



Boston Democratic Socialists of America

the yankee radical

(617) 782-8787

www.dsaboston.org

March-April, 2015

DSA March Forum

Racism & Hollywood—From *Birth of a Nation* to *Selma*

WHEN: 7:30 pm, Thursday, March 12

WHERE: 9 Hamilton Place, Boston (Encuentro 5)—across the street from Park Street T Stop

SPEAKERS: Dick Lehr; Brian Corr

On February 17, 1915, President Woodrow Wilson hosted a White House screening of D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, an early Hollywood blockbuster celebrating the Ku Klux Klan's role in returning white supremacy to the post-Civil War South. A century later President Barack Obama has just hosted a White House showing of *Selma*, the Oscar nominated film about the Martin Luther King-led struggle for black voting rights in 1965 Alabama. Clearly, some things have changed. Our speakers will discuss how these films relate to the 20th century civil rights movement and their relevance for today.

In *The Birth of a Nation—How A Legendary Filmmaker And A Crusading Editor Reignited America's Civil War*, award winning investigative journalist **Dick Lehr** tells how the Griffith epic was greeted with almost universal acclaim by white America from Hollywood to Washington—until a militant anti-racist backlash was mobilized in Boston by black editor and activist Monroe Trotter, a sometime ally of W.E.B. Du Bois and the newly emerging NAACP. Formerly with the *Boston Globe*, Mr. Lehr has written two earlier books on local crime boss Whitey Bulger.

Ava DuVernay's *Selma* has received

mostly excellent reviews. It highlights King's tactical disputes with both other sections of the civil rights movement and President Johnson, although they ultimately united enough to force through the historic 1965 voting rights act. Cambridge Peace Commission Director **Brian Corr** will compare the film to the real Selma march, and discuss how to respond to attacks on voting rights today.

Before the forum the BDSA Exec Board will meet at 6:30 pm; all members are welcome to attend.

Where Did We Come From? A Socialist Party History

WHEN: 3 pm, Sunday, April 26

WHERE: Workmen's Circle, 1762 Beacon St., Brookline

SPEAKER: Jack Ross

The American Socialist Party was born at the start of the twentieth century, led in its heyday through WW1 by railroad unionist and five-time Presidential candidate Eugene Debs, then through the Depression and WW2 by six-time Presidential candidate Norman Thomas. In 1973 it dissolved in a three-way split. The dominant group re-named itself Social Democrats, USA, and became influential for a time in George Meany's AFL-CIO and cold war think tanks before drifting off into neo-conservative oblivion.

The smallest of the three factions kept

the name "Socialist Party", and today is still trying to run candidates on the SP ticket, without anyone much noticing. The third grouping, led by Michael Harrington, broke away to form a new organization, the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, which evolved into DSA.

Jack Ross presumably covers this and much else in his new book, *The Socialist Party of America: A Complete History*, which will be out by the time of his talk. According to the publisher, the book is based on archival research and "challenges the orthodoxies of both sides of the

historiographical debate, as well as assumptions about the Socialist Party in historical memory... and assesses some of the more sensational charges from the right about contemporary liberalism and the 'radicalism' of Barack Obama."

Jack is the son of early Boston DSOC leader Ben Ross, and has written for publications ranging from Antiwar.com to the American Conservative and History News Network. He is also the author of *Rabbi Outcast: Elmer Berger and American Jewish Anti-Zionism*.

SHORT TAKES

Jobs with Justice Dinner

On April 2 Jobs with Justice will hold its annual dinner at 1199/SEIU to celebrate last year's victories for Massachusetts workers on paid sick days, raising the minimum wage, and a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights: 150 Mt. Vernon St., Boston (Dorchester). 6:00 pm reception, 7:00 pm Dinner & Program. Details & Directions: 617-524-8778, Gillian@massjwj.net.

UN Nuclear Weapons Conference

The U.S., UK, Russia, China and France long ago signed onto a commitment to negotiate the elimination of their nuclear weapons, but after 44 years this group has yet to hold its first meeting. April 27, 2015 is when the

nations of the world will meet at the UN to determine what—if anything—can be done to compel the U.S. and other nuclear weapons states to adhere to this agreement. So between now and May, U.S. and international advocates urging the elimination of these weapons will be building a campaign of mass participation in events related to the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. Although the main focus will be on slashing nuclear arsenals, there will also be organizing against climate catastrophe and other social justice issues. Details: info@masspeaceaction.org; 617-354-2169.

Democrats and Israel

When in 2011 Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu last spoke before Congress,

implicitly opposing President Obama's Palestinian policies, Democrats seemed eager to compete with Republicans in jumping to their feet with 29 standing ovations of almost orgasmic intensity.

This time more than 50 Democrats didn't show up for Bibi's Congressional lecture, including Senator Warren and Reps. McGovern and Clark, also Sen. Bernie Sanders. A common complaint from many of the boycotters was that by inviting the Prime Minister without consulting or even notifying President Obama, Speaker Boehner had unfortunately turned the unconditional support Israel is used to receiving from

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Let's Make Big Box Retail and Fast Food Chains Pay A Living Wage

By Harris Gruman



Currently, a full-time worker in Massachusetts earning the minimum wage makes only \$18,720 a year. It would take her 507 years to earn as much as the CEO of McDonald's made last year alone.

No one who works full-time for a large, profitable corporation should be paid so little that they cannot make ends meet. So, if passed, *An Act to Establish a Living Wage for Employees of Big Box Retail Stores and Fast Food Chains* sponsored by Senator Dan Wolf (SD 852) and Representative Steve Ultrino (HD 2835) would be a big step forward.

What Does This Bill Do?

- It will require big box retail and fast food corporations to pay their employees at least \$15 an hour by

2018.

- The bill will apply only to large corporations with 200 or more employees.
- It will phase the increase over three years—\$12 in 2016, \$13.50 in 2017, and \$15 in 2018.

A Living Wage Will Help Employees.

- It will provide greater economic security to low-wage employees at big box retail and quick service fast food chains, many of whom are parents, allowing them to meet basic needs and alleviate the struggles between work and family.
- As *The Boston Globe* reported in December 2014, without family-supporting employment many workers earning the minimum wage are forced to work three or more jobs to piece together enough money to pay their bills.

A Living Wage Will Help Our Economy.

- When workers have more money in their pockets, they spend it at small businesses in their neighborhoods – helping those local businesses grow and create more jobs.
- For employers, higher wages mean more efficient and satisfied workers and less employee turnover, making it easier to recruit and retain workers and helping the bottom line.
- In other countries, fast food chains pay as much as \$20 an hour and offer far more employee benefits, yet they still remain profitable.

Former Boston DSA Chair Harris Gruman is Executive Director of the SEIU MA State Council. For further information call him at (617) 316-0443, or contact harris.gruman@seiu.org.

World Labor Unions: Halt TPP Negotiations

By Paul Garver



(Photo: <http://www.cwa-union.org/issues/entry/c-trans-pacific-free-trade-agreement>)

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has called on governments to stop negotiations on the “Trans-Pacific Partnership” agreement, criticising the secrecy and corporate bias in the current negotiations.

The Communication Workers of America (CWA), the Teamsters and the Machinists are leading the AFL-CIO’s efforts. Together with a broad coalition of organizations put together by the Citizen’s Trade Campaign, they delivered a total of 663,373 petition signatures and letters opposing Fast Track trade authority to House and Senate leaders.

CWA President Larry Cohen promised that CWA activists would turn their attention to stopping the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), as “a dangerous trade deal that threatens our jobs, communities and the environment by giving big business new powers to undermine important laws and regulations.”

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said “This secretive trade deal is good for some multinational corporations, but deeply damaging to ordinary people and the very role of governments. Corporate interests are at the negotiating table, but national parliaments and other democratic actors are being kept in the dark.”

According to Burrow, the current TPP proposals include provisions which would:

- ▶ Make governments submit to so-called investor to state dispute settlement (ISDS) procedures whereby investors can sue governments on a wide range of policies, including environmental and social policies;
- ▶ Provide welfare for corporations and

transfer more power from parliaments to the boardroom.

National trade union centers in the countries negotiating the TPP are calling on their governments to stop the negotiations, and to seek a proper mandate if they are to engage in them again.

The national trade union centers that support this call are: Australia, ACTU; Canada, CSN and CSD; Japan, JTUC-RENGO; Mexico, UNT; New Zealand, NZCTU; Peru, CUT and CATP; United States, AFL-CIO. Some of these trade unions, as well as the unions of Chile (CUT-Chile) and Malaysia (MTUC) had asked for the negotiations to stop at an earlier stage.

Paul Garver is a retired international union organizer, and a member of DSA’s National Political Committee. For more info on TPP, visit (www.citizenstrade.org) then urge your Congressional reps to vote against Fast Track, the attempt to push TPP through without amendments (202-224-3121).

Mr. Bluster Goes to Washington

By Shelagh Foreman

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had this warning for a Joint Session of Congress: “If this regime [Iran]...were to acquire nuclear weapons, this could presage catastrophic consequences...the deadline for attaining this goal is getting extremely close... ladies and gentlemen, time is running out.”

That was nineteen years ago. For almost two decades, the Prime Minister has sounded the same alarm and urged the same US response: ever-harsher sanctions backed by military threats and a policy that treats negotiation as appeasement.

Some critics of his latest address contend that the intended audience was

actually the Israeli electorate; others say it was conceived as a rebuke to the Democratic Administration. One audience was almost certainly the handful of US senators, including Massachusetts Sen. Ed Markey, who will be called on to vote for the Republican Senate’s two attempts to undermine the hard-won diplomatic progress made by the P5+1 in keeping Iran’s nuclear program in check.

So contact our senators and ask them to vote against S. 615, “The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act”, and then vote to sustain President Obama’s promised veto.

And urge Senator Markey to vote against S. 269, “The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2015” when—and if—the Foreign Relations Committee votes on this disruptive measure. Senator Warren has already voted against it in the Senate Banking Committee. Seeking to exploit the perceived momentum from the Netanyahu address, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell may now be bringing both measures, in combined form, to the floor without further committee consideration.

(Continued on page 4)

On the March With JWJ

By Gillian Mason



(Photo from <http://www.jwj.com>)

Spring is here, and for Jobs with Justice that means the fight for working class power is ON. Last year, our movement made some serious gains here in the Commonwealth—raising the minimum wage, and winning paid sick days and a Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, in an uprising of low-wage workers unlike any in recent memory. But we need to keep up the fight in 2015!

This year, we are continuing to support workers at Walmart and fast food restaurants, taxi drivers, personal care attendants, restaurant workers, adjunct professors, and others who have come together to form

#WageAction, the hub for low-wage worker organizing in Massachusetts. Under the banner of the Fight for \$15, these workers are demanding a living wage and a voice on the job, and as the weather gets warmer, the demands will be taken to the street. In 2015 around the 15th of each month we will be taking some kind of action in the Fight for \$15—some months it may be a petition or an online action, and some we'll be marching en masse to let Massachusetts know that low-wage workers cannot wait for change.

Want to join the us? April 14th is your chance! Along with our partners at #WageAction, we're planning a huge mobilization that will bring thousands of workers, students, people of faith, and community supporters to Boston for a day of action. For details on where and when, please contact Jobs with Justice Organizing Director Melonie Griffiths at:

Melonie@massjwj.net.

See you in the streets!

Gillian Mason is Coordinator of Development and Education, Massachusetts Jobs with Justice



EQUAL PAY COALITION



(Photo: en.wikipedia.org.)

International Women's Day (March 8) has its origins in a 1909 declaration by the American Socialist Party based on the union struggles of women garment workers over pay and working conditions, although it didn't go international until 1911. In somewhat the same spirit, a century later the Equal Pay Coalition is campaigning for pay equity legislation here in Massachusetts designed to address the gender pay gap. Chief sponsors are Senators Patricia Jehlen and Karen Spilka, along with Reps. Ellen Story and Jay Livingstone. For more information, contact the MA chapter of the National Organization for Women: 617-254-9130; Massnow@massnow.org.

(Foreman, Continued from page 3)

Benjamin Netanyahu didn't deserve a forum in Congress to subvert the Iran/P5+1 negotiations, just as his government has thwarted successive rounds of US-backed Israeli/

Palestinian negotiations.

Let's thank Senator Warren and Representatives Clark and McGovern for absenting themselves from Netanyahu's third address to Congress. Write our Senators today and ask them

to vote NO on these counterproductive Iran bills.

Shelagh Foreman is Program Director for Massachusetts Peace Action



School Wars: Reign of Error

Reviewed by Tom Gallagher

There are currently about 50 million K-12 public school students and another five million in private school in the United States. With so many students—covering such a vast geographical, social, economic, and cultural spectrum—even under the best circumstances, there are bound to be a few problems. The public education system is historically quite decentralized, operated by myriad local school boards and districts. Yet as a whole, it has come under a nationwide perception of being completely dysfunctional. Is this criticism justified? Not for Diane Ravitch, former assistant secretary of education in the George W. Bush administration. “Public education is in a crisis only so far as society is,” she writes in her new book, *Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America’s Public Schools*, “and only so far as this new narrative of crisis has destabilized it.”

It would be a gross understatement to say that there’s a billion dollars to be made from the business of public education in this country; we’re spending in excess of \$590 billion tax dollars on it this year alone. So it shouldn’t come as a surprise that—like the Wall Street guys trying to get their hands on Social Security funds—the privatizers have come lining up in front of the schoolhouse door. It’s not just the kids’ lunch money they’re after; they want the whole school—with free rent, if they can get it. The guys with the big capital insist that the private sector be allowed to work its magic on public education, too. And the fact that they’ve gotten as far as they have has everything to do with what Ravitch considers the true crisis pervading our society—its large and growing wealth gap.

Of course, in the world of privatization, one simply does not talk about social realities outside the classroom.

Poverty among the student body? Why that’s “no excuse” for “failing schools.” For-profit charter schools with high priced executives and right wing foundations pour millions into anti-public school propaganda. Is this heavily moneyed advocacy problematic? It’s just part of the “secret sauce” for educational success that Chicago Mayor Rahm Emmanuel, who has set the record for number of public school closings, says the private sector has. (Subsequent examination of the sauce determined that the secret ingredient was, in fact, campaign contributions.)

The privatizers have been on the offensive for pretty much the entirety of the 21st century, starting with President George W. Bush’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. Once a supporter, she now realizes the law “fed the privatization frenzy.

As a measure of the absurdity of the federal government’s approach, Ravitch suggests we imagine a comparable discussion on crime. Crime is a terrible thing. There should be no crime in America. What, then, if we passed a law requiring every American community to be crime-free in 12 years?

Any city that did not meet the goal would be punished [...] its police stations would be closed and privatized; its police officers would lose their badges. The first to close would be the police stations in the poorest neighborhoods, where crime rates were highest. Eventually the scythe would swing even in affluent neighborhoods, because no city is completely crime-free.

Ravitch devotes considerable attention to *Waiting for Superman*, the 2010 documentary that “made the central points that public education was failing, that resources don’t matter and that the best ways to fix the crisis of low test scores were to expand the number of

privately managed charters, fire ineffective teachers, and weaken the unions that protected them.” She credits the film, and the attendant publicity—financed handsomely by the Gates Foundation and others—with providing “the charter school movement with a degree of public visibility it never had” and burnishing “the claim by charter school advocates that they were involved in ‘the civil rights issue of our time.’”

When I attended St. Athanasius Elementary School in the Hunts Point section of the South Bronx, our eighth grade teacher, Sister Acquin, forbade any of us from going to Morris, the district public high school. The school’s reputation had recently taken a bit of a hit, as I recall, when a student was shot on the doorstep. I don’t know that Sister Acquin had any way of enforcing her edict—except for fear of the Lord—but as far as I know she succeeded: most kids went to Catholic high schools, and those who went to public schools took one of the other options that existed in the system. So when Geoffrey Canada, whose childhood memory is the source of the title *Waiting for Superman*, mentions in the film that Morris was the district high school for his neighborhood too, I had no trouble understanding the source of his motivation for doing something about the dismal options facing many students.

Neither Canada nor I ultimately went to Morris. (General Colin Powell did, though, apparently emerging well prepared for a life of conflict on a global level.) I went to a Catholic high school, and Canada went to live with his mother’s parents on Long Island and attended high school there. I understand that he has gone on to do many fine things in his work with the Harlem Children’s Zone, although I don’t know

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that our similar experiences of avoiding Morris can be thought of as an adequate basis for formulating educational policy.

Waiting for Superman follows the families of five New York City children hoping to enroll in privately managed charter schools, attempting to avoid the Morris's of today. (Morris itself closed in 2002.) Ravitch sees the film as having played a crucial role in directing discussion "away from the controversial issue of privatization to the ideologically appealing concept of choice," allowing "the new movement for privatization [...] to transcend its tarnished history as an escape route for southern whites who sought to avoid court-ordered desegregation in the 1950s and 1960s."

A measure of the depth of the American right wing's commitment to charter schools is the \$164 million that the Walton Family Foundation spent on "K-12 education reform" in 2013. The foundation derives its revenue from Walmart, the doggedly anti-union retail chain that advises its employees how to supplement their inadequate income with taxpayer-funded benefits. The foundation estimates it has made grants to one of every four charter start-ups in the country.

Other prominent charter supporters come in for some well-deserved criticism as well: "Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York City has said," Ravitch writes, that when he went to school, there were forty students in each class, and if it was in his power to redesign the school system, he would cut the number of teachers in half, "weed out all the bad ones," double class size, and double the pay of the remaining teachers. He maintained that to "double the class size with a better teacher is a good deal for the students."

Before asking whether anyone in Bloomberg's social set would "buy" that, it is worth asking how likely it is that any of them have kids in schools with classes of 50 or 60 kids. Why not? Because, as Ravitch writes, "The Institute of Education Sciences of the US Department of

Education has identified class size reduction as one of the few evidence-based reforms that has proven effective." She also notes, "The catalogs of the best private schools seldom fail to mention their 12:1 ratio of students to teachers, or even 8:1."

At this point it may surprise you to find that Ravitch is not totally opposed to charter schools, and notes that former American Federation of Teachers president Al Shanker actually "was a founding father of the charter school movement" when the idea was that teachers would be freed from regulations and come up with their own programs for involving disengaged students. He turned against the movement when a private, for-profit company took over the management of nine Baltimore schools, and fired para-professionals making \$10 an hour with benefits and replaced them with college graduates making \$7 an hour with no benefits—an appropriate early example of the reality behind the rhetoric

For Ravitch, "One of the most disheartening aspects of the current reform movement is its disdain for the education profession." As a result, she finds, "Some of the worst education policies today, especially those that rely exclusively on standardized testing, have been imposed by non-educators who were wrongly hired as state or city commissioners of education." She recounts a telling story of an ice cream company executive brought in to conduct in-service training for Indiana educators. Because *People* magazine had named his blueberry ice cream the "Best Ice Cream in America," he must have insight on running any organization from an ice cream factory to a school. Indeed, he explained to the teachers that "If I ran my business the way you people operate your schools, I wouldn't be in business for long."

"Zero defects! TQM [total quality management]! Continuous improvement!" as he later recalled. During the Q&A period a teacher asked him, "when you are standing on your receiving dock

and you see an inferior shipment of blueberries arrive, what do you do?"

In the silence of that room, I could hear the trap snap [...] I was dead meat, but I wasn't going to lie.

"I send them back."

"That's right," the teacher replied, "and we can never send back our blueberries [...] We take them with ADHD, junior rheumatoid arthritis, and English as their second language. We take them all! Every one! And that, Mr. Vollmer, is why it's not a business. It's a school!" That man had an epiphany that day and went on to learn "that schools reflect the attitudes, beliefs and health of the communities that they serve," and therefore, to improve public education means more than changing schools, it means changing America.

And that is the crux. Geoffrey Canada and I each found our way to keep from going to Morris. The Catholic schools I went to had their way of not becoming like Morris—if you didn't toe the line, they could kick your behind out and you could go to PS 48 or Morris, which would have to take you in. The charter school theory operates on much the same basis: pick the students whose home lives are together enough that there is someone there willing and able to seek out a school placement, and you'll leave the worst blueberries behind.

Ravitch does have answers, answers that start before school children are even born, with good prenatal care for every pregnant woman, and include universal high-quality early childhood education, adequate social services, poverty reduction programs, reduced racial segregation, and keeping education governance in the hands of educators and elected officials rather than for-profit corporations. In other words, as the blueberry ice cream man learned, "fixing" America's schools "means changing America."

Former MA State Rep and Boston DSA Chair Tom Gallagher is the author of **Sub: My Years Underground in America's Schools.**

The Greek People Reject Austerity: Now the Rest of the World Must Join Them

DSA National Political Committee Statement, 01/26/15

Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) celebrates SYRIZA's victory in the Greek parliamentary elections of January 25, 2015.

SYRIZA's coming to power represents not just a rejection of the socially destructive austerity measures European elites imposed on the Greek people against their will. It also represents a new hope for democratic and socialist electoral alternatives across Europe and the rest of the world.

Democratic socialists understand that winning an election does not mark the end of a process of social transformation. It is only the beginning, and a difficult road lies ahead for SYRIZA and its supporters. After years of deep depression, Greek society is in shambles. One quarter of the population is out of work; youth unemployment is over 50%; hundreds of thousands of households are without basic necessities like electricity; untold numbers have been forced to scavenge for their daily bread. Even after its clear victory at the polls, SYRIZA continues to face not just domestic political opposition but international isolation as well. It will quickly find out whether the so-called "troika" (i.e., the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund) will give the Greek people room to breathe or try to punish them for their democratic audacity.

DSA also recognizes that this is a time for true international solidarity. The democratic will of the Greek people will only be realized if grassroots social movements across Europe force their governments to abandon their support for European Union (EU)-enforced austerity policies. This is particularly true in regards to ending the pro-austerity policies of the moderate left governments in Italy and France, and, most importantly, the Christian Democratic-Social Democratic coalition government in Germany.

But today, we should celebrate the fact that the Greek people rejected not just austerity, but the false alternative of the nationalist and fascist right. Tomorrow, we return to our hard work bringing similar triumphs to the United States and beyond.

Normalizing US Relations with Cuba

DSA National Political Committee Statement, 12/17/14

Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) celebrates the Obama administration's move toward the normalization of diplomatic relationships between the United States and Cuba. This change in U.S. foreign policy will help bridge the divide between U.S. and Cuban residents. We believe that increased cultural exchanges will improve the quality of life of both peoples, as will easing the flow of remittances from the Cuban-American community to family members in Cuba. But normal diplomatic relations are not enough; DSA will work with others to pressure Congress to end the unproductive and unjust trade embargo that remains in effect.

DSA remains steadfast in its support of those working for full democracy and human rights in Cuba (dissidents both within and without the Communist Party). DSA believes, as Rosa Luxemburg did, that the right to dissent and to form free political associations and parties must be an integral part of a socialist society. Thus, DSA will continue to support organic Cuban dissident and reform movements that are working to democratize the country's political and economic institutions.

DSA has always condemned the long-standing efforts by our own government to undermine the stability of Cuba. Our government's actions were never designed to aid the Cuban people, but instead to appease right-wing U.S. citizens of Cuban origin and punish a country that rejected imperialism and neoliberalism. We hope that the normalization of foreign relations will curtail negative U.S. actions in the future.

While much remains to be changed in U.S. foreign policy and Cuban domestic policy, DSA celebrates the coming end of more than fifty years of U.S. efforts to isolate Cuba diplomatically. But our work is not done; we will join with others to pressure Congress to end the inhumane and counterproductive economic embargo. For now, we applaud the Obama administration for working to restore diplomatic relations with Cuba, for an improvement in the human condition, even if limited, is a victory for social justice.

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virtually all Congressional representatives into a “partisan issue”.

If so, it’s about time. Try as they may to stay abreast of their GOP colleagues in the bi-partisan “We Blindly Support Israel Right or Wrong” club, these days it’s hard to keep up. In the last Presidential campaign Mitt Romney actually took positions to the right of Netanyahu, rejecting even consideration of a future Palestinian state instead of just endlessly postponing it through the increasingly pointless “peace process”.

Not so long ago things were a bit different—Republicans were actually better. In the fall of 1991 President George H.W. Bush publically opposed further US “loan guarantees” to Israel which were being diverted to erect illegal settlements in the Occupied Territories. The Likud government of the time and their US supporters organized a major effort to push the

loans through anyway, but Bush stood firm. The next year he was denounced by every Democratic Presidential candidate for his “anti-Israel” policies.

In October 1956 President Eisenhower pulled the plug on the British-French-Israeli attempt to militarily re-take the Suez Canal from Egypt by threatening to organize a run on the British pound unless all foreign forces were withdrawn immediately—which they then were. Adlai Stevenson, the liberal 1956 Democratic presidential candidate, criticized Eisenhower along the same lines Democrats did against Bush 35 years later. Ike wasn’t exactly an anti-imperialist; his style was more the covert CIA coups that overthrew democratically elected governments in Iran, Guatemala, and the Congo. But when the Soviet Union then matched British-French-Israeli imperialism with their own, smashing the Hungarian revolution with Russian tanks, US opposition to both

interventions seemed, for a brief historical moment and for whatever reasons, to embody those global democratic aspirations politicians love to drone on about.

So if a few of today’s Democrats have finally worked up the courage to take their own president’s side against Netanyahu and AIPAC, well, that’s a start.

—Mike Pattberg

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