



*the magazine of the
Democratic Socialists
of America*



Special Convention Issue—

Resolutions

Speeches

What we've done

—and more!



A Productive Convention

by Barbara Joye

The 82 delegates and another dozen observers who gathered in Evanston for DSA's biennial convention November 13-15 were clearly energized by today's volatile political climate, with its dangers and opportunities. As NYC delegate Chris Maisano wrote, "The economic crisis that we've been experiencing over the last year has given the Left an opening to organize for its vision of egalitarian social reconstruction, but it has also given the populist Right an opening to use many people's fears and anxieties to organize for its own brand of radical politics, which looks more irrational and potentially dangerous each day."

As a recent "graduate" of Young Democratic Socialists (YDS, the primarily campus-based under 30-year old section of DSA), Chris exemplified another strong theme of the convention: the infusion of new young blood into the organization, as the work of Youth Organizers David Duhalde (2006-8), Erik Rosenberg (2008-10) and their allies has begun to bear fruit (*see report on page 6 for more details*). Erik Rosenberg and YDS co-chair Tatiana Guerrero (NJ) reported on YDS's many accomplishments during the past two years, notably development of a five-year strategic plan to increase their number of campus chapters and increase the socialist commitment of their activist base, plus develop regional structures. YDS already has produced an excellent newsletter, blog, and organizing manual and has launched a national coalition-based campaign for free higher education.

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Many speakers at the convention emphasized another main theme of the convention: the urgency of growing DSA, both its membership and organizing units (locals). National Director Frank Llewellyn reported that more people of all ages are seeking us out on their own initiative through the website or by calling the office. Membership has grown 30 percent since 2005, to over 6,000 members. As San Diego's Herb Shore put it, "Socialism is on the agenda" again for many. But to really have an impact on American politics and policy and to bring in resources that our understaffed organization desperately needs, the delegates agreed to aggressively sign up many more new dues-paying members and to engage in concerted fund-raising. David Knuttunen of Boston, the outgoing chair of DSA's Finance and Budget Committee, argued that there are only subjective reasons why DSA cannot develop over the next several years into a strong, self-financed organization of 20,000 members.



The combination of renewed energy and opportunity led several older DSA members to commit to start new locals or revive dormant ones when they return home – to Tallahassee, San Antonio, Albany, and New Jersey – joining the already revitalized or newly birthed locals in New York City, Wichita, and the District of Columbia, with more to come. A resolution to strengthen the flow of information about clusters of potential local members and YDS college graduates passed easily. The organization committed itself to engage in a sustained, systemic effort to foster "ownership" in "adult" locals to younger members.

The plenary sessions were outstanding, although we lamented the absence of dynamic labor advocate and DSA Vice-Chair Elaine Bernard, who was unable to attend due to a temporary health problem.

A panel on "What is to be Done?" by National Political Committee members Theresa Alt (Ithaca), Michael Hirsch (NYC), and Joe Schwartz (Philadelphia) highlighted some issues and tactics not mentioned by the priorities resolution (such as the environment and solidarity economics), as well as the necessity for a global socialist movement to bring about and defend any truly progressive reforms. Hirsch reminded us that even the best reforms won't hold in this "rigged system" if the current disparities of power and wealth continue. Schwartz stressed that this means action, not just talk, for example around the imminent retirement crisis and the emerging social movement to resist foreclosures and to fight state budget cutbacks. Schwartz also emphasized the need to make taxes in this country truly progressive and raise global living standards. "There is no 'revolutionary' road to socialism," he quipped. In fact, in addition to passing a small group of significant resolutions, the convention as a whole focused on building a basis for effective action and public education.

In small group discussions following the plenary, Atlanta delegate Barbara Landay remembers *DL* editor John Strauss (Philadelphia) stressing that "socialism puts people first." Several workshops addressed organizational issues such as how to start a local; how to keep a local viable (one suggestion: find a niche issue); how to talk about socialism in public these days; how to build a local, especially by creating space for YDS graduates and other "new and different folk"; and how to work in coalitions while maintaining a socialist identity. Media relations professional Valarie Denny's well-attended session on "Getting our message out" gained some urgency from *Chicago Tribune* reporter Ron Grossman's disappointing article on our convention – written Thursday before it really started. Grossman wanted to portray the organization as mostly a support group for activists who came out of the 1960s. The numerous angry letters to the editor and blog posts in response to the piece by young DSA activists demonstrated that Grossman only saw the "facts" he wanted to see. Issue workshops, attended by a multi-generational range of activists, continued discussion of real universal health care, building a revitalized labor movement, and responding to the fiscal crisis of the state.

To implement some of the issues highlighted by the priorities resolution (comprehensive immigration reform will soon be added to the issues in the previously circulated draft), the convention adopted an ambitious program of public forums around an "economic bill of rights," updated from Roosevelt's (the latter memorably introduced by a speech included in Michael Moore's film *Capitalism, a Love Story*). The kickoff will take place at the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit in June. A reader-friendly flier is in the works, highlighting the systemic roots of the economic crisis. Convention activists expressed particular enthusiasm for organizing at the local level public hearings, teach-ins, and forums that would hear from victims of economic insecurity and from movement activists and policy analysts putting forth alternatives to respond to the crisis.



Theresa Alt, Ithaca

A panel on "The politics of the economic crisis: right-wing populism or left-wing resurgence?" continued the discussion of "What is to be done?" with Harold Meyerson, Bill Fletcher, Jr., and Kim Bobo.

Meyerson, an op-ed columnist for the *Washington Post* and long-time Vice Chair of DSA, explored the lay of the contemporary political land and offered his take on

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Democratic Socialists of America share a vision of a humane international social order based on equitable distribution of resources, meaningful work, a healthy environment, sustainable growth, gender and racial equality, and non-oppressive relationships. Equality, solidarity, and democracy can only be achieved through international political and social cooperation aimed at ensuring that economic institutions benefit all people. We are dedicated to building truly international social movements – of unionists, environmentalists, feminists, and people of color – which together can elevate global justice over brutalizing global competition.

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By Marty Luster

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DSA National Convention Resolution on Priorities

DSA believes that an adequate response to the economic and environmental crisis requires the U.S. to adopt a radical reform program akin to DSA's Economic Justice Agenda. We particularly emphasize the document's argument that only through strict democratic regulation of finance capital and raising the wages and working conditions for the global working class can the world economy serve people's needs rather than people serving the needs of corporate elites.

Thus, in the coming period, DSA will prioritize educating, agitating and organizing.

- I. **DSA will speak publicly about socialism.** Simplistic and misleading "anti-socialist" rhetoric is being used by the right to mobilize populist anger against any reforms that would modestly redistribute wealth, income, and opportunity in the United States. Through holding well-publicized forums, producing timely literature, organizing a visible presence at the 2010 U.S. Social Forum, representing DSA positions to the Socialist International, and using newspapers, the Web, radio, video and public access TV, DSA will educate the public as to why Obama's health-care and fiscal-stimulus plans are not socialist. For better or worse, these reforms are similar to – if not weaker than – the policies of most other advanced capitalist democracies.

Furthermore, DSA will articulate why only forthrightly social democratic reforms, such as reinstating progressive and corporate taxation and engaging in prudent, but massive defense cuts, could fund desperately needed public health care and investment in education, infrastructure and alternative energy. DSA will endeavor to take advantage of the massive "socialist-baiting" campaign of the right to educate the American public as to the major role socialist-inspired reforms have played in building more equitable societies than our own in Northern Europe and elsewhere.

- II. **DSA will engage in both education and action to rebuild a United States economy that serves the needs of working Americans and their families rather than the narrow interests of corporate elites.** We will fight to defend people's basic needs against the continued effects of the global economic meltdown and to restructure the U.S. economy in a democratic direction. We will prepare for a range of struggles so as to be able to join nascent movements where and when we are most needed.

Key to this defense are:

1. **Building an anti-foreclosure fight-back.** The anti-foreclosure movement should use whatever forms of protest that can protect citizens from being evicted from their homes and literally put onto the streets. DSA will join movements demanding a moratorium on foreclosures and the creation of a Federal Home Mortgage Administration that would refinance "underwater mortgages" at affordable rates and force banks to absorb more of the losses on their speculative mortgages. Short of affordable re-financing, distressed home-owners should have the right to stay in their homes and pay the holders of their mortgages an affordable, current-market-value rent.
2. **Joining progressive forces fighting for a new round of massive federal financial aid to state, county, and municipal governments.** Only by such measures can essential public services be maintained and massive deflationary layoffs be avoided.
3. **Holding public hearings on an Economic Bill of Rights, to be developed in conjunction with our allies, and using the Economic Justice Agenda as a starting point.**
4. **Continuing to work with labor and its allies to pass meaningful labor law reform that would restore a real right to organize and strike and ensure that the NLRB enforces these laws.** In particular, we will work to pass the Employee Free Choice Act, with an emphasis on encouraging our coalition partners in the non-labor left to understand the importance of rebuilding the labor movement as a vital element in progressing on all our issues.

Furthermore:

(A section on Immigration Reform will be added later by the NPC)

- **DSA reasserts its commitment to passing single-payer health care legislation at either the federal or state level.**

We will also support national health care reform that contains a meaningful public option and state single-payer opt-out clause. Short of single payer, only by establishing a public insurer that can compete against wasteful private insurers can health care costs be contained against the pressures of private interests to inflate the cost of health care. DSA locals will actively participate in coalitions fighting for the creation of state-level single-payer health insurance systems.

- **DSA will work with other progressive organizations to achieve real regulation of banks and the shadow banking system.** We favor a financial regulatory system with teeth, one that: restores the Glass-Steagall Act's separation of investment and commercial banks; and prioritizes investment in productive capital and commercial banks lending at affordable rates to consumers and small business.
- **DSA will join young people in demanding that higher education, in the long run, be a universal, public good financed through general taxation.** In the short run, we will fight for a reversal of cuts in state funding for public higher education. We will join forces with those fighting for a radical expansion in public funding of higher education and for a major increase in federal and state grants to university students.
- **DSA will join the peace movement in demanding an end to war in Afghanistan as well as Iraq and in calling for massive cuts in wasteful and misguided defense spending and for conversion from imperial war policies and arms manufacturing to those meeting domestic needs and stressing humanitarian foreign aid.**
- **DSA will begin a public dialogue among progressives about how to restructure the United States and global economy so that it creates productive jobs that provide living wages for all.** The United States economy can be restructured in an ecologically sustainable direction (and one that provides good jobs at good wages) only if the federal government invests significantly in infrastructure development, alternative energy, and mass-transit technologies. Only if the federal government restores an effective right to organize can a strengthened union movement force employers to pay wages and benefits that justly reward workers who labor under safe and humane working conditions. By itself, private capital has shown no willingness to take on the massive investments needed to create such new technologies nor has it been willing to recognize the rights of working people to form democratic unions.
- **Finally, DSA will work in 2010 to insure that progressive Democrats who support many of the above items are re-elected to Congress or replace right-wing Democratic or Republican incumbents.** Only if the Democratic majority in Congress is not just preserved but expanded and moved to the left can any of the above progressive reforms be enacted. DSA PAC will explore hiring an organizer to help our members become more effective in electoral politics, especially in the primary campaigns where we will promote true progressives.

The above items do not represent a fully comprehensive program for domestic and international justice. But they are a start. Neither DSA nor any other progressive organization can predict which of the above areas of struggle will take off in the near future. But given the breadth and depth of the current fiscal crisis of the states and the near-certain mass increase in foreclosures, some of the above items are likely to become arenas of mass political conflict. If and when they do, DSA, at the national and local levels, will be there shoulder-to-shoulder with our progressive allies. In addition to being active members of a progressive coalition, DSA will bring to these struggles a socialist perspective that contends that only through greater democratic control of economic life can meaningful democratic reforms be won, implemented, and defended.

III. For DSA to have the capacity to do this work, now and in the future, we must:

- a. **Build the capacity of the Youth Section – YDS** – by aiding YDS's efforts and by aiding YDS in establishing organizing beachheads on as many campuses as possible.
- b. **Facilitate the transition of YDS activists into leadership roles in the adult organization** when they graduate or leave campus.
- c. Build the capacity of our locals, commissions, networks, and activists to take a pro-active role in both visible public education and credible political action.
- d. **Modernize the on-line capacity of the organization and its use of new communication technologies in general.**

DSA National Convention Resolution on ACORN

DSA condemns in the strongest terms the right-wing crusade against the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN). Incidents of corruption are possible in any organization, and ACORN has responded appropriately to the overblown recent sting. ACORN's real offense, in the eyes of the right, is that it organizes constituencies, such as minorities and poor people, which the political system too often ignores. The crusade against ACORN is a continuation of the efforts of the right at vote-suppression, which must be resisted wherever it appears.

YDS/DSA Youth at the Convention by David Duhalde

The 2009 DSA convention was another stepping stone toward the revitalization of our organization and rising youth presence and leadership in it. Over 25 percent of the convention delegates were young DSA members, representing over a dozen Young Democratic Socialists (YDS) chapters and DSA locals, a marked increase over the fifteen young people who attended the 2007 convention in Atlanta.

But the major difference between the youth delegation in Illinois and Georgia could not be solely measured by the numbers. In 2007, young cadre represented primarily YDS chapters. Some had been elected as DSA local delegates, but no one's activism was through the "adult" section exclusively. In Evanston, several young socialists were leaders in their locals such as Sean Monahan, who is rebuilding Philadelphia DSA with veteran John Strauss. Others, such as Andrew Bove of Denver, were looking to restart locals. Half of the New York City's delegation was composed of members under thirty, including several on the local's elected leadership committee.

YDS alumni had a greater role in the conference's programming as well. Monahan, New York City DSA Chair Maria Svart, and I led a workshop on integrating young DSA



Erik Rosenberg and Tatiana Guerrero

members into locals. I spoke about the need to address generational difference before they become problems, Svart explained how young people can be DSA leaders because of their free time, and Monahan tackled building a campus presence at Temple University around the revitalized Philadelphia local.

YDS National Organizer Erik Rosenberg and National Co-Chair Tatiana Guerrero addressed the convention as well, providing an overview of the current state of the YDS and our new goals around the five-year strategic plan adopted earlier



this year. Rosenberg covered our recent national activity around Renegotiate NAFTA, Student Labor Week of Action, and G-20 protests in Pittsburgh, and the successful ongoing publication of the *Red Letter* (YDS's internal news bulletin) and *The Activist*. Guerrero addressed the work of the Coordinating Committee, which is developing a regional organizing strategy to build YDS beyond its current base. She explained the need to use

new technologies, such as a new and improved website, to reach student activists and bring the YDS web presence up to speed.

The convention also moved a motion pushed by YDSers entitled "Building Bridges and Locals." The document, referred favorably to the National Political Committee (NPC, DSA's elected leadership), outlined principles of building new locals with intergenerational participation. In addition, three young people were elected to the NPC. This marks the first time the NPC will have under thirty-year old voice outside of the YDS Co-Chairs in nearly a decade.

Despite wonderful and measurable organizational gains, the strongest mark of success of the convention and of YDS over the past few years was the level of camaraderie present at the event. Veteran YDS activists and first-time socialist delegates mingled with ease and spent the convention and afterhours discussing life and politics. Friendship and common purpose are two critical foundations to any group's success. Now DSA and YDS both can confidently proclaim they have both.

David Duhalde is co-chair of Boston DSA, new member of the NPC, and former DSA National Youth Organizer.

visit the Young Democratic Socialists website:

www.ydsusa.org

It's Time for the Left to Get Serious

By Bill Fletcher Jr.

Shortly after last November's presidential election, I spoke at a forum discussing its implications. There I mentioned that we should anticipate a right-wing populist trend emerging, one that I would describe as "revanchist" – a term meaning "revenge-seeking." Interestingly enough, a member of the International Socialist Organization dismissed my concerns as pessimistic and unwarranted. She emphasized the energy and dynamism coming out of the campaign. While, of course, I could see the same thing, I suggested to her that she was underestimating the toxic filth that exists in the bilges of the U.S. Unfortunately, we can see what has been unfolding over the last year.

Right-wing populism has a long history in the U.S. and, much like various chronic illnesses, becomes a part of the system and seems to emerge when the body is weakened. In our case, the body is the economy. When the economy is in crisis, and particularly when there is a financial crisis, right-wing populism emerges and can become a potent political force.

Right-wing populism is not well understood by the Left. Fascism, for instance, which is often our description of anything we do not like that comes out of the Right, is one variant of right-wing populism, but they are not identical. Right-wing populism is a political force that sometimes sounds like a Left critique, but is anything but such a critique. It is – and this is why it is so dangerous – a phenomenon that draws from the myth of U.S. history, so elements of it are easily picked up by segments of the population that are susceptible to the draw of the dominant U.S. narrative.

Let me lay out the basic right-wing populist narrative: We once lived in a society of rugged individuals. If you – generally speaking, a white person – worked hard, you would succeed. If you put in a good day's work, you would be rewarded. But, you see, we – white people – were betrayed. "Our" lives are falling apart. It was one thing for blacks to fall deeper into poverty, or Latinos to be on the margins, but it was not supposed to happen to us. And so, we must find out and identify who betrayed us. Jews are one group; racial minorities are another... And so the story goes...

The virulent racism inherent in right-wing populism is evident today in the anti-Obama madness that has been unfolding. Now there is much to be critical of when it comes to the Obama administration, but the nature of the right-wing assault speaks to the irrationalism of right-wing populism. Whether it is the so-called Birthers, or the healthcare debate, we see it again and again. No concern regarding the truth or facts, but instead playing to fears.

The election of Obama completely unsettled large segments of white America. While their lives were collapsing, how was it possible that a black American would be elected president of the USA? It was not supposed to happen that way.

Right-wing populism plays on fears but it also plays on real concerns. Obama's main focus has been on securing capitalism. The bailouts of Wall Street, begun under Bush,

continued. Yet with these bailouts there were precious few controls on the greed and avarice of Wall Street. The sickening efforts by Wall Street to continue its huge salaries and bonuses flaunted the bailouts and made many people, quite justifiably, furious. On top of that, of course, the wars continue, with resources that should be used to rebuild the U.S. (and save the planet) being devoted to aggression.

But there is something else that has been happening that particularly unsettles right-wing populists. While Obama is concerned about changing the image of the U.S. empire, he altered U.S. foreign policy in some ways that drives the political Right crazy. Take, for instance, his speech to the Muslim world and the apology he offered regarding the 1953 coup in Iran. The president openly acknowledged the U.S. role in that coup, i.e., in the overthrow of a democratic, sovereign government. The problem, however, is that Obama broke the cardinal rule: the U.S. does not apologize for anything, irrespective of whether it is wrong.

One of the challenges that we on the Left face is how to respond to right-wing populism while at the same time taking on Obama. Too many progressives believe that we either have to denounce Obama or we have to embrace Obama. The lack of any sort of tactical nuance is pathetic.

Let us be clear about our situation. We live at a moment of the convergence of three crises: economic, environmental and state legitimacy. While we are increasingly clear about the dangers brought about by the economic and environmental crises, few of us, including on the Left, pay attention to the crisis of state legitimacy. The impact of neoliberal globalization has, among other things, reshaped the role of the state. In general, the capitalist state cannot operate strictly on repression; therefore there must be some level of consensus. That consensus, at least among significant portions of the population, rests on the notion that the state will distribute resources and will help to sustain the population, particularly during rough periods. But what happens when the state stops fulfilling its distributionist role? What happens when people come to believe that they cannot count on the state? Neoliberal globalization has led to a shifting of the role of the State in that it is now more highly repressive but also much less distributionist. Given the polarization of wealth and overall inequality, there are fewer resources that can be devoted to distributionist activities, but always plenty of resources to devote toward wars, prisons and police. In that situation, people start looking out for themselves and this is when things can become dangerous. While the Left's response to such a situation is to, among other things, demand a progressive role for the state and, for socialists, to look for a transformation beyond the capitalist state, the political Right can either move in the direction of greater authoritarianism or toward militia-type movements. An extreme version of this can be openly genocidal, e.g., Rwanda, 1994: people murdering one another over increasingly scarce resources.

Obama emerged in the midst of these crises bringing hope and inspiration, and, while I sincerely believe that he had the intention of introducing certain significant changes, the objectives of his administration are focused on reforming neoliberal capitalism and, as such, are not qualitatively different from either Bill or Hillary Clinton. Look, I was not anticipating an anti-capitalist president, but what is striking is that his administration does not even seek to introduce a different form of capitalist accumulation in light of the crisis of neoliberal globalization – at least not yet. And that, I would argue, will depend to a great degree on what the Left and progressive social movements are prepared to do.

Obama's efforts to preserve neoliberal capitalism actually fuel the fires of right-wing populism. Of course right-wing populism is not anti-capitalist, but in opportunistic fashion, plays on the fears and grievances that people face as a result of the reality of neoliberal capitalism. Insofar as Obama places attention on protecting capital, right-wing populism plays upon this because there is very little left-wing challenge that speaks to the grievances felt by so many.

Prior to the Obama election I feared that progressives and leftists would do, essentially, what many subsequently have done: either write off the election results or fall into demobilization. I will leave aside those who simply write off the administration. They are of little consequence. What is more dangerous are those who have decided to restrain their critiques of the administration; those who have decided that it is better to follow an inside track of playing up to the administration, hoping that by muting their criticisms and differences that they will at least have a seat at the table. In fact, there is a national labor leader who said just that, i.e., that it was better to be at the table and get nothing than to be standing on the outside.

For the Left, in the midst of the convergence of these three crises I would suggest the following:

- Offer a different explanation of U.S. history and of what is happening right now.
- Respond to the crises with theory and action. We cannot destroy myths with facts alone but must instead link those facts to a counter-analysis or framework.
- Build real organizations that are prepared to fight back. This is what makes the ACORN disaster so troubling. We need organizations like ACORN that are rooted among the poor and are prepared to resist. The recent demonstrations in Chicago that involved SEIU and National People's Action are a good example of the sorts of activities that we need, but we must go much further, ranging from eviction resistance to the need for a resurgence of the anti-war movement. What about unemployed councils?
- Force the Obama administration to do what needs to be

done, both domestically and internationally. We cannot afford to sit back and soft-pedal our criticisms of Obama.

- Get serious about mounting progressive electoral challenges, which will not only take on Republicans but also conservative Democrats.

And then there are the tasks of socialists. I must say that I am sick of our failure to think through what needs to be done to rebuild a visible and viable radical Left. Yes, radical! Yes, one that is completely unapologetic in pointing out that

capitalism is a criminal system driving this planet to the brink of disaster. The Left must be at the core of those who voice their outrage as to what is not only happening to the Palestinians, but also to people in Paterson, New Jersey. We must be the ones who continue to point out that every time we hear about this damned deficit, people should remember what could be saved were we not in Iraq and Afghanistan. We must be the ones who point out that this administration was absolutely wrong in its approach to the Honduran coup; i.e., that the U.S. should have done everything in its power to force the coup people from power. We must be the ones who speak



Bill Fletcher

to the misery in Camden, New Jersey; Flint, Michigan; and Oakland, California.

But we cannot do that without organization. We cannot do that by relying on Facebook, Web sites and e-mails. We cannot do that by relying on speaking to and with those people that we like and who agree with us. It means organization and it means that we have to operate very differently than most of us are comfortable operating. Yes, comrades of DSA, while your younger members are going great guns, a fact about which you should be very proud, we need a different DSA. We need tighter organization that educates and activates. We need DSA to reach out to others on the Left, particularly the radical Left, and engage in both joint work but also discussions regarding what steps need to be taken to create a significant formation on the political Left.

We ultimately need a party of the Left, a formation that while not focused on running candidates for office in the near future, becomes a vehicle to unite activists from various progressive social movements; a party that is overtly anti-capitalist; a party that tells the people of the U.S. a different story, a story about possibilities, but also a story about our real history as a country; a party that pushes for the U.S. to rejoin the people of planet Earth, repairing the damage that the U.S. helped to bring about, as we struggle and fight to save what Jacques Cousteau always called the "Water Planet."

In this sense, comrades, I am here to not only speak to you about the subject of this panel, but to put before you a challenge. Too many of us on the Left act as if we have all the time in the world to make changes. If it does not happen in our

lifetimes, too many of us think, it will inevitably happen in the next. No! History demonstrates exactly the opposite. There are no guarantees. Right-wing populism, whether in the form of the Birthers, Aryan Nation-types, Minutemen, the Front National in France, the Northern Leagues in Italy or in the form of clerical fascists such as Al Qaeda – yes, Al Qaeda – seek to take us into a mythical world that never existed; a world of fear, of horror, of hopelessness, of endless repression.

DSA is needed as a major force to transform the Left and compel the entire Left to recognize that ours must be a struggle for power; a struggle for a progressive politics; a struggle to create a national-popular bloc capable of truly altering the priorities of this country...and this necessitates theory and it necessitates organization. Remember the words of A. Philip Randolph that I think are so applicable to this moment:

“At the banquet table of nature there are no reserved seats. You get what you can take, and you keep what you can hold. If you can’t take anything, you won’t get anything; and if you can’t hold anything, you won’t keep anything. And you can’t take anything without organization.”

What more needs to be said?

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Jobs and the Economic Crisis

By Bill Barclay

Introduction: FDR and the importance of jobs

In July 1932, the Democratic Party met in Chicago to nominate their candidate for president. The Party had won the presidency only four times since the 1850s. Chicago, the city in which they met, was under economic siege: 45% of the workers who had been employed two years earlier were out of work. Nationally, over 30% of the non-agricultural labor force was out of work. After internal squabbling, they nominated a political lightweight, a man known as a “trimmer,” one who avoided taking stands on the issues. That man was, of course, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

FDR didn’t talk much about jobs and employment in the 1932 campaign. In fact, he spent more time attacking Herbert Hoover for running up the federal deficit. However, Chicago and the nation’s jobless had made an impact on him. Shortly after coming into office, he called his staff together and said he wanted to put 500,000 young men – and it was men – to work by the summer. Remember, FDR didn’t come into the presidency in January but in March – summer was not very far away. He was told this couldn’t be done; the army said it was logistically impossible. FDR went away and came back a few days later and said, okay, 250,000. His 500,000 number wasn’t based on any analysis – FDR was not an economist – and there were, after all, about 10 million unemployed. They set to it and by the end of June, almost 300,000 had been put to work in what we know as the Civilian Conservation Corps. This was the first installment on the almost 3,000,000 that the CCC would employ during its existence.

FDR wasn’t an economist, but he understood the need for people to have jobs and also understood that jobs put money into people’s pockets and that in turn was good for the economy. In this intuition he was right. U.S. GDP, which had declined by 25% between 1929 and 1933, grew by 60% in the 1933-1940 period.

Today: jobs again at the center of our economic crisis

Our level of joblessness today is not what FDR faced, although when the officially unemployed are added to the underemployed and the discouraged workers who have given up looking for jobs, the rate was nearly 20% in November 2009. What is the same, however, is that today, as for FDR, it is jobs – the lack of them – that are once again at the center of our economic crisis.

But the problem is not simply the result of the over 8 million jobs lost since December 2007; it is much deeper. That is why the proposal that the Chicago Political Economy Group (CPEG) developed and that I am going to outline below goes well beyond what mainstream policy thinkers are looking at.

CPEG started thinking about a jobs program in early 2008, well before the cascades of lost jobs made the front pages. We developed our program based on six factors that we concluded, from our work and analysis, characterize the U.S. political economy.

First, the private economy has consistently failed to generate sufficient “good” jobs – in terms of pay, benefits, or control over working conditions – in at least the past three decades. This period coincides with the rise of the financial sector and the decline of manufacturing as well as the shift of the U.S. from a net creditor to net debtor position, internationally. (Financial sector profits as a share of total business profits more than doubled between 1978 and 2005, accounting for almost 45% of the total in the latter year).

Second, the private economy has failed to generate sufficient good jobs, and access to the jobs created is unevenly distributed across the segments of the U.S. labor force. Our working population is segmented by race, gender, and ethnicity; the result is inequality in access to jobs, especially good jobs. Some quick measures: the median wage for a woman working full time is only 67% of that for a male working full time. The median wage for an African American working full

time is only 63% of that for a Caucasian working full time.

Third, the lack of good jobs is not the result of a lack of useful work to be done that would meet social needs. This need is evident in the decay of our bridges and roads, the poor condition of our hospitals and schools, our lag in developing the new energy technologies that are necessary to replace increasingly costly fossil fuels. Another way to see this need is to visit a national park and read the plaques that tell you when the work to develop the park was done, when the trails were built or the campgrounds were created. You will be struck by how much of this work was done in the 1930s through the job creation programs that FDR created – and how little has been done since then.

Fourth, from points one and two, it follows that the government, particularly at the federal level, has an essential role in remedying both the macro level failure of the private economy to generate sufficient good jobs and the labor market-level failure to insure access of all sectors of the working population to the good jobs available.

Fifth, since the failure of the private sector in job creation is long term, the role of government in remedying that failure must necessarily be long term. CPEG's jobs program is not a temporary, stopgap measure. It is designed to restructure the U.S. political economy so that our society looks different after the "Great Recession" than it did prior to that time.

Finally, just as the jobs program must be redistributive in the creation and access to good jobs, so it must be redistributive in the financing of the program.

CPEG's Jobs Program: how many, what, and what kind of jobs?

The core of CPEG's "A Permanent Jobs Program for the U.S.: Economic Restructuring to Meet Human Needs" is the creation of 4 million new jobs per year over each of five years, with 3.5 million of these jobs the result of direct or indirect government action. (The paper contains the technical notes by which we derive these numbers. Here it is sufficient to say that the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 1.5 million jobs per year created by the private economy; we estimate a loss of 1 million jobs per year because of the wage levels in CPEG's proposal – see below – and government action to create 4 million jobs/year).

CPEG targets three areas for the new jobs. These areas reflect both the segmented nature of the U.S. working population and the importance of a forward-looking industrial policy.

The first area for new jobs is a traditional one: **social investment in new and updated infrastructure**. Since the 1930s, the U.S. has accumulated a social investment deficit. We need new and/or rebuilt roads and bridges. We need rehabbing of hospitals, schools, and parks. Most of these jobs are in construction, and, given that about 95% of construction jobs are held by males (disproportionally white, although less so than 10 years ago), these workers would be the primary initial beneficiaries of this part of our jobs program. To date, these workers have accounted for almost 2 million of the 8

million jobs lost since December 2007. Many, perhaps most, of these jobs would be in the private sector as a result of government contracts.

Equally important, however, is the need for substantially increased **investment in human services**. We need teachers and teacher's aides; we need elder and child care workers; we need nurses and CNAs; and we need an expanded public health work force. And we need them to be trained with the possibility of career ladders. These will be primarily public sector jobs; it is clear that the private market is unable to generate good jobs in most of these areas. Thus, CPEG's proposal includes a significant expansion of the public sector. And again, the current segmentation of the U.S. labor force – over 74% of health care workers and 75% of education workers are female – means that the initial beneficiaries of these jobs will be female, with many of these workers African American (25% of health care technical and support workers) or Hispanic. The resulting expansion of the public sector must be accompanied by an emphasis on accountability and transparency.

The third target area is organized around an **industrial policy** to develop the new technologies of energy and agriculture. Green energy technologies are important here, but they do not exhaust the possibilities. We need regional transportation networks and more efficient, less resource-intensive food production. In this job-creation target area, there would be a mixture of private- and public-sector employment.

It is worth taking a minute to emphasize the idea of an industrial policy for the U.S., because it is so foreign to most U.S. policy thinking. Despite the conventional wisdom, however, industrial policies work – just ask the Scandinavians, Japanese, or, more recently, the Chinese. In fact, such policies have even worked in the U.S.: we have had a *de facto* industrial policy for the last three decades – the development and expansion of finance. During this period, the profits of financial sector businesses have gone from less than 25% of all business profits in the 1970s to 45% in 2005; there has been some decline since then, but the financial business profit share is still dramatically above the long-term U.S. average. There have been some benefits – we were able to export part of our financial crisis to the rest of the world through selling asset-backed securities abroad. But I think we can all agree that the net returns to this policy have clearly been negative.

Good Jobs – what do we mean?

Probably the first thing we think of when labeling a job "good" is the wage level. Is it sufficient to support a family with some provision for future needs? Since the jobs to be created are permanent and are designed to fulfill the failure of the private economy, they should pay well. We have used the median hourly wage in the fourth quarter of 2008 as the basic pay level for these jobs: \$18.00/hr. This is \$37,500 for an annual salary.

In thinking about wage levels and the target population, we need to consider the reality that our program is designed to address not only the current surge in unemployment but also

the longer term lack of jobs. We will draw into the labor force a significant number of people who have limited or perhaps no work experience and may lack training and skills necessary for some of the jobs we want to create. Therefore, we include “on-ramps” for new or inexperienced labor participants with an initial training wage level of \$11.15/hr., the breaking point between poverty wages and living wages.

Good jobs are more than well paying jobs, however. They must also include benefits that are important to insuring a life that is not one of constant dread that a child will get sick, a parent will have an accident and the family finances will be destroyed with loss of home and possibly bankruptcy following. All the jobs created under CPEG’s program should be eligible for whatever health program finally makes it out of the convoluted process of the U.S. legislature. Finally, workers in these jobs should also have the right to associate together to articulate their needs in the organizational form of their choice, most likely unions.

How much would CPEG’s program cost – and how can we pay for it?

A. The Cost of the Program

First, remember that this is a five-year program; hence, cost aggregates over time. Second, in addition to the base wage of \$18/hr, there will be some supervisory labor that will expect to be paid at a higher rate. Finally, there would also be some individuals employed at the training wage for a period of time. In order to be conservative in our analysis, we included a managerial increment but did not reduce expenditures for training wages. Putting these factors together yields a per cohort cost of \$175.5 billion, about 1.25% of GDP in 2008 when we designed the program. By the fifth year – and thereafter – the annual cost is \$877.5 billion, or 6.25% of 2008 GDP. (GDP would obviously grow as those employed under our program spent their wages for clothes, shelter, food, etc.)

As I said, we developed this program in 2008; in fact, we came to these numbers in August 2008, before the Great Recession was widely noticed. When we met to talk about these results of our analysis, our first reaction was, “Wow, that’s really a lot of money!”

Of course, two months later, during the financial panic of October 2008 and the Bush bailout of the banks, we discovered that this really wasn’t that much money, after all. As then-presidential candidate John McCain said, if it’s needed for the American people, the money will be found. It is a question of political will.

B. Paying for the Program – the Willie Sutton Philosophy

During his career, Willie Sutton robbed over 100 banks. At one time a reporter asked him, “Why do you rob banks?” Sutton (supposedly) replied, “Because that’s where the money is.” Whether or not this exchange ever occurred, the lesson is instructive. Despite what conservatives may say, the fiscal cupboard is not really empty. We start by remembering our sixth principle: the program should be redistributive not

only in its impact but also in its funding.

In 1989, two economists wrote a paper advocating a tax on financial transactions; i.e., on the trading of stock, debt, currencies and derivatives of each. They argued that such a tax could be set at a level small enough that it did not undermine incentives to investors, although it might have some dampening on the activities of short term traders (day traders in today’s terms). These economists were Larry and Victoria Summers – yes, that Larry Summers, Obama’s chief economic advisor.

The idea was a good one then – and it is an even better one now. In 1989, when the Summers published their article, total value of stock trading in the U.S. was approximately \$2 trillion. A lot of money, yes, but compare that with 2008 when the total value of stock trading on the New York Stock Exchange and NASDAQ Stock Market was \$72 trillion. A 0.25% transaction tax on stock trading, levied on both the buy and sell sides of each trade, would have raised \$360 billion. And stock trading is probably the smallest of the three big markets that would be covered by a financial trading tax, the other two being debt and currencies. When all three of these markets are included, as well as derivatives of each, this tax conservatively would raise at least \$600 billion. Further, this tax would not represent a subtraction from GDP, since the value of these trades is not part of the \$14 trillion GDP of the U.S. Also worth noting is the excellent pedigree of a financial transaction tax: variants of it have been advocated by John Maynard Keynes and Nobel prize-winning economist James Tobin – and today by the UK’s Prime Minister Gordon Brown (although probably too late to save his political career).

How else could we raise the funds to pay for our jobs program? First, we can go back to a proposal that appeared in the Obama presidential campaign and has since apparently vanished: the idea of an income surcharge of 5% on the households receiving – I refuse to say earning – over \$250,000/year, about 2.5% of all households. This would raise an additional \$100-125 billion per year. Second, we must reinstate the Estate Tax. (The right calls it the “death tax.” But it is actually the “Paris Hilton Tax” – she inherited her wealth rather than creating it – and it can save us from being inflicted with more such beings.) Even with a relatively conservative level of progressivity and with the trigger level indexed to inflation, the tax will raise \$50-100 billion per year. I want to dwell on this tax for just a minute. This is the only wealth tax that is in effect in the U.S. – right? Wrong – almost all of us pay a wealth tax. It is called the property tax and whether you (and maybe also the bank) own a home and pay it directly or you rent and pay it indirectly, you pay this wealth tax. However, for most of us, this is a tax on our largest single asset – our primary residence. For those households in the top 3-5% of the income and wealth distribution, however, the primary residence is a relatively small portion of their wealth. Why don’t we institute a wealth tax that reaches these households also? A .5% wealth tax on the top 1% of households by wealth – those with approximately \$5 million or more in assets – would yield \$75 billion/year.

All of the above are directly redistributive – and these taxes will fall primarily on the segments of the population and those institutions that got us into this economic crisis to begin with. There two other sources of revenues that can also be applied to funding CPEG’s jobs program. First, shifting \$50-100 billion from the \$1 trillion military budget and, second, levying an excess-profits carbon tax on the major energy producers. Together these would generate \$100-200 billion.

Conclusion

In sum, we are proposing a permanent jobs program for the U.S. that is redistributive in its impact (making available good jobs for all) and in its financing (who pays). Thus, we

Convention
continued from page 2

the Obama administration’s various initiatives. He argued that cutbacks in state budgets had eviscerated much of the stimulatory effect of federal spending initiatives and called for further federal aid to shore up state and municipal finances.



Kim Bobo exhorts the crowd.

Fletcher, author of *Solidarity Divided* and a veteran labor activist, analyzed the political and psychological profile of the new right-wing populism and forcefully argued for the need to build a multi-racial, anti-racist coalition that would remain engaged in the political struggles of the day (see article page 7). And

Bobo, author of *Wage Theft in America* and the founder of Interfaith Worker Justice, channeled the spirit of the prophet Nehemiah to preach a vision of social reconstruction in the United States that ended with redistribution of wealth and power. Her exhortation of “Can I get an amen brothers and sisters?” frequently brought the crowd to its feet.

Saturday’s plenary session featured Bill Barclay (Chicago), John Cameron (AFSCME), and Michele Rossi (NPC, East Bay) continuing the theme of crisis in the U.S. and global capitalism and our fight for equality. They highlighted the need to rein in the financial sector; establish a permanent jobs program and a national industrial policy; defend public services; and address gender, class and racial inequality through a revived public sector. Barclay, along with a group of Chicago activists and social scientists, is developing a national full employment project that DSA will incorporate into its economic justice project.

Ad-hoc sessions brought together delegates interested in reviving the Religion and Socialism Commission, promoting a “solidarity economy,” and raising the profile of international issues and DSA’s international solidarity. Another session

are seeking to take the U.S. political economy in a new direction. This new direction seeks to create a political economy that meets the needs of our people rather than serves the avarice of a small elite. Isn’t that what the purpose of any economy should be?

This talk given by Bill Barclay at the November DSA National Convention is a summary of a longer paper by the Chicago Political Economy Group titled “A Permanent Jobs Program for the U.S.,” the current version of which can be found at www.cpegonline. Other members of CPEG include Ron Baiman, Sid Hollander, Haydar Kurban, Joe Persky, Elce Redmond and Mel Rothenberg.

brought together the many delegates active in, or in support of, organized labor.

The recently reconstituted labor network publishes an excellent, frequently visited blog “Talking Union” and now hopes to begin to rebuild an active network of DSA labor movement activists.

Seven new members were elected to the NPC: David Duhalde (Boston), Stuart Elliot (Wichita), Paul Garver (Boston), Seth Hutchinson (Austin), Jason Schulman (NYC), Maria Svart (NYC), and Rannfrid Thielle (Wichita). Three are recent YDS graduates, continuing DSA’s commitment to a “generational transition.” They join incumbents David Green (Detroit), Herb Shore (San Diego), Joseph Schwartz (Ithaca/Philadelphia) and Michele Rossi (East Bay, CA), Barbara Joye (Atlanta), Simone Morgen (Columbus, OH), Virginia Franco (San Diego), and Theresa Alt (Ithaca). The four outgoing members of the committee, David Knuttunen, Tim Sears, John Strauss and Michael Hirsch, promised to continue working hard for DSA on both the national and local level.

Delegates left the convention invigorated by the growing strength of our locals, in places as disparate as Atlanta, Georgia, and Wichita, Kansas. On Sunday, delegates committed their locals and themselves as individuals to take on specific tasks and projects to advance the priorities resolution passed the day before.



With the contemporary political milieu filled with conservative charges that Obama is a “socialist,” the time is ripe for DSA to increase its visibility and explain the basic tenets of democratic socialism (and why our president, unfortunately, is not a socialist). Only if more Americans willingly say, “What’s wrong with socialism?” will we be able to achieve reforms that strongly challenge the privileges of corporate America.

Those interested in joining a local or helping to start one should email the National Director, Frank Llewellyn, at fllewellyn@dsausa.org or call him at 212-727-8610.

DSA Locals Activity: 2007-2009

ALASKA

In Fairbanks, Alaska DSA sponsored a screening of Michael Moore's film *Capitalism: A Love Story*, with coffee and discussion. We'll purchase DVDs of the Moore film and send it out so that others in this very spread out state can do the same and engender community discussion.

The local will be part of an environmental and sustainable development coalition that wants owners of the controversial Pebble Mine development restricted to 20% of the profits if the mine is developed. Any other profits above 20% would go to develop sustainable and renewable energy employment programs. Our primary intent is to focus public awareness on the predatory mining interests backing this potential \$20 billion dollar bonanza, which sits in a sensitive area critical for spawning salmon. As our great Alaskan DSA veteran socialist and former legislator Niilo Koponen always says, "Onward!"

ATLANTA

Just one year after launching our local, we hosted the 2007 DSA convention, which motivated us to maintain momentum to build the local while contributing to the Atlanta progressive movement and national DSA. We continued our public forums on topics such as human rights, developments in Haiti and Venezuela, homelessness in Atlanta, closing U.S. bases abroad and uniting the labor movement. Our Socialist Education Circle discussed texts by Michael Harrington, Frances Fox Piven, Marx, Paulo Freire, Eduardo Galeano, DSA's own Schwartz and Schulman, and local member Larry Keating's *Race, Class and Urban Development*. Most exciting was Atlanta DSA's role in incubating a significant new broad coalition to fight foreclosures (see Spring 2009 DL).

Atlanta DSA members have been actively involved with local coalitions, and many led workshops at the Georgia Progressive Summit addressing the Employee Free Choice Act, saving our public hospital and national health reform, and effective movement building. We continue to support the Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition, Coalition for a People's Agenda, Georgia Citizens Coalition on Hunger, Georgia Minimum Wage Campaign and the Grady Hospital Coalition. We launched our website at www.dsa-atlanta.org and hope that it and our local newsletter will become a key resource for the broader Atlanta progressive community.

Beyond the fight against foreclosures, Atlanta DSAers also advocated single payer health care at public forums and town hall meetings. Our visibility in the progressive community has led to a 15% increase in membership in the past year.

BOSTON

Since our last convention, the Boston local has seen an increase in activism from new recruits, with a total membership in Greater Beantown and Massachusetts in the hundreds.

The local held forums on health care reform, corporate globalization, and the Latin American left, staged a pre-pri-

mary debate and then a post-election analysis with Tim Costello, Frances Moore Lappe, and Frank Llewellyn, and a session on the economy with speakers from Dollars & Sense. One forum



David Knuttunen

with United for a Fair Economy and Jobs with Justice on the Employee Free Choice Act drew 40 people, out of which a DSA Labor Committee was organized, including several non-members, to actively promote EFCA. This committee has evolved into an intergenerational activist group that, with new membership, has increased

our profile and connections in broader coalitions.

After leafletting Michael Moore's *Capitalism: A Love Story*, we had a successful meeting at which former YDS leader David Duhalde spoke on "What Is Democratic Socialism?" to an older group of interested non-members. And with the inspiration of the Atlanta local and others, we've decided to involve ourselves in local efforts against housing foreclosures in the coming year.

Despite high dues levels, we've maintained our participation in Mass Alliance, a coalition of 22 groups trying to elect a more progressive Massachusetts state house, which incorporated some of our suggested questions into its candidate screening process.

CENTRAL INDIANA

The Central Indiana local of has sought to strengthen its local membership base, reach out to the larger community, and lend its support to issues of social justice.

The local met monthly and began publishing a monthly newsletter, *Central Indiana Socialist*, with news of DSA, political issues, and other area Left organizations. C.I. DSA is active in Jobs with Justice (JwJ) and Justice for Janitors, including representation on their official bodies, and the local's treasurer, Pete Behrendt, was honored with JwJ's first ever "I'll Be There" award.

For the past few years local DSA and Socialist Party USA groups have met jointly, resulting in a cooperative venture we formed called Indiana Socialist Fellowship to unite all left movements and unaffiliated progressives in the area.

CHICAGO

Chicago DSA continues to serve greater Chicago out of its HQ office, and this year staged the 51st annual Debs-Thomas-Harrington Day Dinner. Our bimonthly *New Ground* is both newsy and respected and presents member-written pieces on current and theoretical issues. The local holds monthly meetings open to all members.

The Greater Oak Park Branch, adjacent to Chicago, has been working to promote a living wage ordinance for Village workers, managing to put a non-binding resolution on a local ballot, holding conversations with Village trustees and Community Relations Commission, and providing speak-

ers for a public forum. The voters of Oak Park favored the proposal by a 60 percent margin, and local churches have been willing to consider the issue and endorse the program. The branch also worked to elect a DSA member Village President. Most recently, the branch helped organize a protest of banking actions when the American Bankers Association visited Oak Park to view the Frank Lloyd Wright Museum and home.

Chicago DSA supported the strike of the workers at the Congress Hotel, with members joining picket lines, continues to support abolition of the death penalty in Illinois, and our members constitute half of the Chicago Political Economy Group, which has produced an outline of a permanent federal living-wage jobs program funded mostly through financial transactions taxes, garnering some publicity and local speaking engagements. CPEG co-organized a National Living Wage Jobs for All conference in New York City with the National Jobs for All Coalition.

COLUMBUS/CENTRAL OHIO

Over the past two years, Democratic Socialists of Central Ohio have continued to work with various coalitions like Jobs with Justice, Ohio Conference on Fair Trade, UHCAN (one of our members chairs the Columbus single-payer group), and peace organizations. These activities are driven by the varied interests of our members, many of whom participate in several organizations in this rather small progressive community.

Local members have participated in regular vigils to support an end to the Iraq and Afghanistan incursions and to find viable paths to Palestinian-Israeli peace. Domestically, we supported rallies and organizing efforts for Teamsters whose suburban employers brought in outside non-union refuse collection services, and we lent a hand to a stagehand union that recently achieved a contract after demonstrating at the businesses that used a local theatre to stage events. DSCO has also worked to raise awareness of trade issues and their effect on American jobs, speaking with labor and faith groups and encouraging representatives to sign on to the TRADE Act. These activities are coordinated with our educational forums, such as a series on the influence of corporations in American life and on the corporatization of colleges and the loss of tenure.

Our members have been attempting to monitor observance of the local Living Wage Ordinance, and have canvassed to elect the first Democratic representative in this district for years, while campaigning for the national ticket in this swing state. We have also participated in events against Chase Bank, in coalition with JwJ, worked occasionally with a younger group that has started an informal cooperative with educational programs covering a range of Socialist or generally left programs.

We are planning a forum on right wing populism/paranoia, and a hearing on economic insecurity. And, of course, like several other locals, we flyer'd three showings of the latest Michael Moore film.

DETROIT

Detroit DSA has actively lobbied members of Congress on behalf of single-payer national health insurance and the Employee Free Choice Act. We have tabled and collected signatures for DSA's Renegotiate NAFTA petition at a number of events in southeastern Michigan. We have sponsored DSA Forums, our outreach political discussion group. Our annual Douglass-Debs Dinner has become a local institution. We have become influential members of several local coalitions, including Southeastern Michigan Jobs with Justice, Michigan Universal Health Care Access Network, the Michigan Alliance to Strengthen Social Security and Medicare, and the Detroit Area Peace with Justice Network.

We have been particularly successful on the electoral front, helping to elect four progressives to the state legislature, three taking seats previously held by Republicans. All four were new to the legislature. We accomplished this by organizing fundraising house parties, door to door campaigning, phone banking and postcard campaigns. D-DSA has had a disproportionate impact on the local political geography. In fact, the conservative Mackinac Policy Center recently published an article in its newsletter entitled "Are socialists deciding close state house races in Michigan?"

ITHACA

Ithaca DSAers joined with PDA to elect House candidate Eric Massa, holding house parties and canvassing in the traditionally GOP 29th district, tabled the Labor Day picnic, had a May Day presence on the downtown pedestrian mall with our Renegotiate NAFTA petitions, and initiated a roundtable on "Advice for the New President" at the public library.



We both leafleted and staged après-screening discussions of *Capitalism: A Love Story*, gathering many email contacts.

Our local project is focused on stopping the hydrofracturing of the Marcellus Shale for a corporate windfall of gas profits, the hot new issue in Central N.Y. "Hydrofracking" can destroy underground drinking water, ruin farmland, sicken residents and affect distant cities while enriching greedy energy corporations and pitting poor landowners/mortgagees against each other and the overall needs of our state.

We keep on airing our weekly Community Access Cable TV series, *Ithaca DSA Presents*, chronicling ongoing struggles for peace and justice in Iraq, Israel, and Palestine; for raising low wages; for immigrant rights and labor rights; for single-payer health insurance; and for survival in Latin America. We have presented DSA's Economic Justice Agenda to the viewing audience, explored huge forestry

cooperatives of the Pacific Northwest, looked at the similarities between permaculture and socialism, and defined socialism itself.

NEW YORK CITY

The New York City DSA chapter merged in 2008 with the city YDS chapter, providing fresh new direction to a large NYC DSA membership base in New York who've been members for decades but haven't been active for years.

We filled a bookstore to capacity with our debate on what real health reform looks like, impaneled author Nomi Prins, journalist Bob Fitch, and our own Joe Schwartz to talk about New York City's economic crisis, and provided shoe leather/fundraising support for the locked out Stella d'Oro bakery strikers in the Bronx, as well as our Fair Share campaign to get progressive taxation in NYS. NY DSAers leafleted Michael Moore's *Capitalism: A Love Story* and found audiences to be generally receptive to socialist information after having seen the film.



Fatou Camara

GREATER PHILADELPHIA

The Greater Philly local, after a quiet period, has had an infusion of new YDS members that have brought new energy and ideas. Our annual local convention brought in three times as many attendees as the previous two, a good third of them under 30. The vast majority of those in attendance, particularly the younger members, view DSA as their activist priority (member involvement in issue-specific organizations often does dilute focus on DSA) and are determined to make this identity and their socialist values central to their involvement with other organizations.

The local is committed to restarting *Greater Philadelphia democratic Left*, beginning with an on-line version. A member is contributing web space for a site, and another will put it together and maintain it. We are working in support of a local candidate for state representative; he is a democratic socialist. Our members have been a presence at rallies for organizing security guards at the Art Museum, for health insurance reform, and against the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. We distributed literature at six or seven showings of *Capitalism: A Love Story*. We are planning to have members do presentations to other groups and, of course, to hold our own events with speakers.

Meanwhile, Temple University YDS is growing: in September, they held a very substantive, well-attended organizing/outreach event with YDS national organizer Erik Rosenberg and DSA Vice Chair Joe Schwartz. There we recruited several new volunteers to write for our newspaper, historically the local's largest (and most regular) project which also dovetails with our vital email announcement list.

SACRAMENTO

In 2006, Sacramento DSAers and former DSA mem-

bers formed a Progressive Alliance, at first working with PDA. This became our primary electoral and anti-war focus, while we maintained a clear DSA identity. The Progressive Alliance reaches out to about 3000. The local DSA membership is about 90. We've held DSA forums on the divisions in labor with David Bacon and Bill Fletcher. Cornel West and Dolores Huerta spoke at our campus and plugged DSA. The Progressive Alliance holds a monthly film series and features DSA at its annual May Day film event.

We hosted Progressive Forums attended by 250, at which we presented the draft Economic Justice Agenda and worked to elect a Democratic White House, while connecting our electoral work to our anti-racist activism and advocacy for immigrant rights. This brought in new young energy. See <http://www.sacramentopa.blogspot.com>.

Sac DSA sponsored one of several platform development sessions to suggest ideas for the national Democratic Party, including DSA's national Re-negotiate NAFTA program, and in California DSAers campaigned in coalition for the NO ON PROP 8 campaign to defeat that assault on GBLT persons. We revised our media plan to seek opportunities for public recognition of DSA, began publishing DSA pages in an on-line local alternative newspaper, and established our own web page, <http://sites.google.com/site/sacramentodsa/Home>.

SAN DIEGO

The main activity of San Diego DSA has been coalition work in the struggle to bring a living wage ordinance to the city of San Diego and now to insure that the existing ordinance can be enforced. We are part of a coalition led by the Center on Policy Initiatives (CPI) and have brought out our members at rallies to produce large crowds at City Council meetings where these issues are decided.

We are major participants in the San Diego Maquiladora Workers' Solidarity Network, organizing tours to Tijuana and working with allies in Mexico. SD DSA also submitted about 300 signatures for the Renegotiate NAFTA petition and distributed DSA leaflets at Michael Moore's *Capitalism, a Love Story* film.

We are participants in the Affordable Housing Coalition, San Diego, and helped organize a well-attended forum on the foreclosure crisis, which included community activists and city and state elected officials. This is an ongoing project. DSA has also been a major participant in the San Diego struggle for single-payer health care, primarily with San Diego Health Care for All.

SD DSA has been an ongoing member of the San Diego Socialist Unity Network (SUN), along with Freedom Road Socialist Organization and Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism. Starting about two years ago, SUN has held bi-monthly "Socialist Salon" gathering.

One of the most popular activities of the DSA chapter is to produce an Elections Recommendation mailing for our own members, concentrating on ballot propositions and primary elections. We have had candidates

attending DSA meetings seeking the support of our members. We also encourage our members to participate in electoral work for candidates and propositions.

TWIN CITIES

Twin Cities DSA has been meeting monthly, as we have for the past 15 years. A main focus of our work, which included speakers and participation in rallies, was single payer universal health care reform.

We had a table at the Minneapolis May Day festival. We disseminated leaflets following the local showing of Michael Moore’s *Capitalism: a Love Story* movie, collaborated with the Progressive Caucus of the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party and the local Socialist Party, and sent a member to Germany to develop a sister partnership with a German SPD local. We also helped Campus Democrats and Progressives at a Minneapolis community college; they affiliated with YDS, and sent members to YDS retreats in New York. We elected new and younger leadership for our local.

WASHINGTON, DC

A revitalized Washington, DC-area local began meeting this past summer and sponsored a meeting with Alex Main of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, who led a discussion of the recent coup in Honduras. The local also elected four delegates to the DSA National Convention, and is planning to develop a website and establish an online presence.

WICHITA

On April 1, unionists, workers, students, academics, and retirees gathered at Watermark Books in Wichita and founded Wichita DSA. We have benefited greatly from the vital YDS group that is already here at Wichita State University, and the dynamic cooperation between the two groups is proving to be a great asset.



Rannfrid Thielle

Arias, a national organizer on immigration issues, who spoke about immigration reform. We plan to follow up on the immigration issue in the coming months. Wichita DSA has also contributed to efforts in the Wichita community to gather support for health care reform.

At a joint meeting with the WSU-YDS in September, we elected the official executive committee, formally adopted our by-laws, and screened a movie about Mother Jones. Our website is now up and running. Please visit us at www.wichitadsa.org, which features a video of Richard Healey’s talk. Our Facebook Group, Wichita Democratic Socialists, currently has over 70 members.

Change the USA! Join the DSA!

- Yes, I want to join the Democratic Socialists of America. Enclosed are my dues (includes a subscription to Democratic Left) of:
 - \$50 Sustainer \$35 Introductory \$20 Low-Income/Student
- Yes, I want to renew my membership in DSA. Enclosed are my renewal dues of:
 - \$60 Sustainer \$45 Regular \$20 Low-Income/Student
- Enclosed is an extra contribution of: \$50 \$100 \$25 to help DSA in its work.
- Please send me more information about DSA and democratic socialism.

My special interests are:

- Labor
- Religion
- Youth
- Anti-Racism
- Feminism
- Gay and Lesbian Rights
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