
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

♦ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ♦ President: Luis Román ♦

Erasing the Echoes of the McCarthy Era

unlawful detention...



torture...

Robert Meeropol

- Executive Director, Rosenberg Fund for Children
- Author, *An Execution in the Family*
- Son of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg

Thursday, October 8th
7:45 pm sign in/refreshments * 8:00 forum

Congregation Ramath Orah
550 West 110th Street (off Broadway)

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Volume 34, Issue 8

October 2009

District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

We emerge from two weeks of two primaries wrapped around two Jewish holidays in pretty good shape for November. Democratic nominees Bill De Blasio, John Liu and Cy Vance put together powerful campaigns that appealed to a broad, diverse range of voters. This coalition has the potential to make the November 3 Mayoral election very interesting. With money and a *raison d'être* other than “no third term”—two very big “ifs”, I know—Bill Thompson could win. That is why the Bloomberg campaign is spending so much money, much of it on ugly, misleading ads. They know that the voters overwhelmingly disapprove of Bloomberg's term limits initiative, are unenthusiastic about reelecting him, and are overwhelmingly Democratic to begin with. Something just may be in the air, and this time there may be enough troops on the ground to turn that something into more than just air. Stay tuned.

Some comments on other races/trends:

Our District. Broadway Democrats did pretty well, carrying our district for eight of our nine endorsed candidates in the two elections, and even Norman Siegel came in second to Bill De Blasio here. (There wasn't enough time to set up another endorsement meeting for Public Advocate, though most of us, as individuals, supported De Blasio). I was especially proud of our showing for District Attorney, where Richard Aborn won overall here by rolling up big margins in Grant Houses and Cathedral Parkway Towers, running better there than in our traditional area of strength, the PS 165 polls and Riverside Drive. By contrast, David Yassky narrowly won our district in the runoff by winning big at PS 165 and on Riverside Drive and running poorly in most other places. Turnout was surprisingly good in the first election, pretty bad, 10% or so, for the runoff, though still better than in most districts.

District Attorney. Congratulations to winner Cy Vance and our candidate Richard Aborn for their excellent campaigns and excellent platforms. In retrospect, the central political premise of both

campaigns was correct: Vance said he could gather the most electoral support based on his endorsements by beloved outgoing DA Robert Morgenthau and other connections; he was right. Aborn said that Leslie Crocker Snyder wasn't going to win, anyway, so why not support the candidate with the best ideas and experience; Snyder's poor showing vindicated this argument. But even though Aborn lost, I feel very positive about the outcome: the bad candidate lost, and Cy Vance will be a great DA.

Comptroller. This is the one race that I found rather depressing. Both John Liu and David Yassky are certainly more than qualified, and of course the impending election of the first Asian-American to citywide office is a cause for celebration. But the negativity of both campaigns at the end was very bothersome: Liu too often sounded more showman than substantive, and Yassky seemed indecisive both on term limits and major development issues. I know that John Liu will do a good job, as would have David Yassky, but both his successful and Yassky's unsuccessful campaigns wound up confusing this point rather than making it.

In Memoriam, Carolyn Kent and Clifton

Maloney. I close with tributes to two people whose lives were intertwined with politics and elections but were not themselves strongly political people. I first met Carolyn Kent in the first year of the Broadway Democrats; she and her beloved husband Ed were stalwart supporters. But we knew her, of course, as the woman who was determined to preserve the historic beauty of our neighborhood and its buildings, and that she did. I can truly say, and I know I'm not alone, that the only name in either my historical or my personal experience that exceeds Carolyn's when the subject is Manhattan landscape and preservation is Olmstead, and once you leave the parks and begin walking the streets of Morningside Heights, no name rings louder.

Clif Maloney was the strength behind his beloved wife Carolyn, but I was fortunate to see him in other contexts as well, usually in Central Park after the NYC Marathon where we somehow often bumped into each other even though he always

finished well ahead of me. Though a successful businessman and devoted husband and father he to me also had a visionary, other-worldly quality about him. His death, after reaching the summit of that Himalayan peak, is a tragedy for his loved ones from whom he was taken far too soon. But it is also fitting tribute to him: he succeeded here in the Western valley, and then climbed high on that Eastern mountain.



President's Corner

Luis Román

It appears we are facing a crossroads in our war in Afghanistan. For years, since we first dethroned the Taliban and installed Hamid Karzai as president of the country, it seems the focus of our military has been propping up the shaky central government, one rife with corruption, and which is currently suspected, if not accused, of rigging Karzai's recent reelection. President Obama is currently reviewing the recommendations of General McChrystal, the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Those recommendations were leaked in an article in the *Washington Post*, and they appear to include a request for as many as 40,000 additional troops. Naturally, those on the right have leaped up, screeching, criticizing the President for even pausing to consider the request, instead of loading up planes with young American men and women to ship halfway around the world. It seems they forget that the President is actually the commander-in-chief, and it is he who actually decides what the policy of our military will be going forward.

The question underlying all of this political drama is, what exactly are we trying to accomplish in Afghanistan? When the war began in 2001, we were told the Taliban were harboring the Al Qaeda terrorists who planned the 9/11 attacks. The point of the war was to capture or kill as many of those terrorists as possible, and to topple the government which gave them safe haven. We appear to have done very well on that score. It left us with the job of creating a new government for Afghanistan, as well as securing the country against Taliban resurgence. Hamid Karzai was installed as president, a constitution was cobbled together, and we declared Afghanistan on the road to joining the rest of the world in the 21st century.

It hasn't been that easy. As the Soviets found in the 1980's, tribal forces in Afghanistan are very effective at mounting insurgent operations, and very patient. The Soviets ran out of money to maintain their occupation after 10 years. Many insurgents are betting that we will eventually run out of patience. That probably isn't going to happen anytime soon, however. While public opinion about the war has definitely tilted toward the negative over the past two years, this country isn't anywhere close to the divisions that we suffered over Vietnam. There are no campus protests, no burning flags. Troops returning from theaters of war aren't being taunted as baby-killers. It seems one lesson we have learned from Vietnam is that war today is complex, more sophisticated than simple black and white. We are more willing to listen to both sides of the argument.

I also think that we, as a country, have become less interested in protest as a form of social action. We have so many more choices of where to receive our news, and there are so many more filters for that news, it seems there is no common place where people come together to consider the future of the country. I'm not suggesting we need to run outside and start demanding all our troops be recalled from Afghanistan tomorrow. I think it's a good idea, however, if we get together and start discussing when that time should come.



Assembly Member's Report

Daniel O'Donnell

Dear Broadway Democrats,
Your hard work this campaign season shaped the debate and resulted in an incredibly strong slate of local and city-wide candidates. All of our endorsed candidates, regardless of their electoral success, put progressive reform at the center of the public debate.

Democrats now enter the final weeks of the general election reinvigorated and lead by three highly-qualified and strong candidates for city-wide office – Bill Thompson for Mayor, Bill de Blasio for Public Advocate, and John Liu for Comptroller.

Don't believe the "conventional wisdom" that our Republican opponent for Mayor is unbeatable. A recent poll indicated strong approval ratings for the incumbent, but nearly half of those respondents

still felt it was time for a change. That poll was done before the voters were focused on the race and before Thompson was selected and out there making a strong case for his candidacy. We can only be defeated if we allow the “conventional wisdom” to become the reality. Our city is in desperate need of change and Bill Thompson will provide that leadership. You should be proud of all you’ve accomplished so far and I am confident that we will be victorious on November 3rd if we continue to be as engaged as we’ve been throughout the primary season.

☺

Steering Committee

Richard A. Siegel

Another side to the Health Care debate

While the nation debates healthcare reform, healthcare is changing for the worse right under our noses. States all across the country are cutting support of the public safety net systems. As stated previously, **New York State cut \$107 million dollars from the city hospital system** (The Health and Hospitals Corporation—HHC). This cut has resulted in job cuts. These jobs were mostly filled by our neighbors—people who live in the city. It has also resulted in service cuts—programs for the chronically mentally ill have been closed. The health care safety net in NYC has serious holes. If it breaks, then people’s lives are at risk.

Life and Death

In Atlanta, Georgia, that nightmare has occurred. Grady Memorial Hospital has won a court case that allows it to close its dialysis center. This means that approximately

60 undocumented patients will no longer receive life saving treatment. Without dialysis, the toxins will build up and these people will die. The hospital’s administrator calls this a “gut wrenching decision.”

How can this be okay in the richest country in the world? How can life saving treatment be withdrawn from our neighbors without their consent? Any progressive person committed to social justice must be appalled that this can happen.

Please work with our local elected officials to make sure that the NYC safety net hospitals receive adequate funding. In this economic environment, so many of us are at risk of losing our jobs and healthcare and need the services of the safety net system.

☺

Steering Committee

Low Moses

The Execution of the Rosenbergs

In the early 1950, as a young child, I walked the picket line with my mother, opposing the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. It will be our pleasure to have a speaker who speaks first hand about the harm that is done to families and children by the “Prison Industrial Complex”.

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This Month’s Forum

Attorney Robert Meeropol was six years old when his parents, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, were sent to the electric chair in 1953. Their execution by the U.S. Government remains one of the most troubling in American history.

Meeropol uses his parents’ case as an example to demonstrate the dangerous similarities between the McCarthy era during which his parents were targeted, and the perilous eight years that preceded President Obama’s election. Meeropol illustrates the similarities between the post-9/11 crackdowns on civil liberties—including unlawful detention and the use of torture—and the anti-communist fervor of the 1950’s. And he explores whether the new administration is taking sufficient steps to restore our commitment to human rights and repair the damage done to our Constitution.

Please come to what promises to be a very interesting evening. A question and answer period will follow the talk.

Membership

In order to vote in club elections (endorsements, elections of officers, judicial convention, amendments), you must be an eligible, voting member of the Broadway Democrats. You must

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

have attended at least one of the previous nine monthly public meetings and you must pay your dues. Dues partially defray the costs of presenting forums and putting out this newsletter. Dues are \$20; senior dues are \$5.

Special Interests: _____

We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!

The Broadway Democrats
P.O. Box 1099
Cathedral Station
New York, NY 10025

FIRST
CLASS

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President: Luis Román

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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