

PRE-CONVENTION DISCUSSION BULLETIN

**2009 NATIONAL CONVENTION
OCTOBER 9-11, 2009
NEWARK, NJ**



Comrades,

The SP People of Color, Queer, and Women's commissions are pleased to announce that the agenda of the 2009 National Convention will include a Friday night forum on sexism, racism, and heterosexism as related to SP-USA principles, platform, and practice. This forum will be scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m., on Friday, October 9th. To assure that all members can attend, all convention committees will meet from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm and not reconvene after that time.

The purpose of this forum is to clarify and confirm our party's commitment to socialist feminism, anti-racism, and queer rights. Representatives from each of the sponsoring commissions will address the question "What do SP principles, platform, and practices say about our role in the struggle for justice, equality, and liberation for women, people of color, and the LGBTQ community?" A facilitated Q&A and discussion will follow.

It is our belief that our party's principles and platform should be an ongoing topic of discussion and debate. While socialist feminism, anti-racism, and queer rights are presented as basic tenets of our Party, there are certainly differences of opinion among the membership as to what they mean—in theory and in practice.

The National Convention delegates represent a wide-range of viewpoints within the Party. Therefore, we should make use of the opportunity for dialogue that the convention provides.

We believe that this review and discussion of party policies and positions relative to feminism, liberation struggles, and minority rights will strengthen gender, racial, and cultural awareness and diversity in our party and in the democratic socialist movement.

In short: It is our experience that SP-USA members welcome and enjoy the chance to come together to think and talk about matters critical to the functioning of our party and to the building of a mass democratic socialist movement. Issues around sexism, racism, and heterosexism, both within and outside the Party, are matters of this kind. We need to address them regularly. Ideas regarding internal systems and organizing projects related to confronting bias and creating and maintaining diversity can and should be brought to our national conventions as well as to our organizing conferences.

We look forward to your participation in the 2009 National Convention's Friday Night Forum at 7:30 p.m. on October 9th.

In solidarity,

Amber Clifford
Queer Commission

Susan Dorazio
Women's Commission

Amilcar Navarro
People of Color Commission

CONVENTION FAQs

Hotel: Gateway Hilton Hotel Gateway Center - Raymond Blvd, Newark, New Jersey, United States 07102-5107 Tel: 1-973-622-5000

Transportation: The Hotel is connected to Newark Penn Station by a walk way overpass. To enter the hotel you can follow the signs inside Penn Station to the Hilton Hotel or go downstairs and cross the street.

From Newark Liberty Airport: Take NJ Transit from the hotel to Penn Station.

From NYC Airports: If you take fly into New York City instead of Newark you should take a shuttle or subway directly to New York Penn Station, walk one block East to JC Penny/ Herald Sq and take the PATH train to Newark Penn Station (\$1.75). Follow directions above from Newark Penn Station.

AMTRAK: Take AMTRAK to Newark Penn Station or take to NY Penn Station and follow directions above.

Greyhound: Take to Newark Penn Station stop.

For emergency questions or info call Greg's cell (201) 803-7574

ARTICLES

Towards An American Social Revolution

By David McReynolds, New York, NY

It was 1951 when I joined the Socialist Party, at UCLA. Disturbed at the right wing of the SP, at its support of the Korean War, the anti-Communism which had led the Party to accept some limits on civil liberties, I joined with others in setting up the "Committee for a Socialist Program", a left wing caucus. We fought the entrance of the Social Democratic Federation into the SP in 1956 but by then, at a time when the SP's membership was even smaller than it is now, I saw an opening when Max Shachtman and the Independent Socialist League - "reformist Trotskyists" - sought to come into the SP.

As a student I had read Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Martov, Balabanoff, Luxemburg, Pannekoek, Kautsky, but it was Mohandas Gandhi who most appealed to me, and I had come under the influence of A.J. Muste and Bayard Rustin. So while I had admiration for Lenin, and for the events of October, 1917 in Russia, what concerned me, as it concerned Muste, was the building of an American movement.

At no time was I drawn to Shachtman, whom I found bright but not deep. My interest in the ISL entry into the SP was emphatically not because I was drawn to some version of Leninist or Trotskyist thought but because I felt that at that time, when the Communist Party was disintegrating, the Civil Rights movement had begun, the peace movement was powerful - that at that moment it might be possible to use the name and reputation of Norman Thomas and the Socialist Party as a rallying point for a new beginning. (Something, let me add, with which Norman Thomas agreed).

Events took an unhappy turn. Shachtman moved to the far right, and the old, historic Socialist Party I had joined in 1951 splintered in 1972 in what was a muddled and strange configuration. By then the Vietnam War was raging and it seemed far more important to put my time into the struggle to end that war, than to get into faction fights with Shachtman and Harrington. I had resigned from the Socialist Party in 1971 to protest its "critical support" of the Vietnam War, but rejoined when Frank Zeidler and Brahm Bassford pulled most of the "old" Socialist Party back together in 1973.

Much of the current internal debate in the Socialist Party as I read it on the members list (and it is a very good thing that most SP members aren't on that list!) is replete with what I find a pointless debate about who is a "revolutionary socialist" and who is a "social democrat". Regulars on that list serve are familiar with the "tendency of two" in Miami who refer to themselves as "Bolshevik Beach Bums" and argue the case for "making revolution" (as if revolution was something like a dish you could cook for dinner).

Central to the American socialist movement that I came into in 1951 was a passionate belief in the defense of civil liberties, a deep opposition to the vanguard and democratic centralist positions of the Leninists and Trotskyists - who were worthy, without a doubt, but with a different vision than most of us had. We sought - and I still seek - a socialism which will be American, even as it is also internationalist. This is a lesson we could have learned from others. The Vietnamese once asked me why some of the Americans in the peace movement carried the Vietnamese flag in our demonstrations and not the American flag. The Vietnamese movement, as that of China, of Cuba, was built on the national culture of those countries, not on a slavish effort to duplicate events from Russia in 1917.

We are today a small movement. Even if one counts as allies those groups which have rejected the "vanguardism" of the Leninists - Democratic Socialists of America, Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism, Freedom Road Socialists, and Solidarity, the total number of folks is under 5,000. If you toss in all those other groups which embrace some form of the old Soviet model - Workers World Party, Socialist Workers Party, Party of Socialism and Liberation, Freedom Socialist Party (and a dozen other fragments) you have less than 10,000. The Communist Party, which is in transition, has less than 3,000. Can we grasp not only how divided the movement is, but how tiny a part of the American public we reach?

The debate about whether one is a "revolutionist" or a "social democrat" makes as much sense to me as if we were starting out from New York on a road trip to San Francisco and before we had gone less than a hundred miles were hopelessly divided over which restaurant to go to in San Francisco, and whether the meal would be vegan, vegetarian, or steaks. We spend more time attacking each other than the vast, well organized capitalist structure in charge of our country.

We need to find some way to embrace as many Americans as possible, working on immediate projects, engaging in independent electoral action where we can, engaging with trade unions, with the full range of progressive forces, including peace, women, multi-cultural groups, and, yes, religious. (Let me note in passing that the revolutionary events in the South in the 1950's and 1960's came out of middle class in the black churches - which were, on many issues, very reactionary. Yet in that context, of that time and place, they opened up the political landscape of this nation).

This convention is extremely important. It will determine whether the Socialist Party reaches out to others, or closes itself inward in an effort to be as pure as possible. We have new members, and younger members. It is up to them to end the pointless ideological wars in the SP, to see other groups on the left as allies, not as enemies. And to realize that if we seek to achieve a genuine American social revolution, in which the political structure will be based on working people, the means of production owned and democratically run by the workers - then we have a life time of work ahead of us, of education, of being part of our communities, of the struggles in those communities. And it is our job not only to carry socialist values into those communities, but also to listen, to learn.

That is the task facing the delegates at this convention - to close the door on sectarianism, to seek links with the history of our own nation. Which means seeing how central racism has been to our country, how deeply certain values of "individualism" have penetrated, (where in other societies there is more sense of community), how often militant action has been nonviolent as violent. It is easy to be drawn to foreign examples, whether from Russia, or China, or Cuba - but the most revolutionary teachers from those countries would tell us to look homeward, and build on our own unique foundation. This means embracing both Eugene V. Debs and Norman Thomas. It means honoring the achievements of Frank Zeidler even if many of us (including me) find ourselves to Frank's "left". It means embracing Emma Goldman, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, A. J. Muste and A. Philip Randolph - all figures who fought for a "new America", one that has never been and yet can be.

We are divided - and I can understand this - on the issue of electoral action. But in 99% of the nation there is no socialist on the ballot and members engaged in political work may find themselves working, at times, on the fringe of the Democratic Party. I've run as a write-in Socialist Party candidate in Lower Manhattan (1958), as a candidate on the ballot on the Peace and Freedom Party line in 1968 (with full support of the Socialist Party, as the Presidential candidate of our party in 1980 and 2000, and as the Senate candidate of the Green Party here in New York (with full support of the Socialist Party) in 2004. So no one can argue that I oppose independent electoral action. But I have also actively supported the Democratic candidate for City Council in my district, and sent a small contribution for her re-election, just as I have sent a small contribution to Greg Pason's campaign in New Jersey. (A small contribution because I'm on social security). Should I be expelled? Or should we try to understand that the Socialist Party is less a political party than can put candidates forward with the tenacity the Libertarians do, than a political force seeking to use every means we have to push forward our agenda?

David McReynolds, co-chair of the Socialist Party for two terms, member of the National Committee for many years, living in retirement in Lower Manhattan.

A Social Democrat View of Our Party's Recent History **By Peter Diamondstone, Brattleboro VT**

Viet Nam. Social Democrats took over the SP, and under the leadership of Shactman passed the Harrington Resolution supporting the War. When the Party split, 8 years after Tonkin Gulf, and supporting the Viet Nam War, Shactman formed Social Democrats-USA, and continued to support the War. Harrington formed what is now known as DSA, also a party for Social Democrats, and continued to support the war until the Democratic Party opposed it with a Congressional budget limit.

The Party was so overrun with Social Democrats that they formed TWO separate groups of Social Democrats. And the worst of it is that even with 2 separate SD groups, there were so many of them left, no, remaining that they overran SP-USA for over 30 years. These were the Social Democrats who had finally come to oppose the War.

Sanctions. Sanctions were a euphemism for blockade. The blockade was a form of genocide. At the DC "antiwar" demonstration, Jan.26, 1991, SP-USA supported genocide with banners and signs and publications. Blockade is naval warfare. The new SP-USA was still so overrun with Social Democrats that the mass murder of close to 100,000 Iraqi children a year under the age of 5 years by "sanctions" meant nothing to them. They justified naval warfare as a means to stop warfare. A sort of new twist on Viet Nam: burning a village to save it. SP-USA supported "economic sanctions" -the Republicrat and Social Democrat euphemism for war: naval blockade, see the Brattleboro Reformer editorials, Nov. 1, 1991, "When is a blockade not a blockade?" and May 26, 1992, "The Never Ending War." Even my capitalist home town daily newspaper knew that "economic sanctions" was a coverup for blockade.

On Dec. 12, 1990, the day following the final vote in Congress authorizing military force against Iraq, David Dellenger spoke at a peace rally (I still have posters advertising the event, prominently displaying Dellenger's name) at the St. Michael's RC Church school auditorium in Brattleboro . In his speech and in small group discussion groups following, Dellenger opposed the "sanctions" as acts of war, pointing out that the war- blockade under the cover of the word "sanctions"- had been going on without Congressional authorization since Aug., 1990. A week later, on Dec. 19, 1990, a small DC demonstration of about 10,000 was organized principally by Workers World Party which, like Dellenger , opposed the "sanctions" -blockade- from its inception in August.

A week later, on Dec. 26, 1990, there was a quite large DC "anti-war" demonstration (organizers claimed 100,000). SP-USA was one of many liberal Democrat and Social Democrat sponsors allegedly opposing "The War," but supporting the blockade, naval warfare, using the euphemism, "economic sanctions." SP-USA had signs and banners with the words, "Let the Sanctions Work," thus supporting limited naval warfare. Ultimately the "sanctions"-blockade- was responsible for the mass murder of at least a half million Iraqi children under the age of 5 years.

For empirical evidence of the blockade prior to the Congressional authorization for use of military force, see E.Faye Williams' book, The Peace Terrorists- I have a copy. She was part of the effort to break the "sanctions"-blockade by bringing medical supplies and food to Iraq aboard the Womens' Peace Ship that embarked from North Africa in Nov., 1990. At the time she was "crew" on the Womens' Peace Ship, she was an assistant to a US Congressperson from California and had been the victim of a stolen election in Louisiana for the US House.

The Womens' Peace Ship had been major news until it suddenly slipped from newspaper front pages into oblivion when the ship was seized by the so called "sanctions," the US Navy and Marines. How the Women captives of Navy and Marines were treated makes for interesting reading by itself. The cargo of food and medical supplies was illegally offloaded by our brave troops at Qatar. The cargoless ship with its crew and Women passengers was then allowed to finish the voyage to Iraq, shortly before the bombing began. That is what our party was supporting. The mass murder of children by depriving them of food and medicine. -Like the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

I believe this party failed to openly and publicly declare its opposition to the "sanctions"- blockade, until 1996. From 1990 on, the sanctions were murdering children under 5 at a rate of about 100,000 each year. LANCET, the Brits medical magazine, published it. Ramsey Clark made speeches all over the country, sponsored by Workers World, because he and they knew that the "sanctions"-blockade were mass murder. They held a War Crimes tribunal in Manhattan in Feb., '92, in part condemning the "sanctions" as mass murder-genocide.

As we all know, once war- even naval war- remember Tonkin Gulf- gets rolling, it has a life of its own. Our party was a cheerleader for starting the snow ball of naval warfare, "sanctions" - blockade rolling down the slippery slope of mass murder and then we stopped cheering once the damage had been done, but did nothing to stop the snow ball of mass murder by sanctions-blockade for years.

Every time one pays dues to the SP-USA, one is renewing one's subscription to the Statement of Principles (SoP) including the section on Electoral Politics. Note that Bill Stodden, based on the SoP , made the ethical decision to leave the SP because he decided to support a Democrat.

In some states, in order to participate in the primaries of the capitalist parties, one must become a member of one of them, such as in NY State, which raises an ethical question for ethics conscious members renewing or joining SP. Does the declaration of support implied by public declaration of voting in capitalist party primaries and capitalist party membership help to support and maintain the capitalist parties, and does that conflict sufficiently with the SoP to make SP membership unethical? All of us must decide that ethical questions for ourselves.

The Social Democrats' assumption is that the Republican is "...the worst side.." of the Capitalist electoral duopoly. It is THE fundamental assumption of Social Democrats. But that assumption is rejected by Socialist Party-USA members who not only accept, but rejoice in, as in marriage, personal commitment to and restraint by the Statement of Principles and Party Constitution.

Joining this party is a commitment to a classless society which means rejection of capitalism and its ramifications. And that is the reason our Statement of Principles restricts us to electoral politics "...independent..." of BOTH Capitalist parties.

Joining SP-USA is commitment to all other members that we mutually agree to restraints on our personal freedoms that do not restrict non members. Those restraints are set forth in the SoP and Constitution. As a result of agreeing to those restraints, we become socialist team members who commit to each other that we will not give Aid or Comfort to either party of the Capitalist Duopoly.

PLATFORM COMMITTEE

Immigration

By Steven Edinger Los Angeles, CA

To re-do or remove the immigration section of the party platform

Migration and immigration are a complex topic. I believe that being a socialist does not necessarily mean having a set position on migration and immigration. Some socialists advocate having no countries or borders at all. Others, such as myself, are in favor of borders. A world government, in my opinion, would be a terrible thing.

When asked about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, M. K. Gandhi answered that we'd be better off with a declaration of human duties. I don't think that people have a right to go wherever we want and do whatever we want.

Our party should not be trying to promise everything to everybody. But that's what the present immigration section of our party platform is doing. As it stands, we're calling to basically open the borders and allow anyone from anywhere in the world to become a U.S. citizen after they've been living here for six months. Yet in other sections of the platform, we call for defending the environment! And in other sections, we advocate universal healthcare for everyone in the United States. These positions are completely contradictory! How on earth is the United States going to withstand the tripling or quadrupling of our population, provide this free healthcare for all, and at the same time, become environmentally sustainable??!!

That is completely impossible. If you put two and two together, our present party platform adds up to a joke.

In this last day before our deadline, I don't have time to write out a well-thought-out platform statement on migration or immigration. I can tell you that I personally disagree with the present statement right from the first section. I'm NOT for a world "where ... everyone will be able to ... live where they choose."

-- Daniel Boone and the other European settlers who moved to Indian lands in the Ohio River Valley??!!

-- Today's Israeli settlers in the Palestinian Territories??!!

-- Urban Sprawl housing in today's remaining natural areas??!! NO WAY.

Term Limits

By Eric Chester Pt. Townsend, WA

The Socialist Party USA supports term limits for those holding office at every level of government, from municipalities to Congress.

Rationale: Rotation in office is an important principle that helps to ensure that those in office do not become entrenched and invulnerable from pressure from below. Long-term incumbents have important advantages that make it very difficult to remove them from office. Indeed, most veteran members of Congress confront no opposition and are elected unopposed.

by Steven Edinger Los Angeles California

[The following first paragraph should go into the party platform.]

The Socialist Party USA is the voice of revolutionary democratic socialism in the United States. We are all for revolutionary measures that may affect property relations or increase citizen participation. But we also favor democracy, yes, even what some people call "formal democracy" or "representative democracy." We stridently oppose constitutional changes that allow for the unlimited reelection of presidents or other public officials. The restrictions on a leader's time in office represents a very important built-in democratic protection.

Healthcare

Single-Payer Health Care as a Transition to Socialized Medicine

Presented by the NYC Local of the Socialist Party USA

Rationale: A democratic socialist political program should both paint the future we wish to create and reflect ongoing struggles in which our organization is participating. Programs which do one but not the other offer ultra-left sectarian

or reformist alternatives. The current national debate on health care presents democratic socialists with just such a challenge. In the past period locals of the SP-USA have effectively participated in campaigns supporting the creation of a single-payer national health care system. We propose to have this political activity reflected in our program by including demands which support both single-payer and community control of medical facilities. The new demands do not eliminate our final goal of a fully socialized health care system. They merely demonstrate that we see the abolition of private health insurance companies as a key step toward making health care a human right through socialized medicine. We believe that only a broad mass movement can make this change possible. Socialists need to be involved in this process and our party program should reflect this.

Health Care

The Socialist Party stands for a socialized health care system based on universal coverage, salaried doctors and health care workers, and revenues derived from a steeply graduated income tax.

1. We support the immediate abolition of all private health insurance companies through the creation of a single-payer health system. We see single-payer as an important step in the direction of a fully socialized national health program with full standard and alternative medical, dental, vision, and mental health coverage for all. This system would be publicly funded through progressive taxation and controlled by democratically elected assemblies of health care workers and patients. The National Health Program should improve, and replace, Medicare and Medicaid.
2. We call for a health care system that emphasizes preventive care, respects patients' privacy, gives special attention to the needs of the physically and mentally disabled, and conducts treatment and research unimpaired by sexism, racism, or homophobia.
3. We call for full funding for AIDS research, prevention, and treatment. We demand full civil rights for people living with AIDS.
4. We call for public ownership and worker and community control of the pharmaceutical industry.
5. We call for educational programs to help prevent drug addiction; for voluntary treatment programs for addicts and alcoholics; and for the availability of free, sterile needles for those still using IV drugs.
6. We call for the reinstatement of funding to community mental health services so that low-cost or no-cost treatment is available on a voluntary basis, with clients' rights respected. We oppose involuntary incarceration for treatment without due process.
7. We support the right to choose or refuse medical treatment, the right to die, and the right to assisted suicide.
8. We call for full community decision-making regarding the creation, organization or elimination of public health care facilities.

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

Healthcare

By Eric Chester Pt. Townsend, WA

Health care is a vitally important segment of the economy. The Socialist Party USA believes that health care is a basic right and should be provided to everyone, without cost, on the basis of equal access for all. This requires a system of socialized medicine, in which the government insures everyone, where there are no copays, premiums or deductibles and where doctors receive a salary. Such a system would be funded by a steeply graduated income tax, where the wealthy and affluent are heavily taxed to generate sufficient funds to provide appropriate health care for all. The Party also stands for the socialization of the pharmaceutical companies, taking these essential corporations out of the hands of the wealthy few and operating them for the common good in the public sector.

The current market based system is a disastrous failure. 45 million Americans have no health insurance. Many more hold insurance policies that do not protect them from catastrophic bills when confronting medical emergencies. Corporations push more and more of the cost of expensive premiums on to their workforce. Pharmaceutical companies promote unneeded prescriptions with misleading advertisements while avoiding the funding of research

into illnesses they do not view as profitable targets. Doctors are encouraged to rack up their charges rather than seeking the best care for their patients.

Single payer health care has become an issue that many liberal organizations and unions have adopted as a priority. A single payer system confronts only one problem of the many in the current system, removing the insurance system from the for-profit private sector. This would mark a significant step forward, but it would not ensure a health care system that actually provides the needed care for all. The actual provision of goods and services, by doctors and pharmaceutical companies, would remain mired in the profit determined private sector. Furthermore, single payer does not necessarily put an end to premiums, copays and deductibles.

The Socialist Party can only provide critical support for single payer coalitions. In participating, we do so while continuing to call for a system of socialized medicine, and while pressing for a funding base that targets the wealthy and affluent.

President Obama has made health care a priority issue. In doing so, he has explicitly stated his opposition to a single payer system. Instead, he and Congressional leaders are working out a plan to expand health care coverage to some of those not currently covered. Funding would occur through a patchwork of taxes, some progressive and some targeting the poor, such as a tax on those who are presently without coverage and who refuse to pay into the new system. The Socialist Party rejects the new program as entirely inadequate. Furthermore, we are opposed in principle to coercing individuals into paying for health insurance they should be receiving as a basic right.

The Socialist Party remains committed to a system of socialized medicine. In broader, single payer coalitions, we will point out Obama's rejection of single payer and the necessity of totally breaking with the Democratic Party as a prerequisite to gaining a genuine change in the current system. Socialist Party members will oppose any effort to dilute the program of the broadly based health care coalitions, to weaken an already weak demand even further, and will push instead to move forward.

Strategy and Direction for 2009

By Greg Pason, Maywood, NJ

The Party's convention is an opportunity for rank-n-file members to not only elect National Committee members and delegates, but to give the NC direction and a plan of action for the next two years. A good way to do this is to create a *Strategy and Direction* statement. This strategy and direction document will prioritize the NC's work and give us better focus for the upcoming 2 years. By creating such a document the membership can better evaluate whether the NC is representing the will of the convention. **I therefore move that the 2009 national convention pass a Strategy and Direction statement for 2009-2011.**

Action Committee

By Eric Chester Pt. Townsend, WA

The national committee shall establish an action committee composed of one representative from each local. The action committee shall meet by email and by phone conference as it sees necessary. It shall implement coordinated days of action and other national programs, while providing locals a venue to exchange information on local activities. The national committee shall make sure that the committee is gender balanced and that people of color are represented.

Spokespeople

By Eric Chester Pt. Townsend, WA

1. The co-chairs and co-vice-chairs shall serve as official spokespeople for the Socialist Party USA. In speaking to, or writing for, the media, or as speakers in public forums, they act as the official representatives of the Party. As such, they are bound by the same guidelines that apply to the presidential and vice-presidential candidates. They should adhere to the fundamental principles embodied in the Statement of Principles and they should promote the current policies of the Party as embodied in the Party's platform, convention resolutions and decisions of the national committee. In those unusual cases where they disagree with the position of the Party, as spokespeople they should present the Party's position as well as their own.

2. The national committee may designate certain members of the Party to speak on or write about specific issues of concern. As official spokespeople of the Socialist Party USA, these individuals will be bound by the same guidelines set forth in point 1.

3. All other members of the Party should make it clear, in writing for or speaking to the media, when they are identified as members of the Party, that they are speaking as individuals and not as official representatives of the Socialist Party USA. This holds true as well when a member is a speaker at a public forum. This guideline is particularly applicable to members holding positions of responsibility, members of the national committee and alternates, members of the NAC, and state and local officers.

Revolution Revival Concert Series Resolution

by Steven Edinger Los Angeles California

In honor of the thousands of revolutionaries who gave their lives during the 20th Century in Nicaragua and El Salvador, in honor of the recent election victories by the FSLN and FMLN in these two countries, the Socialist Party USA assumes sponsorship of the Revolution Revival Concert Series. Our purpose here is to help the revolution succeed in these two countries. We aim to bring CRITICAL SUPPORT -- critical in both senses of the word -- BADLY NEEDED and WILLING TO VOICE OUR OPINION. We aim to offer badly financial and material support, directly from the people of the United States. AND at the same time, we intend to offer our opinions -- to help guide this revolution in what we consider to be a good direction.

The Revolution Revival Concert Series has been taking place on a decentralized, small-scale basis. The role of the Socialist Party will be to help promote the concerts -- both on flyers and on the official Socialist Party USA web site.

Although we will not be putting SP-USA funds into these concerts, we also pledge not to siphon off any concert revenues for ourselves. In the case of Nicaragua, the money raised will presently go directly into the country's national budget, to replace aid money that was recently cancelled by the United States government. We will also work toward the long-term goal of helping Nicaragua pay off and wipe out its foreign debts. In the case of El Salvador, we are ready to work on the foreign debt right away -- again, with the purpose of reducing and eventually wiping out this debt. Concert organizers have already been working directly with Nicaraguan and Salvadoran representatives here in the United States, and will continue doing so. In all the concerts, half of the money raised will be going to Nicaragua and half to El Salvador.

Environmental Standards at our Concerts: Strict environmental standards must apply. We pledge not to use air travel in connection with these concerts. We won't be using gas generators, plastic silverware, plastic lats, plastic cups, styrofoam cups nor styrofoam plates. We will be recycling our bottles and cans from the concerts.

Leeway as to the Concert Content: Concert organizers should aim for participatory activities, but they will have leeway as to the choice of music, speakers, poets, storytellers, and sports activities.

Leeway to Voice our Opinions: It is hard to say what new proposals the Nicaraguan and Salvadorean governments may introduce during the next few years. But concert organizers should have leeway to express their opinions. No, we're not presenting "conditions" for our support. But we are going to FEEL like trying harder if we see things going in a good direction in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

From the outset, we can state unequivocally, a sentiment of our party as a whole.

-- The Socialist Party USA supports a woman's right to abortion, and we especially oppose anti-abortion laws that may endanger a woman's life.

-- The Socialist Party USA is the voice of revolutionary democratic socialism in the United States. We are all for revolutionary measures that may affect property relations or increase citizen participation. But we also favor democracy, yes, even what some people call "formal democracy" or "representative democracy." We stridently oppose constitutional changes that allow for the unlimited reelection of presidents or other public officials. The restriction of a leader's time in office represents a very important built-in democratic protection.

-- The Socialist Party USA is committed to defending the natural environment, anywhere in the world. Yes, we oppose capitalism in part because of its devastating impact on the environment. But we also recognize that socialist governments and socialist countries have ALSO inflicted environmental harm, as occurred at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station in 1986. We aim to guide socialism in a direction that will reduce and eventually halt humanity's harmful impact on the environment. And in this respect, we stridently oppose the construction of a new, near-sea-level canal, across Central America -- no matter what countries might be involved. Because of its terrible impact on Caribbean and Pacific sea life, such a canal would represent an environmental disaster.

Motion to Support the 2010 US Social Forum

by Peter Moody (Pennsylvania member at-large)

Motion: Instead of holding its own national organizing conference in summer 2010, the Socialist Party USA instead helps build and mobilize for the US Social Forum in Detroit, Michigan. To help facilitate this, a Social Forum Organizing Committee will be created to help coordinate workshops and forums that members want to participate in.

Motivation: the previous two national organizing conferences (in Detroit, MI in 2006 and Ann Arbor, MI in 2008) have been reasonably successful as ways to bring Socialist Party activists and organizers together to share skills and work on internal education. However, the United States Social Forum will give us a much wider audience for dialogue on the struggles that we as a Party are engaged in, and may provide opportunities for developing closer relationships with other socialist groups where we share political principles and spheres of activist work.

Series of Three Resolutions to Convey Honorary Memberships in the Socialist Party,

by Steven Edinger. Los Angeles CA

Resolution for Colombian Political Prisoners Held in the United States

The Socialist Party USA would like to honor Ricardo Palmera and Comandante Sonia for their work and dedication to the people of Colombia. We hereby convey honorary membership in our party during their stay in the United States. [We will also attempt to deliver free copies of our party newspaper to the prison institutions where they are staying.]

Resolution for Cuban Political Prisoners held in the United States

The Socialist Party USA would like to honor Gerardo ... {We'll fill in the five names later}, for their work in defending Cuba from armed attacks by exiles living in the United States. We hereby convey honorary membership in our party during their stay in the United States. [We will also attempt to deliver free copies of our party newspaper to the prison institutions where they are staying.]

Resolution for a United States Political Prisoner held in Peru

The Socialist Party USA would like to honor Lori Berenson for her steadfast dedication to the people of Peru. We hereby convey honorary membership in our party during her stay in Peru. [We will resolve to send free copies of our party newspaper to her parents' house in New York. Her parents can try to deliver the papers to Lori when they visit her at Peruvian prison institutions.]

Political Organizing To Oppose U.S. Intervention in Colombia

by Steven Edinger Los Angeles California

The Socialist Party USA resolves to become an official sponsor for nonviolent actions and demonstrations to oppose United States intervention in Colombia. We will attempt to make these actions and demonstrations open for a variety of anti-imperialist points-of-view to express themselves: for pacifists, for supporters of the revolutionary guerillas, and for everyone in-between

On Party Accounting

By Greg Pason Maywood, NJ

We need to start synching party finances so we can better evaluate spending.

Resolution: The National Office, Treasury and The Socialist magazine will begin to compile financial records into Quickbooks or a similar accounting program and develop a standard accounting system beginning on January 1, 2010. The finance committee will work with the National Secretary, Treasurer and Editor in helping to develop this system. The National Action Committee or National Committee will review the system at it's second meeting of 2010 so that a system can be approved and Party accounting standardized for future review.

Resolution on Norman Thomas

by Steven Edinger Los Angeles California

The Socialist Party USA would like to appologize for Norman Thomas, at least for some of the things he did. During the 1930s and 40s, Norman was our presidential candidate several times. But during the 1960s, Norman continued as a Socialist Party member. The Socialist Party USA of today is a solidly anti-imperialist part; but during the 1960s Norman Thomas was clearly collaborating with imperialism, and, at some level, involving our party with his collaboration. (1) According to several veteran militants, Norman accepted money from the Central Intelligence Agency. (2) According to Edward S. Herman's book, Demonstration Elections, Norman helped convince deposed

Dominican Republic President Juan Bosch to participate in an unfair election process in the mid-1960s. This decision by Bosch helped to diffuse the revolutionary movement in the Dominican Republic, and helped to stabilize the U.S.-imposed government there.

We believe that the Socialist Party USA, as refounded in 1973, has been working consistently in a good direction. Part of doing that means unearthing, recognizing, and apologizing for party leaders' mistakes in the past.

Resolution in Favor of Presidential Term Limits

by Steven Edinger Los Angeles California

Term limits are very important for presidents, especially socialist presidents. We doubt that these limits are needed for a political party which does not presently hold political power, -- as with our own party. However, we must "lead by example." For this reason, the Socialist Party USA hereby adopts a 10-year maximum limit for all paid party posts, including that of our National Secretary -- effective January 1, 2010. -- Any party leaders who complete ten years as National Secretary will not be able to switch to another paid party position.

On this note, we salute the excellent leadership of National Secretary Greg Pason, and will set about electing a new National Secretary. During the training/ transition period, (October through December, 2009), the Socialist Party USA will continue to pay Secretary Pason his full salary. We will also pledge ADDITIONAL funding to pay our new Secretary during the training period.

Dual Membership

By Marc Luzietti Ft. Lauderdale, FL

The National Committee, National Convention, or National Referendum may allow dual membership with specific democratic centralist organizations or allow specific individuals from such organizations to have dual membership. Democratic centralist organizations or individuals in such organizations not specifically granted permission to join the Party are banned from dual membership.

Dues Structure

By Marc Luzietti Ft. Lauderdale, FL

The National Committee will hereby institute a progressive dues structure of a minimum of 1% of annual salary. Dues may be waived or reduced for individuals suffering economic hardship.

The Socialist

By Eric Chester, Pt. Townsend, WA

1. The Socialist shall be published at least four times a year on a regular basis as determined by its editorial board.
2. The national committee shall have the authority to publish its statements in The Socialist. The national committee shall also set general guidelines on the direction of the journal.
3. The national committee shall elect an editor for a term of two years. The editor shall have the primary responsibility for soliciting articles, copyediting and working with the layout person preparing the issue for printing.
4. The national committee shall elect a gender balanced editorial board of three women and three men for a two year term of office. The editorial board shall have the final decision on which articles shall be published. Members of the editorial board shall have the primary responsibility for writing editorials. Editorials should reflect the Party's Statement of Principles and its current policies as embodied in the Party's platform, convention resolutions and decisions of the national committee.

Change to Statement of Principles

By David Schaich Cambridge, MA

Proposal: In the "Cultural Freedom" section of the Statement of Principles, replace the first two sentences, "Art is an integral part of daily life. It should not be treated as just a commodity produced by the activity of an elite group." with "Art is an integral part of daily life, and should not be treated as just a commodity."

Rationale: This proposal alters the Statement of Principles so that it no longer refers to an unspecified "elite group" of art-producers.

In its current form, this passage can lead potential members and outside observers to worry that the Socialist Party could be the sort of organization that condemns art we consider "elitist", would ban it if we had the power to do so, and so on. I have had to address such concerns myself, so this is not merely a theoretical issue.

Nor, unfortunately, are these concerns necessarily unreasonable. While we all know the Socialist Party is not an organization of this sort, there have been any number of authoritarian outfits describing themselves as socialist which did (and do) carry out such practices. It's very much to our benefit to be clearly distinguished from them, which this proposal would help accomplish.

Rights of States and Locals

By Steve Sears, Milwaukee WI

Any right, or privilege not expressly granted the National Committee or the National Action Committee in the Socialist Party USA Constitution, by Convention Resolution or membership referendum, resides solely with Locals, State Affiliates, or members at large where neither of these exist.

This change would place power into the hands of the membership. The NC and NAC are designed to run the day to day affairs of the party, not make policy. No Constitution can cover every instance and that is one reason we meet every two years. We do not elect our NC to tell us where the party is going, that is a decision made by us, the members.

Initiating Legal Action

By Steve Sears, Milwaukee WI

Resolution: No legal action can be initiated by the Socialist Party USA without first approval by the SPUSA Convention, or by a membership referendum.

The money in the SPUSA treasury belongs to each of us. Lawsuits are expensive and not something that should be initiated without a full membership review. This ensures that personal animosity does not play into the expenditure of what could amount to a large sum of our treasury.

Resolution on Dual-Membership in Democratic Centralist Structured Organizations

Submitted by the Socialist Party of Michigan State Executive Committee

1. The blanket ban on holding dual-membership in the Socialist Party USA with any and all other organizations structured along a democratic centralist organizational model is hereby repealed.
2. The National Convention and National Committee reserve the right to bar dual membership in other specific organizations.
3. In the event that reasonable suspicion emerges that a separate membership-compatible organization is attempting to conduct infiltration, membership raiding, or disruption within the Party, or has otherwise been found to be engaging in such threatening or reprehensible actions so as to warrant an immediate barring of dual-membership, the National Action Committee may also suspend dual membership in such an organization until the matter can be addressed by the National Committee at its next scheduled meeting or via a mail-ballot.

Resolution on Establishing a National Organizer Position

Submitted by The Socialist Party of Michigan State Executive Committee

The operation of the Socialist Party National Office has for long been an extraordinarily taxing and demanding job, often requiring extra long hours and efforts beyond what one person can fairly be expected to perform. Complaints frequently arise from members that the National Office does not function quickly or efficiently enough in carrying out one or another of its many numerous procedures and tasks. The real basis for such perceptions, when reasonably grounded, however, is not that the National Secretary is ineffective or unorganized, but rather that the position of National Secretary has become exorbitantly overburdened.

We as Socialists believe in fair and reasonable workloads for our own staff, just as we do for the working class as a whole. Correspondingly, we recognize that the Party's operational staffing needs have substantially grown beyond those of prior decades when SP membership was only a small fraction of its present size. Likewise, at present, the Party's opportunities for growth, organizing, and political outreach have and, likely will continue to, become exponentially greater as current economic and political conditions continue to unfold.

Rather than ultimately providing a savings in costs and resources, the direct or default assignment of a single staff member to the combined roles of daily administrator, membership and affiliate communications coordinator, branch organizer, outreach director, ombudsman, internal national discussion bulletin and newsletter editor, webmaster, membership record keeper and dues processor, office maintainer, shipping clerk, and primary fundraising developer for the national party inevitably results in sharp restrictions on the amount of time and engagement that can be put into developing each of these essential areas of work. The National Convention of the Socialist Party USA therefore resolves that:

- (1) The office of National Organizer shall be established to work full time on activities related to Party-building, coordination, and outreach, while also supplementing and assisting the administrative work of the National Secretary as needed.
- (a). In coordination with the National Secretary, the National Organizer shall continuously identify localities and state/territorial regions in which at-large membership concentrations and/or local expressions of interest indicate practical potential for the development of new locals. Upon identifying such localities and regions, the National Organizer will undertake persistent outreach efforts toward at-large members within each of them, including travel to the organizing locations of prospective new locals whenever worthwhile and feasible, in order to assist such local members with coming into contact and working together to establish new locals in their areas.
- (b). The National Organizer shall maintain, and initiate, regular contact with all chartered state and local organizations in order to keep the national party up to date on state/local organizations' operational statuses and areas of work, assist state parties and locals with overcoming any issues of dormancy or organizational dislodgement, and facilitate participation by, and coordination among, local and state Party organizations in national Party campaigns. At a minimum, toward this objective, the National Organizer will call, or make arrangements to speak with, at least one representative of every SP state and local executive committee at least once per month. In states in which there is a chartered local but no state party, the National Organizer will additionally work with such chartered locals to conduct outreach to at-large members in other areas of their states for purposes of organizing additional locals and state organizations.
- (c) The National Organizer shall work consistently on developing and expanding SP electoral action, and will assist or assume the responsibilities of Campaign Clearinghouse Coordinator; including the maintenance of the Socialist Party USA Campaign Clearinghouse website and filing of necessary paperwork for the Socialist National Committee with the Federal Election Commission. The National Organizer will also engage in efforts to facilitate the recruitment of SP candidates for federal, local, and state office, assist SP candidates with ballot access, public speaking opportunities, press coverage, campaign filings, and campaign materials when requested, and creatively research and develop new strategies for SP ballot qualification efforts within viable states.
- (d) The National Organizer shall regularly engage in external networking, outreach, and publicity efforts aimed at expanding both membership recruitment and public visibility of the Party and its political message. Under the direction of the National Committee and any pertaining guidelines it may establish for such processes, the National Organizer will regularly send out press releases regarding party statements and activities, assist with coordinating efforts to ensure the Party maintains active participation in coalitions to which it belongs (e.g. Coalition for Free and Open Elections), and engage in open, but informal outreach and dialog with other groups and coalitions with which the SP may choose to more directly pursue association or joint work in the future.
- (3) The National Organizer shall be elected, and potentially removable, by the National Committee and subject to the supervision and authority of the National Committee and National Action Committee (Article IX Section 6 of the SP-USA Constitution). In the event of a budgetary emergency in which the elimination of the National Organizer position is of explicitly clear imperative or comparative benefit to the interests of the Party, the National Committee may suspend or eliminate the position at the point of such an occurrence. Barring such emergency circumstances, the National Committee shall evaluate the costs and benefits of the National Organizer position during its 2011 pre-Convention meeting and establish a recommendation on whether to continue the position during the next National Committee term. The 2011 National Convention will then determine whether to accept, reject, or table the National Committee's recommendation in the form of a related motion.
- (4) Work hours and compensation for the National Organizer shall be determined by the National Committee (SP-USA Constitution, Article IX Section 6(2)), but should generally approximate those of the National Secretary.

Resolution on Unshackling National Party Funds from Use in SP Electoral Action

Submitted by The Socialist Party of Michigan State Executive Committee

For purposes of eliminating the Socialist Party's needless present confinement to allocating only those extremely meager funds which have been individually and specifically contributed to the 'SNC Electoral Fund,' rather than to the Socialist Party itself, for use in financially supporting the electoral activities of the Party. The 2009 Socialist Party USA National Convention resolves the following:

1. The SP National Secretary, National Treasurer, Campaign Clearinghouse Coordinator and/or any other necessary or applicable national Party officer(s) will effectively merge the FEC-recognized 'Socialist National Committee' electoral account with the default Socialist Party account in which membership dues and general contributions are ordinarily deposited.
2. The National Secretary, National Treasurer, Campaign Clearinghouse Coordinator and/or any other applicable officer(s) should familiarize themselves with the applicable requirements of the Federal Election Campaign Act as detailed in the most recent August 2007 edition of the Federal Election Commission's "Campaign Guide for Party Committees" (and any subsequent editions that may be published in the future) particularly including the specific types of contributions that are prohibited (i.e. contributions from direct federal contractors, foreign nationals without U.S. legal permanent residency, contributions made in the name of a person other than the contributor, individual contributions exceeding \$28,500 in a calendar year, cash contributions exceeding \$100, anonymous contributions exceeding \$50, and other restrictions relating to corporations, labor unions, PACS, and partnerships). The question of whether the SP Treasurer or Campaign Clearinghouse Coordinator will assume the tasks and filing obligations of the Treasurer for this merged account/committee will be determined by the National Committee following requested input on the preferences of both such officers.
3. The National Secretary, National Treasurer, Campaign Clearinghouse Coordinator, and/or other applicable officer(s) shall open a new bank account, or convert an existing Party bank account, for depositing all contributions and dues payments that are prohibited under the Federal Election Campaign Act. Such contributions, like those deposited in the main account, can then be spent on general non-election related Party expenditures, but will be specifically segregated from the account from which election-related expenditures can be drawn.
4. To ensure compliance with legal requirements, the National Secretary and/or any other applicable officer(s) shall add a fine print disclaimer to every membership application, contribution form, and solicitation letter, which states that it is "Paid for by the Socialist Party USA," or whatever will be the precise name of the new Socialist Party USA account, and that is "not authorized by any candidate or candidate committee." A line will also be added to all membership applications and contribution forms for "Occupation" and "Employer" "(if applicable)," with a notation that we are required under Federal Election Campaign Act to make our best efforts to collect such information from individuals who contribute \$200 or more within a calendar year. The National Secretary, Campaign Clearinghouse Coordinator and/or any other applicable officer(s) shall also add this disclaimer to the Socialist Party and Campaign Clearinghouse websites.
5. The National Secretary, National Treasurer and/or other applicable officer(s) shall also provide the officer who is to assume the filing responsibilities of the FEC-recognized Treasurer of this committee all necessary information that s/he will need for properly completing the required monthly, quarterly, or biannual (depending on the year and contribution receipts) reports (i.e. applicable name, address, and occupation/employer information collected for all individual receipts and expenditures exceeding \$200 in a calendar year, total election-related disbursements, total operating/generic expenses, loans owed by and to the committee, and investment and depository information).
6. In the event that new policies, findings, or other circumstances arise from which it would be clearly beneficial to repeal or modify this policy, the National Committee shall be permitted to take such action. Barring such circumstances, however, the National Committee and national officers to whom it pertains are expected to make a best faith effort to apply the resolution's intent of establishing the primary Party account's eligibility for use in electoral action-related expenditures and disbursements.

Limit discussion time in debates at the National Convention

Nan Pfefferle, Milwaukee WI

Rules committee members ought to adopt a two-minute limit for debate on the topics before it. There should be no more than five statements for and a like number against any question before the convention.

Motivation: Delegates need to have some confidence that issues listed later on the agenda will not be lost because of time overruns earlier on.

Amendments to the Socialist Party USA Statement of Principles

Submitted by The Socialist Party of Michigan State Executive Committee

Amendment to Intro Paragraph 3

Submitted by The Socialist Party of Michigan State Executive Committee

Under capitalist and "~~Communist~~" states, people have little control over fundamental areas of their lives. The capitalist system forces workers to sell their abilities and skills to the few who own the workplaces, profit from these workers' labor, and use the government to maintain their privileged position. ~~Under "Communist" states, decisions are made by Communist Party officials, the bureaucracy and the military.~~ The inevitable product of each **such a** system is a class society with gross inequality of privileges, a draining of the productive wealth and goods of the society into military purposes, environmental pollution, and war in which workers are compelled to fight other workers.

Alternate Version of Amendment to Intro Paragraph 3:

Submitted for additional consideration by The Socialist Party of Michigan State Executive Committee

Under capitalist and "~~Communist~~" **Stalinist** states, people have little control over fundamental areas of their lives. The capitalist system forces workers to sell their abilities and skills to the few who own the workplaces, profit from these workers' labor, and use the government to maintain their privileged position. **With such enormous concentration of economic and political power foundationally structured upon its expansionary need to accumulate through profitable exploitation and conquest, the productive wealth of society becomes increasingly drained into military purposes, environmental pollution, and war in which workers are compelled to fight other workers.** Under **Stalinist** "~~Communist~~" states, decisions are made by ~~Communist~~ Party officials, the bureaucracy and the military. The inevitable product of each system is a **highly stratified class** society with gross inequality of privileges. ~~a draining of the productive wealth and goods of the society into military purposes, environmental pollution, and war in which workers are compelled to fight other workers.~~

Amendment to the Electoral Action Section

Submitted by The Socialist Party of Michigan State Executive Committee

Socialists participate in the electoral process to present socialist alternatives. The Socialist Party does not divorce electoral politics from other strategies for basic change. While a minority, we fight for progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. When a majority we will rapidly introduce those changes, which constitute socialism, with priority to the elimination of the power of big business through public ownership and workers' control.

By participating in local government, socialists can support movements of working people and make improvements that illustrate the potential of public ownership. We support electoral action independent of the capitalist-controlled two-party system, **and we reject the idea that there ever exist legitimately supportable "lesser evil," "special," or so-called "progressive" candidates within any electoral level of the twin capitalist political machines.**

Constitution On-Line

By Stephen Tash, St Clair Shores, MI

Proposed that the Constitution of the Socialist Party USA be required to be readily and prominently available online through the official Socialist Party USA website.

Re-Adopt the 1973 Statement of Principles

Art Kazar, Local Chicago

Resolved that the Socialist Party, USA, in convention, re-adopt the 1973 Statement of Principles to replace the current Statement of Principles.

Amendment to "Electoral Action" in the Statement of Principles

By Matthew Andrews, Boston MA

In the last sentence, replace the word "support" with "advocate" so it will read: "We advocate electoral action independent of the capitalist-controlled two-party system."

Rationale: This strengthens the language addressing this important point of political principle. The current verb "support" is passive and not exclusive. By clarifying that we "advocate" this position, we exclude the strategic perspective that we might sometimes work within the establishment's political parties. Breaking left-wing social movements away from the Democratic and Republican Parties is central to our strategy for developing a socialist movement.

CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE

Constitutional Revisions Sub-Committee Proposals

The following changes are being proposed by the Constitutional Revisions Sub-Committee of the National Committee (names at the June 2009 NC meeting)

These are the four changes to the constitution the constitutional committee agreed to put forward. The first change had unanimous support. The following three had two out of three comrades in favor.

Article III Section 2 change third sentence to "Members in arrears in membership dues for three months or more are no longer in good standing."

Article III Add new Section 4, current Section 4 renumbered to Section 5 An organizational body of the SP-USA may initiate disciplinary action if there is evidence that a member has violated the Socialist Party Statement of Principles, Constitution, regulations, or policies. Threats against the personal safety of other comrades, whether in the SPUSA or not, is grounds for censure or other action; repeated threats or physical attack on another member is grounds for expulsion. The member's due-process rights include: a notice in writing of the charges; a hearing, not less than one month after the charges have been received, before a full meeting of the body bringing the charge; and the right to appeal the decision to the immediately higher body, up to and including National Referendum, except if disciplined by National Referendum.

Article VIII, Replace Section 6, The national convention shall nominate candidates for President and Vice-President of the United States at the conventions in the odd-numbered years immediately preceding the election years a) after the national platform has been adopted

b) unless any such convention decides by roll call vote of a ¾ majority of delegates present not to nominate for those offices

c) according to a roll-call vote of a simple majority of those delegates voting, through a process of roll-call run-off voting that eliminates the candidate with the lowest vote, in each run off, until a simple majority has chosen the nominee.

Article XI: Referenda Replace Section 8: For a referendum vote to be approved, it must receive a majority vote of those members returning ballots. (the rest is stricken)

Proposed Constitutional Changes Regarding Membership

By Arthur S. Kazar - Local Chicago

For several years now there have been heated debates within the Party regarding the practice of some State and/or Locals that have admitted members that are not members of the Socialist Party, USA. This "problem" is something that goes back decades, even before the 1973 re-founding of the SPUSA.

Those in favor of this practice claim it was something that was "grandfathered" in when the Party was reformed in 1973 even though it is not mentioned in the constitution. Those opposed claim it violates the Party's national constitution because there is no provision for such members and that the national constitution supersedes the State constitutions and Local By-laws.

I believe that if we are to expand our membership to more than the high of 1500 to 2000 that has been the norm for over 35 years and bring more people into the democratic socialist movement we need to reach out to those who agree with us in principle but for whatever reason may not want to join the national party yet would join a local or state party. My hope is that eventually most of these members will in time overcome their reservations and become full members of the Party. If some never do, I still believe that bringing new members, even if only on a state or local level, who identifies themselves as democratic socialists, adds to the strength and vitality of the entire organization.

Therefore, I propose the following changes to the Constitution of the Socialist Party, USA.

ARTICLE XII: State Organizations

Add the following as Section 2.

State Organizations may admit associate members who are not members of the Socialist Party, USA if so authorized by majority vote of the state convention or by a majority of the members who are in good standing. Every Associate Member must sign a membership application that includes "I, the undersigned, desiring to bring about by democratic means a new society based on democratic socialism, hereby apply for membership in (name of state organization) and subscribe to the Statement of Principles of the Socialist Party, USA".

Associate Members will not be eligible to run for the SEC or run for any State Party office.

Associate Members will have full rights to discuss, debate and write about state issues but will not be eligible to vote on any official position of the State organization.

Associate Members may at any time become full members by joining and paying dues to the Socialist Party, USA. Associate Members will not be considered when delegate strength to the State or National Conventions is determined.

ARTICLE XIV: Local Organizations

Add the following as Section 6.

Local Organizations may admit associate members who are not members of the Socialist Party, USA if so authorized by a majority vote of the Local's members who are in good standing. Every Associate Member must sign a membership application that includes "I, the undersigned, desiring to bring about by democratic means a new society based on democratic socialism, hereby apply for membership in (name of local organization) and subscribe to the Statement of Principles of the Socialist Party, USA".

Associate Members will not be eligible to run for the LEC or run for any Local Organization office.

Associate Members will have full rights to discuss, debate and write about local issues but will not be eligible to vote on any official position of the Local Organization.

Associate Members may at any time become full members by joining and paying dues to the Socialist Party, USA.

Member Bill of Rights

By Stephen Tash, St Clair Shores, MI

Proposed that the National Constitution of the Socialist Party USA have all Articles IV or greater incremented by 1 and insert Article IV: Member Bill of Rights:

Being voluntarily part of the Party, members retain certain rights:

1. No member shall be subject to punishment in any form by the Party or its subsidiaries and their procedures on the basis of thought, speech, or membership in another organization which is not clearly contrary to the Statement of Principles. Any punishment is limited to that affecting standing in the Party and its subsidiaries.
2. No member shall be required to state agreement with any document to retain standing or hold office except the Statement of Principles and agreement to abide by the Constitution.
3. Every member has the right to due process before any action be taken against them by the Party or its subsidiaries and their procedures. Due process necessarily includes a full and recorded briefing of the evidence against the member, time to prepare, the right to counsel, and the right to appear before a deliberative council to defend themselves against accusations. The deliberation shall be held in a location reasonably accessible to the member or arrangements will be made to remotely offer reasonable accommodations. Officers of the Party, or subsidiaries thereof, may have their duties and powers suspended during this time but not be officially removed until due process has been served. The specifics of this shall be set into a document to be decided by the National Convention and be changeable by majority vote.
4. Members have the right to witness the proceedings of the Party, its subsidiaries, and their officers. No meeting with deliberative power of Party officials nor officials of its subsidiaries shall be held in secret or without 48 hour notice.
5. Members have the right to be fully informed of the Party and its subsidiaries' documents and procedures. A well-maintained version of every document shall be made readily available to members.

Constitutional Amendments

Submitted by The Socialist Party of Michigan State Executive Committee

Amendments to 'Article III: Membership'

Section 3: Every applicant for enrollment as a member in good standing of the party, shall sign the following membership application **pledge**: "I, the undersigned, **recognizing the necessity of the working class and oppressed peoples organizing themselves into a political party, independent of and in opposition to the twin capitalist parties and the system they defend, and creating a radically** ~~desiring to bring about by democratic~~ **new social system from below, based on collective ownership and democratic control of the means of production, distribution, and commerce through political mobilization and mass action,** ~~means a new society based on democratic socialism,~~ hereby apply for membership in the Socialist Party of the United States of America and **affirm agreement with** ~~subscribe to its~~ **Statement of Principles."**

Section 4: A) Applications for enrollment as a member in good standing of the party, shall **each formally** be acted upon by the local organization or the local executive committee, subject to review by the local organization.

B) As part of the formal application process, local organizations must certify to the National Office that each new member applicant has been contacted and spoken with, prior to admission to membership, in order to ensure to ensure understanding of and general agreement with the Statement of Principles of the Party and the membership application pledge (see Article III: Membership). Local organizations shall make all reasonable attempts to welcome new members, involve them in party activities, answer their questions, and maintain contact with them.

Section 5: A) Applications for enrollment as a member in good standing of the party at-large, shall be acted upon by the National Secretary or National Action Committee, subject to review by the National Committee in unorganized states, and by state committees in organized states.

B) The National Office and National Committee shall establish procedures, in cooperation with state organizations, to contact at-large membership applicants so as to welcome them, answer questions, urge them to be active, and inform them of procedures for organizing locals. Before admission into membership, at-large applicants must be communicated with to ensure their general understanding of, and agreement with, the Party's Statement of Principles and membership application pledge.

Amendment to 'Article V: Administration'

Section 2: **National Constitutional provisions,** ~~N~~national referenda, national conventions, and National Committee decisions and policies shall take precedence over conflicting state and local decisions. In all other respects, state and local organizations shall have full powers.

Amendment to 'Article VI: Political Action'

Section 2: In the absence of Socialist Party candidates, members as individuals may vote for, endorse, or support candidates of other political parties. **However, support or endorsement in any form for the candidates or organizations of the Democratic and Republican parties is fundamentally incompatible with the Principles of the Party.** Members as individuals may run for political office as candidates of other political parties only with the approval of the National Committee, and of the state or local organization, with the exception of political parties previously approved by the National Convention or the National Committee.

Amendment to 'Article XI: Referenda'

Section 8: For a referendum vote to be approved, it must receive ~~either:~~ a greater number of votes in favor of its approval than votes opposed to its approval from members who return ballots who return ballots by the deadline.

~~1) a majority vote of the total national membership in good standing, or~~

~~2) a two-thirds vote of those members returning ballots, provided 30 percent of the membership return ballots.~~

Constitutional Amendments

By Marc Luziett, Ft. Lauderdale FL

Article III Section 1 Every person who lives within or is a resident or citizen of the United States, its territories, commonwealths, or possessions, who supports the principles of the Party, shall be eligible for membership.

Motivation: Resident has a specific legal meaning which excludes undocumented immigrants.

Section 3: Change wording of membership application to "I, the undersigned, desiring to bring about a new society based on democratic socialism, hereby apply for membership in the Socialist Party of the United States of America. I support its Statement of Principles and I will abide by its Constitution, regulations, and policies." (Dorazio/Luzietti)

Motivation: to make explicit that comrades are agreeing to abide by the party's rules.

Article IV Section 2: Local organizations may be chartered by the National Committee or National Action Committee subject to the review of the National Committee. (Strike subsections a and b).

Article V Section 4: Change first sentence from* "Local organizations hold their authority subject to the State Committee or the National Action Committee, whichever grants their charter." *to* "Local organizations hold their authority subject to the National Committee and the National Action Committee."

Motivation: Get rid of needless middle bureaucracy.

ARTICLE VI: Political Action Section 2: Members, as individuals, may vote for, endorse, or support candidates of other political parties. Officers of the Party may not endorse or support candidates of another party without prior approval of the National Committee, and of the state or local organization.

Motivation: It's none of the party's damn business who we vote for or what support we give. Officers, however, should be required to publicly support the party and its candidates, as they are spokespersons for the party.

Section 3: Members, as individuals, may run for political office as candidates of other political parties only with the prior approval of the National Committee, and of the state or local organization. The National Convention or the National Committee may grant prior approval to specified political parties. State and local organizations of the Party may run candidates for political office in other political parties subject to the same restrictions.

Motivation: Getting prior approval will solve problems of comrades who decide to run for a ticket and ask permission only when it is too late to get off the ballot.

Section 4: State and local organizations of the Party may endorse, support, or form joint party tickets with similar independent political parties only with the prior approval of the National Committee.

Section 5: State and local organization of the Party may endorse, support, or run candidates for non-partisan political office or run a non-partisan campaign.

Article VIII Section 3: Strike section b and renumber accordingly.

c. Where there is a local organization, the local organization shall conduct delegate elections on the basis of membership. Minorities and women shall be guaranteed a minimum representation by proportional representation.

Motivation: gender equalized delegations make it nearly impossible to field full delegations. There just aren't enough active women in the party.

Article IX Section 2: Add to the end of the section, Minorities shall be guaranteed proportional representation.

Article XII: Supremacy Clause

Current Article XII renamed Article XIII: State Organizations: The constitution and by-laws of each local, state organization, and commission must comply with, and are subordinate to, this constitution. The National Committee is empowered and shall take such actions as are necessary to enforce this constitution.

Motivation: To put a final end to the debate over whether or not states and locals are free to ignore the national constitution.

Article XIII: State Organizations: Add "Section 2" States organizations shall have jurisdiction over at-large members who reside within their states. State organizations shall not have authority over locals or their members.

Current Article XIII renamed Article XIII, Section 3. This is a separate proposal, to be treated as a whole.

Entire Constitution *except* Article VI, replace "local organization" with "branch"

Article VIII Section 3 strike subsections d & e

ARTICLE XIV: Branches Section 1: Branches shall consist of all approved members who have indicated a desire for membership.

- (a) Branches granted a geographic jurisdiction shall be known as locals.
- (b) Branches organized along specific issues or tasks shall be known as commissions.
- (c) Branches organized along political lines shall be known as tendencies.

Section 2: Applications for membership shall be acted upon by the executive committee, subject to review by the whole branch. Branches shall have power over the admission, transfers, and expulsion of members, subject to appeal to the National Action Committee, and the National Committee.

Section 3: Applicants for membership and transfers may join whichever branch is most suitable for their place of residence, activities, and politics, subject to the jurisdiction of the branches concerned.

Section 4: Branches shall keep membership and finance records and may hold public meetings, forums, classes, and other functions.

- (a) Branches shall represent the national organization in the area assigned for their jurisdiction.
- (b) Local branches may run candidates for public office, representing the area in their jurisdiction.

Section 5: Branches shall elect an executive committee and it shall consist of the chair, the secretary, treasurer, and any other elected officers.

- (a) The term of office for officers shall be determined by the organization.
- (b) The executive committee shall be responsible for carrying on the Party's business affairs between membership meetings of the branch.

Section 6: YPSL The Youth branch of the Party shall be known as the Young People's Socialist League.

Old Article XV stricken. Renumber Articles XVI and XVII accordingly.

Motivation: To move the party away from old electoral based organization and move the party towards political and issue oriented organization. My idea is to have locals, commissions, and tendencies be the backbone of the Socialist Party. This is where our party work is done. These structures should have representation at the National Convention.

Abolish Gender Parity

By Nan Pfefferle, Milwaukee WI

Eliminate mandates for gender parity at national conventions and on the National Committee. Article VIII Section 3—strike parts b and c. Article IX—strike last line of Section 2.

Motivation:

- Numerical gender parity has been a burden, causing undue challenges and the loss of voices that might have been good for us to hear at conventions and on the NC
- Since there are fewer women in the party than there were when it was enacted, this policy has clearly failed in its original purpose to attract more women
- Socialist principles call for radical democracy and equity and our party should not offer affirmative action
- We should keep gender parity among the members who are national chairs and co-chairs and on the National Action Committee because these groups can offer women a strong voice without choking off those of males

Bottom-up National Structure Amendment

By the NYC Local of the Socialist Party USA

The purpose of this Constitutional Amendment is to 1) ensure that the NC represents the active part of the Party so that it may most effectively promote real, on the ground, activism 2) ensure that the NC is at all times bound to the realities of local organizing. In the current constitution, there is no guarantee that members of the NC are in any way connected to the actual organizing being carried out by the Party. As a result, there has been a divorce between the actions of the NC and the day-to-day activities of state and local organizations. It is through the growth and success of the latter group that the Party and the Socialist movement as a whole will grow. Our National Party needs to be organized in a way that promotes the success and growth of the state and local organizations. Too often the NC

produces resolutions that either have no bearing on actual organizing or, even worse, resolutions that hamper the ability of the state and local organizations to function well.

This Amendment will limit the number of members elected by the National Convention to the NC to two co-chairs and four at-large members. This will allow at large members of the party to have a voice on the NC and allow the convention to participate in shaping the NC. In addition to the two co-chairs and four members, every local with ten or more members in good standing will be allowed to choose a representative to send to the NC meeting. This will allow the NC to reflect the actual makeup of the Party. The NC will be better able to address the issues that arise in day-to-day organizing. The ten member threshold will create an incentive for local organizers to recruit new members and to build healthier locals. Our national organization should actively support on-the-ground organizing. No number of resolutions or statements, no matter how perfect the position they put forward can, alone, build a socialist movement. Only class struggle in our communities, workplaces, and through elections and state politics can accomplish this. Approval of this proposal will better allow our organization to grow in a healthy way – from the bottom-up.

(Proposed changes in bold and language to be removed is struck through.)

ARTICLE VIII: National Conventions

Section 1: The national convention of the Socialist Party shall have final authority in all matters of principles, policies, constitution, and national platform, which are all subject to referendum.

Section 2: National conventions shall be held in every odd-numbered year, the time and place to be determined by the National Committee. Special conventions are limited to those purposes set forth in the special call.

Section 3: The National Committee shall establish policies for the National Office to maintain the membership rolls consistent with the provisions of Article III. (a) The National Committee shall determine the total number of delegates to the convention. Delegates shall be apportioned on the basis of total Party members in good standing. Delegates must have been members of the Party at least six months preceding the convention. The six months membership requirement may be waived by a majority vote of the National Committee or the national convention in cases where a local has no available candidates for delegates with six months membership in sufficient number to fill the delegate seats to which they are entitled. (b) i: All delegations to the National Convention shall have equal number of men and women, except: 1. odd-numbered delegations may have one more woman or man, and 2: single-person delegations are exempt. ii: Any delegation which fails to achieve gender parity [as defined in (b) (1) above] shall have the delegation's total number of votes reduced to the size of a balanced delegation (the equal number of men and women, plus one) by the Credentials Committee, unless the Credential Committee is persuaded that the state/local has made a good faith effort to meet the gender requirements. (c) Where there is a state organization, the state organization shall conduct delegate elections. If minorities exist, they shall be guaranteed representation by proportional representation. State organizations shall also send delegates on the basis of male/female parity. (d) Where there is no state organization, locals shall elect their delegates through the same procedure. (e) The National Action committee shall conduct delegate elections among members at large where there is no state or local organization. The National Action Committee shall attempt to ensure female/male parity among the at-large delegates. (f) The National Action Committee shall fix the amount of the registration fee.

Section 4: The national convention shall elect the National Chair or Co-Chairs of the Party. (a) Vacancies in the office of National Chair shall be filled by the National Committee. (b) The term of office for the National Chair shall be for the interval between regular conventions.

~~**Section 5:** The national convention shall elect two National Vice-Chairs of the Party.~~

Section 6: The national convention may nominate candidates for President and Vice-President of the United States. (a) It shall require a two-thirds vote of those delegates who are present and voting to nominate such candidates. (b) Nominations shall be made after the adoption of the national platform.

Section 7: The national convention or the National Committee shall determine the site of the National Office.

Section 8: **The national convention shall directly elect four members of the National Committee and the National Co-chairs. Each nominee for National Committee member or alternate shall appear before the convention and make a statement on his/her goals for the National Party in the next term.**

ARTICLE IX: National Committee

Section 1: The National Committee shall be the governing body of the Party, with authority to set policies and direct actions in accordance with national convention discussions.

Section 2: The National Committee shall consist of all National Committee members, the National Chair or Co-Chairs, and **representatives of Local Organizations as outlined in Article XIV Section 6.** ~~and the National Vice-Chairs.~~ Members of the National Committee must have been members of the Party or its merged affiliates at least one year preceding the convention **or be members in good standing and elected by a Local Organization.** Female/male parity shall be required on the National Committee.

Section 3: The term of office for National Committee members shall be the interval between regular conventions. (a)

Vacancies in the National Committee shall be filled by the alternate receiving the highest vote in the previous convention. (b) In the event a member is unable to attend a meeting of the National Committee, that member may designate an alternate to take said seat for that meeting. (c) If a member of the National Committee fails to designate an alternate, an alternate shall be seated by the National Committee in the order of the election of alternates.

Section 4: National Committee meetings shall be called at least once every six months except by two-third consent of all National Committee members. (a) Special meetings of the National Committee may be called by a majority mail vote of the total membership of the National Committee. (b) A quorum of any National Committee meeting shall be at least half of all National Committee members. (c) The National Committee may take action by mail vote. A motion put to a mail vote of the National Committee is considered passed if approved by a majority of the total membership of the National Committee. (d) A motion put for mail vote must be sent to National Committee members within three weeks after the receipt by the National Office. The deadline for return of the ballots to the National Office shall be three weeks after they are mailed from the National Office. If statements pro and con are submitted with the ballots, approximately equal space shall be both sides.

~~**Section 5:** The National Committee shall be elected by the national convention at which time the number of members of the National Committee shall be determined. Each nominee for National Committee member or alternate shall appear before the convention and make a statement on his/her goals for the National Party in the next term.~~

Section 6: The National Committee shall elect the National Secretary, National Treasurer, Editor, and any other officers that is deems advisable. (a) The National Committee shall fix the salaries of the National Secretary and any other officers. (b) The National Secretary, National Treasurer, and any other officers and any other offices may be removed from their offices at any time by majority vote of those National Committee members voting. (c) The National Secretary, National Treasurer, and any other officers shall be under the supervision and authority of the National Action Committee and the National Committee. (d) The National Secretary shall supervise the activities of the national organization. This office shall consult, work with, and be under the supervision of the National Action Committee and the National Committee on all Party matters, such as principles, policies, activities, and problems within the National Office and the national organization.

Section 7: Recall. Any National Committee Member(s) may be from the office by a Referendum, as provided in Article XI.

ARTICLE XIV: Local Organizations

Section 1: Local organizations shall consist of all members residing in the area designated in its charter.

Section 2: Applications for membership shall be acted upon by the local executive committee, subject to review by the local organization. Local organizations shall have full power over the admission, transfers, and expulsion of members, subject to appeal to the state committee, National Action Committee, and the National Committee.

Section 3: Applicants for membership and transfers may join whichever local organization is most suitable for their place of residence and activities, subject to the jurisdiction of the local organizations concerned.

Section 4: Local organizations shall keep membership and finance records and may hold public meetings, forums, classes, and other functions. (a) Local organizations shall represent the national organization and the state organization in the area assigned for their jurisdiction. (b) Local organizations may run candidates for public office, representing the area in their jurisdiction **(c) Local organizations must forward the name, mailing address, email and phone of a representative to the National Secretary in order to create a Key Contact List of the organization.**

Section 5: Local organizations shall elect an executive committee and it shall consist of the local chair, the local secretary, local treasurer, and any other elected officers. (a) The term of office for local officers shall be determined by the local. (b) The local executive committee shall be responsible for carrying on the Party's business affairs between membership meetings of the local organization.

Section 6: Local organizations with a membership of more than 10 will be allowed one voting representative at each meeting of the National Committee. The National Secretary will be charged with identifying and inviting local organizations that meet this criteria one month prior to a meeting of the National Committee. Local organizations will forward the name of their National Committee representative to the National Secretary no later than two weeks prior to the National Committee meeting.

Constitutional Amendments

By Matthew Andrews, Boston MA

Article VI: section 2: Strike the words "vote for" and Insert "independent of the Democratic and Republican Parties." at the end of the first sentence.

Rationale: Although our Statement of Principles already requires members to support independent political action, this section of the Constitution has been used to argue that members are free to support Democratic

Party candidates in the absence of an SP candidate. This amendment will help clarify that we are categorically against working within the establishment's political parties. We should strike the words "vote for" because who someone votes for is a private matter protected by the law which need not be mentioned in our Constitution.

Article IX Section 2: Strike "Chair or"

Rationale: We have a long standing tradition of gender balance for all important offices, and it is constitutionally required for the National Committee. This should be reflected in the Constitution by eliminating the option of electing a single National Chair.

Article IX Section 4 (c): add to the end of the first sentence "...if called for by the National Action Committee or four members of the National Committee."

Rationale: There is no clear process described for how to request that the National Committee take a vote by mail. This process could be used more often between face to face meetings, but there must be safeguards against its frivolous use. This amendment is in accordance with my proposed amendment of Article X Section 2.

Article X Section 2: Strike "any" and replace with "at least four"

Rationale: The National Action Committee exists so that it can make decisions and act in a timely manner. It should be free from mail ballot challenges that would take six weeks. From experience we know that a highly politicized climate can lead to some individuals challenging every decision that is made. Others will second anything to bring it to a vote. The Constitution should require that a significant number of National Committee members express doubt in a decision before triggering a mail ballot referendum process. This amendment is in accordance with my proposed amendment of Article IX Section 4 (c).

Proposed Constitutional Changes

By Jerry Stastny Jerry M Stastny Menasha, Wisconsin

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP, SECTION 2

To change the existing line: "Members in arrears in the membership dues for six months or more are no longer in good standing."

To change to: "Members in arrears in the membership dues for 45 days or more are no longer in good standing. The NAC or the National Committee has the authority to extend "membership in good standing" for an additional 45 days in cases where a Member claims extreme hardship in renewing dues within that first 45 day period and filing a claim of intent to remain a Member."

Currently allowing members to be in arrears for six months brings a hardship to the Party and with the options for monthly payment of dues eliminates any need for any member to go six months in arrears. 45 days allows one month and an extra 15 days for those who may have just forgotten to submit their dues. With the many ways available to submit dues there is no need to go beyond 45 days. Allowing for an approved extension of an additional 45 days will cover those who due to an emergency are unable to submit dues in a timely manner.

ARTICLE V: ADMINISTRATION, SECTION 4

To change the existing line: "Local organizations hold their authority subject to the State Committee or the National Action Committee, whichever grants their charter."

To change to: "Local organizations hold their authority subject to the National Committee, the National Action Committee and the state committee of the State Organization in which the Local is chartered."

ARTICLE XIV: LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS, SECTION 2

To change the existing line: "Local organizations shall have full power over the admission, transfers, and expulsion of members, subject to appeal to the state committee, National Action Committee, and the National Committee."

To change to: "Local organizations, acting as the representative of the National Party, shall have power over the admission, transfers, and expulsion of members, subject to appeal to the National Committee, National Action Committee and the state committee."

ARTICLE IX: NATIONAL COMMITTEE, SECTION 1

To change the existing line: “The National Committee shall be the governing body of the Party, with authority to set policies and direct actions in accordance with national convention discussions.”

To change to: “The National Committee shall be the governing body of the Party, with authority to enforce constitutional compliance and to set policies and direct actions in accordance with national convention discussions.”

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Billy Wharton for National Committee

Billy Wharton NY, NY

I am proud to present myself as a candidate for the National Committee of the Socialist Party USA. For the last 15 years I have worked as a part of a variety of projects dedicated to the creation of socialism in the United States. My political christening came under fire as a student-organizer at the City University of New York (CUNY) in the mid-90s. A right-wing governor was following up on a process initiated by a democratic governor by attempting to implement tuition increases and budget cuts to the public university system. Students resisted. We used mass marches, building takeovers and civil disobedience to beat back the cuts. In some cases proposals for cuts were eliminated, in others they were modified and sometimes we lost. Each instance proved to me that it was possible, and necessary, to build a militant socialist political movement in this country.

From CUNY I moved to trade union organizing. I spent a summer in New Orleans working for the AFL-CIO as an organizer. Here I learned that despite being placed in wretched social conditions, working people retain a sense of solidarity and basic human decency which could provide fertile ground for a socialist political project. I also worked at the Association for Union Democracy (AUD), a group which provides legal and educational support to rank-and-file trade union members. Here I was introduced to a multi-decade political project aimed at democratizing the union movement in order to create spaces for more radical politics. As one leading member of AUD often counseled me “If workers can’t run their own unions democratically how the hell do you expect them to run a society.”

In addition to trade union and student organizing I have spent an extensive amount of time organizing inside of social movements such as the health care and anti-war movements. Much of my anti-war organizing was filtered through my union, the Graduate Student Employees Union. As the Chief Steward in my local branch, I put pressure on the heads of the union to develop a position against the US invasion of Iraq and guided our members into the broader anti-war movement. As a health care activist, I have worked hard in support of the creation of a single-payer system while also developing a successful campaign in defense of local non-profit health care insurers.

I hope to bring these experiences and skills to our new National Committee. My hope is that we can develop the Socialist Party USA into a healthy, multi-tendency organization capable of providing a serious democratic socialist alternative. This means building the organization from the ground-up. Socialism from below can only be built from below - from the basic unit of our organization – the local organizations. Our National Committee should therefore support the organizing going on at the local level. The NC should provide the political and material resources necessary to make local work more effective. Where necessary, the NC should offer political perspectives on national and international issues to locals. Whenever possible, the NC should accept the leadership of the locals by recognizing successful local campaigns and attempting to spread them through the entire organization.

There is not straight line or secret formula to build socialism in the United States. Anyone offering such absolute truths should be suspected immediately as either a political huckster or religious zealot. Democratic socialism can only be built through political campaigning, political experimentation and resistance from below. Broad socialist values of solidarity, community and compassion should guide this struggle.

I have been proud to serve as your editor and would appreciate your vote for the National Committee. I am happy to speak with you further about these ideas or any other questions and concerns you might have. Email me: wawharton@yahoo.com

Matt Erard: Statement of Candidacy for the National Committee

Matt Erard Ann Arbor, MI

In continuing my dedication to organizing and building the Socialist Party that I have held throughout the entirety of my adolescent and adult life, I wish to offer my candidacy for the upcoming term of the SP National Committee. My identification with the Socialist Party almost directly paralleled the Party’s entry into the digital age. Having first discovered the Party online in 1997 at the age of 12, I immediately joined the new YPSL listserve, “Red Youth,” and continually strived to be a street-corner and schoolyard supporter of the Party in any way I could until finally scrounging up the funds to become a member three years later at the age of 15. Such street-corner support at the time was

largely literal in effect, as I distributed stacks of self-made leaflets for the 2000 McReynolds/Hollis candidacy on a local sidewalk every week between the spring and November election of that year.

After coming into contact the following year with other members who had recently begun organizing an SP branch in Michigan, I was elected chair of the newly founded Southern Michigan local in November 2001 (which obtained a state charter several months later) and have been annually re-elected as the State Chair of the Socialist Party of Michigan every year since. During the past eight years through which I've served as the state chair of the SPMI, we have held over 90 state membership meetings and conventions, organized countless forums, demonstrations and public events, run state and/or local candidates every election year, published a widely read state party magazine, hosted two SP National Organizing Conferences and chartered four new SP locals. In the course of such work, I have also run as an SP candidate for state representative in both 2006 and 2008, during which I participated in two televised debates with my Democratic opponent in addition to numerous other media interviews. After campaigning as the sole Socialist candidate for the Michigan state legislature in the most recent 2008 election, I ultimately received the highest vote percentage of any minor party candidate challenging the two major parties for any state or federal level office in Michigan that year.

In the course of my years of activism in the Socialist Party, I have additionally had the honor and pleasure of serving as an SP National Committee alternate throughout the past two NC terms since the 2005 National Convention. Despite only being an alternate, rather than a full member of the National Committee, I have nevertheless made it a top priority to attend all but one of the National Committee meetings that have taken place since I was first elected four years ago. During this period, I have not only had the opportunity to consistently participate in NC meetings, but have also had the opportunity to participate on the SP Platform Committee, the SP Constitutional Review Committee, and to chair both the 2008 SP Presidential Search Committee and the 2008 National Organizing Conference Planning Committee.

In addition to such nationally-focused work through NC subcommittees, I made a half-year long commitment to what was probably the most challenging, demanding, and all-consuming role I have ever accepted, by serving as the National Ballot Access Director of the 2008 SP Presidential campaign. While ceaselessly working day and night on nationally coordinating and strategizing to address a continuously emerging array of deadlines, obstacles and new daily crises, we were ultimately able to qualify the ticket for eight state ballots and official write-in status in another 22 states – making it among only seven presidential campaigns technically capable of gaining enough electoral votes to win the election.

While I believe my background of work in the SP demonstrates the extent of my commitment to building the Party, I hope that, in considering my candidacy for the National Committee this year, delegates will give greatest consideration to my voting record on the NC during the past four years (most of which can be found online within the minutes of 2005-2009 NC meetings at: (<http://socialistparty-usa.org/ncminutes/>)).

As I believe my past votes on the NC will reflect, I strongly consider myself a socialist in the Debsian tradition and believe that Eugene Debs' vision of a mass-based, multi-tendency, and explicitly socialist party is as relevant and needed today as it was in the time in which Debs lived. Accordingly, I strongly believe that we can be a multi-tendency and democratic de-centralist party that is also a Party of principle. I believe that we can be a party that values the ideological diversity of its membership while also presenting a coherent challenge and alternative to the degenerating capitalist system that surrounds us. Furthermore, I believe that we can and must continue to lay the foundation for the mass-based party the SP was on its way to becoming in the early 20th Century to finally be achieved in the early 21st Century – the equally broad, dynamic, and genuinely revolutionary party of the U.S. working class.

Eric Chester: Statement as a Candidate for the NC

Eric Chester

I believe that the Socialist Party USA is moving in the right direction and that the actions of the last national committee furthered this process. The SP needs to clearly and definitively differentiate itself from liberal reformism, and we have begun to do this.

As the outgoing convener of the Party's international commission, I strongly believe that we need to deepen our international work. We should be writing joint statements and participating in joint projects with parties and organizations that share our commitment to direct action, total independence from capitalist parties, and the creation of a democratic socialist society.

Jerry Stastny: Statement of Candidacy for the National Committee

Jerry M Stastny Menasha, Wisconsin

I hereby declare my desire to be considered as a candidate for the National Committee.

I have been an alternate on the current NC and have attended all of the NC meetings, being seated at the Milwaukee, Seattle, Newark and Ft Lauderdale meetings. Since March of 2008 I have been the Party's National Treasurer. I believe that those who accept positions in the Party have a responsibility to serve the Party to their fullest ability; my consistent participation in the NC meetings and experience in an elected position illustrate my high level of commitment.

As a member of The Socialist Party of Wisconsin and a member of the SEC, I have been an active member in Wisconsin. I have worked to bring a solution to the "Wisconsin Issue" with a strong desire to see Wisconsin be an integral part of the Socialist Party-USA. I believe in a strong National Party. In order for the Party to grow, and consequently, for socialism to succeed, all tendencies of the Party must work together. State and Local Parties must be strong representatives of the SP-USA in their areas. I also believe Commissions must be the groups within the Party that coordinate the activist campaigns that are taken on by Locals and individuals, allowing for coordination on a National level.

In order for the Party to grow, we need to work closely with organizations and coalitions that align with the socialist mission of improving the life of all people. Only socialism and a Socialist Society will bring about the change that is required for a better society, and we must work harder to get our socialist message out. On this same line, we must develop our own media, utilizing the broad coverage and availability the Internet provides in addition to more traditional venues. In short, it should be our goal over the next 2 years to promote the socialist message through our activism, publications and Internet presence.

Previously, I represented the Party as one of the two delegates to the United for Peace and Justice National Assembly in December of 2008. Currently, I am an active Member of the NAC and the National Treasurer of the Party. I look forward to continuing my commitment and service to the party as a National Committee Member. I am, and will remain, dedicated to promoting socialism through the SPUSA.

I can be contacted at jemist@new.rr.com or (920) 722-1328 if anyone would like more information or has questions.

Kristin Schall: Statement of Intent to Run for National Committee

by Kristin Schall NY, NY

Five years ago, I began my activity in the Socialist Party as an intern at the national office. Since then, I have become increasingly involved in both the activism and organizational aspects of the party. I have served as the secretary, and now, chairperson of the New York City Local, am an active member of the Editorial Board of *The Socialist* and currently serve as a national committee alternate.

As an active member of the New York City local, I have participated in the organization of a successful campaign to prevent the privatization of a local not-for-profit health insurance provider. In this campaign, I gained experience working with a wide variety of people from rank-and-file trade union activists to community organizers. From working with a diverse group of activists, I learned that strategy and ideology need to be debated democratically, not for the purpose of pigeonholing people into political categories, but to develop strategies that will help further the cause of democratic socialism. In addition, I have also been active in the movement for single-payer healthcare reform, and in union organizing at my workplace.

As a member of the national committee I will draw on my experience with the day-to-day organizing of a local and on the ground activist work to help foster a national committee that is true to the multi-tendency vision of the Socialist Party. I would be happy to discuss my vision for the party, or answer any questions people may have. Please feel free to email me at kristinschall@gmail.com.

Stephen Tash: Statement of Candidacy for the National Committee

Stephen Tash St Clair Shores, MI

I've been a socialist since the age of 15 and a member of the party since 16. I hold a bachelor's degree in Political Science and have taken graduate level classes in PoliSci to get my bachelor's and a class in Marxist philosophy. I've been active in the Michigan Local, including serving a year as editor of the Michigan Socialist, and have been active in discussions on the National ListServ. I fall to the center-right of the party and take a pragmatic stance on how to create a thriving socialist movement through eventual electoral success. I currently (at least at the time of writing) am the chairperson of the Socialist Party of Detroit.

Greg Pason: Statement of Candidacy for the National Committee

Greg Pason Maywood NJ

I would like to put my name forward as a candidate for the National Committee. I've been a member of the Party for 20 years and National Secretary for over ten years, after serving as Vice-Chair. My politics include a commitment to prioritizing nationally coordinated activist campaigns as well as independent political action. I'm currently the Socialist Party candidate for Governor of New Jersey and active in community work. I have been chair of the Coalition for Free and Open Elections, co-Chair of the NJ Local of the National Writers Union and currently serve as a Trustee of Brainworkers International.

Zelig Stern: Statement of Candidacy for the National Committee

Zelig Stern NY, NY

I have been an activist for 5 years, since I was 16, and a member of the party for one and a half. I have been the secretary of the NYC local for one year. In the time I have been a member of the NYC local I have been involved with many activist struggles that have led to the growth of the local. These include organizing a coalition of union opposition caucuses and healthcare reform organizations to fight against the privatization of a not for profit insurance provider, organizing in Single Payer coalitions, organizing against the NYC Budget Cuts, and a community activism project in my neighborhood to demand an end to the under funding of the area. I have also recently joined a unionization project in my workplace, Starbucks. My membership in the Socialist Party will always center around building the class struggle through grass roots activism. It is my dedication to day to day organizing that will make me a necessary component of the NC.

Platform

- No amount of resolutions or statements, no matter how perfect the position they put forward, can build the socialist movement as long as they remain divorced from on the ground activism.
- The main functions of the NC should be 1) creating structures that will enable and encourage on the ground organizing and the growth of the local organizations 2) serving to provide national cohesion for local organizing.

PROMOTING LOCAL ORGANIZING

- This can be done by empowering the local organizations within the decision making bodies of the Party.
- Ensuring that the local organizations can act without constant fear or threat of discipline from the NC.
- Providing resources to locals and direct aid when possible (e.g. instructing a new local on how to organize a meeting)

PROMOTING NATIONAL COHESION

- Produce statements on a variety of issues that can be turned into pamphlets for local organizations to use.
- Coordination more effective national communication channels.
- Coordinate communication between locals working on similar issues.
- Promote the growth of active Commissions.

The largest problem our party faces is a low level of activity. If we want to build the Party, and if we want to forward the class struggle, we must find ways to build on the ground movements where workers and community members can learn how to organize against their oppressors. The function of the NC should be to further this type of direct activism. To some up my position in three words... Organize! Organize! Organize!