

United States: Joanne Landy, 1941-2017 - Co-founder of the Campaign for Peace & Democracy, “a genuine loss for the entire democratic socialist left”

Sunday 22 October 2017, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 14 October 2017).

Joanne Landy, long-time prominent member of the New Politics editorial board, co-founder and co-director of the Campaign for Peace & Democracy, former executive director of the New York chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program, and a leading voice for a democratic foreign policy and socialism from below, has died. All the movements she enriched and inspired with her wisdom, her sharp political analysis, and her humane values for more than half a century are in her debt and have suffered a great loss. We mourn her passing.

Details on a memorial service will be forthcoming. Below are some tributes and remembrances, most recent on the top.



Jason Schulman

Joanne Landy, long-time editorial board member of *New Politics* and a co-founder of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy, and a genuinely decent person, died on October 14, just shy of her 76th birthday. She had been fighting cancer for many months and then, shortly before her death, suffered a stroke. Her passing is a genuine loss not only for NP and CPD but for the entire democratic socialist left.

Having served on NP's editorial board for several years, I can honestly say that Joanne was one of the nicest and most principled people I've ever met. She was a veteran of the Third Camp, Neither-Washington-Nor-Moscow wing of the American revolutionary left, embodied in U.S. socialist journals like *NP* and *Against the Current*. She'd passed through various socialist organizations—the Young Socialist League and Young People's Socialist League in the 1950s, the Independent Socialist Clubs

of America in the 1960s, Democratic Socialists of America in the 1980s— without ever noticeably changing her political views, particularly her support of working-class political independence and opposition to authoritarianism of any stripe. Though firm in her beliefs she was never sectarian and was truly a fun person to work with. She also played a key role in Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP).

NP held a celebration of Joanne's life and work this past June. She received a tribute from Polish political activists (and rock musicians), a nod to her consistent support for democratic socialist dissidents during Poland's Stalinist years, from Jacek Kuroń and Karol Modzelewski in the 1960s to the early Solidarność of the 1980s. A speech she gave in 2012 on the Lessons of 1989 at the Left Forum can be found [here](#).

Joanne is irreplaceable but it was an honor to know her and work with her. Rest in peace, my friend and comrade.

Jason Schulman, *New Politics* co-editor; member, Democratic Socialists of America (NYC)

Campaign for Peace and Democracy

Dear friends of the Campaign,

It is with the deepest sorrow that I have to report that Joanne Landy, the Co-Director of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy and one of its two founder (as the Campaign for Peace and Democracy/East and West) in 1982, died on October 14th, two weeks after suffering a massive stroke. She was just a few minutes shy of her 76th birthday. Tributes to Joanne and information about the future of the Campaign will follow shortly. As for now, I join with all of you in mourning the passing of a great, tireless fighter against war, repression, and social injustice. We are unlikely ever to see her equal.

In grief and solidarity,

Tom Harrison

Havaar: Iranian Initiative Against War, Sanctions, and State repression

We always knew she was really with us—

In memory of Joanne Landy

We are a group of activists who worked closely with Joanne Landy in Havaar: Iranian Initiative Against War, Sanctions, and State Repression. She was a founding member of Havaar, which emerged out of a fusion between members of Occupy Wall Street's global justice working group and Iranian diasporic groups focused on solidarity with democratic and feminist organizing in Iran. Joanne showed up when we put out a call for solidarity with Iranians opposed to economic sanctions and threats of war, and the repression carried out by their own government. She won our trust

because of her sincere commitment to self-determination for the Iranian people. We were a motley crew of folks from different backgrounds with differing levels of political experience. Joanne threw her lot in with us and was resolute in her conviction that what we did together was important and necessary work.

Joanne came to play a unique and invaluable role in our organization. She was among the most consistent of our members, rarely missing a meeting or event, despite her age and declining health. It is hard to find adequate words to describe the difference her presence made. We were incredibly fortunate to have someone with a living memory of anti-war and Left organizing going back decades, someone with a tremendous depth of political knowledge and strategy, someone whose moral-ethical compass would come to inspire us all. Throughout her passionate and uninterrupted organizing efforts for the Campaign for Peace and Democracy, Joanne collaborated with grassroots initiatives from Poland, Russia, Mexico, Greece, Syria and Iran, to name only a few, always with the goal of bridging progressive movements in the U.S. with other struggles from around the world.

When we went into politically contentious situations, for example challenging those in the anti-war movement who in the name of “anti-imperialism” refused to criticize the repression carried out by the Iranian government, she made the most principled arguments in favor of a kind of internationalist anti-imperialism that would never sacrifice the democratic demands and aspirations of ordinary people. We always knew she was with us and would have our backs no matter what.

Even though her age made her a contemporary of many of our parents, she fit in easily in our group, with her combination of political seriousness, lightheartedness and humor. She celebrated birthdays with us, grieved with us and danced with us. She somehow knew exactly how much and when to weigh in and to step back, utilizing her vast experience to gently guide us and support us in leading and shaping the organization. Her humble, generous spirit infused our meetings.

Joanne was one of those special, rare people who embody what real activism is: it was never about her ego, she was truly committed to justice and solidarity. She never assumed she had a monopoly on the truth. Instead, she listened, and was eager to hear our stories, revise her ideas, and learn from us too. She was curious and open. She would ask many nuanced questions from her fellow activists with different points of view to get the most accurate picture of things. She was present! She was there before others showed up, whether for a street protest, a public event or a meeting. And she was truly accountable, never failing to deliver what she signed up for. Joanne knew how to put things in context and, rather than adhering to old dogmas, continued to re-think ways to battle injustice and imagine a better world. Never, ever did she give in to despair. She always wanted us to keep going, to figure out our next steps, to put our politics into action in the world. We will forever remember her continual efforts to breathe wind into our sails.

We only wish we had met her sooner and known her longer. But for the brief years of our intergenerational experiment in Havaar, she became our beloved friend and comrade. We will never forget her beautiful way of being, her calm manner, her fierce devotion to justice everywhere and unfailing solidarity with those on the receiving end of violence. We will miss her deeply and can only hope to carry on her legacy of nuanced and principled opposition to all forms of oppression, without apology.

In loving memory,

Ali Abdi
Mohammad Asgari
Saara Azadi
Ausoo

Setareh Danesh
Carrie Fox
Sara Hosseini
Ali Issa
Geoff Johnson
Camilo Lund
Manijeh Nasrabadi
Udi Pladott
Sadra Shahab
Shaya Shirabadi
Jeanne K. Strole
Leyli Yousef
Sina Zekavat

International Socialist Review

Dear comrades,

The Editorial Board of the International Socialist Review is writing to express our condolences and sympathy to you and all who worked with Joanne Landy in the wake of her death. Joanne was a truly wonderful person and a tireless leader in the Campaign for Peace and Democracy, New Politics, and countless activist projects.

Many of us collaborated with her on political efforts all the way back to the early 1960s. She was an internationalist who fought against all imperialisms and all states that oppressed their peoples, in the hopes of building a new and democratic society throughout the world.

She set a non-sectarian model for activists. Even when she sharply disagreed, she argued in a friendly, often funny, and clear manner without ever demeaning other activists. And she always searched for ways to collaborate with other forces without for a moment compromising her principles.

She will be sorely missed by the left, especially those in the tradition of socialism from below. The best way to honor her is to take up the torch for social justice she carried for decades and continue the struggle.

All our solidarity,

Ashley Smith for the Board of the *International Socialist Review*

P.S.

* October 14, 2017:

<http://newpol.org/content/joanne-landy-19412017>