



# the yankee radical

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JUNE-JULY 2011

## 2011 Democratic Socialists of America Awards Reception

# *All Out for Matt and Rocio!*

**Date:** Saturday, June 11

**Time:** Social 3 PM; Program 4 PM

**Place:** 56 Perkins Street, Jamaica Plain

**Directions:** [www.dsaboston.org](http://www.dsaboston.org)

Please join us at Boston DSA's annual awards reception, this year honoring a long-time advocate for low wage workers and community empowerment along with a best-selling author—**Rocio Saenz** and **Matt Taibbi**. Our reception will again be held at the historic Jamaica Plain home of environmental activist Marcia Peters and David Karas. **Honorary Co-Chairs** for this event who will introduce the awardees are **Lisa Clauson**, Co-Director of Community Labor United, and **Chuck Collins**, Senior Scholar at the Institute for Policy Studies.

There are many instances in U.S. history where immigrant communities and the labor movement have joined together for the benefit of both—from the predominantly Irish miners union organized in the anthracite coal mining region of Pennsylvania in the 1860s and '70s, to the German brewery

workers in Milwaukee and Italian and Jewish garment workers in New York who built their unions in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, to immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean involved in organizing drives today. SEIU 615 is certainly part of this tradition; they are also focused on organizing the private sector, a desperately needed undertaking since the organized part of the U.S. private workforce is now down to 7.5%.

**Rocio Saenz** is President of SEIU 615, which represents 18,000 property service workers in New England. She joined SEIU's



Justice for Janitors campaign in 1988, and helped lead a successful drive to unionize Los Angeles janitors. In August 2001 Rocio moved to Boston to organize property service workers, and a year later led several thousand janitors on a month-long strike that won improved wages,

benefits and workplace rights. She was elected President of Local 615 in 2003.

**Matt Taibbi's** first job in his almost 20 year career in journalism was as sports editor for the *Moscow Times* in 1992. He has also played baseball for the Red Army, pro



basketball in the Mongolian Basketball Association, and worked for a private detective agency in Boston where his father Mike had previously been a TV journalist. Matt is currently a contributing editor at *Rolling Stone* and has written two *NY Times* best sellers, *The Great Derangement* and *Griftopia*. In these books and other journalism and TV appearances, he has unraveled with savage wit and political insight the Wall Street-Washington-Academic network that brought us the economic meltdown.

*(continued on p. 2)*

## **DSA MEMBER'S MEETING & COOKOUT**

**WHEN:** Sunday, July 17; 3 pm

**WHERE:** 24 Bridge St., Newton

**DIRECTIONS:** [www.dsaboston.org](http://www.dsaboston.org)

Fire up the grill, bring out the cooler—time for a summer backyard party! Or at least it will be when July 17 comes around. But first our DSA members meeting (friends welcome) will hear three longtime activists reflect about their life on the left.

**Nancy Goldner** has been active in progressive movements in several states since

the 1980s, and been a member of DSA, Solidarity, and now DSA again. Labor economist and DSA member **Gerald Friedman** recently testified at a state house hearing in favor of progressive tax policy; he remembers singing the *Internationale* with Michael Harrington at a NY party back in the 1970s. **Dave Grosser** became politically active against the Vietnam war; he now works with the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, the campaign to cut the military budget 25%, and is a member

of Solidarity.

This being a members meeting, we'll probably also briefly discuss some organizational matters which those on our email list will be informed of—to get on it, ask [webmaster@dsaboston.org](mailto:webmaster@dsaboston.org)



## SHORT TAKES



### DSA Reading Group Returns

Boston DSA is pleased to be bringing back our reading group for the Summer. The first get together will be on Saturday, **June 18**, 10 am, at the Andala Coffee House, 286 Franklin Street, Cambridge (Central Sq.). Initial readings will include *Towards Freedom: Democratic Socialist Theory and Practice* by Joe Schwartz and Jason Schulman and other writings to be found at:  
[http://dsaboston.org/reading\\_group](http://dsaboston.org/reading_group)

### Bikes Not Bombs

For 26 years the Roxbury environmental group *Bikes Not Bombs* has sponsored youth leadership programs, international development projects, and a retail and vocational training center. On **June 12** their annual Bike-A-Thon fundraiser starts and ends at the Green Roots Festival at the Stony Brook T Station in Jamaica Plain. Choose from 15, 25, and 65 mile rides; stay for the party afterwards. Register at:  
[www.bikesnotbombs.org](http://www.bikesnotbombs.org), or 617-522-0222.

—Mike Pattberg

## Yankee Radical

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### Awards: continued from p. 1

Our honorees will receive awards named after Eugene Debs, Norman Thomas and Julius Bernstein, or A. Philip Randolph and Michael Harrington. All were democratic socialist leaders of the last century active in the labor, civil rights and peace movements of their time who embody the political values DSA seeks to carry on today. These awards



have been given since 1977 to honor deserving activists and raise funds to support the work of the Boston local. Past awardees include international women's rights advocate Dessima Williams, AFL-CIO President Robert Haynes, educator Deborah Meier and journalist Robert Kuttner. Admission is \$35; Sponsorship begins at \$75, which includes an open bar, hors d'oeuvres,

and a listing of your name or organization in the awards journal supplement that will be in the September *Yankee Radical*.

All sorts of interesting people will be coming on June 11 to celebrate Matt and Rocio—insurgent janitors, labor organizers, muckraking journalists, MBA fans, and, hopefully,...You!

### I want to join Boston DSA in honoring Rocio Sáenz and Matt Taibbi!

Please reserve \_\_\_ tickets at \$35 each for the June 11 reception  
 (You may also choose to pay at the door. No more than 100 people will be admitted due to limited capacity.)

Sponsorships: Please list me as a:

- Friend at \$75 (includes admission and listing in journal)  
 Supporter at \$150 (includes two admissions and journal listing)  
 Patron at \$225 (includes three admissions and journal listing)  
 Benefactor at \$350 (includes four admissions and journal listing)  
 Grand Benefactor at \$500 (includes six admissions and journal listing)  
 I really want to join you in honoring Rocio Sáenz and Matt Taibbi, but I just can't afford \$35!  
 Please reserve \_\_\_ tickets at the \$15 low income/student rate. (No one will be turned away.)

I'd like an ad greeting in the event journal of the September *Yankee Radical* to be seen by 1400 subscribers.

- |   |       |  |       |
|---|-------|--|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1/8 page (4¼×2¾) | \$125 | <input type="checkbox"/> ¼ page (4¼×5½)    | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ½ page (8½×5½)   | \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> full page (8½×11) | \$750 |

Ad copy can also be emailed to  
[yankeeradical@dsaboston.org](mailto:yankeeradical@dsaboston.org).  
 Tentative deadline for ads is Aug. 19.

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

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

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

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

# FALSE CHOICES

*On May 4 Mass Alliance Director Georgia Hollister Isman made some introductory remarks at the Progressive Legislators Breakfast in Boston, a portion of which is excerpted below. Her comments refer to the April 26 Massachusetts House vote to strip municipal employees of most of their collective bargaining rights*

Progressive politics is fundamentally about optimism. We aspire to a better Commonwealth. And not only that, we believe it is possible to create such a place.

But I have been doing this job since the Bush years, and I think that sense of optimism has never been more threatened than it is today. . .

At Mass Alliance, we continue to believe it is possible to protect the rights of workers and have great schools, it is possible to protect immigrants and have safe streets and a thriving economy, it is possible to protect reproductive rights and make quality healthcare more affordable to everyone. Conservatives try—and have always tried—to instill in us the cynical belief that we must trade these things off against each other.

So my heart hurt last week to watch so many legislators walk away from their long standing, progressive commitments to collective bargaining. And to do so thinking that they had to help their local towns. That is a false choice. And I think, a failure of the

kind of optimism that is necessary to move progressive politics forward. We all want a Commonwealth of cities and towns that provide the kind of services their residents need. And we, in this room at least, also want a Commonwealth where workers can have a collective voice in decisions about their wages, benefits, and working conditions. We should not—and do not—have to choose between those two.

Because there are real solutions. Progressive solutions. Practical solutions. Many of us will be at the State House tomorrow for a hearing on *An Act to Invest in Our Communities*, sponsored by Rep. O'Day and Senator Chang-Diaz. This bill would raise 1.37 billion so that we can invest in the kind of things we all want as a Commonwealth. That is certainly one such solution.

I have interviewed scores of candidates in my 5 years at Mass Alliance. With the exception of a few rogue libertarians, almost everyone wants government to do more to help individuals and communities achieve

success. But only a few, the real progressives, are willing to draw those values to their natural and practical conclusion, and make a commitment to our shared responsibility to invest in those values through taxes. . .

Some one asked me last week if we expect progressives to stand up for union rights and immigrants rights. The answer is YES! And environmental protection, and LGBT rights, and the rights of women, and strong public services for those who need them, and economic justice, and progressive taxation. But I tell you, I have seen people wage and win campaigns on these values. And living by them—all of them—in the legislature, as a guide when tough issues arise. And I have seen some real victories, not all the time, but enough to make a difference.

The Mass Alliance coalition is based on that experience, that optimism, and the belief that we can advance these values together.

## Give It Back!

*On April 18 DSA joined in a Tax Day rally sponsored by US Uncut and MoveOn.org, ending with a march to the office of Senator Kerry. The resulting letter below was written by Executive Board member David Knuttunen*

Sen. Kerry:

I was one of the participants in the MoveOn/USUncut rally in Boston on Patriot's Day. I appreciate your sending an aide to address us. I am sorry that the group was (in my opinion) unnecessarily rude to the aide; however, I do think the message the aide was asked to convey seriously underestimated the strength of feeling around the tax issue.

Opposing further extension of the Bush tax cuts to the wealthy is a necessary but NOT sufficient position to constitute leadership on this. Those tax cuts are and always were unconscionable, and never should have been granted, nor extended. They certainly must not be extended further. But deeper measures are needed. People are outraged by the rampant looting of this economy by the wealthy and powerful, instituted by their agents in the GOP, but permitted by

altogether too much Democratic acquiescence. I am hearing the word "kleptocracy" more and more. Someone needs to take leadership, and start saying: "No more!" In fact, "no more" is not strong enough. We need to be saying "give it back!"

Ending the Bush tax cuts is only the starting point. We need to take other steps to introduce fairness back into what has become a regressive tax system. We need to stop favorable treatment of capital gains and dividend income. There is no reason that unearned income should be taxed at a lower rate than hard-earned wages. We should be RAISING the top marginal tax rates, not lowering them. We need to close corporate tax loopholes and change the laws that permit corporations to produce and market goods and services in the United States while taking advantage of offshore tax havens to avoid tax liability. And we need to institute a financial transactions tax. I know none of these things

will be easy. I suspect none of them can be done in the next year. But the more people see Senators and Congressmen fighting for these things, the more they may come to understand that justice is possible, and perhaps they will elect some more allies in 2012.

Again, I regret the rudeness and impatience shown by some in the rally. But we need more than gestures in the Senate. There are plenty of villains there; we need some heroes, too. I hope you will take on a true leadership role in pressing in the Senate for tax and economic justice for the people of Massachusetts and the United States.

Sincerely yours,  
David Knuttunen

# Invisible No More

By Mike Gallagher



Antonio Jackson works as a security officer in a downtown Boston skyscraper full of white shoe law firms and prestigious financial services companies. He takes his job seriously, protecting life and property in some of the most expensive real estate in the region. Security guards like Antonio are on hand round the clock seven days a week to respond to all sorts of potential calamities—first responders to fires, heart attacks or busted sprinkler pipes. They control access to the upper floors and check the credentials of delivery trucks using the underground loading docks.

It's an important job, but being a security guard has historically been a very low wage, high turnover position, invisible to the everyday public.

## Justice for Janitors—Yes, but what about us?

That picture started changing about a decade ago. Following a successful contract campaign for better pay and benefits waged by janitors in the Los Angeles commercial real estate sector, security officers there pointed out that they were property services workers too, and needed a union as much as anyone. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) agreed and began engaging security workers in big cities around the country. A long campaign featuring demonstrations, leafleting, strikes and support from community groups, clergy and elected officials eventually brought some of the largest security services companies to the table.

Here in Greater Boston—first at Harvard University and later in the financial district, Back Bay and Cambridge—security officers began forming a union with SEIU Local 615, the same union that janitors, window washers, food service workers, groundskeepers,

skilled trades workers, and more than 18,000 other property services members had already transformed into an effective fighting organization.

The union organized and bargained a citywide agreement that for the first time raised standards across the board. The result: higher wages and affordable, quality health insurance in place of shoddy coverage or no coverage at all, a few paid holidays and sick days that officers had never had before, and most of all, a voice at work so workers can speak up for fair treatment.

Security officers are not exactly getting rich. Conditions are far better than before, turnover is way down, but there is still much left to do. Such as:

- **Public Facilities**

Local 615 members worked hard to build standards in the downtown commercial real estate sector. But when we look at the pay and conditions of security officers working at government facilities—state office buildings, colleges and other infrastructure—it's a sadly different picture: Significantly lower pay, no raises from one year to the next, rotten health insurance or none at all. While the Massachusetts universal health reform law requires private employers to provide decent health care at an affordable price, ironically state agencies often omit any mention of health care in services procurement documents. For the state it seems it's all about who can do it cheapest. This approach to bidding creates a race to the bottom and promotes poverty here instead of good jobs.

SEIU is pushing for an extension of the prevailing wage law (which already covers janitors), so that security officers working at state

facilities don't have to work for the bottom feeder contractors, and can earn decent pay and health coverage without being forced to go on publicly subsidized programs. At the same time we are working towards the adoption of a "responsible contractor" policy for all public procurement with specific criteria and enforceability.

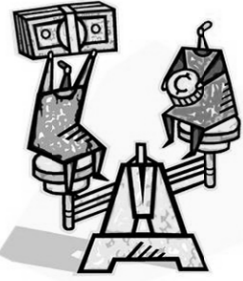
- **Suburbs**

Nearly 300 security officers working in the Boston suburban ring have already joined the union, but their hope for improvement in their jobs is being thwarted by the security contractors who have repeatedly postponed the start of negotiations toward a suburban agreement. The union is now working with allies in Quincy, Waltham, and other communities to get these stalled talks back on track.

- **Other client sectors**

Thousands of security officers in Massachusetts work at sites of all kinds—shopping malls, biotech, colleges, industrial, warehouse and infrastructure facilities, hospitals and more. SEIU will continue agitating, demonstrating, lobbying or whatever else it takes to win organizing rights for those in these key parts of our regional economy, to raise economic standards everywhere, and to gain the public and client respect this work merits—*Invisible no more!*

*Mike Gallagher works in the Security Division of SEIU Local 615, which has 18,000 members in MA, NH, and RI.*



# Why Beacon Hill Should Pass the Revenue Bill

*At the initiative of Boston DSA, Professor Gerald Friedman presented the following testimony on May 5 at the State House in support of the Act to Invest in Our Communities, a bill sponsored by Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz and Rep. Jim O'Day, and supported by DSA and other members of the Campaign for Our Communities.*

My name is Gerald Friedman. I am a Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I have lived in Massachusetts since August 1978 when I moved to Cambridge to attend Harvard, where I was awarded a PhD in Economics in 1986. Since 1984, I have taught at your state University at Amherst.

Before studying Economics at Harvard, I was a History major at Columbia and my first book, *State-Making and Labor Movements*, is a historical study of the origins of the labor movement in France and the United States 1870–1914. I am a big picture guy, and I do not envy your responsibilities because the big picture is grim. For 4 years now you have faced ever-mounting deficits because of the combination of the Great Recession and the Bush tax cuts. For a few years it was possible to avoid the worst budget cuts through a combination of accumulated reserves and federal aid. Well, those days are gone, as are any easy cuts. Now, the rubber hits the road, and we only have hard choices.

Let us review: In Massachusetts as in every state, the Great Recession has forced local and state governments to retrench to try to balance budgets just when there is growing need for state and local services by people laid off and needing assistance. A conservative estimate would put the shortfall in spending since FY2009 at over \$6 billion; we are looking at a further \$3 billion in the FY2012 budget voted by the House. And these cuts are not only destructive, they are cumulative because of deferred maintenance and the underfunding of preventive services.

The fiscal crisis that you face is harder because its roots go beyond the Great Recession, and even before the resulting slashed revenues, state and local taxation has been falling in Massachusetts. In 1990, state and local tax revenues were 10.6% of state personal income; this fell to 10.0% in 2007

before dropping to 9.3% in 2010 (despite the hike in sales taxes). This revenue problem was exacerbated by the Bush tax cuts, which led to reduced federal assistance and less revenue through increased tax avoidance by corporations and reduced estate and gift taxes. The subsequent squeeze on state spending has been at the expense of the young, the disabled, and all of us who rely on government services through cutbacks in services. The decline of infrastructure spending shifts the burden onto those using roads to the benefit of suppliers of tires and general auto repairs; other cutbacks shift the costs of education onto parents, and the burden of life chances in general onto the backs of the needy.

These spending cuts are *inefficient* because the costs paid, in damage to cars, education, and health, are greater than the state saves from reduced spending. But there is also a distributional issue here. The choice you face is not between spending and tax cuts but between *different types of cuts*. Less spending for education and lower property taxes, for example, come at the expense of the parents who try to fill gaps in their children's education from their own resources, or else at the expense of the children themselves who pay through an inferior education that leads to a less-enriched life and lower future earnings. Cutbacks in state support for the disabled are similarly equivalent to tax increases targeted at the families of the needy and the disabled themselves. They and their families pay in lost income or stress from the need to provide care with less state support. And we all pay because each cut in the social safety net is equivalent to a reduction in the sense of security that comes from the social insurance that we have all come to expect and to value from society. It is elementary microeconomics to show how diminishing marginal utility makes insurance valuable; and it is elementary political

science to show how Americans in general value this insurance.

The real alternatives are to raise revenue from those with money or to reduce services for those without. You know this because the state has tried to maintain services by shifting the finance to user fees—we have certainly seen this at the University! In these cases, the cost shift is explicit. But such user fees are not only administratively burdensome, they violate the mission of the Commonwealth: to provide for the welfare of all its citizens. And, they can never be adequate because so much of what we do through government is to provide for those who cannot buy services through the market because of youth, poverty, or disability.

Cutting taxes and spending are bad social policy; they also reduce employment in Massachusetts. One might imagine a situation where taxes are so high that they stifle initiative and drive business and families out of state. But this is by no means the situation in Massachusetts, where the state and local tax burden is almost exactly the national average. Instead, there is every reason to expect that the net effect of balanced tax and spending cuts is to *reduce* employment. This is in part because much government spending provides a direct or indirect subsidy to private business. Cuts in state infrastructure spending, for example, raise costs for businesses that have to spend more for transportation and for inputs, such as clean air and water. Cuts in education and social services not only hurt people but they undermine business growth by reducing the quality of the state's workforce.

Businesses locate in Massachusetts because they can make money here by hiring our skilled workers and using our valuable common assets, including our roads, mass transit systems, and our relatively clean environment and interesting community life. The

*(continued on page 8)*

# Rebuttal: Why Bus Rapid Transit Won't Work

By John Kyper

Unlike Walter Hook in the April Yankee Radical (“Why Boston Should Give Bus Rapid Transit a Second Chance”), I have not been terribly impressed by what I have experienced of the much-touted bus rapid transit (BRT)—either here or in other cities. And I seriously question how well such a system could work in Boston’s congested inner core, with its many narrow, crooked streets. While he contends that Boston can no longer afford any further expansion of its subway system due to mounting construction costs, over the past 20 years MBTA and state transportation planners have kept designing bus subways that would cost considerably more to build and operate than comparable rail facilities *and* could never operate with the efficiency of a well-designed rail transit line.

I have lived in Roxbury for nearly four decades and have witnessed the sorry history. Over the years the T has loudly trumpeted this fragmented “line,” with its unconnected segments on Washington Street and the South Boston Waterfront—and with two incompatible fleets of vehicles—as pioneering examples of BRT technology, sure to be emulated across the country. The Federal Transit Administration repeatedly favored its grant applications until the whole scheme collapsed several years ago when the cost of linking the two segments with a massive excavation underneath Boston Common started to approach \$2 billion.

The bus that runs along Washington Street today replaces the old elevated Orange Line that used to run until 1987, when it was relocated into the Southwest Corridor, a mile to the west. For all of its bells and whistles, the “Silver Line” mocks the state’s longstanding promise to the affected communities for a permanent replacement service linking them directly into the central subway system—one that would be, in the words of a 1974 memorandum of understanding, “equal to or better than” what was to be taken away. The state’s original plans in 1972 called for a light rail branch of the Green Line that would utilize an abandoned streetcar tunnel underneath Tremont Street and run down Washington on a reservation similar to Beacon Street. It would continue on to Grove Hall and then to Mattapan Square, serving an area that the

planners found (then as now) “the most transit-dependent” part of the entire metropolitan region.

People in Roxbury remember this broken promise and are still waiting for first class transit. There was good reason why they rejected the express bus proposal for Blue Hill Avenue that the state tried to impose two years ago without any prior consultation, including digging up the length of the Avenue for massive bus lanes and shelters. The community successfully demanded a public process where residents can discuss with officials both the type of transit they want along this corridor and its design.

Similarly, the “Transitway” to South Boston was originally envisioned as a branch off an existing rail rapid transit line, but was later converted to a bus mode to expedite the MBTA’s application for federal funding. Even from the beginning, it was conceded that this bus tunnel would not be adequate to support the planned development of the South Boston Waterfront (“Fan Pier choices,” Boston Globe editorial, 12/15/99), and that a high-capacity subway line would better serve the area. In the end the project came in egregiously over budget and opened behind schedule, in large part due to the greater width, and the gentler grades and curves required by a bus than would have been necessary for rail vehicles.

The anomalous “shotgun marriage” of linking the Waterfront with Washington Street service made no transportation sense for the riders along either leg of its serpentine route. Far more people boarding the system at the Convention Center would want to go to the Back Bay hotels and entertainment district than to the southern part of the city. Similarly, people from the South End, Roxbury and North Dorchester want to get directly to downtown and the rest of the subway system. Thus the two groups of passengers would have been forced to detour via an unnecessarily expensive and time-consuming bus tunnel skirting the southern edge of downtown and cross paths going up and downstairs at Boylston station, an awkward transfer that could have been avoided by better planning.

Instead of analyzing real life trip origins and destinations, MBTA planners used an

“environmental justice” argument to leverage federal support for the link by claiming that Roxbury residents were to be the project’s “real” beneficiaries. Witness the repeated insistence of officials that people from Roxbury were clamoring to travel to jobs out at the airport, despite all evidence to the contrary and the existence of a better alternative already in the Blue Line.

Similarly ill-conceived was the “Urban Ring” BRT—now also shelved indefinitely—which would have circled the downtown core 2-3 miles out from the center. Despite official claims, however, it is not true circumferential transit but a series of half a dozen overlapping bus routes that will continually get stuck in heavy traffic and will fail to provide the seamless service we are promised. Despite official statements that “[w]ell over 50% of the alignment will be in dedicated travel ways,” a quick look at the plans reveal that many of the proposed bus lanes would be placed on streets that already have difficulty accommodating their present traffic load, especially during rush hours—including Albany Street in the South End and Mountfort Street near Boston University. The bulk of the project’s \$2.6 billion price tag would be for a subway underneath the Longwood Medical Area that was not planned to have transfers with either the “E” or the “D” branches of the Green Line. Given these problems, is it any wonder that residents of Somerville and Medford have rejected a spur of the “Urban Ring” through their neighborhoods, demanding instead a direct rail connection into the subway?

Short of banning automobile traffic from our streets, BRT is not likely to work well here. Cities like Montreal and Los Angeles with a regular street grid and miles of wide, straight boulevards, offer many promising locations for dedicated bus lanes and stations. Boston is an old city with few such corridors. Despite (sometimes) lower construction costs, the operational costs for BRT can be far higher: A bus holds fewer people than a light rail vehicle, and its lifespan is generally half as long. And unlike light rail which can utilize a single operator for a string of cars, buses cannot be coupled together into a train, constraining busway capacity and increasing labor costs.

*(continued on p.8)*



# BAHRAIN CPD STATEMENT

*Since our last issue the Arab Spring insurgency has spread to more Mideast dictatorships while provoking responses of often brutal repression, especially in Syria. On the Libyan conflict, discussion on DSA's internet list has supported the anti-Qaddafi uprising; there have also been differing views of NATO's military response after the UN "no fly zone" resolution was implemented to save Benghazi from imminent massacre. The Bahrain statement below is from the Campaign for Peace and Democracy ([www.cpdweb.org](http://www.cpdweb.org)), which has no official connection to DSA although some of its members and supporters do.*

## End U.S. Support for Bahrain's Repressive Government

On Feb. 13, 2011, inspired by the forced resignation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, peaceful democratic protests erupted in Bahrain. Protests grew and, in response, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa invited other Gulf states to send security forces into the country to assist in violently suppressing the demonstrators. The March 15 invasion by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates brought an intensification of torture, secret trials, demolition of Shia mosques, and repression against human rights activists, journalists, labor, lawyers, medical professionals, students, political figures, and others. On March 18 the regime destroyed the Pearl Monument that had served as the protest center.

Like many other autocracies in the region Bahrain has been a key U.S. partner. It has provided a home to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, responsible for naval forces in the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian Sea, and the coast of East Africa as far south as Kenya. This is why Washington's response to the vicious repression in Bahrain has been so muted and pro-forma, in contrast to forceful denunciations of repression in countries outside the U.S. orbit, such as Iran and Libya.

Richard Sollom from Physicians for Human Rights says health care workers in Bahrain have been targeted on a scale he has never encountered. Government forces have invaded hospitals; doctors have been dragged out of the operating room, abducted, and detained for giving care to wounded protestors. The government says it will try 47 medical workers it accuses, incredibly, of causing the deaths of protesters by inflicting additional wounds on them.

Hundreds of workers, including union leaders, have been fired for striking for democratic change. Security forces closed

down the General Bahraini Federation of Trade Unions headquarters. The Bahrain Center for Human Rights writes: "Bahrain is currently considered a dangerous zone for the freedom of press and journalists." On April 3 the government suspended the country's only independent newspaper, *Al Wasat*. On May 2 it arrested two politicians belonging to the opposition Al Wefaq party.

Bahrain's population is 60 percent or more Shia, with the government dominated by a Sunni minority. There is systematic discrimination against the Shiite majority in political representation, employment, wages, housing, and other benefits. The government has tried to split the opposition along Shia-Sunni lines, but uprising leaders insist their struggle for democratic rights is non-sectarian.

Zainab Alkhwaja wrote to President Obama after her father, Abdulhadi Alkhwaja, former head of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, was beaten unconscious in front of his family and arrested by masked men, "if anything happens to my father, my husband, my uncle, my brother-in-law, or to me, I hold you just as responsible as the Al Khalifa regime. Your support for this monarchy makes your government a partner in crime. I still have hope that you will realize that freedom and human rights mean as much to a Bahraini person as it does to an American, Syrian, or a Libyan and that regional and political considerations should not be prioritized over liberty and human rights."

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Physicians for Human Rights, the International Crisis Group and many others have exhaustively documented the brutal terror of Bahrain's government. No further evidence is needed. As long as the repression continues, the promise to lift the state of

emergency is only an empty public relations gesture. The United States should end all aid to Bahrain, condemn the invasion by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and sharply denounce Bahrain's horrific suppression of democratic rights.

As the Arab Spring has swept through North Africa and the Middle East, the role of the United States has been truly shameful. Washington's rhetoric cannot conceal a deep fear of democracy. Its first instinct was to stand behind its old friends. Only when it became obvious that Ben Ali's and Mubarak's days were numbered were they abandoned. As for Saudi Arabia, this ultra-reactionary monarchy, with its appalling treatment of women and religious minorities, is almost never criticized by U.S. officials.

There are those who, while deploring repression in Bahrain, justify continuing U.S. support for that country's brutal tyranny as "realism"; in a dangerous world, they argue, our security depends on having a Middle Eastern state willing to host the Fifth Fleet. This argument is profoundly mistaken. Interventionist naval forces are part of a foreign policy that, by siding with despots and pitting the United States against the Arab people's longing for responsible government and a better way of life, guarantees endless terrorism and bloodshed and an even more dangerous world for everyone. For good reason, democratic movements around the world today do not trust the United States, which they see as motivated by imperial interest. That is why the United States desperately needs a new foreign policy, one that welcomes democratic forces—not hypocritically, in order to manipulate them and blunt their impact, but to stand in solidarity with their struggles to win political power for the people and achieve social and economic justice.

*the yankee radical*

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***Why Beacon Hill (continued from page 5)***  
 spending cuts that we have absorbed over the past decades and those we look towards in the next few years put these assets at risk.

Furthermore, on the margin, the extra spending from tax cuts produces fewer jobs than the jobs lost due to cuts in state spending. This is because almost all of the money taken in taxes is spent in the state hiring people; e.g. teachers, social workers, fire fighters, but much of the money kept when taxes are cut is either saved or else is spent

on out-of-state goods or services. Recent empirical studies have estimated that state spending creates jobs for under \$40,000/job, a fraction of the cost of job creation through state tax cuts.

The proposed "Act to Invest in Our Communities" will not undo the damage caused by 30 years of tax and spending cuts but it will at least ameliorate the harm to be done this year. And it will do so in a way that minimizes the economic cost of higher taxes during a recession. The proposed revenue

increase will raise the total tax burden in the Commonwealth by 0.3%; and by raising almost all of it on households with an income of over \$200,000, minimizes any economic dislocation. Indeed, we could see this as a small reversal of the Bush tax cuts because this proposal recaptures for the Commonwealth only 16% of those cuts enjoyed by those earning over \$200,000.

Thank you.

***Rebuttal (continued from p. 6)***

During the 1980s Seattle built a downtown bus tunnel where—following the example of Guadalajara in Mexico—it has since installed a light rail trunk line. Ottawa is planning to do the same with its busways in several years when it constructs a light rail subway through its downtown. Similarly,

both legs of the "Silver Line" need to be reconfigured as rail lines and linked directly into the existing transit system, so they can reach their full potential as vital transportation links. Boston should stop trying to reinvent the wheel with a technology that has proven, at best, less than optimal in this city and build something that will actually meet our transportation needs in

an efficient and cost-effective manner.

*John Kyper is a member of the Washington Street Corridor Coalition and DSA. He is also the Transportation Chair for the Massachusetts Chapter of the Sierra Club.*