

Democratic Socialists of America  
National Political Committee  
Minutes of Meeting Jan 26-27, 2019  
Approved: 10-16-2019

**Saturday, January 26, 2019**  
**Temple University, Philadelphia**

**In attendance:**

Jack Suria-Linares, NPC  
Elliott Geary, NPC, YDSA Co-Chair  
Ajmal Alami, NPC, YDSA Co-Chair (via Zoom)  
Chris Riddiough, NPC  
Theresa Alt, NPC  
Ella Mahony, NPC  
Ravi Ahmad, NPC  
Zac Echola, NPC  
Allie Cohn, NPC  
Natalie Midiri, NPC  
Chris Maisano, NPC  
Delé Balogun, NPC  
Jeremy Gong, NPC  
Marianela D'Aprile, NPC  
Heidi Chua, Assistant to the National Director  
Maria Svart, National Director

Chair: Frances Rizo

9:27 AM – Call to order

**Motion to adopt Standing Rules: carries**

**Natalie moves to cut meeting evaluation from agenda and add 30 minutes to lunch on Sunday.**

**No objections.**

**Director's Report**

Maria summarizes her director's report. DSA is "maturing" after a couple of years of struggling to manage explosive growth. DSA has unique opportunities with mass strikes and AOC in the media. DSA has lost wonderful field organizer Hannah Allison, but bringing on several new staff

members who are tremendous assets, Kaitlin Marone and Amy Zachmeyer, field organizers; Heidi Chua, assistant to the national director; and Kristina Sepulveda, operations director. Maria attended the Sanders Institute conference in November, but spent the fourth quarter of 2018 largely focusing on building capacity on staff. For example, Heidi has increased efficiency of financial tracking and reporting. Sasha has worked with Tech and the organizing staff on a proposal to provide digital tools which will be extremely useful for chapter organizing. Kristina is providing more support for operations staff, address process inefficiencies and develop new protocols. Alison Baldree, our development director, made just two experimental changes to the “join” page between October and December which led to a 22% increase in the percentage of new members who joined as monthly givers. We have accumulated resources that we now have to decide how to allocate. Maria advocates spending some on operations capacity at the national office to support the entire staff and membership, in addition to field staff to support chapters.

Sasha has been transitioning to a new role in organization and will be planning the national convention and the spring conferences. New data management system, “Comrades” is on the way with the help of the Tech team, and will enable locals to have direct access to their membership list and to send mass emails directly. Proposed membership in Movement Cooperative would provide many additional digital organizing tools at a reduced rate due to group buying and is included in the budget proposal. IRS group exemption is running behind, but it is still moving. Group liability insurance is looking complicated. National could cover costs directly but would take significant administrative time to collect information to get an estimate on costs, or could simply provide information for chapters to apply for it and cover it themselves. For the NPC to decide how to proceed. Paula Brantner, DSA’s national grievance officer, is coaching chapter HGOs one on one upon request and developing a grievance training for chapters at regional conferences in the spring alongside a series of webinars regarding grievances for those who cannot attend conferences, but we need additional staff capacity to manage this work adequately. Tomorrow, we will discuss a proposal drafted with a labor attorney for a process for a member appealing expulsion from a local and for locals to request expelling someone from the organization nationally. Finally, staff needs more space and would like to move to a new, larger office that is in the same building, additional costs being included in the draft budget.

### **Operations Committee Report**

Devin discusses Movement Cooperative. When consulting with chapters, they needed better data collection when running independent campaigns. There are a number of potential data management tools such as Nationbuilder, Devin recommends new platform called “Rosa,” being developed in NYC DSA for the future. Ongoing training will be part of the proposal. Contract will last one year.

**Theresa moves to approve two new members to budget and finance committee.**

**Seconded by Ravi.**

**Jeremy moves to call question.**

**Carries unanimously.**

**Motion carries unanimously.**

**Theresa moves to approve budget.**

**Jeremy moves to postpone budget vote to next NPC meeting.**

**Jeremy withdraws motion with consent of the NPC.**

**Jeremy moves to amend adoption of the budget to become a provisional budget and more inclusive work be done on the budget between now and April.**

**Jeremy withdraws amendment with consent of the NPC.**

**Ravi moves to postpone vote on budget to tomorrow and that staff prepares overview of expenses.**

**Motion passes with 6 in favor.**

**Theresa moves to increase discretionary spending limit by National Director from \$2000 to \$5000.**

**Motion carries unanimously.**

**Allie moves to postpone chapter/OC pipeline report to tomorrow.**

**Motion carries unanimously (added to committee reports tomorrow.)**

NPC enters executive session.

### **Personnel Committee Report [Executive Session]**

Exit executive session: 1:20PM

Lunch break

Call to order: 2:07PM

**Natalie motions to adopt the Resolution Clarifying the Scope and Functioning of The Personnel Committee.**

**Division of the house: 8 ayes, 5 nays, motion carries.**

**Natalie motions to ask Alex Birnel to join the personnel committee at a later session, and, if he says yes, to add him.**

**Motion carries.**

**National Electoral Committee report.**

A subcommittee of the NEC, including members of the Endorsements Subcommittee, worked on a draft report regarding endorsement strategy that will be forwarded to the NPC over the next week.

**Motion to conclude report discussion.**

**Debate opens. Motion carries.**

**Medicare for All Committee report.**

**Motion to adopt the report and its recommendations.**

**No speakers against. Motion carries.**

**Report from United Teachers of Los Angeles strike.**

Very exciting display of working-class power!

**Report from the Exploratory Committee for the 2020 Presidential Primary.**

Report lays out a process for endorsement debates and decision, including in chapters as well as at pre-convention conferences.

**Jeremy Gong motions to adopt the committee report and its recommendations.**

**Jack motions to add a clause to recommend sending an endorsement questionnaire to all presidential candidates.**

**Amendment fails: 4 ayes, 9 nays**

**Adding a clause to recommend sending an endorsement questionnaire to Bernie Sanders.**

**No second; amendment fails.**

**Adding a clause that within two weeks of a Sanders announcement, national will send a communication to all chapters to hold a local meeting for an advisory poll on this question.**

**Division of the house: 4 ayes, 9 nays**

**Motion fails**

**Adding a clause that the online poll become a binding referendum.**

**Motion fails. 3 ayes, 10 nays**

**Zac motions to postpone decision on the main motion until tomorrow morning first thing.**

**Motion fails.**

**Chris R. motions to postpone decision on the main motion until after the day's last presentation.**

**Motion carries.**

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**Sunday, January 27, 2019**

**Temple University, Philadelphia**

8:11 AM – Call to order

**On the floor: Jeremy's motion to adopt the report from the Exploratory Committee for the 2020 Presidential Primary and its recommendations.**

**Amendment from Zac:**

Page 6, under "National Infrastructure", reads as follows:

"The 2020 Exploratory Committee will continue to serve on an interim basis until the endorsement vote and/or the appointment of a new committee. If DSA endorses Sanders, the NPC should establish a DSA Bernie 2020 Committee (hereafter the "Committee") by appointment."

Amend to:

"The 2020 Exploratory Committee will continue to serve on an interim basis until the endorsement vote and/or the appointment of a new committee. If DSA endorses Sanders, the NPC should establish a DSA Bernie 2020 Committee (hereafter the "Committee") by appointment. Immediately upon approval of this proposal, the National Director or their designee must invite all chapters and organizing committees located in the first four primary states of Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina to name a delegate to the 2020 Exploratory Committee as a full voting participant, and all delegates representing locals or organizing committees would immediately be transferred over to the DSA Bernie 2020 Committee upon the latter's creation.

As the presidential primary moves beyond the first four states, a delegate from each chapter and organizing committee must be invited to join the Committee as full voting members by no later than sixty days before the date of the primary election in the state that a given chapter or organizing committee is located in. Further, to prevent the Committee's voting membership from bloating in an unsustainable fashion, delegates from local chapters and organizing committees in each state shall retain voting rights until the day after the primary contest, upon which they can elect to remain on as non-voting observers. The Committee cannot refuse to sit a delegate from a

chapter or organizing committee without just cause, such as a violation of DSA's anti-harassment policies or deliberate malfeasance, and each chapter or organizing committee can recall its delegate. Any chapter or organizing committee can decline this invitation to name a delegate to the Committee if they so choose."

**Debate opens on amendment to the main motion.**

**Motion to amend fails, 6 ayes, 7 nays**

**Amendment to the main motion by Zac:**

Strike the portion of the report recommended for adoption in main motion that deals with the NPC voting on endorsing Bernie Sanders and replace it with a clause that says the 2019 DSA National Convention should vote on whether or not to endorse Bernie Sanders.

**Motion to amend fails, 3 ayes, 10 nays**

**Amendment to the main motion by Jack: Add a liaison between DSA and the Bernie Sanders campaign.**

**Motion to amend withdrawn.**

**Elliott moves to call the question.**

**Main motion to adopt the report from the Exploratory Committee for the 2020 Presidential Primary and its recommendations.**

**Motion passes, 10 ayes, 3 nays**

**Discussion on questions from Chapter Pipeline Committee regarding chapter bylaws. Two questions:**

1. Whether there should be a differentiation between "active" and "full" members in deciding voting rights.
2. Whether being "active agents of the carceral state" (broadly defined) can be grounds for expulsion in addition to the grounds stated in the sample Bylaws and Constitution.

**Natalie moves to refer the sample language on "active membership" to legal counsel.**

**Motion passes: 8 ayes, 2 nays**

**Natalie moves that we deny the appeal and recommend to the chapter that they ask a question in their leadership candidate forms, asking candidates to disclose their involvement with the carceral state.**

**Motion passes: 10 ayes, 2 nays**

Chapter Pipeline Committee will send a recommendation to North Bay DSA and report back to the NPC.

### **Young Democratic Socialists of America Report**

General discussion of issues related to YDSA and YDSA's growth.

### **Immigrant Rights Report**

General discussion of issues related to DSA's immigrants' rights work. Jack requested assistance from NPC or national staff to help conduct the committee leadership election. National office will work with Jack on this.

### **International Committee Report**

Discussion of coming up with clearer guidelines and protocols for releasing statements, making fundraising appeals, etc.

### **Chris R. motions to extend discussion by 10 minutes.**

#### **Motion carried unanimously.**

Discussion on report and the role of the International Committee, how the NPC can provide support, and what projects can be taken on.

### **Natalie moves to designate herself and Jack as point-people to develop more concrete steps on the questions at hand regarding committees and working groups.**

#### **Motion carries.**

### **Political Education Report**

Stacks is going to a bimonthly. Next issue of the stacks is going to be on nature and capitalism. In the next week are having a full meeting to discuss how to build sustainable capacity for week. Want to get the night school guide out to chapters.

### **Convention Planning Report**

General discussion of the convention. Venue - have a contract with the Westin Peachtree Plaza in Atlanta. YDSA will likely start the evening of July 31, DSA convention will start on Aug 2; convention will end of Aug 4. Pre-convention conference - there will be nine, starting on Feb 9 and the last will be on April 14. Discussion of the program. Pre-convention rules discussion; decided to break rules into convention - one for rules for before convention that includes amendments to bylaws, delegate selection, NPC nominations, resolutions. Will have clear deadlines for these items. We don't know whether there will be a need for at-large delegate elections, but are ready to hold one if necessary. Resolutions and constitutional amendments. New rules on NPC nominations. Caucuses, slates, interest groups. Delegate apportionment. Constitutionally mandated to set ratio today. Cost and registration scenarios. Staff will assist chapters with fundraising trainings.

**Natalie moves that we have ten minutes for questions about the report.**

**Motion is adopted.**

Natalie adds that there was discussion on the committee about whether we could consider a DSA Political Platform rather than priorities resolutions. Discussion about whether and why to have a platform and how to get input from chapters. Discussion of budget. Discussion of at-large delegates.

Lunch break

Return at 1:00pm.

Discussion of Political Platform idea. Discussion of international guests for convention. Discussion of convention rules, convention planning committee recommends publicizing the precoinvention rule within a week of end of NPC meeting.

**Move to adopt the 2019 preconvention rules without delegate apportionment ratios.**

**Motion seconded, voted.**

**Passes unanimously.**

**Natalie moves to approve 2019 convention budget with 2017 subsidy rates.**

**Motion seconded voted.**

**Passes unanimously.**

**Motion to approve 51 to 1 ratio delegate proportion.**

**Motion to appoint a Rules and committee made up of resolution**

**Motion that the NPC appoint the Convention Planning Rules Subcommittee to serve as the interim Resolutions and Amendments Committee and additionally, that the newly formed interim committee recruit additional members from past Resolutions and Amendments Committees.**

**Ravi motions an amendment to add additional members at large of old members and make it new members. There are numerous experience and we can find wide range people of new people.**

**Natalie- everyone in committee has no exp**

**Motion carries unanimously.**

**Amended motion is adopted**

**Motion to adopt a delegate proportion ratio of 51 members to 1 delegate and that this ratio be added to the delegate apportionment section of the pre-convention rules.**

**Motion is seconded.**

**Motion is withdrawn by Natalie.**

**Motion to adopt a chapter delegate apportionment ratio of 51:1 for chapter based members.**

**Motion is seconded.**

**Motion carries unanimously.**

**Motion to add in the adopted ratios for at large delegates and chapter delegates to the Delegate section of the pre-convention rules, that we adopt and approve the Delegate section of the pre-convention rules, and that we publish the rules within one week of the meeting.**

**Motion is seconded.**

**Motion carries unanimously.**

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**Motion to refer elections committee back to convention planning committee.**

**Motion carries.**

**Move to adopt the entire document of proposed process for platform. A subcommittee should be formed and follow this process for the preliminary platform. February proposal will be written by subcommittee with input with disabilities and other working groups.**

**Motion to amend to show this preliminary platform in March to solicit member commentary and to be incorporated into April draft with NPC. Get feedback from District calls, members and chapters.**

**Motion carries.**

**Main motion.**

**Motion carries.**

**Motion to appoint a states and regions subcommittee to take up the issue of state and regional bodies to explore how to formalize this at the convention, including Dele, representatives from chapters and another NPC member.**

**Motion to refer the topic to the convention planning committee. They should build process to figure this out— bring it to regional conferences for example.**

**Carries.**

**Motion to clarify that working on a platform does not preclude the others in the organization working on a priorities resolution themselves.**

**Motion. Aye 5 people, Nay 4**

### **Revisiting Budget**

Does not include staff expansion and we need some discussion before adopting whole budget. Discussion of need for additional information on income and expenses. Decision on accumulated income which should be spent to expand staff.

**Theresa- Motion to adopt the budget.**

**Motion is seconded.**

**Motion to provisionally approve the budget as is and direct staff to submit a memo regarding staffing needs for NPC discussion and approval.**

**Motion is seconded.**

**Motion to Amend the aforementioned motion to strike the phrase ‘NPC’ and replace with ‘SC’.**

**Motion is seconded.**

**Motion carries with a vote of 6 to 4.**

**Motion to Amend the amended motion to strike the phrase ‘staff’ and replace with ‘personnel committee’.**

**Motion is seconded.**

**Return to vote on the main motion.**

**Motion carries unanimously.**

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### **Expulsion Process Discussion**

Review of proposed National Expulsion and Appeals Process, intended to address matters not within the scope of Resolution 33. Members to appeal a chapter expulsion, or chapters to request national expulsion of a member.

**Motion that the NPC adopt the National Expulsion and Appeals Process on a provisional basis and refer specific concerns to be incorporated to the Steering Committee.**

**Carries.**

### **International Socialist Organization Convention**

**Motion that NPC sends two observers to the ISO's upcoming convention in February.**

**Motion that the main motion be amended to say that Dele and Marianela will be the observers. Carries.**

**Motion that Dele and Marianela write a report on the convention. The NPC votes yes. Carries.**