

## January 6, 2024 - DSA Business Meeting

**Present:** Robbie Liben, David Quattrocchi, Arthur Endsley, Steven Clark, Mark Anderlik, Sandy Burch, Rachel Calderon-Navarro, Sarah McClain, Tony Davis, Brendan, Carly, Joey Paxman, Chester Seitz

### Roles:

- **Facilitator:** Sandy
- **Time-keeper:** Steven
- **Progressive stack:** Brendan
- **Note-taker:** Arthur
- *Native Land Acknowledgement*
- *Community Agreement for Respectful Discussions*

### Introductions

- *Motion to approve the agenda* (Robbie, Brendan), *approved*
- *Motion to approve last meeting's minutes - No December Business meeting.*

### Treasurer's Report (Sarah)

- We have \$6514.53, of which \$1548.50 belongs to the Chapter, the rest to the Legislative Action Committee

### Resolution on Palestine (Sandy)

- *Motion to discuss the resolution* (Brendan, Mark), *approved*
- David: Propose to remove the conditional in the second demand (“until Israel honors the human rights...”), as we probably don’t want to provide *any* military aid.
  - Robbie: And perhaps remove the word “military”
  - Brendan: Yeah, I think we probably don’t want to be providing any financial support to Israel.
  - Carly: Why is the U.S. role to be sending aid to countries?
  - Tony: I would leave “military” in there because we might want to send humanitarian aid to Israel at some point. I would also re-word the end of the second point, because we don’t “occupy” people (“and occupation of, the Palestinian people.”)
  - David: I can’t foresee a situation in which we would provide humanitarian aid to Israel...
  - Brendan: I’m okay with leaving “military” in...

- Mark: It's really not taxpayer money that gets sent to Israel, it's federal money. I bring this up because when we think about aid to Israel and how it otherwise might be spent... It makes a huge difference to not conflate the federal budget with our household budget.
- Brendan: I think it's important to specify that Israel is an occupation, including the 1948 lands.
  - Sarah: Or could we just write "the Israeli occupation," period.
  - Brendan: If we were to write about the Israeli occupation of the West Bank we would then to bring up the Right of Return...
  - Tony: I agree with Sarah; think we could end it with "ends its apartheid regime," period.
  - Sandy: I think it is "the occupation of Palestine;" I think that's important.
- Brendan: I think this resolution should be making demands of the U.S. government, not of Israel. We could re-write the new third point: "demand that the U.S. end support for Israel's crimes against humanity and its occupation of Palestine."
- *Approval of the resolution, unanimous*
- Robbie: What's next with this resolution?
  - Sandy: Great question. As stated, we'll use our Chapter resources in alignment with this resolution, e.g., phone banking, etc. The next thing I want to do is to send this resolution to the Steering Committees of our other Montana DSA chapters. Once we have approval from the other Chapters, we can make this a state-wide campaign, which could use the state-wide funds.

### Labor Working Group Proposal (Mark)

- As you may know, 2023 was an amazing turn-around for what was historically one of the most corrupt labor unions in the U.S., the United Auto Workers. The new leader, Sean Fain has asked other unions to align their contracts so they expire on May 1, 2028.
  - Typically, a contract is 3 years long. There is typically a no-strike clause in contracts, until they expire. Unions don't want to lose their treasury by having an illegal strike.
  - The significance of this ask, for other unions to align their contracts, is that it enables a possible future, general strike.
- Our proposal is to help Montana unions get organized so as to align their contracts in this way. Here in Montana, there isn't a union that is currently prepared to organize in this way.
  - We've already identified 35 union members in Montana who are ready or sympathetic. Bozeman and other Montana chapters have helped with this.
  - Historically, Montana union leadership has been hostile to DSA, particularly the Montana AFL-CIO; usually for political reasons. It can be hard to bypass the leadership to talk to rank-and-file members.
- Mark: If you know anyone in any union who's interested in this, please get in touch with them; have them get in touch with our Labor Working Group.
- Sandy: I think there's another opportunity for a Chapter-wide training on this topic...

- Mark: On January 11, we're having a state-wide Labor Working Group meeting... It's not just our Western Montana chapter. I could bring up the topic of training at that meeting.
- Questions?
  - Brendan: Mark and I were talking about the Montana Federation of Public Employees (MT FPE) contract expiring...
  - Mark: Each school has its own, separate contract, which makes that trickier. But the MT FPE leadership could reach out to each chapter...
  - Robbie: How is this different from what the Labor Working Group is already doing?
  - Mark: I talked to a union organizer, here's an example... She would talk to her co-workers, organize them to create and sign a petition to their union leadership. This is where more training might be helpful.
  - Steven: If it does turn out to be more work than anticipated, I think we should focus our Labor Working Group efforts on this because it is worth it.
  - Carly: Excited to hear about this; we have wanted to build out labor relationships as part of our work on the Palestine issue. I'm just wondering if it may be possible to make an ask on this in the future: calling for a cease-fire.
  - Mark: I think it is worth a try but I would not expect anything. For example, the Olympia Washington chapter of the AFL-CIO passed a resolution calling for a case-fire but then National AFL-CIO pressured them to retract it. The Old Guard of Labor has close ties to Israel. But it'd be worth asking, especially of Montana FPE.
- *Motion to table the Recruitment Discussion, (Robbie, Mark), approved.*
  - *In light of the importance and length of this discussion.*
- Brendan: What is the proposal here?
  - Mark: We're looking for approval from the Chapter to make this our focus.
- Rachel: In 2023, we worked heavily on Strike Ready... The effort we put into Strike Ready will be similar to what is needed here. I think our recruitment efforts will help but we'll also be working with other Montana chapters.
- Tony: This past year, labor unions across the U.S. made remarkable progress; not sure about Montana. I think this is a good plan for building on that.
- *Motion to approve the Labor Working Group Proposal (Arthur, Robbie), approved*

### **Annual General Membership Meeting, February 3**

- Steering Committee elections are coming up!
- We will also be approving our 2024 Budget.
- Please help to plan and turn-out members for this important meeting! This is a great time to help recruit new members.
- Are there any nominations for Steering?
  - Brendan: I'm considering it...
  - Carly: We were going to talk to Montanans for Palestine members about it. What are the membership requirements?

- Robbie: They must be a DSA member in good standing, but new members are always welcome.
- Mark: To join DSA, we just ask that people go online and pay dues. Monthly dues are better because our Chapter gets more money.
- Sandy: I am hereby formally nominating Brendan and David for the Steering Committee.
- Carly: Just a brief point on recruitment and Montanans for Palestine. We've been considering whether we want to become our own structure or encourage others to organize within existing structures...
  - Brendan: I have a structure question about Steering...
  - Sandy: The Steering Committee is five members: Two Co-Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, Communications Coordinator.
- David: My view is that this is something all Western MT DSA members should cycle; it's a shared responsibility.
- Brendan: Also happy to be nominated, but have a concern about the learning curve.
  - Robbie: No worries, we're all amateurs here!
- Rachel: I am considering it, but biggest concern is that Steering includes additional meetings... Looking at my current commitments, I know I have something every day of the week.
- Arthur: I think that current Steering Committee members will be happy to assist new Steering members. Apr 23, 2024

## Working Group Reports

### Common Good Missoula (Arthur and David)

- Our Neighborways campaign was featured in the Missoulian last week, please write a positive comment online if you have the stomach for it.
- We've had regular meetings with Aaron Wilson and Ben Weiss who work at the City, in preparation for the Neighborways pilot project. We're writing a letter of support, on behalf of the City, to the Montana Department of Transportation; Western MT DSA will be a signatory to that letter unless we opt out by January 11.
- Upcoming event at The Roxy Theater, February 8, 2024 at 7:30p, there will be a screening of "The Streets Project," a film about how car-centric our society is and how things might be different. A panel discussion will follow where the Neighborways Campaign Team will talk about Neighborways.
- Our Housing and Zoning Action Research Team is looking at code reform. The framing of the zoning update is largely about keeping the status quo... Very little about housing attainability or housing justice. We're building power and if you want to join please reach out!

### Editorial Working Group (Robbie)

- We've had three editorials published over the last month: "Anti-zionism is not anti-semitism" by Sarah McClain, one about Kissinger and another about a cease-fire, by Robbie.
- Please join us for writing editorials!

#### **Labor Working Group** (Rachel)

- We took the month of December off!
- Just preparing for our big 2024 push.

#### **Unhoused Neighbor's Union** (David)

- We have meetings every Sunday at 5:00p, at the Johnson Street Shelter; food is served! Please come!
- We have a petition to the City regarding their ordinance.
- Mark: I would also take the online petition and send it out to the WMTDSA e-mail list.

#### **Announcements**

- Montanans for Palestine film screening coming up!
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*Motion to adjourn* (Arthur, Brendan), *approved*