



## Spring 2007

### Solidarity Greetings

**W**elcome to the Metro Atlanta Democratic Socialists of America Newsletter. We plan to issue a newsletter on a quarterly basis. Any suggestions for material and subjects that you may have will be most appreciated.

*-Metro Atlanta DSA officers and committee members*

For more information, call Milt Tambor (770) 313-4628 or email Norm Markel [norm@psychologyofconversation.com](mailto:norm@psychologyofconversation.com)

### Forum on Democratic Socialism Draws a Good Turnout

**F**orty people attended the January 27th forum on "What is Democratic Socialism." Panelists included DSAers Jeff Bragg, Norm Markel and Bob Wohlheuter. Ian Fletcher, faculty member at Georgia State University, acted as moderator. The ten minute presentations were not only interesting and informative but captured the unique aspects of each panelist's personal/political history. Due to the in-depth program no DSA business was conducted.

The discussion following the presentation was lively. The subject matter clearly resonated with the audience since the informal conversations continued well past 1:00 pm.

Adam Shapiro, who hosts a current events program on WRFG on Thursdays at noon taped the presentations. Adam also provided Atlanta DSA with an opportunity to promote the forum and talk about democratic socialism with his listeners. The tape can be made available to anyone interested (contact Milt Tambor). Thanks to all who contributed to the success of this event.

Educational Program Saturday, March 31, 2007 11:00 a.m.: Isaac Goben, Secretary-Treasurer North Georgia/Atlanta AFL-CIO Labor Council "Employee Free Choice Act."

### US Social Forum in Atlanta: An Exciting Left Political Happening

**T**he first ever US Social Forum will take place in Atlanta on June 27-July 1. Inspired by the World Social Forum in Brazil in 2001, 150 social forums have been held throughout the world but up to now none in the US. The call "Another World is Possible" explicitly challenges the injustice of the global corporate economic system. The sponsored forums are intended to forge international links among individuals, organizations and social movements that will foster a shared vision of social and economic justice. They provide a people's alternative to the World Economic Forum and its imposition of austerity programs that harm the poor and create huge debts owed by third world countries to the international banks.

As many as 20,000 activists are expected to converge in Atlanta during this five day period. The Atlanta local

organizing committee has begun to draft a schedule of events. A march and concert are planned for opening day. The following days will include plenaries and workshops related to the themes of consciousness, vision and action. Most events will be held at the Atlanta Civic Center, Westin Hotel, Downtown Marriot, African-American Research Library and Apex Museum. Community and cultural events are also being planned for 7 Stages and Horizon theaters.

We encourage activists to help build the USSF by attending meetings and submitting proposals for workshops. Our local plans to host a house party for DSAers during the weekend. Registration and background information can be found on the web site [ussf2007.org](http://ussf2007.org). The next meeting of the Atlanta Organizing Committee will be at 6:30 pm March 27 at the Communication Workers of America Local 3204, 279 Logan St. (corner of Hill St. and I-20).

### DSA National Convention Plans in Atlanta are Under Way

**D**SA's National Convention will happen in Atlanta November 9-11, 2007 at the IBEW Hall. The Convention will be the first national DSA meeting held in the South and Atlanta DSA is proud to be hosting this event. The Convention provides delegates with an opportunity to evaluate their work over the past two years—including the Bernie Sanders fund-raising house parties—and to set priorities for 2008 and DSA's role in the upcoming presidential election.

Besides the convention business, there will be a public forum Friday evening and an awards dinner on Saturday night. The awards will honor individuals who have made important contributions toward building a progressive movement in Atlanta. We are working on lining up some great entertainment; see next issue. DSA committee members are drawing up plans for an ad book, choosing a menu and selecting award recipients. Anyone interested in joining the convention planning committee, contact Norm or Milt. ■



# Metro Atlanta Democratic Socialists of America

## From the MADSA February 24, 2007 Minutes

Joe Parko gave a slide presentation about his visit to Palestine/Israel, especially the West Bank, in March 2005. His group met with Mordechai Vanunu, who had revealed Israel's development of nuclear weapons and was subsequently imprisoned for 18 years and kept under house arrest thereafter. Estimates are that Israel currently has about 400 nuclear weapons (seldom discussed).

They then met with B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, which works on issues such as killing of Palestinian civilians by Israeli military forces, restrictions on the movements of Palestinians, the separation wall, illegal settlements on Palestinian land, status of East Jerusalem, holding and treatment of Palestinian prisoners, and demolition of c. 12,000 Palestinians' houses considered illegal by the Israelis or where the families of individuals who are considered dangerous were living. They also explored issues of civilian deaths; the impact of the wall on the Palestinian's ability to farm (for example Bethlehem is now completely sealed off and is a dying city); the differences between the rights of Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel; and the settlements. They visited students at Bir Zeit university in Ramallah; a prisoners' support group; an Arab town that had been destroyed by the Israeli army when the state was established; and a checkpoint at Bethlehem. He discussed restrictions on Palestinian civil liberties, torture of prisoners, harassment at checkpoints, arrests of children, continuing construction of illegal settlements and "Jewish only" roads, and the issue of water rights.

The group also met with members of the growing movement of Israeli "refuseniks" who refuse military service in the West Bank; a leader of the Israeli peace bloc (Gush Shalom); the director of the Arab Association for Human Rights; Rabbis for Human Rights (who pick olives for Palestinian farmers cut off from their land); Christian Peacekeepers protecting Arabs in a village near Hebron; the Dome of the Rock; and a pilot "peacebuilders" class at a school run by the Holy Land Trust. His group joined the Trust in a nonviolent march against the occupation.

A brief discussion following Joe's presentation focused mainly on the marginalization of Israel's Socialist elements. ■

Joe Parko's article on the visit is in the current issue of the *Great Speckled Bird*.

## MADSA PRESENTS SPEAKER ON MEXICO MARCH 11

John Ross, a prize-winning "rebel journalist" and historian, reported on "What's Going on in Mexico? From the Bottom" on March 11 at the MadRatz Infoshop.\* Metro Atlanta DSA co-sponsored the event with the Latin American and Caribbean Community Center, the International Action Center and A Capella Books.



Ross has just published his third book chronicling the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, *Mexico: Zapatistas! Making Another World Possible*. The first volume, *Rebellion From the Roots* (1995), won an American Book Award and was followed by *The War Against Oblivion* (2000). His newsletter "Blindman's Buff," distributed by the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA), reports on the turbulent Mexican political scene, plus side trips to Palestine, Baghdad, South America and other global hotspots. Ross also teaches "rebel journalism" and is author of the memoir and "Uppie" award winner *Murdered by Capitalism*; a history of Mexico from the conquest to neo-liberalism: *The Annexation of Mexico*; and many poetry chapbooks.

*Zapatistas!* Is the first book to measure the fallout from Mexico's stolen federal election and the upsurge from the bottom that followed in Mexico City and Oaxaca, in addition to the disasters that neo-liberalism inflicted during the Fox presidency.

\**MadRatz is a new multimedia facility for progressive organizations, with a library of left books and videos and a computer room. It's at 840 DeKalb Avenue, four blocks west of the Inman Park MARTA station, behind the Neon Company and IFO Signs and is open noon to 8 pm Friday through Sunday.*



## A Paradigm<sup>a</sup> for Progressives 1: Rights of Man [sic]<sup>b</sup>

### Civil Rights

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." (*Preface, Constitution of the United States*)

### Human Rights

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and happiness. ... .. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor." (*Declaration of Independence*)

### Economic Rights

1. The right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries or shops or farms or mines of the nation;
  2. The right to earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation;
  3. The right of every farmer to raise and sell his products at a return which will give him and his family a decent living;
  4. The right of every businessman, large and small, to trade in an atmosphere of freedom from unfair competition and domination by monopolies at home or abroad;
  5. The right of every family to a decent home;
  6. The right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health;
  7. The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment;
  8. The right to a good education."
- (*F. D. Roosevelt, State of the Union Message, 1944*)

- a Paradigm = A set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them.
- b *Rights of Man* by Thomas Paine, 1791, especially Part Two.

*Continued on page 4*



# Metro Atlanta Democratic Socialists of America

## A Paradigm for Progressives 2: A Class-Conscious Microscope

### who they are

### what they do

#### Capitalist Class

- a CEO of a large corporation
- a high-ranking person in a large corporation
- works for the board of directors of a large corporation

- carries out the policies of the corporation's board of directors
- interacts with government agencies & other corporate execs.
- leaves the day-to-day operation of the corporation to others

**Why? "It's human nature."**

#### Corporate Elites

- a corporate director who sits on multiple boards
- an elected power-broker in the national government
- a think-tank fellow, a media specialist, a hired political mgr.

- coordinates activity across corporations
- gives strategic direction for international policies by U.S.
- disseminates capitalist ideology

#### Corporate Professionals

- a corporate lawyer, a corporate CPA
- a financial service professional
- a doctor who practices beyond HMO & insurance oversight

- works for the capitalist class
- provides services to the capitalist class
- fortunes rise & fall with that of the capitalist class

#### Small Business Owners

- employer of wage labor
- manages employees directly
- works along side relatively few employees

- shares capitalist class interest in private property & assets
- shares capitalist class interest in weak labor regulations
- vulnerable to capitalist market and government power

#### Working Class Professionals

- a community college or public school teacher
- a lawyer: public defender or small general practice
- a doctor in a working-class neighborhood

- works with the working class
- provides services to the working class
- fortunes rise & fall with that of the working-class

#### Working Class

- a white-collar bank teller, a call-center worker
- a blue-collar machinist, a construction worker
- a pink-collar secretary, a nurse

- little control over pace of their work
- little control over content of their work
- no supervisory control of others

**Why? "It's corporate capitalism."**

*Norman Markel*

*MADSA Jan. 27, 2007*

*norm@psychologyofconversation.com (please put MADSA in the subject line)*