Knuttunen volunteered to develop the Boston Latin America event.

David Green announced that Mark Solomon, head of CoC, is interested in talking about cooperation between CoC and DSA and possible merger.

### **Next Action**

The NPC discussed both Low-Wage Justice and Latin America. The 2006 elections will affect what we do. Broad discussion will be needed, and we considered how to better use dsamember and other existing methods for internal communication.

Joe Schwartz proposed the theme: From economic insecurity to economic justice. David Knuttunen moved that: DSA's work in the coming year will be guided by two broad themes "From Economic Insecurity to Economic Justice" and "There Is an Alternative:

DSA's Latin America Initiative" with the understanding that the common thread in both these themes is "Socialist Challenges to the Global Assault on Living Standards". John Strauss seconded, and the themes passed unanimously.

Signed up to work on Latin America: David Knuttunen, Joe Schwartz, Frank Llewellyn, Corey Walker, Michele Rossi, Simone Morgen

Signed up to work on Low Wage Justice: Herb Shore, David Green, Virginia Franco, Mike Hirsch, John Strauss, David Knuttunen, Joe Schwartz, Tim Sears

The Electronic Communications Committee will prepare further direction for the website.

### **Resistance to the Washington Consensus**

Joe Schwartz presented his proposal for a conference on resistance to the Washington consensus, to involve European and Latin American activists, academics and policy-makers. There was discussion of both the politics and the needed funding, as well as more modest feasible variants to establish a track record.

Frank offered to rewrite the proposal and discuss it with his contacts.

Mike Hirsch agreed to call Left Forum and ask for a DSA panel.

The NPC adjourned for three quarters of an hour to allow a meeting of the DSA Fund Board, then reconvened.

David Knuttunen moved that the National Political Committee accept the proposal coming from the DSA Fund Board "That the DSA Fund accepts and executes a license agreement with DSA for the use of the name Democratic Socialists of America. Such an agreement only recognizes the reality that the name was originally used by DSA exclusively. Such an agreement would enable them to prevent confusion between the organizations should the FUND take a set of actions that ruptured the relationship between the organizations." This passed unanimously.

### **National Convention**

There was discussion of the financial problems of an Atlanta convention. David Knuttunen moved to instruct Frank to pursue the option of holding the convention in a union hall in Atlanta. This passed unanimously.

Discussion continued about convention program.

### **Democratic Left**

See written report. There was brief discussion of editorial committee functioning and of future content.

### **Electronic Communications Committee**

Herb Shore moved:

Resolved that the NPC reaffirms the purpose of the dsamember list-serve, as currently described:

“This is a discussion list for members of Democratic Socialists of America. The purpose of this group is to further the work of Democratic Socialists of America. The prime topics for discussion are DSA strategy and tactics, program, theory and practices. A wide variety of opinions and proposals are expected and encouraged, but the moderator will not permit rude or abusive behavior, or personal attacks by one participant on another.”

Further resolved that the sentences:

“The purpose of this group is to further the work of Democratic Socialists of America. The prime topics for discussion are DSA strategy and tactics, program, theory and practices.”

will be posted to dsamember on behalf of the NPC, and that it will be reposted as a reminder whenever the discussion on dsamember strays too far from the original intent.

Tim Sears proposed an amendment that the text to be posted be the whole paragraph. The amendment failed 4-5. The main motion than passed unanimously.

### **Local Development Committee**

Michele Rossi moved and David Knuttunen seconded to accept the LDC report, which was accepted unanimously.

### **Socialist Forum**

The NPC returned to a proposal from the previous meeting recognizing that *Socialist Forum* is no longer being published and therefore ceasing to offer it to those who send an extra \$10 along with their renewals. Joe Schwartz moved:

Resolved:

That those who have sent money for *Socialist Forum* and not received it be sent the YDS Toolkit on CD. When the current supply of DSA membership renewal forms is used up, new ones will be printed that ask for an extra \$10 contribution to support DSA's international work.

This passed unanimously.

The **next meeting** of the DSA NPC will be January 20-21, 2007, with backup dates January 27-28.

Submitted by Theresa Alt