



2	INTRODUCTION
3	ALBERT LEE FOR CONGRESS
5	CENTERFOLD ART
6	CHAPTER UPDATES

BREAD & ROSE CITY



BREAD & ROSE CITY is published throughout the year by the Portland chapter of Democratic Socialists of America. Portland DSA can be reached at info@portlanddsa.org.

ABOUT THE CENTERFOLD ART

By Portland DSA member and designer Kate Taylor, *Let This Radicalize You* was created in response to Bernie Sanders suspending his presidential campaign on April 8, 2020. Accompanying the art was: “let’s think about the ways we can help and change our local communities beyond electoral politics. we have got to take care of each other, because the establishment sure as hell won’t.”

CONTRIBUTORS

Laur Muth, Mary King, David Purucker, Bobby Hayden, Candy Luisa Herrera
Content has been supplied by members of Portland DSA. If you’d like to contribute in the future, please email info@portlanddsa.org.

PRODUCTION

Laur Muth and Tyler Walicek, Editors | Kate Taylor, Designer | Rob Guthrie, Production Manager
Printed with union pride by Hollywood Impress.

Want to join DSA, or do you need to renew your dues? Learn more at portlanddsa.org/join.

DEAR COMRADES,

When the current staff of Bread & Rose City sat down months ago to plan future editions of the newsletter, we quickly decided to have an electoral theme for this issue, which would coincide so closely with this year’s primaries. Whether and how we as socialists should engage with an electoral system that by design upholds and defends capitalism has always been a subject of debate within the chapter. Both of Bernie Sanders’ presidential campaigns were the path to DSA for many new members, leading to our organization’s massive growth since 2016. But there are also legitimate concerns about how a focus on electoral politics could weaken the other work chapter members do, from seeding unions to tenant organizing to mutual aid projects.

And then, as we prepared to enter into the crucial final stages of the primary campaign, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. As it spread, it also further exposed the failures of our current system of government. Frontline workers didn’t have the proper protective equipment they needed. The middle class and the wealthy were able to work from home, while the working class often continues to labor in unsafe conditions. Our for-profit health-care system lacked the capacity to care for those infected, and the prospect of medical bankruptcy continues to keep people who need medical care away from doctors and hospitals. Structural racism means that black and brown people are more likely to be infected, and Trump and Biden have both chosen to engage in xenophobic rhetoric against China rather than put forward any sort of informed, compassionate response plan.

Amidst it all, Portland DSA members have organized to protect the most vulnerable and keep our movement driving forward. The Medicare for All campaign is pushing to abolish private health insurance and pass the Healthcare Emergency Guarantee Act. The Fundraising Working Group is building up their Mutual Aid Fund to ensure we can care for each other if and when the state fails. The Red Caucus organized a caravan to demand greater government action against the virus and created an Unemployed Council Caucus within the chapter. The Anti-Imperialist Working Group is organizing to free prisoners and demand that human rights be considered in the city’s procurement process.

In a few short days, we’ll know whether chapter-endorsed candidates Albert Lee and Paige Kriesman won their races. When we learn the outcome of their primaries, we will also get a chance to see if there is a place in electoral politics for leadership that puts people first. Electoral politics are just one front of our battle for a just world. We can cast our ballots for our comrades, and then roll up our sleeves and set to work on the myriad projects that are transforming our world. Liberals view elections as the endpoint of democracy. We know they are the beginning.

— Laur Muth, co-editor of *Bread & Rose City*, co-chair of DSA’s Anti-Imperial Working Group

Albert Lee for Congress: Electoral Politics in the Time of COVID-19

→ BY LAUR MUTH



BREAD & ROSE CITY

SPRING 2020

Albert Lee describes his campaign as part of a classic “inside-outside strategy” to advance democratic socialism.

“I think it is vitally important that we work within the structures that exist currently as well as trying to break down those structures,” he said. “We can harness the power from the existing paradigm at the same time as trying to destroy that paradigm.”

One of the biggest criticisms that Lee has of that existing paradigm is the role of money in politics. The Citizens United Supreme Court decision in 2010 lifted previously existing limits on campaign contributions from corporations and Super PACs, giving corporate money an even bigger role in elections than ever before. That money can

decide elections, in large part by paying for the advertising that gets candidates name recognition. And once those candidates are elected, the people who paid those advertising bills expect a return on investment.

“Rarely is our electoral politics about substance. It is about familiarity,” Lee explained. “We have established a very progressive platform, but unfortunately that is not always what people vote on.” The progressive platform includes DSA priorities Medicare for All, a Green New Deal, and cutting back on defense spending to invest in infrastructure, high speed rail, and education.

→ CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Lee chose not to take any corporate money in his campaign. The decision aligns with his values, but puts him at a disadvantage in the campaign against incumbent Earl Blumenauer. That challenge has only grown with the outbreak of COVID-19.

Blumenauer's time in office, starting in 1996, has been good for his own finances: his net worth has grown from about \$500,000 when he entered office to at least \$4.5 million, and perhaps as much as \$10 million, depending on how various assets are evaluated. The biggest contributor to his current campaign has been Nike, which provided Blumenauer with over \$18,000 in campaign contributions this election cycle. 49 percent of Blumenauer's campaign funding comes from PAC contributions, as opposed to a whopping .05 percent of Lee's, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

"The last two months of the campaign was supposed to be all about fieldwork, about people going out, knocking on doors, having those conversations," Lee said. Obviously, that has become impossible. So instead, Lee has shifted to doing virtual town halls and phone and text banking.

The pandemic has further exposed the multiple crises of American capitalism and the ways it undermines democracy. Cases of COVID-19 have been traced back to in-person primaries in other states, and the very real threat of the virus has suppressed voter turnout in places where voting is done at the polls. Lee points to discrepancies between polling and primary results in other states as evidence of how this has affected the election so far this year.

"The pandemic has further exposed the multiple crises of American capitalism and the ways it undermines democracy"

"If we had election observers here, I don't think they would certify the results in a lot of our primary states," he said. But even beyond that, "We haven't had a functioning democracy in quite a while. For instance, look at the deep south and the problems of voter disenfranchisement, voter suppression, the failure to return voting rights to people who have been incarcerated. Both major parties are spending the bulk of their time and energy and efforts into suppressing votes to get the outcome they want."

One of the solutions Lee envisions for the entire country is already a normal part of Oregon elections: uni-

versal, postage-paid vote by mail. Beyond that, he aims to reduce the obstacles people face in voting, such as voter ID laws, and implement ranked choice voting.

"For the right wing, [these policies] are a death knell," he said. "But Democrats don't necessarily want them either. We've seen them use all their power to keep a very popular insurgent candidate from winning, twice."

If Lee is elected, he plans to break down the structures that prevent the development of a truly democratic society.

Let this
Radicalize
you rather
than
lead
you to
despair



MARIAME KABA
@prisonculture

Chapter Updates

FUNDRAISING WORKING GROUP

Our chapter's Fundraising Working Group has been primarily focused on two campaigns over the past few months. The first is promoting our Mutual Aid Fund. This is a fund we set up about a year ago to allow chapter members to help each other out in crisis situations (health care, economic, or otherwise). To learn more about the fund or make a donation, check out www.PortlandDSA.org/MutualAid. To make a private request for funds, you can talk to any member of the steering committee. Our second campaign is to increase the number of chapter members signed up for monthly donations from 6% to 15%. To become a monthly donor, you can visit www.PortlandDSA.org/Donate.

RED CAUCUS

Red Caucus is a multi-tendency caucus of revolutionary Marxists who are active in many facets of DSA. Our points of unity express the kind of organization that we believe is necessary to advance working class interests— independent of the capitalist parties, rank and file in the labor movement, multiracial, and anti-imperialist. We do not aim to be a talk shop, but believe the best way to move people toward revolutionary politics is to fight the class war alongside them and to learn from the struggle ourselves.

Since the pandemic started, our members have been involved all across the chapter: organizing a Coronavirus Caravan (to highlight DSA demands on the government), forming an Unemployed Council Caucus in the chapter to organize the unemployed outside of DSA, assisting in Anti-Imperialist Working Group online panels, building support for the Healthcare Emergency Guarantee Act, initiating reading groups on texts such as the Communist Manifesto, and contributing to a chapter statement connecting the coronavirus crisis, decommodified housing, and ecosocialism. We have also been researching the possibility of a new party in Oregon. Learn more about us at tinyurl.com/RedCaucus.

MEDICARE FOR ALL

The Medicare for All campaign is building support for Bernie Sanders' and Pramila Jayapal's Healthcare Emergency Guarantee Act, which would extend Medicare to cover the uninsured as well as patient costs after private insurance. We created a new Facebook page "Abolish Private Health Insurance" and have lawn signs to distribute. We have attracted new members, largely Bernie Sanders supporters, by participating in new member orientations and have continued to strengthen our collaboration with other community single payer groups to develop next steps in the movement.

The pandemic has exposed the brutality of our healthcare system to a mass audience—the neoliberal hospital system that lacks coordination, preparedness, and workers' rights; the capitalist drive to seek profits above all human concern as the pharmaceutical industry aims to compete rather than collaborate; the failure of politicians, too often funded by the industry, to deliver meaningful solutions. We see the crisis as a huge opening—albeit rife with challenges and despair—to draw people into action for Medicare for All and the broader movement for health justice.

ANTI-IMPERIALIST WORKING GROUP

The Anti-Imperialist Working Group is dedicated to fighting the highest expression of capitalism: imperialism. We have been working to place human rights at the center of Portland's city governance by creating a human rights pledge for candidates in the mayoral and city council elections to sign. Nine candidates have signed on, and we are working with Portland's procurement office to incorporate human rights language into its new procurement policy. We are also organizing against immigrant detention, especially in light of the risks to public health in prisons and detention centers, and working to counter U.S. military aid to the right-wing Duterte regime in the Philippines.

INFO TECH WORKING GROUP

This spring, the working group helped move the chapter website to WordPress to make it easier to update, and that work is paying off. Since then, we've added a Spanish language translation of the website. The site can now be quickly updated to provide current information like links to new Medium articles. The working group responded to the COVID-19 crisis by setting up a chapter videoconferencing site and by testing online voting software. We used online voting software to nominate our 2020 working group co-chairs at our March meeting. The group is working with the new online general meetings working group to recommend software and procedures that could be used for online general meetings.



POLITICAL EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

Greetings from PEWG! We'd like to tell you about some recent developments:

We are striving to become your "one stop shop" for all things political education by posting a weekly digest in the #general Slack channel of upcoming events of potential interest to chapter members. In addition to local events, this digest will include national webinars, discussion groups, etc. For example, the Libertarian Socialist Caucus (LSC) will host a discussion on Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology. Locally, the Feminist Caucus will lead a reading of Feminism for the 99% beginning on May 20th.

PEWG is also planning a forum on party politics to be held in mid-June with debates and Q&A featuring LSC, Bread & Roses, and Red Caucus.

Historically, the Foundations of Socialism class has been four F2F sessions. However, we've decided to take this program virtual and again are in the planning stages. Potential presenters are urged to contact us.

Even though our monthly meetings will be virtual for the foreseeable, we are continuing the tradition of presenting and recording Red Talks. Anyone interested in presenting should go to tinyurl.com/dsaredtalks.

Finally, we are aggregating and annotating selected YouTube videos on our channel "Portland DSA."

OTHER EVENTS

For the latest updates to chapter events, you can visit portlanddsa.org/calendar. A snapshot of upcoming activities can also be found at tinyurl.com/pdx-dsa-events.



