

Metro Atlanta DSA – Minutes: September 27, 2008

The meeting was called to order at the Friends Meeting House in Decatur, with 19 in attendance.

Treasurer's report-- We have more than \$4,000 in our account, with some checks still coming in for dinner program booklet ads.

October speaker -- Still being sought. Ian at Ga. State had no suggestions, but Milt is exploring a possible prof. at GA Tech.

Socialist Education Circle -- Suspended until after Nov. 8 because of preparations for the awards dinner. Next steering committee will discuss the agenda. Suggestions are welcome. Charles has proposed "Open Veins of Latin America" by Eduardo Galeano with some short selections from Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, for the next two discussions. Details will be posted on our website: www.dsa-atlanta.org

Next steering committee meeting -- at Barbara Joye's house: 471 Seminole Ave. NE (404-525-4360), 7 pm Monday October 13. All are welcome.

Election of officers -- Jeff reported that the nominating committee unanimously decided to recommend that the current officers serve another term. The recommendation was unanimously accepted.

Douglass-Debs Dinner – Milt commented that the date is the first Saturday after the election; we have great awardees from the gamut of the Atlanta progressive movement; and we have a great speaker. We should be able to draw a good crowd. We have already sold 100 tickets and should be able to get 100 more committed, plus more ads (businesses, organizations and individuals) for the program book. We already have as much ad revenue as last year. The smallest size ad (business card) is \$50.

We can give discounted (or if necessary complimentary) tickets to students and other low- income people who definitely plan to attend. Now is also the time to encourage your friends and family to buy tickets. We will get on the progressive calendars and WFRG. Ticket sales should be completed so we can tell the caterer how many people are coming by Nov. 1 (but walk-ins will be accepted).

Guest speaker – Akinyele Umoja, Associate Professor of African-American Studies at Georgia State University, who visited Haiti last summer to observe the human rights and political situation, presented a video on the ascent and overthrow (twice) of President Aristede. Afterwards Dr. Umoja described what he saw in Haiti, which is now policed by the United Nations though there is a (weak and compromised) elected government officially in power. He also reported on the recent disappearance of the human rights activist Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine, whom he had met, and brought us up to date on other developments since the film was produced. He also related the foreign (especially U.S) support for the coups to the current disruption of the Bolivian government. In connection with our concern for the hurricane victims, he pointed out that the civil defense

organization set up by the Aristede government was dismantled after the coup, which contributed to the current catastrophe. IN answer to questions, he described the popular forces in Haiti that could bring about solutions to the current problems, and urged us to challenge our government's policies, bring leaders of the Haitian popular movements here to speak, and support people's organizations in Haiti. He also described his current work with the Malcom X Grassroots Movement;

For further understanding of Haiti, Charles recommended the book "Damming the Flood: Haiti, Aristede, and the Politics of Containment," by Peter Hallward.

Contributions – A collection was taken for Haitian hurricane relief, which totaled around \$300. We will research the best organizations and \$100 will be added from the local's funds.

Announcements:

U. S. Human Rights Network: Human rights activists from Brazil will discuss U.S. accountability for universal human rights standards by building links between organizations and individuals, 2:30-3:30 pm, Monday, Sept 29 at the office of the U.S. Human Rights Network, 350 Georgia Avenue, #330, Atlanta. Sponsors: USHRN, Latin American and Caribbean Community Center, and Malcolm X Grassroots Movement.

A coalition on raising the minimum wage is meeting in Atlanta. Contact Milt for more information.