

Organizing in the 21st Century

Alternating Wednesdays at 6pm via Zoom

[Spring 2023 Political Education Focus](#)

- Which thinkers and ideas inform DSA's political and labor strategy?
 - How have contemporary organizers interpreted lessons from recent struggles?
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1st session - March 15th

[RSVP HERE](#)

[Hegemony How-To](#) By Jonathan Matthew Smucker

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Podcast

1. <https://thedigradio.com/podcast/hegemony-how-to-with-jonathan-matthew-smucker/>

Guiding questions

- Have you ever felt like a political orphan?
- What is Smucker's critique of the Occupy movement in the second chapter? What do you think of his critique?
- What are prefigurative politics? Have you ever encountered an example of prefigurative politics?
- What is Smucker's critique of activism (p 23)? What alternative forms of political action does he propose?

- What are the differences between “meeting people where they’re at” during an electoral campaign versus a labor campaign?
 - Smucker (p. 27) argues that “right does not equal might.” What does he mean? What lessons can political organizers draw from this?
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2nd Session - March 29th

[RSVP HERE](#)

No Shortcuts by Jane McAlevey

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

Podcast

1. <https://thedigradio.com/podcast/strike-with-jane-mcalevey/>

Guiding Questions

- Who is the intended audience of "No Shortcuts"? Why was it written?
 - What are the distinctions between 'advocacy', 'mobilizing', and 'organizing'? Can you give examples of each?
 - What is the purpose of 'whole person organizing'?
 - What are the limits of Jane McAlevey's principles?
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3rd Session - April 12th

[RSVP HERE](#)

Wednesday April 12th - Organizing and Burnout

- [Spadework](#) by Alyssa Battistoni
- [Canvassing](#) by Nikil Saval

Podcast [Interview with Nikil Saval starts 30 min in]

1. <https://goodbye.substack.com/p/seattle-nostalgia-and-autonomous>

Guiding Questions

Unlike previous segments the podcast will not help with answering these questions. It is an interesting conversation with Nikil Saval in 2020 the day after being elected. The readings are worth diving into.

- Why do Saval or Battistoni find it important to push through work they are dreading?
 - What motivation do you rely on to overcome a dreaded task?
- Why is Alyssa Battistoni dissatisfied with people joining the union but not organizing?
- Why doesn't Nikil Saval like the 'story of the self'?
 - Why might it still be important anyway?
- Both Battistoni and Saval have to learn how to lean into uncomfortable conversations. As Battistoni puts it "*Often, however, you have to learn to speak differently—to speak as a different version of yourself.*"
 - How do the different campaigns shape the way the authors end up adapting?
- What does it mean for organizers to be accountable to each other?
 - In what ways does it help?
 - In what ways could it hurt a campaign?

- These essays cover campaigns that lost in 2016, but both contain seeds of later victories. In 2020 Nikil Saval was elected a state senator in Pennsylvania, and in 2023 graduate workers at Yale won union recognition in a NLRB election with 1,860 voting in favor and 179 voting against.
 - What lessons can we draw from the ebb and flow of victories and losses?
 - What is required to persevere through a loss?
 - What are the dangers of always promising victory?
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Check In Meeting - April 19th
RSVP HERE