



Democratic Socialists of America

Greater Detroit Newsletter

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DSA's Electoral Success

By David Green

Detroit DSA was largely successful in its summer electoral work. We endorsed three state senate candidates in the August 3rd primary: State Representative Vincent Gregory (District 14-Southfield/Farmington Hills), Macomb County Board of Commissioners Chairman Paul Gielegem (District 10-Clinton Township/Roseville), and Isaac Robinson (District 3-Detroit/Dearborn). Our strategy was to intervene in primaries where, due to low voter turnout, the disciplined efforts of a small organization can have a disproportionate effect. We chose the state senate because 26 of the 37 races were for open seats. Due to term limits, there were very few incumbents seeking re-election. Since the Republicans presently hold the state senate by a one seat majority, there is a significant opportunity for the Democrats to recapture the state senate. Finally, with redistricting scheduled to take place in 2011 based on the 2010 Census, control of the state senate could have an enduring impact on the results of federal elections in Michigan.

Detroit DSA held a fundraising house party for our endorsed candidates on July 9th. 35 donors contributed over \$6800 to the candidates. This fundraiser occurred at a critical time when the candidates needed the money to cover the costs of mailings to absentee voters.

DSA volunteers canvassed twice for each of the candidates during the months of June and July. We

Agenda for September 11th DSA General Membership Meeting

Join us on September 11th for our next DSA general membership meeting. Our speaker is **Oakland County Commissioner Steven Schwartz who will present a proposal for county-wide bus service** for Oakland County. This proposal would replace our present piecemeal approach to public transportation in which some communities contract with SMART for bus service, and others do not. This piecemeal approach is both more expensive for taxpayers and provides fewer routes for passengers.

- 1) Treasury Report
- 2) Report on Jobs with Justice (JWJ)—David Green
- 3) Report on Michigan Universal Health Care Action Network (MichUHCAN) —Selma Goode
- 4) Report on Michigan Alliance to Strengthen Social Security and Medicare (MASSM)—Ken Jenkins
- 5) Report on Detroit Area Peace with Justice Network—Lon Herman
- 6) Education Committee—DSA Forum—David Green
- 7) Report on August 28th March for Jobs and Labor Day Parade
- 8) Election of Officers and Executive Board
- 9) Final Plan for October 2nd March for Jobs in Washington, D.C.
- 10) Speaker: **Oakland County Commissioner Steven Schwartz on a "County-Wide Plan for Bus Service in Oakland County"**

Democratic Socialists of America Greater Detroit

Officers

Chair: David Green

Secretary: Catherine Hoffman

Treasurer: Lon Herman

Steering Committee:

Ron Aronson, Ken Jenkins,
Selma Goode, David Ivers

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knocked on doors, distributed campaign literature, stuffed envelopes, and put up lawn signs for the candidates.

The result—two out of three of our endorsed candidates won their respective primaries. Vince Gregory won his race comfortably, though the result was closer than anyone had expected. Paul Gielegghem defeated a better known opponent by only 200 votes. DSA support was critical in this victory. Isaac Robinson came in second in a three person race—losing by only 848 votes.

DSA will continue its electoral work this fall as we canvass and phone bank for Paul Gielegghem. He will need our support in what is expected to be a tough general election.

BOB KING AND JESSE JACKSON LEAD MARCH FOR JOBS IN DETROIT

By David Green



Over 10,000 Detroiters marched down Washington Boulevard from the UAW-Ford National Programs Center to Grand Circus Park on Saturday, August 28th to demand jobs, peace, and justice. The march was organized by United Auto Workers (UAW) President Bob King and Operation PUSH founder and director Reverend Jesse Jackson. It commemorated the 47th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's March on Washington.

The dais at Grand Circus Park was teeming with dignitaries—politicians, clergy of every denomination,

and union leaders. Among the elected officials present were Representatives John Conyers, Jr., John Dingell, Maxine Waters, and Marcy Kaptur and Senator Debbie Stabenow. Michigan Democratic Party gubernatorial nominee Virg Bernero briefly addressed the audience and committed himself to placing the interests of Main Street over those of Wall Street. Among the union leaders who spoke were UAW President Bob King, newly-elected President of the Service Employees International Union Mary Kay Henry, Farm Laborers Organizing Committee President Baldemar Velasquez, and American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Council 25 President Al Garrett.

Speaker after speaker pounded away at the themes of creating jobs (through a second economic stimulus bill), withdrawal of American forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, fair trade, and a moratorium on foreclosures. In his remarks, Bob King noted that a government's budget reflects its values. He charged that the Senate was acting "immorally" in delaying extension of unemployment benefits for workers while simultaneously proposing to make permanent the Bush tax cuts benefitting the wealthiest segment of our population. He added that simply eliminating these tax cuts for the wealthy and ending our \$150 billion annual

expenditure on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan would pay for a second economic stimulus.

Reverend Jackson emphasized the need for citizens to carry over the rage expressed at this march into the November 2nd election. He issued a challenge to Detroit voters: If Detroit turns out 400,000 voters on election day, then progressive candidates will sweep statewide races, progressive members of the Michigan Congressional delegation will be re-elected, and we can pursue a job-creating agenda. "But," cautioned UAW President King, "we must keep marching." We must maintain pressure in the streets even as we strive for electoral victories. This is how real change is accomplished. For this reason, both President King and Reverend Jackson urged Saturday's participants to join the March for Jobs in Washington, D.C. on October 2nd.



ANDIAMO RESTAURANT OF DEARBORN LOSES ROUND IN RESTAURANT WORKERS' FIGHT:

National Labor Relations Board Issues Order that Andiamo Illegally Intimidated and Retaliated Against Restaurant Workers Standing Up for Their Rights on the Job

(Detroit, MI) In July, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued an order that Andiamo Restaurant illegally cut the hours of, intimidated, and retaliated against servers and other restaurant workers in seeking to squash workers from participating in a lawsuit and protest against workplace violations at its Andiamo Restaurant in Dearborn.

The NLRB settlement order requires that Andiamo Restaurant pay back pay to a server, and also requires that Andiamo Restaurant pledge to no longer subject employees to coercive interrogations, surveillance, threats of termination, or require as a condition of employment that all employees sign a legal document stating that if they participate in a lawsuit against the restaurant, they could be responsible for Andiamo Restaurant's legal fees. "Andiamo Restaurant used fear and illegal threats to try to keep workers from coming forward," says Naome Debebe-Bogale, a former server at Andiamo Restaurant in Dearborn and one of the workers who filed charges against the restaurant. "I hope that other workers see that it's ok to stand up for your rights."

As the economy falters, a spike in wage complaints has been reported across the country. "Workers' rights are being trampled, at the time when they need their wages and their right to speak up the most," says Minsu Longiaru, the Coordinator of the Restaurant Opportunities Center of Michigan (ROC-Michigan), a restaurant workers' organization. "All we are asking is that Andiamo Restaurant do the right thing."

Andiamo workers filed federal lawsuits and complaints alleging unpaid wages and discrimination violations with the support of the Restaurant Opportunities Center of Michigan (ROC-Michigan) in January, 2010. Restaurant workers and their supporters have been holding weekly protests outside of Andiamo Restaurant in Dearborn in which over 1,000 individuals have participated, including an event during the U.S. Social Forum in which peaceful protesters shut down the restaurant for 24-hours.

DSA members have been a critical support during the weekly Friday protests. As the heat rises in the kitchen, Andiamo has come to the bargaining table over the summer months and negotiations continue. "Thank you to all the DSA members who have shown your support for our struggle for justice," says Bertha Rosales, a cook for 6-years at Andiamo Restaurant and a leader in the campaign. "Now more than ever we need you and we need



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to keep the pressure on. We must not forget what has gotten us this far in the first place.”

Come join the restaurant workers’ struggle for justice! **Weekly pickets continue at Andiamo Restaurant in Dearborn, 21400 Michigan Avenue, every Friday from 7-8 pm.**

DSA executive board member Ron Aronson delivered the following remarks at a memorial service for Helen Samberg held at Birmingham Temple on July 18th.

Helen Samberg

By Ronald Aronson

There’s one thing I’m sure Helen would have wanted people to be reminded of at this memorial: that she was not only a good person who believed in fairness and justice, that she was not only a devoted activist with remarkable tenacity, that she did more than integrate the personal and the political, effortlessly, gracefully, all the time. But also that Helen Samberg was a socialist. It turns out that Jack Lessenberry’s excellent column last week made this reminder unnecessary—thanks to Jack, thanks to Suzanne, there’s no danger that this side of Helen will be forgotten today.

I was active with Helen in New Jewish Agenda and on the board of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Scholarship Fund, and others here have worked with her at Jewish Family Service, or in Local 1640, in the Nation readers group she hosted, or other organizations, and all of these were deeply important to her. But somewhere at the core of Helen was her lifelong identity as a socialist. What did that mean? Why was something so distant and unlikely to achieve in America so important to her? It was so important that she was one of the main members, for the past 25 years, of the Detroit local of Democratic Socialists of America, and the ten years before that, of New American Movement.

The funny thing is that although she and I shared membership in these organizations and the commitment to socialism, she and I never felt the need to talk much about it. Except that I knew she meant neither Soviet socialism nor social-democratic reforms. Before 1991 she had long hoped, like many on the Old Left, that the Soviet Union might overcome the Stalinist and post-Stalinist nightmare. She also knew that however actively she supported social security and universal health care, neither of these is socialism. Helen would get annoyed at “What We Believe” statements emanating from the DSA National Office that would stress making capitalism more humane or stress reforms that other capitalist countries had long ago achieved—and would sidestep the one, single, radical change that she felt convinced was the only reform that would make a decisive difference: workers taking democratic control over the means of production. Did she really believe in this? In the 21st century? Did she really think that workers were capable of running things, that genuine equality was possible, that the profit system could be dismantled?

Helen’s answer was not a theoretical one, but one that she lived. You could hear it if you went out and around with her and saw her, to her dying day, talking to cashiers and waitresses about unions, talking to fellow customers about health care, and passing out peace buttons. The message was always: You matter. We matter. Your ideas and action are important. You are important. This was Helen’s message as a worker among workers, as a citizen among citizens. We all have rights, we are all able. All of us without exception. No social and economic system should exclude some and privilege others. In doing what she refused to do, our system made her furious. Her life was a one-woman effort to radically change it, to live her belief in socialism.

Another side to Helen’s socialism was her refusal to become cynical. She kept her hope alive by keeping active, by never in her ninety-nine years knuckling under to the power of the privileged and their system. She never gave up on people or concluded that her socialist vision was impractical—never threw in the towel on radical change. Difficult yes, impossible never. Calling herself a socialist meant that there was always someplace to get to that was qualitatively better, and we should never, never be satisfied with less. Not that her hope ever became vague, ethereal, or unreal. She was too Jewish for that. Real-world struggles had concrete goals, even if inspired by a distant horizon. She tried, in the political life that was so much part of her, to keep alive both a belief in a better world and firm grounding in this world, fighting for whatever was on the agenda.

Helen was, by her example, one of my greatest mentors. This is the one thing I never got to tell her. I have been privileged to have so many years with such a person, someone who lived what she believed. Her commitment helped nurture my own, her activism inspired my own. Her hope gave me hope. She is one of those rare people about whom you can honestly say that the world will be worse without her—and, speaking for myself, my world will be emptier, far emptier without her.

Immigration Reform Update:

Across the country, there has been an upsurge in immigrants' rights organizing during the past 18 months.

Spurred on by President Obama's promise to pass comprehensive immigration reform during his first year in office, organizers launched a strong accountability campaign, including the 250,000 person March for America in Washington DC. Unsatisfied by the Congress and the Administration's responses thus far, the movement has resorted to acts of civil disobedience and is organizing hard for the 2010 elections. In Michigan, and across the country, immigrants rights allies aim to bring hundreds of thousands of new voters to the polls, in an effort to demonstrate the growing power of the immigrant's rights movement, and demand action in the legislature as soon as possible.

This organizing is taking place against the backdrop of the passage of SB 1070 in Arizona. SB 1070 would remove police discretion, and require law enforcement to demand the immigration papers of anyone they deemed "reasonably suspicious" of being an undocumented immigrant. It would also criminalize anyone who "harbors," aids, or employs the undocumented. This would criminalize anyone from husbands and wives who share a home but not an immigration status, to neighbors who might give an undocumented friend a ride to church, to those who offer migrant's a drink of water in the desert.

Obviously, SB 1070 creates numerous civil rights and racial profiling problems, and also further alienates police from the immigrant community at large. Arizona has also been hit hard by a devastating national boycott of travel to the state, resulting in the loss of at least \$100 million in business from conventions alone.

The passage of SB 1070 set off a firestorm that continues to this day. Members of the faith community have held continuous vigil before the state capitol in Arizona, demanding repeal of the law, while other organizations work to register new voters and build support amongst the White and African-American communities. Opponents of the law earned a short-term victory recently, when the court of appeals issued injunctions against some of the most heinous provisions of the law, while not ruling on the constitutionality of the law as a whole.

Here in Michigan, the Reform Immigration for America - Michigan coalition continues the fight against "copycat" SB 1070 bills that have been introduced into our house and senate. The coalition was able to organize widespread public pressure against Arizona-style bills, such that both Democratic candidates for governor pledged to oppose the proposed legislation.

To stay updated about the campaign for immigrants rights in Michigan, please visit www.michiganimmigrationreform.org or text the word "Justice" to 69866.

SAVE THE DATE

September 28th and 29th

For the DSA Forum

featuring

JEFF FAUX

past president of the

Economic Policy Institute

and

October 2nd

MARCH FOR JOBS IN

WASHINGTON, D.C.

for further information

or to reserve a spot on the bus,

contact David Green at

(248) 761-4203.

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD FOR DETROIT DSA

Detroit DSA's by-laws require biannual election of officers and executive board. We will hold elections at our general membership meeting on September 11th. DSA members may nominate any member in good standing until the general membership meeting on September 11th. The executive board has recommended the following slate:

Chair: David Green

Vice-Chair: Catherine Hoffman

Secretary: Selma Goode

Treasurer: Dave Ivers

At Large Executive Board Members: Ken Jenkins, Lon Herman, Reg McGhee, Phil Schloop,
Dave Elsila

Calendar of Events

September

Saturday, September 11th—DSA general membership meeting from 10 AM until noon at the Royal Oak Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais Avenue)

Saturday, September 11th—DSA canvassing and phone banking on behalf of state senate candidate Paul Gielegem from 1-3 PM. We will meet at Paul's headquarters (38875 Harper in Clinton Township) at 12:30 PM to receive our assignments.

Tuesday and Wednesday, September 28th and 29th—DSA Forum featuring Jeff Faux, economist and past president of the Economic Policy Institute who will speak on "Jobs and the Economic Crisis"—Details concerning the forum will be forwarded shortly. For further information, contact David Green at (248) 761-4203.

October

Saturday, October 2nd—March for Jobs in Washington, D.C. Detroit DSA will be making arrangements for bus transportation to the march. To reserve space on the bus, or for further information, contact David Green at (248) 761-4203.

Saturday, October 9th—DSA canvassing and phone banking on behalf of state senate candidate Paul Gielegem from 10 AM until noon. We will meet at Paul's headquarters (38875 Harper in Clinton Township) at 9:30 AM to receive our assignments.

Sunday, October 10—DSA executive board meeting from 10 AM until noon at the home of David and Teena Green (28292 Harwich Drive in Farmington Hills)

November

Saturday, November 6th—DSA general membership meeting from 10 AM until noon at the Royal Oak Senior/Community Center (3500 Marais Avenue)