

## **February 2016 AoS Agenda**

Tuesday February 16th, 4:30 p.m. at Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Square S

Present: David, Michelle, Ella, Nathan, Anne, Jacob Denz, Shelly, Seana, Tori, Parth, Sam (Member from Music), Ziad, Mahoma Lopez (Laundry Worker's Center and Brod Kitchen and Steward), Justin, Sándor (Adjunct at CUNY and Brod Solidarity), Rosana (Codirector of Laundry Workers Center), Daniel (GSOC member), Darach, Chris

Facilitating: Seana/Michelle

Notetaking: Ella

Timekeeping:

### **Present:**

#### **Introductions 10**

#### **Brief Presentation from Hot and Crusty Workers Association**

#### **Minutes Approval from November**

#### **Standing Committee Reports**

- **Bylaws 10**
- **CommComm 10**
- **PoliSoli 10**
- **Organizing Committee 10**
- **Contract Enforcement**
- **Grievance Committee 10**
- **Unit Reps 10**

#### **Caucus System Proposal (Nathan) 20**

#### **Discussion of Organizational Chart (Chris) 20**

#### **February General Assembly Meeting (Ella/Nathan)**

#### **Elections ([Proposal](#)) (Ella) 15**

#### **March General Assembly: BDS Townhall [Proposal](#)**

#### **Non-Distribution of Cards in Depts 5 (Find out missing depts)**

#### **Draft and Share March Meeting Agenda to all stewards 5**

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### **Present:**

#### **Introductions 10**

#### **Brief Presentation from Hot and Crusty Workers Association**

Mahoma: Thank you for your solidarity in our fight. The company closed the shop on Monday and continued bargaining. They don't want to close the shop but are engaging in a sort of blackmail. This company wants to do a decertification of the union.

Rosana: The company fired 3 workers, including Mahoma, who is a leader in the union to scare the workers. We need GSOC and all the unions to help us fight back against their union busting. We appreciate your support and solidarity. The struggle is very intense at this point. The company is expanding and has money.

#### **We have some asks:**

- 1) **Putting pressure by flyering**
- 2) **Planning a big rally for Friday with info on the table. We need to mobilize all the workers to come here and support us. We need other unions in NYU to come out on Friday.**

Nathan: We have a sign up sheet for flyering that we've been circulating. If everyone can do an hour a day we can have a constant presence.

Mahoma: The company really hates the flyers. The company is asking for a lot of concessions in the contract but they don't want this picketing or conflict.

Daniel: As an adjunct, we teach a lot of things and one of the things we teach is labor history. This is right out of the history playbook of an employer who thinks they can get away with anything. As people probably know, in 2012, the workers won a huge struggle against this employer's wage stealing and they formed their own union. Hot and Crusty shut down and there was a huge picket and the workers won. This has inspired a lot of immigrant workers. The boss at Brod is trying to totally wipe that out. So when the union contract expired, he tried to shut down the store. He fired Mahoma after the first protest. Another worker was fired for giving Mahoma a hug while he was flyering. He is really trying to crush their spirit. We can't let them win in a union town like New York. We need hundreds of people out there on Friday. We need every union in the city. We have to pull out all the stops. We had 200 people two weeks ago, we need a lot more. Workers are paid to pass out flyers asking people to cross the picket lines.

Anne: I'm on the communications committee, so I want to clarify some things so I can debunk some of the claims of the anti-workers. These are: claims that Hugo is a "consultant", that this is illegal so shouldn't be upsetting, and the legality of Mahoma's firing...

Mahoma: They set up a whole legal loophole to claim we were late the whole year and fire some of us on that basis. On the day we had the huge rally, Hugo came up to me and said "you are a screw up" so it's pretty clear why I was fired.

Rosanna: With regards to Laila (the woman who hugged Mahoma) we have the records proving they are wrong. But the legal process takes a long time so we need to take it to the street. Hugo represents a group of rich south african investors. He is the face of this group of people. They don't want to show their face because they are rich social people. So they make Hugo the face of it. They want to pretend both stores are separate but they are not. The food is made at 63rd street, workers from 63rd street train the workers. Hugo is the union buster.

Sándor: For questions about legality, I think what's illegal is to fire people for union activity. I think any reader would be skeptical that that was random. And Laila was clearly chosen as a target. He uses this 'non-owner' status to pretend that it's not illegal for him to put up anti-union lit in the store. It's the job of all of us to educate.

Nathan: I would propose the following concrete steps: **Stewards should talk to the activist depts and sign up to flyer. Ella will talk to other NYU unions on campus.**

### **Minutes Approval from November, December, January**

Resolved that we would approve all the full minutes and the historian would choose what to censor (or abbreviate) from NYU admin. If workers want access to the full uncensored minutes, they can receive those upon request. All months' minutes were approved unanimously.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

#### **- Bylaws 10**

- Chris: Bylaws committee will review the bylaws in the fall and make them align more closely with how we've been operating.

#### **- CommComm 10**

- Anne: Sarah is making more strides towards putting up our info in the Tamiment labor archives at NYU. We haven't done better at redistributing emails.
- Chris: We are getting a higher percentage of people opening emails. 45% open rate for a list which has virtually never been cleaned up.

#### **- PoliSoli 10**

- Michelle: We had a poorly attended meeting recently. We have been mostly involved in the Brod solidarity committee, which you just heard about. We endorsed the BDS for GSOC petition. We have been involved in the fight for 15 campaign, the Coalition for Fair Labor (Abu Dhabi group) and their report on the mistreatment of workers at that campus, circulating info about police brutality protests especially the recent mobilization around Akai Gurley, and there have been several people who expressed enthusiasm about the election of Bernie Sanders but none of them have showed up to a political

solidarity meeting yet. So we encourage such supporters to show up to a meeting. And there's a possibility that the UAW may endorse Sanders!

- Ella: There was also the petition about Turkey.

- **Organizing Committee 10**

- Nathan: Last semester we realized last semester that we need to put more pressure outside of the bureaucratic grievance process. And we realized the main reason we failed was not building enough leadership in some depts. I'm working with Colette, a former labor organizer, and she is organizing a series of trainings and inviting people in various depts. The next training meeting is this Friday at 4 in the library, right before the rally.

- **Contract Enforcement -**

Seana: It seems like contract enforcement is really pointless. It makes a lot more sense to have this task be the work of unit reps, because it's extremely complicated and bureaucratic and hard to keep track of for volunteers. So we might fold this into organizing committee moving forward.

- **Grievance Committee 10**

- **Unit Reps**

- Ella: We are meeting with Gail about arbitrations, going forward, once a month.

**Caucus System Proposal (Nathan)**

Nathan: We want a clear system for allowing caucuses to access union lists for organizing purposes. (See proposal sent by Nathan).

Sam: How would people use the lists other than mass emailing?

Nathan: So organizers could know where the bulk of union members are.

Ella: I think caucuses should have access to official communication infrastructure (maybe 3 lines)

Nathan: I agree with that but I'm trying to propose the minimal thing that the local would be ok with.

Michelle: And this has precedent with previous elections. I propose we discuss and vote on Nathan's proposal and then on Ella's proposal.

Seana: I don't know how the name + being able to find the email makes a difference here. Not sure why not getting the email makes a difference, I guess.

Ella: You can still opt out from the directory.

Michelle: All potential members of the union are generally posted on the line. Potential union members are already publicly available. I think it's ok that someone's name might get written down and they might get an email from the union. I would like to vote on this proposal, I think it balances a number of communications.

Sam: I have a question about the distinction between a caucus and the union? Would the position of the caucus be considered the position of the union? I think the idea is a little clearer to me now than it was 10 minutes ago but I'm still not sure.

Michelle: So a good example is AWDU, which has needed the sort of unofficial status of a caucus to carry out the proposal.

Nathan's proposal passes with 11 yeses and 1 abstention.

Chris's proposal: 1 shared page in the Rank and File, 140 characters in the bottom of mass emails with a disclaimer that the views of the caucuses do not represent the views of GSOC discussion.

Ella's proposal passes with 11 yeses and 1 abstention.

**Discussion of Organizational Chart (Chris) 20**

Chris: summary of changes

Ella: doesn't find it very helpful b/c too wordy, legalistic

Michelle: chart designed to introduce people to committee system

Chris: also designed to coordinate roles of committees

Michelle: we should only be focusing on this if it solves a specific problem

### **February General Assembly Meeting (Ella/Nathan)**

Ella: Want workers to get involved in GSOC. What's the best way to get folks excited? Nathan can guide brief full-group meeting to talk about vision of the union, then break into committees with tables (GSOC Club Fair feel).

[general consensus]

### **Elections [\(Proposal\)](#) (Ella) 15**

Ella: Elections committee with Shelly, Jacob, MGW. We Unit Reps propose April 18–21.

Jacob: We would do JC, but do we want to coordinate with triennial elections of the Local?

Chris: I'm nervous tying our elections to that.

Ella: Can Votes committee find it out?

Nathan: We think that GSOC for BDS folks will want to get their referendum on the ballot and we want to make sure we avoid Passover at the end of April. Best time will be the week before Passover.

Jacob: I wasn't trying to argue for anything. Two votes seems like less of a problem.

Sam: What are the elections we're talking about?

Ella: AoS empty seats + Joint Council

Nathan: We don't know about specific referenda, but we assume that would be their move.

Sam: Can you vote online?

Michelle: Probably up to the votes committee. Bylaws allow for absentee and online voting.

Nathan: Anybody can join the Votes Committee.

Ella: Can we vote on the dates, as the recommendation?

### **[passes unanimously, 10-0-0]**

Ella: Decisions about electronic, absentee, etc. can be decided by the Votes Committee

### **March General Assembly: BDS Townhall [Proposal](#)**

Nathan: Probably going to be BDS referendum. Important to give members a chance to debate and discuss. Idea is to have meeting open to our members, any potential member (NYU grad students), sponsored by GSOC. Not an official debate, but a comment period. All sides welcome. Not a very complex proposal. Moderation: we could have someone not associated with any side. Two neutral moderators. I would recommend we restrict it to people who could possibly vote.

Chris: Will we restrict to eligible members?

Nathan: Realistically we'll check for NYU ID and will ask for people to introduce themselves before they speak, but we can't

Michelle: This gives enough time for people to constitute caucuses around, so offering caucuses a time limited presentation would be appropriate. I feel strongly that the only people attending should be people who are eligible to vote. Not Med School students. Not Law School students. Not people outside our unit. So many people who have strong feelings, just at the beginning asking that you only speak if you're eligible to be a member of GSOC. Go on the honor system. As much as possible help it be an internal discussion.

Jacob: Doesn't seem to me that we have clarity to the nearest thousand or ten thousand. The only graduate students who are specifically excluded by the recognition language are MBA students. Law students could be members. I think that's a problem we need to figure out.

Michelle: To clarify my position: it's graduate students at the school which is eligible. Law would be ineligible.

Sam: Personal question: won't be in NY after this month. Something I'd like to be involved in and able to participate. Skype into this meeting?

Nathan: Have someone read written remark.

Sam: Lots of people who definitely aren't able to vote but care deeply about this issue. Feel that if the union were to endorse BDS, people who aren't members would be impacted. Feel that as NYU students they really have a stake in it. Could it be recorded so they could watch or listen to this meeting?

Michelle: Death threats for some of my pro-BDS friends, so recording could be very tricky

Jacob: Point of information: I believe GSOC members for BDS did video record one of the public events in the fall. I assume we think this is a different kind of issue, but just pointing it out.

Ziad: It was a lecture and we got approval from the speaker.

Nathan: I share Michelle's concerns. Transparency is important. You can take notes about what happened in the meeting and share them. When you're recording and you can ID particular people and publicize it for the world to see, but I think it could make a lot of members uncomfortable. People of all opinions on this could be nervous about it.

Michelle: Sam's comments drew attention to two things: 1) recording or not, 2) Law school students attending or not

Shelly: 1) I don't think we should be in the business of policing who can and cannot be in the room, but I support honor system suggestion, 2) not a good idea to record, I would stay home

Michelle: Votes on the two separate issues? [reads the proposal to respond to Sam's query]

Nathan: Revise to make it one meeting, 2nd week of March and another if we have incredible demand

Sam: location—there are some Jewish students on campus who feel that they can't enter a church. Could we hold it in a location that's not Judson?

Nathan: If there's a club who could book the meeting for us... NYU doesn't let us book rooms ever. Except for these general meeting.

Sam: BDS has a certain history elsewhere of voter suppression, of Jewish voices in particular. I'd be concerned if a certain demographic of the Jewish community would not be able to attend.

Michelle: Physically we don't have any other spaces.

Chris: I'll ask about using 320.

Michelle: Question of proposal?

**[passes unanimously, 10-0-0]**

**[Ella needs to ask Gail about a space]**

Michelle: recording?

**[nays have it with 0-7-3]**

Michelle: attendees? My proposal: Only people who are graduate students working or who are students at the following schools. Ask people who are not such students to not speak. And ask people to identify them when they speak. Further comments?

**[passes 9-1-0]**

Michelle: other amendments?

Nathan: Rooms are very small. I think we need to give priority to people who are similar to Michelle's criteria.

Michelle: If we run out of space, we ask only people who fit the above criteria.

**[passes 9-1-0]**

**Non-Distribution of Cards in Depts (Find out missing depts)**

**Draft and Share March Meeting Agenda to all stewards 5: Joint Council Update (Unit Reps)**

**Announcements 5**