

DSA North Texas General Meeting

February 13, 2022 2:00pm

Facilitator: AFROSOC

Note Taker: Alexandra T.

[Video with Zoom chat](#), Access Passcode: 4P.5!QyA

Topic	Time	Speaker	Notes	Action Items
Settle In	28 mins		Steering Members Present: Adam B., Alexandra T., Brinda, Colin Campbell, Ian S., Olinka G., Radiance B., Sierra M., Stephanie S.	
Welcome & Community Agreements	7 mins	Alexandra T. (Secretary)	National DSA Meeting Code of Conduct National DSA Code of Conduct	
Black History Month Panel Q&A	min	Apryl Hill, DSA NPEC (National Political Education Committee) and NTX DSA AFROSOC	<p>Q: How do we honor and uplift the voices of black women? A: Big question - simply, listen to the voices of the black women around us. Not just listening, but also incorporating their ideas and values into our work. Not just famous black women, but also our neighbors. Value the opinions of everyday people that you work and organize with is a very good start to honoring and uplifting voices. We often fixate on a black voice/a set of black voices that are not femme at all or distant voices. Taking into consideration those voices in day-to-day interactions and letting those voices change your decision-making. If you are listening to those voices, but then when it comes time to make decisions that affect them and you turn off those voices, you are no longer listening to them.</p> <p>Realize how historically impactful everyday black women are. Every single historical movement is impacted by normal everyday black women who are running the show. Understand that historical significance and that this moment has historical significance as well.</p>	

			<p>Q: Where do you think the instinct to distrust and dismiss the voices of black women come from?</p> <p>A: It's programmed in us in America/western Civilization. The other day someone posted about the impact that women in West African tribes had on C-Section medical progress. They used sterilization techniques and anethetics before western medicine. The first comment was a white man (his first instinct) was to ask "weren't they doing that in the middle east first?" - drawing the line between Egypt and the rest of Africa. The same programming blames lack of progress on individuals instead of the effects of colonization and slavery.</p> <p>Q: What can white people do to be better?</p> <p>A: Recognize that programming and challenge it out loud to other white people. We (black women) know that it exists but it's not our job to fight that. It's white people's job. It's up to white socialists to fight those fights. We definitely shouldn't have to fight against white leftists, or inwardly among themselves either,</p>	
<p>Black History Month Panel Q&A (cont.)</p>	<p>min</p>	<p>Bianca Cunningham, National AFROSOC (NYC DSA, co-chair, labor)</p>	<p>History: Verizon Wireless worker that wanted to unionize the store. Bianca reached out to ___ to help organize. We won! The person helping us was a socialist from Occupy. DSA wasn't a thing in NY at the time. We went on strike for our first contract in 201_ for 49 days. Around 2014/2015. We started talking about revitalizing the DSA NYC branch and forming the Labor Branch.</p> <p>"Race & Labor" first facilitator and facilitated that for 2 years so now I work on a consulting basis to mediate issues and give comprehensive training to change union culture to be more responsive and inclusive. Now I work as Campaign Director for "Arguing for the Common Good"</p> <p>Q: As a predominatitely white organize, have we done a good job</p>	

			<p>A: In my experience (since 2016), national DSA has been less prominent. Chapters have operated autonomously, so your experiences are different.</p> <p>What happens is 2 things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If we acknowledge that we live in a white supremacist society, any predominately white organization will have elements of white supremacy in play. 2. The tendency to want to OWN EVERYTHING - doesn't leave much room for other organizations, like black and brown-led, to take the lead. We're not just an organization that you can order on-demand for issues. There is a desire to be better allies but it's in competition with the desire to be the owner/center of organizing strategies. <p>Q: Why did you feel starting AFROSOC was necessary?</p> <p>A: As we were building branches in New York, someone asked me if we were going to start a Black Caucus, and I was offended at first. I wanted to be at the table with everyone else. But as time passed and specifically when we got the Trump Bump (50-100 people consistently and then 400+ people suddenly were there) it was very stark difference of the same number of black faces. It was uncomfortable to be such a small population. We needed our own space for organizers of color to have a buffer from the overwhelming white organization. The other reason - many of us come from different backgrounds, immigrant/first-gen socialists have leftist histories in other countries and we want a space to share that specific type of organizing than other comrades.</p> <p>Q: Why is intersectional framework is important in every context?</p> <p>A: Video</p>	
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	<p>min</p>	<p>Jade, DSA Seattle, Secretary for Seattle AFROSOC, Co-Chair Seattle ARC</p>	<p>Q: Why is Anti-Racist Co-Conspirators Caucus necessary? A: All chapters across the country seem to be predominately white. AFROSOC in DSA Seattle formed again in 2020. There was a reparations fund bill that AFROSOC was trying to get passed in the chapter in Dec 2020 and there was a ton of backlash of white comrades. The fund was unfair, why should we have this fund out from dues of working class members (Not recognizing that the material conditions of black working class or different than white working class - an important part of reparations)? Some members wanted to be more than allies, they wanted to work alongside with AFROSOC to fight for what AFROSOC is fighting for. That's how ARC was born. The bill was eventually passed and we did get reparations and it's been a very successful thing.</p> <p>Q: What's the difference between an ally and an accomplice? A: That lies in the actual practice of anti-racism. We take a lot of teachings from So You Want to Talk About Race and How to Be An Antiracist: An Ally: I see you, I'm with you, one and done situation. Accomplice: Consistent dialogue between parties, not assuming. It's a parallel caucus meaning we don't assume what AFROSOC wants.</p>	

			<p>Q: ARC tries to instill anti-racist principles in the chapter as a whole. What other goals does ARC have?</p> <p>A: Rethinking the grievance process for the whole chapter. We wanted to instill restorative/transformational justice principles in the grievance process. We learned these principles (adrienne maree brown, mia linguist (sp?)), we wanted to get away from carceral punishment in the current grievance process. We have a working group for political education to make anti-racist education more accessible.</p> <p>Q: What do you think DSA as a whole (on a national level) to be better co-conspirators toward BIPOC members?</p> <p>A: I highly recommend an ARC caucus (assuming there's already an AFROSOC caucus, otherwise that first) - have to be okay with being wrong. We have a process for white members who join ARC to agree to be respectful because there is accountability for unconscious bias. It's a really sensitive space. Listen to AFROSOC is so important.</p>	
	<p>min</p>	<p>Emily Castillo, NTX AFROSOC</p>	<p>Background: Professor on Latin American politics (you have to have a strong understanding of Marxism to really teach that). PhD candidate in Sociology at UNM and my work focuses on education and ethnic studies (the mechanisms that perpetuate whiteness), and I am a critical race theorist. Here in New Mexico I work with organizations to help pass legislation to implement ethnic studies as a required offering in high schools.</p> <p>Q: What issues do you see with political education in organizing spaces?</p> <p>A: It happens in academia as well - a tendency to understand particular theorists as the "legitimate" ones (canonical works of a particular field), and that ends up being the work of dead white men. That's not to say there's not validity there, but by centering those</p>	

			<p>works and considering them what's considered "real" political education, you leave out the work of people of color with theories that are critically important and come from real lived experiences. For theory to go into practice, it has to be relevant, it has to speak to the people and their experiences. There's a tendency to romanticize dead white men (i.e. Russian Revolutionaries) without understanding what relevance that holds in intersectional identities that weren't part of the society where those theories were developed.</p> <p>Q: Why is intersectionality important to any class analysis?</p> <p>A: Without it, you don't speak to the realities of what people are actually experiencing. For example - the feminist movement of Right to Work didn't recognize that women of color were already working-out of necessity and were being exploited. There are very different lived experiences amongst identities of the working class, you already lost the majority of folks who should be at the table. Part of that is really taking a look at what you consider political education. W.E.B Dubois was a Bolshevik. All of his work is framed in theory but he isn't taught because he's not considered important as white scholars. Black Reconstruction really talks about his ideas of the psychological wage of whiteness and he outlines how the elite class has managed to create the psychological wage and whiteness-as-property that a lot of working class workers buy into. "Whiteness-as-Property" : material benefits of whiteness that gets in the way of class consciousness and organizing. Example: White Flight - "well I don't want my property to lose value and capital because people of color moving into the neighborhood devalues the neighborhood, so I'll just leave." Those homeowners already know how their whiteness benefits them. Identity becomes social capital in a capitalist system.</p>	
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			<p>Q: What can we do to better apply intersectional lens to political education?</p> <p>A: Make sure the folks in charge are people of color and they are doing the work to include the scholars of color central to the topic. The contexts of Marx (for example) do NOT speak to the lived realities. It doesn't need to be "dumbed down" - it needs to be relevant. If you're not including the analysis of black women in political education, then it may still be based in white supremacist structures.</p> <p>White socialists need to understand that feedback is a gift, even when it makes you uncomfortable and causes tension. Don't shut down. What did it cost the person giving me feedback to get the point of speaking up and trying to educate them.</p> <p>"Whatever white people do not know about negroes reveals precisely what they do not know about themselves" - James Baldwin</p> <p>Articles to help process feelings about being white (including guilt, which has to be transformed in order to be fully realized accomplices and not held back by it).</p> <p>Q: Any recommended readings?</p> <p>A: Book: <i>Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880</i> by W.E.B. Du Bois (Note: Book is 700 pages but it's more accessible than Marx's 700 pages)</p> <p>Article: "Whiteness as Property" - Cheryl Harris</p> <p>Article: "Teaching White Students about Racism" by Beverly Daniel Tatum (Unlighted version available on her website)</p> <p>Book (Audiobook on YouTube): <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> - W.E.B. Du Bois</p>	
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	min	Marsha Jones, Afiya Center	<p>Background: Director of the Afiya Center, speaker What brings me the most joy is being a mother and grandmother</p> <p>Q: How can we honor and uplift the voices of black women? A: When people ask why we center black women in our work - this is how I answer them. I fell into this world, HIV brought me to this space, and I saw that black women were dying and it was like we were invisible. Black women were not being heard. bell hooks, <i>Ain't I a Woman</i>, speaks about the dehumanizing of black women during slavery and how they were more dehumanized than black men. If there's any group of people who have been more desocialized, it's black women. When we're talking about "people" we are talking about white men. When we're talking about "black people" we are talking about black men. How do we prioritize and show up for black women? Trust black women. That phrase came about BECAUSE an anti-abortion campaign claimed "the most dangerous place for a black baby is a black woman's womb" and the counter campaign is Trust black women. Black women are most strategic voters, trust us and not try and use us!</p> <p>Q: WHERE do you think the instinct to discount black women and their experiences comes from? A: It's historical. From day 1, being kidnapped and brought to this country. Nobody seems to have a problem with the violence towards them back then, and still today. Last ones to be promoted, not having resources to start things on their own, it's everywhere. It's normalized.</p>	

			<p>Q: What can white people do to hold themselves accountable? How can they be better in their spaces?</p> <p>A: Stop apologizing. Don't be sorry, be better. The apology is a performance. Listen to what black people are what saying. Learn how to follow. Step back. Stop for a moment, listen to what we are saying, and then contribute. Be honest about your privilege, use that privilege to create space for other people. That's what it's for. Let the folks most impacted by the thing we are talking about lead instead of being the one leading it. Whatever projects you into this movement, stay there, and stay there with integrity and sit in it and desire to be better in it.</p> <p>Audience Q&A: What local black-led organizations can we support?</p> <p>A: The Afiya Center, AFROSOC,</p> <p>Marsha: There's a lot of organizations with black faces, but not many black-led.</p> <p>Q: What's the role of white ally to take when they see fake intersectionality, like that (CIA commercial where a woman was talking about her diverse background and the CIA welcomed her)?</p> <p>A: Emily: Calling out tokenism and naming it. Call out the performance part of performative allyship and ask them what they will actually do beyond that.</p> <p>Radiance: As a white person, don't go after the person of color being tokenized. Other people of color will handle her. Go after the CIA for their tokenization.</p>	
Break	5 min			

<p>Working Group (WG) Updates</p>	<p>10 min</p>	<p>Working Group (WG) Leads</p>	<p>Racial Justice/AfroSoc*/ARC** (Radiance): Next ARC meeting is Feb 15 at 7:30 PM</p> <p>*Do not have to be a dues-paying member of DSA to be in AfroSOC **ARC is currently working on a membership process.</p> <p>Membership Report (Derek B.): Not Present</p> <p>Treasurer (Adam): January Spending Report: Housing WG Fundraiser January venue & pizza Captivate FM - podcasting hosting website Donation of \$1700 to TEA from Healthcare WG Fundraiser (still available)</p> <p>Anti-War (Stephanie): Feb 20th - Panel DSA International Committee on crisis - Saudi Arabia attacks on Yemen</p> <p>National Anti-War protest March 1st (facebook event coming)</p> <p>March 11th- Die-in in front of city hall for Vaccine Equity, cohost with Healthcare WG</p> <p>EcoSoc (Brinda): Not Present</p> <p>Electoral (Sierra): Early voting starts tomorrow for primaries, Feb 14th- 25th. Election day is March 1st. Electoral recommendations will go out this evening. If you have questions on specific candidates, you can reach out to Sierra.</p>	<p>Racial Justice/ AfroSoc/ARC: 2/15 7:30 PM ARC meeting</p> <p>Anti-War: 2/20 2:30pm Yemen Panel 3/1 Protest 3/11 6pm Vaccine Equity Action</p> <p>EcoSoc:</p> <p>Electoral: Sign up to volunteer for Jessica Mason's campaign</p> <p>Healthcare: 2/22 7pm National M4All Campaign Call 3/11 6pm Vaccine Equity Action</p> <p>Buy the Medicare4All Tshirt</p> <p>Sign up to help</p>
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