

SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, USA: LEARNING FROM OUR PAST AND REVIVED UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP TO BUILD FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE WORLD

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Contents

Introduction

[Chapter 1](#) The Anatomy of a Split

Chapter 2 SDUSA & DSOC, Bitter Rivals

Chapter 3 Critical Question No. 1.

Why would we want to Revive the SDUSA?

Chapter 4 Critical Question No. 2.

Why Should We Trust You?

Chapter 5 The End of One Era of the SDUSA and the Rise of a New Era

Chapter 6 Critical Question No. 3.

What will be the Revised SDUSA Relationship with DSA and the “SP of the USA”?

Chapter 7 Critical Question No 4.

Aren't your efforts a Waste of Time and Money as the Conception of Socialism has been completely discredited?

Chapter 8 Critical Question No. 5.

What are the Basic Statements of Principles of the Revived SDUSA?

Appendices

Notes

Introduction

Social Democrats, USA. is the 110 year old organization that was known as the Social Democratic Party of the United States of America from 1898-1901, the Socialist Party of America from 1901-1956, Socialist Party/ Social Democratic Federation from 1956-1964, Socialist Party, U.S.A. from 1964-1972, and Socialist Party, U.S.A./ Democratic Socialist Federation of the U.S.A. in 1972. Social Democrats, USA is the direct successor of the Socialist Party, U.S.A., the party of Eugene V. Debs, Mary Harris “Mother” Jones, Jack London, Helen Keller, Morris Hillquit, Victor Berger, Meyer London, Norman Thomas, Darlington Hoopes, A. Phillip Randolph, Michael Harrington, Bayard Rustin & Frank Zeidler.

The Socialist Party U.S.A., at its national convention on December 30, 1972, by a majority vote of the delegates, voted to change the name of the organization to Social Democrats, U.S.A. The organization became officially known as Social Democrats, U.S.A., with the adoption, at its convention, on December 31, 1972, of a new constitution. Nevertheless, the structure of the renamed organization remained the same as it was when it was the SPUSA, with a National Chair or Co-Chairs, National Secretary or Executive Director, National Committee, National Action Committee, State & Local Organizations and the Youth section, the Young People’s Socialist League of America and the internal discussion bulletin. *Hammer & Tongs*. Social Democrats, U.S.A., uninterrupted, continued to be affiliated with the Socialist International. The International recognized that the SDUSA was the same organization that held that seat under the name Socialist Party, representing the United States, since the SI’s founding in 1952.

In addition, the SDUSA’s constitution maintained that “The Socialist Party, by that name, shall continue in association with the Social Democrats, U.S.A.” The constitution also stated that one of the duties and functions of the Socialist Party was “to solicit and receive money for distribution for socialist purposes, including electoral activity, in accordance with the decision of the Board.” This meant that not only was the historic Socialist Party, still alive, despite the official change of the name of the organization to SDUSA, but if the need aroused, the Board of the Socialist Party, whose membership was the same as the National Committee of the Social Democrats, U.S.A., could vote to re-establish itself, again, as a political party, on a local, state or national level, under the name Socialist Party. U.S.A. This Article of the SDUSA’s constitution entitled, “The Socialist Party,” remained unchanged when the governing document was amended on September 8, 1974; July 18, 1976, November 21-23, 1981, December 5, 1982, December 6, 1987, and March 24, 1990.

The YPSL's changed its name to Young Social Democrats in 1976. However, the SD's constitution included a separate Article in the document that were amended from 1976 thru 1990, under the title, "Young People's Socialist League," that maintained, "The Young People's Socialist League, by that name, shall continue in association with the Social Democrats, U.S.A."

After the attempt to revive the SDUSA in 2008-2009, the elected officers of the organizations and the NC in December voted to dismiss Gabe Ross as its Executive Direction for insubordination. Nevertheless, Ross defied the elected officers by continuing to insist that he is the only spokesperson for the SDUSA and that the officers were no longer members of the organization! Thus, we were forced to disassociate ourselves from his rump group that uses the confusing name of Social Democrats, USA/Socialist Party, USA, on our former website, but is essentially a one or two person operation. Notwithstanding, the elected officers of Social Democrats, USA, maintained their right to the ownership of that name and affirm that theirs is the identical organization, and the only historic political entity, that under the name, "Socialist Party", ran Eugene V. Debs and Norman Thomas for President of the United States, elected Victor Berger and Meyer London to the U.S. House of Representatives, Daniel Hoan and Frank Zeidler as mayor of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and scores of mayors, state legislators, judges, and other local political offices holders in the period from 1912 to the mid 1920s.

This is the official public document announcing the revival of Social Democrats, U.S.A. It directly connects the revised organization to its heritage as the historic Socialist Party of Debs, Thomas and Harrington to the Social Democrats, U.S.A. of Bayard Rustin, Tom Kahn, Carl Gershman, Rita Freeman, Donald Slaiman David Jessup and Penn Kemble. All of the documents of this 110 year old organization are part of our continuing history, no matter how controversial today.

In this Manifesto of Social Democrats, USA, we will connect our past to the present, by first looking back at the last 50 years of the SP-SD, beginning with an objective account of what led to the three way split in the Socialist Party in the early 1970s and the change of the Party's name to Social Democrats U.S.A. and the bitter rivalry that took place between it and one of the organization that evolved from the split, the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee. Next, this document will directly and critically confront, with a little levity, the questions that our critics on both the political Right and Left will probably raise about our effort to revived the SDUSA, including the charges of being neo-conservative by the Left and the obsolescence of the concept of socialism or social democracy in the 21st Century after the fall of Communism in most of the world, made by the Right and even many moderates and liberals as well. We intend this to be an entertaining and lively response to the many controversies concerning our organization.

We will also tell the complete story of the apparent abandonment of the SD by its former national leadership and how one remaining Local decided that it didn't want the organization to die. Rather, they started the effort to revive and rebuild the SD under new leadership and a revised political outlook which intends to maintain the best traditions of the last 30+ year history of the organizations, while changing those policies that appeared

to place ourselves closer to neo-conservatives on the Right, instead of reflecting our 110 year old heritage on the democratic Left.

Unfortunately, after a promising beginning, our first effort toward reviving the SD and create an organization with a democratic internal structure went awry as a result of the divisive behavior and public activities by our provisional Executive Director and head of the one remaining SD Local, which severely damaged the credibility of the organization. After many attempts to try to amicably resolve these problems with the Executive Director, the provisional elected officers of the SD felt that they had no choice but to dismissed the ED from his post and move the National Office to New York City from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and begin anew with our mission of reviving the SDUSA for the 21st Century. It will also clear up any confusion over how the former ED continues to maintain control over our former website, blogs and message boards, insisting that he continues to speak for the SD, even after he was dismissed from his official position of ED by the elected officers of the organization, thereby creating the fiction that there are two organizations claiming to be the SDUSA. While his actions has resulted in the officers having to create a new official website and message boards for the authentic SDUSA, no one reading this section of the document will have any doubts, upon reaching the end of the chapter, that this organization is the only legitimate body that can claim that name and the rich historical heritage that comes with it.

This experience has only reinforced the officer's conviction that the revived SD must be an empathetic organization, as the problems with the Executive Director have been repeated many times over in other Left and non-Left political organizations, and did not develop solely due to his personal short-comings. Therefore, this section of the Manifesto, will discuss in depth, not only the factors that led up to the decision to fire the Executive Director, but its wider meaning beyond the fate of one organization. The reason why Left organizations have usually failed is because of the divisive internal life which belittles its humane and often inspiring principles and goals. As a result, rank and file members become disillusion and leave, frequently becoming alienated by the experience and decide to reject being involved in the political arena altogether.

We will then discuss what our new relationship will be with the so-called "Socialist Party of the United States of America" and the Democratic Socialists of America, and why we believe that it is necessary to revive the SDUSA, rather than have us work in one of the two existing organizations, that evolved from the historic Socialist Party

Finally, we will conclude with the Basic Statement of Principles of the Revives SDUSA which will clearly show to the public what policies will be continued from the SD of the past 30 years and what will be Different in the Empathetic Internal Life and the Political Positions of the Renewed Organization.

We will first describe the new empathetic internal structure of the revived organization where we will be dedicated to practicing the very principles that we are proposing in our statement of principles, then go on to the Statement itself. The initial shorter Statement that was sent to the Socialist International and revised on May 3, 2009, appears on our website. That Statement and the longer version here are a consensus document that will

contain aspects in it that members and potential members could differ on, while remaining united over the majority of its total content. For example, the Statement will directly address the issue of SD's continuing strong support for the existence of Israel and condemnation of both anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism on the Left, even while we may also be critical of the policies of the Israeli government. A principle goal of these Principles and the SD, as an organization is to build a majority Left coalition in this country which would include white, Latino and African American working class social and religious conservatives, who are also economic populists. This is a segment of the population, which was once a central part of the majority New Deal/Great Society coalition, but had been alienated by the social and cultural positions of the Democratic Party and the wider Left since the late 1960s.

In turn, the Statement will also discuss how the SD will attempt to reach out to the religious community, while at the same time develop a consensus position on divisive social issues, such as abortion and Gay and Lesbian rights, which will not please everyone, but would enable us to attract a wider area of the entire spectrum of the population of the United States than any other group on the Left, in order to reach our goal of building a majority Center-Left coalition in this country. Our model in this endeavor is the "Come Let Us Reason Together" document adopted by a group of moderate Evangelicals and the Third Way, a Washington think tank for progressives. Our aim in this entire "Manifesto" and in our Basic Statements of Principles is to present a document announcing the revival of an organization that could be supported by a very substantial section of the democratic Left in this country, as well as reach out to a large percentage of the population of the United States that have traditionally been wary of Left wing organizations.

Chapter One

The Anatomy of a Split

A, The Socialist Party in the 1960s & early 1970s. What caused a 3-way split in the Party and the change of its name to Social Democrats, U.S.A. at the end of 1972?

In the Socialist Party in the 1960s thru 1972, there were factional differences in the organization between those members, who we wanted to maintain its traditional role as a political party running candidates for public offices in opposition to the two main capitalist Democratic & Republican Parties, or supported the building of a party run by the labor movement, and those members, organized in the Realignment Caucus. The members of this Caucus, while agreeing with their other SP comrades over the capitalist nature of the two main political parties, saw that the labor movement, including its rank-and-file and minority members, identified the Democratic Party as their own. These SP members continue to believe that labor was mistaken in trusting mainstream moderate-to-

liberal Democrats to represent their interest. But so long as labor, the only mass movement capable of building a socialist society - allied itself with the Democratic Party, the small socialist movement, after almost a quarter of a century of fruitlessly trying to get the labor movement to leave the DP and form a labor party, had no choice but to aid the labor movement in attempting to make the Democratic Party truly its own. In this, labor would form a de facto labor party within the Democratic Party, or if faced with a clear betrayal of workers' interest, it might begin an independent working class party of its own. A major influence in organizing the Realignment Caucus came from those SP members, who had been members of the Independent Socialist League, which was led by Max Shachtman, which merged with the SP in 1958, which brought new energy and young talent to an almost dormant party. However, the Caucus also included long time SPers, and Norman Thomas, while maintaining his stand of never joining a fractional caucus, was sympathetic to the strategy of the Realignment Caucus. The Labor Party Caucus, and later the Debs Caucus, on the other hand, was primarily made up of long time members of the SP. There was also a third group in the early 1960s, called Mendelson/Meier, which tried to present a compromise position to bridge the difference between the labor party and realignment caucuses.

Nevertheless, despite these difference within the Party, the SP and other fraternal organizations, such as the League for Industrial Democracy, set the agenda for the American Left for the first time since the early 1930s, eclipsing the Communist Party, in the first 5 years of the 1960s, having a major influence in the civil rights movement, peace movement, labor movement, and in the Democratic Party itself. This would culminate with the SP being the main organizers of the famed 1963 March on Washington for Jobs & Justice. The SP's newspaper, *New America*, became the cutting edge journal on the Left covering from the inside both the activities of the civil rights and peace movement, surpassing the long time independent Stalinoid weekly newspaper, the **National Guardian**. We were able to accomplish all this, even though the SP's membership was still meager in comparison to the glory days of its mass membership in the hundred of thousands in the years 1912-1920. During this period, the SP was closest to the all embracing Debsian model or the pre World War I years, of being made up of various tendencies from advocates of a Third Camp position opposed to both the U.S. and Soviet camps in the Cold War and independent political action by the Labor movement on the Left to moderate pro Western bloc, social democrats on the Right, supporting working inside the Democratic Party. At the same time, they were able to live together in the same organization by being united on common objectives, such as their work in the civil rights movement, while engaging in debates and discussions over issues in dispute in an atmosphere of unity. This was the spirit of the SP back in 1960s.

However, in the later half of the decade of the 1960s, the factional differences in the SP, matching the strife that existed in the larger American society of the period, began to tear the party apart. The Vietnam War and the growing New Left movement of young people further divided the SP, not only between the independent electoral strategy caucus and Realignment caucus, but within the Realignment caucuses itself. As early as 1964, some former members of the ISL, who maintained that organization's traditional opposition to both blocs in the Cold War (the Third Camp) and either of the two major capitalist

parties, left the SP, believing that it was becoming too tied to the Democratic Party and reformist in nature. Then, in the late 1960s, the factional fight between the militant anti-war Left wing of the SP, now known as the Debs caucus, and the Realignment caucus heated up with both sides trading control of the national office and the Party's newspaper, *New America*, until 1968 when the Realignment caucus gain majority control of the National Committee of the SP and the election of Michael Harrington, as the party's chairman.

The death of Norman Thomas in November, 1968, whom when he was alive served as a unifying force in the party for both factions, helped to further unleash the growing tensions within the party, which would eventually lead to a three way split. First, the members of the Debs caucus, whose major figures were long time SPers David McReynolds and Rob Tucker, supported an immediate withdrawal of all U.S. armed forces in Vietnam and the SP working side by side with the mass anti-war movement in the United States. They accused the members of the Realignment caucus of really supporting the U.S. intervention in Vietnam, while hiding its Hawkish position behind bogus anti-war organization's such as Negotiations Now. Moreover, the Debs caucus accused the SP majority leadership of bureaucratically operating the national office and newspaper, in an authoritarian matter (referred to as Right-wing-Bolshevism) denying equal access for the minority caucus. (Ironically, the members of the Realignment Caucus made a similar charge against the Debs Caucus when the later controlled the national office and newspaper, *New America*, in 1967-68.) The Debs Caucus also charged that the new Realignment leadership was transforming the SP into a vestige of the Democratic Party and uncritically following the pro-war line of the AFL-CIO under the presidency of George Meany, thereby leaving behind the Party's heritage as bequeath by Debs & Thomas. Therefore, after their defeat at the 1970 Convention of the SPUSA, McReynold and Tucker, left the Socialist Party, along with many other members of the Debs Caucus.

At the same time, divisions between Michael Harrington and his former mentor, Max Shachtman, were growing within the majority Realignment Caucus. They had differed over the Vietnam War, but these differences had been papered over by the Shachtman & Harrington sides agreeing to a compromise position on the war, similar to the policy of SANE (Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy), while they all continued to share the Realignment strategy of running with the labor movement in the Democratic Party in order to transform it into a social democratic party. After, winning a majority of the NC at the 1968 SPUSA Convention and the election of Harrington, as Party Chairman, these differences in the Realignment Caucus over Vietnam between Shachtman and Harrington reared its ugly head. Max and his supporters supported then Vice President Hubert Humphrey in the 1968 Democratic Primaries, while Mike and his supporters backed the anti-war candidacies of Senators Eugene McCarthy & Robert Kennedy. When Humphrey, with the strong support of the labor movement, narrowly lost the Presidential election to Richard Nixon, Shachtman and his supporters blamed the defeat on the New Politics elements in the Democratic Party and the anti-war movement, who had advocated a position of abstaining from voting for Humphrey in protest for his support of the Vietnam War. Therefore, while both the Shachtman and Harrington sides in the

Realignment Caucus favored the SP working in the Democratic Party, they now differed over the nature of the coalition that each supported in the DP. The Shachtman side favored a coalition led by the AFL-CIO, minorities, etc, while the Harrington side saw a new coalition emerging from the anti-war section of the labor movement, led by the UAW, the new student and mainstream anti-war movements and intellectuals that came out of the McCarthy and Kennedy campaigns, under the name of the New Politics. After 1971, both sides could no longer work in the same caucus and therefore disbanded the Realignment Caucus, stating that it had achieved its goal now that the majority of the membership of the SPUSA supported its position of working in the Democratic Party. However, a brief period of internal peace was broken over further divisions over the Vietnam War and the makeup of a majority winning coalition in the DP, which led to Harrington and his supporters forming a new caucus called the Coalition caucus. Nevertheless, Harrington remained the chairman and chief spokesperson of the Socialist Party to the outside world, even though he was also the leader of a minority caucus in the Party.

Finally, early in 1972, it would be a unification of the Socialist Party, U.S.A. with the Democratic Socialist Federation, which was the remnant of the former Old Guard faction which left the SP in 1936, which would ironically help lead to the major 3 way split in the Party at the end of the year. Michael Harrington had opposed the early unity with the pro war DSF (whose members consisted of the Workmen's Circle and the Jewish Socialist Verband, etc.) while the debate over the Vietnam War was continuing in the SP. The members of the DSF would add to the pro-war majority in the Party. Therefore, the NC decided to strip Harrington of his title as sole Chairman of the SPUSA. Rather, he would now become one of 3 equal co-chairmen's of the new unified Socialist Party, U.S.A. and Democratic Socialist Federation of the U.S.A, with civil rights leader Bayard Rustin and labor leader Charles Zimmerman, from the DSF, as the two other co-chairman. But it would be a pyrrhic unity as the divisions over the Vietnam war and the nature of the coalition within the Democratic Party grew wider between the majority and Harrington's Coalition Caucus as George McGovern, representing the anti-war –New Politics coalition forces in the DP won the presidential nomination over the candidacies of Senators Hubert Humphrey and Henry Jackson, who were favored by Shachtman and the majority which followed him in the SP. After the Democratic Convention, SP-DSF debated endorsing George McGovern, as the New Politics forces took over the DP. AFL-CIO declined to support him and was neutral in the race against Pres. Nixon. The SP was divided between following the AFL-CIO's neutral position, or giving a very soft endorsement of McGovern against Nixon, but emphasizing his supporter's "authoritarian leftist leanings" and "elitists and anti-labor tendencies." Shachtman said McGovern's "foreign policy is a monstrosity, not just as bad as Henry Wallace in 1948 but much worse." McGovern is calling for the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Vietnam in six weeks seemed to be in favor of "turning over all of Vietnam to the Stalinists," according to Shachtman. And Max lamented that the McGovern campaign ran "entirely against the grain of our realignment policy. he wants an anti-labor machine; I want the opposite."¹ Finally, Harrington supported the SP giving a strong positive endorsement to McGovern, praising his support of taxing unearned income and other progressive positions. When the

NC voted to give McGovern a very critical soft endorsement, Mike resigned as SP co-chair in protest. He accused his "comrades" of secretly supporting Nixon.²

Shachtman died of a heart attack on Nov. 5, 1972. Two day's later; McGovern lost to Nixon in a massive landslide. SP-DSF Convention was held on Dec. 29-31, 1972 (and covered for three straight days in the **New York Times**). Harrington's Coalition Caucus and the remains of the Debs caucus were defeated on every question voted on by the delegates at the convention. The majority voted to change the name of the Socialist Party to Social Democrats USA, 72-34, thus breaking with the last vestige of the heritage of Debs and Thomas, according to Harrington and his allies. It should be noted that when David McReynold's angrily quit the SP after the 1970 National Convention, calling the SP majority, the "former associates of Norman Thomas," then SP Chairman Harrington responded by stating, "I am quite willing to agree that all of us in the Socialist Party, of whatever faction, are 'former associates of Norman Thomas,' but I object to invoking the memory of that great man for factional purposes."³

It is important here to look at the rationale for the name change. It originated in the discussions that led to merger of the Socialist Party and the Democratic Socialist Federation. The majority, in the Convention debate over changing the name of the Socialist Party, maintained that the term "social democrats" more accurately denoted their political philosophy and that dropping the term 'party' had long been overdue. The new name would also "distinguish the organization from its Communist opponents and from the smaller Socialist Labor and Socialist Workers parties, the latter – a Trotskyist Communist organization hostile toward Israel." National Secretary Joan Suall argued that the name change represented "no substantive change to our commitment to the building of a democratic socialist society in America." In addition, she stated that "our organization stopped running candidates many years ago. Today we support Democratic Party candidates who indicate a commitment to moving the country in the direction of social democracy." James Glaser, the first vice-chairman of the newly named SDUSA claimed that the term "socialist" had become "hopelessly identified in the public mind with the Communist world. Our movement, in contrast," Glaser asserted, "is identified in Europe and elsewhere as social democratic. Essentially, this means we favor the achievement of socialism through democratic, peaceful and constitutional means." Former SP National Secretary Irwin Suall pointed out that the name change would further the organization's goal to bring socialist politics into the mainstream of American political life. "Far from being a departure from Socialist tradition," Suall added, "the name social democratic was first used in the U.S. by Eugene Victor Debs when he called the forerunner of the SP, the Social Democratic Party of the United States of America."

Michael Harrington, on the other hand, argued that the name change would mean a departure from socialist politics. "I think it could mean not simply the abandonment of a tradition, and in an attempt to become more acceptable to the American people and the American trade union," he told the delegates at the Convention. "It would result in our giving up our socialist content. I think that the Socialist party should stand forthrightly for socialism."⁴ Looking back, from the vantage point of almost 38 years, at the content of this debate, we can see merits in the arguments of both sides. The contemporary

rational for the name change makes sense, even though the organization still held the title to the name Socialist Party. However, Harrington's warning came true. As the years and decades went by, the SD did increasingly give up the socialist content in its public programs, and eventually managed to also narrow the definition of social democrat and social democracy. This is illustrated in its final public document, "The New Social Democrat," that was released in May, 2003. The document maintained that "social democracy is not an adversary to capitalism that seeks, however gradually, to do away with it. Social democracy can complement and even strengthen capitalism by helping maintain the framework of rules and obligations that encourage the market to operate with efficiency, vigor, fairness, legitimacy and the fullest possible participation of our citizens. Experience shows that, contrary to both the ideologues of laissez-faire and the dire predictions of the Marxists, a capitalist economy that is complemented by a soundly conceived social-democratic social and regulatory system promotes greater prosperity for both rich and poor." This statement was, as Harrington warned, a full departure from socialist tradition and the "giving up (of) our socialist content," including attacks on Marxism, that one would expect to see on the Right. Max Shachtman and other departed SDers, who were advocates of democratic Marxism to the end of their lives, must have been turning in their grave over this statement. It also showed the dramatic shift to the Right, in the SD's from its initial program, "The American Challenge," that was adopted at the 1972-73 Convention which defended Marx's analysis of the capitalist economic system and did not make a differentiation between the terms democratic socialism and social democracy. Rather it used both names throughout the document.⁵

Nevertheless, had Max lived, he would have probably opposed a name change and it never would have been brought up, according to some sources.⁶ Second, these sources argue that despite his sour relations with Harrington, he never would have allowed the SP to split. In any event, Harrington's caucus began planning to form a new organization at a meeting in Feb. 1973. They began publishing a journal entitled *Newsletter of The Democratic Left* in March, 1973.⁷ Jack Clark was brought in to organize this new group. Mike officially resigned from the SD in July, 1973. The Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) was founded in Oct, 1973. Mike Harrington was elected chairman of DSOC at the founding convention. DSOC was form "to create a socialist presence in the United States." They would work in the left wing of the Democratic Party. While socialism was their ultimate goal, DSOC would "work in the liberal, labor, black and women's movement for social change desperately needed now." Their founding statement called for bringing together both the Meanyites and the McGovernites under one roof in the DP. It also stated that Communist countries were not socialist. Its analysis of Communism still held to the Shachtmanite theory of bureaucratic collectivism.⁸

At the same time, the members of the Debs Caucus who had remained in the SP and won 2 seats to the new National Committee of the renamed Social Democrats, U.S.A., also decided to withdraw from the organization, taking with it the state parties from Pennsylvania, Illinois, California and Wisconsin, whose historical ties to the SP went back to 1898 and had continue to maintain an office since that time. The Debs Caucus continued to function, along with the above state party organization, outside of the SD, while Virgil J. Vogel of Illinois circulated letters between members of the withdrawn

state parties and other members of the Debs Caucus maintained that the SD by transforming the nature of the organization from that of a political party to a political pressure group, and dropping the name “Socialist” from its title, gave up its connection to being the historical Socialist Party of Debs & Thomas. Therefore Vogel called for the Debs Caucus and the 4 state parties to re-establish the Socialist Party under their leadership. They decided to ignore that the SD in its new constitution, in Article XIV, maintained that “the Socialist Party, by that name, shall continue, in association with the Social Democrats, U.S.A.” Rather, the withdrawn state parties and the rest of the Debs Caucus gathered together for a conference, in Milwaukee, in May of 1973, where Vogel made a motion to transform the conference into the founding convention of the Reconstituted Socialist Party of America. The delegates voted to pass the motion and the new Socialist Party was born on May 26, 1973. The national office would be located in the historic Socialist Party of Wisconsin headquarters in Milwaukee. Frank Zeidler, who served as mayor of Milwaukee from 1948-1960, and was the last major office holder elected by the Socialist Party, became national chairperson of the new SP. Sometime later that year, the renewed party decided to again name the organization, Socialist Party, U.S.A (SPUSA)⁹ In 1974, however, to avoid a lawsuit with the SD, which still claimed the title to the name Socialist Party, U.S.A, the new party officially renamed itself, Socialist Party of the United States of America (SPUSA), but still went by the name, Socialist Party, U.S.A. in all of its publications and later on its website. In 1976, the new SPUSA, resume electoral activities on a national scale by nominating Zeidler to run for President, with J. Quinn Brisben, as his Vice President running mate.

Chapter 2

SDUSA & DSOC, Bitter Rivals

SDUSA and DSOC both came out of the Shachtmanite movement. SDUSA was now the Right-Shachtmanite tendency. Those who came out of the SP in DSOC are called Center-Shachtmanites. Hal Draper and the Jacobsons who reject working in the DP and adhere to the Third Camp position were Left-Shachtmanites. This is how the SD-DSOC split affected the wider democratic Left in the U.S. in the period from 1973-1980:

While both SD and DSOC worked inside the Democratic Party, they supported different camps in the DP. SD formed the Coalition for a Democratic Majority. DSOC organized Democracy 76, and worked to influence the platform at the 1976 Democratic Convention. SD’s activities within the DP and the Coalition for a Democratic Majority opposed what they call the New Politics forces behind Democracy 76. Both groups endorsed Carter. (DSOC might not have formally endorsed him, but Harrington did in an article in the *NY Daily News*.) DSOC members are elected to political offices running as Democrats, such as NYC Council member, Ruth Messinger, Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Ca.) & Rep. Major Owens (D.-N.Y.). Democracy 76 became the Democratic Agenda and DSOC achieved its highest level of influence within the DP at the 1978 Democratic mini-convention in Memphis, where it was Harrington vs. Carter at that meeting debating the Administration’s economic policy. Democratic Agenda activities continued in 1979 and 80. DSOC and Harrington supported Sen. Edward Kennedy in the 1980 Presidential

primaries. DSOC didn't endorse Carter after the 1980 Democratic Convention. SDUSA criticized Carter's weak foreign policy. The group had a strong relationship with New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Senator Henry Jackson (D-Wash.). SD formally endorsed Carter, but some prominent friends and members of the SD backed Reagan. Carl Gershman joined the new Reagan Administration as chief aide to UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick. Kirkpatrick, herself had close ties to the SD. Some CDM Democrats and SDers became neo-Conservatives and joined the Republican Party. Gershman had been the executive director of SDUSA from 1974-79. (In fact, Gershman was appointed as Kirkpatrick's aide, not many weeks after returning from the Congress of the Socialist International, as part of the SD delegation. He went from singing the *International* to serving in the Reagan Administration, just a few short weeks apart.)

Chapter 3

Critical Question No 1

Why would we want to Revive the SDUSA?

A, Why would we want to Revive the SDUSA when its Reputation on the Left became so toxic due to the Charges that under the former Leadership, its excessive Anti-Communist Principles led it to support U.S. military intervention everywhere and have ties to CIA Activities in Latin America and elsewhere?

This SDUSA has been considered by many observers to be the direct heir of Max Shachtman's final political legacy. Many of the members and the leadership of SDUSA were Max's closest allies in the last 10 years of his life. Therefore Max has taken the blame for some SDers who have become neo-Conservatives and worked in the Reagan (and the second Bush) Administration. He has been called the father of the evil empire theory of the USSR. (This statement, says more about those who are making this accusation.) Are Max's critics correct? Or were his closest allies lost without his guidance, and moved in a direction that Shachtman never would have approved of, especially those who became neo-Conservatives?

B, A frank look at the charges against our past activities under the former Leadership

SDUSA had been charged with being excessively anti-Communist. Its close ties to the former AFL-CIO leadership, particularly in international affairs, have been blamed for the Cold War mentality of the Labor Federation. And the SDUSA have also been charged with having ties to CIA activities in Latin American unions and elsewhere. We are very aware that these charges today affect our renewed effort to revive the SDUSA. Therefore, in our new publication, *The Torch & Rose*, and in *Fist & Rose*, our planned theoretical publication, there will be an objective study of the entire past SDUSA network. This network consisted of the following kinds of organizations and periodicals: (1), groups which have had close fraternal relations with the SD, such as the League for Industrial Democracy, Frontlash and the A. Philip Randolph Institute. (2) Organizations in which SD members played a large and influential role. Examples are Penn Kemble and Prodemca, and Carl Gershman and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Then there was also Freedom House that can be placed on this list. . There was also the SD's relationship to the American Institute for Free Labor Development in Latin America (AIFLD). Then there was the relationship between the SD and *Commentary* magazine. Finally, there were those Shachtmanites and SDers and allies who became neo-Conservatives and influence the foreign policy positions in the Reagan and the current second Bush Administration.

One of our main goals in taking an honest and objective look at our past activities since 1973 is to determine, once and for all, the charges of CIA and Right wing activity by AIFLD and the NED, and in the SD and its fraternal allies as a whole, which have been widely made by many of the Left. If we find that these allegations are true, we will say so and make amends for them. But if they are "Stalinoid" lies, we will state this fact in our publications. Our judgment will be made on the evidence and not some pre-conceived political bias on our part or influenced by the opinions of critics or friends of the SD on either the political Left or Right. Moreover, it would show that the new SDUSA is an open and very democratic organization that is not afraid to that a hard look at our own past, and learn the right lessons from them in order to build a better organization.

Here, we will explore in brief, the various topics concerning the SD's past activities which will be explored in depth in future issues of our new publications. First and foremost, there was the issue of SDUSA and anti-Communism. The SD saw itself as being, except for mainstream labor, the only anti-Stalinists on the Left. It felt isolated. Therefore, articles in our publications will discuss whether the socialist anti-Stalinism of Shachtman's closest allies in the SP, degenerated after he died into an anti-Communism that became almost anti-Marxist and not too different from conservative anti-Communism. Was this factor the reason that some SDers moved into the neo-conservative camp and supported Reagan as the answer to the Soviet threat? On the other hand, was the SD reacting against a "democratic Left" that was moving increasingly away from an understanding of Communism? These are the questions we intend to explore.

The SD on the Soviet threat: This was the issue that seems to be the primary focus of the activity in the SD in the 70s and 80s. Were they correct to warn about the aggressive aims

of the USSR? Did they overlook the real weakness of Soviet society which ultimately led to the collapse of the entire Communist system and the USSR itself? We may argue that from recent data that the SD analysis was both essentially correct in many aspects of its anti-Soviet position, especially its critique of detente, and completely wrong in its analysis of the military strength and dynamism of the USSR and Communist societies. Remember Jeane Kirkpatrick's article in *Commentary* in 1979 about the differences in the ability to change authoritarian Right wing dictatorships and the permanence of Communist totalitarian dictatorships that established her fame, and were adopted as an article of faith by the SD? And remember Jean-Francois Revel's book, *The Totalitarian Temptation* and the charge in it of the increasing Finlandization or neutralization of Western Europe? The leadership of the SD highly publicized Revel's thesis in their public writings and activities. Then, when it came to the Gorbachev period, the SD could not explain him or comprehend the reality of his reform movement. Another problem was that the SD seemed to shy away from making any criticism of the foreign policy aims of the U.S. in the Cold War, as even Shachtman did in his pro war statement on Vietnam. Rather, in reaction to what they saw as the anti-American positions of the majority of the American Left, the leadership over-reacted to the other extreme by cerebrating American military power and seeing the United States as being the primary force for good in the world, without hardly any blemishes. A prime example of this sentiment was the Foreign Policy Resolution, written by Joshua Muravchik, which was debated and passed at the 1985 SDUSA Convention.

Here, we will take a second look, in our publications, at the SD analysis of the "detente fraud" in the 1970s and the entire foreign policy positions that were taking by this organization under the former leadership. We will take a very close look at Carl Gershman, when he became the main SP spokesmen on foreign policy and his views of the Soviet threat. Was his influence in the SD, positive or negative to the organization's future? After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the SD saw the Soviet action as vindication of its hard line policy toward the USSR, and Communism in general. How did this analysis affect the SD's views of the reforms of the Gorbachev era?

Angola and South Africa: The SD championed Jonas Savimbi and his National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (UNITA) rebel force, which was also backed by the U.S. and South Africa, against the pro-Soviet government of the country, whom was also being aided by Cuban military forces sent to the area by the Castro government. Savimbi, in his public speeches to SD & Freedom House, co-sponsored events, claimed to be a democratic socialist, and that his rebel force was fighting for a free and democratic socialist Angola, against a Marxist-Leninist pro Soviet puppet government. Savimbi, however, turned out to be a violent authoritarian guerrilla leader who would sabotage every peace agreement that would be reached with the Angolan government and murder countless Angolan civilians. Nevertheless, the SD wasn't alone in misjudging Savimbi and UNITA on the democratic Left. Eric Lee and Alex Spinrad, in their journal, *The New International Review*, wrote the following statement in their important article: "Democratic Socialism: Points of Departure," written in 1983: "In the impoverished Third World we socialists support all genuine anti-imperialist forces, including the democratic forces in El Salvador; the courageous Afghan rebels fighting against Soviet

imperial conquest; the Angolan resistance movement (UNITA) which seeks to drive Cuban and Soviet colonial armies out of Africa; the Black workers movement in South Africa, fighting against the brutality and immorality of apartheid capitalism; the Cuban democratic freedom fighters both those on the island and those in exile; and others. Those who are fighting for genuine national independence are fighting with us – against capitalist imperialism and against totalitarian imperialism. In the period of détente, these movements are fighting with us against a common enemy and toward a common goal: a world of free people and peoples.”¹⁰ This statement, except for the comment about “capitalist imperialism” (unfortunately) and “détente”, is a perfect summary of the foreign policy position of the SDUSA in the 1970s and 80s.

SD and the Labor Movement: The SD established very close links to the leadership of the AFL-CIO. The top leaders of the Labor Federation appear at public SD functions. Several SDUSA members held important staff positions in the AFL-CIO and major affiliated unions. This enables the SD to play a powerful role in shaping the labor movement in the U.S. What were the results of their influence in the labor movement, particularly on foreign policy, in particular, the influence of Tom Kahn on labor's foreign policy positions as head of the Federation's international division? We will objectively deeply analyze this questions concerning Kahn, who was a major figure of our recent past in both the SP and SD, in our new publications.

The SD and the Labor Movement's crucial role in supporting the independent Polish trade union, Solidarity. Tom Kahn's critical role in that effort. On this issue, there cannot be any criticism of the SD's role at all by anyone who considers him or herself a democratic socialist, or on the democratic Left. Rather, the Social Democrats, U.S.A played a central role in backing Solidarity after it was born in 1980. Then, after it was suppressed in December, 1981, when Poland was placed under martial law, the entire SD organization, including half of its national office in New York was turned over to the Committee in Support of Solidarity. Members of Solidarity who were able to flee Poland for the United States came to SD headquarters. They viewed it as their refugee center and home away from home. SD's pro Solidarity work was known throughout Poland. No one on the Democratic Left, including DSOC-DSA made any kind of effort to support Solidarity that came close to the job done by the leaders and members of the SDUSA. In fact the one pro Solidarity demonstration that was organized by DSOC, was organized by two dual members of DSOC and the SD Ironically, the only other organization on the Left that made a major effort in aiding Solidarity, were our Left-Shachtmanite comrades in the Campaign for Peace & Democracy, East & West, founded by former YPSL, Joanne Landy. In fact, other than the SD, or the so-called Right-Shachtmanites, and the AFL-CIO, Landy, by herself, did more for aiding Solidarity than any other *organization* on the Left. In short, whatever the other sins of the SD in its foreign policy, we, old members and new, can hold our head in pride over the effort that our organization, S.D.U.S.A. played in aiding Solidarity in its time of greatest need, that ultimately led to its rise again and democratically defeating the Communist government in Poland in 1989

SD. labor and Central America, including SD's support and involvement in AIFLD: What was AIFLD's real role in Latin America? The accusation of the SD's involvement with the CIA refers to the organization Prodemica that was founded by Penn Kemble. As a result of our opposition to the Sandinista government in Nicaragua and support for so-called democratic elements of the U.S. supported contras, such as Eden Pastora and Adolfo Romero. These are some of the issues that we will reconsider in our new publications.

Then there was Frontlash, the labor backed youth organization that was created by the SD, when it was still the Socialist Party in the late 60s. Frontlash was founded to directly combat the white backlash that developed in the 1966 Congressional elections, to register young people to vote and educate them on issues central to both the labor and the civil rights movement. **This is an example of an organization that engaged in very positive work in the tradition of the social democratic/democratic socialist movement, and the entire democratic Left, that was supported by the SD and had its office in the SD headquarters. Yet, Left critics of the SD have ignored this aspect of the SD's domestic activities from the 1970s thru the 1990s.** In addition, we will continue to highlight and also have a balance look at some prominent SDers in the Labor movement. For example, Sandra Feldman, who was the president of the AFT.

SD on domestic issues: A large proportion of this topic has already been covered in the previous paragraphs. SD and Blacks: Critic of the SD took little notice that our organization had a higher percentage of African-American members than either DSOC/DSA or the so called "SPUSA." Every convention of the SD had a strong civil rights resolution. However, what was controversial was our anti-quotas position. In our new publications, we will look back on this issue and our entire position on civil rights issues. One major factor for the SD attracting black members was our close relationship to the A. Philip Randolph Institute, which was led by our chairman, Bayard Rustin and NC members, Norm and Velma Hill. We look forward to renewing our relationship with the Randolph Institute, as well as establishing a new relationship with the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

The SD structure and the internal life of the organization, frankly, was a major problem and the central reason why the organization did not grow as it should have, in spite of its critic on the Left. In many ways, while the organization's central credo was its advocacy of political and social democracy, at the same time, democracy within the organization became more restricted.

The development of locals around the country was ignored, while control was centered in the national office. The SD's newspaper, *New America*, which had been continually published since 1960, when it was the organ of the Socialist Party, suddenly stop publishing without any explanation from the national offices in 1986, after it became more lively and innovated under the editorship of investigative reporter, Dennis King. There was reluctance in recruiting new members in the fear that they may bring some independent thinking to the organization and challenge the long term leaders of the SD.

The elections to the National Committee were as democratic as the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union before Gorbachev. A committee from the NC would select the list for the new NC, which would be primarily made up of members of the old NC, with perhaps several new people who had gained the trust of the NO. Then the convention delegates would vote for a single list containing the nomination for the new NC, just like in the old USSR. In this instance, critics of the SD may be right when they called the leadership, ‘Rightwing Bolsheviks.’

Each time, the YPSL or YSD or the national office did try to bring in new people and try to develop a new leadership with a fresh and open outlook, (I.E. an SD version of *glasnost*), their efforts would be always blocked by the NC or other long time members in the NO. The new blood would then usually leave the organization, disillusioned with the SD or politics in general.

The reality was that the old leadership ran the SD like a social club. The movement, as they called it, was made up of long time members who came together in the ISL of the 1950s or the SP of the 1960s and worked in harmony governing the SD. New members would first have to gain the trust of these “old-timers” before they could be active in the SD, or be nominated to the NC. They became more and more suspicious of outsiders, and contemptuous of their former comrades in both DSOC/DSA and “SPUSA”, particularly Michael Harrington, with whom they had a very close relationship with in the 1950s to around 1965. (The worse action in this rivalry was the SD’s and Tom Kahn, in particular, trying to sabotage the 1980 Eurosocialist Conference that was held in Washington D.C. and organized by Harrington and DSOC. **Belatedly, the new leadership of SDUSA formally apologizes for this inexcusable action to a fellow member of the Socialist International, which was taken by the former leadership of our organization.**) At the same time, in a rare moment of candor, they would admit that the SD had never gotten over the loss of Harrington, who had been their charismatic major spokesperson, when they were in the SP. Then, after the resignation of Rita Freedman as executive director, the death of several key members of the NC, and the failure of another attempt at bringing fresh and youthful leadership to the SD, as Rita’s successor, the organization stopped holding its national conventions every two years, and started on a major and almost fatal national decline. We will discuss this further below, and how the almost demise of the SD can & should be transformed to its new rebirth. We are also intending to also revive the League for Industrial Democracy.

Chapter 4

Critical Question No. 2

Why Should We *Trust* You After the Bitter Reputation Left by the Old Leadership of the SDUSA and the Fact that former prominent Leaders of the Organization have become Important Neo-Conservatives Figures on the Right?

A. Why should we *trust* you? Aren't you the neo-Conservatives whom were behind the planning for the Iraq War & are now working to begin a new war with Iran? Aren't you all now Republicans and have repudiated your Socialist and even Social Democratic heritage as illustrated by the book, *Heaven on Earth, The Rise & Fall of Socialism*, and other writings of former YPSL chairman Josh Muravchik?

Yes, we have to face this critical issue of the relationship of the SD and the neo-Conservatives. What was the influence of Commentary magazine and Norman Podhoretz and Midge Decter on our organization? What about the SDers who became well known neo-Conservatives: Josh Muravchik, Linda Chavez and Chris Gerstein, Max and Anne Green, etc.? Then there were the neo-Conservatives who have been close to the SD, such as Michael Novak, Michael Ledeen, Ben Wattenberg and Jean Kirkpatrick and possible Paul Wolfowitz. (Some of these figures spoke at SD functions before they were known as neo-Cons. But Kirkpatrick was never a member of the SD.) Should we formally repudiate and denounce them? On the other hand, shouldn't we have a symposium in our publications and in public, with our former comrade, Josh Muravchik, reviewing and debating his critique of socialism in his book? This would show that the new revived SDUSA is not afraid to tackle the tough issues, including the issue of the viability of social democracy/socialism itself, even with a critic who was once our close comrade and teacher, when he was chair of the YPSLs. Carl Gershman served as Kirkpatrick's assistant at the U.S. Mission to the UN in the first Reagan Administration. Then he became the first director of the National Endowment for Democracy. We repeat that we will look at the arguments for and against the NED and try to determine who's right in our new publications. Neo-Conservatives dominated the foreign policy of the second Bush Administration. They are accused of being reversed Trotskyists, by their critics, of having a pro-capitalist version of the Trotskyist theory of the "Permanent Revolution." Their position was viewed as being a direct result of the neo-conservatives origins in the Trotskyist/Shachtmanite movement. Is this the final legacy of the Shachtmanite movement and a lasting legacy of our organization, SDUSA? On the other hand, is it a basic distortion of the movement's goals and analysis of world affairs? Yes, this topic and all of the above controversies over the activities of the SD since 1973, and even prior to the split, will be frankly and objectively reviewed in the new publications of this revived Social Democrats, U.S.A.

Chapter 5

The End of One Era of the SDUSA and the Rise of a New Era.

A. The End of One Era of the SDUSA and the Rise of a New Era, as the SD, seemingly defunct as an organization, as was the concept of Socialism itself after the fall of Communism, arises again, like the Phoenix, to Build a Brighter future for the Organization, under New Empathetic Leadership and The Social Democratic/Democratic Socialist Movement in the United States & The World along with our Comrades in the Socialist International

The SD lost its vital power base in the AFL-CIO, as SD supporter Thomas Donuhue lost to new DSA member John Sweeney. This appeared to result in the end of SDUSA, as most of its activities appeared to be transferred to a new think tank that was being run by SD President Dave Jessup, the New Economy Information Service (NEIS), in 1999. The NEIS seemed to be close to the "Third Way" concepts of Clinton and Blair. After 2003, NEIS also became suddenly inactive. After 1994, the SD no longer held a national convention, in violation of its constitutional requirement calling for a national convention every two years.

The SDUSA did open a website and communicated with its members through the publication, *NO Notes*. But after 2000, *NO Notes* was only available on the SD's website. There were no indications of any meetings of the National Committee since 1994, again in violation of the constitutional requirement for NC meetings every 3 months. There were no public meeting of the SD in the final years of the 1990s and the first 2 years of the new century.

Suddenly, on May Day of 2002, the SD had an all day conference exploring the critical issue: "Socialism: What Happened? What Now?" A year later, the SD arose again with a all day conference on the topic "Everything Changed: What Now for Labor, Liberalism and the Global Left?" The National Committee seem to have met before that meeting, because a subcommittee of NC prepared a statement entitled "The New Social Democrats," which was to be distributed at that conference "for use in discussion to prepare for the adoption of resolutions and an action program at a meeting to be held in the late Fall or Winter of 2003." It did not represent an official statement by the organization. As far as it is known, that conference was never held. The next and final activity that was held by the former leadership of SDUSA was the conference on October 1, 2005, "Sidney Hook and American Democracy: Current Crisis, Future Challenges." Sidney Hook, the famous philosopher, and social democratic political activist, who was a fierce opponent of Communism and a very controversial figure in his own right, had been Honorary Chair of the SD from 1978 to his death in 1989. All of the above three conference were organized by Penn Kemble. He also wrote the NO Notes for the SD website. Kemble did not attend the later conference as he was dying from brain cancer. It was Kemble whom was responsible for keeping the SD alive until 2005, despite the deaths of many long time key leaders of the SD and members of the NC. And it seemed that with his death later in October of 2005 (which received more coverage and tributes

in conservative publications such as *The Washington Times*, *The New York Sun*, and the *Wall St Journal* then anywhere else), no one was left in the NO with the will or desire to keep the organization alive. The last items to be placed on the official SD website were the tributes to Kemble. Nothing has been added since October, 2005.

Thus, with Kemble's passing, it appeared that the SD also died as the phone in the national office was disconnected and letters or new membership contributions were returned with the message, "no longer at this address, box closed." And there was no forwarding address. Nevertheless, the SD's official website was not taken down until some time in 2009. Until then, the dormant organization still listed the address and phone number which were no longer in operation. In addition, the site still asked for donations and for dues from new members, despite the apparent abandonment of the organization by the former leadership and the surviving members of the NC.

And that would be the end of this story, except one existing Local of the SD, refused to allow the organization that they had worked so hard to build, to die. The Western Pennsylvania Local of SDUSA, which was chartered by the national organization in 1981, was the last active local in the SD.¹¹ It never received any notice from the NO that it was closing shop and disbanding the organization. Moreover, current members of the SD had not received a dues renewal notice for years, since 1998, or any mailing from the NO, including invitations to attend the 3 conferences. It seemed that only NC members and invited guests were permitted to attend those conferences. The former leadership of the SD seemed to close shop without informing the rank and file members of the organization. Therefore, the uninformed members could claim that they had paid dues to the SD for a service, and the SD leadership took their money and then disappeared without a trace. When Jeff Brindle of Pennsylvania send his application for membership to the old NO in order to join the Western Pennsylvania Local, his check was returned.

In 2006, Brindle, a former member of the "SPUSA" founded the Social Democratic Party of Pennsylvania. The Social Democratic Party of Pennsylvania affiliated with Social Democrats, U.S.A. in order to advance efforts to rebuild the authentic Socialist Party of America/Socialist Party, U.S.A. Gabe Ross, a continuing member of the SD since 1972, and one of the leading figures in the Western Pennsylvania Local, contacted other SD members across the country, and they all agree that they wanted the organization to continue in spite of the abandonment by the national leadership of the National office. They decided to re-establish a new national office in Johnstown, Pa., in the headquarters of the Western Pennsylvania Local, which in reality was also Ross's apartment. Ross, who was also a member of DSA & the "SPUSA" reached out to members of DSA, expelled or disillusioned members of "SPUSA" from the Fist & Rose Caucus, and activists in other progressive arenas and people who were never a member of social democratic/democratic socialist organization to join SDUSA and help rebuild the organization from the ground up.

However, in a good faith effort, Ross and some other members, especially, Rabbi Craig Miller, tried to contact the former leadership of the SD to discover why they closed the doors to the organization without informing the membership and invite the existing

members of the last elected National Committee to continue on with us in reviving the organization. Our hope was that some of the members of the last NC would continue to function in that position in a revived SD thereby provides an uninterrupted direct connection between the old leadership of the organization and the new NO being re-established in Jonestown, Pa. Unfortunately, what responses we did receive from the former leadership were negative, with the sense that they considered the SDUSA to be their personal property and if they choose to disband it, without any notice to the membership – tough luck. Therefore, while it was (and is still) our desire to have members of the old NC join us and renew their work in the SD, the new leadership of the organization contended that the ownership of the SD were in the hands of the remaining continuing members of the organization and the existing active Western Pennsylvania Local. Therefore, a provisional reorganizing National Committee, made up of both the continuing and new members of the SDUSA, began meeting, via conference calls, to plan the revival of the over 110 year old organization, that had been the historic Socialist Party of Debs & Thomas.

Our major problem was that the abandonment of the organization by the previous leadership had left us without any resources, materials, banners (everything was sent to Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library) and a tiny remaining membership scattered throughout the country. Most of the officers and members remained strangers to one another as they only knew each other from the weekly conference calls. Everything was done on a volunteer basis, including the staff in the Johnstown National Office/ Gabriel Ross's Apartment. In addition, a majority of our remaining members had significant medical, psychological and financial problems that inhibited their involvement with the organization on a normal basis. In other words, there was no rich benefactor ready to finance the organization, or union money coming to us. We did not have prominent academics who could write our position papers and for our publications. Thus, we began anew by really being an organization made up of the working class, the unemployed and people who view national health insurance not as a political issue, but their only source of managing their physical and mental health. Therefore, we in the SDUSA see dramatic social change and socialism itself, as not merely a philosophical question, but as vital to our own personal survival

The revived organization first began using the working title Social Democratic Party of America/Social Democrats USA/Socialist Party of America and claimed the intellectual property of the Social Democrats, USA including the names Socialist Party of America, League for Industrial Democracy, Young Social Democrats, Young People's Socialist League, Inc., and to the legacy of Debs, Jones, Thomas, Sinclair, Randolph, Harrington, Hoopes, Zeidler, and Rustin. Gabriel Ross was elected acting General Secretary of the Social Democratic Party of America. We established a website in order to publically announce the revived SDUSA, whose webmaster was Atlee Yarrow, formally of the Socialist Party of Florida.

In 2008, the Young Social Democrats was reconstituted under the leadership of acting Youth Secretary, Jaime Johnston, who we were told was a 18 year old self educated computer expert. She aided Yarrow in administrating our website, and was

recommended for the position of Youth Secretary by Gabe Ross. The provisional NC was not aware at the time that she was in a romantic relationship with Ross, who was over 30 years her senior, and that they were living together in his apartment, which would be a major conflict of interest in any organization. In addition, she had very little knowledge of socialism, in general, to be a public spokesperson for the YSD, and relied primarily on Ross for her political education.

Plans were originally laid with Social Democrats, USA / Social Democratic Party of America for a joint re-foundation convention in Philadelphia on Labor Day weekend. A committee to revive the efforts of the League for Industrial Democracy was formed. It was decided to resume using the name Social Democratic, U.S.A. in all public correspondences, activities and as the official name of our website. We also made a second website duplicating the entire content of the old SDUSA website, but with the new phone number and address of the re-established NO in Johnstown Pa. The old website was still up at this time, with their bogus address & phone number, because the former leadership signed a contract for that domain lasting to 2011! They never bothered to shut it down, as they proceeded in their attempt to secretly dissolve the organization. Then, as stated above, the original old website suddenly disappeared in 2009.

It was agreed that the revived SD will adhere to the provisions of the last amended constitution of the SD adopted in 1990 to show the continuity of the organization between the old and new leadership until the adoption of a new constitution at the re-foundation convention. The Socialist International was contacted by the new NO and the process was begun to reestablish the SD's membership in the SI, which the former leadership allowed to lapse by non-payment of dues going back several years. Ironically, the SI, in good faith, constantly tried to contact the old leadership to remind them to pay their back dues or they would lose their membership. But even the SI couldn't get a response from the old leadership.

In June, 2008, the provisional NC elected new officers for the SD, who will be formally nominated at the forthcoming convention. Rabbi Craig Miller was elected provisional National Chair of the SD. Later that year, Rabbi Miller would briefly resign from that post and was replaced by Rick D'Loss as SD's provisional National Chair. Rob Tucker was elected as Provisional President of the organization. (However, he soon became very ill and never really was able to take part in our meetings. He would pass away in February, 2009.) Gabe Ross was appointed by the officers to be the provisional Executive Director of the revived organization. In July, it was decided to postpone our re-foundation convention to next year, and concentrate on building our Locals and circulating our publications, with this so-called "SD Manifesto" becoming our official document announcing the revival of the SDUSA.

We reestablished our website on a new domain, with the goal of intergrading our new content, with the content of the old SDUSA website that was set up by the former leadership, after a dispute with Yarrow, with Jaime Johnston becoming our primary web-master.¹² The official name of our organization on this website was Social Democrats, USA-Socialist Party. However, this name prove to be confusing since while our

organizational structure was carried over from when the SDUSA was the Socialist Party, since 1973 we have been a non-political party, political action organization. In addition, there are new laws that have come into play since 1973, specifically relating to political endorsements and contributions that strictly define the distinction between a political advocacy group, a political action committee and a political party. As a result, we decided that our official name should continue to be Social Democrats, USA, alone, as it has been since 1973.

The provisional NC had also been debating whether to give up the title to the name, Socialist Party, U.S.A., as the present organization, which is officially registered under the name, Socialist Party of the United States of America, but publicly uses the name Socialist Party, U.S.A (SPUSA) on its website and all of its public literature, etc. may try to challenge us in court over which organization has the legitimate title to the name Socialist Party, U.S.A. Therefore, some NC members argue that we should reluctantly allow the current organization that calls itself “SPUSA” to claim the copyright to that name in order to save our revived fledging organization from a possible expensive lawsuit, and instead lay claim to the other historical names associated with the Socialist Party, such as the Socialist Party of America, etc.

On the other hand, other NC members point out, that according to the SD’s own constitution, the Socialist Party, U.S.A still existed, alongside the SDUSA, and could be revived for electoral purposes again, by a unanimous decision of its National Board, which consisted of all of the members of the SD’s National Committee. Moreover, it should be noted, for our current debate, that the SD's structure remained the same as it was when it was the SPUSA. All that changed was the name of the organization and that it no longer called itself a political party. However, it was still the same organization. Similarly, in 1944 when the Communist Party voted to transform the organization into the non-party, Communist Political Association, it was still under the same leadership and structure as the CPUSA, except the title of Chairman became President, etc. Then in 1945, the CPA, at a emergency convention, voted to becoming again, the Communist Party of the United States. Similarly, the SD could have, at any convention, voted to return to the name Socialist Party USA and run candidates for public office. It was still the same organization. That is why it remained a member of the Socialist International. The SD continued holding the seat that it occupied under the name of the Socialist Party. Similarly, when the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) merges in 1982 with the New American Movement (NAM) to form the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), the renamed and merged organization continued to hold DSOC's seat in the Socialist International, despite the more drastic change in the structure and membership of the merged organization. Accordingly, the SDUSA continued to hold the copyright title to the name Socialist Party, U.S.A. and the new organization that was founded in 1973, recognized this when they changed the name in their constitution to Socialist Party of the United States of America in 1974. But they only trademarked that name in 2007. Therefore, while we do not use Socialist Party, USA in the official name of the organization, we the members and officers of the revived Social Democrats, U.S.A. may still decide to officially reclaim our ownership to that

specific name with the formation of a political action committee for supporting electoral campaigns that would be called Socialist Party, U.S.A. PAC.

The year 2009 was to be the breakout year for the Provisional officers and members of the revived SDUSA, with the publication of the first issue of *Torch & Rose* in January, and a Refoundation National Convention in May that would officially reconstitute the organization under new leadership. This would enable the SD to begin public activities, recruit new members and re-establish itself as a major player on the Democratic Left.

The Refoundation National Convention did, in fact, take place on May, 3 2009. But our resource were too meager for it to be the public event, that would bring together from across the country, our members and officers, whom, for the most part, had never met one another. While, some public outdoor events were planned in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, it was uncertain whether they ever took place. Instead, the formal Refoundation Convention was conducted through a Conference Call on the afternoon of May 3rd.

Nevertheless, the Convention began on a extraordinary positive note, as we were privileged and honored to have as our Keynote Speaker, 95 year old, Ernie Erber. Erber was the Chair of the YPSL's back in the late 1930s, and became a following of Leon Trotsky. He aligned the YPSL's with the Trotskyists who entered the SP in 1936, and edited *The Socialist Appeal*, an official SP publication that became the Trotskyist organ in the Party. Erber, represented the YPSL's, in international conferences in Europe in 1936, and found himself in Spain, at the beginning of its Civil War. There he tried to organize a Eugene V. Debs column, on behalf of the SP, wrote a YPSL pamphlet about the Civil War, and even, helped edit *La Batalla*, the newspaper of the anti-Stalinist/anti-Fascist POUM. Erber, in the SWP, was a leading member of the Shachtman faction, and when the Shachtmanites split from the SWP in 1940 to form the Workers Party, Erber served on both its National and Political Committees. He was also as various times, editor of *Labor Action*, its newspapers, and Managing Editor and member of the Editorial Board, of *The New International*, the Shachtmanites theoretical journal. In 1948, Erber would resign from the Workers Party, as a result of his growing disagreement with the Bolshevik/Leninist nature of the Party and its support of the Bolshevik Revolution, in a public letter the WP's discussion bulletin. In turn, Shachtman responded with a 119 page single space vitriolic response, in the discussion bulletin defending revolutionary socialism, Leninism, and denouncing Erber's "sudden" deviation in sharp and highly personal caustic language that was an unfortunate trait of his political movement, and one, as we shall see, continues to plague us today, in the SD, and in many other Left wing organizations. After resigning from the WP, Erber joined the Socialist Party, would become a prominent city planner, and in the early 1980s, become active in DSOC/DSA in its Columbia, Maryland Local.

In his address, Erber gave us a historical perspective for our activities. He reminded us of what it was like in the depression era, his activities as a young socialist, reminisces about the prominent figures of the socialist movement that he knew, such as Norman Thomas, his experience in Spain, in the early days of the Civil War, and connected the events of

his long life to the economic conditions today, and a another crisis, second to the Great Depression, caused by Capitalism. He reaffirmed his belief in socialism, despite all the setbacks that have occurred and its identification with the horrors of Stalinism/Communism. He stressed that a 21st Century Socialist movement must be free from Stalinism if it is to be relevant in this new era. Nevertheless, Ernie, told us that he was thrilled to be associated, in the twilight of his long and very active life, with our efforts to revive a socialist/social democratic movement in the United States. Erber's talk to us, send chills, and we were all very moved by it. We decided to elect him to be our Honorary National Chair. Sadly, Erber's address would be his last public statement. His health, soon after, increasingly declined and he passed away on February 16, 2010, at the age of 96.

After Erber's keynote address, the Convention would amend and approve a new Constitution for the SD, adopt a revised Statement of Principles, a Ten Year Strategy, and to reconstitute the League of Industrial Democracy (LID) under new leadership. The Constitution proclaimed that the official name of the organization "shall be Social Democrats, USA." Then, to re-establish our ownership to the name, Socialist Party, USA, the Constitution stated that this would be the name of "the organization's political arm," or PAC. Nevertheless, on our website, public literature, message boards and blogs, the Constitution maintained in Article 1 Section C, that "The organization shall be referred as Social Democrats,USA(SD,USA); the only legitimate successor to the Socialist Party, USA(SPUSA)."

In the final action of the Convention was the election of officers. Rabbi Craig Miller and Rick DLoss, were elected as National Co-Chairs of the SD. Steven Weiner was elected President of the SD, and editor of its official publication, *Torch & Rose*. David A. Hacker and Patty Friend were elected as National Vice Presidents of the SDUSA. The elected officers then agreed to appoint Gabriel McCloskey-Ross as Executive Director of the SD and Jaime Johnston as National Secretary of the Young Social Democrats/ Young People's Socialist League.

Unfortunately, there are no public records anywhere of the convention as the staff failed to take minutes of the proceedings, nor published an official communiqué about it, either on our official website or message boards. None of the adopted Resolutions, included the new Constitution of the organization were ever published. In fact the first mention of the Convention was not directed to the members of the SD, but rather was in a personal letter from Executive Director Ross to David McReynolds of the SPUSA! Yet, the Constitution and the Convention would be frequently cited by Ross in his later sectarian polemics against the officers of the SD, and he even celebrated the 1st anniversary of our refoundation without informing anyone about the contents of the Convention that officially re-established the organization.

A second positive highlight for the reorganized SDUSA would be the 4 part economic symposiums conducted by the Laurel Highlands Local, on the subject, "The Four Freedoms: A Social Democratic View of the 'New Deal' in Face of Economic Crisis," in April, 2009, and the 32 page booklet on the subject that was produced by our National Office for the series, and then reproduced, on-line, in the Adobe PDF program.

A third highlight of the year was the election of National Co-Chair Rick D'Loss to the City Council of Carnegie, Pennsylvania, which enabled the revived SDUSA to tout its ability to elected one of its members to public office, as a self proclaimed socialist, in the first year of its renewed existence.

However, there were also various negative developments in 2009, that would eventually lead the officers of the organization to make an a crucial, but very reluctant decision at the end of the year, in order to save the effort of reviving the SDUSA and conducting its activities in a emphatic internal environment. The reorganized SDUSA was to be a decentralized organization. Instead, all of the internal organizational activities (membership, dues, finances, management of the website, message board & blogs) was centralized in the Johnstown NO/Ross Apartment under the control of the 2 staff members, Executive Director Gabe Ross and his now, wife, Youth Secretary and Web Master Jaime Johnston. The officers would later see this as a major error on their part in the reorganizing of the SD. There was little direct supervision of their activities, since the officers lived though out the country, with the closest, National Co-Chair, D'Loss living an hour and a half away from Johnstown. Thus, Ross and Johnston were given enormous trust by the officers to carry out the daily administrative tasks of maintaining the organization. Ross, as a political strategist, author of the "Four Freedoms" booklet and lecture series, and writer of a second companion Statement of Principles for the SD, that was so poetic in its writing, it could have also been written as the official song of the organization, made many positive contribution, with the aid of Johnston, in the effort to revive the SD.

Unfortunately, these would be overshadowed by his inability to compromise on various political issues, such as the conflict in Gaza in the beginning of 2009, divisive and derogatory attacks on other organizations, individuals and members in our public message board, frequent unexplained absences and non- communications with officers and staff, no major updating of the website since 2008 and misuse of the membership list and dues for partisan purposes, including arbitrary expelling officers, falsely excusing them of lapses in paying dues. As a result, the SD suffered a loss of members and potential members, and recruitment was severely effected as the officers and remaining members felt that the toxic internal atmosphere being generated by the actions of the NO Staff made it impossible attract new people and develop Locals.¹³

Nevertheless, in April of 2010, the revived SD even caught the attention of Glenn Beck on his Fox New Channel television show, who proclaimed that we actually control the Democratic Party. Absurd, of course, unless Beck was considering some other alternative universe. But the real farce of his comments about us is that the SD website that he showed on his program no longer represents the official organization and its elected leadership. What happened? Glenn King, a member of the SD from Columbus, Ohio, provides the answer in his response to Beck's assertion about the SD, in an brief article that he wrote, entitled, "Taking Over the Democratic Party:"

“The Social Democrats USA has recently made national news or at least into the Glenn Beck show which is almost as good. On his April 22 program right tea party leader Glenn Beck attempted to further build his case that President Obama is a socialist by attempting to tie Obama to the now defunct radical reform organization ACORN and its executive director Bertha Lewis. Mrs. Lewis who evidently is a democratic socialist spoke at gathering of the Young Democratic Socialists the youth arm of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) in March. At the gathering Bertha Lewis called for DSA members to build the organization and recruit new members. Since Barack Obama as have many other Democratic leaders has had a positive relationship to ACORN prior a series of scandals within the organization during the last few years, Mr. Beck easily scored several propaganda points. As propaganda the argument of guilt by association normally works for those who wish to believe the main story line. Next to top it off Beck showed a citation from the web site of the old Social Democrats USA, which calls for the Social Democrats USA to be a “party within a party” I.E. a caucus within the Democratic Party. The implications for Beck of this were obvious. The Democratic Party is infiltrated by and ultimately controlled by dangerous socialist elements of the Social Democrats USA

“Would that this were true! However some unfortunate facts need to be stated. The first of which is that in December of 2009 a schism occurred within the Social Democrats USA and Gabe Ross the executive director of the SD USA was fired from his position by the organization’s full National Executive Committee. The division that occurred between the NEC and its executive director was due to an increasing tendency by Mr Ross to use methods of slander and the demonization of board members who disagreed with him over often minor political issues. That behavior when combined with Mr. Ross’s often deliberate refusals to implement NEC decisions and his unilateral expulsions of NEC members made his continuation in his post of Executive Director an impossibility. Unfortunately since Gabe Ross controlled the SDUSA web site, the NEC leadership had to develop an alternative web site called ‘Social Democrats, USA for the 21th Century.’ Unfortunately this new web site due at least partially from legal harrasment from Mr. Ross is still not up and running. Hopefully that will change soon. This does not mean that most of the statements on social democratic political strategy, tactics and writings on the old Gabe Ross controlled site do not represent much of the thinking of the legitimate SDUSA. On the contrary much on the old site was written and developed by such notable Social Democratic NEC members as David Hacker the party’s historian.

“Now that this is clarified, a few more points regarding the SDUSA’s supposed control of the Democratic Party must be made. Unfortunately while the Social Democrats, USA is the direct lineal descendent of the old historical Socialist Party of America of such leading members as Eugene Debs, Norman Thomas and Helen Keller, history has not been kind to the organization. Since the party changed its name in 1972 and its loss of members to two secession movements the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee – latter to become DSA, and another movement which became the Socialist Party USA; the SDUSA has lost membership. Thus the Gabe Ross schism of the Social Democrats USA which so impresses Glen Beck probably has less than 20 paid members. Its activist

core is evidently much lower. Glenn Beck would have been advised to have done his homework more thoroughly.

“Thus it is ironic even funny that it is the old Social Democrats USA web site that Glen Beck used to show the supposed infiltration and control of the Democratic Party by dangerous social democratic elements. However on the optimistic side Glenn Beck has done a great job of getting the Social Democrats USA in the news even if for now the schismatic group has gotten the bulk of attention. That scarcely matters in the long run the party as a whole will benefit.”

As a result, the second decade of the 21st century began very divisively, climaxing a 2009 which saw our goal of reviving the SD with an internal life that would be truly democratic and empathetic, tragically become the exact opposite, as the heritage of the Bolshevik style of debate, that Max Shachtman used in his polemic against Ernie Erber, would surface again even in the reorganized SD, in the actions of Executive Director Gabe Ross. This would ultimately result in the year 2010 beginning with the elected officers of the SDUSA dismissing Ross, and Ross, in turn, claiming that the officers were no longer dues paying members of the organization, ignoring them and using his control over the website and other internet sites, to continue to insist that he is the only official spokesperson of the SDUSA. (See the letter by the officers, dismissing Ross, in the Appendix.1) In effect, as Glenn King related above, this has created, at the time that this is being written, a bizarre situation where two organizations claim that they are the SD, which, in reality has placed the entire project of reviving the organization in jeopardy, as outside observers could sarcastically ask, “Will the Real SDUSA Please Stand Up?”

The clear answer is that there is only one authentic organization known as SDUSA, and we are *that* organization, made up of the Officers and members of the NEC which unanimously voted, with the exception of Ross and Johnston, themselves, to dismiss Ross as ED and move the NO to New York. We tried to reach a compromise with Ross that would make him Political Director, based in Johnstown, while a separate new position of Organizational Director would operate out of New York City. However, Ross rejected any compromises, and insisted that *he* was now the personification of the SDUSA, its entire 110 year heritage, and its sole officer. Then, through his and Johnston control of the public on-line organs of the organization, he arbitrarily banned the elected officers from being able to communicate with the membership through its message boards, and stated that they have all been expelled for lapses in dues payment. All of these charges were false, of course.

Nevertheless, as this is being written, Ross, through his total control of the former website, message boards and blogs of the organization, continues to maintain the fiction that his 2 person rump of the SD, is the authentic version. Yet, while he keeps making wild threats against this legitimate SD and the elected officers, and bars us from reading and participating on his various boards, he still needs us, as he continues to reprint articles that we wrote for the SD, including the original version of this document, on his website and blogs. However, while the existence of this other alleged SDUSA remains an annoying problem, we are certain that it will only be a temporary phenomenon.

Whatever members, Ross may be able to temporarily recruit, will likely become quickly disillusioned, when they discover that they are now the targets of Ross's wrath, as a result of future inevitable political and organizational disagreements, and that they are really dealing with a two person operation that is mainly a web creation that is being run out of a computer in their small apartment.

At the same time, the internal crisis in the SD and the divisive narcissistic behavior of Gabe Rose, its former Executive Director, should be viewed as not merely limited to one political organization. Rather, similar anti-social occurrences exist and have existed on the Left in political entities, large and small, causing disaffection and disillusionment. It is one of the main reasons why Left organizations have failed in this country. It is for this reason that the officers and members of the authentic revived SDUSA are committed to ending this traditional negative environment of internal life and structure, inherited from the past.

Rabbi Michael Lerner, the editor of *Tikkun*, has frequently written on this theme concerning the wider reasons why the Left has failed in this country. And he has also tried to explain the paradox on how could a Left-wing activist, such as Ross, write such a moving Statement of Principles, and other political writings, clearly observe the anti-democratic and toxic internal life that was occurring in the Socialist Party of the United States of America (See the next chapter.), yet repeat this very anti-social behavior after he was given the post of Executive Director of the revived SD.

Lerner wrote in his book, *Surplus Powerlessness*, that people who became involved in social movements, such as the SD, have also brought along, all the deformities that have been generated by their experiences "in the world of work, in family life, and in childhood."¹⁴ In other word, Lerner points out, "the social movement itself would, no matter how wonderful it was in other respects, also serve to provide a location in which all the Surplus Powerlessness that they had inherited would get played against each other."¹⁵ As a result, Lerner states, that "unless people were to directly and consciously incorporate into their analyses and into their experiences an understanding of Surplus Powerlessness, they will be driven back into passivity and cynicism."¹⁶ This is why the divisive internal life of a majority of Left wing organizations has led disillusion members to become altogether alienated from politics.

Those who remain, while sincerely committed to social change and a vision of a new society, become more isolated from the real world, and give off the aura of defeat. Their behavior toward one another and toward the outside world further estranges them from reaching out to a wider audience. Lerner explains that the Left too often "become havens for people who are too afraid to engage in real struggle. They get together with other people and look down on everyone else who isn't smart enough or pure enough to join the struggle. This behavior," he continues, " guaranteed to keep people away, is actually quite effective for recreating isolation and thus assuring people that their ideas will never have to be taken too seriously."¹⁷ Ironically, it is this process of isolation that enables individuals such as Ross, and much of the radical Left in general, to "articulate

the most visionary and ‘radical’ visions without ever confronting the real Surplus Powerlessness that cripples their participants.”¹⁸

Lerner’s conception of Surplus Powerlessness, later evolved into his conception of a Politic of Meaning, and has organized with Cornel West, The Network of Spiritual Progressives.” Its vision “**Advocates a New Bottom Line in America.** This bottom takes into consideration not only how well institutions and the economy maximize money and power, but how well they maximize love and caring, ethical and ecological sensitivity and behavior, kindness and generosity, non-violence and peace, and the extent to which they enhance our capacities to respond to other human beings in a way that honors them as embodiments of the sacred, and enhance our capacities to respond to the earth and the universe with awe, wonder and radical amazement.”¹⁹

A concrete example of this analysis toward the problems that plague the leadership of Left organizations and unions is Peter Gabel’s article, “A Labor Leader Loses His Way,” which appeared in the September/October, 2009 edition of *Tikkun*. The Labor leader that Gabel’s is discussing here is Andy Stern, who has recently resigned as President of the Services Employees International Union. Stern was seen by many observers of labor as being a progressive innovator that the union movement needed in order to grow and survive. His public speeches and appearances in the media would enhance this image as he would proclaim the need to a more militant and combative labor movement. It was a result of this declaration of a new militancy that led Stern to have the SEIU leave the AFL-CIO, along with the Teamsters, UNITE HERE and 3 other national unions to form a new labor federation, called Change to Win.

However, there was also a dark side to Stern’s activities, as he led SEIU to interfere in the internal affairs of other unions, such as the California Nursing Association, in order to enhance the influence of SEIU in the entire Labor movement. One of his most egregious actions was to create a major rift in UNITE HERE, which had recently merged in 2004, by successfully raiding the union, which is the primary subject of Gabel’s essay. Gabel details how Stern influenced UNITE HERE co-president Bruce Raynor, to leave the union and “created an artificial new hotel-restaurant-gaming union called “Workers United” that is an affiliate of SEIU and is now openly trying to undermine traditional UNITE HERE jurisdictions around the country, and essentially pillage them.”²⁰

What is important for our purposes, vis-à-vis the SD and the wider Left, is to comprehend, according to Gabel, the rationale behind the destructive behaviors that led “two life-long labor leaders who have devoted their whole adult lives to the labor movement do something so seemingly irrational and counter-productive?”²¹

The answer is one that people on the Left, usually overlook, or do not want to even consider. But, that we in the revived SDUSA must be open to in organizing our internal life. This is “the vulnerability of everyone raised in our individualistic, socially separated, alienated culture to the legacy of unworthiness and humiliation that introduces a compensatory narcissistic distortion into both our perception of events and our interpretation of and response to them.” As Gabel explains, beyond the usual

understanding on the Left of the social-economic inequalities and environmental degradation of modern life lies an additional factor too often ignored on the Left. This is “the spiritual immiseration that results from the deprivation of sustained authentic and affirming connection with other human beings. Buried beneath the artificiality and noisiness of our media culture and the often passively endured and isolating routines of everyday life is a chronic and universal sense of "underconfirmation" of our deepest self, of being insufficiently recognized at the core of our being by other human beings, including family members and those we love most and most long to connect with.” As a result, Gabel contends that “we each internalize this deprivation of recognition as inherently humiliating and a source of mysterious unworthiness and shame, an abnegation of the self that is so painful as to be unsupportable and which we therefore deny and banish from awareness. In its place we build the narcissism of the ego, a compensatory self-"image" worn on the outside of the underrecognized and concealed real self and compulsively motivated to aggrandize itself in order to ward off the threat of the other's refusal of reciprocating connection.”²²

In the case of the SD, this helps us explain the narcissistic and divisive behavior of Comrade Ross and his need to be recognized as being the leading personality of the SD, after his failure to secure a leadership position in either DSA or the SP of the USA. The lesson of both the Stern and Ross example, according to Lerner and his associate, Peter Gabel is that organizations, such as the SDUSA have an essential need for a process of “psycho-spiritual healing.” This means “the creation of healing processes built into the ongoing practice of our social movements, processes that consciously foresee the vulnerability of all of our social change movements to what we might call ‘internal panic,’ to losing touch with our most idealistic commitments to the creation of a loving and egalitarian future society and lapsing into the narcissistic ego-identifications that are a universal expression of the humiliation built into our conditioning within the system of social relations we are seeking to surpass.” Gabel concludes that “those who want to transform the world have hardly begun to practice the kind of ongoing spiritual reassurance needed to consciously monitor and very gradually heal the same wounds that the preservers of the status quo seek to keep in a state of unconscious repression.”²³

Other commentators, such as Jeremy Rifkin, call for the creation of an “Empathic Civilization.” In his new book, by that name, Rifkin contends that “if human nature is materialistic to the core –self-serving, utilitarian, and pleasure seeking-then there is little hope of resolving the empathy/entropy paradox. But if human nature is, rather, at a more basic level, predisposed to affection, companionship, sociability, and empathic extension, then there is the possibility, at least, that we might yet escape the empathy/entropy dilemma and find an accommodation that will allow us to restore a sustainable balance with the biosphere.”²⁴

We in the revived SDUSA are also committed to these endeavors in building our organization. We will be open to new ideas, such as Lerner, Gabel and Rifkin, and others, from various traditions, along with the Marxist and non-Marxist theoretical heritage of social democracy/democratic socialism.

Chapter 6

Critical Question no. 3

What will be the Revived SDUSA's Relationship with DSA and "SP of the U.S.A."?

A. What will be the revived SDUSA's Relationship with the Democratic Socialists of America & the Socialist Party of the United States of America? And why bother to revive the SDUSA in the First Place and instead work inside one of these Two Established Organization promoting the cause of Social Democracy/Democratic Socialism?

It is well known that the SDUSA, under the former leadership had a very continuous relationship with the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, which in 1982 became the Democratic Socialists of America, while Michael Harrington was alive. As shown above, they were intense and even bitter rivals in both the labor movement and the Democratic Party and many times on opposite sides on international issues, including inside the Socialist International. SD was also envious of the growth of this former minority caucus of the organization, which quickly grew to pass it in membership. Only with the fatal illness of Michael Harrington in 1988, did a thaw finally emerge between the two U.S. member party's of the SI, as the SD send and paid for a half page greeting to Harrington in the journal commemorating the large public celebration of his 60th birthday. Then after Harrington died of cancer of the esophagus on July 31, 1989, the SD was one of the many organizations that placed a death notice, in his name, in the *New York Times*. In the decade of the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War, several personalities, who were close to DSA, such as Jim Chapin and Robert Kuttner were invited to attend SD sponsored conferences. But there never really was any organizational reconciliation between the two groups.

On the other hand, the SD basically ignored the "SPUSA." They were considered to be too small and irrelevant to be bothered with. Therefore, when the "SPUSA" took the name, "Hammer & Tongs," for its internal discussion bulletin, which was the long time title of the historic Socialist Party's internal discussion bulletin, and according to the SD's constitution, would continue in the renamed organization, the SD decided that it wasn't worth to contest it. Likewise, when the "SPUSA," which didn't have a youth section until 1989, started its own version of the Young People's Socialist League, the SD also did not contest it.

1, Socialist Party of the United States of America

The new Socialist Party, itself has hardly made a dent in the political life of the United States since it was founded in 1973, despite running a presidential ticket every four years since 1976. These campaigns were only able to gather a few thousands votes across the country, as the Party was only able to appear on the ballot of a limited number of states. Most Americans, including activists in progressive causes, do not even know that it exists, and believe that the historic Socialist Party of Debs & Thomas died many years ago. In fact, ironically, the “SPUSA” received the most publicity in its 35 year history, until the 2008 election, during the 2000 election mishap in Florida, where the ballot in Palm Beach, County was so confusing that voters who thought that had voted for Al Gore, ended up voting for Pat Buchanan. When the disputed ballot was shown on television, viewers could see that the “Socialist Party, U.S.A” ticket of David McReynolds and Mary Cal Hollis, appeared next to that of Gore’s and Buchanan, which would probably have been the first time that they became aware of its existence. The limited resources of the Party also restricted its efforts toward running candidates for other political offices around the country. They were only able to conduct a few local campaigns a year, which were mainly for propaganda purposes, without any chance of actually winning a political office and carrying out its program.

Nevertheless, the Socialist Party of the United States of America, when it was under the chairmanship of Frank Zeidler, which lasted until 1984, and for several years after, proudly proclaimed in its public appearance and Party literature, its historic connection to the Socialist Party of Debs & Thomas. Zeidler’s pamphlet, *Ninety Years of Democratic Socialism: A Brief History of the Socialist Party USA*, was widely distributed and even appeared on the organization’s website, when it was started in the late 1990s by Andrew Hammer. As long as the former members of the Debs Caucus and the four state Socialist Parties, that originated in the SD in 1973, or when it was still the SP in 1970, continued to be active in the new “SPUSA,” the connection to the past was ensured. These long time SP members would include, Zeidler, himself, McReynolds, Rob Tucker, Margaret Phair, Charles Curtiss, Max and Sylvia Wohl, William Douglas, Donald Busky, Steve Rossignol, Ann Rosenshaft, Bill Briggs, and Robin Myers. While the new “SP” was essential pacifist and very critical of U.S. foreign policy, their foreign policy positions were more or less, close to that of Third Camp socialists, and even more anti-Communist than that of DSA in the 1980s. In addition, these comrades who never were part of an organization with a Leninist background and its divisive Bolshevik style of debate, managed to create an internal life in the new Party that was truly comradely and collegial. People, who came into contact with the “SPUSA,” in those days, viewed the organization as consisting of the most decent people on the Left. This decency could have developed in reaction to the harsh and divisive personal abuse that these former Debs Caucus members received in the old SP by the majority leadership in the Shachtmanite Realignment Caucus. David McReynold, in particular, who was responsible for the Shachtmanites coming into the SP in the first place, was the subject of fierce abuse & gay-baiting by the majority.

However, conditions began to change in the “SPUSA” as these “old-timers” retired or died. New members came in, who had no historic ties to the old SP, and quite a few, either came from or brought a Leninist outlook, in what had been a Party espousing

democratic socialism. The internal life became more contentious in the organization. The new “SP” had continued to proclaim the democratic and multi-tendency nature that it had inherited from the historic SP. Various tendencies had contested for seats on the National Committee and promoted their conception of democratic socialism that the Party should proclaim in its programs and statement of principles. Some even called for revolutionary democratic socialism. Other supported a feminist conception of democratic socialism. But all of the tendencies were united in stating that their program for the “SP” were written to continue the heritage of the historic Socialist Party of Debs, Thomas, Hillquit, London, Hoopes, Zeidler, etc. In the last several years, this would no longer be the case.

Gabe Ross, the former Executive Director of the revived SDUSA, had been very active in the “SPUSA,” for over 25 years, and was an eyewitness to the recent decline of the organization, both in political ideology and in its internal life, as it became more sectarian and intolerant of dissenting views, and increasingly doctrinaire in its definition of socialism, to the point that with the sole exception of Debs, the Party and its version of the YPSL, on their respective websites, for the most part hid its connection to the over 110 year old history of the historic Socialist Party. (While Ross, in his position as SD’s Executive Director would eventually duplicate many of the conditions that he criticizes in the account below, the real tragedy of his case, as noted in the previous chapter, is that he can be a credible source describing the deteriorating internal and political conditions in the SPUSA, and other organizations where he is not in a leadership position. However, once he assumes a prominent office in an organization, the bureaucratic and authoritarian methods that he condemns in others, resurface in kind under his authority.) The historical account written by Zeidler no longer appears on the website. The name and heritage of Norman Thomas, and all the other notables who served in the Socialist Party after the death of Debs in 1925, and even Debs’s contemporaries, such as Morris Hillquit, Meyer London and Victor Berger, have been practically erased by this so-called “Socialist Party of the United States of America,” similar to the manner that the Soviet Communist Party, under Stalin, erased Leon Trotsky, Nikolai Bukharin and other prominent Communists who were purged in the 1930s, from the official accounts of the history of the CPSU.

In order to find a brief historical account of the 110 years of the Socialist Party, on the SPUSA’s website, one has to be some kind of detective. There is no reference to it in on the Home page. Rather, one has to know that you have to first click on National Office on the Home Page. Then on that page, you click Membership Handbook. There, the last item on the bottom of the page, will you be able to find the link that says “Socialist Party History.” Here you will finally discover a brief history of the SP, which stress the contribution of Debs, but is only able to mention the name and contribution of Norman Thomas in the SP in two brief sentences.

It should be noted that this has not been the case in the websites of some Locals in the SP of the USA. The website of the Socialist Party of Central New York, ‘CNY REDS,’ for example, contains the complete historical essay by Frank Zeidler and proclaims on its home page, “Socialism and Democracy are indivisible.” Its chair is Ron Ehrenreich.

CNY REDS states, “We are affiliated with the Socialist Party, USA - the “old SP” whose members have included Eugene V. Debs, Mother Jones, Upton Sinclair, Margaret Sanger, W.E.B. DuBois, Helen Keller, A. Philip Randolph, Norman Thomas, Frank Zeidler, and Allen Ginsberg. The SP is a “multi-tendency” party committed to core values of socialism, equality, and democracy, and united by shared [principles](#). Our basic strategy and the socialism that we envision is best described as **Radical Democracy**, where democracy is practiced in daily life in all aspects of social endeavors, and not merely a hollow choice between two hand picked candidates every two to four years.” The Local’s website also has a clear anti-Leninist declaration. Accordingly, if the Socialist Party of Central New York represented the outlook of the SP of the USA’s national office and it’s NC, there might not have been a need for our effort to revive the SDUSA. Nevertheless, this has not been the case, according to Comrade Ross. Here is his personal testimony:

“When I joined the Socialist Party of the United States of America, for the first time, which I believe was in 1976, the SP of the USA was the group that members of the Peace movement with Socialist tendencies joined. There was a close relationship between the SP of the USA and the War Resisters League. David McReyonlds wrote one of the best short pieces on Democratic Socialism I have ever read for War Resisters League Organizing Manual. At the time I was active in two groups based in Philadelphia, Mobilization for Survival and Movement for a New Society. The latter group had a distinctly anarchist bent. I was always surprised when an MNS member mentioned his or her membership in the SP of the USA. The SP of the USA thankfully kept alive the pacifist tendencies of the Socialist Party of America and was probably more averse to Communism than DSOC. The SP regularly sold the pamphlets of S,I, parties on its literature table at NAM conventions.

“I remember being at a DSOC conference in 1980 when someone asked Michael Harrington about David McReyonlds presidential candidacy and Mike said David was “The best candidate with no hope of winning” Oddly the leadership of the SDUSA respected David while they had no time for his Party. In the late '70 or early '80's the SP of the USA sought membership in the Socialist International. The S.I. discouraged the request according to David. Apparently there were meetings between the leadership of the DSOC, the SDUSA and the SP of the USA about the S.I. membership application. This is what Arch Puddington and Harry Fleishman told me

“It is important to remember that many in DSOC held "a plague a' both your houses" view of the duopoly . It is also worth remembering that DSOC seriously considered running Ron Dellums and Mike Harrington for president and vice president in the 1980 Democratic primaries. DSOC pursued a serious entryist strategy to the DP at the national level. The differences between DSOC and the SP of the USA were not large enough to prevent Pat Lacefield an active member of the SP from being named National Director of DSA in the late 1980s.

“Eric Chester was part of the anti-merger, August 7th caucus in the New American Movement. Oddly, so was future co-chair of DSA Barbara Ehrenreich. After the merger

Chester helped to form Solidarity ; A Socialist Feminist Network. According to the *Hammer and Tongs* that was in our convention packet in 1983, Chester was part of negotiations to merge Solidarity...; Worker's Power; and what was left of the International Socialists with the SP of the USA. When we encountered Chester at that convention he was an observer for the I.S, Most of these people, I believe, drifted into the group currently known as Solidarity or the International Socialists. Chester argued that Frank Zeidler, who opened at least the last three NAM conventions, would be unacceptable to the membership of the groups he represented as national chair because Frank was personally pro-life.

“Moving forward to 2005, the International Commission wrote a statement for May Day to be published in *The Socialist*. By majority vote the commission decided to include a mention of the Second International declaring May first International Worker's Day. The Commission also voted to include an expression of solidarity with the parties of the Socialist International. Chester dissented and argued that such a statement involved “working in the Democratic Party” I still don't know what he was talking about. He took the matter to the National Committee which decided to name Eric the convener and commissar of political correctness for the International Commission. The NC also altered the definition of Socialism to mean a sudden act. While revolution was not mentioned, that is clearly what they had in mind. The NC ordered the Commission to concentrate on minor international parties, who were outside the SI. In response Melvin Little formed the Fist and Rose Tendency. Yes, we knew at the time the acronym was FART. It was play on the idea of a rose and mired in dung. Melvin Little, David Hacker, Susan Ross, and Gabriel Ross wrote the Fist and Rose Manifesto with substantial help from David McReyonlds. David never was a member of the Tendency and never endorsed the Manifesto but offered comradely assistance, The Manifesto is available here on our website. (Ross is referring here to the former website of the SDUSA, which he still controls. His comments, here, were made in May of 2008 when we were all still united.)

“By this time the SP of the USA was polarized into caucuses. There was the Debs Tendency who liked to use the word revolutionary a great deal. They have no other defining characteristics. The Direct Action Tendency was closely tied to the Wobblies and the War Resisters League and supported civil disobedience as a tactic. Most of this Tendency left to join the reformed Students for a Democratic Society. The Grassroots Tendency was composed of members of the Boston and Vermont locals and was very secretive. It was the only Tendency without an open listserv. The Comrades Caucus was mainly the old guard who worked on being comradely while there opponents planned their expulsions. David McReyonlds suddenly was labeled a right winger. This was just nuts. Eventually, nearly all of the Fist and Rose Tendency and younger members of the Comrades caucus drifted out of the Party. The entire North Carolina Party left. We lost about 100 members in Pennsylvania. The National Committee suspended the Party constitution to try to expel me. The only problem being that the Socialist Party of PA predates the SP of the USA and in fact helped to found the SP of the USA. So the NC resolution is just more BS. Now the Oregon SP wishes to expel Michael Marino in part because of his bad hearing and eyesight. Helen Keller must be rolling in her grave.

“The SP of the USA has gone from being the friendliest most diverse group on the Socialist left in America to being a cadre organization of proclamations from the Supreme Soviet. Had the matter of dual membership in the revived Socialist Party of America or revived Social Democrats USA been put to convention vote, the motion to expel dual members would have failed as badly as the motion to expel DSA members did two years earlier. The pretense that we are a rival party is laughable. The SP only runs token candidates and discourages those like Karen Kubby and myself who actually get elected to something. Obviously we could have worked out a political nonaggression pact. The leadership SP of the USA desires insularity and they now have it.

“There are nearly no functioning locals and only a few states that have even the pretense of an actual political party. Now Oregon, one of the few that can actually claim a Party organization is in the throes of suicide. Enough sadness for one post”

This is why many of us who had been members of the SPUSA, became involved in this effort to revive the SDUSA, the organization that actually was the historic Socialist Party of Debs *and* Thomas.

It is for this reason that we call upon our former comrades in the SP of the USA, who originally came from the historic Socialist Party or still proudly adhere to its entire history and heritage, warts and all, to join us in rebuilding the authentic descendent of the Socialist Party. Yes, you who had left this organization believing that it had moved so far to the Right that it no longer seemed to reflect the historic heritage of Debs & Thomas. The internal life of the organization became autocratic and intolerant of dissent. The SP in the late 1960s was isolating itself from, and even opposing the emerging mass movement on the Left, centered in the anti-Vietnam War movement. Some of you, led by David McReynolds and Rob Tucker, felt that you had no choice, but to leave the SP in 1970. Others, in the Debs Caucus left after the majority of the SP voted to change the name of the organization to SDUSA and no longer function as a political party, at the end of 1972.

Now, our former Comrades, aren't you facing a similar situation in the current SP of the USA, except this time, the organization is moving in a increasingly sectarian far Left position, outside of the heritage of Debs & Thomas. In fact, leading members of the SP of the USA proudly denounce Thomas for being a lackey of the CIA and other sins. Only Debs is worthy of honor, along with contemporaries of his who were in the Left wing of the SP. But one wonders if it is the historic figure of Debs that they are honoring, or an interpretation of Deb's views made to match their own “revolutionary socialist” political orientation, similar to the manner that his name has been used by the former Trotskyist, Socialist Worker's Party, when their Pathfinder Press published the book, *Eugene V. Debs Speak*, and the Stalinist, Communist Party, U.S.A., whose publishing house, International Publishers, in 1948 published, *Gene Debs: The Story of a Fighting American*, by Herbert M. Morais and William Cahn. Both Leninist organizations in these books, claimed to be the true inheritors of the Debsian view of socialism. And now the members of the Debs Tendency also claim that they are the only legitimate heirs of his legacy and seek to apply his political strategy for the SP in the first decades of the 20th

Century, to the very different social and political conditions that today exist in the United States, in this first decade of the 21st Century.

Certainly, the NO couldn't ignore the passing of Comrade Zeidler. He had only been the first chairman and presidential nominee of the new SP. Therefore proper respects were paid in the national publication, *The Socialist*, and then he could be forgotten. The internal life is becoming more authoritarian and now purging of members and state bodies are becoming more common. Moreover, the Party's position of only working with other proclaimed socialists, means that this version of the SP is acting just like the SP in the late 1960s, but in a Left-Sectarian manner, by isolating itself from the growing, if non-socialist, progressive movement that is active today in various new organizations, publications and blogs. The fact that the resolution which denounced Norman Thomas was defeated at the last SPUSA Convention in 2009 was a welcome development, as well as that of resolutions calling for closer relations with democratic centralist Leninist organizations. But it doesn't negate our primary critique that the SP is still moving in a Left-Sectarian direction and is basically irrelevant in the struggle to build a majority Democratic Left in this country, uniting socialists and non-socialists. Can one imagine an SP Convention, prior to 2000, where a resolution denouncing one of the two central historic figures of the Party, would be even considered? Not even the worst of the Right-wing Shachtmanites in the old SD, would ever consider publicly denouncing Thomas.

Therefore, our former Comrades, isn't it time that you leave this adopted home of yours and come back to your real home in the revived SDUSA. I, David Hacker, the National Vice President of the revived SDUSA and your once and hopefully future Comrade, invite you to join us and, in the name of the SD, officially apologize for any mistreatment that you may have suffered in the 1960s and early 1970s, by the former leadership of this organization. I especially send this message to my Comrade David McReynolds, who is really the Mr. Socialism of the early 21st Century in the United States, to accept our apology for your mistreatment by the old leadership, and rejoin us as Honorary Chair of our revived organization, which will be far different in tone and policy then the one that you left in 1970. No, we will still have our disagreements on some issues, and you will resume your honored place as the spokesperson of the Left-wing of our organization. But whenever, there are differences in this organization, all members will treat one another with respect, in the spirit of true comradeship. Perhaps, we will need to earn your trust and you will want to see how we function, before you decide that you could join us. We understand after the bitter experience of the past that you, David and other comrades may feel that we, the new SDUSA, have to first earn your trust. However, you should know that one prominent person from your ranks, did join us, before he prematurely passed away. In fact, he not only joined our new endeavor, but he had been elected by the provisional NC as the first President of the revived SDUSA. This personage was none other then Comrade Rob Tucker, who with David McReynolds, bitterly left the SP in 1970. Then, in the twilight of his many decades in the socialist movement,

as the expert advocate for socialized medicine, he returned to his real political home. Therefore, in his memory, I ask, will you follow his example and return back to your real political home, the only organization that was, and still proudly proclaims its heritage as the historic Socialist Party of Debs & Thomas.

2, Democratic Socialists of America

In 1982, the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) merged with the New American Movement(NAM) to form the Democratic Socialists of America(DSA). On many levels the merger made sense. In cities where NAM was strong DSOC was weak and visa [versa](#). The day to day operation of two groups was similar. Both groups worked in local progressive coalitions around issues of fair housing, safe renewable energy, and worker's, women's, and minority rights. Both were active in local political campaigns. But something went horribly wrong. More than a quarter century after the merger the organization has less members than DSOC did in 1982 and considerably less activism than NAM did in 1982.

DSOC and for a while DSA, celebrated its members winning public office. Now there seems to be a fear that mentioning DSA's involvement will bring red-baiting. This is hardly an unfounded fear as the frequent association of [Barak](#) Obama with DSA across the web attests. Rather than DSA publicly endorsing Obama, in 2008, and proudly pointing to [Obama's](#) participation in forums held by Chicago DSA, the organization appeared to try to stay under the national political radar. Nevertheless, it was a welcome sign that DSA National Director Frank Llewellyn was able to write a few articles that appeared in several newspapers defending the concept of socialism from its Right-wing critics, which also included being a guest on Glenn Beck's show on the Fox News Channel. DSA was also a part of the Beck program where he cited the Ross bogus SD website. However this is still a long way from days of the Democratic Agenda challenging a sitting Democratic president in 1978-1980.

DSA, and DSOC before it, relied on the "us too" theory of recruitment. Whatever issue seems popular on the Left at the moment DSA joins the parade. True, some members of the revived SDUSA have criticized DSA for being members of United for Peace and Justice Coalition despite what they see as the "soft Leninist" nature of the group's leadership. However, we understand that DSA joined the UFPJ coalition because it was the more moderate anti-war coalition, in comparison to that ANSWER, which was really a front for the Stalinist, Workers World Party. And it should be noted that the century old social democratic Jewish fraternal organization, The Workmen's Circle invited Leslie Cagan, the National Coordinator of UFPJ to speak at their national convention in June 2008. Nevertheless, we argue that this is a far cry from the organization that was primary force in opposing the re-introduction of draft registration in 1980, and was the main organizer behind the coalition that sponsored the March on Washington against the Draft in March of 1980. The question, then, was DSA too weak to be able to be the leading player behind the anti-Iraq war movement? In other words, why couldn't DSA have been the main organizers of the present day anti-war coalition against the war in Iraq, etc.,

rather than become just one of a large number of organizations, etc. belonging to UFPJ, where they may end up having little say over the program and policy positions put out by them?

Some of this can be attributed to the loss of Michael Harrington as charismatic spokesperson. There is also the loss of union monies in the national treasury. However, NAM never got union monies; nor was any member of NAM then able to command speaking Honoraria that made travel of group spokesperson free. Yet 700 of [NAM's](#) 1000 members made the yearly pilgrimage to the group's national convention. Interestingly, the convention was opened by with an address by former Milwaukee mayor Frank Zeidler.

DSA never developed a strategy. People on the Left often say that DSA [works](#) in the Democratic Party when the reality is that on a national level, members of DSA talk about how they wish they could work in the Democratic Party. Some in DSA argue that this would mean becoming a socialist caucus within Progressive Democrats of America. However it has been contended that the group is essentially an email list and fund raising gimmick. Whether this is true, or an unfair exaggeration is beyond the scope of this booklet. In fact, the revived SD may find itself in the future, at times, working with the Progressive Democrats in supporting common programs. Nevertheless, DSA needs to be running its own members for office beginning with municipal elections, as its Detroit Local has been successfully doing. DSA supported Bernie Sanders in his run for the Senate and failed to realize the lesson of Sanders victory. Sanders went from mayor of Burlington, to member of Congress, to the U S Senate by building a local coalition that supported him in his electoral efforts. DSA is rightfully proud of the money it raised for Sanders, but it is not looking for the next Sanders. Let us hope that the Detroit example will be duplicated by other Locals in the organization.

Gone are the days of hard work in local reform Democratic club and the Central Labor Council. Now DSA writes statements that even most of its members do not read. This is not building a "Socialist movement that speaks its own name," as Mike Harrington used to say. Gone is a connectedness to organized labor on the national or local level. Worse, gone is almost all activism on the local level. There are perhaps six to ten functioning locals nationwide. This can only be blamed on the lack of a local strategy. The 2009 DSA Convention approved a new National Priorities Resolution to address these concerns. However, similar resolutions had been passed in prior Convention, to great fanfare, to be only followed by disappointing results. All of us in the revived SDUSA, a majority of which are also dues paying members of DSA, hope that this time this new strategy will be successful.

We can make the last statement because this is not written to condemn DSA and its members and resume the antagonistic behavior that the former leadership of SDUSA had toward its fellow U.S. representative to the Socialist International. Rather, we, the new leadership of the SDUSA, no longer consider DSA to be a rival organization. Instead, we view DSA as our sister organization, sharing the same goals and heritage, but sometimes disagreeing on strategy and public policy positions, and appealing to different

constituencies.. We want to establish close and comradely relations with DSA, as we are kit and kin of one another. We want to put the hostile relationship of the past to the dustbin of history, and begin anew. We welcome, and in fact encourage dual membership between our two organizations that stand together for the principles of the historic Socialist Party of Debs, Thomas & Harrington & Rustin. Yes, Michael Harrington is restored to his rightful place as one of the key figures in the history of this organization, Social Democrats, U.S.A., the direct successor of the Socialist Party, USA, which he served as its chairman. We honor and will publicize all of his many books concerning Democratic Socialism. We also honor and celebrate the contributions of all the DSOC/DSA members, living or dead, who were members of this organization when it was the SPUSA. We may, on both sides, still disagree about some of the issues that led to the split of 1972-73, but we shall no longer act disagreeable to one another. In fact, our two organizations, whether on a local level or national, should be able to work together promoting the many issues we share in common, lobbying Congress, writing public statements, and co-sponsoring forums. We can also co-sponsor the Debs-Thomas-Harrington Dinner that Local Chicago DSA organizes each year, since it was run under the auspices of this organization when it was the Socialist Party from 1958 to 1972, as noted on the Local's own website. In sum, let us begin anew, placing aside the hostility and rivalry of the past, and accept that even when we (The SDUSA) make a critique of DSA such as the one stated above, or vice versa, it is done in the spirit of constructive criticism, and not with the malice that was typical of the former leadership of our organization.

In fact, one of our long range goals is to repair the split of 1973. Instead of one united multi-tendency democratic socialist movement, we separated into 3 organizations. Therefore, in our opinion, that old cliché held true, the whole was greater than the sum of its parts, in regards to our three organizations. The effect of the 3 way split did not lead to a stronger democratic socialist movement. Rather each group was incomplete as each one lacked certain elements that were present in the other group. For example, in DSA conferences, one would see political refugees or activists from Right wing dictatorships in Latin America. But they wouldn't meet any political refugees or dissidents from Communist countries, such as Cuba, Vietnam, or from Eastern Europe, before the fall of the Berlin Wall. On the other hand, visitors to a SD convention or dinner, would meet political activists from these "Left"-wing dictatorship, but would not see anyone from the right wing Latin American countries or critics of U.S. foreign policy toward those countries. As a result, DSA members would, rightly, condemn the U.S. for its policies toward Latin America, but be generally unaware of the oppressive conditions in Cuba, Vietnam, etc. SDers, on the other hand, developed their hard line anti-Communist international positions after hearing the testimony of these eyewitness accounts of Communist oppression, but they generally were silent or even supportive of our government's imperialist policies toward Latin America of backing right wing regimes, because they never heard from their victims, as was the case with DSA members.

Members of both organizations received an incomplete and one-sided exposure to the oppressive conditions that existed around the world and our government's response to them. The members needed to learn the whole story by meeting and hearing from

political refugees from both “Left” and Right wing dictatorships. This would have been done in a united organization. And similar examples can be cited concerning other areas of both domestic and international policy and political strategy. Therefore, we in the revived SDUSA, look forward to working with our fellow comrades in DSA, and building over time, mutual trusts between our members, as we pursue our common democratic socialist objectives. Our ultimate goal should be the reunification of our two organizations, along with the inclusion of those comrades from the present named SP of the USA, who have remained true to the historic SP heritage of Debs and Thomas, back into one united broad based multi-tendency organization. This was the recommendation of the late John Cort, the founding editor of *Religious Socialism*, the publication of the DSA Religion and Socialism Commission, before he died, that DSA & SDUSA should reunite with the Cold War being over. Thus, sometime in the near future, we can finally all agree that the sum of the parts of the democratic socialist movement in the United States, should become whole again, repairing the 3-way split of 1973 by uniting back in our historical home, Social Democrats, U.S.A., the same organization and the only historical political body, that was the Socialist Party which ran Eugene V Debs and Norman Thomas for president.

Chapter 7

Critical Question No. 4

Aren't your efforts a Waste of Time & Money as the Concept of Socialism has been completed discredited and is Currently Being Used as a Derogatory Epithet Against President Obama and The Democrats by the Tea Partiers

A. Nevertheless, aren't your efforts a Waste of Time & Money, trying to revive the SDUSA, and ultimately rebuild a united democratic socialist movement, when we all know that concept of Socialism has been completely discredited by its connection to Communist totalitarianism and the collapse of the USSR and its Eastern European satellites? Free Market Capitalism has Proven to be the Superior Economic system and the only one that is compatible with political democracy. Even some people in your own ranks, do not want to be associated with the word, “Socialist,” and prefer to call themselves, Social Democrats or even Economic Democrats, though, as the Tea Partiers Remind Us, we all know that they are actually still advocating socialism and are trying to hide that fact by using another name they believe may be more accepted to the average American. Therefore, isn't the concept of Socialism permanently dead and buried in the 21st Century and your

attempt to resurrect it totally Irrelevant in Our Contemporary Society?

Our answer is a firm, no. We expect that the term socialism will always be used as a derogatory epithet by the Political Right in this country. First, we call ourselves socialists because that is what we are. We really believe that people would be better off if key economic decisions were made democratically rather than by a few wealthy executives. Second, no matter what we call ourselves, the powers that be will try to turn it into a dirty word. Liberals and progressives in this country have been afraid of being called socialists for generations. It just didn't begin with the recent presidential campaign and the Tea Partiers use of it against President Obama. . It was used as an epithet in the halcyon days of Debs and Thomas. Teddy Roosevelt's Bull Moose presidential campaign in 1912 was called by the *New York Times*, socialist. It was widely used in the McCarthy era of the 1950s, and during Michael Harrington's lifetime. No one can scare us away from something we support by calling it socialist.

Finally, we call ourselves socialists to remind everyone we have a goal. Even if we know it will take a long time to accomplish through the workings of the democratic system, even if we keep our minds open to the suggestions of others, we are sustained by the belief that someday people will be able to live together in peace, equality, and cooperation.

Neither is there one general definition of what a socialist society would look at. We certainly do not believe that the government will own every thing. Rather, many socialists believe that the market will continue to play a crucial role in a future socialist society. Others have a communitarian vision of Workers Control from Below of major industry and government.

Rather we stand by this statement made by the late James T. Burnett, former chair of the YPSL's, who was also an activist in the 1964 Berkeley Free Speech Movement, NC member of both SPUSA & SDUSA, and was a mentor to many of us in the revived SD. Burnett was the editor of the *Appeal to Reason*, named after the famous SP newspaper in the early decades of the 20th Century. The paper was published by the SD Local in San Francisco, beginning in 1974, but became an independent publication in 1982. Burnett was one of the first voices to support a reunification of the democratic socialist movement. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Burnett wrote the following statement that we believe is still the best declaration concerning the issue of the relevancy of the concept of socialism in today's society and expresses where the revived SDUSA stands on this crucial issue and on the general orientation of our approach toward foreign policy issues:

1. The Relevance of Socialism²⁵

“The conventional wisdom these days is that the collapse of the Soviet empire represents the demise of Socialism. This is ridiculous. We

never believed the identification of Stalinist totalitarianism with socialism during all of the decades when proclaimed by both Stalinists and right-wing reactionaries. Why should we believe it now? We should reclaim the socialist ideal-- a just society, a society not based on invidiousness and narrow-minded "individualism". This is not the time for us to become traitors and cowards. The basis of Socialism -- communism in its unfalsifiable sense -- remains as valid, even more valid, than ever. We want and needed a society of collective justice where everyone gets food, shelter, health care, education, and the ability to actualize his or herself. Why not? We're civilized, aren't we? We will win our most valuable support by asserting an ideal, not by ambiguity and misdirected "moderation". We need a cadre before we can aspire to mass influence and few people of character or intelligence have ever been able to get excited about moderation. I want to make a point about symbols. This is hardly something that would be taken up in an official document, but is important socially, I do not think we should give up the word "socialist, the term "comrade", the red flag, or the Internationale. They are symbols of a commitment and a brotherhood and sisterhood that is invaluable. There is no such thing as "only" a symbol. Our era has seen many outstanding champions of equity and freedom not the least have been Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Karl Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Julius Martov, Eugene V. Debs, Norman Thomas, Max Shachtman, A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, Michael Harrington, and the students of Tienanmen Square. I stand in their tradition.

2, Foreign Policy

“The collapse of the so-called “Communism” is both a victory and a challenge. It is a victory insofar as it removes (although not completely so far) a hateful and reactionary system that, worst of all, paraded under the name of socialism. Long ago, Max Shachtman, pointed out that if Stalinism was indeed a kind of socialism, then all of the worst criticisms that the enemies of socialism had ever made were true, and a thousand times over.

“How things will settle down in the world is impossible to tell. Who could have told just a year ago how things would be now? Theory is not fortune-telling. It is a set of principles that can be used to guide action under probable conditions.

“The idea that the end of the Soviet empire represents the triumph of capitalism is lunacy – understandable lunacy, but lunacy nonetheless. It is like a hangover. Sooner or later it will go away, probably sooner than later as the peoples of Eastern Europe find out what the so-called free market really means. We should call for what was valid in the basically-flawed communist ideal while inviting the “capitalist” reforms that are in the interest of the people. If we do not do so, others will. They already are.

a, The Importance of the Socialist International and SDUSA's Membership in that Organization

“The Socialist International is a major organization in which people of our political tendency have exercised surprising political influence in spite of our ridiculously small numbers. This organization represents millions of workers and other people throughout the world. It is, in fact, the largest voluntary organization on the planet. We should be proud that our political comrades were the first to begin a mass-membership international group. Within the International, our main efforts should be:

- To oppose any remnants of romantic attraction to terrorist and totalitarian causes.
- To maintain the democratic socialist ideal.
- To encourage all possible aid to the emerging free labor and social-democratic movements in the former Stalinist countries and the developing world.
- To resolve trade and other economic conflicts on the basis of international labor solidarity.
- To promote greater international cooperation toward the ultimate aim of a world government under world law.

“Above all, we should be proud to be (reinstated as) members of the Socialist International and strive to maintain and expand our influence in it. We should propose that the document, “Aims and Tasks of Democratic Socialism” that was the basis for the re-foundation of the International at the end of World War II, be reviewed to meet the changing realities of the last half century, while retaining its fundamental values and emphases. (Since Burnett wrote this in 1992, the SI has revised this document.) It should become the basic statement of purpose of international social democracy/democratic socialism in the late twentieth century (and now in the early twenty first century). We are entering an era where, with astute leadership, the lines of our anthem could become true: ‘The international working class shall free the human race.’ I even think that the words of the French original will come true: ‘L Internationale serait la genre humaine.’ (The provisional NC of the revived SDUSA has voted to adopt the ten principles of the Party of European Socialism. See the document in Appendix no3.)

b, How we view the role that the United States plays in the World

“America is not the unique ill-doer in the world. Hardly anything, other than the direct sight of injustice in my own society, infuriates me more than the notion that all of the problems of the world can be blamed on the United States. The US has been guilty of enough crimes. Chief among them are our genocidal campaign against Native Americans, the enslavement of Africans and generations of unspeakable mistreatment of their descendents, our imperialist relations with Mexico. And this is just to name a few.

“The United States has also been a friend of freedom. Without the US war effort, the world could probably not have defeated fascism. We condoned slavery, but we also overcame it, at the cost of much blood. We rebuild Western Europe through the Marshall Plan. It is true that we had ulterior motives – stopping Communism –but who demands

pure motives in the real world? Good motives are good enough. Could anybody really say that the US wanted to make Japan and Europe into its most formidable economic rivals now? No, we had altruistic motives as well.

“At the same time, this does not mean that anything any American Administration does is OK. This is especially true now that the overriding concern about the ‘evil empire’ is gone. Incidentally, one of the greatest lessons of the post-cold-war period is that the two exploitative class societies can no longer use one another as excuses for their misdeeds. The eclipse of Stalinism represents a profound crisis for capitalism – a point too little recognized. The relationship between capitalism and the pseudo-socialist despotism and their mutual co-existence and their mutual termination are very important topics to be analyzed.

“Another - -actually the same – theme that requires consideration is epitomized by a remark made by a modern social democrat decades ago when he quoted a British Fabian to the effect that the French Reign of Terror and Napoleon had set back reform in England for a hundred years and opined that Soviet “socialism” had at least as reactionary effect in our times. I do not agree about the historic role of the French Revolution, but I do about the subsequent analogy.”

Today, we can add to Burnett’s statement the new threat of so-called totalitarian Islamism exemplified by the September 11, 2001 attack by Al Qaeda on the United States. We believe that only the development of a true democratic foreign policy for the United States can defeat terrorism. In fact, we advocate not merely containing international terrorism, but eliminating it at its roots. However, we maintain that it will only be a government that espouses the values of democratic socialism and the wider democratic Left that can do this. We have seen the failure of the former right-wing American administration, which include some of our own former comrades, who have become neo-conservatives ideologues, in their attempts to diminish and combat this threat. In fact, many of their own actions in the world have served as a recruiting call for totalitarian Islamism.

Specifically, the war on Iraq was an issue that invited dissent and we believed has critically harmed the effort against totalitarian Islamism (which should not be confused with the actual tenets of Islam.) This does not mean dissent about Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship and malevolent intents, but about the appropriate means of dealing with him. To say that the “only correct” approach was military intervention or economic sanctions are equally simplistic and sectarian. But the facts were that the sanctions were working, while also taking a terrible toll on the civilian population in Iraq, which is why many on the Left opposed them. The Bush Administrations rational for going to war have been proven false, while the original just NATO conflict against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, in retaliation for the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, was neglected, with the effect that the totalitarian Islamists are gaining a resurgence in that embattled country. In the meantime, there has been the loss of hundred of thousands of Iraqis and over four thousand American lives in this war of choice in Iraq. Now, with the military focus being back on Afghanistan, there is a healthy debate

among members of the SD, whether the cost in lives, both military and civilian, is justified, or too late to be effective and supported, specifically after 1,000 Americans have been killed in the conflict as of May 31, 2010., with a corrupt government in Kabul, and no apparent resolution in sight.

We believe that the Iraq war and the present economic conditions in the United States have illustrated the bankruptcy of the ideas of the conservative movement in this country. Similarly, as Comrade Burnett pointed out, back in 1992, to place “the collapse of the Soviet Union, into some kind of victories for the self-serving reactionary right in the United States would be an indictment of the intelligence of the democratic left in this country. Such imbecility is almost impossible to comprehend, no matter how many Republican press releases are sent out on its behalf.”

Combating so-called Islamofascism is not Right-Wing, as even our Third Camp Comrades, maintained in the article, "Only a Democratic Foreign Policy Can Combat Terrorism", by Thomas Harrison in the Winter 2002, edition of New Politics magazine. While we have several serious differences with Comrade Harrison's position, a large portion of the revived SD,USA future statements on this issue will parallel his call for a new democratic foreign policy to combat Islamofascism. We will not blindly follow a "Third Camp," approach, as certain aspects of Obama's foreign policy propositions deserve our critical support. Nevertheless, even here, our stand will be broadly defined as being in support of democracy and religious pluralism vs. anti-democracy and religious fundamentalism. In the anti-democratic camp are not only the remaining Communist regimes, right-wing dictatorships, and Islamic fundamentalist governments, but also multi-national corporations who have no allegiances to any nation or creed except how to make the most profit. Thus, we have multi-national corporation's dealings with China and Vietnam when those regimes have controlled work forces, government dominated trade unions, and imperial ties to Third World countries.

Therefore, the revived SDUSA's foreign policy program can be euphemistically called a 2 and 1/2 camp position. We do see Islamic extremism as one of the major dangers in the world today. Thus, we will stand with the democratic West and moderate Muslims, vs. Islamic fundamentalism. We continue to affirm the best of bourgeois democracy, but we also recognize the imperialistic aspects resulting from its Capitalistic nature, particularly the activities of the multi-national corporations. Thus in the contest of the West against Islamic fundamentalism, we also still struggle against Western imperialism. Our support for democracy should not be confused with that of the neo-conservatives. We do not make a fetish of Capitalist democracy and we do not believe that it can be militarily imposed from the outside. Rather, we support all the authentic Democratic Left elements everywhere, including in the Muslim world. We believe that U.S. foreign policy can only be truly democratic if it becomes social democratic in nature.

Thus, as the new SDUSA continues to adhere to this position, no one will be able to confuse us with the old leadership and the neo-conservatives. In future issues of the *Torch & Rose* and in our International Affairs resolution that will be issued in the near future, we will further detail our concept of a 2 1/2 camp position

Chapter 8

Critical Question No. 5

What are the Basic Statements of Principles of the Revived SDUSA?

A. Then, What are the Basic Statements of Principles of the Revived SDUSA, and what will be continued from the SD of the past 30 years and what will be Different in the Political Positions of the Renewed Organization?

It should first be emphasized that we start out as a very tiny and monetary poor organization. We expect to be able to gain many more members as we are able to spread the message about the rebirth of our organization through the web, distribution of printed literature, and public events by our Locals. In fact our aim is not to only reach out to members of other democratic socialist's organizations, or even the non-socialist progressive movement that is becoming a growing presence in this country. Rather, we hope to be able attract people, who would previously never consider themselves on the Left, and who do not know that such an organization exists. Nevertheless, we shouldn't and will not fall into the ridiculous trait of minuscule Left wing sects espousing a position on every domestic and foreign issue. In other words, do not expect to find here the SDUSA's position on the independence of Abkhazia from the former Soviet Republic of Georgia. (Ironically, after this was originally written in 2008, a military conflict erupted between Georgia and Russia over the issue of independence of Abkhazia.) It is not a full political platform that would be adopted at a national convention. Rather, it is a statement defining the Principles and political direction and goals of the revived SDUSA.

1. The Internal Structure of the Revived SDUSA

As previous discussed in Chapter 5, it will be in the internal life and structure of the revived SDUSA that will be radically different from that under the former leadership. Theirs was a top down organization, where the developments of Local and State Organizations were given low priority. We have already described the centralization of the SD in the National Office and the less than democratic way that the organization was run by the former leadership. Membership growth was not emphasized and in fact, even desired. The old leadership was insular and feared a lost of control of the organization if a large influx of new members joined the SD. It was their personal club, and when they got tired of it, rather than trying to recruit new members and develop a new generation of leaders, they just closed the national office, without any consideration for the members around the country.

Our conception of the SD will be totally different and completely in accord with an organization that espouses social and political democracy from the bottom up. We

believe that a group cannot advocate democracy until it first practices it in the structure and internal life of the organization. Therefore, the revived SDUSA will be a decentralized organization with the emphasis on the growth of local and state affiliates. Moreover, each State organization will decide where to place its political priorities. The members of one state or local organization of the SDUSA can, for example, decide at their own convention, to re-establish the state body as a political party, using the name Social Democratic Party or Socialist Party of that respective state, to run a candidate or candidates on its own ballot line for local winnable political offices. On the other hand, the members of another State organization of the SDUSA, or Local could vote to work with the labor movement and other progressives in the Democratic Party, carrying out the old realignment strategy. The national office would not be allowed to interfere with the political strategy decisions of the state or local organizations, unless they violate the provisions of the SD's constitution or Statement of Principles.

The members of the National Committee would meet, between conventions, via conference calls, thereby saving expensive travel expenses and helping in a small way to save the environment. The biannual national convention will continue to be the major meeting place for the members of the organization.

The elections of national officers and the National Committee will be contested democratically, where each candidate will campaign for the position by communicating something about themselves and their program, to the members, via the SD website, some weeks prior to the national convention. There will be term limits for national officers and NC members. But, we must admit, the above will only be possible if and when the SD has a significant growth in membership from his present very modest figure.

However, we believe that we will be able to attract many new members and keep them in the organization, when they see that both the leaders and the rank and file members act decently toward one another. In other words, socialists are really social able. The word "comrade" is not just a political term addressing a fellow member, but also describes how SD members treat one another in a comradely manner. New people will be welcomed when they come to our meetings. They will not be alienated by being ignored and feeling that they do not belong. Moreover, personal attacks will be strictly banned at public meetings and in meetings of the NC.

This was the worse practice of the old leadership of the SD, going back to the days when the organization was still the Socialist Party. A Bolshevik style of debate was brought into the organization, after the merger with the Shachtmanite Independent Socialist League in 1958. This Bolshevik style was an inheritance from Max Shachtman's early political activities within the Communist Party and was continued in the Trotskyist movement, which the ISL came out of. The tactics of this form of debate would be to attack your fellow Party member and "comrade" who belong to a different faction of the organization in the bluntest of personal terms, much sharper than one would attack a capitalist enemy. Personal feeling had no place when one is engaged in a political battle, even with one's comrades. This Bolshevik style of debate had a very detrimental effect

on Max Shachtman and the Shachtmanite movement, Right, Center & Left. Later there would be his attitude to the early young New Leftists in SDS where his patient guidance could well have preventing the group from its later Maoist craziness. Rather, he could have help SDS become a radical but anti-Stalinist mass organization that might still be vibrant this very day. Mike Harrington in his angry response to the Port Huron Statement was exhibiting the worse aspects of this Bolshevik style that was an inheritance from Max's early political activity in the CPUSA. And Ernie Erber also became a victim of this "Bolshevik style" during his time in the WP after he wrote his resignation statement. Later, David McReynolds and his allies in the SP would also suffer under this style of debate from Max and his closest allies in the SP. This is why David remains so bitter about his experience to this very day. And it seems that Eric Chester and company has inherited this "Bolshevik-Shachtmanite" style, in the present SP of the USA, similar to the SDers that they so fervently denounce. Unfortunately, as related in Chapter 5, in our initial attempt to revive SDUSA, Gabe Ross, our former Executive Director, unconsciously also inherited this debating style and a Leninist conception of a political organization, even while publicly denouncing Leninism. He even wrote that the SD should not be a mere membership organization, but one made up of a discipline cadre, which is Leninism, pure and simple. But it was the old leadership of the SD that completely practiced this Bolshevik style in their internal life of the organization, which they inherited from Max, even while at the same time loudly proclaiming their devotion to the spread of democracy everywhere in the world.

The revived SDUSA, on the other hand, will firmly reject this debating style. Rather we will have learned from the feminist movement to encourage people who may not be that intellectual or knowledgeable about a subject, shy in public and new to the movement, to speak without fear at our meetings. Whenever difference arise over an issue or strategy, we will encourage an open dialogue in our internal discussion bulletin, *Hammer & Tongs* and in public meetings of state and local organizations, up to the NC itself. These dialogues would be conducted in an atmosphere that would be respectful of each comrade's opinion, no matter how deep the difference may be. NC meetings will begin on an empathetic note, Good and Welfare, where each member will express their individual well being, along with describing the activities of their Local. As a result of the revived SDUSA having a supportive and empathetic democratic internal life, we believe that we will be able to attract new members who may have been alienated from their experiences in other political organizations. Our goal is to create a multi-tendency, broadly-defined and active internal life and a perspective of a much larger and geographically-dispersed membership. Special emphasis should be put upon bringing about a real and independent youth organization in the YSD/YPSL. Finally, with the revolutionizing of the world scene, uniting with former antagonists is in order. The democratic Left in America needs all the friends it can get.

B. Basic Statement of Principles of the Revived Social Democrats, U.S.A.

This statement is dedicated to the memory of the late James T. Burnett, who wrote a statement of principles for our movement, entitled, "Who We Are," in every issue of his

Appeal to Reason. It is revised and adapted from his statement of January, 1992, along with the additional contributions of Craig Miller, Dan Frankot and David Hacker

Social Democracy comprises humanity's boldest experiment -- an attempt to organize society of collective justice and individual freedom where everyone gets food, shelter, health care, education, and the ability to actualize his or herself. In other words to achieve a truly civil society.

To this end:

1, WE SUPPORT A STRONG & DEMOCRATIC AMERICAN LABOR

MOVEMENT. We firmly believe that working men and women organized in their trade unions are the most important force for progressive social change. This has long been a central tenet of the socialist movement. However in the 1960s, radical theoreticians, such as Herbert Marcuse stated that labor was no longer the primary progressive social force in society. The student movement, or Blacks and other minorities, or the underclass ("wretched of the world." according to Frantz Fanon) took its place. In other words, much of the New Left was searching for "substitute proletariats," whether they were peasants, the urban poor, military officers or educated elites to serve in the role that Marx assigned to the organized working class. Such a concept was anathema to Max Shachtman and his close allies in The SP who strictly maintained that "working class socialism was the only kind of socialism there was or would ever be." Then in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a new wave of Left wing activism by students, Blacks and other racial minorities, feminists, and homosexuals, were called the new social movements. Much of the broad Left viewed the new social movements as being the new vanguard for social change in the U.S. replacing the labor movement. White ethnic workers were seen as part of the White Anglo Saxon establishment, having made it into the ranks of the "comfortable" middle class. In any case, this was the fashionable view at the time, and still is in too much of the Left today. This position remains one of the main reasons for the current weakness of the American Left today.

This "new social movements" strategy on the Left, in our view, became a form of ghettoization where each separate group made demands on behalf of its specific interest, rather than unifying all these forces behind a common program. Second, they alienated ethnic whites, in fact, pushing them into the laps of the Republican Party. Max Shachtman and his allies in the SP foresaw all this. They predicted the defection of working class whites to the GOP if the DP moved away from economic or class issues and focus instead on cultural and social questions. They were right. Some of this can be viewed in the make up of the present Tea Party movement. The SD continued to challenge this anti labor viewpoint on the Left after 1973. This position will remain unchanged in the revived organization. Rather, we continue to affirm that working class socialism is the only kind of socialism that can or will ever exist.

Nevertheless, it is not enough to merely state that "we support the American Labor Movement," in a period when the unions in the United States are in a deep crisis. Our

members will be active on the picket line aiding striking workers and promoting their cause in our publications and website. However, the old SD became unquestioning supporters of the Meany/Kirkland leadership of the AFL-CIO. This was also the period of the steady decline in union membership in the United States and in its political influence, as well. In 1956, 36% percent of the workforce was unionized. In 1989, that figure declined to 16 % percent of the total workforce in this country. Moreover, in key industries, there was a drastic decline of union membership from 1953 to the late 1980s: Construction from 84% to 22%, Manufacturing from 42% to 25%, Mining from 65% to 15%, and Transportation from 80% to 37%. In the period from 1971 to the late 1980s, the unionized public workforce declined 10%, while there was a incredible 42% drop of union membership in the private sector. However, the situation hasn't improved since the election of DSA member John Sweeney as President of the AFL-CIO in 1995, running on a "New Labor" slade. By 2007, union membership had dropped to consist of only 12.1 percent of American workers, with a majority of them being in the public sector. About 35.1 percent of public employees belonged to a union, while a miniscule 7.5 percent of private sector workers were members of a union. ²⁶

Therefore, something is terribly wrong here and mere cheerleading for labor is not going to help solve the problem. Rather we need to take a hard look at both the external conditions (anti-labor laws and NLRB appointmants, corporate anti-labor campaigns, and restrictions on union organizing) and internal conditions (corruptions, lack of union democracy and rank & file participaption in governing the union, etc) that are weakening the trade union movement. Today the union movement is still divided between the AFL-CIO and the Change to Win coalition. Some on the Left viewed Change to Win as a new version of the CIO of the 1930s, and as a result were the new progressive sector of the Labor movement. They ignored the fact that the unions that make up Change to Win, have been the most corrupt in the entire labor movement. Then, there was the internal division within the largest member union, of the new federation, the Service Employees International Union, as discussed in Chapter 5 between its former President, Andy Stern, and its largest state affilite in California. At the same time, the SEIU had been engaged in a sometime violent turf battle with the California Nurses Association. Thus, if we, in the SDUSA, continue to merely proclaim, "We support the American Labor Movement," the question then in 2008 would have been, "which movement? AFL-CIO? Change to Win? SEIU? Which side in SEIU? SEIU vs the Nurses? And that question still remains relevant today in too many places in the Labor movement?"

The time when the SD *and* DSA received a substanital percentage of their income from trade unions has passed, with labor, itself facing major financial problems that go along with a diminishing membership. At the same time, we no longer have to worry about a union cuting its financial support of us. **Therefore we support an open and self-critical multi-racial labor movement. Moreover, we will be independent friends of Labor and also have a open and self-critical attidute toward the union movement in this country.** We will have a major priority of recruiting rank and file workers, both union and non-union members. Then we will be able to learn from them their experiences in the union movement, or trying to organize a union. At the same time, this does not mean that we won't develop a relationship with union officials, especially those labor leaders

who are bringing innovated ideas to advance the working class movement. But it will be an **independent relationship** and not the servile one of the old SD leadership.

While our present membership may be small, the experience of the SP-SD over the last 50 years, showed that our small movement was able to play a major role in shaping the Labor movement. Similarly, we weren't afraid to tackle the controversial issue of union corruption back in the 1950s thru the early 1960s. Comrade Herman Benson began his long campaign for union democracy in the pages of *Labor Action*, when he was in the ISL, and then in *New America*, as a member of the SP. As a direct result of his efforts in the publications of our movement, he was able to organize the Association for Union Democracy, which is still very active today. That is why the revived SDUSA will not be adverse from taking a frank look at corruption in the labor movement, including why union reforms have generally failed

We are fully aware of what labor historian Robert Fitch, in his book, *Solidarity For Sale*, calls the "Roach Motel Syndrome." Socialists go into the labor movement, but they never leave. "They enter as revolutionaries determined to create a social movement. Those who survive the ordeal of industrialization become plain and simple union reformers. But eventually, if they build a base or move up in the hierarchy, its because they're adjusted pretty thoroughly to the demands of a corrupt patron-client system."²⁷ This exactly described what happened to the SDers who became prominent officials in the labor movement, such as Donald Slaiman. They all began as radical rank and file activists. But over time as they rose to higher positions in their respective union, or in the AFL-CIO, they more and more accommodated to the mores of the labor movement. Eventually, they became defenders of the status quo in the movement. Why?

Many on the Left blame the problem on labor leaders becoming bureaucrats and support rank and file insurgencies. But as we have seen, the SD "labor bureaucrats" began as rank and file activists in opposition to the "conservative" leaders of their union. Rather, the revived SDUSA in our publications, will go deeper and ask some hard fundamental questions, including whether Fitch's analysis is correct that it is the internal fiefdom patron-client structure of unions, and the labor movement, as a whole, that has been a central cause of the comparable weak and corrupt trade union movement in the United States, going all the way back to the founding of the AFL itself. Thus, Fitch, a former labor activist, and currently a historian of the movement, points out, "the AFL-CIO was not a centralized organization that put a lot of power in the hands of a single leader. The presidency was mostly an honorific position, and the occupant acted as a spokesperson for a collection of completely autonomous affiliates. The affiliates, in turn were made up of 20,000 largely autonomous locals. The president couldn't call a single strike or organize a single worker – any rebuilding of the Federations strength had to start at the lower lever, where the money and power were located. It was often not in the interest of these leaders to bring in new members or do much more than perform routine maintenance on the political machines that kept them in power." Thus, it is "the union institutions that act and have identity, that manage or succumb to trends, and shape the character of their leaders."²⁸

Therefore as an organization whose **First Central Principle is to Support a Strong and Democratic American Labor Movement, for without one, the very concept of a viable social democratic movement in this country is an impossibility, has to have the courage to examine the root causes of its problems, and explore why European unions do not share them.** Labor activists, inside and outside our organization, will be free to debate these issues in public forums and in our publications.

2, WE SUPPORT VIGOROUS DEMOCRACY HERE IN THE US AND ABROAD:

Social Democracy can only exist in a climate of strong democratic institutions. We support strong voting rights, public campaign finance and equal access to the ballot and the media of all candidates. We look to strengthen the longest and most successful democratic experiment in world history.

3, WE SUPPORT THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL as the society of like minded parties and activists. We stand with the Labour Party of Britain, the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the French Socialist Party, and labor, social democratic and socialist parties around the world who are members of the SI. We look to SI members in government for guidance in effective and just government. SDUSA has adopted the SI Declaration of Principles and the Ethical Charter and uses the Party of European Socialists (the SI working group in the European Parliament) as its pragmatic basis.

4, WE EMBRACE THE LIBERATORY POTENTIAL OF RELIGION, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ARE FULLY COMMITTED TO THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE. The world's sacred texts provide some of the strongest support for the dignity of labor, the need for social fairness and the ability of humanity to achieve its highest aspiration. Nevertheless, religious people have felt alienated from the Left, as their values seem to be ridiculed and dismissed as ignorant, superstitious, and narrow-minded. This is especially true of evangelical Christians, devout Catholics and Orthodox Jews. Too often, as Rabbi Michael Lerner has pointed out, The Left view "religion as just as much a problem in American culture as guns and anti-immigration sentiments," commenting on the remarks by then Senator Barak Obama in his Democratic Party Primary Campaign in April, 2008 to a prosperous audience at a San Francisco fund raising event for his campaign. There he commented on the "bitterness" he saw among the White ethnic working class and lower middle class voters in Pennsylvania, which causes them to oppose immigration and cling to guns and religion.

According to Rabbi Lerner, "seeing religion as a substitute gratification grabbed on to by people who are otherwise oppressed is an insight that has been part of liberal and progressive culture for at least 150 years. Unfortunately, Senator Obama, like many in the liberal and Marxist traditions of the past 150 years, got it wrong—because he identified the needs that are being systematically denied as purely material, thereby falling into the 'It's the economy, stupid' mistake of the Left." Rather, Rabbi Lerner continued, "in the research we did for ten years at the Institute for Labor and Mental Health we found that it was not only material, but spiritual deprivation that was at the heart of much of the pain that Americans experience today. That's why even at the height of American prosperity

in the Clinton years, a powerful resurgence of right-wing religious forms was providing an avenue of expression for people whose needs were being ignored by the liberals in the Clinton administration, the Democratic Party, and even in parts of the liberal churches. Similarly, the revival of a religious Left has not gotten much traction to the extent that it adopts the liberal political and economic agenda and makes it “religious” by finding some useful Bible quotes to back up the peace and justice planks of the Democrats. Valuable as that may be, it too misses the deeper pain that has led people to embrace right-wing religions.”²⁹ This echoes the theme which concluded Chapter 5 of this booklet.

As a result, these Americans have become prime recruiting targets of the conservative movement, which has resulted in the rise of the Christian Right, who often find allies in supporting various social issues among devout Catholic and Orthodox Jews, who then end up voting Republican in presidential election. The later two groups are often called Reagan Democrats, as they were once a central part of the Democratic Party majority New Deal coalition, but switched over to the Republican Party, when they found their religious and social values to be more compatible with that being espoused by Ronald Reagan in 1980 and 1984.

In fact, it was these very groups that was central to the Socialist Party’s success in the first decades of the 20th Century. It was evangelical Christians that form the basis of the Socialist Party mass membership and electoral support in Oklahoma during those years. The SP had its highest percentage of the total vote in that state before the First World War. It was Roman Catholics in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, that rallied behind the Socialist Party and helped elect two mayors and many city council members in that city. Finally, it was Eastern European Orthodox Jews, living on New York City’s Lower East Side, that elected and re-elected SP candidate, Meyer London to Congress.

Then, in the 1930s and 1940s, these groups were a major segment of FDR’s New Deal coalition, along with Blacks, and white progressives in the North. True, Southern evangelical Christians were the segregationist Dixiecrat portion of the FDR coalition. But White ethnic Catholics form the backbone of the CIO and were central to the New Deal Coalition. And of course, Jews of all denominations rallied behind FDR. The Southern aspect of the coalition broke away after 1948, but the rest of the majority New Deal coalition stayed firm, with the exception of the Eisenhower years, up to Lyndon Johnson’s landslide victory in 1964. In fact, this formed the basis of the SP strategy, developed by Max Shachtman and Michael Harrington, known as realignment.

Realignment did occur in the US. The Southern Democrats-Dixiecrats did leave the DP and became Republicans. It was assumed then that this would assure permanent majority status for the Democrats after the civil rights revolution gave back to African Americans in the South the right to vote. The vision of the Shachtmanites and the SP majority in the 1960s was a Democratic Party and democratic Left made up of the labor movement, including ethnic white workers of both sexes, Blacks, Latinos, Asians, I.E, the entire civil rights movement, middle-class liberal to progressive reformers, the feminist movement, etc. Most of all, White and Black workers would be united in supporting universal programs that would benefit every working class and middle class American. (We hope

that you notice that we emphasize ethnic and often devout Catholic white workers of both sexes as a basic part of this progressive coalition, because it has been the loss of ethnic white male voters to the Republicans, and many ethnic white women as well, that has severely weakened the Democratic Party and the desire for a democratic Left majority coalition.)

These “Reagan Democrats” left the DP, when as, stated above, social and cultural issues replaced economic and class issues as core aspects of the program of the DP and the Left, as a whole, after 1964. One of the main issues that have divided working class Catholics and evangelical Christians from the DP and the Left has been the controversial issue of abortion. The SDUSA, did not take a position on abortion until 1991, when the AFL-CIO passed a pro-choice resolution. Prior to that, the SD separated itself from other group on the Left by maintaining that the abortion issues was divisive and would alienate Catholic workers in the labor movement. The revived SDUSA has decided to resume this position that was taken by our organization before 1991. We know that it will alienate a majority of the Left. We specifically understand the objections of feminists, for whom this issue they consider to be central to women rights. We also consider ourselves to be a pro feminist’s organization which is devoted to supporting the reproductive health of all women. But we also recognize that many ethnic white Catholic working class men, and specifically women, who would be attracted to the DP and the wide left and progressive movement, because of its economic positions, have turned away from us because of our position on abortion. As hard as it may be for the majority on the Left to accept, these working class men and women see their pro-life or opposition to abortion position as being central to both their political and religious values.

Accordingly, we want the SDUSA to be the one organization on the Left that welcomes members who are either pro-life or pro-choice and doesn’t interfere with their personal beliefs, or compromise them by making them abide by a public position on the issue. Rather, we want to provide a supportive environment for both sides to finally meet and work on developing social democratic economic programs which would result in alleviating the social and economic conditions of women that cause a large percentage of abortions. We believe that the issue of women’s reproductive health goes beyond the controversial topic of abortion. We must move away from the polarization nature of this debate, which has existed since the 1970s, that has only benefited the political Right in this country, and concentrate on the vital issues of women’s health care that can united moderate elements on both side of the abortion question. These issues are public access to pre and post natal care and maternal health, through universal health care, comprehensive sex education, and equal access to contraceptive devices for women of all classes. Nevertheless, these positions cannot be compulsive as the government doesn’t have the right to interfere with the private religious sentiments of Americans who have different views toward the issue of artificial birth control and sex education in the public schools. A model for our position is the “Come Let Us Reason Together” document adopted by a group of moderate Evangelicals and the Third Way, a Washington thing tank for progressives (See Appendix D for the “Come Let Us Reason Together” statement.)

Therefore, to achieve its highest aspirations, SDUSA embraces religious faith not as an “interest group” within a larger movement, but as fundamental to the creation of a better world. It should be noted that our former Executive Director was a devout Catholic, while the National Co-Chair of the SD is an Orthodox Rabbi. At the same time, we also welcome secular or non-religious members and share their conviction that that the United States should maintain its tradition of the separation of Church and State. Thus, while we embrace people of religious faith and the liberatory message of the mainstream of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, as well as the Eastern religions of Buddhism and Hinduism, etc, we oppose extremists or fanatics of all faiths, who seek to undermine the church/state separation.

5, WE OPPOSE TOTALITARIANISM IN ITS SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS FORMS. Communist (is) a horrible, destructive parody of socialism. For generations, Stalinism, in the Soviet Union, China and elsewhere presented an image of the socialist ideal that had as much to do with that ideal as the Inquisition have to do with the teachings of Jesus Christ. All through that period, “Communism” was the most dangerous enemy of democracy and free Labor in the world. We rejoice in its collapse (of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe) with formerly enslaved nations now joining the society of democracy. But we also note that not all of the countries of the former Soviet empire have become democratic, including a regression in Russia, herself. **SDUSA proudly opposes Communist totalitarianism and opposes religious extremism arising in many religious traditions, with currently the most dangerous being in the Islamic world.**

6, WE AFFIRM THAT IN THE 21ST CENTURY THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC/DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT SHALL ALSO BE A GREEN MOVEMENT DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE FRAGILE ENVIRONMENT OF THIS PLANET. IN OTHER WORDS, WE ARE ECOSOCIALISTS. We are committed to the principles of the Great Law of the Iroquois that states “In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations.” We believe that the suspicious attitude of the former leadership of the SD toward environmentalists, echoing the opinion of some trade unions, that they represented upper middle class elites who were antagonistic to the needs of workers, is obsolete, in this era of the growing danger of the effects of global warming. Rather both the environmental and labor movements have come to realize that they need one another, and must work in harmony if we want to succeed in setting back global climate change. The establishment of new industries developing alternative energy sources of solar, wind and geo-thermal will create new jobs for workers. But will they be union jobs? And as socialists, we ask, can we put our trust in the private sector to create these new “green” industries, when they were the original source that produced the environmental crisis that we are in, in the first place?

We call ourselves today ecosocialists because we bring a social ecological perspective that class and ecology are not separate issues, but that they are intimately entwined, there can be no green transformation without a red transformation, there can be no” divided

planet” or divided society that uses poor nations and peoples as garbage polluted dumping grounds of social injustice and destroyed environmental conditions. Also a visionary gradualism means global protection, global social democracy of the social commons (air, water, soil,) that cannot be commoditized an “earth democracy”, over neo/liberal “development” that colonizes life worlds in the name of corporate elites rather than the common good and common prosperity. We call for a new international of democracy and social justice, shared prosperity like post war social democracy and the New Deal that stresses production of use values over exchange values. Just as these earlier social democracies regulated national capitalisms the new social democracies must call for global regulated capitals. This is why the SDUSA support a strong alliance of environmentalists and labor. Together, they can make a difference by saving natural resources, reducing pollution, keeping toxic chemicals out of the environment and making the world a safer place for this and the next seven generations.

7, WE DEFEND THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL AS A JEWISH STATE. The fact that we even have to make such a declaration, in our statement of principles, about a independent nation that is a member of the United Nations, is a result of the shameful view in a large percentage of the Left, worldwide that Israel is a product of “racism” or “imperialism,” and therefore illegitimate. We fervently disagree. It is a democratic society, though imperfect, especially in its treatment of Sephardic Jews from Arab countries and the native Arab or Palestinian citizens of Israel. Nevertheless, it should also be pointed out that Arabic is one of the two official languages of Israel and that Israeli Arabs, share the same democratic voting rights of all Israelis and also have representatives in the Israeli Knesset. Similar examples of democratic rights are denied to the citizens of most Arab countries in the Middle East. Israel’s (Labour) movement, the Histadrut, is lead by Social Democrats, with the Red Flag of the international Socialist Movement proudly flying above its headquarters. During the first decades of its existence, Israel was founded and governed by a Social Democratic Labour Party. Then, what is the source of the hostility of much of the Left to Israel, in the last several decades, which goes so far as to question its very existence as a sovereign state, rather than focus its criticisms on the action of its government, as it does in the case of every other country in the world?

A little historical background is necessary here. Up to the 1967 war, the Left was generally seen as pro-Israel and Israel, under the political domination of a socialist party, Mapai, in alignment with an even more Leftist Zionist party with Marxist-Leninist roots, Mapam, plus the Histadrut Labor Federation and the Kibbutzim movement, was viewed as being on the Left and building a true democratic socialist society. The radical, independent pro-Soviet weekly newspaper, *The National Guardian*, was sympathetic to Israel from its first issue in 1948 till 1967. The CP Sponsored Anniversary Tours would advertise tours to the USSR, Eastern Europe and Israel. In 1948, the most pro-Israel candidate for President was Henry Wallace and the Progressive Party, which called for full de jure recognition of the State of Israel and an end to the arms embargo that the U.S. placed upon it, in its platform.. In fact, the champion of Israel and the Zionist cause in the UN from 1947 to 1949 was the USSR and its Eastern European allies. A pre-state book that illustrates how anti Cold War progressives in the immediate post war years

were devoted to the cause of Jewish statehood and self determination in Palestine was *Behind The Silken Curtain: A Personal Account of Anglo-American Diplomacy in Palestine and The Middle East* by Bartley C. Crum. Crum later became the attorney of the Hollywood 10. Even when publications like the *National Guardian* were critical of Israeli actions, such as in the 1956 Suez War, the critiques were written with sympathy for Israel's dilemma of being surrounded by hostile Arab nations devoted to its destruction, and without any denouncing of Zionism, much less questioning the very existence of Israel as a Jewish state.

Suddenly, groups like SNCC and the Youth Against War & Fascism attacked Israel, after the 1967 Six Day War, in almost identical language as the racist Right-wing National States Rights Party. They, and the Socialist Workers Party, the *Guardian* (which purged the original founders of the newspaper and drop the word "National" from its name), and most of the radical or socialist Left, did not merely criticize Israel's action in the war, but went on to deny its legitimacy as a sovereign state. Zionism became a new epithet on the Left. The exceptions to this anti-Israel position on the left were the Socialist Party and the two Jewish publications that came out of the CPUSA, *Jewish Currents* and the *Morgan Freiheit*. Similar reaction occurred in Leftist groups and journals around the world that were outside the social democratic movement. Did the breaking of relations with Israel of the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies, with the exception of Rumania, help spark this anti-Israel sentiment on the Left? Certainly, from that time, to the Gorbachev period, the Soviet Union conducted a crude anti-Zionist propaganda campaign, that was actually, pure anti-Semitism, in the state-run media. Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank after the 1967 has been cited, by its critics on the Left, for the hostility toward it. The international dimensions of this campaign became so strong that the United Nations General Assembly, on November 9, 1975, passed a resolution which called "Zionism, a Form of Racism."

Thus, forgotten was the fact that from 1949 to June 1967, Jews were barred from the Old City of Jerusalem, including the holiest site in Judaism, the Western Wall. Now imagine how Catholics would feel if they were to forbidden to visit Vatican City and Moslems were banned from their sacred cities of Mecca and Medina? Also forgotten were the 100,000 Jews living in the Arab world, many for 1,000 years, who were forced to flee after the establishment of Israel in 1948. When Egypt occupied Gaza from 1949 -1967 and Jordan, East Jerusalem and the West Bank, during the same period, there were no calls from anywhere for a Palestinian state to be create in that area. Where were the criticisms of those occupations? In fact, from the late 1950s to the 1967 Six Day War, the call in the Arab world was Pan Arabism, the unification of all the Arab states into one central country. That is why Egypt under Gamal Abdal Nasser was called The United Arab Republic. His plan was for Egypt to be the center of a united Arabia. It was only after 1967, that Palestinian nationalism arose and replaced the cause of Pan-Arabism.

Accordingly, we are unconditional advocates of Israel's right to exist, and that our support does not depend on its being "nice" in order to deserve our defense. But that doesn't mean that we are never uncritical of its governmental policies. We oppose the Settlement policy of the Right-wing Likud government. We support Israeli democratic

ideals and those who work for them. Whenever those ideals are compromise, we will vigorously protest because we are pro-Israel. Sometimes, being pro-Israel means being critical of the policies of its government. Rather our slogan is **Israel is here to stay** and also **Israel must be saved**. But at time, we could add, Israel must be saved from itself, if we believe that some governmental policy or action that it is engaged in would be detrimental to establishing a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, etc.

Moreover, our support for Israel’s sovereignty does not mean that we are anti-Palestinian. Rather, the question of when a Palestinian national consciousness developed among the Arab population of the West Bank and Gaza, and in the Diaspora, (a name taken from the Jewish experience in exile) doesn’t matter, it has been a reality for the last 40 years. **We support a just resolution for the Palestinians that grant their legitimate national aspirations without fatally compromising the legitimate security concerns of the Jewish State.**

SDUSA, being a democratic organization, its members will have differing views on how the above can be accomplished, in establishing a two state solution for Israel and the Palestinians. Their opinions range from the right wing of the Israeli Labor party, leftward to Meretz/Yahad, Peace Now and Gush Shalom, the Israeli Peace Bloc. These differences will be freely debated in our publications and in public meetings. In fact, a principle test of our commitment to having an empathetic internal environment will be how we will conduct a discussion and debate over the usually very divisive Israeli-Palestinian issue, by respecting and understanding everyone’s position on the topic. At the same time, we are proud of our fraternal relations with the Israeli Labor party and Meretz/Yahad party, who represent their nation in the Socialist International. We are also allied to organizations and publications of both the Jewish and non-Jewish Left that strongly defend the existence of Israel, no matter how critical they made be of its governmental policies, and welcome the new Pro-Israel –Pro Peace, J Street Organization.

Some of our members will also come from a pro-Palestinian background. And we welcome members of the Arab-American community. **However, all members must agree to the proposition, whatever our difference over how to achieve it, that a just resolution for the Palestinians that grant their legitimate national aspirations can only be accomplished without fatally compromising the legitimate security concerns of the Jewish State.** Moreover, many members of the SDUSA view that the final resolution toward a two state solution of Israel living in peace and harmony with a united sovereign state of Palestine, over almost all of the territory that Israel occupied in 1967, while sharing a capital in a united Jerusalem, will only occur when they both have a commitment to a secular, democratic and social democratic future, in their respective states. This means Israel as a Jewish state, that in the words of Rabbi Michael Lerner, is “a state that gives affirmative action in regard to immigration to Jews who have a reasonable claim to fear of persecution where they are currently living-but not a state that is run by Jewish religious law except in the cultural sense that Jewish holidays are given the same official public priority in that state that Christmas is given in the United States.” And a Palestinian state that is

govern not by Islamic fundamentalists, such as Hamas, but secular and moderate Palestinians, both Moslem and Christian, which also embraces a pluralistic democratic social and religious policy that respects and defends the holy sites belong to Moslems, Christians and Jews, alike.

8, WE REJECT THE IDEOLOGIES OF OPPRESSION. The SDUSA is proud to adapt Point no. 8 from Eric Lee's and Alex Spinrad's indispensable article, "Democratic Socialism: Points of Departure," which appeared in Volume Three, Number Four of their journal, *New International Review* in our own Statement of Principles: "We believe in the equality of peoples. Chauvinism and racism are obstacles to the achievement of our ideals to the extent to which they permeate the working class and socialist movements." We are proud of the SP-SD's long heritage of involvement in the civil rights movement from the 1930s, through the sit-ins, freedom rides, voting rights campaigns and many demonstrations, including being the central organizers of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Justice. "Yet, even today, sexism, racism, (homophobia) and anti-Semitism thrive and flourish inside socialist parties (and in the Left in general), like a mold growing on overripe fruit. There is no place inside the socialist movement for such ideologies."³⁰ Yet, one of the issues that critics of the SD have accused us of being weak on, has been Gay and Lesbian rights. Are our critics correct?

We have to admit that the Left in the United States, specifically regarding Gay and Lesbian civil and human rights generally shared the hostile attitude toward homosexuality of the general population for a majority of the last century. Gay and Lesbian members of both the Socialist and Communist Party had to hide their sexual orientation from their fellow members. The SP practiced a form of a "don't ask, don't tell" policy toward homosexual members. As long as they kept private their sexual orientation, they were tolerated and left alone. However, we must honestly report that Gay-baiting did occasionally erupt in the SP toward homosexual members. One of the most shameful aspects of the late Max Shachtman's political life, were his offensive homophobic attacks on David McReynolds in the factional debates in the SP in the 1960s, while at the same time also defending the public reputation of prominent Gay members such as Bayard Rustin and Tom Kahn.

The Communist Party and other Leninist/Stalinist and Trotskyist groups were militant opponents of homosexuals and homosexuality. The totalitarian and authoritarian Left viewed homosexuality as a deviant behavior that was caused by capitalism, and would be alleviated and disappear in the healthy climate of Communist society. An outed Gay or Lesbian member of the CPUSA would be immediately expelled from the Party for practicing deviant behavior and for being a security risk, being vulnerable to pressures from the FBI to name names, or face public exposure of their aberrant sexual orientation.

It was only in the later decades of the 20th Century did the Left slowly moved to a more positive view of Gays and Lesbians. The democratic Left added Gay and Lesbian civil and human rights to its political agenda opposing racism and sexism in this country, while the antidemocratic "Left" continued, until very recently, for the most part, their hostility to homosexuality. The democratic Left welcomed Gay and Lesbian members

and added specific Commissions devoted to Gay and Lesbian issues and culture. This was the policy that existed in DSA.

The SD, on the other hand, did not take an official position on Gay and Lesbian civil rights until the 1990s, even though our leadership included two prominent Gay members, Bayard Rustin, our National Chairman, and Tom Kahn. But it was only in the last year of his life that Rustin publicly discussed his homosexuality, and Kahn kept his sexual orientation private, working as a high official in the macho homophobic environment of the George Meany/Lane Kirkland AFL-CIO. We specifically rejected erecting special quotas or caucuses for special interest groups in the SD, including homosexuals, and electing the NC by dividing separate voting list for males, females and minority males and minority females.

The issue of homosexuality and Gay and Lesbian civil and human rights is still a controversial issue in this first decade of the 21st Century. Similar to the issue of abortion, working class and low income people of various religious faiths have divergent positions on homosexuality. The more liberal churches, and Reform, and Reconstructionist Synagogues accept homosexual orientation as being a separate normality, different from heterosexuality, but just as natural for an estimated 10 percent of the population. Both Gays and Lesbian can enter the clergy, and marriages are even approved between Gay and Lesbian couples. However, the Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Judaism, and evangelical and other orthodox Christians still condemn homosexual behavior, while having different views toward protecting the civil rights of Gays and Lesbians. They all agree, however, in opposing legalizing marriage for Gay and Lesbian couples.

Therefore, the SD is facing the same dilemma that exists in the case of the issue of abortion. How do we maintain our principle of opposing all the ideologies of oppression, including homophobia, without at the same time offending and alienating religious conservative working class and low income people whom we want to reach out to? The answer, we believe is not to turn our backs on the rightful human-rights demands of the GLBT community, including more federal money for research toward a cure for AIDS, equality in employment and housing, backing hate crime legislation, and repel of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," policy on Gays & Lesbians serving in the armed forces. That would be a betrayal of principle, for an organization that celebrates the life and work of its late Chairman Bayard Rustin, and also Tom Kahn, who tragically joined the many hundred of thousands of Gay men who have prematurely died from AIDS... Thus we also endorse here, the statement, "Come Let Us Reason Together," that was adopted by Third Way and moderate Evangelicals on this issue.

However, it would be equally wrong for the SD to base a specific political strategy toward Gay and Lesbian issues in order to attract them to the SD. We must understand that not all Gays are Leftists, although most of the more visible ones may be. Many Gays are well-off entrepreneurs who would favor Republican economic policies. On the other hand, many Lesbians suffer from the feminization of poverty. But it is certain that there are quite a number of Lesbians who would join other women in stating that they

want to make it on their own without the paternal help of the government. What ties them to the Democratic Party and the Left is the homophobic positions of the leadership of the Republican Party, specifically the influence of the Christian Right. However, if the Republicans and the conservative movement should change to a more friendly approach on issues that concern Lesbian and Gay men, there could be a significant move to the Republican Party by affluent members of the Gay and Lesbian community.

Accordingly, the SDUSA will support women's and Lesbian and Gay Rights because they are basic human rights. We support equal rights for Gay and Lesbian couples and civil unions. However, we will leave it up to the members of our individual state and local organization to decide the controversial issue legalizing marriage for Gays and Lesbians couples. Locals made up of a predominantly religious conservative membership, which reflects their community, shouldn't be forced to take a position on this issue, while at the same time respecting the individual civil rights of Gays and Lesbians. On the other hand, Locals which have a high percentage of Gay and Lesbian members would want to be free to actively support legalizing Gay and Lesbian marriages, and other issues of concern to their community. The national organization will try to attract women and members of the GLBT community to the SDUSA, but without setting up special quotas or caucuses.

9, WE INCLUDE AMONG THESE IDEOLOGIES OF OPPRESSION, ANTI-ZIONISM. SDUSA is not a Zionist organization. Members may be pro Zionists or non-Zionists. They may even be critical of aspects of Zionist theory and historical development, especially of the Revisionist/Herut/Likud version of nationalistic Zionism. Similarly, some members may have a critical historical view of Labor Zionism's myopic relations with Arab residence of pre-Israel Palestine, and its own post 1967 Settlements on the West Bank. This is not anti-Zionism. Rather, it is constructive criticisms of aspects of Zionist ideology and history of the movement. However, the political anti-Zionism that is expressed on both the Neo-Nazi far Right and on the Left in Europe and even in the United States, is another matter altogether. Instead, "like its predecessor, anti-Zionism aims to divide the Jewish people from other peoples of the world. Anti-Semitism denied that Jews were human beings with all the rights of human beings. Anti-Zionism denies that Jews are a nation with the right of national self-determination. We are deeply concerned by the rise of anti-Zionism and even open anti-Semitism within the socialist parties (and in the wider Left) and favor an aggressive and spirited campaign to drive anti-Zionism from our ranks" (This statement also came from "Democratic Socialism: Points of Departure" by Eric Lee and Alex Spinrad.)³¹

10, WE, IN GENERAL, WORK WITHIN THE TWO PARTY SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES, BUT WE ALSO SUPPORT INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST/SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY CAMPAIGNS BY OUR STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS IF THEY ARE FOR LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICE, AND THERE IS A BETTER THAN EVEN CHANCE THAT THEY MAY BE WINNABLE. The realities of American Politics make running independent Socialist candidates for public office (frequently) a gesture in futility. It was around this issue that divided the Socialist Party in the 1960s into two factions, The Labor Party and

later the Debs Caucus, supporting traditional independent Socialist campaigns or the creation of an independent labor party, and the Realignment Caucus, which supported the SP working with the labor movement in the Democratic Party in order to transform it into a real social democratic party. The revived SDUSA will continue to ally ourselves with the pro-labor forces of the Democratic Party and work to strengthen Social Democratic ideals in the DP. Nevertheless, when appropriate, individual Locals or State Organizations, may run third party candidates (or fusion) candidates, under the name Socialist Party of (state name), or Social Democratic Party of (state name). **The SDUSA, as a hybrid organization, somewhere in between being a political party or only a political advocacy group, is willing to experiment with different democratic processes on the local level. As a result, both sides of the old political strategy debate of the 1960s should be able reunite in harmony in the revived SDUSA, as they will be free to pursue their separate tactics, determining which approach is the best, while working toward the common goal of building a stronger democratic socialist/social democratic movement in the United States.**

11, “WE STILL HAVE OUR DREAM OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT OF THE NEAR FUTURE AND OUR VISION OF THE SOCIALIST SOCIETY OF THE FAR FUTURE, BEYOND OUR LIFETIME AND OUR CHILDREN’S LIFETIME,” again quoting Comrades Lee and Spinrad from a different article in *The New International Review*, concerning the future of the democratic socialist movement in the United States. **“We dream of a democratic socialist movement in the U.S. which is deeply rooted in the labor movement, and is therefore genuinely multi-racial. We dream of a socialist movement with a militant commitment to anti-Stalinism, a movement which finds allies among millions of Americans of Eastern European, Cuban, Chinese and Indochinese extraction who fled Communist regimes. We dream of a movement with a vivid theoretical life. We dream of a movement which inherits not only the tradition of Debs and Thomas, but of A. Philip Randolph and Max Shachtman as well.”**³²

We also dream of a movement that will reunited the survivors and descendents of the three faction that split the historic Socialist Party in the early 1970s, including the Third Camp Left Shachtmanites, who share our militant opposition to Stalinism or so-called “Communism.” They would still be free to pursue their independent political strategy in the new SDUSA. We dream of a broad based multi-tendency democratic organization whose members would range the social democratic/democratic socialist spectrum from the Third Way Blairites on the Right, to the Left-Shachtmanite/ *New Politics* Third Camp Left.

However, we will also be an organization that will say “no” to viewpoints that are contrary to a social democratic/democratic socialist orientation. People who call themselves socialist have the free speech right to develop broad conspiracy theories about AIPAC or 9-11, and condemn Zionist imperialism, while praising the development of actually existing “socialism” in Cuba, Vietnam, China and North Korea, but not in the SDUSA. Similarly, we will reject neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism and a predominantly militaristic interventionist foreign policy

viewpoint in the revived SDUSA. We want to be a true democratic and multi-tendency organization, which is why our prospective broad based membership, ranging from Third Way to Third Camp, will be united in their common opposition to authoritarianism and totalitarianism on both the Right and the so-called Communist “Left,” and in extreme fundamentalist religious movements.

Finally, while we are concentrating on developing social democratic programs for the here and now, this doesn't mean **that we in the SDUSA, have given up our dream of the vision of the new socialist society that the incremental change we are currently seeking, would eventually lead us to.** We fully understand that we must have some idea of where we want to go, if we want to succeed in attracting idealistic young people to this organization. At the same time, we reject the false messianic vision of Totalitarian Communism of a new “Soviet Man” and socialism as a replacement for religious faith that will cure all the ills of society. Neither do we accept a vulgar interpretation of historical materialism that claims the inevitability of history moving forward to a socialist and communist future.

Nevertheless, our short term goal, as spelled out by the late Michael Harrington, in one of the most moving speeches of his entire career, delivered at the joint celebration of DSOC's 5th anniversary and Mike's 50th birthday, back in December, 13, 1978, **“to once more make socialism a presence in this society, in the mainstream. To take it off the margin.”**³³ Our aim is, in the revived SDUSA, **“is an America, in which it will be as ordinary, as normal to be a socialist as it is to be a liberal or a conservative or a Democrat or a Republican.”** We reluctantly note that we are still as far from this goal in 2010, after the fall of Communism, as we were 32 years ago, when Comrade Harrington made these remarks. But that makes it even more essential that we once again set upon achieving this goal, in his memory. The SDUSA, will operate as open social democrats/democratic socialists, in a broad predominantly non-socialist progressive coalition.

Yet, Comrade Harrington reminded his audience, hearing his address, that evening, **“that we are not simply people who play a valuable role in a coalition, but also people who have a vision.”** And 32 years later, with all the changes in technology and in world affairs, Mike's vision of socialism is still as fresh and vital today, as it was then:

“We are people who understand that for the first time in the history of humankind, it is possible that there is enough to treat everybody in this world. That the limits that we face today are not economic limits. They are not resource limits. There're political limits. There limits of our will. But we really could have brotherhood and sisterhood. It is now possible. ...We socialists have the vision that for the first time in human history, for the people of the world to have a decent life. And secondly, we understand that the reason why people do not have that decent life is because there are profound structures which keep that possibility from coming to fruition.

“We understand that the choice before the world today is not whether we are going to have planning. It's not whether we are going to make economic decisions political.

The choice before the world today is what kind of planning are we going to have. What kind of political making of economic decision making? For whom, what decisions are they going to make? That's the real agenda. Not only is there the statistical possibility of enough. There is a struggle against the bureaucratic institutions, against the elites, against the ruling classes, be they corporations or commissars, which want to inhibit that possibility of a true fraternity and solidarity. And what we say ultimately is, that it is no longer necessary or tolerable that people be programmed. That throughout most of human history, most of the people of this world, the overwhelming majority, their entire lives were determined by the accident of their birth. And that we have a vision of a world in which through political and economic struggle, we will not end evil, we will not end death, we will not end unhappiness. But at least, we will make it possible for people to choose their own lives to the fullness of their potential. We have a vision that it is no longer necessary or tolerable that children should be born on the streets of Calcutta. That it is no longer necessary or tolerable that a social disease like Leprosy should exist in the Third World. That it is absolutely obscene and outrageous that in the United States of America, the richest society in the history of humankind, that there should be poor people and that there should be slums and ghettos. We have that vision. We are about freedom. Planning, collectivization, all of these things are means to an end of deprogramming humanity. Of allowing people to choose."

Comrade Harrington closed his vision of a future socialist society with his favorite parable about dessert societies: **"Politically, we are on the Left wing of the possible. We try to change this society within the limits that are imposed upon us. But we have a vision. In dessert societies, water is something that is so precious, that people fight over it and wars are fought over it. People get married and people get divorce because of water. And it is well known in dessert society that it is human nature to covet water. And if you bring someone from a dessert society to the United States of America, and you show them a public water fountain, they will say to you that cannot be. It is human nature to go and get as much water as they can. And the people have come out at night with their cups and buckets and take the water and take it back to their rooms and hoard the water. And you say to them, no that's not the truth, because we have enough water for everyone and people no longer covet water. But what then about medicine? What then about food? What then about housing? Is it only about water that we can do it here?"**

"That we can envision a society that which will not exist in our lifetime, nor our children's, but which is possible where the basic necessities of life are free for all, collectively provided, and where humankind for the first time, where people for the first time could be decent to one another."

Thus, we have a vision of our immediate struggle, and a process, which Harrington called in his final book, *Socialism: Past & Future*, "visionary gradualism" of taking the first step of a journey of ten thousand miles. Then, we pause, and revived and rebuild the Social Democrats, USA / the original Socialist Party, together with old and new comrades from every sector of American life, and go on to take the second step of our

journey of ten thousand miles in order to come closer to that vision of our ultimate goal of the socialist society for this country and the world, that was so elegantly stated 32 years ago by Michael Harrington.

WE STAND FOR SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND EMBRACE THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, USA/SOCIALIST PARTY, BOTH POSITIVE & NEGATIVE FOR THE LESSONS THAT TEACH US FOR TODAY & TOMORROW, We fight for a democratic socialist society, which is the extension of democracy into all aspects of society. We view the terms, social democracy and democratic socialism as being interchangeable and standing for the same values. This means that we support not a government dominated social system, but a democratic non-sexist, un racist, welfare state with a mixed economy in which the people and democratically-responsible representatives will have the maximum feasible influence in setting economic priorities. Social Democrats, USA (SD,USA) is the successor to, and the same organization that was, the Socialist Party, U.S.A., whose past and present leaders include labor, civil rights, and humanitarian leaders, such as Eugene V. Debs, Norman Thomas, Victor Berger, Meyer London, Kate Richard O’Hare, Mother Jones, Helen Keller, A Philip Randolph, Upton Sinclair, Carl Sandburg, Reinhold Niebuhr, Darlington Hoopes, Samuel H. Friedman, Katharine Smith, Max Shachtman, Rob Tucker, David McReynolds, Deborah Meier, Rochelle Horowitz, Erich Fromm, Murray Kempton, Frank Zeidler, Michael Harrington, Tom Kahn, Bayard Rustin, James T. Burnett, Ernie Erber, Rita Freedman, Sandra Feldman, Donnie Slaiman, and Penn Kemble. We fully embrace the different streams of the SP and SD, USA’s history. We welcome a wide range of the Social Democratic/Democratic Socialists from the Third Way to the Third Camp, members of the Democratic Socialists of America and Socialist Party of the United States of America who share our commitment to Democratic Socialism.

We are committed to the revival of SD,USA, because we share the view that was expressed by historian William O’Neill, in the conclusion of his book, *A Better World: The Great Schism: Stalinism and the American Intellectuals*, published by Simon & Schuster in 1982. On pages 383-384, O’Neill writes the following: “Although the old left deserved to fail, we do need a left wing of the proper kind. A left rooted in anti-Americanism and dedicated to the interest of foreign countries, which is what we had for most of the last half century or so, benefits no one, not even itself. An ethical left that regarded the well-being of the United States as a legitimate concern would be valuable as a counter to the right – always more powerful in this country than its opposite. – and as a way of making responsible dissent effective. Had there been a genuinely independent and democratic left of consequence in the 1960s, the worst national misadventures might have been avoided, or at least scaled down. That the Michael Harringtons and Irving Howes are so few is a problem that has defied the best efforts of socialists since World War I. But whatever the solution, experience makes clear that going the other way, as both the old and new lefts did, is not it. **A Strong Left, if there is to be one, will have to be an *American Left*, democratic, loyal, and with no compulsion to admire or**

emulate foreign tyrannies. Anything less would be flawed and, the record indicates, futile too.”³⁴ (Emphasis added.)

This is the American Left that we want to build. One that would proudly flies both the American and the Red Flag. We are patriotic and love our country to such an extent that we are willing to take the time and effort to make it truly into a shiny city on the hill. We are Social Democrats/ Democratic Socialists because we are committed to the future of the United States and the American people. That is why we think that America needs a stronger voice for our kind of program. We may be not for everybody, especially those who want to continue the domination of the country by corporate elites and those who adhere to both the political Right and the authoritarian Left. On the other hand, maybe we are for you who represent the hard working middle income, low income and unemployed majority of the citizens of the United States of America.

Appendices

A: Subject: an open letter to the members of SDUSA

Friends and Comrades,

We are writing to explain changes in the Social Democrats USA coming in the weeks and months ahead.

You are obviously aware that there is a serious rift between the officers and the Executive Director (ED) Gabe Ross. For you, the members, this may appear as the occasional outburst on the discussion board that later calms down, only to flair up again a month or two later.

For us in the officer ranks, the picture is a little different because we are in continuous communication concerning SD issues, whether they are finances, internal democracy, growing the organization, or setting political direction. The disagreements are serious and they have been continuous for the past 9 months. The acrimonious style of communication including vicious personal attacks has further contributed to the deterioration of what should be comradely dialogue. The recent threats to waste organizational resources in pointless legal action was the final straw. The ED's reference to his threatened lawsuits against fellow members of SDUSA as "the most fun you can have with your pants on" bespeaks a very different idea of how friends and comrades should behave.

As with all such conflicts, there is plenty of finger pointing and blame to be passed around, and everyone will have his version of the truth. None the less, these conflicts must be resolved. Essentially there exist differences in the manner that the ED wishes to run the organization and the way the officers wish to proceed. We have deliberated for a month over the correct course of action, but we wished tempers to cool and did not wish to interfere with member's holiday cheer.

It is the responsibility of the officers to act in the interest of you, the members. It is also our responsibility to select a location for the National Office and designate an Executive Director to run that office. That being said, we, the officers listed below, have concluded that the differences between the officers and the ED are irreconcilable. Effective immediately we are relieving the Executive Director of his responsibilities. We declare null and void the ED's unilateral purging of members. And further, we declare the claim of underhanded seizing of SDUSA property, namely the website, as factually false. Our action today does not imply that previous statements and activities by the ED had our full support -- many of his comments and actions hurt us deeply. If any of you want a more detailed explanation, please feel free to contact us directly.

We hold no illusions that our actions today will bring quick resolution. Logistical matters make changing the status quo difficult. At the moment, our National Office is being operated out of the apartment of our ED. The ED holds the passwords to the website control panel, the passwords to the Yahoo discussion forums, the membership roster (including email addresses, postal addresses, and phone numbers), the bank account information, and the information regarding who is current on dues. If there is any charge of malfeasance that can be leveled at us officers, it would be that we allowed this situation to develop in the first place. We can now only ask your patience while we try to correct it.

We no longer recognize the Johnstown office as the National Office of the Social Democrats, USA. Further information will be sent to you next week about a new mailing address, phone number, etc. Do not send any further dues to Johnstown or the SDUSA website. Regarding dues, we don't want any member to suffer a negative consequence of these organizational changes. Therefore, we are declaring a dues holiday for the first half of 2010. This will allow us time to re-establish the membership list and bank account. The officers will personally fund the operation until June.

Despite our differences with Comrade Ross over the operation of the National Office, we ask him to remain in the organization. His political position papers are well reasoned and his writings have been a valuable contribution to the Social Democrats, USA. Be assured that all of your officers remain deeply committed to the Social Democratic movement and we continue to hold firmly to the Principles as defined on the SDUSA website. We strongly believe there is a niche for our brand of democratic Socialism in the American body politic and we will continue to espouse and promote it. It is unfortunate that in a year such as 2009, with all of its economic and political upheaval, we have been mired in internal conflict.

Our commitment to you is that 2010 will be a new year for the Social Democrats USA, a year of action instead of bickering. May we all have success as we continue the work to build a better world.

With respect, fraternity, and camaraderie,

Rick D'Loss, National Co-Chair

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Craig Miller, National Co-Chair

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B: Alternate Statement of Principles for SDUSA, written by Gabe Ross.

As socialists of the democratic left, we wish these truths were self-evident:

First, that the workers of all nations share more in economic interest with each other, than the workers of any nation share with the political and economic elites of their own nation.

Second, that governments derive all just power from the consent of the governed. That governments exist for the benefit of the governed and not the reverse. Therefore, it is the duty of the governed to alter and abolish all forms of domination, political, economic, cultural, and religious, that would seek to deny the governed full and complete access to the power, which belongs to them alone.

Third, that war is, by its very nature, a crime against humanity. Occasionally, it may be necessary for a people to defend itself from attack. This is never an excuse for the imperial acquisition of resources, territory, or an attempt to establish military or ideological hegemony.

Fourth, that the rights of humanity as set forth in the United Nations International Declaration of Human Rights, may never be transgressed by any party no matter how imperiled or aggrieved that party believes itself to be. Torture, the deliberate targeting of non-combatants with anti-personnel devices (regardless of whether the bomb falls from fast moving airplanes, or is carried in backpacks aboard public transportation), or the deliberate imprisonment, starvation, or displacement of massive numbers of people for political gain is now and will forever be WRONG!

Fifth, that human kind has a right to be free from persecution because of ethnicity, gender, age, religious preference, sexual orientation. The peoples of the earth are entitled to national self determination within political boundaries that respect for the sovereignty of others and real concerns for self protection shall allow.

Sixth, we social democrats will never be cheerleaders for the slaughter of any group of people no matter what the ideology of those pursuing the massacre may be. We will never apologize for tyranny or injustice no matter what grave exigencies the tyrant shall claim.

Seventh, while people are hungry, homeless, poorly clothed, and without the basic necessities of life, there can be no democratic process.

Eighth, people have an inherent right to worship God or participate in spirituality as their conscience dictates. The state must never be the arbiter of religious thought. Instead, it is the people who must instruct the government as to spiritual and moral precepts. Therefore, it is the

right of each person to disagree vehemently with others in their society upon the nature of what is moral. A democratic government cannot take sides. This does not mean that the individual members of an elected government cannot and should not be guided by moral precepts. No one seeking election in a democratic society should be asked to divest him or herself of whatever spiritual and moral precepts he or she holds.

Ninth, while governments have a right to maintain the security of their borders, they do not have the right to harass those forced to cross a particular national frontier in order to find gainful employment or shelter from the ravages of war, famine or natural disaster.

Tenth, human beings are the stewards of the earth, not its masters. No generation has a right to pass on a polluted or degraded planet to the generations that follow.

Eleventh, that in any prosecution brought for any crime a defendant shall have a right to be heard by himself, and/or through counsel and shall have an absolute right to examine all evidence, to face all accusers, to call all material witnesses and to make whatever representations to the tribunal which he or she faces, which may seem to the defendant to be exculpatory. The judiciary of a democratic nation must be independent and separate from that nation's legislative and executive branches of government.

Twelfth, there is only one cure for the ills of democracy; more democracy. Free people will build a wondrous and diverse culture that will express what it is to be truly human.

Submitted with a due appreciation to the sources from which I borrowed, i.e., the Gospel of Saint Matthew; the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as amended; the Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson; Common Sense and The Rights of Man by Thomas Paine, The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels; The Four Freedoms speech of Franklin Delano Roosevelt; Pacem in Terra, by Pope John Paul II; the Euston Manifesto, and the odd reference to Voltaire, Rousseau, Mary Wollstonecraft, Peter Goodwin, Robert Owen, John Stuart Mill, G.B. Shaw, G.K. Chesterton, Victoria Woodhull, H.G. Wells, Bertrand Russell, Winston Churchill, and George Orwell.

Respectfully submitted for comment and amendment by Gabriel Kierran McCloskey-Ross, acting general secretary of the Social Democratic Party of America. Many thanks to my collaborator Jaime Johnston. Thanks to Don Busky for doing the proof reading that I should have done and to Rob Tucker for Encouragement and inspiration.

C: The Ten Principles adopted by the Party of European Socialism, that was approved by the provisional NC of SDUSA as expressing the Viewpoint of the Organization.

1. "Rights and duties for all": Outlines that PES does not wish to leave society to be shaped by [market forces](#), but instead advocates rights and duties to hold together a modern [welfare](#) society. Government has a duty to ensure citizens have access to public services and to protect their rights. In return, government expects citizens and other actors to contribute to the welfare society. Businesses have a right to fair [competition](#) in a transparent and stable environment. Their duty is to contribute to [public finances](#), aid [full employment](#), increase skills in their [workforce](#) and aid society through [corporate social responsibility](#). As for the individuals, they have a right to participate fully in society and the workforce while their duty is to advance through education and training.^[9]
2. "[Full employment](#)": Realise full *and high quality* employment in the context of a modern [welfare state](#). Labour markets would be made more dynamic through inclusive policies of security and support, including fighting [age discrimination](#). The EU and its member states would have to provide conditions for "smart, [green](#) growth and the [EMU](#) would be geared towards coordinated economic policies of high growth and job creation.^[9]
3. "Investing in people": Focus on improving the abilities of low-skilled workers rather than just concentrating on opportunities for the highly skilled. Education, training and social tools would be used, not just to improve the skills of citizens, but to fight social exclusion and reach full employment - PES state that "Those who need high quality education most – the poor and disadvantaged – are still those who receive it least in many European countries."^[9]
4. "Inclusive societies": Policies at all levels to aim to tackle the exclusion of groups such as the [elderly](#), [ethnic minorities](#) or those from poor communities. Provisions for healthcare, social services and childcare would be provided with new legislation examined for its social consequences rather than a strictly economic outlook.^[9]
5. "Universal [child care](#)": Provisions for high quality, affordable, child care to be made available to ensure children have a good start to education while freeing parents to enter paid employment. This would also be helping equal rights for men and women and help the EU deal with its [demographic](#) changes.^[9]
6. "Equal rights for women and men": Greater [gender equality](#) to improve women's status in the workplace and their pay. PES sees this not just as a "moral imperative" but as a "key to solving the demographic challenge, to strengthening democracy and ensuring higher welfare for families"^[9]
7. "Social dialogue": Maintaining the presence of [organised labour](#), seen as "invaluable". PES wants to encourage social dialogue between employers and employees to help rights, employment and economic growth. This to make a more inclusive and dynamic workforce.^[9]
8. "Making diversity and integration our strength": Fight all forms of [xenophobia](#) and encourage tolerance to people, regardless of [nationality](#), [ethnicity](#), [race](#), [gender](#), [sexual](#)

[orientation](#) or [religion](#). Sustainable migration policies and a respect for diversity are seen as contributors to economic and social goals such as integration and anti-discrimination. PES sees the EU having a huge responsibility in managing migration and its causes abroad.^[9]

9. "Sustainable societies": Fighting [climate change](#) to assure social justice, [environmental protection](#) and economic progress. Rising energy prices would hit the poorest hardest and PES state that the EU should take a leading role in a post-[Kyoto Protocol](#) agreement.^[9]

10. "An active Europe for people": PES see the EU as more than just a market place but rather something that can bring "greater shared prosperity for people, stronger social cohesion and social justice." This would be done through competition, but not between member states, cooperation, but not against social protection and solidarity through the EUs cohesion.^[9]

D: The Come Lets Us Reason Together Governing Agenda

The Come Let Us Reason Together Governing Agenda is a common ground agenda that charts a new path forward by uniting key Evangelical and progressive leaders behind specific policy recommendations on some of the most divisive culture issues of our times: abortion, workplace rights for gay and lesbian people, torture, and immigration reform.

POLICY: Reducing Abortions Through Common Ground Policies

Common ground on abortion means reducing abortions in America through policies that address the circumstances that lead to abortion: preventing unintended pregnancies and supporting pregnant women who wish to carry their pregnancies to term, as well as increasing support for adoption. This approach involves the following policy tracks:

1. **Preventing unintended pregnancies.** Prevention policies include grants for sex education (age-appropriate, medically accurate and complete contraceptive information with an abstinence emphasis) and support for teen pregnancy prevention programs, including after school programs and resources to help parents better communicate with teens, and increased access to contraception for low-income women.
2. **Supporting pregnant women through to parenthood and support for new families.** Support policies include expanding Medicaid coverage of pregnant women and S-CHIP coverage of children, prohibiting pregnancy from being classified as a pre-existing condition by insurance providers, and providing support for pregnant and parenting students who are in school.
3. **Increasing support for adoption.** Adoption support policies include expanding adoption tax credit assistance and supporting optional adoption services at group homes for pregnant and parenting women.

POLICY: Protecting the Rights of Gay & Lesbian People to Earn a Living

Even amidst our different beliefs about the issue of sexual orientation, we agree on a policy that protects the basic rights of gay and lesbian people in the workplace. This policy has two provisions, which are grounded in core American values of fairness and the Golden Rule on the one hand and religious liberty on the other:

1. **Making it illegal to fire, refuse to hire, or refuse to promote employees simply based on their sexual orientation.** This policy protects the basic rights of gay and lesbian people to earn a living, and it is careful not to create, or imply, any rights for gay and lesbian people that every other citizen does not already have.
2. **Providing a clear exemption for faith-based employers that is identical to the religious exemption in Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 (as specified in the bipartisan H.R. 3685, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act).** We affirm that no legislation to protect the human dignity and rights of gay and lesbian people should threaten the religious liberty of churches and other religious organizations.

POLICY: Renouncing Torture

We agree that the use of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment against prisoners is immoral, unwise, and un-American. We must be better than our enemies, and our treatment of prisoners captured in the battle against terrorism must reflect our character and values as Americans. We agree that the U.S. should adopt a clear stance against torture that includes the following core provisions, modeled on the *Campaign to Ban Torture's Declaration of Principles for a Presidential Executive Order on Prisoner Treatment, Torture and Cruelty*:

1. **Following the Golden Rule.** We will not authorize or use any methods of interrogation that we would not find acceptable if used against Americans, be they civilians or soldiers.
2. **Implementing one national standard.** We will have one national standard for the interrogation and treatment of prisoners. Currently, the best expression of that standard is the U.S. Army Field Manual.
3. **Upholding the rule of law.** We will acknowledge all prisoners to our courts or the International Red Cross. We will in no circumstance hold persons in secret prisons or engage in disappearances.
4. **Affirming a duty to protect.** We acknowledge our historical commitment to end the use of torture and cruelty in the world. The U.S. will not transfer any person to countries that use torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.
5. **Ensuring checks and balances.** Congress and the courts play an invaluable role in protecting the values and institutions of our nation and will have access to the information they need to be fully informed about our detention and interrogation policies.

6. **Maintaining clarity and accountability.** All U.S. personnel—whether soldiers or intelligence staff—deserve the certainty that they are implementing policy that complies fully with the law. Henceforth all U.S. officials who authorize, implement, or fail in their duty to prevent the use of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners will be held accountable, regardless of rank or position.

POLICY: Creating Secure and Comprehensive Immigration Reform

We agree that we need comprehensive immigration reform that creates an earned path to citizenship and protects families, while securing our borders and treating American taxpayers fairly. The common ground solutions we present here enable us simultaneously to protect our borders, protect families, and protect our values. We agree that we should adopt comprehensive immigration reform with the following provisions:

1. **Securing the borders through rigorous enforcement.** We support active efforts to secure the border and prosecute illegal trafficking, identification fraud, and abusive employers.
2. **Providing a practical, earned path to citizenship.** We support an earned path to citizenship for existing undocumented workers in the U.S. that is fair to American taxpayers and restores the rule of law. We recognize that citizenship is a high honor and agree that it should come with basic obligations such as obeying the law, paying back taxes and reasonable fines, and learning English and American civics.
3. **Establishing a fair guest worker program.** We support a guest worker program that fills jobs where there is a need, but that does not unfairly disadvantage American workers. It should ensure that workers are not exploited and that they are paid for the work they do.
4. **Keeping families together.** We support policies and enforcement that are sensitive to the value of preserving family integrity, keeping parents and children together.

The Governing Agenda was coauthored by [Rachel Laser](#), Director of the Culture Program for Third Way; [Dr. Robert P. Jones](#), Visiting Fellow in Religion for Third Way and President of Public Religion Research; [Dr. David Gushee](#), professor at Mercer University and President of Evangelicals for Human Rights; [Rev. Dr. Joel Hunter](#), senior pastor at Northland, A Church Distributed; [Rev. Samuel Rodriguez](#), President of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference; [Dr. Ronald J. Sider](#), President of Evangelicals for Social Action; and [Katie Paris](#), Director of Communications Strategy for Faith in Public Life.

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Notes

¹ Peter Drucker, *Max Shachtman and His Left: A Socialist's Odyssey Through the "American Century"* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1994) p. 308. Maurice Isserman, *The Other American; The Life of Michael Harrington*. (New York: Public Affairs, 2000) p.299. Michael Harrington, *Fragments of the Century: A Social Biography*, (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1973) p. 195.

² "Harrington Quits as Socialist Head," *New York Times*, October 23, 1972. James Ring Adams, "Battle Royal Among the Socialists," *Wall St. Journal*, December 7, 1972.

³ Harrington response to McReynold's resignation, quoted in *For The Record: The Report by the Social Democrats, U.S.A. on the Resignation of Michael Harrington and his Attempt to Split the American Socialist Movement*. (Booklet published by Social Democrats, U.S.A. 1973.) p. 1.

⁴ No Minutes were taken of the December, 1972 SPUSA/SDUSA National Convention. However, the debate over changing the name of the SP was covered in both *The New York Times* and *New America*, the official newspaper of Social Democrats, USA, and the Socialist Party, USA, prior to the name change. "Socialist Party Now the Social Democrats, U.S.A. *New York Times*, December 31, 1972. p36. Arch Puddington, "Building A Social Democratic Movement in the United States," *New America*. December 31, 1972. p. 1,7.

⁵ "The American Challenge" is now online at the Internet Archives, <http://www.archive.org/details/TheAmericanChallengeASocial-democraticProgramForTheSeventies>.

⁶ Jacob Lofman, who was a very close friend of Shachtman stated this in his talk to a meeting of the Young Social Democrats on the topic "Realignment: Retrospective and Perspectives," on Thursday, June 21, 1979. Recording in author's possession.

⁷ The first 6 issues of the *Newsletter of the Democratic Left*, beginning with March, 1973 are now online at the Internet Archives.

⁸ "We Are Socialists of the Democratic Left." This founding document of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee can be found online at <http://www.archive.org/details/WeAreSocialistOfTheDemocraticLeft>.

⁹ Frank P. Zeidler, *Ninety Years of Democratic Socialism: A Brief History of the Socialist Party USA*. (Pamphlet published by Socialist Party, USA: Milwaukee, Wisconsin, July 1991) p. 19.

¹⁰ Alex Spinrad & Eric Lee, "Democratic Socialism: Points of Departure." *New International Review*. Vol 3 No.4. pp. 5-6.

¹¹ In light of later events, it remains unclear how active this Local was and how many members, other than Gabe Ross belonged to it. After the reviving of the SDUSA in 2008, Ross claimed that the local, now called the Laurel Highlands Social Democrats, had regular meetings and was chaired by Kelly Ohler. However, neither Ohler nor any other member of this Local took part in the NEC Conference Calls with the provisional officers of the SD, other than Ross and Jaime Johnston, his wife.

¹² Atlee Yarrow strongly dissented concerning our Statement of Principles planks defending Israel and denouncing anti-Zionism, in terms that some NEC members saw as being anti-Semitic. He later went on to transfer his former SDUSA website into a new entity called American Socialist Voter. At first, it was supposed to be devoted to advocating the unification of the 3 organizations that came out of the historic Socialist Party. However, it has since become devoted to a so-called unity among all self proclaimed socialists, bringing together Stalinists, Trotskyists, Social Democrats and Nazis, any group that has socialist in their name. Frankly, Atlee must be really working for Jonah Goldberg and Glenn Beck, who maintain that National Socialism and Fascism are actually Left-wing political movements.

¹³ Permit me to write a personal comment on this matter with Gabe Ross. This section of the document has been the toughest for me to write. The reason is that Gabe Ross, for over 30 years has shared the same political experiences, and political organizations, as me. We both attended together many national conventions of both the SDUSA and DSA, and even the 1983 convention of the SP of the USA. In the course of these years, we had not only become close friends, but spiritual brothers as well. In other words, when he is in pain, I am also in pain. When he went through the tragic final weeks of his first wife, Susan, illness and medical malpractice, to be instantly followed by becoming homeless, I suffered spiritually with him. In turn, he was there in spirit during those awful last weeks of my mother's life, and also while I was taking care of her. With some exception, the Israeli-Palestinian issue and should Israel bomb Iranian nuclear facilities, we were in complete accord on political issues and strategy for the revived SDUSA. His Four Freedom's Pamphlet, Statement of Principles, and strategic resolutions are faultless. In fact his version of our Statement of Principles is so poetic in its writing, as I have stated in the main text, it could also be made into the official song of the revived SDUSA. Gabe was the prime motivator of reclaiming the SDUSA after the former leadership abandoned it without telling a soul, or rank and file dues paying member. Some people ridiculed his effort as a fantasy trip. Yet Gabe persisted despite the odds, and gathered the rest of us, to help him make this project into a reality. As a result, it is with the deepest regret and sadness, that I have to describe the reasons behind why we, the elected officers of the SDUSA, reach the decision to relive him as the organization's Executive Director and move the National office to New York. Ross hostile reaction and his false counter-charges against the officers has tragically, but unavoidably lead to the end of our 30 year friendship. Obviously, in order to keep the narrative flowing in this chapter, I can only give a summary of Ross's behavior as ED that caused his dismissal. However, if anyone is interested in looking at the documentation of our charges and our communications with Ross from 2008 to our final break at the end of 2009, you can send an e-mail request to me or any one of the other officers that is listed

in our signatures of the open letter to the members of the SD concerning this matter, which appears in Appendix A.

¹⁴ Michael Lerner, *Surplus Powerlessness*. (Oakland, Ca.: The Institute for Labor and Mental Health, 1986) p.235.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. pp.237-238

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 238.

¹⁹ This statement describing the mission of the Network of Spiritual Progressives (NSP) appears on the *Tikkun* home page at <http://www.tikkun.org/>. A more detailed version can be found on the home page of the Network of Spiritual Progressives at <http://www.spiritualprogressives.org/>.

²⁰ Peter Gabel, "A Labor Leader Loses His Way." *Tikkun* (September/October, 2009)

http://www.tikkun.org/article.php/sept_oct_09_gabel

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Jeremy Rifkin, *The Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness In A World In Crisis*. (Tarcher; 2009.) p.42

²⁵ This statement by Jim Burnett was in an open letter that he wrote to supporters of *Appeal to Reason* in 1992 with suggestions for a possible political platform for our tendency on the Democratic Left.

²⁶ Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Statistical Abstract of the United States.

²⁷ Robert Fitch, *Solidarity for Sale: How Corruption Destroyed the Labor Movement and Undermined America's Promise*. (New York: Public Affairs,2006.) p.256.

²⁸ Ibid. p, 13. Fitch's refers to this as the "feudom syndrome – a kind of protection system based on exclusive jurisdiction, exclusive bargaining, and job control. Those who control the jobs becomes the bosses; those who want the jobs become their clients. Loyalty to the boss becomes the highest virtue. It's an ethic of dependence rather than solidarity, one that promotes the most wide-ranging corruption. Corruption in turn produces atomization, weakness, demoralization, and apathy, which in turn promote further corruption. Solidarity—united action on behalf of the common good - -turns into a slogan that produces only crooked smiles." Ibid. p15. See also Michael D. Yates" What's the Matter with U.S. Organized Labor? An Interview with Robert Fitch" *Mrzine* (03-30-06) <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2006/yates300306.html>.

²⁹ Michael Lerner, "Obama the Nominee." *Tikkun* (July/August 2008) <http://www.tikkun.org/article.php/MichaelLerner-Obamathenominee>

³⁰ Alex Spinrad & Eric Lee, "Democratic Socialism: Points of Departure." *New International Review*. Vol 3 No.4. p7.

³¹ Ibid. p7.

³² Eric Lee & Alan Spinrad, "Thoughts on the DSA." *New International Review*. Vol. 4, No.1. p.7

³³ Michael Harrington's address was recorded by the author at the event.

³⁴ Willian L. O'Neill, *A Better World: The Great Schism: Stalinism and the American Intellectuals*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.) pp.383-384.