



Boston Democratic Socialists of America

the yankee radical

(617) 782-8787

www.dsaboston.org

June-July, 2016

Report from the People's Summit; Meeting with Sanders Delegates

WHEN: Tuesday, June 28, 6–8 pm

WHERE: Ironworkers Local 7, Union Hall; 195 Old Colony Ave., South Boston
(Andrews Station Red Line)

By Rand Wilson

All DSAers and Bernie Sanders' supporters are invited to attend this meeting with many of his delegates. It will also be an opportunity to hear reports from the recent "People's Summit," strategize about plans for activities inside and outside the Democratic National Convention, and to deepen our collective discussion about the future.

First, **The People's Summit:**

About 3,000 Bernie Sanders supporters met in Chicago from June 17 to 19, searching for the way forward to continue the Political Revolution and fight against the takeover by the "billionaire class." Despite Hillary Clinton's apparent primary victory, the mood was very upbeat. Most clearly felt that through the [Sanders Campaign](#) we have achieved something quite important.

The main conference organizers—[National Nurses United](#) and [National People's Action](#)—had a highly structured agenda with limited discussion and participation. The conference reflected the Sanders' movement, but it didn't provide a direction for the future. It was about

vision, not organization or strategy.

Many of the plenary speakers implied their support for Clinton without stating it outright. More explicit was the need to keep building the movement for "down ballot" candidates who embrace the Sanders' platform. There was no manifesto or proclamation, there were no resolutions. It was not the founding convention of anything, but rather an opportunity to share perspectives and ideas for the future.

The conference showed how all of the social movements could come together to create a larger political movement with a comprehensive program for social change. The thorny question of whether and how to do that, within or outside of the Democratic Party remained the key unanswered question. [DSA](#) leaders and members were highly visible throughout the weekend.

Meeting with Sanders Democratic Convention Delegates

Last April and May, 45 Congressional District and At-Large pledged Sanders delegates from Massachusetts were elected to the 2016 [National Democratic Convention](#)

in Philadelphia (July 25–28). So the state [Democratic Party](#) has now provided us with something usually lacking on the left: Instead of self-appointed leaders, we have a diverse, statewide group of 45 *elected* representatives committed to the Sanders' platform. It would be an exciting prospect if after the election these delegates could help lead a network in Massachusetts dedicated to continuing the "political revolution" with the support of the Sanders campaign and access to its large list of donors.

Rand Wilson is an elected delegate from the 7th Congressional District. He works for [SEIU Local 888](#) and has volunteered with the [Labor for Bernie network](#).

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SHORT TAKES

Bernie Sanders

June 26

Ever since their defeat in the NY primary, the Sanders campaign has been belatedly coming to grips with an unpleasant reality about the race for the Democratic nomination—they lost. Despite Sen. Sanders repeated assurances of still having a “real but narrow path to victory”, this was clearly no longer the case. Mainstream pundits began asking—some with increasing irritation—why not just pack it in and go home?

This question has been answered for anyone watching a recent televised (C-SPAN) performance of Sanders appointees to the Democratic Party platform drafting committee. After former Florida Congressman Robert Wexler presented the standard AIPAC/No Criticism of Israel Allowed line embedded in past platforms, he was immediately challenged by DSA member Cornell West, Arab American Institute President James Zogby, and Rep. Keith Ellison, all calling for an end to Israeli occupation and illegal settlements in the West Bank. Clinton

appointees voted down this particular amendment 7-6, along with others like an indexed \$15 minimum wage, a carbon tax, a fracking ban, and opposition to the TPP. But if Bernie’s team can get enough delegate signatures, issues like these will be debated in Philadelphia on prime time.

From the early primaries up to now, Clinton’s strategy has been to co-opt Sanders’ positions whenever possible, not confront them. Apparently this has now led to mutual agreement on a number of progressive platform planks, including expanding Social Security, abolishing private prisons and a new Glass-Steagall.

But on certain things—like TPP or Israel/Palestine—Clinton will choose to fight, not conciliate. If Bernie nonetheless succeeds in bringing about a convention floor vote he’ll probably lose, but in doing so will focus the issues for his post-convention Democratic primary endorsements, and the post-election movement to follow.

—Mike Pattberg

July 11 Housing Forum

On Monday, **July 11** the Boston Jacobin Reading Group is sponsoring a panel discussion on the struggle for affordable housing and rent control in Boston, led by two local housing organizers, Darnell Johnson and Eliza Parad.

Darnell and Eliza will be presenting on Community Land Trust networks, Just Cause Eviction, and Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) reform, among other issues. We will have time for discussion afterward.

The event will be at **Encuentro 5, 9A Hamilton Place, Boston (Park Street T stop), 7 pm**. Hope to see you all there!

—Karen Narefsky, Jacobin Magazine

Airport Workers Rally for Good Jobs

By Eugenio Villasante, Local 32BJ, Service Employees International Union

On June 15th Logan airport workers and their supporters held a rally in East Boston to commemorate Justice for Janitors Day, the 26th anniversary of the historic struggle of Los Angeles janitors for better wages, safe working conditions and union recognition. Today that union—32BJ SEIU—is helping to organize Airport Workers United, part of an international labor campaign to support airport employees against the “race to the bottom” being pushed by the global airline industry.

JetBlue, for example, now outsources passenger service jobs to low-bid contractors. This system leaves cabin cleaners, wheelchair

attendants and baggage handlers making as little as \$11 an hour, without access to affordable health benefits.

In response, Airport Workers United are raising their voices for \$15 and union rights. By sticking together, speaking out for change, and going on strike, we have won wage increases in Los Angeles, New York City, Newark, New Jersey, Minneapolis, Boston, Philadelphia, and Fort Lauderdale, Florida. More than 70,000 airport workers nationwide have either received increased pay or other improvements, including healthcare, paid sick leave and worker retention

policies as a result.

For further information visit www.seiubj.org, or contact Khalida Smalls, (ksmalls@seiu32bj.org).



Let's Back Pat!

By Matt McLaughlin

State Senator Patricia Jehlen is a proven and experienced progressive who this year has a serious challenge in the September 8 Democratic primary—and welcomes your help! Her Senate district includes Somerville, Medford, and parts of Cambridge and Winchester. She is committed to increased public school funding, expanding the green line to Somerville and Medford, cleaning and expanding access to the Mystic River, providing home care for senior citizens, and expanding LGBTQ rights. She was also one of our few

elected officials to have backed Bernie Sanders in the Presidential primary.

Among Sen. Jehlen's numerous legislative accomplishments, some are quite recent. Her Parental Leave bill became law last year; voters passed her Paid Sick Leave bill by referendum in 2014. She backed housing vouchers for families and helped pass a bill creating 1,000 units of housing for seniors, people with disabilities and veterans.

There are plenty of canvassing, phone banking, and outreach opportunities coming up—see Sen. Jehlen's

calendar at <http://electpatjehlen.org>. The Senator is also accepting applications for our Summer/Fall 2016 Fellowship Program. Fellows will get hands-on campaign experience in grassroots organizing, outreach and voter contact. To learn more visit www.electpatjehlen.org; or call Charlotte at (617) 909-0408 (charlotte@electpatjehlen.org.)

Matt McLaughlin is the campaign manager for Senator Jehlen.

Our Endorsed Candidates

Boston DSA is a member of the Mass Alliance coalition that supports progressive candidates for state legislative elections. For details on the Alliance endorsed candidates below, visit www.massalliance.org.

OPEN SEATS

MONICA CANNON
7th Suffolk—Roxbury

NORA HARRINGTON
Norfolk, Bristol & Plymouth—Sharon, Canton, Milton, etc.

JACK PATRICK LEWIS
7th Middlesex—Framingham, Ashland

NATALIE HIGGINS
4th Worcester—Leominster



HOW TO LOCATE YOUR POLLING PLACE

Need help in finding your polling place? If so, visit:

<http://wheredoivotema.com/bal/MyElectionInfo.aspx>

CHALLENGERS

MOSES DIXON
17th Worcester—Worcester, Leicester

JEN MIGLIORE
9th Essex—Lynn, Saugus, Wakefield

DENISE ANDREWS
2nd Franklin—Western Mass—Orange, Athol, etc.

MIKE CONNOLLY
26th Middlesex—Cambridge

MATT PATRICK
3rd Barnstable—Falmouth, Mashpee

JOAN MESCHINO
Senate

PROGRESSIVE INCUMBENT DEFENSES:

PAT JEHLLEN
MIKE DAY
JAMIE ELDRIDGE
BARBARA L'ITALIEN
GERRY CASSIDY

MEMO FROM MARIA...

By Maria Svart

Many people believe that only the rich can leave a meaningful legacy gift to a cause. The truth is that even those of us with modest means have insurance policies, pension benefits, wills or living trusts for which we can designate beneficiaries like DSA, and a bequest is one of the simplest ways to do so. These thoughtful gifts ensure that we can continue our critical work to fight for the values of cooperation, solidarity, and socialism.

We value bequests of all sizes. To learn more about investing in solidarity for the future and putting DSA in your will, contact us at (212) 727-8610 or see

www.dsausa.org/bequests.

Maria Svart is National Director of Democratic Socialists of America

No TPP for Boston!

By Liz King

No TPP Boston is a small, activist group formed out of the Boston Council of MoveOn.org to help defeat Obama's Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). We've been working to defeat this proposal for 2 1/2 years now, and feel like our work is finally paying off as anti-TPP sentiment is ever-growing. Lately we've visited with North Shore Rep. Seth Moulton, who is on the fence, and have been concentrating our efforts in his district. On June 4 the MA Democratic Party Convention

passed an anti-TPP resolution (see below), which lets Rep. Moulton and the rest of our delegation know that Massachusetts Democrats are against this proposed agreement.

The biggest upcoming anti-TPP event is the July 24 March for a Clean Energy Revolution at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. There will be buses from Boston. Sign up and get more info here:

www.secure.foodandwaterwatch.org/

We also have a highway banner,

and plan to display it regularly throughout the summer in the Salem/Lynn area. We also have flyers explaining the effects of TPP on health, food, the environment and state government, along with another regarding China. We can mail them to you for neighborhood distribution and at your events.

We meet in Brighton. If you'd like to join us or get on our email list, please contact me (Liz King) at bking32@aol.com.

Resolution Passed at MA Democratic Convention

June 4, 2016

Whereas the Trans-Pacific, TPP, Partnership is a trade agreement between the United States and 11 nations in the Asia Pacific region, involving 40% of the economy of the world; and

Whereas, the TPP shifts control from our democratically elected governments to extra-governmental tribunals which multinational corporations use under the Investor State Dispute Settlement provision; and

Whereas, the TPP thereby endangers our regulations pertaining to product safety, worker rights, financial regulation, and environmental protections; and provides no protections against abuse of the tribunal system and no appeal process;

Therefore, be it resolved, by the delegates to the Massachusetts Democratic Convention held in Lowell on June 4, 2016, that we urge Congress to reject the TPP. **Furthermore** that opposition to the TPP be incorporated into the party platform at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, PA.

YDS Summer Conference

Join us for our unique summer gathering of young socialist activists and Bernie Sanders supporters this August 5-7, 2016, just 10 minutes outside of Washington, DC. The conference, "**From Sanders to the Grassroots: Continuing the Political Revolution Among the Student Left,**" will be held at the National 4-H Conference Center, 7100 Connecticut Ave., Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

To register: Visit www.ydsusa.org.

Co-sponsor:
Students for Bernie.

Build Subways, Not Submarines

By Jonathan King

Most New England residents understand that the vigor and health of the overall economy depends on a modern and efficient transportation system. The interstate highway system, despite its focus on vehicles, connected and enhanced communities and commerce across the nation. It wasn't built with property taxes or user fees, but by large federal budget appropriations. The Boston area MBTA Red Line, in its early days a superior public transit system, also depended on large cash infusions from the federal government.

So how come in the richest and most technologically advanced nation in the world Amtrak trains are derailing, we don't have regular passenger rail service across Massachusetts or the Northeast corridor, the Red Line is often in "crush hour" conditions, the T can't keep running the snow, and the MBTA is raising fares and cutting service? Republican and some Democratic Congressmen claim we can't afford it. Let's examine that assumption.

According to the National Priorities Project, Congress allocated \$1.11 trillion dollars in fiscal year 2015. By far the largest category of discretionary spending was the military, bigger than all federal civilian programs combined. All other national needs—housing, transportation, infrastructures, biomedical research, environmental regulation, climate science—share the remaining 45%.

Republicans and many Democrats treat the military and civilian sides of the budget as separate items, but of course both are part of one pool of funds, mostly from individual income taxes. Thus this past November and December when the Budget authorization was moving through Congress, there were dozens of articles in the *NY Times* and *Boston Globe* about political maneuvering. None mentioned that more than half the

authorized dollars were going to the Pentagon, or that these were the reader's income tax dollars.

Though Republicans often criticize "big government", they're referring only to programs addressing human needs like housing, education, and health. When it comes to military spending, the mindset has generally been "the bigger the better".

The day after the AMTRAK derailing a Senate committee supported a further *reduction* in Amtrak investment. The same week, the Senate proposed more than \$600 billion dollars in military funding, more than the total military budgets of the next six largest nations combined. A significant fraction of this budget is for upgrading our nuclear weapons arsenal.

The United States has 14 Ohio class nuclear missile submarines. Trident missiles fired from just one of them can obliterate the major cities of any nation in the world. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects the cost of US nuclear forces for the decade 2015–2024 at \$348 billion. This may well be an underestimate; 900 billion to \$1.1 trillion seems more likely over the next 30 years (Broad and Sanger, 2014). And the current budget—more than a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall—proposes buying 12 new nuclear weapon submarines at \$8 billion each. The history of Pentagon weapons projects costing far more than their initial "lo-ball" estimates suggests that the actual costs will be significantly higher. Continuing to drain our national wealth in such non-productive and provocative programs will enrich the 17–18 major nuclear contractors, but not the rest of us.

So the solution to disinvestment in rail transport is to reverse it; don't spend \$300 billion building unnecessary and provocative nuclear submarines, but take

the money and build subways. And instead of importing trains from foreign countries, build them here, not only improving transportation but also creating jobs. In fact they could be built in New London, Connecticut, site of submarine construction where the necessary heavy equipment already exists.

One of the outlets this battle takes in Congress is the Congressional Progressive Caucus. Each year they submit an alternative budget, now called the People's Budget, which spends more on civilian needs and less on the Pentagon. So, in the years to come let's try to cut funding for these nuclear weapons. Promoting the People's Budget is a small first step toward reversing the wrong priorities of our tax dollars.

(Adapted from a talk given at the [recent conference](#) "Solving Transit and Traffic Problems in the Cambridge Corridor".)

Jonathan King is Professor of Biology at MIT, and active with Peace Action and Budget for All.

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Mass Murder In Orlando

Issued by the National Political Committee of DSA, June 13, 2016

Democratic Socialists of America condemns the perpetrator of the mass killing and wounding of innocents at the LGBTQ night club Pulse in Orlando, Florida this past weekend on Latin night. We stand in solidarity with the victims and their families and the LGBTQ and Latinx community of Orlando and beyond.

This was not a random shooting, but one motivated by the homophobia and hypermasculinity that characterizes all fanatical ideologies, be they Islamist or Christian extremism or far-right anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim political movements. Rather than attacking the actual sources of injustice, violent extremists target those who do not conform to conservative and patriarchal conceptions of social life.

DSA condemns all authoritarian movements and extremist religions that favor imposing their ideologies through the armed violence of the state

or of vigilantes. We find it particularly hypocritical of the religious right to condemn this attack as one upon “American values,” when the far right espouses a worldview that demonizes the LGBTQ community, immigrants and people of color. DSA stands for the building of a democratic civil society that affirms the humanity of all; the Right’s current hate campaign in favor of transphobic bathroom bills stands in stark opposition to that commitment.

In the United States, extremist individuals can act out their violent hatred through ready access to military-style weapons whose only purpose is to inflict massive, instantaneous casualties. The majority of the U.S. public favors banning assault rifles and stricter regulation of access to fire arms. Until we defeat the power of the undemocratic NRA, the United States will continue to lead the world in random mass killings—a

much greater threat to our collective well-being than is organized terrorism.

Ideologically motivated mass shootings in the United States in recent decades have been carried out by individuals acting in isolation. When the actor is an individual white racist, as in the Charleston, South Carolina shootings, we do not condemn all whites in the United States as adherents of the shooter’s racist ideology. The same refusal to hold an entire community to blame for the act of an individual fanatic must also apply to the Muslim community in the United States. These acts of fanatical harm of innocents can only be curtailed through a continuous struggle for a society that embraces freedom of sexual expression and the right to freely choose whom one loves, as well as full rights for all immigrants, regardless of their nominal legal status.

Stop U.S. Complicity with Saudi War Crimes!

By Shelagh Foreman

Cluster bombs are banned by 119 nations (but not the United States or Saudi Arabia) due to the frequency with which “bomblets” don’t explode upon impact and are later found by children who set them off, causing horrifying injuries or death. U.S. law does ban cluster bombs that malfunction more than 1% of the time, and prohibits selling cluster munitions to countries that use them in civilian areas. These provisions have both been violated with bombs manufactured by Textron Corporation and sold to Saudi Arabia, according to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

Even the Obama administration had put a halt on the transfer of cluster bombs to Saudi Arabia—a halt we need to make permanent.

But by a recent 216–204 vote the House of Representatives has blocked an amendment that would have stopped the sale of U.S.–made cluster bombs to Saudi Arabia. (To their credit, all nine of our Massachusetts Representatives voted Yes.) These munitions are part of the Saudi’s devastating military campaign against Yemen. Now as our hopes turn to the Senate to end this particular aspect of U.S. complicity in Saudi war crimes,

Senators Warren and Markey need to know that we count on them to halt these cluster bomb sales.

So on **July 6, 4–6 pm**, Mass Peace Action is organizing a Stand Out-Protest at Textron Headquarters, 201 Lowell Street, Wilmington, to tell them: Stop making cluster bombs! Call 617-354-2169 to arrange carpools. Some will be leaving at 3:00 pm from Cambridge.

Shelagh Foreman is Program Director of Massachusetts Peace Action



Bogdan Denitch, 1929-2016

By Harold Meyerson



Bogdan Denitch

The first time I heard Bogdan Denitch speak, he intimidated the hell out of me.

That wasn't, I hasten to explain, his intent. Far from it. The occasion was a national board meeting of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee in 1975—the first I'd ever attended and the first time I'd ever heard him speak.

Early on in the meeting, some contentious issue came up, someone rose to advocate a position, and Bogdan then rose to counter it. He proceeded to respond to the advocate's argument—one that had only just been advanced—with a perfectly formulated rebuttal. "I have five points," he began ("How could he know he had five points?" I wondered—the other guy had just finished making his one.) He then rolled them off in order, each point building to the next, pausing only for the occasional inflective grunts with which he punctuated his arguments. A dash of sarcasm here, an allusion to some obscure left history there, a devastating finale, and then he sat down.

"That's how people speak here?" I thought, vowing not to open my mouth for the rest of the meeting if that was the

standard I was expected to meet. What I came to discover, however, was that Bogdan's only peer in argumentation—though with a vastly different style and temperament—was Mike Harrington, Bogdan's closest friend. What both Mike and Bogdan had apparently learned from their mentor, Max Shachtman, was to formulate their thoughts not in complete sentences but in complete paragraphs. Fully organized arguments tumbled effortlessly from their lips. As a Trotskyist faction that lacked all power save that of argumentation, the Shachtmanite elite became masters of debate, and some also internalized what I gather (never having heard Shachtman speak myself) was Shachtman's own slashing, allusive style. And when it came to slashing and alluding, at least within DSOC and DSA, Bogdan had no peer.

The subject matter on which he was also close to peerless was, of course, Eastern Europe. And the most memorable talk I ever heard him give was at the 1989 DSA Convention, just a few days after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Bogdan was slated to speak in the opening plenary, and it was the sudden collapse of Soviet communism and the future trajectory of the Warsaw Pact nations (plus, needless to say, Yugoslavia) that he addressed.

His performance was at once sobering and dazzling. These were not nations that had the social, economic, cultural, or political base to evolve seamlessly, if at all, into liberal democracies. "These are not beloved

communities," Bogdan thundered, as he took us on a tour d'horizon around the Eastern bloc. Ethnic hatred, religious obscurantism, suppressed nationalism, raging xenophobia, kleptocratic regimes—these would all rise to the fore, he predicted.

Among the several gazillion talks I've heard over the past forty years, Bogdan's stands out as the most prescient prophecy I've encountered—delivered with his usual logic, sarcasm, allusions, and a deep understanding, a foreboding rooted in familiarity, that almost nobody—left, center, or right—could match. It was such an impressive performance that I asked Bogdan to author some pieces on Eastern Europe's devolution for the *L.A. Weekly*, then a paper much like the *Village Voice* at its long-gone best, where I had recently gone to work as news and politics editor. Bogdan was normally an academic writer (like Shachtman, a great debater but fairly dull on the page) but, inspired by what he was seeing in Serbia and Croatia, and by my reminding him he was writing for a vaguely counter-cultural publication, he produced some stories that not only documented the rise of Miloševićian nationalism, but provided vivid pictures of the Mad Max-like thugs who had emerged as the storm troopers of the brave new Yugoslavia.

As the years went on, Bogdan became a friend and mentor, and someone I could argue back at even without a degree from the Shachtman finishing school. Not that he still

wasn't a formidable disputant: most of my memories of this come from barrooms, where, after we both had a few drinks, he could grow increasingly emphatic—but also, always, wry, amusing, engaging. I don't know what dreams he harbored as a young man of building a democratic socialist revolution, though some element of self-romanticization was, as is often the case, probably detectable. If you look closely at the photograph of the young Bogdan in Maurice Isserman's biography of Harrington, he is smoking a pipe, reading a book and, at the bottom of the picture, holding a pistol. How much of this—the macho

man of the left, the intellectual man of action—was inspired by Trotsky and how much by Hemingway, I couldn't say.

But when it came to the more prosaic tasks of building a democratic left day-by-day, Bogdan was tireless. He founded and built the Socialists Scholars Conference—now Left Forum—into a major left institution (and if its presentations mixed the boring and silly with the occasionally brilliant, well, you go to war with the left you have). He would travel across the country to speak for DSA locals; he founded democratic socialist organizations in the former Yugoslavia

and got Scandinavian socialist parties to fund them; he was not just DSOC and DSA's representative to the Socialist International, but himself an internationalist in the deepest and best sense of the word. He was a rooted cosmopolitan—rooted in a deep commitment to democratic socialism, at home in the world and in the better world he strove to make, in his loud, logical, slashing, inimitable way. Rest in peace.

Originally posted on the Dissent website. Harold Meyerson is executive editor of the American Prospect and an Honorary Vice Chair of DSA.

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