

RED LETTER

A MONTHLY MISSIVE FROM THE DSA NATIONAL POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE (NPEC)

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

05/22: Political Educators Conference

06/05: DSA Inside Baseball

09/02-05: Socialism Conference, Chicago IL

Asking Big Questions, Answering Small Stories by Evan M

Where does transforming the world begin? With a steadily rising tide or a series of smaller waves? This is something NPEC tried to answer with its recent event, "Red and Green: A Revolutionary Green New Deal". This virtual panel of four speakers spotlighted lessons for the Green New Deal through case studies of organizing for transformative green policies. But it was also an exercise in breaking down some of the roots of socialist organizing in the midst of the climate crisis. **Continued on Pages 2 and 3**

Baseball and the Labor Movement by Jason R, Central CT DSA + Baseball Caucus

Join the DSLC, NPEC, DSA members and baseball fans from across the country on Sunday June 5 at 7pm ET/4pm PT for a special night of baseball, unions, and the workers that make them happen, with special guests including stadium worker union organizers and more to be announced! **Continued on Page 3**

Curriculum Spotlight: "Breaking Up with Capitalism"

NPEC member Per D shares this resource from Boston DSA. It is targeted to people who are brand new and perhaps still a little skeptical of socialism. Here is a downloadable PDF of the eight-part document - click on a line in the table of contents to skip ahead to a page or section. Available on our website at education.dsaua.org/files/sites/17/2022/05/Breaking-up-with-capitalism.pdf

Submit to Red Letter!

Respond to this prompt in 500 words or less: *How has racism shaped capitalism?* We'll publish up to three essays in the June edition of Red Letter. Please send your submission to npeccomms@dsacommittees.org by June 6.

We also welcome submissions on other topics! We are looking for lesson plans, reportbacks, and reviews of political education events and materials (including NPEC's work). Let us know what you're thinking - email us a pitch, or piece you already have prepared, or general feedback.

Socialism Conference 2022

Haymarket Books will host the annual Socialism Conference in Chicago over Labor Day weekend. Submit a workshop or talk by May 15. socialismconference.org

Asking Big Questions, Answering Small Stories (Continued from Page 1)

The title hints at the working theory behind the collection of case studies presented by our speakers: that we aren't voters seeking green reform, but that we're socialists seeking revolutionary change. The tension underlying a revolutionary reform such as the Green New Deal poses both challenge and opportunity to organizers today, and each speaker provided a unique perspective of how to navigate societal contradictions to capitalize on powerful opportunities. By analyzing these case studies, we were able to elucidate some tools and tactics useful for socialists pushing the project of a mass movement for the GND into being.

Sean Estelle, member of DSA's National Political Committee from 2019-2021, shared reflections from the process of starting a campaign in 2018 to take over ComEd, a private electric utility, and make it publicly owned at the end of its 30 year contract with the city of Chicago. "We were able to do a lot of political education around public ownership during the New Deal, socialist experiments in other countries, and a lot of the work that was in motion and connecting it to DSA politics at large, things like the Medicare for All campaign. [...] It seemed like a really big opportunity for Chicago DSA... to make an intervention in local politics... and really put serious demands on the table that may not lead to full municipalization and a full public takeover but it might lead to some of the intermediate demands like a shorter franchise agreement, or a progressive rate structure for ratepayers, or also starting to build ties with the lineworkers union."

Keith Brower Brown, PhD candidate at UC Berkeley, talked about how, in California's Central Valley, construction unions and immigrant environmental justice activists built a nationally-rare alliance that swept local elections, empowered workers, and fought ecoapartheid. "Environmental justice and immigrant organizers had some resources, and unions had resources, that each other needed. [...] It was a shared experience of political isolation that helped bring them together. It was their political marginalization that actually made it more likely for them to test out new strategies and make new alliances that they don't make in big Blue cities super often. [...] The most concrete ways they allied were in local elections and many local policy fights... work[ing] together on policy breakthroughs that guaranteed union labor on city construction, and [redistributing] infrastructure budgets..."

Patrick Bigger, research director at the Climate and Community Project, discussed recent work on debt justice for climate reparations, and how U.S. climate movements can be in solidarity with anti-debt, anti-austerity, pro-reparations campaigns around the world. "Countries around the world are really struggling with foreign debt, and this is particularly pernicious because countries that are vulnerable to climate change are already borrowing more than their less vulnerable counterparts. [...] The Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative... after a lot of pressure from activist groups around the world and in the U.S., [saw] the poorest countries in the world [get] a lot of their debt wiped clean. [...] The U.S. has effectively had a veto on progressive action at the [International Monetary Fund] since its founding after WWII... [so] it's really imperative that in the U.S. we organize on these issues because the U.S. does have such an outsized role in determining IMF policy."

Sarahana Shrestha, DSA candidate running in NY's 103rd Assembly District as part of DSA's Green New Deal Slate, spoke about how her campaign emerged out of NY's Public Power coalition and what potential lies in vying for power in a bourgeois state as an ecosocialist. "As DSA, we only do elections if we can use it to work around issues, we don't do elections just to win, we want to do elections so that we can use it as a medium for organizing... wherever we live... our local residents to the ideas we believe in. We are having very... bonding conversations at the door [when canvassing] because people are anxious about climate [issues], they're very anxious that they vote for people that are supposed to be the best option and yet nothing gets done."

Political education was key in each of these case studies because it involved convincing people that a new and more democratic form of governance was not only desirable, but necessary for the promise of a green economy to be realized. For socialist political educators, it's imperative that we not only involve ourselves in local organizing efforts, but examine case studies from around the world to adapt the approaches that successfully build power against capital.

Asking Big Questions, Answering Small Stories (Continued from Page 2)

In each case study, organizers were better able to build power when they honed in on the specific political context they operate in, mapping the nuances impossible to see from the big picture alone. But even more enlightening was how their vastly different approaches still coalesced around the larger task of transitioning to a green, worker-owned economy. While the end goal remains a global, radical Green New Deal, each case study the speakers brought forward shows the waves of revolutionary potential that can one day swell into something unstoppable.

Baseball and the Labor Movement (Continued from Page 1)



From the founding of the first-ever union for professional players in 1885 to the lockout and contract fight this year, the history of the national pastime is the history of the workers who have been fighting for fair pay and better working conditions, both on the field and in the stands. Team owners have attempted to divide workers and fans by painting players as selfish millionaires, but to quote Dodgers pitcher and union rep Walker Buehler, “This isn’t millionaires vs billionaires. This is workers vs owners.”

The solidarity between sports workers on the field and off was demonstrated during negotiations this year when the MLB Players Association donated millions to the SEIU stadium workers lockout fund. Players and stadium workers understand that there would be no games without their labor, and that it is the bosses, not the players, who bear responsibility for low wages, poor workplace conditions and contract negotiation lockouts which impact stadium workers the most. To quote UNITE HERE stadium workers union president Diana Hussein, “But it shouldn’t be on the Players’ and MLBPA to fund the needs of ballpark stadium workers impacted by the lockout and cancelation of games. It’s the owners that decided to lockout Players. It’s the owners that decided to cancel games. It’s the owners with the power to end this.”

Join DSA’s baseball caucus, the Democratic Socialist Labor Commission and National Political Education Committee as we learn not only the history of baseball’s intersection with the labor movement, but also how socialists today can support sports workers in all their forms, from the dugouts to the concession stands, who make baseball the game that we love.