



# the yankee radical

(617) 354-5078

June 2013

## 2013 Democratic Socialists of America Awards Reception

# All Out for Andi, Jenn and Shelagh!

**WHEN:** Friday, June 7: 6 pm Social,  
7 pm Program

**WHERE:** 58 Berkeley St., Somerville

**DIRECTIONS:** [www.dsaboston.org](http://www.dsaboston.org)

DSA is proud to honor three of Boston's best activists at this year's annual awards reception: Jennifer Doe, Shelagh Foreman, and Andi Mullin. Honorary Chairs for our event are Brian Corr, Director of the Cambridge Peace Commission; Harris Gruman, Political Director for Massachusetts SEIU; State Representative Denise Provost, and Rand Wilson, SEIU Local 888. It will be hosted by Dick and Roberta Bauer; Dick is a longtime leader in UAW local 2320 and the NE Jewish Labor Committee, and Roberta has served many years as an elected member of the Somerville School Committee.

**Jennifer Doe** has spent the last 10 years as an organizer for Jobs With Justice, primarily responsible for worker organizing and labor support. Prior to that she monitored and recovered workers' back wages in Worcester County for the Foundation for Fair Contracting, organized Community and Political Outreach for the Pioneer Valley Building Trades, and headed Research and Strategic Campaigns for the Laborers' Union Eastern Region.

**Shelagh Foreman** is Program Director of Massachusetts Peace Action (MAPA) and a core member of 20/20 Action, an Amherst based peace and environmental group. Shelagh has worked for more than three decades on nuclear disarmament, represents Peace Action on the Political Committee of Mass Alliance, and is chair of MAPA's Iran Task Force.

She is also a painter and print maker who has studied art or taught art history at the Cooper Union, Columbia University and the Museum School.

**Andi Mullin**, Director of the Campaign for Our Communities, has led the struggle to fund our state's essential public services through progressive taxation. From 2007–2011 Andi was Director of Legislation and Governmental Affairs for the Massachusetts Nurses Association, and before that served as Legislative Agent for AFSCME Council 93. She has also been in the leadership of other progressive groups ranging from Mass Alliance and NOW to the Committee for Boston Public Housing and RESPOND, which provides services to battered women and their children.

*(Continued on page 2)*

# DSA Members Meeting & Cookout

**DATE:** Sunday, July 14

**TIME:** 2:30 pm Gather;

3:00 pm Meeting;

4:30 pm Barbeque (pot luck)

**PLACE:** 24 Bridge Street, Newton

**INFO:** [webmaster@dsaboston.org](mailto:webmaster@dsaboston.org)

It's summer, or soon will be, so let's have another DSA barbeque party in David and Susan's backyard. But first our members meeting (friends welcome) will discuss some projects or campaigns Boston DSA might want to join. Although nothing

has yet been finalized, we hope to have some informed speakers address a couple of controversies currently in the news that seem to illustrate just what's wrong with today's economy: the sweatshop death traps in Bangladesh where runaway Western clothing manufacturers pay the lowest wages in the world, and the rising movement of one-day strikes by fast food workers in several US cities—will Boston be next?

There will also be time for members to

bring up issues of their own. Those on the BDSA email list will learn more about our agenda as it develops; to get on it contact [webmaster@dsaboston.org](mailto:webmaster@dsaboston.org).

People can be picked up from Watertown Square between 1:45 and 2:15 pm—call 617-448-5341. Child care can also be arranged if requested at least 5 days in advance.



## SHORT TAKES

### DSA Monthly Talks

Following our 7 pm exec board meetings on the second Thursday of each month, Boston DSA has been having some wide-ranging political discussions open to all members and friends. Upcoming presentations include a talk on feminism and another on the bureaucratic mode of production (617-354-5078 or [webmaster@dsaboston.org](mailto:webmaster@dsaboston.org)). The meetings are at Encuentro 5, 9B Hamilton Place Ste. #2, Boston—across from the Park Street T stop. Ring the bell outside to be let in.

### Bangladesh Deathtraps

Boston DSA has been recently involved in rallies organized by the Bangladesh Solidarity Campaign ([www.massjwj.net](http://www.massjwj.net)) addressing the horrendous working conditions in that nation. Since 2005, almost 1400 Bangladeshi workers have died in entirely preventable factory fires and building collapses. Since The Gap is a major producer in Bangladesh, factory workers and their unions there are urging it to sign on to the legally binding Bangladesh Fire and Building Safety Agreement. Sign the petition and learn more at [www.gapdeathtrap.com](http://www.gapdeathtrap.com).

NPC member Paul Garver has written this issue up on DSA's Talking Union blog ([www.talkingunion.wordpress.com](http://www.talkingunion.wordpress.com)). LabourStart ([www.LabourStart.org](http://www.LabourStart.org)), founded by former DSOC (DSA) activist Eric Lee during his time in the US, also has a petition, this one addressed to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urging punishment for the negligent factory owners, recognition of the unions, and compensation for the victims.

### Underground Railroad

The Museum of African American History is hosting a year long Freedom Rising commemoration of the Emancipation Proclamation and the recruitment of black troops in the Civil War, including the famed MA 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment. On **June 20**, Cheryl LaRoche will speak on The Underground Railroad—Paths to Freedom in the North: Free, 6 pm, 46 Joy Street, Boston. For more information, or other events including programs on the Boston Abolitionists, visit [www.maah.org](http://www.maah.org), or call 617-725-0022, ex 222.

### The Passing Parade...

Our former Treasurer Tom Canel invites DSAers to volunteer for day or

evening **phone banking** to AFL-CIO members for the Markey campaign at the Harvard Clerical and Technical Workers Union (which Tom helped organize), 15 Mt. Auburn Street, Cambridge. Call 857-998-3101 for details....The MA AFL-CIO is backing a bill that would raise the state minimum wage from \$8 to \$11 an hour, then update it yearly based on increases in the Consumer Price Index. On **June 11**, 10 am–3 pm at the State House Gardner Auditorium, it will have a hearing before the Labor Committee ([www.massafcio.org](http://www.massafcio.org)). The AFL-CIO is also supporting the Earned Paid Sick Leave bill, sponsored by Sen. Dan Wolf and Rep. Kay Khan ([www.masspaidleave.org](http://www.masspaidleave.org)).... The hotel workers at Le Meridien Cambridge have asked for a fair process to decide whether to have a union. The hotel is owned and operated by an out of state company called HEI Hospitality, and HEI says No. So on Thursday, **June 13** Jobs with Justice and the hotel workers are organizing an informational picket line from 3–5 pm at Le Meridien, 20 Sidney Street, Cambridge, and would appreciate any help. Call JWJ for more information, 617-524-8778.

—Mike Pattberg

### Continued from Page 1

The awards our honorees will be given are named after DSA Founding Chair Michael Harrington and A. Philip Randolph, or Gene Debs, Norman Thomas and Julius Bernstein—all democratic

socialist leaders of the last century active in the labor, civil rights and peace movements of their time who embody the values DSA seeks to carry on today. These awards have been given since 1977 to honor deserving activists; past recipients

include Rand Wilson, Matt Taibbi and Sen. Patricia Jehlen. Admission is \$35 (\$15 low income), which includes hors d'oeuvres and an open bar. So join us on June 7!

### Yes! I want to join Boston DSA in honoring Jennifer Doe, Shelagh Foreman and Andi Mullin!

[ ] Please reserve \_\_\_\_ tickets at \$35 each for the June 7 reception.

Sponsorships will be listed in reception journal: Please list me as a

[ ] supporter at \$75 (includes admission and listing in journal)

[ ] patron at \$150 (includes two admissions and journal listing)

[ ] benefactor at \$300 (includes five admissions and journal listing)

[ ] I really want to join you in honoring Jenn, Shelagh, and Andi but I just can't afford \$35.

Please reserve \_\_\_\_ tickets at the \$15 low income/fixed income rate.

[ ] I'd like a greeting in the event journal in the September *Yankee Radical* (copy for ad enclosed)

[ ] 1/8 page (4¼×2¾) \$125 [ ]

¼ page (4¼×5½) \$200

[ ] ½ page (8½×5½) \$350 [ ]

full page (8½×11) \$500

Ad copy can also be emailed to  
[yankeeradical@dsaboston.org](mailto:yankeeradical@dsaboston.org).  
Mail checks to: DSA, P.O. Box 51356,  
Boston, MA 02205, or pay at door.

# JAY LIVINGSTONE FOR REP!

By Eleanor LeCain

A true progressive is running for state representative in Boston/Cambridge— Jay Livingstone— in a special election being held on Tuesday, May 28th. Livingstone is an experienced community leader with a proven record of hard work in advancing progressive ideals—let’s help him win by making some phone calls now, and helping on Election Day, May 28th. If you can help for even a couple of hours, please call Eleanor at (202) 258-4424.

A Massachusetts native, Jay teaches at Northeastern University and operates his own law practice, standing up against employer discrimination. He has been a

key organizer in the campaigns of Rep. Ed Markey, Sen. Elizabeth Warren, and Gov. Deval Patrick. As a State Rep Jay will work hard for quality, affordable public education; increased funding for at-risk youth, the disabled and the elderly; improved public transportation; and sensible development that works for small businesses and preserves the quality of neighborhood life.

He has been endorsed by Marty Walz and Paul Demakis, the two state reps who recently held this seat, the Boston Ward 5 Democratic Committee, Mass Alliance, Progressive Massachusetts, Mass Peace

Action, the Sierra Club, the ten Boston locals of AFSCME, the National Organization for Women (Mass NOW), Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts and, of course, DSA— among many others.

If you would like more information, please visit [www.jaylivingstone.com](http://www.jaylivingstone.com) or call Eleanor at (202) 258-4424.

*Eleanor LeCain is a Cambridge native and President of the Washington, DC Chapter of Red Sox Nation.*



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Response to NPC Statement

Dear Editor:

On December 7, 2012 the National Political Committee of DSA adopted a statement published in the April *Yankee Radical*: After the UN vote: Support a Two State Solution. The two state solution was desirable before the UN vote and remains so.

But there is one matter of most unfortunate wording. The statement “condemns the recent Israeli military attacks on Gaza” while recognizing the “unjustifiable rocket attacks” of Hamas. It acknowledges that the former arose in response to the latter. It then argues that “Israel should be willing to negotiate with representatives of the Palestinian people, while such representatives should promote the peace process by ending attacks on Israeli civilians.” But by referring to the attacks on Israeli civilians the statement clearly is speaking about Hamas in Gaza, not about the Palestinian Authority on the West Bank. Negotiating with the PA is imperative, but the statement’s wording applies to Hamas and Hamas is unwilling to alter its vision of the future: the destruction of the state of Israel. Nor is it

willing to be bound by agreements reached at earlier times (or, for that matter, even today) between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. There is simply no evidence that “a unilateral withdrawal of illegal West Bank settlements or an end to the embargo of civilian goods entering Gaza” would alter Hamas’ long term goal. It is hard to imagine that it could lead to negotiations or, if so, what the two sides might negotiate about.

It seems to me that National DSA could use its energy to promote negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian authority and to attempt to influence Hamas to recognize that, as the statement correctly puts it: “Peace in the Middle East and justice for both the Palestinian and Israeli people can only be achieved through mutual recognition by each side of the right of each people to viable and secure states of their own, in which the rights of minorities are also guaranteed.” Until Hamas agrees with that perspective, the onus for the lack of negotiations with Hamas must lie with the leadership in Gaza.

Rashi Fein, Boston

Dear Editor:

I just read your position statement re Markey. It includes these lines: “And on a democratic resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict or heading off a new war with Iran he often sides with AIPAC and

the neoconservatives—but then so do most Democrats and almost all Republicans.” Quite accurate, descriptively. Not exactly profound. This statement goes way beyond being simply utterly pathetic; it is an **absolute outrage**. (Forget other adjectives.) So...**this** is what you people have to say about Zionism, Palestine, Israel, M.E. U.S. policy--and the uber-Zionist Markey. You added the statement: “life is full of imperfect choices”...“this one is clear enough.” Well, yes, the choice for me is clear enough. My choice, immediately, is to have **nothing more to do with you people. Remove my name from your mailing list.**

Additional note: You will be pleased to know that your organization is in the running for this year’s *PEP Award*. Be assured that you will get my vote.

Ken Barney, Arlington

*Since its founding in 1982 DSA has had a “two state” perspective on the Israel-Palestine conflict, periodically updated to reflect the latest atrocities. This issue more than most tends to provoke strong responses—some more coherent than others. Those wondering about the controversies discussed above can check out the April YR at [www.dsaboston.org](http://www.dsaboston.org), pgs. 2 and 5.—Editor*

# Budget for All Presses for Jobs, Not Austerity

By Cole Harrison

Last November over 600,000 Massachusetts voters passed the “Budget for All” non-binding question by an average 3 to 1 margin in 91 cities and towns. This progressive federal budget platform calls for no cutbacks to social programs, investment in jobs and a green economy, higher taxes for the rich and corporations, an end to the Afghanistan war and cuts in the military budget.

Budget cutters in Washington are using “sequestration” to slash Meals on Wheels, Head Start, Housing, Education, Fuel Assistance, Unemployment, Health Programs, AIDS Housing, and family violence prevention—but saved FAA air traffic controllers when elite air travelers complained of delays. The U.S. House has voted for even deeper cuts. Now President Obama wants to cut Social Security in a “grand bargain” with Republicans.

The Budget for All Coalition, made up of 85 Massachusetts groups including DSA, has continued since November to press Congress to respect the expressed will of the people, pushing back against the pro-corporate austerity drive. A series of rallies in Boston, Fall River, Springfield, and Northampton included a “Have a Heart” rally on Valentine’s Day and a scheduled May 16 rally at the Tip O’Neill Federal Building in downtown Boston. As the *Yankee Radical* goes to press this rally has been endorsed by the MA AFL-CIO and several key union locals as well as community and peace groups, and is due to be addressed by Rep. Linda Dorcea Forry, Democratic nominee in the Dorchester-South Boston state senate special election.

In Washington, the Budget for All campaign produced results when Reps. John Tierney and Stephen Lynch joined Reps.

Capuano, Markey, and McGovern in voting for the Congressional Progressive Caucus’ “Back to Work Budget” in March. Here at home, State Sen. Dan Wolf and State Rep. Carl Sciortino have filed legislation on Beacon Hill asking the Legislature to go on record in favor of the Budget for All—whose increased spending on social and jobs programs would also do much to help Massachusetts with its own budget problems. The resolutions, H.3211 and S.1750, are awaiting a hearing date in the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs.

*Cole Harrison is Executive Director of Massachusetts Peace Action and a steering committee member of the Budget for All Coalition.*

---

## **BOSTON DSA STATEMENT:**

# **THE MARATHON BOMBINGS**

By Charles Brackett, Chair Boston DSA

Boston Democratic Socialists of America unequivocally condemns the brutal and senseless attacks against the Boston Marathon and subsequent murder of MIT Police Officer Sean Collier. We firmly stand in the socialist tradition of supporting resistance to tyranny but reject terrorism and murder of the innocent.

We salute the first responders—civilians, medical personnel and police—who risked their lives to save innocent victims and to apprehend the criminals responsible for these deadly attacks. Men and women risking their own lives to save strangers is the essence of the greatness not only of the United States but of the human race in general.

While saluting individual police for their personal heroism and welcoming the swift apprehension of the perpetrators, we join with the American

Civil Liberties Union and the rest of the progressive movement in expressing concern over the increased militarization of policing and scapegoating of Muslims and immigrants in our communities. We particularly abhor the efforts by the far-right to use these attacks as an opportunity to demonize immigrants and derail immigration reform, and their demands that the alleged perpetrator—an American citizen—be denied basic civil liberties.

Finally, while nothing excuses attacks like these, we are not ashamed of our belief that capitalism and war beget alienation and exclusion and separates person from person. Socialism—the common ownership of the means of production for the benefit of people and planet—brings communities together in pursuit of justice. We use these tragic events as an opportunity to recommit ourselves to the socialist vision of

building a just, sustainable and inclusive society where people and nations no longer live in fear of one another but instead cooperate for the benefit of all.

## **Yankee Radical**

P.O. Box 51356  
Boston, MA 02205  
Phone: 617-354-5078

e-mail:

[yankeeradical@dsaboston.org](mailto:yankeeradical@dsaboston.org)

Web: <http://www.dsaboston.org>

Editor: M. Pattberg

# Let's Support the Balancing Act!

*\*DSA National Political Committee Statement, 02/12/13*

In 2011 and 2012 the U.S. Congress, driven by Tea Party extremism and corporate money-fueled hysteria over a contrived “debt crisis,” enacted \$1.7 trillion in deficit reduction over ten years, mainly by slashing vitally needed domestic programs that serve our most vulnerable citizens. Cuts in the 2011 budget alone included \$600 million from community health centers, \$503 million from Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition programs, \$400 million in home energy assistance, and \$1.6 billion from environmental programs.

However, these cuts did not touch the bloated Pentagon budget, nor did the government increase its revenues by ending massive tax breaks and subsidies to billionaires and large corporations. Instead, the threat of a catastrophic and indiscriminate “sequester” of future discretionary spending was triggered for 2013. Sequester cuts would threaten to hurl the slowly recovering economy back into recession by destroying some 600,000 jobs in 2013 alone, while making even deeper cuts into the vital government programs that serve the most needy citizens and provide needed investments in education and in infrastructure....

The American electorate rejected the politics of imposing austerity on the people in the elections of 2012. As a result, in January 2013, Congress enacted a modest tax increase on the wealthiest individuals, while postponing the budget showdown by two months. At the same time, Congress also failed to renew or replace the temporary tax reduction in the payroll tax, thereby taking away 2% from the take-home pay of working people. This last step is already stalling economic recovery.

## **Create Jobs by Cutting Corporate Tax Loopholes and Pentagon Spending**

On February 5, 2013, ten members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus

introduced the Balancing Act that would cancel the across-the-board “sequester” budget cuts, replacing them with an equal amount of revenue (\$948 billion) by closing some flagrant corporate and individual tax loopholes. The bill would also cut some \$300 billion from the most wasteful Pentagon spending boondoggles (a lesser cut than under the current sequester), reinvesting it in job creation in infrastructure and education.

The Balancing Act would restore budget discipline by raising revenues from those most able to pay and protecting essential social programs for those who need them the most. Overall, beginning with 2011 when the Budget Control Act was passed, the Balancing Act would achieve a one-to-one ratio between increased government revenues and spending reductions.

Corporate tax loopholes to be cut include fossil fuel subsidies, carried interest (hedge funds), offshore tax abuses, jets and yachts, etc., while a 28% rate cap would be imposed on itemized individual tax deductions.

Modest savings in Pentagon procurement would be achieved through Massachusetts Rep. Markey’s Smarter Approach to Nuclear Weapons bill, by slowing the purchase of nuclear submarines, by replacing some F-35 fighter purchases with the proven and far cheaper F-18s, etc.

Jobs would be created by hiring more teachers and investing in school modernization and in transportation infrastructure. A Making Work Pay tax credit of \$400 (\$800 for couples) would replace the expired payroll tax reduction to stimulate consumer demand.

Detailed proposals of the Balancing Act are available at <http://cpc.grijalva.house.gov/balancing-act/>

With the Balancing Act, the Congressional Progressive Caucus offers a rational, commonsense alternative to the unfair and economically destructive alternatives posed by Tea Party

Republicans and corporate “Fix the Debt” neoliberals. While most of its provisions are not likely to be enacted by the current Congress, it represents the views and the needs of most Americans.

We urge you therefore to contact your Representatives and Senators asking them to endorse and support the Balancing Act.

## **Beyond the Balancing Act**

DSA believes that other more far-reaching ideas are also necessary in the longer term to restore sound national budget priorities.

Among them:

- Social Security should be improved and financed by raising the cap on earned income now taxed and by extending the tax to unearned income.
- Medicare should be extended to residents of all ages. Costs should be contained by eliminating excessive profits by pharmaceutical, insurance companies and healthcare providers.
- A financial transactions tax (Robin Hood Tax) would raise substantial revenues while curbing reckless financial speculation.
- Deeper cuts should be made in excessive Pentagon spending by ending useless wars, closing many foreign bases, and reducing unneeded weapons procurement while providing better healthcare and rehabilitative services to military personnel and veterans.
- Fossil fuels should be taxed at a higher rate to reduce global warming, while providing compensation to lower-income persons who would be affected by higher prices for heat and fuel.

*\*(Slightly abridged for reasons of space).*

# Looking Back: The “Arab Spring” in Eastern Europe

*Joanne Landy has been active in democratic socialist organizations since the 1950s. She is Co-Director with Tom Harrison of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy, and a member of DSA. The interview excerpted below was conducted by John Feffer; the full version is on the CPD website, [www.cpdweb.org](http://www.cpdweb.org).*

*How and why did you first get involved in Eastern Europe?*

**Tom Harrison:** Joanne and I were both part of this group in Berkeley, the Independent Socialist Club, in the 1960s. When I came on the scene in 1966, we were very soon heavily involved in defending left-wing oppositionists Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski in Poland.

**Joanne Landy:** Both of us were “third camp socialists,” which meant we were for neither Washington nor Moscow, neither capitalist imperialism nor the oppressive Communist systems in Eastern Europe. And because I’m older than Tom, I also started doing this many years before Tom did—in the late 1950s actually. Then, in 1980, two things simultaneously burst upon the scene: the Western peace movement against the missiles in Western Europe and Solidarnosc in Poland.

We were excited about both of those things. We participated, of course, in the big peace march in Central Park in 1982. And as soon as we heard about Solidarnosc, we got together a bunch of people to build support for them among progressives in the United States, and I went over there, to Poland. It was quite a trip. I couldn’t fly directly from New York, because it was the time of the PATCO strike. And so I had to take a train to Montreal and then fly to Poland. I had my “support the PATCO strikers” button on when I went into the Solidarnosc offices and into the office of the Polish airlines, and got lots of V signs and cheers from people who saw the button. People were very solidaristic not only about having an American come to Poland, but an American pro-labor person.... A group of us here in New York founded something that initially was called Solidarity with Solidarity. And then Gail Daneker, who did not come from a socialist tradition, but from some kind of non-socialist Green tradition, really taught

me a lot about how to form an organization: how to get tax-exempt contributions, how to put together a board, how to go to foundations. She’d had many years of experience in Washington and elsewhere doing this, whereas I’d always been in small socialist groups that were pretty effective, like the Independent Socialist Club with Hal Draper in Berkeley, but which didn’t organize in the non-profit world. Pretty soon we set up the Campaign for Peace and Democracy/ East and West. And when the Cold War ended, we just dropped the “East and West” ....

And, of course, in its initial stages, the opposition movement in Eastern Europe was quite left-wing, and we had high hopes for the idea of an opposition in Eastern Europe being simultaneously opposed to the regime and supporting working-class interests and deep democracy: not dismantling nationalized property but making it democratic and accountable.

Over the next decade or two, we saw a generally more conservative trend among the dissidents. The disappointments that happened after 1989 were actually developing before 1989, for reasons that are not wholly due to the political mistakes of dissidents, but more broadly due to the declining power of the Left in the West and the inability of most of the Left to solidly support the burgeoning opposition movements in Eastern Europe. Those two things combined made it much more likely for many of the former dissidents to be complicit in the kind of shock therapy and abrasive unfettered capitalism that happened. First, we have a very powerful world capitalist system, and second, the Left was largely absent from solidarity actions with the people.

*There were also anti-Communists working on the Right side of the political spectrum.*

**JL:** We were completely opposed to them.... As far as these right wing anti-

Communists are concerned, to the extent that they noticed us, they hated us. Because here we were uncompromisingly opposed to the system over there, and at the same time very much engaged in opposing U.S. imperial foreign policy in countries like Chile, or Nicaragua, or in terms of the arms race... The right-wingers wanted to claim and monopolize moral legitimacy, and they were all over Eastern Europe—the CIA, Freedom House... There were also parts of the labor movement deeply implicated by their acceptance and use of U.S. government money through the National Endowment for Democracy. We wanted the peace movement to be as present as possible, and Edward Thompson and European Nuclear Disarmament (END) did a lot of that, to their lasting credit...

*Did you see a shift in the Left’s position after the fall of the Berlin Wall?*

**TH:** It was easy for leftists who disparaged our efforts in the first place to say, “Aha! This proves that these people were basically capitalist pigs to begin with, and they represent nothing progressive.” Because, in fact, what happened in Eastern Europe was this ghastly wave of governments instituting shock therapy, and embrace of U.S. foreign policy, and it was tremendously discouraging.... But we felt somehow that the democratic momentum of 1989 contained within it more progressive tendencies...

*What would it have taken for Poland to go on a different route?*

**JL:** .... All Eastern Europeans knew was a monolithic West imposing these draconian “free market” solutions. The Left was for the most part out of the picture, struck dumb by what happened. It was either hostile or abject because it hadn’t really been involved or knowledgeable about the legitimacy of the struggle. If it had been, it

could have said with some moral standing, “Don’t go there! You don’t want what we have. Take a look at the terrible logic of our society, with its recurrent harsh economic cycles, its disregard for the vulnerable, and its constant impetus for war.”...It’s not just what happened in 1989. It’s what happened, or didn’t happen, over the preceding 10 years. But look, it’s not all over. Out of bitter experience now, people in Europe are getting a picture that things are not so great with this Western-imposed system. Out of that we see various alternatives: of a very right-wing quasi-fascist kind of reaction on the one hand and a left-wing type that you see in Syriza in Greece. We hope that this left-wing alternative to the cruelties of the capitalist system emerges everywhere.

But we’re operating with a great handicap. For decades being leftwing was associated with supporting these viciously authoritarian systems. To rebuild the idea that a leftwing alternative means something more democratic—not less—and that can accommodate peoples’ needs—well, that’s a tall order. I’m not betting the family farm on it—an old expression since I don’t actually have a family farm—but I think that there are possibilities.

*It wasn’t just the handicap of the Left’s ideological complicity with Stalinism. The Right also had all the resources. The Left had ideas and the Right had money.*

**TH:** Yes, but it’s not just that. The 1980s were a profoundly conservative decade, globally, and that had an effect on the thinking of the dissidents of Eastern Europe. Many of them had been new leftists in the 1960s, and maybe even in the 1970s. But the 1980s was the golden age of Thatcherism and Reaganism, when pro-capitalist thinking was hegemonic worldwide and profoundly effective. Even if the Left had been better, it perhaps wouldn’t have been able to counter this trend.

**JL:** Okay, but part of the reason why the Right was so hegemonic was because the Left had been discredited in many ways, because so much of it had been associated with these Communist societies. And, of course, we still have an incredibly powerful world capitalist system, which may someday send us all into

extinction.... We’re really trying to work our way out of this problem of people thinking that the only alternative to capitalism is an authoritarian, statist, undemocratic system. It’s a miracle that there’s the Occupy Movement and the rebellions across Europe now against austerity. It’s wonderful. But at the same time they don’t yet have an alternative to propose.

*I want to go back to something you said earlier about how some of the disappointments you had with how things turned out....*

**JL:** ...What was also disappointing to me was what many of my liberal friends concluded from the fall of Communism, as one person wrote to me, that “the United States is the only superpower left, so it is left to the United States to solve the multiple crises that are going on around the world.” I said, “Wait a minute! That’s not the right cure for that disease.” What we hoped was that with the fall of one side of this Cold War conflict the other side would be exposed for what it was...

*Do you see things today that give you hope, in terms of any flicker of those earlier impulses of an alternative to shock therapy and a different type of future for Eastern Europe?*

**JL:** From talking to my friend Jan Kavan, with whom I have differences but whom I still consider my comrade, there are people in Eastern Europe who are opposed to the neoliberal shock therapy and who are beginning to organize against it. In the Czech Republic, the first signs were actually not from the working class, but from people who Jan was associated with who were opposed to the U.S. missile defense system. I have to admit that I don’t know too much about it, but I think there are people who are reacting against the neoliberal “reforms” and that’s where hope lies...

*In terms of Yugoslavia, what do you think it would have taken to avoid the wars that took place?*

**TH:** A lot of people on the Left claim that the breakup of Yugoslavia was a Western conspiracy, in particular a German conspiracy, which I think is nonsense. Had Western governments actually recognized the independence of Slovenia, Croatia, and

Bosnia sooner, that might have made a difference. In many ways Milosevic was really coddled by the West, up to a certain point.

*There was a reluctance to engage with Yugoslavia on the part of the Bush Sr. administration. What do you think the full strategic interests were?*

**JL:** There was a very conservative impulse to rely on Milosevic as a force for stability, and that lasted for a long time. And then when they finally saw that that was not really viable, they then jumped over to the other side, which was to not only defend Croatia’s right to be independent, which I think they should have, but to turn a blind eye to the massacre of Serbs that was happening in Croatia. It was all very instrumental. It had nothing to do with a simultaneous recognition that Yugoslavia had been an artificial, top-down creation and that people should be free to leave it. At the same time, you needed to defend the rights of minorities in all of the former Yugoslavia. So, they defended Milosevic and relied on him without quite admitting it for too long, and then really shamefully ignored the massacre of Serbs in Croatia.

**TH:** In both phases, there was no real concern for the victims of these assaults. It was just about power politics, and what I think most people don’t realize is that for a long time the U.S. position was really for maintaining the unity of Yugoslavia no matter how the people there felt. They really clung to that position as long as they could.

**JL:** Which overlapped with what a lot of the Left thought, for instance its analogy to the American Civil War and how you can’t support separatism. But these authoritarian systems, whether in the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia, depended on a forced unity from the top that was very undemocratic and unpopular among the people who were being forced into a single nation. In the end, of course, it would be good to have a Balkan federation of people who freely associated—not just from the former Yugoslavia but from neighboring countries—but that has to be

*(continued on page 8)*

*the yankee radical*

Democratic Socialists of America  
P. O. Box 51356  
Boston, MA 02205

Presorted  
First Class  
U.S. Postage  
P A I D  
Boston, MA  
Permit No. 1141

## INSIDE

<i>Awards Reception</i>	<i>p. 1</i>
<i>DSA Meeting</i>	<i>p. 1</i>
<i>Short Takes</i>	<i>p. 2</i>
<i>J. Livingstone for Rep</i>	<i>p. 3</i>
<i>Letters to the Editor</i>	<i>p. 3</i>
<i>Budget for All</i>	<i>p. 4</i>
<i>DSA Marathon Statement</i>	<i>p. 4</i>
<i>Support the Balancing Act</i>	<i>p. 5</i>
<i>Arab Spring in Eastern Europe</i>	<i>p. 6</i>

(continued from page 7)

voluntary, not something that can be imposed from the top down.... You could say the same thing about China and Tibet. The U.S. government and much of the Left recognize the "territorial integrity" of China; i.e., the forced maintenance of Tibet as part of China. You're never going to win real friends in Tibet or affiliate in an honest and positive way with democratic oppositions within China if you have that attitude. I don't think there's any simple answer. These questions about national minorities—and about the Chinese who moved into Tibet or the Russians who moved into Estonia—are very fraught questions to which there's no easy solution. But if you start out with having stability from the top as your guiding principle, whether you're the U.S. government or the Left, you're never going to address these problems in a democratic and flexible way.

*One of the arguments around Bosnia was that if the United States had intervened earlier, if NATO had pushed back against the Serbs, then the war would have ended sooner. Did you feel a conflict between a*

*commitment to ending genocide and aggression in the region and a real skepticism about U.S. motivations?*

**TH:** "Skepticism" would be a mild word for what I feel about U.S. motivations. I'm really never in favor of U.S. intervention, because I think the United States is a profoundly overweening imperialist power, always with its own agenda. I never believe it is intervening for progressive reasons. In the Bosnia case, I think lifting the arms embargo was the right approach, because in fact the Bosnian army—which did manage to get weapons with great difficulty—actually began to turn the tide militarily against the Serb armies. And then the United States intervened with the Dayton Accords and basically divided up Bosnia.

*Ultimately, however, U.S. military intervention on the side of the Croatian army did push back the Serbs and changed the strategic balance on the ground...*

**TH:** That's right. But the question is, do you want to do that in a progressive way or

a reactionary way? And it was done in a very reactionary way.

*Do you see any signs of progressive alternatives emerging in former Yugoslavia?*

**JL:** Eastern Europe, broadly speaking, is a traumatized region. And former Yugoslavia in particular is a traumatized region. It's going to be hard to construct something out of that, and a lot depends on things outside of Europe: for instance, if there's an alternative economic option for Europe and the Arab Spring countries....It's not that economic issues erase national questions. The national questions have an integrity of their own that has to be addressed. But now you have this sweeping global economic catastrophe that's huge and also completely unnecessary. There's more productive capacity in the world today than we've ever seen before. So, why is it that people are starving, why are so many people unemployed? It's all because of the irrationality of the capitalist system.