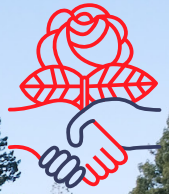


# DEMOCRATIC LEFT



THE MAGAZINE OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA • JAN.-FEB. 2023 • VOLUME 51, NO.1 • DSAUSA.ORG

## WORKERS REINVIGORATE THEIR UNIONS

Above: A November 2022 rally in support of strikers at the University of California - Berkeley. Courtesy fairucnow.org

BY EDMUND KORD

For the U.S. labor movement, 2022 may have been the year when it all turned around. This is perhaps most true for the United Auto Workers (UAW), where, in December, 48,000 striking academic workers at the University of California (UC) won a landmark agreement and insurgent reformers running for international union leadership ousted much of the union's entrenched leadership.

The UC strike was not only the largest strike of the year but the largest strike ever by academic workers. For more than five weeks, graduate student in-

structors and researchers, postdoctoral researchers, and academic researchers in four separate bargaining units struck in coordination across all ten campuses of the UC — plus Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, a federal government research facility. DSA members lent crucial aid, with 15 local chapters organizing strike support and DSA raising more than \$26,500 for the union's strike fund.

Before the strike, the minimum starting salary for a graduate student instructor or researcher at UC was under \$24,000, forcing 92% of graduate student employees to pay over 30% of their income to rent. Low pay

and grueling schedules are endemic across academia, but living costs are especially high in California. All 48,000 striking workers reached settlements that, among other things, secured substantial pay increases of 20% to 80% by 2024.

That 2022's largest strike was mounted by academic employees reflects the current wave of unionization in higher education. At the same time that UC academic workers were walking picket lines, part-time faculty at the New School in New York City, represented by ACT-UAW Local 7902, waged the longest ever adjunct faculty strike, winning path-breaking gains after nearly a

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JAN.-FEB. 2023

1

month. The six largest filings with the National Labor Relations Board for union elections in 2022 were all groups of graduate students: at MIT (UE), Yale (UNITE HERE), Northwestern (UE), Johns Hopkins (UE), Boston University (SEIU), and the University of Chicago (UE). The UC strike may serve to inspire more organizing in the sector.

Meanwhile, in November, UAW members voted directly for the leaders of their international union for the first time. For decades, top officer spots have been chosen by convention delegates, a system that helped ensure that leaders from the same ruling caucus maintained control. UAW members changed that in a union-wide referendum.

At the end of the day, 11% of eligible voters (400,000 current members and 600,000 retirees) cast ballots. Candidates running on the Members United slate, a group of reformers seeking to build a more aggressive UAW, won five spots on the union's executive board. Two other contested positions — president and one regional directorship — went to a runoff election now underway as we go to press. If Members United candidates win the remaining two positions, the reform group will control half of the union's leadership.

More militant leadership at the UAW could make 2023 even more of a banner year for the labor movement than 2022. This year, contracts expire at

the “Big Three” auto firms — General Motors, Ford, and Stellantis (formerly Chrysler). There could be a nationwide strike three times as large as last year's UC walkout.

UAW activism is not the only place where workers are claiming their power. The Teamsters Union contract with United Parcel Service expires this summer, Starbucks and Amazon workers continue their struggles to unionize, teachers fight back against increasing restrictions, and more and more workers claim their rights. DSA members will be stand in solidarity with them. 🌹

**“EDMUND KORD”** works in the auto industry and is a DSA member.



## FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

### BUILDING POWER IN 2023

BY MARIA SVART

While chaos reigns in Washington, D.C., we're building power for the long haul. Although 2022 was another difficult pandemic year, unlike many organizations we've survived to keep fighting. Door by door, conversation by conversation, strike by strike, and election by election, DSAers put in the work. We know that lasting collective action isn't often spontaneous, it's the result of many hands each doing their part to move forward a long-term plan we've created together.

The ruling class would like nothing more than for us to give up and stay home, but we're still here and back with a vengeance. DSA won 75% of our candidate and ballot campaigns in 2022 and expanded workplace and labor solidarity organizing, mobilized when the Supreme Court rolled back abortion rights, and is organizing local and state level campaigns with working-class demands.

We're also returning to the kind of cross-chapter, in-person events that helped build unity and forge relationships before COVID-19 brought everything to a halt three years ago. The Young Democratic Socialists held an outreach conference and summer convention, and in October the Multi-Racial Organizing Committee (MROC) held the first MROC Institute. Finally, our staff Organizing Department held training weekends (Regional Organizing Retreats or RORs) for chapter leaders in the Southwest, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeast as well as Ohio and Kentucky, with more to come this year.

Coming up in 2023 are a national conference on labor, electoral, and student organizing in April and our national convention in August. One of DSA's biggest strengths is that we know ordinary people transform society and that we have to teach ourselves to do so because the capitalists hoard that knowledge. These events are an opportunity for grassroots members to come together, share lessons from local organizing, and apply a national perspective.

The April conference will host YDSA members and interested students

alongside some of our most active and experienced DSA organizers engaged in labor and electoral work. We will debrief our victories and losses and look ahead to a momentous year in the labor movement and to the 2024 presidential election cycle. The economy and the political system are the two places where the working class can make large-scale change through mass collective action.

Our national convention is the highest decision-making authority in DSA and the opportunity to spend an energizing few days with a thousand comrades old and new. All members have a responsibility in the next six months to consider important questions about organizational strategy, structure, and use of resources in relation to a sober analysis of the actually existing array of class forces. Look at the graphic on page 3 to see where you can fit in as convention plans develop and check in at [convention2023.dsausa.org](https://convention2023.dsausa.org) for the latest updates. Watch for opportunities at the national and local level to discuss how our people are in motion, what the owning class is doing, and what that means for DSA's next steps. 🌹



# 2023 National Convention Timeline

Delegates and Alternates:  
1361

Chapter Delegates:  
1 DELEGATE PER 75 CHAPTER MEMBERS

At-Large Delegates:  
1 DELEGATE PER 75 CHAPTER MEMBERS

Alternates:  
1 ALTERNATE PER 10 DELEGATES

Online:  
CONVENTION2023.DSAUSA.ORG

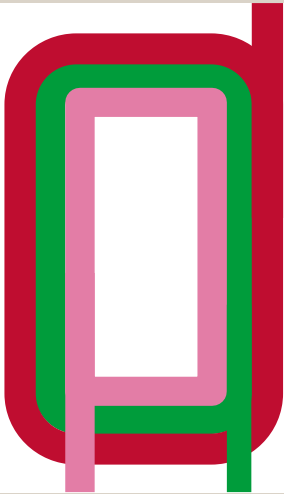


Biannual convention



First in-person since 2019

## Stay in the Loop



**!** Chapters should think about raising funds to defray delegate costs

### DELEGATE ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATION

- Feb. 28: Deadline for members to request to be considered at-large
- Mar. 17: Delegate apportionments for chapters announced
- Apr. 4: Delegates may start being nominated. At-large members notified of at-large delegate elections / Registration fees and costs announced
- May 4: Deadline for at-large delegate nominations
- May 13: Convention registration opens
- May 18: At-large delegate voting opens
- June 6: Deadline for nominating and electing delegates/ At-large delegate voting closes
- July 13: Convention registration closes
- July 24: National office shares a roster of delegates and alternates
- July 26: Deadline for credentials challenges

### NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF NATIONAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE

- April 4: NPC nominations start
- June 14: NPC nominations close
- June 30: candidate questionnaires released
- July 14: NPC candidate forum
- June 14: Deadline for secondary submissions (amendments)
- June 30: Compendium of resolutions, bylaws changes, constitutional amendments, and amendments to all these will be sent out
- July 24: Final compendium released
- Apr. 14: Deadline for resolutions, constitutional amendments, or bylaws changes
- Feb. 20: Constitutional amendments, bylaws changes, or resolutions may be submitted

Aug. 4-6: Convention in Chicago

### BYLAWS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS



**PAYING IT FORWARD**

We are grateful to the late Harold Stokes for his legacy gift to DSA.

**MOVING? LET US KNOW**

**DSAUSA.US/DL\_ADDRESS\_CHANGE**

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*Democratic Left* (ISSN 1643207) is published six times per year at P.O. Box 1038, New York NY 10272. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY (Publication No. 701-960).

*Subscriptions:* \$25 regular, \$30 institutional. *Postmaster:* Send address changes to P.O. Box 1038, New York NY 10272. (212) 727-8610.

*Signed articles express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily the organization.*

**NATIONAL POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**



**Hey, comrade! Are you . . .**

- a DSA chapter leader trying to organize digital records for better access and use?
- a DSA member who wants to add a socialist archives project to your local political education curriculum?
- someone with a bunch of DSA swag in your closet, and no clue what to do with it?

**Sunday Feb 26  
4:00 ET On Zoom**

The DSA Fund & the DSA National Political Education Committee invite you to join comrades nationwide for the first ever **DSA Archives Project Workshop!** We will learn methods and discuss ideas on how we can preserve, organize and use our history to advance socialist politics and strengthen DSA. No experience necessary!



**Interested? >>> [tinyurl.com/DAPworkshop1](https://tinyurl.com/DAPworkshop1)**

 **Democratic Socialists of America**  
[dsausa.org/join](https://dsausa.org/join)

# A better world is possible.

I want to join DSA.  I want to renew my membership.

Enclosed are my dues:  \$45 Introductory  \$60 Regular  \$20 Student  \$27 Low-Income  \$175 Sustainer  An extra contribution

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Check enclosed**  **Electronic check** (below) This is our preferred payment method because it avoids credit card fees  **Credit card** (below)

**Electronic check:**  
 Checking  Savings Routing # \_\_\_\_\_ Account# \_\_\_\_\_  Personal  Business

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