



Boston Democratic Socialists of America

the yankee radical

(617) 982-3033

www.dsaboston.org

June, 2014

2014 Democratic Socialists of America Awards Reception

All Out for Jake and Cecily!

DATE: Sunday, June 8

TIME: 3 PM Social, 4 PM Program

PLACE: Workmen's Circle, 1762 Beacon Street, Brookline

Please join us at the Workmen's Circle on June 8 for Boston DSA's annual award reception, this year honoring two activists separated by six decades but united in the struggle for social justice—**Jacob Schlitt and Cecily McMillan.**

JACOB SCHLITT has been a labor, civil rights, Jewish community and democratic socialist activist his entire adult life. Active with the Congress of Racial Equality in the 1940s, he went on to become a key union leader in more campaigns than can be listed here—so Jake, can you help us out? (See pg. 3). In “retirement” he continues to serve on the New England Jewish Labor Committee's Executive Board.

Like Jacob Schlitt, **CECILY McMILLAN** began her activism early on, mobilizing her Atlanta high school classmates against the Iraq war and canvassing for Georgia PIRG. Then in 2011, at college in Wisconsin, Cecily

participated in the uprising against Governor Scott Walker's anti-union policies; after moving to NYC she was one of the initiators of Occupy Wall Street, and helped draft a proposal for “Jobs for All”. In subsequent Democratic primary elections she took a major role in the campaigns of Occupiers for Congress and City Council, assisted a citywide hospital unionization drive, worked with the Municipal Labor Committee organizing rallies for fair wages and contract renewal, and the NYC Central Labor Council in support of union-backed city councilmen—all while trying to complete her master's thesis on the great civil rights campaigner Bayard Rustin!

But sadly, Cecily has recently been convicted for elbowing an undercover policeman during a 2012 NYC Occupy rally; if she's unable to attend, her

award will be accepted by her defense committee (www.justiceforcecily.com).

Our honorees will receive either the Eugene Debs, Norman Thomas and Julius Bernstein award, or one named after A. Philip Randolph and Michael Harrington. All were American democratic socialist leaders of the last century active in the labor, civil rights and peace movements of their time. Past awardees include former MA AFL-CIO President Robert Haynes, Senator Patricia Jehlen, housing activist Ellen Feingold, T Riders Union founder Khalida Smalls, and journalist Matt Taibbi.

Admission is \$35 (\$15 for low income, or whatever you can afford), which includes hors d'oeuvres and an open bar. (More details pg. 6).

So—see you June 8!

(continued on page 6)

DSA Meeting June 10th

Boston DSA meets monthly at Encuentro 5, 9B Hamilton Place, Boston, 2nd floor—across the street from the Park St. T stop (ring bell #2 to be let in). Usually we get together on the second Thursday of

the month, but this time it's Tuesday, June 10th—7:00 PM Board meeting, 7:45 PM political discussion. We hope to have a speaker on this year's state elections, and throughout the summer other talks on local

labor and environmental campaigns, and maybe US-Mideast policy. Open to all DSA members and friends.

SHORT TAKES

In Case You Missed It...

Boston DSA has hosted a number of talks so far this year. In January **Lisette Le**, from Right to the City, spoke of their efforts to leverage the power of communities of color in addressing local employment and development issues, like the Boston Redevelopment Authority. The following month we co-sponsored a Move.On forum against Obama's proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership. In March **Nancy Goldner** explained how the Public Bank Working Group is working to bring about a Hub Public Bank—a more democratic, accountable and community-oriented use of Boston taxpayer's money. In April **Mark Schneider** discussed his latest book, *Joe Moakley's Journey: From South Boston to El Salvador*, an account of the late Congressman's political awakening after being tasked with investigating the 1989 murders of six Jesuit priests and their housekeepers in El Salvador by its US-backed military. **Luis Ramos** from CISPES then analyzed the recent FMLN electoral victory there—the US embassy apparently refrained from overt interference in the election, but was less than happy with the results. And on

May 20 **Larry Wittner**, in a talk co-sponsored by Peace Action, recounted the history of the world nuclear disarmament movement, along with Congressional efforts to enhance the US nuclear stockpile instead of complying with our obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Student Debt

The Progressive Change Campaign Committee (www.boldprogressives.org) has a petition in support of a student debt bill, authored by Senator Elizabeth Warren, allowing borrowers to re-finance their old education loans at the same low rates the government affords Wall Street banks. It would be paid for by a tax on millionaires, one reason her legislation probably isn't going anywhere—at least for now. Democratic Socialists of America has made this issue a national priority (www.dsausa.org/studentdebt), calling for a number of short term reforms ultimately leading to free higher education.

—Mike Pattberg

Letters

Tom Gallagher has been a Boston state rep, UN election monitor, baseball historian, Boston DSA Chair, failed Olympic luger and, in recent decades, a substitute school teacher in San Francisco—which he still is...

April 06, 2014

Hi folks,

As some of you may know, I have long claimed that my improbable "career" as a substitute teacher would not go unrecorded. Due to the peculiar disinterest of the publishing industry, however, this has taken longer than hoped for. But finally, "Sub: My Years Underground in America's Schools" is here.

Should you be interested, it is available for purchase on Kindle and for loan from the Kindle Owners' Lending Library. Print copies should be available in about a week. The cost for those is \$15 plus tax; \$20 by mail (my address is 239 Mullen Ave., SF, CA 94110); \$25 outside North America.

—Tom Gallagher

June 12—Day of Action**Can We Save Our Unions?**

DATE: Thursday, June 12

TIME: 7:00 P.M. Porter Sq. Books

PLACE: 25 White St., Cambridge, MA 02140

(After-party, 8:30–10:00 PM at Christopher's Bar, 1920 Mass Ave., just across the street)

Find out at this talk by labor journalist and former CWA organizer Steve Early, author of *Save Our Unions: Dispatches from a Movement in Distress*. Steve will discuss his new book, and several progressive labor initiatives in New England. *Save Our Unions* profiles Bernie Sanders and the successful movement for single-payer health care in Vermont, and assesses Boston-area struggles as well, mainly Verizon/IBEW and CWA related. Sponsored by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, Jobs with Justice, DSA and other labor and political groups.

Fight for \$15!

A Low Wage Worker Day of Action is set for Thursday, June 12. It is part of the national "Fight for \$15" campaign to raise wages for low wage workers.

Marches and rallies will be in Boston (Copley Square), Worcester (Wal-Mart, 25 Tobias Boland Way), and Springfield (16 John Street, before marching off to McDonalds).

Free bus transportation to the Boston rally will be available at the following locations: **Lynn:** Bus @ North Shore Labor Council, 112 Exchange St., leaves at 3:00PM. **Dorchester:** Bus @ 1199SEIU, 150 Mt Vernon St., leaves at 3:15PM.

Lawrence: Bus @ 50 Broadway, leaves at 2:30PM. **Chelsea:** Bus @ Chelsea Collaborative, 318 Broadway, leaves at 3:15 PM. To Reserve a seat on a bus, CALL 617-284-1260 or **SIGN UP AT WAGEACTION.ORG.**

—Rand Wilson

A Short Bio of Jacob Schlitt

By Himself



At the JLC and JALSA Succah at Occupy Boston where I urged her to run for Senate

Jake was born a democratic socialist and will die a democratic socialist, but hopefully not for a while. Born in the Bronx in December 1927, his mother was a cloak finisher, a member of Local 9 of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. She had come from Romania in 1904 at the age of 16, made her way to the Lower East Side of New York, worked in the sweat shops, took part in the 1910 Cloakmakers Strike, and was elected shop chairlady and a member of the local's Executive Board. Her heroes were Eugene Debs and Meyer London. Her commitment to socialism and trade unionism she passed on to her son.

Jake attended the Bronx public schools and City College, but a decade after Irving Howe. He was a member of the Congress of Racial Equality, and was active in the 1949 City College strike calling for the ouster of Professors Davis and Knickerbocker, one a racist, the other an anti-Semite. He was not a YPSL because no one recruited him. In 1950 he went to work for the ILGWU, where almost every officer was a former socialist. (While he was organizing alteration workers,

Anne Draper, who was organizing millinery workers, sold him a subscription to *Labor Action* and introduced him to Max Shachtman.) He was drafted in 1954, returned to New York and was hired by the Jewish Labor Committee as the liaison with its field directors, one of them being Julie Bernstein, a kindred spirit. It was Julie who demanded, as he did of so many others, that Jake join the Socialist Party and stop beating the Party out of its dues. He also worked with Sam Friedman, one time SP vice presidential candidate.

From the JLC, Jake moved on to become Education Director of the Amalgamated Laundry Workers Union. While at the Laundry Workers in 1963 he volunteered at the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters as Bayard Rustin planned the March on Washington, bringing five busloads of Laundry Workers to the March. Jake went on to work for AFSCME in Washington as Education Director, and in 1966 was hired by the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights. He attended the founding convention of DSOC (later DSA) in 1973, and was an active member of the Washington Chapter. Julie would be proud that Jake has been a dues paying member ever since.

It was during this period that he was also active in Labor for Peace, Jews for Urban Justice, the grape boycott, the Poor People's Campaign, and organized a union at the Civil Rights Commission. He was one of a half dozen union men attending the 1974 Founding Conference of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. In 1979, Jake was named director of the newly

formed New England Region of the Civil Rights Commission, and became involved in the Boston civil rights scene as one of the founders of the Greater Boston Civil Rights Coalition and later the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization.

Jake has always played an active role in the Jewish community from his earliest days with the JLC. He has been a member of the Workmen's Circle from 1956, served on its National Executive Board, and was President of the Boston chapter. He also was a member of the Washington DC and Boston Jewish Community Relations Councils, reminding them that, though they are members of the "establishment," most of their parents and grandparents who came to this country were socialists, supported unions, and opposed capitalist exploitation.

When Congress cut the Civil Rights Commission's budget in 1986, eliminating seven offices including Jake's, he managed to get an appointment as a member of the Massachusetts Board of Review of the Department of Employment and Training, then as Inspector with the Fair Labor Division of the Attorney General's Office, retiring in 1997. He has been a longtime member of Workers Education Local 189 of the AFT, and somewhere along the way was appointed to the Advisory Council of the Workers Defense League.

Jake is married to the former Fran Morrill and has, altogether, three children—democratic socialists all.

An Occupier's Trial

By Maurice Isserman

This report, shortened for reasons of space, was written on April 14 for the DISSENT website. Sadly, Cecily McMillan was convicted on May 5 in New York City (www.justiceforcecily.com)



Cecily McMillan has had trouble concentrating on the master's thesis she is supposed to be writing this spring under my direction at the New School in New York City, a study of the political beliefs and career of the late, great socialist, pacifist, and civil rights campaigner Bayard Rustin. It's not that Cecily has writer's block and has been avoiding the library. Rather, she is spending far too much of her time in the defendant's seat in New York City Criminal Court in Lower Manhattan. There she faces charges of felony assault on a police officer in Zuccotti Park, birthplace of Occupy Wall Street, on March 17, 2012. On that day a demonstration took place in the park to mark the six-month anniversary of the original occupation. When the police moved in to clear the park, making scores of arrests, Cecily was caught in the melee. Her trial began last week, and has drawn national and international media attention.

I have known Cecily for nearly three years. I met her when I was invited to speak at a Democratic Socialists of America youth section gathering in the Catskills in the summer of 2011. Cecily, then twenty-two years old, was a recent college graduate and a veteran of the previous winter's Madison, Wisconsin protests against Governor Scott Walker's anti-labor policies. She was obviously in her element in a political gathering—self-confident, vocal, and, in that much abused term, charismatic: A leader. And also (and this doesn't always go with the territory) generous and empathetic. My seventeen-year-old son, a high school student, was

attending his first socialist meeting, overawed by the older, worldly college students surrounding him, and I was deeply grateful when Cecily took him under her wing. So, a leader—but with a pronounced maternal instinct.

And I was not terribly surprised when I came across her name in a *New York Times* story about Occupy Wall Street. I learned that she had been involved with Occupy from the beginning. And I was pleased to see that she was in the faction that thought Occupy should put forward concrete demands, if it was going to be taken seriously and broaden its support. As the *Times* reported:

“Politically active members like Cecily McMillan and David Haack...said they were ready to take action. Mr. Haack, who in 2009 tried to run for the White Plains City Council, admitted feeling disillusioned after the group struck down their proposal in August, but now he feels inspired by the movement's ‘true democratic process,’... Ms. McMillan, 23, a New School graduate student, has begun to worry that the movement could become ‘a joke’ without specific goals. Still, with the right demands, she said, more union members and diverse contingencies could join.”

In other words, within the spectrum of political tendencies represented in Occupy, Cecily represented the Michael Harrington/democratic socialist “left wing of the possible” perspective, which never turned out quite as influential as the anarchist/utopian wing (alas). Cecily and I crossed paths again at other DSA gatherings. I was pleased when she asked me to supervise her master's thesis this spring. Her topic reflects her deep interest in and personal commitment to the politics of nonviolent direct action. I have no doubt about the sincerity of her convictions on that score.

Now, more than two full years after her arrest, Cecily is back in the pages of the *New York Times*, and not in a way she

would like to be. As the *Times* reported at the end of the first week of the trial: “The central issue facing jurors... is who assaulted whom. Prosecutors say Ms. McMillan wheeled around and elbowed Officer Grantley Bovell in the face while he was arresting her. Ms. McMillan says Officer Bovell grabbed her right breast from behind and she reacted instinctively, not knowing he was a police officer.”

Bovell has been involved in several other cases of police misconduct that led to civil suits against the city. And he received an official reprimand for involvement in a notorious Bronx ticket-fixing case, which should raise some questions of credibility with the jurors.

I wasn't in Zuccotti Park that March night two years ago. I freely admit a lack of objectivity. But my loyalties and gut instincts are reinforced by the memory of the many and long discussions Cecily and I have had about nonviolence. I believe the video evidence supports her case. I believe Officer Bovell's credibility is problematic.

Cecily was offered a plea bargain by the DA's office: in exchange for pleading guilty to felony assault, she would get no jail time. Were she my daughter, I would have urged her to take the plea—anything to stay out of jail. But Cecily is stubborn. And principled. And sees herself, rightly, as the victim in this case.

I admire her. And I fear for her.

This case should never have been brought to trial. I hope it ends with the only just outcome: Cecily's acquittal and exoneration. And then she can get back to what she should have been doing this spring: finishing her thesis on Bayard Rustin.

Maurice Isserman is a professor of history at Hamilton College, the author of *An Other American: The Life of Michael Harrington* (2000). His most recent article for *Dissent* chronicled its sixty-year history

Bernie Sanders 2016?

By Michael Pattberg

This is a slightly revised version of a memo written last February as part of a national DSA discussion of a possible 2016 Presidential run by Senator Bernie Sanders. The resulting statement by DSA's National Political Committee supporting it—"Run, Bernie, Run!"—is at http://www.dsausa.org/sanders_petition, and elsewhere in this issue. Progressive Democrats of America has a similar statement/petition (www.pdamerica.org).

Most though not all Boston DSA leadership seem sympathetic to at least some version of this idea, but we haven't formalized it in any resolution, so what follows are my views only. To speed this discussion along I'll list a few of the obvious objections, some raised locally, and supply some of the answers:

—Sanders might not run, and certainly won't win if he does. Why waste time on a hopeless cause?

True enough, up to a point. But a Sanders primary campaign would mobilize the progressive Democratic base against the neo-liberal Clinton/Obama/Wall Street crowd. Since the "serious" big dog Democrats will probably stay out in deference to Hillary, Sanders could turn out to be her most significant opponent. A bored press, looking for something to write about, might start covering Sanders/Clinton as David vs. Goliath. Less ideological Democrats could also begin objecting to the idea of Clinton inevitability being pushed on them even before the first Iowa caucus—just like last time. All of a sudden, there's a race! If Sanders could get past the Kucinich threshold of 1% or 2% to, say, 15 or 20%, there will be a new left pole in US politics beyond 2016. Or as former Boston DSA Chair Tom Gallagher puts it in *Common Dreams.org*, "America's left could move beyond the mere consolation of its philosophy and, at least for a time, become an actual, self-conscious part of electoral politics. Then the question would be how we could manage to do it again in 4 years, and then 4 years after that".

—But if he can't win, why bother?

There are no "spoiler" candidates in

Presidential primaries. However many delegates Sanders wins could be transferred to the next best candidate at the convention, assuming there is one and Hillary hasn't nailed things down by then. It's even possible a few liberal long-shots slightly to the left of Clinton might join in some kind of tactical alliance against her, which sometimes happens against presumed front runners. But either alone or with others stealing some of his arguments, Sanders could emerge as the main alternative to Clinton/Obama, both in ideas and perhaps in future organizations.

—Only another woman would stand a chance against Hillary. Plus, Sanders is wrong on (...), (...), and perhaps (...).

Yes, it would be better to get behind a woman with at least somewhat the same record and experience. As far as I know she doesn't exist among any of the conceivable DP candidates; this includes Elizabeth Warren who Boston DSA was happy to campaign for, but who is still on the fence about Obama's TPP—the latest NAFTA-style trade deal Sanders is already attacking. I do wish he wasn't so bad on Israel/Palestine (is AIPAC really so strong in Vermont?), but then so is almost every other elected official. As was Michael Harrington, come to think of it.

—Here's a better idea: Let's start a new party! Or throw in with one of the existing tiny socialist groups who always oppose the Democrats.

Let's not. Left third parties are basically a clever way of electing Republicans, as Karl Rove clearly understood in 2000 when he simultaneously mobilized his big

donors for both Bush & Nader. And Nader ran the best left third party Presidential race at least since Barry Commoner in 1980, with disastrous but predictable results. The perverse incentives of US election law mean that left wing third parties help the GOP, while right wing third parties help the Democrats—or would if there were any. A better model for 2016 is the 1988 Jesse Jackson campaign, which forced his primary opponents to address progressive issues and inspired a new generation of African-American organizers and candidates—without indirectly aiding George Bush 1 (who won anyway).

—But why get DSA involved in this; don't we have enough on our plate?

Not only would a Sanders campaign point the way forward for the mass left, but DSA as an organization could especially benefit. The media would sooner than later remember that Sanders is a self-described "socialist"; far from indignantly denying the allegation, he actually affirms it—Guilty as charged! Plus he's been handling this kind of attack since the 1980s while consistently winning elections, so he knows how to talk about socialism beyond the Left Forum. He is also good at separating democratic socialism from the Stalinist albatross (telling John Nichols at *The Nation* blog, "In Vermont people understand exactly what I mean...They don't believe democratic socialism is akin to North Korean Communism") as well as neo-liberal trends within social democracy, although the latter I just infer from his public statements and voting record.

(continued on page 6)

Run, Bernie, Run!

The National Political Committee of DSA passed this resolution on 5/23/14.

Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont (Independent) has announced that he is considering a candidacy for President in 2016 to further a desperately needed political revolution in the USA.

Senator Sanders is a lifelong champion of the public programs and democratic rights that empower working class people. His candidacy could help expand both the progressive movement and the democratic socialist voice within that movement.

Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) strongly encourages Senator

Sanders to create a formal exploratory committee. We further encourage him to meet with grassroots activists throughout the country to discuss how his candidacy might effectively promote their varied struggles for social and economic justice, human rights, world peace and a healthy environment.

By running in Democratic Party primaries, Independent Senator Sanders would challenge the dominant discourse of the neoliberal Democrats that privilege corporate business interests over those of all working people. Thus he would

contribute to building a strong movement to halt the vicious attacks of Tea Party Republicans at all governmental levels on workers' rights, voting rights, and people of color in general.

Those who wish to promote the goals of this petition should consider taking concrete and specific actions at the grassroots level that would promote a Sanders run. To sign the DSA petition urging a Sanders candidacy, visit http://www.dsausa.org/sanders_petition.

(continued from page 5)

So what's the proposal?

We should explore the idea of initiating—preferably with others—a Draft Sanders 2016 campaign, with a website, literature, etc. Which others? Ideally some of the more progressive unions, but that seems unlikely. To state the obvious: We're in no position to “draft” Sanders for president—or anyone else for anything. In this

context “Draft” means something like “We hope you will consider running, and will support you if you do”. But in the run-up to 2016 familiar political choices will return, right on schedule. On the one hand the usual third party dead-enders dedicated to principled irrelevance; on the other, Democrats reluctant to buck the Clintons, or feminists unwilling to transcend identity politics. The vast political

territory in between is a perfect match for DSA. We can only benefit by joining with those who wish Sanders would run, whether he does so or not. Let's help start this bandwagon so we won't have to jump on it later on.

—Mike Pattberg is
Chair of Boston DSA and YR editor

(Awards Reception, continued from page 1)

***I want to join Boston DSA in honoring Jacob and Cecily!
(Mail check to DSA, PO Box 51356, Boston, MA 02205, or pay at the door.)***

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ E-mail _____

2

Please reserve ____ tickets at \$35 each for the June 8 reception.

Sponsorships: Please list me as a:

Friend, \$75; 1 admission & journal listing Supporter, \$150; 2 admissions & journal listing

Patron, \$225; 3 admissions & journal listing Benefactor, \$350; 4 admissions & journal listing

Sponsorships will be listed in reception journal in the first issue of the *Yankee Radical* following the event.

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

$\frac{1}{8}$ page (4¼×2¾) \$125 $\frac{1}{4}$ page (4¼×5½) \$200

$\frac{1}{2}$ page (8½×5½) \$350 full page (8½×11) \$500

Boston DSA Endorsements

At our May meeting, Boston DSA endorsed these candidates for the September 9 Democratic primary elections. Boston DSA is also a member of the Mass Alliance coalition, which has so far endorsed State Senators **Patricia Jehlen** and **Dan Wolf** (www.massalliance.org).



Don Berwick for MA Governor
(www.berwickforgovernor.com).

Berwick calls himself the “social justice candidate” and has an extensive background in health care, including working for Obama’s ACA. But he’s the only candidate who supports single-payer, and says he would also back a campaign for a state graduated income tax. He favored Governor Patrick’s version of last year’s transportation/revenue bill over the one by House Speaker DeLeo that ultimately passed, but preferred the Campaign for Our Communities proposal to both. His backers include Senators Jamie Eldridge and Sonia Chang-Diaz, and Rep. Denise Provost.



State Rep. Mary Keefe
(www.electmarykeefe.org)

Mary is running for re-election to her 15th Worcester District seat. She has a long history with the Worcester labor and environmental movements, and in the legislature has been one of the most active proponents of raising the minimum wage. Rep. Keefe was one of only eight reps to vote against Speaker DeLeo’s transportation bill, holding out for more aid to mass transit and more progressive tax rates. For this primary she has just one opponent, but he’s much better funded and is supported by former Lt. Gov. Tim Murray; Keefe is endorsed by Congressman Jim McGovern and many local progressives.



US Rep. John Tierney
(www.johntierney.com)

John has been one of the more outspoken liberal members of our MA delegation, even though he recently voted against the Congressional Progressive Caucus budget amendment he’s supported in the past—and even though he’s a member of the CPC! But Tierney has been a strong supporter of green jobs and abortion choice, while opposing Pentagon waste and Wall Street tax loopholes. His primary challenge is from a well-funded Harvard grad and Iraq war vet who describes himself as “fairly centrist”, while campaigning on vague promises of bi-partisanship.



Ed Collins
(www.edcollinsforstaterepresentative.com)

Longtime IBEW leader, MA AFL-CIO Vice President and DSA member **Ed Collins** is running for an open rep seat in Springfield. He has two primary opponents, one of whom—Peter Murphy—has backed Scott Brown in past campaigns. Ed has been an important voice for the progressive wing of the labor movement and the Democratic Party for decades; he helped found the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupation Safety and Health. But on at least one issue Collins differs from DSA—he opposes any sort of carbon tax, feeling it’s regressive and would kill

the power plant jobs of his IBEW members. (Last year DSA resolved that “Fossil fuels should be taxed at a higher rate to reduce global warming, while providing compensation to lower income persons affected by higher prices for heat and fuel...”). But Ed strongly supported the Safer Alternatives (to dangerous chemicals) bill, and has pushed the AFL to work with groups like Clean Water Action. He also favors raising the gas tax and diverting more of it to mass transit.

CONGRESS: Just Say No to TPP Fast Track! And Yes to US-Iran Nuclear Agreement!

President Obama has been unable to push through fast track legislation to help pass his Trans-Pacific Partnership, the latest NAFTA-style “free-trade” treaty Congress is expected to vote on this year. But the TPP negotiations themselves have been kept secret from the vast majority of the people they’d impact, although enough has leaked out to recognize this new trade deal as pretty much the same old NAFTA/CAFTA snake oil.

TPP would continue the 30 year neo-liberal project of pressing down wages and outsourcing jobs, while allowing global corporations to legally challenge financial, environmental, labor, food safety and pharmaceutical regulations enacted by governments, even democratically elected ones like our own—even city councils! These disputes could then be taken before unelected panels of international corporate trade lawyers to recoup lost “potential profits”. So TPP seems to be just the latest attempt to transfer power from governments to private capital.

But with mounting opposition from

labor, environmentalists, family farmers and locally owned small business, there’s still a chance we can strangle this monster in the crib. Consult the following websites for background information:

www.citizenstrade.org/

www.stopfasttrack.org/

www.flushthetpp.org/

then call Senators Markey & Warren and your representative (202-224-3121).

Opponents of President Obama’s breakthrough negotiations with the new leadership of Iran to limit its nuclear program have been urging additional sanctions on that nation ever since the talks began in December. They are part of legislation proposed by Senators Menendez (D-NJ) and Kirk (R-IL), which also promises US political, economic and military support to Israel whenever Netanyahu chooses to attack Iran (S. 1881). The Iranians have made it clear however, that passage of any additional sanctions during the 6 month negotiating period will end the talks then and there—which seems to be

what much of the Congressional opposition wants anyway. As do similar hardliners in Tehran, the governments of Israel and Saudi Arabia, and various Sunni extremist groups including Al Qaeda.

But repudiating US–Iran negotiations could undermine Iranian moderates while increasing the likelihood of a US–Israeli attack, leading to more regional chaos, terrorism and nuclear proliferation. Thanks to opposition from Obama, S.1881 seems to be on hold, at least for the moment, and Boston DSA has joined with Peace Action and others to make sure it stays that way. The ultimate solution is still an internationally enforced treaty for a nuclear-free Mid-East, but these US–Iran negotiations are at least a promising beginning (for info visit: www.niacouncil.org). Call Senators Warren & Markey and your Congressperson (202-224-3121) to tell them: Speak out against new sanctions! Don’t sabotage the US–Iran talks!

Hypocrisy and the Bomb

By Lawrence S. Wittner

In recent years the governments of the United States and other nuclear-armed nations have been sharply critical of Iran’s possible development of nuclear weapons, a violation of the 1968 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). But in late April the Republic of the Marshall Islands filed a lawsuit against the nine nuclear powers themselves for failing to meet their treaty obligations for nuclear disarmament.

In the mid-1960s, as the Cold War raged, one of the few things the Soviet and American governments could agree upon was that other nations should

refrain from developing nuclear weapons. So they sought to get non-nuclear powers to sign a treaty renouncing nuclear weapons production. But, not surprisingly, the non-nuclear nations asked why they should be expected to forgo nuclear weapons while the two superpowers retained theirs. Ultimately then, to satisfy everyone, the treaty was broadened, and the final version had two parts. The non-nuclear powers agreed not to develop nuclear weapons, and the nuclear powers (under Article VI) agreed to divest themselves of their arsenals.

For the last 46 years the nuclear powers appear to have gotten the better part of this bargain. Although the overwhelming majority of nations have resisted the temptation to develop these weapons, the nine nuclear powers (the United States, Russia, Britain, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea) retain approximately 17,300 of them—considerably more than enough to destroy the world. About 95 per cent belong to the United States and Russia.

Yes, since the signing of the NPT the nuclear powers have disarmed to

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UKRAINE: Is There A Way Out?

By Joanne Landy

5/20/14

Joanne Landy is Co-Director of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy (www.cpdweb.org). This is a draft of an article to appear in the forthcoming issue of *New Politics* magazine, where she is an editorial board member.

The governments of the United States and Russia are attempting to shape events in Ukraine in their own interests, not for the benefit of the Ukrainian people. Ukrainians have long suffered from domination by Moscow, under the Russian czars and later in the Soviet Union, most horrifically under Stalin. With the end of Communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, millions hoped for freedom and a new beginning. However, the United States and Western Europe exploited the collapse of the Soviet system to expand their own military and economic power, extending NATO into a dozen formerly Communist nations (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Albania and Croatia), and they hoped, into Ukraine and Georgia as well. Equally destructive, the West attempted to use its economic heft, “shock therapy,” and international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to push a brutal capitalism on the people of the former Communist countries.

In late 2013 mass protests erupted in Ukraine against the government of Viktor Yanukovich, culminating in huge demonstrations of hundreds of thousands. Despite having been elected, Yanukovich was a repressive and grotesquely corrupt ruler who lavished upon himself obscene privileges, including a vast personal compound furnished with a spa, a zoo, a large boat, a massive car collection, and a golden toilet (!), while defending the interests of the wealthy oligarchs who supported his government.

In January 2014, Yanukovich signed a



Maidan at night
maidantranslations.com

series of anti-democratic laws similar to those already imposed on Russians under Vladimir Putin, which sharply limited freedom of speech and assembly. As mass protests mounted, the government sent riot police on February 18 to brutally repress the people in the streets. Two days later, riot police again fought against protesters, and the battle culminated in snipers who had taken positions on rooftops shooting at demonstrators.

Some Maidan detractors have argued that the snipers were actually deployed by the opposition to create an incident that would discredit the government. The evidence for this theory is dubious; in any event, the corruption, repressiveness, and undemocratic record of the Yanukovich government is indisputable, and gave more than adequate cause for the uprising.

Maidan was an expression of mass discontent that had been building for years, and cannot be explained away as simply the result of a false flag operation or a plot by Washington—though we know that the United States and other Western countries have worked to take advantage of popular dissatisfaction for

their own purposes and will do everything they can to see that the radical democratic potential of the Maidan doesn't come to fruition. They will be helped in their efforts by the fact that the Ukrainian left and labor movements are very weak, leaving a vacuum to be filled by leaders who embrace the neoliberal austerity measures promoted by the United States and the European Union. These measures will cause bitter suffering for the masses of Maidan protesters, many of whom have been under the illusion that joining the European Union will bring them prosperity and a decent standard of living (an illusion held as well by millions in Greece and other Southern European countries until bitter experience has begun to show them otherwise).

In addition, though the far right forces of Svoboda and the Right Sector were only a small portion of the protesters, they played a key role in the physical defense of the Maidan against violent government attack. Today there are a number of far right figures in the interim coalition government that was hastily constituted by parliament after Yanukovich left Kiev; it remains to be seen whether the Ukrainian people will permit these dangerous elements to remain in leading government positions.

After Yanukovich

Once in power, the new post-Yanukovich government took steps that were certain to make the country vulnerable to Russian attempts to undermine Ukraine's independence. First, parliament passed a law revoking the status of Russian—the native tongue of thirty to forty percent of Ukrainians—

as an official language in areas where Russian speakers constituted ten percent or more of the population. This reactionary law was quickly canceled by the new acting Ukrainian president, Aleksandr Turchinov, who must have come to realize that it would set off an explosive reaction. But the damage had been done, fostering suspicion and hostility toward the new government among many Russian speakers, particularly in the eastern and southern regions of the country.

Compounding this disastrous signal about language rights, the new government declared from the outset that it would adopt the crippling economic measures demanded by the European Union and Western financial institutions. Conscious of how hugely unpopular the social cuts and privatizations the West was demanding would be, when the new prime minister, Arseny Yatseniuk (famously known as “Yats” to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland), announced his determination to carry out harsh austerity measures, he conceded, eerily, that doing so would mean that Ukraine would be led by a “suicide” government.

The Rights of Less Powerful Countries

NATO was an imperial military alliance from its inception, and with the end of the Soviet empire it lost even its retrograde Cold War rationale for existence. The Campaign for Peace and Democracy, of which I am Co-Director, and anti-war movements around the world called for NATO to dissolve after 1989 (better late than never). Instead, NATO aggressively extended its reach into the former Soviet orbit. This fact, however, does not justify Russia’s interference in the domestic affairs of Ukraine: supporting a lightning referendum in Crimea under the shadow of Russian troops and operatives or declaring, as Putin has, that eastern and southern Ukraine are “Novorossiia” (or “New Russia”), signaling that Moscow would be justified in intervening, by

force if necessary, to defend Russian speakers in that region. Powerful countries have no right to turn neighboring nations into “buffer states” by invoking security as a justification. When real or concocted security threats are used to justify imperialism, prospects for peace and democracy suffer a terrible blow. Ukrainians face complex and pressing problems in establishing just and democratic structures in their country, but they need to work through those problems without imperial interference from either the West or Russia. The negotiating partners should be eastern and western Ukrainians, not the United States, the European Union, or Moscow.

The Russian annexation of Crimea is to be condemned because of the intimidating way in which it was achieved (and the precedent that was thus set for future intimidation), and because of the fact that short shrift was given to considering the rights of Tatars and Ukrainian speakers, who together make up a third of Crimea’s population. But there is good reason to believe that the majority of Crimeans would have freely voted to rejoin Russia in a fair referendum, and it seems doubtful that Crimea will ever return to Ukraine.

However, according to recent opinion polls conducted by the U.S.-headquartered Pew Research Center and the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, the situation in eastern and southern Ukraine seems quite different: the great majority of the population in these regions say that they are suspicious of the Kiev government and want a measure of autonomy to protect their regional interests, but wish to remain part of Ukraine. Arguably people in the east and south should have the right to secede and become independent or integrated into Russia if they so desire, but their views should be expressed in legitimate votes that will either confirm or disconfirm the opinion polls, not in hasty “referendums” conducted under pressure

from unaccountable armed groups and Russian military intimidation.

To those who say that Russia hasn’t intervened militarily in Ukraine, my reply is (1) there are more than likely secret Russian operatives playing a role in eastern Ukraine and, in any case (2) even if the Russian troops massed on the border with Ukraine haven’t fired a shot, they are being used as a weapon to intimidate the population. Daniel Ellsberg uses a metaphor to make this point in another context: he has often said that when the U.S. threatens to use nuclear weapons, it is in fact using them, just as someone who points a gun at someone’s head in the midst of a confrontation is using that gun whether or not he actually fires it.

A peaceful resolution of the Ukrainian crisis will doubtless need to involve some kind of significantly decentralized structure for the country, though the extent of regional autonomy remains to be negotiated in hard bargaining by the representatives of both sides. However, a huge obstacle to democratic bargaining is the presence of ultranationalist and far right elements on *both* sides.

Ultra-Nationalists and the Far Right

The far right presence in the new Kiev government has barely been mentioned in the mainstream press in the United States, but it is significant, and very troubling. The neofascist Svoboda Party holds important positions: Svoboda’s Oleksandr Sych is deputy prime minister, the party’s Ihor Shvaik is agriculture minister, and Andriy Mokhnyk is ecology minister, while former Svoboda MP Oleg Mokhnytsky runs the general prosecutor’s office. (For Svoboda’s stated principles, see the All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda” program—“[Program for the Protection of Ukrainians.](#)”)

This doesn’t mean that Ukraine is a fascist state; non-fascist neoliberal parties and Prime Minister Arseniy Yatseniuk are more powerful than Svoboda at the moment, and fascist measures have not been carried out. But it is an ominous sign that Svoboda has been legitimized

with government posts. In the absence of a successful left alternative, neoliberal austerity measures are likely to strengthen neofascist and far right forces—a dynamic we have seen in other parts of Europe, for example with the rise of Golden Dawn in Greece and the Front National in France.

Ultra-nationalist and far right elements also play a significant role on the pro-Russian side. For example, as Tash Shifrin notes on her [Dream Deferred website](#), “The Donbass People’s Militia is led by Pavel Gubarev—a former member of fascist paramilitary organisation, Russian National Unity and of the Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine, which despite its name is allied with the Eurasian Youth Union linked to influential Russian fascist Aleksandr Dugin.” In his article on the anarchist-leaning website *tahriricn* “[Excuse Me Mister: How Far Is It From Simferopol To Grozny?](#),” Laurent Moeri reports that “there is very disturbing information about Chetniks having been invited to join Russians fighting together with the Cossack ‘Wolves’ (the ‘Wolves’ are a paramilitary organization known for their ruthlessness and have engaged in combat in Chechnya as well as in Georgia).” And in April 2014, [Aleksandr Ivanov-Sukharevsky](#), leader of the Russian neo-Nazi Peoples National Party, addressed the pro-Russian forces in South-Eastern Ukraine, giving them full support...

Within Russia, Vladimir Putin has used the Ukrainian conflict to foster ultra-nationalist sentiments that buttress the increasing authoritarianism of his government, which is marked by hyper-patriotism, harsh anti-protest laws, repression of journalists, vicious discrimination against gays, and an unholy alliance with the Russian Orthodox Church that we saw on display in the cruel persecution of Pussy Riot. It’s no surprise, then, that Putin and the Russian government are praised by far right forces throughout Europe, including Hungary’s neo-Nazi Jobbik party, the British National Party, Golden Dawn in Greece, the Italian Fronte Nazionale, and

Marine Le Pen’s French Front National. (Ironically, Svoboda had observer status with the ultranationalist Alliance of European National Movements until March of this year, leaving only after leaders of the Alliance endorsed the annexation of Crimea by Russia.)

Inside Crimea, the repressive consequences of being brought into Moscow’s orbit are illustrated by the (failed) attempt to ban this month’s Tatar commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the day the mass deportation of their families began under the orders of Josef Stalin, and the cancellation of the Gay Pride parade scheduled for April 22-23 in light of the Russian law banning “gay propaganda”.



Much has to be done to realize the democratic promise of the Maidan uprising. For starters, the Ukrainian people need to insist that Svoboda be removed from the governing coalition, and that the Kiev government repudiate its deadly deal with the EU and the IMF. But beyond these first necessary steps, ordinary Ukrainians across the country desperately need to create a democratic left movement, with member-controlled unions (1) and political parties that can represent them. They need new radical and socialist parties that can take major enterprises out of the hands of the oligarchs who dominate western, eastern and southern Ukraine, nationalize them, and place them under the democratic control of workers and the larger society. They need parties that can build an independent Ukraine unaligned with either NATO or Russia, outside of the German-dominated European Union and the Russian-dominated Eurasian Economic Union, and free to develop unrestricted trade relationships with all countries.

Ukrainians need an international environment that nourishes rather than thwarts democracy in their country, and

that’s where we can help. We can express our solidarity with the Ukrainian people by demanding that Russia withdraw its troops from the Ukrainian border and cease making interventionist threats, and that the West cease its escalating military presence in Europe, move to dismantle NATO, and withdraw its demands for privatization and austerity. We can call for aid without imperial strings to Ukraine and other countries in economic crisis. In supporting the Ukrainians, we are helping ourselves. After all, we all need a way out of the cruel world our masters have made.

Note

1. Such unions are missing in Ukraine today. As Sean Larson notes in "Contradictions of the Ruling Class in Ukraine," to be published in the forthcoming issue of *New Politics*, “The opinion [among the public] predominates that trade unions are relics of the communist era for the purpose of organizing vacations or childrens summer camps (functions largely responsible for sustaining union membership) rather than fighting organizations pushing for the interests of workers on the job and in politics.”

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some extent, either through treaties or unilaterally. But they were usually compelled to do this by massive popular opposition to nuclear weapons and nuclear war. And, in recent years, perhaps because of the decline of the anti-nuclear movement, these disarmament ventures have largely ground to a halt. Despite the highflying rhetoric of the early Obama administration about building a nuclear weapons-free world, that goal has been dropped. Moreover, with the exception of negotiating the New Start treaty (a small-scale disarmament arrangement) with the Russians, there has been no significant action on even limited agreements.

Indeed, there is a major nuclear “modernization” program underway by virtually all the nuclear powers. Russia

is developing new, updated ICBMs and a new strategic bomber, and new nuclear submarines are already being produced. Both China and India are reportedly developing hypersonic nuclear missile carriers, while Israel is proceeding with the modernization of its own nuclear arsenal. In the United States, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced what Reuters called “ambitious plans to upgrade [U.S.] nuclear weapons systems by modernizing weapons and building new submarines, missiles and bombers to deliver them.” In late December 2013, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that implementing these plans would cost the United States \$355 billion over the next decade. An analysis by the independent Center for Nonproliferation Studies put the bill at \$1 trillion over the next 30 years.

This default on treaty and rhetorical commitments made by the nuclear powers should appall the public of all nations. Democratic socialists in particular, as champions of the well-being of humanity, should challenge this hypocrisy. Just as an economy based on competition for wealth produces injustice and misery, so an international order based on competition for power produces a nightmarish world, characterized by nuclear proliferation, nuclear arms races, and, perhaps ultimately, nuclear war.

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