

## **Metro Atlanta DSA – Minutes: August 25, 2007**

The meeting was called to order at the Friends Meeting House in Decatur, with introductions; 14 in attendance.

This was our first meeting since May, because of the social forum (USSF) and summer vacation.

**Treasurer's report:** The party during USSF netted \$235, which was mostly spent for food. We also spent \$100 for a NYT ad re free trade. \$1,028.07 remains in the account. Paul Segal will help Austin.

**USSF party:** About 50 people attended. Kempton: Good food, good drink, good friends; we met the national DSA youth leader for the first time, David Dualde, and his contingent.

**USSF participation:** DSA organized three workshops. Milt participated on the panel on “The US Working Class and Socialist Perspectives.” Other sessions were on “As Radical as reality: Pragmatic Politics and the Student Left,” and “Refunding Government: Responding to 30 Years of Budget Cuts.” Milt observed that the existence of an Atlanta local encouraged national DSA participation. Some of us also attended the “Sicko” premiere the same week and encourage others to see it.

Barbara, Milt and Jorgé attended a USSF Atlanta planning committee evaluation meeting Tuesday and reported on its content. The Social Forum process will continue, especially in conjunction with the next Georgia Progressive Summit, and serve as a way to strengthen the local progressive movement. Members are encouraged to help build the GPS.

**Marx in Soho:** Norm reported on this excellent play by Howard Zinn that was presented at 7 Stages in August. Audience members wanted to continue the discussion of Marx's life and work.

**YSA/DSA retreat:** Milt attended a day-long event in NY at which various readings were discussed, including a history of socialism that includes DSA, which Milt will obtain for us. It raised the question of how we make the transition to a democratic socialist society and whether the traditional notion of the working class as the agent of social change still holds up.

**National convention:** The convention will include workshops, discussions and speakers on many issues and plan DSA's agenda for the next few years. The convention agenda will be published soon. A rally for economic justice will be included. Cliff Kuhn will lead a tour about the Atlanta 1906 race riot.

Registration of \$175 for each delegate will be paid by the local. “Observers” will pay less, and the fee will be waived for volunteers. We need to elect four delegates. The steering committee has discussed having a Metro Atlanta caucus to guide the delegates' votes. We will host the awards dinner and also provide some hospitality.

Kempton reported that the nominating committee nominated Milt, Norm, Barbara J. and Austin as delegates but others are encouraged to step forward. Adam volunteered, and additional volunteers should get in touch with Kempton before the next general meeting. Henry urged that we educate ourselves about the issues in advance of the election of delegates.

**Douglass-Debs Awards dinner:** Friday, November 9. Beer and wine at 6 pm, dinner 7 pm, at the IBEW hall, 501 Pulliam St. We are assembling a host committee and will send out invitations by September to at least 500 people. Radial Café will cater a buffet. We are putting together a program booklet with ads. Craftsman, a union printer, is handling printing and addressing. Paul found a union shop that makes engraved stone plaques and Barbara S. has mocked up a design with images of Douglass and Debs.

Sen. Bernie Sanders will speak. Honorees: Charlie Flemming, pres. Atlanta-North Georgia Labor Council, AFL-CIO and Alice Lovelace, USSF lead organizer and poet. Honorary co-chairs: Richard Ray, Pres. Georgia State AFL-CIO and State Sen. Nan Grogan Orrock.

**Election of officers:** Kempton reported from the nominating committee, which also includes Barbara Segal and Jeff Bragg. The committee proposed continuing the current officers for one more year because of the upcoming convention and the need to get the chapter firmly established.

**Executive committee:** Next meeting will be Thurs. Sept. 20, 7 pm at Barbara Joye's house, 471 Seminole Ave. in Little Five Points. All members are welcome.

**Next general meeting:** Sept. 29. Norm and Milt will be out of town. Adam Shapiro or Barbara J. will chair. Kempton will handle the delegate and officer elections. No speaker determined yet. Jeff had suggested a panel on education, with members of his teacher's union. Henry and Barbara J. suggested additional speakers on that subject and will invite their contacts.

**"Rapid response team":** Norm proposed acting on Kempton's suggestion at the steering committee that we line up some people to send letters or columns to the AJC when something occurs in the news. We discussed the move to privatize Grady as an example. Henry suggested responding to Rita Valenti's invitation to get together to discuss action on this issue Sept. 4, before the Grady board meets. Rita works with the Coalition for the People's Agenda and a coalition for single-payer health insurance. He will arrange that meeting and Norm will invite the membership to participate.

**"Toward an Economic Justice Agenda":** Norm reviewed this document, which is available on the DSA web page. We discussed the degree to which it's a socialist vs. just a reform document. "About this document" says it's a program that a broad coalition of left and progressive groups can support. Sample of discussion: Adam questioned whether the legislative approach would be adequate to implement the program. Kempton pointed out that the paper does not call for a national health system. Barbara suggested there be some explicit description of our vision of socialism and the need for accountability for

the major investment decisions that drive our economy, perhaps in an accompanying document. Milt said the paper omits mentioning the role of peoples' movements for social change outside the electoral arena. Paul said it fails to discuss the corrupting influence of corporate power. Norm said we need to make sure our concerns are discussed at the convention. There were other comments on the dilemma of long-term vision vs. short-term pragmatic goals.

**Announcements:**

- An Atlanta Kucinich group will meet at Manuel's tavern Thursday Aug. 30 at 7 pm.
- The Labor Council will show films at 5 pm Sept. 13, 20, 27 at the IBEW hall. "The Cradle Will Rock" etc.
- You can sign up for "DSA News" on the DSA web page.
- This Tuesday at 6 Move On and First Iconium Baptist Church are sponsoring a peace vigil/rally at the church.
- Jorgé recommended "Salud," the documentary on Cuba's medical system, available through the Atlanta-based group Medic. Henry has a copy also.
- "Madrid Before Hanitta," a film about Jewish Palestinian volunteers in the Spanish Civil War International Brigade, will be shown at an informal potluck dinner, with special guest and Spanish Civil War veteran George Sossenko. Norm and Barbara will organize this. Date and place to be announced but it's coming up soon.

-- Barbara Joye, secretary