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## Labor 25 Years after PATCO

### Electoral Challenges to Neo-Liberalism

Also—

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Lebanon War and the United Nations



# Twenty-Five Years after the Breaking of PATCO

By Steve Early

This summer marked the 25th anniversary of a strike whose outcome still haunts organized labor – and affects the job conditions of millions of non-union workers as well.

On August 3, 1981, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) launched a nation-wide walkout after years of conflict with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). President Ronald Reagan – a one-time Hollywood union leader – gave the strikers 48 hours to return to work. When 11,345 of them ignored his ultimatum, he fired them all. Meanwhile, the FAA kept air traffic flowing – at greatly reduced volume – with the help of supervisors, nonstrikers, and military controllers.

Reagan's mass dismissal of PATCO members – and their blacklisting from further federal employment – was the biggest, most dramatic act of union busting in 20th century America. PATCO's destruction ushered in a decade of lost strikes and lock-outs, triggered by management demands for pay and benefit givebacks that continue to this day in a wide range of industries.

Whenever longtime union members gather now to bemoan the weakened state of labor, PATCO invariably gets mentioned. If only we had all stuck together, they say, and displayed the kind of strike solidarity necessary to meet Reagan's challenge, the history of the last 25 years might have been different for labor.

In the summer of 1981, neither the AFL-CIO nor airline industry unions acted so decisively. As PATCO strike historian and Drexel University professor Art Shostak recalls, "The labor movement fussed and fumed, finally to stand exposed as a paper tiger." PATCO's most significant aid came from abroad, in the form of a brief job action by Canadian air traffic controllers, who risked fines and suspensions for refusing to handle flights bound for or originating in the U.S.

The PATCO strikers themselves were unlikely candidates for labor militancy and martyrdom. The majority, as Shostak points out, were Vietnam-era veterans, who went directly from the military into the FAA's rigid, hierarchical culture of "white shirts, ties, and close-cropped hair." Much to the annoyance of other unions, PATCO had actually endorsed Reagan for president in 1980. More significantly, PATCO failed to build ties with the pilots, mechanics, flight attendants, and baggage handlers whose backing was so desperately needed during the controllers' own walk-out.

Nevertheless, as the fines, injunctions, and federal indictments piled up against strike leaders, PATCO's struggle became a "consciousness-raising experience" – for its members and other trade unionists. There was a tremendous outpouring of grassroots labor support for the air traffic controllers, even as they were being widely vilified in the media for making greedy and irrational demands.

Viewed from the perspective of the last quarter century – with its real wage stagnation, longer working hours, and shrinking pensions – the strikers' proposals do seem unrealistic today, although they shouldn't be. In response to stressful working conditions that affected FAA employees' health and longevity on the job, PATCO sought a shorter work week (equal to the reduced hours of controllers in other countries) and better early retirement benefits.

Compare such strike issues – and the aspirations they represented – with the causes of a nationwide work-stoppage at Northwest Airlines last year. Nearly 4,400 members of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) lost their jobs resisting a 26-percent wage cut, elimination of traditional pension coverage, and contracting out of more than half their work. All the AMFA strikers were immediately replaced, PATCO-style, while top labor officials once again stood by carping about the bad timing or past misbehavior of the union involved.

The lesson of PATCO – and, more recently, AMFA as well – is as old as unions themselves: an injury to one is an injury to all. No labor movement can long survive, much less thrive, without a strong culture of mutual aid and protection. When labor organizations practice solidarity some of the time, rather than all the time, they do a grave disservice to both their own members and the millions of unorganized workers whose pay and benefits have also suffered since Ronald Reagan's death blow to PATCO.

*Steve Early is a labor organizer who works for the Communications Workers of America in Boston. This piece previously appeared in the Boston Globe.*

## New Organizer for YDS

Born and raised in New York City, David Duhalde has been interested in politics and history since a young age. He was first exposed to pro-labor/anti-capitalist activism through the experiences of his parents, both of whom were active in the labor movement and Chile Solidarity. Primarily involved in anti-sweatshop work in high school, David organized city-wide demonstrations and delegations to rallies to D.C. and wrote articles for young people's progressive magazines. In 2002, he began studying at Bowdoin College in Maine, where he helped found a Young



Democratic Socialists chapter. Active in both YDS and the College Democrats, he helped build bridges within the left in turning out the vote against Bush in 2004. The YDS chapter also led successful social justice campaigns, such as getting Bowdoin to go sweat-free in its Bookstore apparel.

On his summer vacations, David often could be found working in the labor movement. He participated in the AFL-CIO's "Union Summer" at 18, worked in the political department of UNITE, campaigned against Bush with SEIU and America Coming Together, and interned at the Hong Kong-based China Labour Bulletin. After graduating, David worked as an assistant director of New York door-to-door fundraising for the Democratic National Committee. In August, he happily left to organize for his first love, YDS.

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## Bush Contracts Out Government Work

By David H. Richardson

The process by which the government competes for work with the private sector is defined by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-76. The putative goal is to save the taxpayers money. The Department of Labor (DOL) has completed 18 A-76 competitions, of which government employees won 16.

About 27 government jobs were eliminated in the two competitions that the government employees lost. In addition, 14 jobs were lost in the competitions that were "won" by government employees. DOL has committed to keep all but five of the affected employees on the payroll, a humane gesture on the part of senior career managers that eliminates any possibility that the A-76 process will save taxpayers any money. The five employees were involved in a competition that the government employees actually "won."

At present, more than 800 DOL jobs (out of 17,000 total) are being subjected to competition with the private sector. If this process continues, separations are expected in many parts of the DOL over the next few years.

### What Is A-76?

OMB is the agency that enforces the president's program on other Government agencies. Dating back to 1966 and revised several times since, OMB Circular A-76 sets out the process by which the government competes with private sector jobs that had previously been performed in-house.

Prior to the second Bush administration, A-76 competitions were largely confined to the Department of Defense. This changed in 2001 when the administration announced a policy forcing about half of the federal workforce to compete with the private sector. Feeling the heat from the American Federation of Government Employees, the principal union in the federal sector, and other groups, Congress passed legislation making quotas for competition illegal. Still, many agencies, DOL among them, are carrying out longterm plans as if the quotas were still in place.

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*David H. Richardson is Secretary of American Federation of Government Employees Local 12.*

### The A-76 Process: the Performance Work Statement (PWS)

The Bush administration revised Circular A-76 in 2003 and did make one improvement. Previously, it was legal to simply convert up to 10 jobs at a time from government employees to contractors without any competition at all. The revised circular requires a competition for even a single job.

Ironically, the A-76 process itself creates work for contractors. Although DOL managers have responsibility for the project, they have no experience or expertise in A-76 competitions. Consequently, they must hire specialized A-76 contractors to assist them.

The first step is to identify and define the work that is to be competed, which is done by writing the PWS. A PWS team is established to draft the document. The A-76 contractor, theoretically under the direction of the PWS team, interviews all, or a representative sample, of the employees whose jobs are being competed, to learn what they do. Far too often, this process has been cursory, resulting in too little work being included in the PWS. This gives the contractors a competitive advantage, since they do not have to bid on all the work but the government does.

### The A-76 Process: the Most Efficient Organization (MEO)

Once the PWS is completed, the MEO Team assembles the government's bid. The people at OMB who sponsor the A-76 process believe that the government is not organized efficiently and that reorganization can save work and taxpayer money. In practice, the "business units" being competed at DOL are not units at all, but employees doing similar types of work in different parts of DOL. For example, one competition encompasses accountants from all DOL agencies and parts of the country.

Since the "business units" are not actual units, there is no reorganization that will save money. As a result, the only thing left is to cut positions and/or grades. If DOL were actually competing a functional unit, contractors as well as federal employees might well be in the same group, and the contractors might well be the first to go. The current grouping of similar positions across DOL, however, makes this approach impossible. For example, contractor accountants are not part of the accounting

competition. Thus, the MEO Team must cut grades or positions (or both). Already the result has been to leave one DOL agency with too few employees to do the work.

### Protests

The A-76 process is headed by the Agency Tender Official (ATO). The ATO appoints the leaders of the PWS and MEO teams and assembles the government bid in the competition. In addition, the ATO is the only federal employee who can protest the competition itself.

Under the Competition in Contracting Act (CICA) of 1984, protests can be decided either at the Government Accountability Office (GAO) or by the U.S. Court of Federal Claims. However, the CICA was written not for A-76, but with general procurement in mind: it protects contractors but not federal employees.

To remedy this situation in part, an amendment to the 2005 Defense appropriation allows the ATO to protest a competition. Federal employees, however, are still not allowed to protest directly. If the ATO is presented with a petition signed by more than half of the employees in a competition, then the ATO must protest at GAO or write a letter to Congress explaining why she or

he didn't protest. Unfortunately, at DOL, ATOs have done neither, and there is no recourse for the employees or the union.

It is widely recognized by all, including U.S. Comptroller General David Walker of GAO, that the interests of the ATO and federal employees may not be the same. In March, Local 12 tested the rules by protesting the Accounting Competition at GAO. The protest was dismissed for lack of standing: it was claimed that the President of Local 12 was not an "interested party," as CICA requires.

### Problems with A-76 and Contracting Out

The contractors claim that they will reduce costs, provide the same level of service to the public, and provide the same pay and benefits as the government. However, they insert an



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# Bush Administration Goes After Air Traffic Controllers – Again

In 1981, more than 11,000 air traffic controllers working for the Federal Aviation Administration seeking improvements in pay, staffing, and other working conditions walked off the job. They did so in defiance of the ban on strikes by federal employees. The result: President Reagan fired the controllers and dissolved their union, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Association, better known by their acronym PATCO (*see page 2 for that whole sad story*).

Twenty-five years later, air traffic controllers are taking it on the chin again. This time, rather than firing the controllers, the Bush administration is trying to make the National Air Traffic Controllers Association – the successor to PATCO – irrelevant.

Last June, following nine months of negotiations, the FAA unilaterally imposed a new contract on the controllers that reduces future salary increases for current workers and cuts pay for new hires by 30 percent – creating a permanent gap in pay between current controllers and those to be hired in the future.

Air traffic controllers could sit at the bargaining table with FAA officials solely because of legislation enacted in 1996 that gave the agency’s employees – including controllers – the right to bargain over wages, hours and other conditions considered non-negotiable at most other federal agencies. In 1998, during the relatively labor-friendly Clinton administration, NATCA and the FAA negotiated a contract that provided controllers an increase in pay while adding staff at the busiest air traffic control towers—precisely the issues that led to the 1981 job action.

The talks that began in July 2005 were another story. While NATCA, the PATCO successor union, offered concessions on pay issues, the FAA refused to budge from its demand for steep pay cuts. The FAA imposed its contract on the controllers even as Congress prepared legislation compelling the parties to return to the bargaining table. (The House voted 271-148 to resume negotiations, eight votes short of the two-thirds needed to override a threatened Bush veto. Seventy-six Republicans defied the Bush administration by voting yea).

“Without an agreement, there can be no doubt that the FAA intends to deny its workers even the most basic, fundamental rights of collective bargaining,” said NATCA President John S. Carr, who vowed to continue to “fight the FAA in the courts, in the Congress, in the press, and in the public.”

NATCA and its supporters in Congress argue that the administration’s action not only harms workers but threatens aviation safety. They cite reducing pay and benefits as leading to a wave of controller retirements, placing a greater burden on the less-experienced workforce that remains.

Rep. Mark Pryor (D-Ark.) said he was concerned that the new contract was part of an FAA plan to privatize and consolidate

air traffic control towers. This would fit the FAA’s eagerness during the Bush years to privatize its facilities. Last year, the agency turned over its flight service stations – which provide aeronautical and weather information to pilots – to Lockheed Martin, privatizing some 2,500 formerly federal jobs. NATCA fears that the FAA next plans to outsource its weather stations and air traffic engineers.

While the big hits in labor-management relations came in the private sector this year, the attacks on the air traffic controllers are one more sign of the Bush administration’s willingness to reverse government-worker gains and marginalize public sector unions, which have in fact grown significantly in the last decade. Just as the breaking of PATCO signaled that it was open season on unions in 1981, the ability of public employees to turn back assaults now – aided by allies in Congress – could signal a turnaround for labor and working families across the board.

## **NLRB rules workers can be labeled “supervisors,” thus ineligible for union protection**

The hammer finally came down on the “Kentucky River” cases that were long before the National Labor Relations Board. Now, says the Oct. 3 NLRB ruling, if an employee uses “independent judgment” on the job, makes “staff assignments” and is held “responsible” for the performance of others, the worker is a supervisor and no longer has collective bargaining rights.

Traditionally, defining who was a boss meant knowing whether the individual was involved in hiring, firing and evaluating other employees, but this decision is more than a fight over job titles. Since under federal law, supervisors do not have the right to be represented by unions, expanding the definition of the word “supervisor” – in this specific case whether “charge nurses” at health care facilities were workers or bosses – gives management unprecedented power to decide who’s entitled to belong to a union. It could be the legal pretext to strip millions of currently unionized workers of their right to organize and forestall future organizing.

This one isn’t just another technical, legal skirmish. It’s about power, not nomenclature – just as power was behind the meaning of “words” for Humpty Dumpty, who explained to Alice that it didn’t matter if words meant different things, but “which is to be master – that’s all.”

# If I Ran the Zoo: A Win-Win Solution for the Steel Industry

By Ron Bloom

*A Steelworkers Union senior staffer poses a challenge to steel industry execs: instead of racing to the bottom and fighting with the union, why not try operating profitably while also guaranteeing jobs and economic growth by breaking with reigning free-market orthodoxy.*

In many ways, it is for the American steel industry, the best of times. While input costs are high, between consolidation and its resulting market discipline and strong world-wide demand, prices are at levels that three or four years ago were simply unimaginable. Industry profits are quite high and balance sheets are stronger than they have been in decades. Since January of 2003, the S & P Steel Index is up over 400%, more than eight times the return of the overall market.

With all that it would be easy for the steelworkers union to sit back and enjoy the show and look forward to the next major round of bargaining in 2008 as an opportunity for us to get a little or maybe a lot more of this fast growing pie. But that assumes that between now and 2008 the industry doesn't figure out a way to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory and get itself in trouble again. Workers have spent far too much time in the last twenty years sharing the pain, but we recognize that to share the gain there needs to be gain to share.

The Steelworkers have some advice for industry execs on how to make sure there's plenty for both shareholders and workers. The theme of this advice will be really quite simple – be hard-headed and pragmatic capitalists – run the companies and actively participate in the political process on the basis of what is good for your shareholders – and not based on outmoded nostrums about unions, free enterprise, deregulation, free markets and free trade.

In today's world the blather about free trade, free-markets and the joys of competition is nothing but pabulum for the suckers. The guys making the real money know that outsized returns are available to those who find the industries that get the system to work for them and the companies within those industries that dominate them.

Does anyone seriously think that the free-marketeers at Goldman Sachs have such staggering returns on equity because all they know is what everyone else knows? Did Bill Gates accumulate a net worth larger than the entire bottom third of our nation because he kept the playing field level? In the real world, he who makes the rules of the game, rules the game.

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*Ron Bloom is special assistant to the president, United Steelworkers of America. This article is based on remarks he delivered to the metal industry's Steel Success Strategies XXI conference in New York in June 2006.*

The starting point is that companies need to get along with the union. Companies that establish a constructive partnership with their unions do far better for their shareholders than those that do not.

In the Spring of 2003, US Steel was trading at just over \$15 per share. The company made a deal with the union that facilitated its purchase of National Steel, and within eighteen months the shareholders saw their investment triple, adding over \$3 billion to the value of the company. In January of 2004, the union made a deal with Allegheny Technologies that allowed them to take the assets of J&L Stainless off Arcelor's hands. At the time of the deal, ATI's equity was valued at \$900 million. Today it sits at \$6.5 billion.

Now, certainly little things like China and the commodities boom have at least something to do with this. But, even after the recent run-up, the cooperation in restructuring and recapitalization at Stelco caused investments to quadruple in a matter of days.

Compare that to companies that have chosen the other path.

In the month before the Steelworkers' fight with Oregon Steel began, the stock traded at \$22 per share. At one point during the fight, it fell to as low as a dollar, and at the time of the settlement was hovering around \$5.

While there is plenty of room for disagreement among management, shareholders and labor, the real truth is that today, labor is the least of the industry's problems. The U.S. and Canada have the most productive and efficient steel industries in the world, and given their high productivity, the reasonably decent wages that workers are paid are seldom decisive in determining a company's level of profitability. Measured against an alienated group with a little lower wage package, an engaged, well-paid workforce more than pays for itself.

Today the real impediments to long-term profitability lie largely outside the collective bargaining arena. Here are four.

## Health Care Costs

The first is one where conflicts between labor and management do still exist, and that is health care. On that issue, however, given the fact that the shareholders want us to get along, the answer is to get it out of collective bargaining and into the public sphere. That means that management must support universal single-payer national health care.

The simple fact is that America's current health care system places those companies that manufacture in the U.S. at a tremendous competitive disadvantage against those who manufacture anywhere else in the developed world. A universal single-payer system, whether financed through general revenue or even a payroll tax, would result in significantly higher profits for the steel industry. The cost of doing otherwise is dramatic. Even after leaving 15% of our citizens without health insurance and another 15% without coverage during at least part of the year, we are still spending about five more Gross Domestic Product points on health care than the amount spent in Western Europe and Canada. This amounts to roughly \$2,800 more each year for every man, woman, and child than we would be spending with a national system.

And what do we get for that \$800 billion drag on the economy?

Our overall quality of care puts us 37th in the world, sandwiched neatly between Costa Rica and Slovenia. We rank 70<sup>th</sup> in hospital beds per capita and 45<sup>th</sup> in physicians. We rank 42<sup>nd</sup> in infant mortality and 32<sup>nd</sup> in life expectancy. This should not be surprising: our patchwork system is built to serve the needs of those who produce health care, not those who consume it.

The American health care system delivers great returns for the shareholders of pharmaceutical companies, who spend two-and-one-half times more on marketing than they do on R & D. It creates huge stock option windfalls for CEOs of health insurers, fabulous profits for the makers of duplicative medical equipment, and high earnings for doctors. But out the back comes a wasteful system that is delivering a lousy product and driving manufacturing companies out of business.

The response of industry management has been, not surprisingly, to try to shift these costs to their employees, based on the theory that if consumers of health care pay for some of it themselves, they will be smarter consumers and costs will come down. The problem is that it misunderstands how health care is consumed. Buying health care can never be like buying a car or television set – it is just silly to seriously expect average people to “shop for the best deal.” This strategy doesn't lower costs; it simply lowers the standard of living of the workers.

If our path to competitiveness is to pay workers less, then we should just say that. But wouldn't it make more sense to adopt a universal single payer system – and take the \$800 billion we would save and split it between workers and owners?

### **Shrinking Customer Base**

It is true that a significant amount of steel is consumed in the construction of infrastructure – roads, bridges, buildings, factories, etc. – things that are specifically anchored where they are built. But almost 80 percent of steel consumption is accounted for by products that can be made anywhere.

And if those who consume steel are not located here, it will be much harder to sell them steel that is made here. The American steel industry today is globally competitive, but it generally does not have costs low enough to rely on exports for its survival.

Historically, the industry has focused on the threat from unfairly traded imported steel. And while that threat is real and should continue to be monitored, today the more immediate threat comes from the demand for steel being lost because those who use the steel will use it somewhere else.

As America's largest consumers of steel – the manufacturers of autos, auto parts, household appliances, and other steel-intensive products – increasingly move their manufacturing facilities elsewhere, the logic for a large domestic steel industry will go, along with those consumers. There is little that is manufactured that does not somewhere along the line, directly or indirectly, require steel. But this means that the less we make here the less we need a steel industry here to feed it.

The steel industry, in its own self-interest, needs to broadly engage in the fight to save the overall manufacturing sector. Every other nation in the world has a specific and targeted strategy to preserve or expand its manufacturing base. We, on the other hand, seem to think that empty platitudes will suffice. I guess that you could imagine a North American steel industry whose costs permitted it to make steel here and sell it to those who consume it in other places, but those economics seem pretty hard to put together.

### **High Energy Costs**

American manufacturing has many problems, but the impact of high energy prices cannot be overstated. Energy now accounts for approximately 20 percent of the overall cost of producing steel, well more than the cost of labor. In just the last four years, those costs have increased by more than half and have, in fact, almost doubled since 1998.

With gas prices spiking at over \$3.00 over the summer, few doubt that the American economy and its participants would be better off if energy prices were lower. The run-up in prices since 2001 is now causing an annual transfer of an *additional* \$400 billion dollars from those who consume energy to those who produce it.

It is true that some of that \$400 billion stays inside the country and goes to the shareholders of energy producers. In 2005, the six largest oil companies made \$72 billion more in profits than they did in 2001. However, since much of America's energy comes from outside the country and is owned by foreign governments, the increased price of energy has meant a substantial transfer of money from Americans to non-Americans.

And if that were not enough, one could finally add the huge corrupting and corrosive distortions that petro-politics bring to our nation. Irrespective of where one sits on the various divides

in our country, no one defends our “addiction” to foreign energy as healthy for our democracy.

Once again, a vital sector of the economy is being run for the benefit of its producers, not its consumers. And while we can waste time arguing about whether to drill in Alaska’s North Slope, real relief will come only from increasing supply and reducing demand, through huge investments in conservation, clean coal, and renewables – all of which will consume lots of steel and none of which will be done by the guys who today are profiting so handsomely from the status-quo.

The steel industry and manufacturers in general need to stop worrying about offending their business school classmates, political soul mates, and friends at the country club and to stand up for their owners. It is time to support a comprehensive national energy program.

### **Exploding Trade Deficit**

To convey the dangers of a trade deficit left unreined, let me quote two well-known radicals.

The first one said the following:

I think we are skating on increasingly thin ice. On the present trajectory, the deficits and imbalances will increase. At some point, the sense of confidence in capital markets that today so benignly supports the flow of funds

to the United States and the growing world economy could fade.... I don’t know whether change will come with a bang or a whimper, whether sooner or later. But as things stand, it is more likely than not that it will be financial crises rather than policy foresight that will force the change.... Altogether the circumstances seem to me as dangerous and intractable as any I can remember.... What really concerns me is that there seems to be so little willingness or capacity to do much about it.

And the second:

A country that is now aspiring to an “Ownership Society” will not find happiness in – and I’ll use hyperbole here for emphasis – a “Sharecropper’s Society.” But that’s precisely where our trade policies, supported by Republicans and Democrats alike, are taking us....

The first radical that I quoted was Paul Volker; the second, Warren Buffet.

And if you don’t believe them, let’s look at where the most cold-blooded and unemotional capitalists of all – currency traders – are putting their money.

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## **Opportunities for Socialist Politics Re-Emerge**

By Jeff Cox

Michael Harrington, the founding chair of the Democratic Socialists of America, argued throughout the 1960s and 1970s – perhaps counterintuitively, given the times – that there was an ongoing social democratic tradition in America. Ongoing, but underground. Its sharpest manifestations were the programs undergirding the New Deal and the Great Society – at least on the latter’s domestic side – and it followed that socialists who kept themselves isolated and in a separate electoral organization from progressive Democrats who supported and wanted to expand on these programs were making a huge mistake.

By the 1980s, when activist members of the New Left were finally beginning to internalize and adopt Harrington’s salient argument, the timing was off. DSA, the nation’s largest and most visible democratic socialist organization with more than 10,000 members, including dozens of elected officials, found itself frozen out of party influence even as that underground social democratic tradition was being undone. Neoliberal politicians began to take control of the party during and after the Carter

presidency, winning in the face of challenges made by Ted Kennedy and Paul Simon, as well as by the two Jesse Jackson “Rainbow” campaigns. Under the leadership of Bill Clinton and the Democratic Leadership Council, these corporate-friendly politicians engineered the abandonment of the party’s working-class base, and the Democratic Party became a minority party at every level of government. Working people were left at the mercy of deregulated public institutions, privatization, crippled regulatory agencies, and trade agreements such as NAFTA that devastated their living standards.

The highly visible global drive to eliminate barriers to capitalist domination generated popular resistance both in America and around the world. As the Bush administration launched unwinnable land wars in Asia, with no Communist threat to justify them, the links between capitalist globalization and American militarism became more visible. As Tom Friedman

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## **PDA is working to build the Democratic Wing of the Democratic Party!**

By Tim Carpenter, Executive Director – Progressive Democrats of America (PDA)

In 2006, the progressive community can and must work to elect a Democratic majority in the House of Representatives, while continuing to put pressure on the state parties and the Democratic National Committee on the issues of war, universal healthcare, poverty, fair trade, human rights, and social justice.

The Democratic left is in a position to make this effort because it is not only alive and well but thriving and growing in cities, suburbs, towns and rural areas all across America. Progressive Democrats of America ([www.pdamerica.org](http://www.pdamerica.org)) is a rapidly growing, two-year-old, 80,000-strong, 135-chapter organization operating in over 30 states. PDA's board of advisors is a diverse group of committed progressive elected officials and activists.

Since its founding in Roxbury, Massachusetts, in July 2004, PDA has aggressively worked an "inside/outside" strategy, networking progressive Democratic elected officials inside the Beltway with grassroots Democrats and progressive movement activists across the country. PDA was the driving force in the passage of resolutions opposing the war in Iraq by eight state Democratic Party meetings. The organization also was instrumental in the passage of resolutions in 10 states calling for the impeachment of President Bush. PDA is often referred to by Congressional Progressive Caucus ([www.congressionalprogressivecaucus.org](http://www.congressionalprogressivecaucus.org)) Executive Director Bill Goold as the CPC's field operation, because PDA has built relationships with members of Congress by delivering grassroots support for their initiatives – from Rep. John Conyers' investigation of the 2004 Ohio voting fraud to Rep. Jim McGovern's bill to cut off funding for the war in Iraq, a current priority effort.

While PDA is still only a progressive "pup" compared with big liberal dogs like MoveOn, PDA-backed candidates have taken some big bites out of conventional wisdom and centrist Democratic complacency. In Los Angeles, local PDA leader Marcy Winograd won 37 percent of the primary vote against entrenched pro-war Democrat Rep. Jane Harman with only two months of lead time. In Maryland, the dynamic Donna Edwards appears to have come only a few hundred votes short of toppling the multi-term Rep. Al Wynn in her first bid for public office,



*Michigan Representative John Conyers  
with PDS Director John Carpenter*

and she is seen as well-positioned to prevail in 2008. And in Illinois, with strong PDA support, Christine Cegelis, though outspent 8 to 1, nearly beat the candidate of the inside-the-Beltway Party leadership and Illinois party machine, Tammy Duckworth, to vie for the seat being vacated by Rep. Henry Hyde.

This fall, in the House, PDA is focusing attention and effort on several strong progressives worthy of note and support in hopes of flipping several seats from red to blue. In California, Jerry McNerny is running a strong race against an incumbent Republican. In Michigan, Tony Trupiano, with one of the nation's strongest grassroots efforts, has his sights on an open seat in a Republican-leaning district. And in New York, anti-nuclear activist John Hall has won the Democratic nomination to challenge a four-term incumbent Republican. In Arizona, while the local PDA primary candidate, Jeff Latas, did not prevail, PDA will now enthusiastically join forces with PDA Board Member Rep. Raul Grijalva and support the nominee, the equally progressive Gabby Gifford, as well as PDA-backed Herb Paine, who won a razor-thin primary victory in a neighboring district.

Among the Senate races, in New York, PDA backed Jonathan Tasini in his primary bid to take some steam out of Sen. Hillary Clinton's centrist bandwagon. While Clinton won, Tasini succeeded in uniting many progressives statewide whom PDA hopes to organize into dozens of new local chapters for the long work ahead. In Ohio, PDA will continue to support the winner of the Democratic primary, Rep. Sherrod Brown, in his Senate bid. In Connecticut, the organization will work hard to defeat Sen. Joe Lieberman a second time and elect Ned Lamont. November wins by Brown, Lamont and Vermont's Bernie Sanders could herald formation of a Senate Progressive Caucus.

Given the importance of election integrity, PDA also has worked on secretary of state races around the nation, backing Deborah Bowen in California, Mark Ritchie in Minnesota, and PDA Board Member John Bonifaz in Massachusetts.

Finally, while PDA certainly understands the difference between a progressive Democrat and a DLC or centrist Democrat, the group urges vigorous work on behalf of all Democratic House

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candidates in November. This is because currently elected progressives and members of the Congressional Black Caucus are mostly in safe districts and so have held their seats for several terms, building seniority. Thus, election of a Democratic House majority this year would have absolutely huge ramifications for the progressive community when it comes to controlling committees: At least nine Congressional Progressive Caucus members would become committee chairs and an additional 35 CPC members would become subcommittee chairs!

The following CPC members are currently in line to become committee chairs if Democrats gain a majority:

- George Miller, Education and Workforce
- Barney Frank, Financial Services
- Henry Waxman, Government Reform
- Bennie Thompson, Homeland Security
- Tom Lantos, International Relations
- John Conyers, Judiciary
- Louise Slaughter, Rules
- Nydia Velazquez, Small Business
- Charles Rangel, Ways and Means

The following CPC members would become subcommittee chairs:

- Appropriations: Rosa DeLauro, Marcy Kaptur, John Olver, Jose Serrano, and Ed Pastor
- Armed Services: Neil Abercrombie
- Education and Workforce: Lynn Woolsey, and Dennis Kucinich
- Energy and Commerce: Ed Markey, Jan Schakowsky, and Hilda Solis
- Financial Services: Maxine Waters and Luis Gutierrez
- Government Reform: Diane Watson, Dennis Kucinich, Elijah Cummings, Danny Davis, and William "Lacy" Clay
- International Relations: Donald Payne
- Judiciary: Sheila Jackson-Lee, Jerry Nadler, and Melvin Watt
- Interior: Raul Grijalva, Tom Udall, and Donna Christensen
- Rules: Jim McGovern
- Small Business: Madeleine Bordallo
- Transportation and Infrastructure: Pete DeFazio, Bob Filner, Eleanor Holmes-Norton, and Corrine Brown
- Ways and Means: Pete Stark, Jim McDermott, and John Lewis

Read those names and committee assignments carefully. Imagine the investigative work that could be done on the Downing Street Memos and the Ohio voting irregularities and

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the steps that could and would be taken toward the censure of President Bush with these members managing the committees.

For this reason, PDA is urging its members and all progressives to donate, organize, and vote Democratic in November. It may involve some holding of noses in some districts, but the stakes are high and the road ahead is long. Progressives must support all the Democratic nominees – including Harman, Wynn and Duckworth as well as centrist Democrats who faced no progressive primary challenge – so we can demand and expect the support of centrist Democrats when our candidates win future primaries.

So the first step in moving the country toward a progressive consensus is restoring Democratic control of the House this year. The ground can be gained for progressives. PDA was founded to do just that. Join PDA and the growing movement to take back our party and our country!

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## Geo-Politics and the Tragedy of the Middle East

An Interview with Stephen Eric Bronner by the FARS News Agency of Iran

*FARS News:* What is the impact of the UN Security Council's silence – and also the silence of NGOs concerned with human rights, with regard to the killing of Lebanese civilians? What effect will it have on the future?

*SEB:* I don't think that your premise is actually correct. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the U.S. Campaign Against the Occupation, and the vast majority of NGOs worldwide – and not merely those concerned with human rights – have castigated the Israeli assault in no uncertain terms. They have organized demonstrations, issued reports, and had a genuine impact on public opinion in the West. As for the United Nations, its Secretary General, Kofi Annan has done the same. It is the United States, not the United Nations, which is



to blame for the incredible delay in passing strongly worded resolutions calling for an immediate cease-fire. The United States has been roundly condemned, even by the European Union, for its identification with Israel ambitions in the Middle East. All of this offers three points that might be of use in the future development of Iranian foreign policy: 1) Western NGOs can foster a critical perspective on the foreign policy of hegemonic powers; 2) The interests of the United States are not necessarily those of the European Union; 3) The United Nations is not simply a tool of American imperialism.

*FARS News:* Did Israel undertake its actions in Lebanon at the behest of the United States?

*SEB:* Plans justifying the incursion into Lebanon were already formulated last year by American neo-conservative foreign policy analysts – like Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, and others – often with their Israeli counterparts for various reactionary institutes. But hundreds of different proposals that speak to hundreds of contingent foreign policy problems pass over the desks of political leaders all the time. There is clearly a confluence of interests between the United States and Israel in the region: basically – in purely geo-political terms – they speak to maintaining an American presence capable of controlling oil, keeping all other nations militarily subordinate to Israel, fostering divisions in and between Islamic nations, and preventing the creation of what has been called a “Shiite Crescent” ranging from Tehran to Beirut. Given the level of U.S. financial support for Israel, which ranges somewhere between 4 and 9 billion U.S. dollars per year depending on how you count it, I have no doubt that Israel cleared its plans for Gaza and Lebanon with the United States before they were implemented. Seymour Hersh has said as much in a recent article entitled “Watching Lebanon” for *The New Yorker*. But I also think that this was principally an Israeli initiative designed to destroy its lone genuine military rival in the region, Hezbollah, and destabilize the Lebanese government.

*FARS News:* What impact will an Israeli defeat have for the Middle East and the American role in the region?

*SEB:* That is probably the most important question and the most difficult to answer. A defeat for Israel – and it seems likely that Israeli goals of eradicating Hezbollah will not be met – might well temper its imperialist ambitions. It could also strengthen Israeli groups like Peace Now and others calling for a wide-ranging settlement in the region, but bringing such a peace about would obviously take time. A UN force to control the border between Israel and Lebanon temporarily is probably the best possible outcome. It would, admittedly, save Israel the trouble of doing the same thing. But it would also provide a certain degree of security for both nations – at least temporarily. By the same token, the Lebanese people will not easily forgive Israeli brutality and the moral and political standing of Hezbollah will be strengthened. That will enable Israelis to project their own feelings upon their enemy. It is more than likely that desires will increase for revenge, feelings of insecurity, increased military power, and a renewed sense of nationalism among the Israeli citizenry. The condemnation of the incursion into Gaza and the war against Hezbollah by virtually the entire world community will also, undoubtedly, generate fears of an international anti-Semitic conspiracy within Israel and among Jews world-wide. The simmering tensions between Israel and Lebanon, in short,

will probably continue – along with various violent outbreaks – in the foreseeable future.

*FARS News:* What impact will a defeat for Israel have on American foreign policy and on its role in the Middle East?

*SEB:* The United States is, for the moment, essentially bereft of influence with any important actor in the region other than Israel. The alliance with Israel has cost the United States dearly. But I think the crucial blow for the United States in the region has less to do with Lebanon than with the implosion of Iraq caused by what might well be the greatest blunder in the history of American foreign policy. Prime Minister al-Maliki of Iraq condemned the Israeli actions in Lebanon and a recent demonstration in Baghdad brought out somewhere around a half million people chanting, “Death to Israel! Death to America!” in a nation where the United States has already spent close to \$1 trillion.

*FARS News:* What is your opinion of the cease-fire negotiated by the United States?

*SEB:* When the UN Security Council finally overcame the strategy of delay employed by the United States, so that Israel would have time to further realize its military objectives, a cease-fire came into existence immediately. But there should be no mistake. The cease-fire resolution that passed on 12 August 2006 did not touch upon the exchange of prisoners, which supposedly sparked the conflict in the first place. It called for disarming of Hezbollah, without any concrete plan for bringing that about and, in a swipe at Iran and Syria, it banned arms sales to the Lebanese government. But the Treaty did not touch upon arms sales to Israel by the United States. The cease-fire also did not call for the Israeli withdrawal from the Sheeba Farms area, a coveted piece of land, which remains the source of a territorial dispute between Lebanon and Syria. It also, obviously, said nothing about Gaza and the Palestinians. The UN resolution did, however, set up a buffer between Israel and Lebanon, presumably so that major Israeli cities would no longer be in range of Hezbollah rockets. It also called for the withdrawal of Israeli troops and the simultaneous introduction of 30,000 soldiers – half from the UN and half from Lebanon – to patrol this no-man’s land, thereby saving Israel the trouble. Nevertheless, the imbalance of power between Israel and its neighbors – especially Palestine – will undoubtedly continue along with the absence of an enduring peace.

*FARS News:* How do you see the “New Middle East”?

*SEB:* I don’t really think that there will be a “new Middle East.” That is because the main problems have not been solved. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains what it was. The prospect of

peace is further away than ever. Israel also remains the dominant power though, admittedly, no longer the hegemonic military force it once was. The Bush Administration will continue to identify itself with Israeli policy: indeed, even when its successor enters office, the best that can be expected is a slightly – and I do mean slightly – more balanced approach. It has become clear that no settlement of the general problems plaguing the region can take place without Syria and Iran. But the United States does not even have an ambassador in Damascus and, especially given the difficulties faced by Israel on the battlefield, I can't foresee any government being willing to surrender the Golan Heights. Iran is the wild card: it may help bring that Shiite Crescent into being,

but it is also engaged in a dangerous game. With the anti-Semitic rhetoric of President Ahmadinejad, with what has been taken to be his intransigence on the nuclear issue, and his flat-out refusal to play a role in peace plans, he is playing directly into the hands of American neo-conservatives and the warmongering Israeli elites. That might produce an attack – I very much hope it doesn't, but it might – and that would, naturally, alter all calculations.

*Stephen Eric Bronner is Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University. His most recent book is Blood in the Sand: Imperial Fantasies, Right-Wing Ambitions, and the Erosion of American Democracy (University Press of Kentucky).*

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## **New Opportunities**

*continued from page 8*

put it, “McDonald’s cannot flourish without McDonnell-Douglas, the designer of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley’s technologies is called the US Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.”

In the 1990s, the Clinton/Democratic Leadership Council wing of the Democratic Party enjoyed virtually no internal opposition, leaving progressives with nowhere to go in electoral politics. Well, the times they are changin’. Since 2000, the aggressively pro-war and pro-capitalist stances of the Democratic Party leadership have led to progressive insurgencies around the country. Whether anti-war or anti-corporate globalization, these campaigns have created opportunities for a new democratic socialist politics. DSA’s Senate primary endorsements of Ned Lamont in Connecticut and Jonathan Tasini in New York, and general election endorsement of independent socialist Bernie Sanders in Vermont, show that we can once again work with our friends on the left of the possible.

Both Howard Dean and Dennis Kucinich deserve credit for providing leadership for the left and institutionalizing their insurgent candidacies with ongoing organizations, Democracy for America and the Progressive Democrats of America. Such leadership is welcome, but progressive insurgencies around the country have been notably decentralized. Candidates such as Lamont come out of nowhere to run against right-wing, pro-war Democrats such as Joe Lieberman. Lamont’s primary victory is the biggest win for the left so far, but progressives have faced disappointments as well. The aggressively pro-war Hillary Clinton persuaded anti-war Democrats to cast their primary votes for her, and in the Maryland senate primary, pro-war Democratic Congress member Ben Cardin defeated Kweisi Mfume.

In House races, the pro-war, neo-liberal right wing of the party has been fighting back. Illinois Representative Rahm

Emanuel, head of the lavishly funded Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC), recognizes that any serious threat to military and corporate power will come through Democratic primaries rather than the general election. In New Hampshire, Emanuel put party funds into a primary fight between the pro-war candidate for a house seat, Jim Craig, and anti-war insurgent Carol Shea-Porter, who was outspent ten to one. Shea-Porter won decisively. Progressives almost knocked off a pro-war incumbent House member, Al Wynn of Maryland, although at last count his African-American and anti-war opponent Donna Edwards was only slightly behind and demanding a recount.

Although the press has focused on east coast races, throughout the country there are anti-war and anti-corporate globalization insurgent candidates. Keith Ellison won a hotly contested congressional primary in Minnesota by covering his district with “troops out” yard signs. In an open seat in Iowa’s first congressional district, labor lawyer Bruce Braley won a crowded primary by threatening to defund the war effort in Iraq. In a wholly unexpected primary victory in the Iowa Secretary of Agriculture race, anti-corporate globalization organic farmer Denise O’Brien decisively defeated a member of the administration of Governor Tom Vilsack, who is national president of the right-wing Democratic Leadership Council.

These are just some examples of local electoral resistance to the neoliberal takeover of the Democratic Party. They illustrate the ample opportunities available for socialists and progressives to promote and work for candidates challenging the party’s status quo. A solid core of progressive elected officials in Congress can determine that any electoral successes in November are not squandered. Working in these campaigns is also the electoral context in which anti-corporate globalization and anti-war campaigns can be linked to an explicit socialist critique of global capitalism and American imperial militarism.

*Jeff Cox is co-editor of The Prairie Progressive, A Newsletter for Iowa’s Democratic Left. (jeffcox@inavia.net).*

# Obituaries

Unfortunately, DSA recently lost several particularly noteworthy long-time members. Some who knew them well celebrate DSA honorary Chair Dorothy Healey, Maryann Mahaffey, and John Cort.



## L.A.'s RED

By Harold Meyerson

When the position of chairman of the Los Angeles Communist Party came open in the late 1940s, the two obvious candidates were Dorothy Healey, then the party's organizational secretary, and Ben Dobbs, the party's labor secretary. Both were smart and affable and had charisma to burn. They were also the best of friends, so – as Dorothy related the story in *California Red*, her quasi-autobiography cowritten with historian Maurice Isserman – they flipped a coin and it came up on the Dorothy-becomes-chairman side.

But Dobbs told Isserman a different tale. “I don't recall flipping any coin,” he said. “She was so much smarter than me that there was never a question in my mind.” The remark smacks of Dobbs' telltale selflessness, and having known them both, I'm certain the only skill at which Dorothy excelled Dobbs was intraparty maneuvering. The first of their two tragedies was that both had to spend so much of their vast talents on intraparty maneuvering. The second was that the party was the Communist Party.

It's hard to grasp today just how important the Communist Party was in Los Angeles in the '30s and '40s – and how Healey's brilliance and guts kept the party at least somewhat important through the '60s. By the '40s, the L.A. local of the party was the nation's second largest, after only New York, and while New York also had a lively presence of Socialists and Trotskyists, L.A. had far fewer. The Communists were the linchpin of the L.A. left and played key roles in countless elections and labor struggles, particularly during the Popular Front days when they became, in essence, the most active supporters of both the CIO and the New Deal.

And no one excelled at, and reveled in, building this real-world left more than Dorothy, who died Sunday at age 91 in Washington, D.C., where she had moved in 1983. She had joined the Young Communist League at age 14 in Berkeley. By 19, she was leading a strike of Mexican agricultural workers in Imperial County, for which she did 180 days in jail. By 24, she was an international vice president of the cannery workers; and a year later, the head of the Labor Non-Partisan League – the CIO's political operation – in L.A. She was, all the while, an open Communist, who, unlike most of the party's leaders, believed in and liked working in coalition with liberals. She and Dobbs were appalled when the party insisted on running candidates from Henry Wallace's Progressive Party in 1948 for every office –

meaning, in a spate of pre-Naderite idiocy, against liberal Democratic officeholders. But good party ops that they were, they never made their dissent public.

Dorothy was traumatized by Khrushchev's 1956 revelations of Stalin's crimes; her long-repressed fears of the dreadful nature of the regime she'd defended were confirmed – and exceeded. The publication of that speech, and the Soviet Union's brutal suppression of the uprising in Hungary later that year, provoked a false spring of open discussion and dissent within the party, but when the hard-liners prevailed, most of the reformers – about three-quarters of the party's members – left. Only in the L.A. local did the reformers hold sway: Despite the efforts of the national leaders to remove Dorothy and Dobbs from their posts, the L.A. local stuck by them.

By then, Dorothy had become a local celebrity, appearing on radio talk shows, hosting her own show on KPFK, running in 1966 for county assessor on a platform of linking property-tax rates to homeowner incomes and winning 86,000 votes. She was probably the most compelling and attractive spokesperson the American Communists ever had.

Dorothy's rift with the national party, the Soviet Union, and actual existing Communism became an unbridgeable chasm when the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1968. The national party supported the invasion; the L.A. party opposed it. Dorothy had the bitter experience of seeing many of the '60s activists she'd recruited to the party – Angela Davis in particular – side with the national party's ossified Stalinist leaders. In the early '70s, she and Dobbs and a group of their comrades left the party, later to join the overtly democratic socialists in the New American Movement and, eventually, the Democratic Socialists of America.

It was a home they should have found earlier. Dorothy and Dobbs and their comrades – housing and civil-liberties activist Frank Wilkinson and attorneys Ben Margolis and John McTernan most prominently – were among the most talented leftists L.A. has known, but their very real contributions to the city's progressive character and infrastructure were ultimately undermined by their adherence to a top-down church whose often outrageous edicts they willingly, and then begrudgingly, defended, until finally they couldn't defend them at all. Their legacy includes a number of the progressive leaders who shape L.A. today, for whom Dorothy's allegiance to Communism was

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*Harold Meyerson is a Vice Chair of DSA. This article was originally published in the August 9, 2006, LA Weekly.*

one of life's more appalling mysteries but who were moved to lives of activism in no small part by the example of the courage, sacrifice, and rage for justice that Dorothy and her comrades (particularly when they were fighting Stalinism and not promoting it) exemplified.

## Maryann Mahaffey Hero to Detroit-area socialists

By Helen Samberg



Maryann Mahaffey, social worker, Detroit City Councilwoman for 33 consecutive years (including three terms as president of the council), DSA member, and friend died on July 25, 2006.

We offer our heart-felt sympathy to her fellow activists: husband, Hy Dooha and daughter, Susan Dooha.

Like her "sisters" Helen Keller and Jane Adams, Maryann was an avowed socialist. She left an empty pair of shoes impossible for any one person to fill. She worked to build a better world. Maryann's own life was a model for how the citizens of that world might live.

Maryann worked in ways that would allow people to maintain their dignity regardless of their circumstances. She protested against the many instances of social injustice, poverty, and aggression that deprive people of their dignity.

The people of Detroit, including workers on strike, mothers on welfare, and the homeless, knew that Maryann would literally and figuratively stand with them. And always, she insisted that elected officials *represent* their constituency and not their own political careers. In every situation, in every conversation, Maryann showed us all what it means to take our ideals and make them real. The combination of her sharp mind, her huge heart, and her ability to put them to use defines Maryann.

Maryann remained active in DSA until the end. She worked on our first successful living wage campaign in Detroit in 1998. She received DSA's Douglass-Debs Award in 2001. She attended our fundraiser for Bernie Sanders one month before her death.

So, let us go ahead and mourn, but then let's put on our shoes, roll up our sleeves, and continue to work for a world in which our differences are celebrated, not feared and hated.

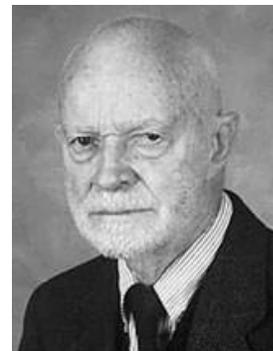
This would be a fitting tribute to the amazing Maryann Mahaffey and all that she worked and stood for.

*Helen Samberg is membership secretary of the Detroit local.*

## In Memory of John Cort

By Maxine Phillips

John Cort was larger than life, a man who inspired admiration, respect, and commitment, even if you disagreed with him, perhaps especially when you disagreed with him. He had that rare ability on the left, or anywhere, of being able to oppose others vehemently, usually in print, while never confusing his dislike of the idea with disdain for the person. This applied particularly to those not religiously orthodox or sufficiently democratic socialist. No matter how much you argued with John – and



being in his presence almost guaranteed an argument – you never felt that he didn't like you. And it was almost impossible not to like him no matter how impossible he seemed.

When I first met him almost thirty years ago, I marveled that I and this then *old* person with fierce opinions on abortion (against), patriarchy (for), and homosexuality (against), could be in the same organization. That he stayed in DSA, even as others from "right" and "left" dropped away, became for me an example of what it means to be democratically engaged.

He lived long enough to have experienced great political hope and great political disappointment, from the New Deal to the Great Society to the Contract with America and the end of government as we knew it. Yet he never faltered in his belief that people could change and that people could change institutions. If one word had to sum him up, it would be faithfulness. He kept faith with the religion he chose after converting to Catholicism in college. He kept faith with his family. And he kept faith with a movement that disappointed him more often than not, but for which he always had hope.

Last January, the executive committee of the DSA Religion and Socialism Commission met at John's house for what we all knew would be the last meeting with him. He wanted to focus his remaining energy on his book on the labor movement, and with his typical take-charge efficiency, he insisted that we devise a workable plan to be sure that *Religious Socialism*, the journal he founded, would survive without him. We did, and we were able to thank him in person for his influence on our lives. To paraphrase E.B. White, it is not often that someone comes along who is a true comrade and a good writer. John was both.

*Maxine Phillips, executive editor of Dissent, is a former executive director of DSA and former co-editor of Religious Socialism.*

# Sanders Fundraiser Boosts Atlanta DSA

By Milton Tambor

Following an organizational meeting in January 2006, fifteen Atlanta DSA members petitioned the National Political Committee for a local charter covering the Metropolitan Atlanta Area. We formed a steering committee, adopted bylaws, and held monthly meetings. At those meetings, speakers discussed such issues as single-payer health care, environmental justice, and immigrant rights. We also contacted several DSAers who had been active in the Atlanta local in the 1980s.

During this period, we were able to latch onto preplanned activities – public forums featuring Barbara Ehrenreich and Cornel West, as well as the April 1 Southeast march against the war in Iraq. Our involvement in the march led to an interview on Atlanta’s alternative radio station and the opportunity to talk about DSA and socialism. However, after the basic organizational matters had been addressed and the forums and march had taken place, we were left without a clear sense of direction. What do we do now? What projects should we undertake?

Core group members definitely wanted to initiate a project that would bring us to the attention of the broader progressive community. At the same time, there was some reluctance to take on an assignment that would be too difficult and demanding. The Sanders fundraiser offered us the kind of program we needed to get going. The tasks were manageable and the DSA national leadership provided the necessary assistance to facilitate planning, with DSA PAC house-party organizing kits that included program suggestions and time lines for organizing the event. We drafted sample invitation and contribution forms, and DSA local representatives who were planning fundraisers in their own cities shared useful information in telephone conferences.

We recognized early on that the success of the event might depend on who hosted the party. A DSAer and faculty member at the Emory School of Medicine with many ties to Atlanta’s progressive community, Henry Kahn, readily accepted our invitation to co-host. Two other community leaders – an attorney and former city council member, John Sweet, and the president of the North Georgia-Atlanta Labor Council, Charlie Flemming – had worked together in past political campaigns and agreed to co-host as well. John and Midge Sweet offered to host the Sunday afternoon party at their home, a gathering place for progressive activists. The three co-hosts signed the letter of invitation that would be sent out four to six weeks before the meeting.

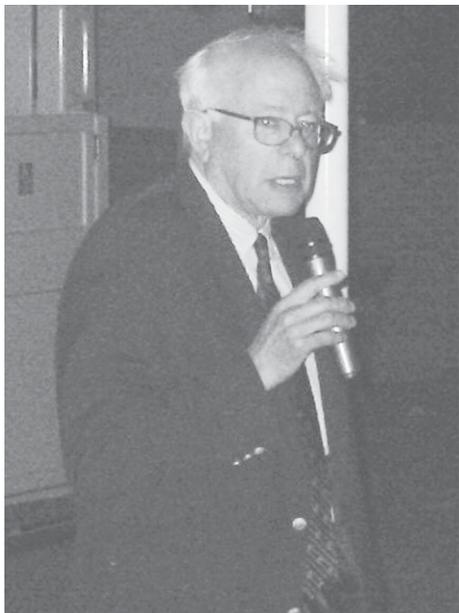
Our local PAC consisted of six members – Jeff Bragg, Kempton Haynes, Barbara Joye, Norm Markel, Austin Wattles, and me. We began by compiling a list of invitees – DSA members, friends, names submitted by John Sweet, and a PAC member active with Atlanta’s alternative radio station. That list, however, was limited to only 125 names. This changed quickly when we were able to secure from the Sanders campaign a list of 500 Georgia contributors – two thirds living in the Atlanta area.

After sending out the 500 invitations, the committee identified 80 contributors who would be contacted by phone. During one evening, three committee members worked together as a phone bank. People were asked if they planned on coming to the party and if they wanted to be on our mailing list

The program for the party came together nicely. Frank Hamilton – formerly of the Weavers – and Mary Hamilton agreed to entertain us with folk music free of charge. Following the entertainment, Bernie, who was to attend a Detroit DSA fundraiser that same afternoon, would call in. The fundraising and collecting of checks would then follow. Several people had volunteered to type up name-badges, greet guests, and help with the cleanup, and others donated wine, cheese and finger food.

On the afternoon of the party everything ran smoothly. Despite a thunderstorm, fifty people showed up and thoroughly enjoyed the folk music and sing-along. Bernie talked to us by phone and spoke passionately about universal health care and living wage as economic justice issues. When asked if he would come to Atlanta after his Senate victory, Bernie said he would.

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## Steel

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While it may be true that they read the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*, cluck endlessly at cocktail parties about Eurosclerosis and make contributions to the CATO Institute, during the day they go short the dollar and long the Euro. In the last three and a half years, the Euro is up 40 percent versus the dollar, meaning those whose livelihood depends on an honest assessment of our economy have voted with their feet.

No one seriously believes that the U.S.'s current profligacy will end other than badly, but neither the steel industry nor any other sector of the business community appears willing to stand up and say that the emperor has no clothes. Each year we are selling almost a trillion dollars of our seed corn and mortgaging forever our future so that we can dance the night away while our poor go hungry and our roads and bridges crumble.

The growth of China and India can be a great opportunity. But not if we, as Lenin so aptly put it, sell them the rope with which to hang us.

Steel industry managers need to repudiate the race-to-the bottom model of globalization. We need world trade that brings the bottom up, not the top down, and we need to tell the American government to do what every one of its trading partners does – stand up for those who operate on their soil.

## Sanders

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The party raised over \$3,000. The grand total, including checks received in the mail, reached \$5,200 from seventy individual donors. Contributions ranged widely – from \$10 to \$1,000. Most typical, though, was a \$50 or \$100 contribution.

After the party, we sent out thank you letters to all who had made contributions. The letters encouraged non-DSA members to join, and we enclosed a leaflet with a membership coupon.

Beyond raising the \$5,200, Atlanta DSA realized other benefits. We signed up several new members, our mailing list grew by fifty names, and, at a meeting following the party, we had our highest turnout. The fundraiser has set the stage for Atlanta DSA to become a serious player in the progressive community. We also feel proud that we were able to contribute to DSA PAC's national effort to raise \$50,000 for Bernie's campaign.

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## Change the USA! Join the DSA!

- Yes**, I want to join the Democratic Socialists of America. Enclosed are my dues (includes a subscription to *Democratic Left*) of
- \$50 Sustainer     \$35 Introductory     \$15 Low-Income/Student
- Yes**, I want to renew my membership in dsa. Enclosed are my renewal dues of:
- \$60 Sustainer     \$45 Regular     \$20 Low-income/Student
- Enclosed is an extra contribution of :     \$50     \$100     \$25 to help DSA in its work.
- Please send me more information about DSA and democratic socialism.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Union Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Bill my credit card: Circle one: MC Visa No. \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### My special interests are:

- Labor
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