

# the yankee radical

(617) 354-5078

June-July 2009

## Debs-Thomas-Bernstein Awards 2009

# Honoring Health Care Workers for Justice

**Tuesday, June 30**

**Reception: 6:30–8:30 P.M.**

**56 Perkins St., Jamaica Plain**

We hope you can join us in honoring Professor, author, and health care reformer Rashi Fein, along with the winners of an inspiring union election at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center in Brighton, by attending this year's Debs-Thomas-Bernstein Awards. Sponsored by the Boston chapter of Democratic Socialists of America, the awards reception will take place Tuesday, June 30, 6:30–8:30 P.M., at the historic home of Marcia Peters and David Karaus, 56 Perkins Street, Jamaica Plain.

Last April, after a long campaign, 73% of the employees of St. Elizabeth's Hospital—respiratory therapists, surgical and x-ray technicians, clerks, nursing assistants, housekeepers and dietary workers—voted to join Local 1199 of SEIU, the state's largest union of health care workers. This was the largest union win at a Boston area hospital in decades, and gave a giant boost to ongoing efforts to organize all Boston area workers. Accepting the award on behalf of the St. Elizabeth's victory will be

Sonia Marshall, patient care assistant and key organizer of the campaign.

After serving in the Navy during WW2, Rashi Fein has spent much of the following decades thinking and writing about health care reform. He served on the Truman Commission on the Health Care Needs of the Nation, which supported national health insurance and regionalization of health care delivery—in 1952! He was later a senior staff member of President Kennedy's Council of Economic Advisors, where he helped develop the initial legislation for Medicare, a model he favors for the health care crisis today. Professor Fein has also served on the Board of the Committee for National Health Insurance under the leadership of former UAW President Doug Fraser and under Walter Reuther on a Board investigating malnutrition in the United States. He is a charter member of the Institute of Medicine, has received numerous honors for service to that field, and sits on a number of not-for-profit health care institutions. In his spare time Rashi has written nine books, the latest of which, *Lessons Learned: Medicine, Economics and Public Policy*,

will be published in November.

The Debs-Thomas-Bernstein Awards have been held annually since 1977 to honor deserving activists and to raise funds to support the work of Boston DSA. Gene Debs, Norman Thomas and Julius Bernstein were democratic socialist leaders of the last century who embody the struggles and values of the political tradition DSA seeks to carry on today. Previous awardees include Frank Manning, founder of Mass Senior Action, Bob Haynes, President of the MA AFL-CIO, and State Senator Patricia Jehlen.

Although honoring Rashi Fein and the dedicated organizers of 1199 would be worthwhile at any time, it is especially timely now. Our increasingly dysfunctional employer based health care system is once again up for Congressional debate, and hospital workers are winning historic victories here and elsewhere. We look forward to celebrating with you on June 30!

For more information on prices, sponsorships, and program book ads see page 4, or visit [www.dsaboston.org](http://www.dsaboston.org)

---

# The Latin American Left Today

**WHEN:** Wed., June 17, 7 P.M.

**WHERE:** Democracy Center  
45 Mt. Auburn St.  
Harvard Sq., Camb.

**SPEAKERS:** Saulo Araujo  
Lorena Calderon  
Marc Saint-Upéry

It's been almost two decades since the U.S. led coalition of (mostly) democratic

capitalist Western nations emerged victorious from their 45 year long cold war with the Soviet led bloc of Communist dictatorships. Since then U.S. foreign policy makers, while rhetorically supporting democracy and human rights, have used their unprecedented power and prestige to strengthen their alignment with the policies of global capitalism—privatization, de-regulation, corporate

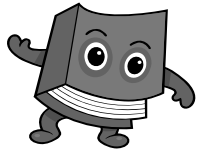
sponsored free trade, so-called “structural adjustment” programs imposed on third world economies, favoring finance over industrial capital—in short, the Washington Consensus.

But in Latin America, where these policies were given a thorough tryout, what resulted was their repudiation: an astonishing series of election victories by socialist, social democratic and left

(continued on page 2)

## SHORT TAKES

### Book Talk June 29



Recently retired Communications Workers organizer and DSA member Steve Early is giving a talk on his new book, *Embedded with Organized Labor: Journalistic Reflections on the Class War at Home*. 7:00 P.M., Monday, June 29, at Porter Square Books, in the Porter Sq. Mall, Cambridge. Party afterwards! For more information, call 617-930-7327.

### DSA Labor Committee

In February Boston DSA sponsored a forum on the Employee Free Choice Act with DSA Vice-Chair Elaine Bernard, MA SEIU Political Director Harris Gruman and Steve Schnapp from United for a Fair Economy before about 40 people. Out of that meeting a DSA Labor Committee has emerged, organized by David Duhalde with several non-members, working to build support for EFCA. But since our Congressional delegation is already on board for this legislation, the group has been joining with Jobs with Justice and tenant groups to publicize other issues related to the economic crisis as well.

In particular we've been hounding Bank of America with demonstrations targeting their policies on home foreclosures and use of taxpayer money to lobby against EFCA. The Labor Committee is also joining in efforts urging Senator Kerry to support single-payer health care, or at least a strong "public option" in the eventual bill. And on June 11, DSA mobilized with

Jobs with Justice, Mass Alliance against Predatory Lending, and the National Community Reinvestment Coalition for a march and State House rally for EFCA, against foreclosures and unjust evictions, and to rebuild communities. To join the DSA Labor Committee contact david.duhalde@gmail.com

### Let's Visit Cuba!

Should you wish to explore Stalinist North Korea, theocratic Iran, or pirate-plagued Somalia, the U.S. government will have no objections. Apparently this hands-off policy extends even to outer space, as venture capitalists are now selling reservations on hypothetical future trips to the moon. But there is one place in the known universe Washington forbids you to go—Cuba.

This travel ban, enacted in 1962, is now under attack from a left-right coalition including the Chamber of Commerce, agribusiness, Human Rights Watch and civil liberties groups. The other side, comprised of cold war hard liners and much of the Cuban émigré community, is using the lack of free elections and democratic rights in Cuba as arguments for keeping the ban. Although as Sam Farber notes in his recent book on the Cuban revolution, the original justification for the travel ban and trade embargo had nothing to do with reasons like these—it was Castro's interference with the "freedom" of American corporations to dominate the Cuban economy.

According to Amnesty International, Cuba now has 58 political "prisoners of conscience", down from the thousands of years past. Amnesty nonetheless opposes the American trade embargo and travel ban, as do most Cubans, including Oswaldo Paya, the leading democratic oppositionist. And this year efforts to at least lift the travel ban might actually succeed, given our new President and Democratic Congress. The Senate bill, S.428, is sponsored by Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and Dick Lugar (R-IN); in the House, Cape Cod Congressman Bill Delahunt is a key advocate. Contact his office for more information: 202-225-3111

### Michelle's Organic Garden

The pesticide peddlers are very upset with Michelle Obama. Soon after she invited local 5th graders over to help plant a White House organic vegetable garden highlighting locally grown chemical-free produce, lobbyists from major agribusiness corporations sent her a formal letter registering their shock and dismay at this undermining of "conventional" (quoting the letter) American agriculture—visit [www.sustainablog.org/2009/04/11](http://www.sustainablog.org/2009/04/11) for details.

Meanwhile *Food Inc.*, a new documentary film opening on June 12, takes a look at our corporate industrial food system, with its many secret ingredients agribusiness hopes to keep that way. Bon Appétit.

— Mike Pattberg

*Latin Left (continued from page 1)*

populist forces, most recently in El Salvador. In a sense this is a return to an electoral strategy of the past, before the covert U.S. overthrow of elected governments in Guatemala, Chile, Brazil and elsewhere discouraged democratic attempts at social reform. But this time winning elections is often accompanied by a variety of self-organized, grassroots movements of small farmers, unions, and indigenous people generally in sympathy with but not controlled by the new governments.

Predictably, Washington has been less than thrilled by these developments, especially in the last 8 years. But the Obama administration is expected to be at least less hostile to democratic left

regimes than its predecessor.

So, what now? Our speakers have long been involved in the politics of this area as scholars and activists.

**Saulo Araujo** is Program Coordinator for Brazil and Central America at Grassroots International, specializing in issues of environment, agriculture and global trade. An agronomist by training, Saulo is a senior fellow of the New England Regional Network of the Environmental Leadership Program, and co-founder of the Worcester Immigrant Coalition.

**Lorena Calderon** is a member of Colombia Vive and is active in their efforts to oppose the pending U.S.-Colombian Free Trade Agreement (FTA). She earned a degree in International Relations from Universidad Jorge Tadeo

Lazano in Colombia, and did her internship in the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Colombian House of Representatives. She is currently Co-Director of the Boston Area Spanish Exchange.

**Marc Saint-Upéry** is a French journalist, translator and analyst living in Ecuador since 1997. He has written on political philosophy, international relations and development issues in various French and Latin American journals. During this past academic year he was an affiliate at the Nieman Foundation at Harvard, and is the author of *El Sueño de Bolívar: El Desafío de las izquierdas Sudamericanas (Bolívar's Dream: the Left's Challenge in Latin America)*

## Boston DSA Members Discussion Meeting and Bar-BQ

# Health Care Reform Under Obama

**WHEN:** Sunday, July 12  
**TIME:** Arrive 3:30 P.M.,  
 Mtg. 4:00 P.M.  
 Pot Luck 5:30 pm  
**WHERE:** 24 Bridge St., Newton

President Obama has expressed a commitment to health care reform, and our country has finally reached the point where there is near-universal agreement that the present “system” (for want of a better word) is broken. We may have a better chance to attain national health care in the next year than ever before. But what kind? We are consistently told that Single Payer—the simple, effective, Canadian-style system DSA favors—is “off the table”, and the creaky,

cumbersome Massachusetts system is being held up as a national model—even as we read repeated newspaper accounts of how our system has failed completely to bring costs under control. So what role for Single Payer activists in the present debate?

**Ben Day, Director of Mass-Care (the Massachusetts Campaign for Single Payer Health Care)** will lead off the discussion (kept cool by David and Susan’s new central air conditioning), which will be followed by a pot-luck dinner and (weather permitting) Bar-BQ. Please RSVP (617) 558-5853 or david@knutdav.com, especially if you will be bringing food. Child care for the meeting can be available by prior arrangement.



**Directions to  
 24 Bridge St.,  
 Newton**

Bridge St. is off California St. in Newton, near Watertown Sq. The closest Mass Pike exit is the Newton/Watertown one. For detailed directions, call or email as for “RSVP’s”, above, or go to <http://knutdav.com/directions>.

The closest bus routes are #59 and #70. Check schedules. It is also possible to walk from Watertown Sq. (#71 or any of the buses that stop at Watertown Yard). We may be able to give limited rides from Watertown Square. Call or email to arrange.

## Wanna Be a State Rep?

# Getting Ready to Run

By Georgia Hollister Isman

In 2008, champions for economic and environmental justice and civil and workers rights ran in nine of the thirteen open seats in the Massachusetts House. They won in eight. There was nothing inherently more conservative about the districts where no progressive ran, their just wasn’t one ready and willing to run. We are held back in our ability to win a progressive majority not because we can’t win, but because too often we don’t try.



In preparation for 2010 and beyond, Mass Alliance has decided to invest in inspiring, training, and preparing progressive activists to become candidates. We especially hope that grassroots members and leaders from our member organizations—including DSA—will think about becoming candidates and preparing themselves for that task.

The first step in our new program is a one day introductory workshop—“Getting Ready to Run”—on Saturday June 13th. It is designed for people who are thinking about running, who might run, or who are preparing to run for any office somewhere down the line. The focus will be on deciding what and when is the right race for you, and on steps you can take now to prepare yourself to be a stronger candidate when the time comes.

If you have ever thought of or wondered about running for political

office, please join us. And also think of your friends who would be good progressive champions in the legislature, and ask them too.

The workshop is from 9am-5pm on Saturday, June 13th at 150 Mt Vernon Street in Dorchester. For more information or to register, please call Mass Alliance at 617 722 4320 or [contact@massalliance.org](mailto:contact@massalliance.org)

—Georgia Hollister Isman is Director of Mass Alliance.

A House Party to benefit Mass Alliance will take place Thursday, June 11, 5:30 to 7:30 pm at the home of John Maher and Ellen Sarkisian, 8 Dunstable Road, Cambridge.

To RSVP or for more information, call 617-722-4320 or contact: [Georgia@massalliance.org](mailto:Georgia@massalliance.org).

# Raise Revenue, Stop the Cuts!

By Rebekah Gewirtz

On April 27th and again on May 18, the Stop the Cuts Coalition mobilized at the State House to protest the deep budget cutbacks proposed in the FY10 budget, and to urge the MA legislature to raise new revenue to offset them. The House FY2010 Budget cut billions of dollars in vital programs, and the later Senate version was even worse. The results in both budgets, if left intact, would be devastating for our communities.

At the April 27th event, facilitated by Stop the Cuts chair and SEIU Political Director Harris Gruman, Mayor Joe Curtatone of Somerville spoke about the dire consequences of the budget cuts to localities like Somerville that would cause layoffs to police, fire fighters, and teachers. Rich Rogers of the Greater Boston Labor Council also spoke about the larger economic crisis and urged the state to preserve jobs by raising new revenue.

At the event on May 18th Mayor Lisa Wong of Fitchburg highlighted the challenges state government faces and urged the need for new revenue as the hundreds of advocates packed into a State House hearing room clapped in

support. Also speaking were John Bennett, President of Mass Senior Action, Mike Grunko, President of SEIU 509, and Lynn Norris of Neighbor to Neighbor. Lynn Norris passionately explained how important services have been in her life and particularly Mass Health dental, which was eliminated from the Senate version of the budget.



In addition to organizing rallies, Stop the Cuts groups lobbied Representatives and Senators for their priority amendments to restore funding. One particular concern to several groups was the cut to the Mass Rental Voucher Program, which prevents thousands of families from becoming homeless each year. Both the House and Senate slashed the program in half. A vast array of other good programs was also cut, from local

aid to elimination of funding for community health centers.

By the end of budget deliberations in the House and the Senate, both branches agreed to raise significant new revenue to offset some of the cutbacks, and they did this largely by raising the sales tax from 5% to 6.25%. This was a great success for the Coalition but, unfortunately, the additional revenue is not enough. There will still be significant and painful reductions in local aid and to programs for our most vulnerable residents. But let's urge the conference committee to at least keep all of the revenue proposed in both branches in the final budget they will send to Governor Patrick before July 1st, and ask the Governor to support this as well.

*Rebekah Gewirtz is Director of Government Relations and Political Action for the MA Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, and Ward 6 Alderman in Somerville. To contact her at NASW visit [gewirtz@naswma.org](mailto:gewirtz@naswma.org); or 617-227-9635 x12*

---

## ***I want to join Boston DSA work in honoring the St. Elizabeth workers and Rashi Fein!***

Please reserve \_\_\_\_ tickets at \$35 each for the June 30 reception

Please list me as a:

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

patron at \$150 (includes two tickets and journal listing)

benefactor at \$300 (includes five tickets and journal listing)

I really want to join you in honoring the St. Elizabeth workers and Rashi, but I just can't afford \$35!

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

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

1/8 page (4 1/4 x 2 3/4) \$100

1/4 page (4 1/4 x 5 1/2) \$200

1/2 page (8 1/2 x 5 1/2) \$350

full page (8 1/2 x 11) \$500

Ad copy can also be emailed to  
[yankeeradical@dsaboston.org](mailto:yankeeradical@dsaboston.org).  
 Deadline for ads is Aug 17.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_



# Rescue the Banks not the Bankers and Shareholders

## *Nationalization of the insolvent banks is the only solution to the financial crisis*

The new plan to rescue the banks follows the same logic as the Bush-Paulson plan: throw taxpayer dollars at the problem to put off nationalizing financial institutions. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner's vague proposal relies on another huge infusion of federal equity into "healthy" banks and a massive government insurance program to underwrite a "private market" for financial institutions' toxic assets. This plan is the same "lemon socialism"—socialization of the mega-losses of private financial institutions – that the Bush Administration put in place.

Financial institutions such as Bank of America and Citigroup have already been *de facto* nationalized by the infusion of taxpayer equity whose value swamps that of these firms' market equity. So far, the Obama administration plans to continue the Bush administration's policy of receiving only bond-like "warrants" instead of voting stock that would provide majority control. These insolvent "zombie banks," as economist Paul Krugman calls them, are only "living" as private entities because of the endless infusion of government funds—funds that continue failing to offset the declining value of the banks' toxic assets.

The banks gladly take the government equity and use it to shore up their deteriorating balance sheets rather than to engage in renewed lending. Healthier banks reward their managers and their stockholders but refuse to lend because they fear a further deterioration of the toxic assets on their balance sheets. Despite prior massive federal aid to financial institutions failing to unlock the frozen credit markets, the Geithner plan proposes to waste \$1 trillion more in equity infusions and insurance guarantees to avoid *de jure* nationalization – and without getting much new lending!

They argue that the federal government can create a private market for the toxic assets where none exists now. Geithner's plan is so vague precisely because he knows what is to come: spending hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars to subsidize private purchasers of the assets (as private offerings on their own will not meet banks' asking prices). Or the Federal Reserve and TARP will write "insurance" guaranteeing a high floor price to investors who buy the toxic assets. In other words, the federal government will create a "free market" by guaranteeing private investors against any sharp decline in the value of the toxic assets they purchase. And this is supposed to be the capitalism that rewards successful risk and penalizes failed risk?

But why are so many of our financial institutions *de facto* insolvent? Massive losses in the value of exotic financial instruments and other assets carried on balance

sheets have left banks and shadow financial institutions such as hedge funds and private mortgage lenders owing their depositors more than they are worth. These institutions relied on exotic economic models that assumed that housing prices were extremely unlikely to fall in value. They became overleveraged with "collateralized debt obligations" (the bundling of risky and less-risky mortgage-backed securities) that the burst housing bubble transformed into non-marketable, valueless assets. As the economy declined, fear of similar securitized debt instruments spread to other forms of credit, including auto loans and credit cards, exacerbating the banks' unwillingness to lend. Hence, Geithner also calls for an \$800 billion expansion of the Fed's Asset-Backed Securities Loan Facility in order to recreate a private market for such debt.

The only rational means to restore the value of these toxic assets is to provide immediate federal relief to homeowners facing foreclosure or struggling to pay mortgages for homes whose market value is now far less than the value of the mortgage. As in the Great Depression, relief will come to the housing market only if the federal government creates a Home Loan Corporation with the power to renegotiate the terms of distressed mortgages – by both lowering the value of the mortgage (with the federal authority splitting the loss in equity with the banks and mortgage companies) and refinancing the adjusted loan at an affordable market rate. The Obama plan devotes \$75 billion for incentives to mortgage-servicers to engage in a voluntary "mortgage readjustment" program. But the plan does not require servicers to renegotiate distressed loans, and many financial institutions will still prefer foreclosure over accepting lower mortgage payments.

Widespread foreclosures can only be avoided if Congress passes legislation giving bankruptcy courts the power to restructure "distressed mortgages." If judges reset the mortgage to the property's current value and reset the interest rate to the current rate, most homeowners would avoid foreclosure. Homeowners unable to pay a restructured mortgage should be allowed to rent (from the bank) for at least a 10-year period. Such measures will provide a floor under housing prices and keep families in their homes.

Normally, the negative balance sheets of major financial institutions would lead the Federal Deposit Insurance Company to take them over in order to "unwind" their bal-

Visit our Web site  
[www.dsausa.org](http://www.dsausa.org)

ance sheets of the valueless assets (whose deteriorating value precludes lending, as the banks do not have enough assets to securely meet their obligations to their depositors). Thus, as with the Savings and Loan crisis of the early 1980s (when toxic commercial mortgages choked off the home mortgage market), the FDIC should take over the insolvent banks and other financial institutions, seize their presently valueless assets, and place them into a Resolution Trust Company (RTC), leading to restructured banks with asset sheets that would support more lending.

Once the sickly financial firm had regained its health, the FDIC could either re-sell it to private investors or the government itself could choose to run the bank. (There is no reason to believe that publicly-hired managers could make any worse decisions than did our vaunted private financial wizards!) When and if the housing market recovered, so would the value of the toxic assets. Then the RTC could sell the toxic assets to private investors without the expensive guarantees, with the proceeds repaying a portion of the banks' bailout cost.

As the Swedish experience of the early 1990s (and the disastrous Japanese delay in eventually nationalizing much of their insolvent financial sector in the late 1990s) proves, the only way to work a financial system out of a calamitous period of speculative hyper-leveraging is to rework the banks' balance sheets by a careful public process of "unwinding." That is, rather than continually paying inflated prices for "toxic assets" that cannot be sold on a truly private market, the government should simply take those assets off the books of distressed financial institutions so that their balance sheets can be restored to health.

Rather than re-selling all the restructured nationalized banks to private investors, the government should maintain full ownership of at least one major bank. Such a bank could provide benchmarks, setting standards for investment in community housing, alternative energy development, and infrastructure that private banks would have to match.

The crisis brought on by unrestrained financial deregulation demonstrates that absent public regulatory restraint, finance capital will engage in irresponsible acts of speculation during financial booms and resort to excessively conservative lending practices during financial busts. Bank deregulation has been a 30-year joint project of Republican monetarists and Democratic neoliberals. It started with the Carter administration's deregulation of the Savings and Loans; accelerated under Reagan's gutting of the entire government regulatory apparatus; and culminated in the Clinton administration's abolition of the Glass-Steagall Act's separation of commercial banks from investment firms (so the very banks that invest in risky financial instruments marketed these instruments to clients!). It was

Lawrence Summers who convinced President Clinton not to allow the Commodity Futures Trading Corporation to create and regulate an open, transparent market for credit-default swaps (insurance against defaults). The unraveling of this unregulated, non-transparent \$60 trillion market still might bring the global financial system to total collapse.

Thus, if the federal government is to restore a sane credit system—a must for any productive economy – it should not only engage in the fiscally prudent step of nationalizing and restructuring insolvent financial institutions (the least costly path for the public treasury); the Obama administration must also recreate a vibrant and effective regulatory system for domestic financial institutions and cooperate with other states, in both the advanced industrial and developing worlds, to build a global financial regulatory system that prioritizes investment in productive enterprise over speculative efforts to make money on money.

The race to the bottom of global neoliberal capitalism is the other half of the story behind this economic crisis. Productive workers across the globe are no longer paid wages sufficient to purchase the aggregate goods and services they produce. The result: the Western working class went heavily into debt, particularly by borrowing massively against inflated home equity values, temporarily forestalling this impending global crisis of overproduction and under-consumption. And the exploited working classes of China and Southeast Asia subsidized Western living standards, while their governments "managed" the market so as to run massive trade surpluses and invested them not in domestic needs but in Treasury bonds and private equity.

Restoration of a stable global economic system will require raising the floor on global living standards and working conditions and creating global regulatory institutions that insure that investment and trade benefit the working people of the world. The era of deregulatory free-market mania is crashing down upon us. Only by reviving the capacity of democratic governments to regulate the economy so that it serves people's needs rather than the speculative desires of corporate elites will we ever recover from the current global economic nightmare.

## Change the USA. Join the DSA!

Yes, I want to join DSA; enclosed are my dues of:

Supporting \$65       Introductory \$35

Low Income \$20       Student \$20

(Dues include subscription to *Democratic Left*)

**Send me more information about DSA!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Send to DSA: 75 Maiden Lane, #505, NY, NY 10038

# MISSILE “DEFENSE” PLANS CHECKED FOR NOW

By Joanne Landy

In March of this year the Pentagon suffered a major setback in its plans to install a U.S. military radar base in the Czech Republic when the Czech government withdrew its parliamentary proposal to do so. Mirek Topolánek, Prime Minister at the time, halted the ratification process when it appeared almost certain that the Chamber of Deputies would vote to reject the agreement. Shortly thereafter the Topolánek government, a coalition of the Civic Democratic Party, the Christian Democrats and the Green Party (!), collapsed. Jan Fischer is the new prime minister, and his caretaker government is expected to stay in power until new elections expected in October 2009. The Social Democrats were not opposed to the radar when it was originally proposed, but the strong grassroots movement that emerged against it and the fact that they had become an opposition party propelled them to change their position. Today the Social Democrats have made radar opposition a major part of their program.

For now the issue is dormant, and the Obama administration has not said whether it will press the Czechs to accept the base in the future. The radar, and the companion Interceptor missiles proposed for Poland, are part of the Pentagon's commitment to “full spectrum dominance,” which serves to escalate the arms race and provide a rationale for Moscow's own domination of its “near abroad.”

Washington claims the bases are designed to respond to an Iranian missile threat. But there is no credible evidence that such a threat exists today, and virtually no one in the Czech Republic believes it does. Moreover, the U.S. militaristic stance, far from protecting against such a threat in the future, only enhances its likelihood by creating even

stronger inducements for Iran to seek nuclear weapons. The U.S. can best reduce the danger of nuclear warfare by taking major steps toward disarmament. This would politically discourage new countries from developing their own nuclear weapons.

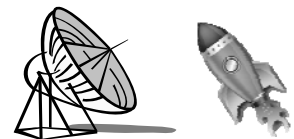
The March anti-radar victory was due to the sustained, creative work of the grassroots Czech movement. Two thirds of Czechs consistently opposed the radar ever since it was first proposed in 2006. Anti-radar activists repeatedly called for a referendum on the issue, but were rebuffed. Meanwhile, in 2008 the Czech government signed the agreement with the United States to proceed with the radar installation, and the Czech Senate approved the accord. However the agreement couldn't be implemented until the Czech Chamber of Deputies ratified it. Thanks to the efforts of the two major anti-radar groups, the No Bases Initiative and the Nonviolence Movement, popular opinion remained strongly mobilized in opposition.

This movement drew support from around the world from those alarmed by the dangerous military escalation of the proposed U.S.-European “missile defense” program. In the U.S., the Campaign for Peace and Democracy (CPD) worked with other groups, particularly the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space and the Humanist Movement, to support the Czechs. CPD's initiatives included public statements, letters published in *The New York Times* and *The New York Review of Books*, visits to the Czech Mission to the United Nations, demonstrations, and, on the weekend before the planned March vote, an open letter to members of the Czech Chamber of Deputies signed by more than 550 people in less than 48 hours.

Anti-radar activists in the Czech

Republic and their international supporters are committed to continuing their campaign until such time as the proposal to install the radar is decisively and permanently withdrawn. Meanwhile, here in the United States, the peace movement needs to be prepared to mobilize pressure if the Obama administration attempts to revive President Bush's plans.

*Joanne Landy ([jlandy@igc.org](mailto:jlandy@igc.org)) is Co-Director of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy, and a member of the New Politics editorial board and DSA. The Campaign sees movements for peace, social justice and democratic rights, taken together, as the embryo of an alternative to great power politics and the domination of society by privileged elites. For more about the Czech radar, visit [www.cpdweb.org](http://www.cpdweb.org).*



## Yankee Radical

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

e-mail:

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

Speakers' Bureau:

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

Web: <http://dsaboston.org>

Editor: M. Pattberg

# The 25% \$olution

By Krishna Dasaratha

The United States is in the midst of the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression. The federal deficit is set to reach new heights. States, cities and towns are facing massive revenue shortfalls and slashing essential programs. The crisis has not hit the Pentagon, however. Military spending, over \$700 billion in the fiscal year 2009, has doubled since 2000, exceeding the rest of the world combined. The number of U.S. military bases on foreign soil has sharply expanded since the *end* of the cold war, by some counts up to 700 today.

“If we do not make reductions

approximating 25 percent of the military budget starting fairly soon it will be impossible to continue to fund an adequate level of domestic activity,” Congressman Barney Frank wrote in the March 2, 2009, edition of *The Nation*. At the recent Massachusetts Democratic Convention Congressman Frank ran a workshop on “Cutting the Military Budget.” He is not alone in Congress—the Congressional Progressive Caucus’s alternate budget calls for cutting defense spending by \$158.7 billion.

United for Justice with Peace has launched the “25% Solution” campaign to mobilize support for cuts

in military spending. In the current economic climate, cutting the military budget is both viable and necessary. We need DSA to join this effort. More information and resources related to the campaign, including a letter by Newton Mayor David Cohen in support of the effort, are available at [www.25percentsolution.org](http://www.25percentsolution.org).

*The 25% Campaign is part of Greater Boston United for Justice with Peace. They can be reached at [25percentsolution@gmail.com](mailto:25percentsolution@gmail.com)*

*the yankee radical*

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

## **INSIDE**

<i>Deb-Thomas-Bernstein Awards</i>	<i>p. 1</i>
<i>Latin American Left Today</i>	<i>p. 1</i>
<i>Short Takes</i>	<i>p. 2</i>
<i>Health Care BarBQ</i>	<i>p. 3</i>
<i>Wanna Be A State Rep?</i>	<i>p. 3</i>
<i>Raise Revenue, Stop the Cuts!</i>	<i>p. 4</i>
<i>Rescue the Banks</i>	<i>p. 5 &amp; 6</i>
<i>Czeching Missile Defense</i>	<i>p. 7</i>
<i>The 25% Solution</i>	<i>p. 8</i>