

April 5th, 2016

Tuesday April 5th, 4:30 p.m. at Judson Memorial Church Assembly Hall, 239 Thompson Street

Facilitating: Michelle

Note-taking: Ziad Dallal

Timekeeping: Ella

Executive Summary:

This AoS meeting was well-attended. We had a visitor from Arthur Schwartz about his nomination for the district of NYC (14th street to liberty tower - this district includes the NYU campus). If people want to know more and reach out, please see below. The AoS also voted to accept a petition as valid to trigger a referendum based on the ballot that the GSOC for BDS caucus presented to the AoS. The Votes Committee will now determine whether either 10% of membership or 2/3 of stewards have signed the petition. This number is determined by referencing the card-signer list provided by the Local.

Agenda:

Introductions [5 minutes]

Visit from Candidate Arthur Schwarz [10 minutes]

Minutes Approval from March [5 minutes]

Standing Committee Reports [25 minutes]

 Communication Committee

 Political Solidarity Committee

 Organizing Committee

 Unit Representative Report Back

 Join Council Report Back

BDS Petition Submission [25 minutes]

Election and Votes Committee Final Report Back before Elections [25 minutes]

May Day Participation

Announcements [5 minutes]

Draft and Send Out Next Month's agenda to listserv.

Introductions:

Shafeka Hashash, Sean Larson, Michelle O'Brien, Daniel Young (GSOC for BDS Representative), Darach Miller, Jacob Denz, Seana Lymer, Sam Dinger, Kyle Shybunko, Jill Joshowitz (Caucus for Open Dialogue Representative), Yaelle (Caucus for Open Dialogue Representative), Chris Nickell, Tori Dahl, Claudia Carrera, Shelly Ronen, Ella Wind, Ziad Dallal, David Klassen (GSOC for BDS Representative), Jessica Feldman, Marc Kagan (from CUNY), Arthur Schwartz (labor and Bernie NYC lawyer), Eddie, Dave Handy (Arthur's Campaign manager), Parth Singh, Nathan Pensler, Sharone Bloome,

26 people present. 14 stewards present.

Visit from Candidate Arthur Schwartz [10 minutes 4:40]

Marc Kagan: Introducing Arthur Schwartz and his work.

Andrew: I am a workers' lawyer, a Columbia university graduate and was there in the 60s student movement. We were attracted to the labor movement and decided to become a lawyer working with unions and for unions. Some of them started winning elections. I am interested in my community and this made me involved in local politics - the local community board and ran for democratic district leader representing parents who want to get playgrounds funded in the city and been spokesperson since 1995. I broke with the political establishment by siding against the establishment candidates. I decided to run for the assembly, the assembly district from 14th street to WT, running to be the Bernie Sanders of the district. I am running against a 26 year incumbent. I am here because I would love to get your support for Bernie, you are going to be in the center of the storm. I would love to have your support as an organization, making sure NYU students are registered to vote - Washington square village is part of my district. The primary is September 13th. Bernie's is April 19th.

In this room (Judson) there is going to be a debate between me and my opponent: on Thursday April 7 at 7 PM

Minutes Approval from March [5 minutes - 4:50]

~ Proposal to approve minutes of AoS meeting of March – Passes.

Standing Committee Reports [25 minutes]

~Proposal: to move Bylaws committee report to later in the agenda – passes.

CommComm 5 - 4:55

Chris: We got out the latest Grad Worker rank and file. Full of lovely satire of the grievance process, and a crossword. Check it out it's awesome. We are trying to keep a schedule of 1 e-mail/week. It's been very good. Everything is going well and we want to be supportive of the votes committee coming up soon.

Political Solidarity 5 - 5:00

Sean: Last week several members of our union organized an anti-trump rally. We had a contingent there and the rally went well, lots of people marched about a little bit. A wide range of people. And laid the groundwork for upcoming rallies

Michelle: on Thursday April 13, trump will be here and there is a substantial and diverse mobilization to disrupt the event and express dismay about Trump's existence. As usual we are paying attention to other organizing: SLAM had a substantial win around \$15/hrs. minimum wage. And Cuomo passed a piece of legislation that will bring \$15/hrs. by 2018.

Sean: our fellow graduate student workers at CUNY along with the BNC is having a lot of direct actions and campaigns and had a strike authorization vote and want to flag this for people. POLY SOLI is in communication with them.

Michelle: we intend to have GSOC presence in mayday marches. If you want a rundown on why there are 2 marches, I will give you.

Nathan: we organized a flyer against Hugo Uys, owner of Brod kitchen.

Organizing Committee 5 - 5:05

We want to put pressure on the arbitrator on Thursday to eliminate the fees of Steinhardt. We have had a few meetings around that.

Kyle: Which fees?

Nathan: in silver and Steinhardt, the fees vary from dept. to dept. But students are charged 1 credit course fees and these are necessary to maintain their registration and matriculation. And the courses don't exist.

Unit Reps 5 - 5:10

Ella: we settled two cases recently - the bonuses were sent. We have decided to consider that case settled. Everyone that contacted us and wanted their bonuses has received them. It does mean that we can't go back and grieve someone who had not contacted us. We had an issue about the courses being cancelled and not getting a replacement course. NYU has decided to settle (not 100 sure) and has decided to give 75% of the cost. We have the meeting with the labor lawyer about the 2.5% raises grievance and arbitration next tuesday. If you want to testify you can come tomorrow at 4 pm. Contact ELLA WIND. And a lot of health care disbursements have been sent out.

Joint Council Report back [5 - 5:15]

Jacob: most of the meeting was procedural. A certain format. We talked about collective bargaining in different workplaces. There was a report about the UAW presidential endorsement. Bernie got our 43 to Hilary's 34. I think the local is interested in Endorsement. There was a few exchange about bylaws and they frowned upon online voting.

Parth: There were 17% trump supporters. We wanted to raise a couple of points that they discussed our bylaws without us being present there. They weren't very concerned.

Jacob: I raised the point that we were invited to the JC meeting.

Claudia: but it wasn't on the agenda

Parth: I said that one week is not enough for us. There was no good response from them on that. I raised a point about online elections and there was vehement opposition to that from other locals as well. "They should be in person because it represents the interest of people." I talked to Maida and Patrick about the details about the candidacy and that was discussed with the voting and elections committee.

BDS Petition and Ballot submission [25 minutes - 5:20]

BDS Caucus representative reads and presents the Ballot.

David [GSOC for BDS Representative]: We have a petition, and this petition triggers a referendum.

Maya [GSOC for BDS Representative]: we have had two town halls, open to all membership. They were facilitated by a neutral facilitator and they were structured by GSOC. Both caucuses, the GSOC for BDS Caucus and the Caucus for Open Dialogue, weighed in on the structure of the town halls. They fostered open dialogues and were greeted well.

Chris: [Reads aloud from GSOC Bylaws, Article 15 Section C, about the procedure, including:] The referendum must be specified by the caucus whether it can be amended or not before being put to a vote.

Michelle: This petition has been submitted, and according to our bylaws there is a general membership meeting scheduled on Tuesday at 5 PM. And then a vote will happen concurrently with the Joint Council and Stewards Vote.

Chris: With our bylaws, if you sign a card you are a member of the union and can therefore vote. This list of card-signers is managed by the Local. The idea is that the Local shares this information. Currently the unit reps hold access to this list in view-only form.

Nathan: Patrick just sent us an updated list and we are now able to check the petition.

Michelle: The process moving forward is: Parth will provide access to the Votes Committee to check the numbers of the petition. What is the role of the Assembly of Stewards here around this process? It sounds like the caucus has no requests from the Assembly of Stewards. And the way the bylaws are structured, the Assembly of Stewards don't have to vote on anything now.

Jessica: clarifying thing about the bylaws: if the referendum is voted down, is there a clause that says that it can be edited and then brought up again?

Claudia: There is a process for what happens when it gets turned down?

Chris: No, there is no process specified in the bylaws.

Claudia: Does GSOC for BDS have a decision whether the ballot will be open to amendment?

Maya Wind [GSOC for BDS Representative]: No, it will not be open to amendment.

Yaelle [Caucus for Open Dialogue Representative]: You talk about the petition that was brought, but in reality the language of the petition varies from the ballot. The petition is argued to be a petition to have a vote. *reads the original*. Clause 3 on the ballot and the academic boycott is not in the original petition. This may be misleading. The resolution itself that calls to join the BDS movement flies in the face of policy on how to solve the conflict. Our caucus has provided ways to amend, but they have been rejected. The BDS movement as it stands does not go along with international consensus and US

policies and the opinions of presidential candidates (two states for two different peoples). Our union taking a radical stand on this divisive issue will discourage other administrations to recognize other unions. We call on the resolution to be more in line with specific calls regarding the occupation after 1967 - and to remove the academic boycott. If it's not binding it shouldn't be there.

Jacob: I agree in general that the petition says more clearly what the ballot is reflecting. But in the Town Hall I was trying to be conciliatory between the two sides. I don't think what the ballot says is not what the petition says. I would suggest that future groups make their petitions much clearer. I myself happen to know that the BDS guidelines include academic boycott and getting rid of NYU Tel Aviv.

Sean: Nowhere in the bylaws does it say that the language of the petition and the ballot have to be the same. There is an academic boycott provision. As we discussed rather extensively, it doesn't alter the substance or content of the ballot. Anybody voting for BDS or not voting, doesn't have to be bound by the academic boycott. That is an optional addendum.

Maya [GSOC for BDS Representative]: While we respect your request of us to submit a ballot that is open for amendment, we have the right to refuse that. This is political disagreement not a procedural one. In terms of the vote, no one who has signed the petition is forced to vote on the ballot. Everyone can vote either way.

Shafeka: The petition doesn't have to have the exact ballot wording. You can change your opinion. The vote is open to everyone. I want to make it clear: just because it is a seemingly controversial issue doesn't mean that the right thing to do is to say: don't have a vote. International stakeholders have not endorsed BDS. as a group of graduate students, no one has been on our side in our fight for the union, so I'm not sure that the opinion of the elites shouldn't dictate what we should do as a union.

Yaelle [Caucus for Open Dialogue Representative]: Procedurally you may be in the clear but that doesn't take away the fact that we suggested amendments, but this was denied. Basically causing deeper fractures. I agree that we don't need to get behind elites. We also don't need to get behind a movement with so many problematical issues and stances. We suggested a middle road.

Jessica: Political debates should happen around the vote, not in this meeting. There might be a procedural problem here arising from the bylaws. [Reading from the bylaws Article 15 Section C:] referendum questions must be presented in writing.

Michelle: Do we think that the petition as it reads is adequate to trigger the referendum?

Jessica: If the Open Dialogue caucus wants to present a different referendum, you can go through that process as per our bylaws.

Sean: I propose a motion: the Assembly of Stewards vote to come down on this interpretation [indicating the interpretation which he, Maya, and Shafeka argued for above] to accept this petition in terms of the bylaws and judging that the petition should be submitted with signatures of 10% of membership that calls on specific issues without having the same language.

Proposal—The motion is to accept the petition and trigger the referendum.

Chris: I would add that there could be room for differences between "referendum questions" and "referendum." There could be flexibility in that.

Michelle: The motion is to accept this petition language to trigger this referendum-ballot language.

Chris: [Reading the first two sentence of Article 15 Section C] there is a semantic distinction in the bylaws that can be construed to support the motion.

Seana: We have to decide whether we are setting a precedent or not. Something along the lines of: "as long as the petition and the referendum are in the same spirit and we are going to be okay with that."

Michelle: We move this petition along, we interpret the bylaws to mean that referenda need to be compatible with the spirit of the petition.

Darach: We should not pass this and set a precedent, the stewards should decide on what to do regarding this ballot language.

Yaelle [Caucus for Open Dialogue Representative]: By voting on this, if it passes, it won't be just setting a precedent. It would set a precedent in terms of allowing ambiguous language to be accepted as an actual petition.

Claudia: As a member of the Bylaws Committee, I would say that this distinction did not come to mind in writing the referendum process provision in the bylaws, and I acknowledge that the current language is vague and open to different interpretation. For assessing the spirit of the bylaws on this issue, I'll point out that the amendment process in the existing referendum procedure suggests that having the final ballot language differ from the language of the original petition does not pose a fundamental problem and can be understood to be part of the process. I submit this motion: we interpret the existing bylaws language as allowing for a distinction between the actual referendum question to be voted on, to remain the same between the petition and the ballot submitted at the AoS, versus the explanatory text elaborating on the implications of the referendum question, which can be modified along the way. Accepting the GSOC for BDS ballot petition would set this precedent for our interpretation of the bylaws referendum process provision going forward.

Jessica: I second Darach and I don't want to compromise this process (set a precedent)

Nathan: I agree with Michelle. I disagree with Jessica

Parth: I second Jessica. The wording has to be firm.

Michelle: Let's frame the four new motions

- 1) Darach: Withdrawn
- 2) Claudia: I offer the amendment: interpret the bylaws as providing for two portions to a referendum—the referendum question to be voted on and to gather signatures on, and further text explaining the referendum question and its implications. This would be in keeping with the structure of popular referenda in state elections in the US, per my experience. I also move to have this set a precedent for our interpretation of the bylaws going forward (later withdrawn).
- 3) Parth: We only accept a resolution that matches exactly the language of the petition and in the general meeting the caucus will present the ballot as they read it today.
- 4) Jessica: What Parth said is consistent with the bylaws. But my motion is: the signatures have to apply to questions brought on the ballot. You could trigger the ballot with newer language if you get $\frac{2}{3}$ signatures of the stewards.

Sean: The motion is to accept Claudia's amendment, which would mean that it is a rejection of Parth and Jessica's proposals, i.e. accept this petition as triggering the referendum specified by the ballot that was read out. Motion to accept the petition as triggering the referendum ballot that was just read—as the Assembly of Stewards interprets the bylaws.

[5 minute break for caucusing]

The GSOC for BDS Caucus: Our procedure is consistent with what Claudia is saying. There is one question: "should our union join the BDS movement?" And then, as Claudia says, there is the clarification text beneath articulating what it would entail. The question remains the same: joining the BDS movement and what the BDS movement stands for. And the original motion stands. And keep in mind that this ballot has been submitted unofficially for the purposes of discussing it and respecting the democratic process in town halls.

Jill [Caucus for Open Dialogue Representative]: In terms of NYU Bylaws, what does referendum mean in terms of American legal system: the word referendum in the bylaws is used differently than in the American legal system.

Michelle: I'm ruling that comment out of order.

Darach: Is the only binding part of the referendum the question?

Sean: Nothing is binding. This is a resolution; they will be voting on the language of the ballot. But the question to which Yes and No is the answer is: should our unit join the BDS movement.

Michelle: [calls to order the motions]

[Clarifying note: because the Parth's and Jessica's motions were directly counter to Sean's and Claudia's, there was general agreement not to vote on counterfactual motions.]

Proposal—to accept the petition's language as consistent with the ballot presented and valid for triggering the referendum—passes.

10: in favor
4: opposed
0: abstentions

Proposal—set a precedent by interpreting the bylaws such that there are two portions to a referendum, the referendum questions and the referendum itself—withdrawn; this issue will be clarified in the next bylaws revision.

[Because of the discussion registered in the above “clarifying note,” no vote was taken on the third and fourth motions above because they were deemed incompatible with the resolution that passed.]

THUS it is decided that the petition qualifies to trigger the referendum.

Elections and Votes Committee Final Report Back Before Election [25 minutes - 5:45]

Shelly: a lot of exciting work ahead of us. We are going to verify the votes to the petition. The call for nominations for the upcoming elections is going to get out very soon. The Open seats: 2 in humanities and social sciences. 3 in STEM, 9 out of 9 in Tandon, 6 out of 8 in professional schools. Meida and Patrick said that the local will send out a call for unit chair in may.

Claudia: the GERs (unit reps) are 1 position in the contract. The unit chair has remained unfilled. Unit Reps have been operating as de facto chairs. So this position remains unfilled. You can be a steward and a unit rep and a unit chair. The unit chair is provided by the local bylaws, and is elected by the entire membership.

Shelly: my recommendation is to deal with it in may with the rest of the local.

Parth: but most of the students will be gone or will be in exam period.

Patrick: if you want to include the unit chair in this call, then we have no objection as a local. We are happy to do it when everyone is doing it.

Chris: Our bylaws suggest that it must be activated by $\frac{2}{3}$ votes in membership meeting. We need a general meeting to activate that.

Shelly: the reason why I was considering moving it is because this is a new position and we need to have conversation about it.

Shelly: Votes Committee have been in contact with people. The vote is going to be 4 days. The days we are looking at: Monday through Thursday.

Michelle: Can candidate staff the polling stations?

Patrick: we don't know.

Shelly: we are opting for online voting option. So we need a list of our card-signing members.

Patrick: for which vote? We have made clear that the local will not facilitate an online vote for positions in which there will be elected positions. I will confer with my fellow officers about that about the fact that the list of the card-signing members is being shared with the votes committee on the basis that Parth is a unit rep.

Shelly: if you are uncomfortable with it being shared with Parth, you can share it with the voting committee.

Patrick: this is the first time you have asked for it, why is it being asked?

Shelly: it is unit business/

Claudia: a referendum on BDS.

Jessica: we need to verify that 10 percent of the membership has signed the petition to trigger a referendum.

Patrick: so card-signers that are open to vote.

Maya: we need to have the list also to notify the membership of the vote.

Patrick: you have the ability, always, already to email all card-signers. You can do that through Mail Chimp.

Chris: What Shelly is requesting is access to the card-signer list. For the purposes of verification, we only need a list of names without emails. But for purposes of vote administration, we need a list with emails.

Shelly: We asked for the list of card-signers to verify 10 percent of card-members. When can we have that?

Patrick: I can't answer that.

Chris: We are going to facilitate it.

Shelly: there is going to be a referendum once we can verify that 10 percent of card-signer list has signed the petition.

Patrick writes this down

Jessica: we need a searchable list of all card-singers in order to verify signatures.

Shelly: list with e-mail addresses. That's one request, so we can administer the BDS vote.

Jacob: it sounds like the idea that the people who cast ballots online against the list of card-signers. Which in the past we couldn't do.

Claudia: the vote e-mail will be sent only to card-signers.

Chris: if someone during the election signs a card, then they should be eligible to vote by emailing the voting committee and requesting that they want to vote.

Patrick: I have a question. Did you want to use the same application to do the vote as you have done for the bylaws vote.

Chris: Yes. Without the confusion of the bylaws vote. Do you have any further questions?

Patrick: Thank you for bringing this to our attention and for being so explicit about it and I can say that we have not been asked to do anything to help facilitate the BDS referendum until now. So we have to confer about this. We want to have a list of card-signers with e-mails to verify 10% signature and to use for people to vote in the BDS referendum. That is something we have to review and I know you're not happy about that. I'm not sure what the UAW bylaws say about such a referendum.

Shelly: The election is less than two weeks away. Please operate with expediency. I asked for this in our first votes committee meeting back in February.

Patrick: Certainly.

Claudia: I understand the procedure. I will just emphasize that the unit's point of view this is unit business for which there is already ruling that units have right to unit autonomy and communication with membership on unit matters. There is no need for review or acceptance by a higher body.

Jessica: Can we get it on Thursday? [laughter in agreement]. And when you're talking with other officers, make it very clear that a lot of people want to have it online and that both caucuses want to have the possibility of online voting.

Patrick: I need to check with my fellow officers. It is good to know that both caucuses want online voting. That may make a difference.

Response to Bylaws? Send out an email to membership about decision [15 minutes 6:10]

Claudia: the bylaws committee has decided not to move to submit any Bylaws referendum questions at this moment, nor to submit a proposal to the AoS at this time.

Ella: I think we should send an e-mail to our membership about the local's response to our bylaws.

May Day participation [if we go under time, otherwise we just need Poli Soli to organize]

Political solidarity will look into the May Day events.

Announcements [5 minutes - 6:25]

- Bernie Rally in Wash Sq April 13 -
- Michelle: AWDU and the AWDU book club is organizing an event in which we are going to watch this amazing movie that black revolutionaries in the UAW made about themselves and we are going to hear from ELLA about the relevance of this for us today. TAKE FLYERS.
- The AWDU book club has an event about Kim Moody's book.
- Parth: there is a contingent faculty, from April 11- 13th it would be good of GSOC to participate in solidarity. Claudia: can you send to commcomm and polisoli.
- Draft and Send out next month's agenda to listserv (elect unit reps)

Meeting Adjourned at around 6:30 pm.