**Democratic State Committeeman Report**

**Daniel Marks Cohen**

I am grateful to have been the beneficiary of the three clubs in the 69th Assembly District: Broadway Democrats, Three Parks Independent Democrats, and West Side Democrats, in their petitioning efforts that succeeded in accessing the ballot for another term as State Committeeman for the 69th AD, this will be my fifth term and my tenth year in the position – I look forward to beginning my 6th term after the June primary.

The NY Democratic State Committee has not met since last October. We are due for another meeting, shortly after the primary, but with COVID likely preventing us from meeting in person, it will likely be on Zoom, if at all. I had raised the concern previously that the State Committee elects a dozen members to the DNC, with Jay Jacobs serving on the DNC *ex-officio*, by the virtue of the fact that he is chair of the NYSDC, that leaves a remaining 11 positions, and they are (alphabetically): Stuart Appelbaum, Vivian Cook, Jennifer Cunningham, Maria Cuomo Cole, Hazel Dukes, Emily Giske, Carl Heastie, Christine Quinn, Michael Reich, Gerard Sweeney, Robert Zimmerman.

A few of these people make sense: Appelbaum is the head of RWDSU and a significant labor leader. Cook is an Assemblywoman from Queens. Hazel Dukes is a Civil Rights activist, and past national president of the NAACP. Heastie is the Assembly Speaker. And Quinn is the former NYC City Council Speaker and current Executive Committee Chair of the NYSDC. But of the remaining a few are more questionable, particularly Cole who is Governor Cuomo’s sister, Reich who is a well-connected lawyer in the Queens political machine, and ditto for Sweeney. The others are Cunningham who is a political strategist, Giske who is a lobbyist and Robert Zimmerman, who is a communications professional and really, really rich.

It seems possible that there will be some adjustments now that there have been some electoral changes in Albany – such as Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Majority Leader of the State Senate should be added, and could conceivably replace Cook. But the two rich white guys from Queens (really, from Long Island, where they live and work) Reich and Sweeney, have to go. They were – and still are – part of the Queens machine that was run by former Congressman Joe Crowley, the former Queens County Leader. He was beaten by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and speaking of her, Congresswoman AOC would be an ideal person to put on the DNC as a new progressive perspective, in addition to adding some needed Latina representation on the slate.

Assemblywoman Yuh-Line Niou would be another good choice and a strong lefty voice, and would also provide some needed representation from the Asian-American community on the DNC as well. Mayor Lovely Warren of Rochester and Crystal Peoples-Stokes, an Assemblywoman from Buffalo, both well-regarded, and as African-American women from upstate, they are two more options that provide racial, gender and geographic diversity as well.

In fact, if you broaden the criteria beyond being from downstate and Long Island, with occasional token representation from upstate NY, you could include a wide selection of people across many regions, backgrounds, perspectives and experience. Will we get a chance? If we were to have a meeting in public, in person, we might – the Progressive Caucus of the State Committee (a group that I am a co-founder and officer) has in the past had some success motivating the Democratic Party to do the right thing through exposure, outrage and media attention. But with everything happening on a Zoom call that will be controlled by the Governor’s representatives, I am wary of being able to make much change. While the meeting will be public, who speaks will be tightly reined. There is little chance of making a lot of noise if we are literally “muted” on screen. I am still hopeful though. The recent victories of the left in Democratic primaries has given Progressives renewed vigor, and we may be able to exert enough pressure before the meeting to force some changes. Stay tuned to this space as this story unfolds.