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The Indypendent is a New York-based free newspaper published every Wednesday. It contains news, features, and columns that provide a grassroots perspective on the local, national, and international news. The Indypendent is funded by subscriptions, advertising, and donations. It is a non-profit organization and is sustained by the contributions of its readers and supporters.

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By Anja Rudiger

Vermont’s pioneering healthcare movement

On May 26, Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin signed a law that creates a path for a universal, publicly financed healthcare system in Vermont, making it the first state in the country to move toward such a system. Legislators and advocates alike have compared Vermont’s role to that of Saskatchewan, which half a century ago spearheaded the establishment of universal healthcare in Canada.

The law states that Vermont will create the publicly financed Green Mountain Care to provide comprehensive coverage as a public good for all Vermont residents, regardless of income, health status or employment. Yet the struggle for universal healthcare is far from over. Green Mountain Care will be implemented only after a number of conditions are met, including the requirements of the federal health reform law. Some key decisions have been postponed to future legislative sessions, such as a financing mechanism for the system and the design of a health benefits package. The timeline calls for financing proposals by January 2013, a federal waiver application by 2015 — earlier if Congress allows — and implementation by 2017 at the latest.

The pioneering nature of Vermont’s health reform was rooted in a people’s movement, which caused reform efforts to be driven by principles, rather than political calculation, industry interests, or professional advocates and lobbyists. The vision of healthcare as a human right captured the public imagination and created the political space for action by elected officials. Observers credit grassroots organizing, it has grown with each legislative session, such as a financing mechanism for the system and the design of a health benefits package. The timeline calls for financing proposals by January 2013, a federal waiver application by 2015 — earlier if Congress allows — and implementation by 2017 at the latest.

The campaign built a broad movement guided by principles such as universality and equity, rather than by specific policy proposals like single payer. By shifting the focus from cost containment to collective needs, the campaign placed people at the center of policy and practice. When viewed as a human right, healthcare becomes a unifying concern for everyone, not just for the uninsured, “consumers” struggling to pay their bills or workers seeking to hold on to benefits.

Embedding human rights principles in public and political discourse has advanced the goal of treating healthcare — and potentially other needs — as a public good, financed through taxation, rather than being purchased as a market commodity. The success of this organizing model became apparent in the fight against a last-minute amendment to exclude undocumented people from the plan. The campaign mobilized hundreds of Vermonters to stand up for the human rights principle of universality, and after days of phone calls, protests and a large rally, the exclusionary amendment was struck.

If excluding undocumented people presented a clear line in the sand, the maneuvering of private insurance companies has been harder to detect and defeat. The industry and its corporate allies are a formidable opponent with deep pockets and well-honed patience. Insurance companies, whose business model depends on restricting access to care, managed to keep a foot in the door, as they persuaded legislators to remove a clause prohibiting the sale of private plans in the new public system. Therefore, the most important struggle ahead will be for financing Green Mountain Care as a public good, through equitable contributions from all of Vermont’s people and businesses.

Human rights campaigners are prepared to take on corporate forces. While the Healthcare Is a Human Right Campaign has not relied on legislation to boost its organizing, it has grown with each legislative session. As people across the country study Vermont’s achievement, it may inspire them to help build the movement for healthcare as a human right. Such an impact could rival the significance of the universal healthcare bill itself.

Anja Rudiger is the Human Right to Health Program Director at the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative.

U.S. BOAT TO GAZA

AHoy: The Audacity of Hope, the U.S. Boat to Gaza, is set to sail June 25 from Greece in a flotilla with 12 boats from other countries — including Canada, Switzerland and Turkey — to try to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza. The Audacity will carry some 60 passengers, including retired Army Colonel Ann Wright and the three others pictured above at a May 25 fundraiser in New York City. The boat will also carry messages of solidarity to the people of Gaza.

BROOKLYN BASH UNDER THE STARS

PHOTO: Lew Friedman

With the June 15 deadline to renew rent stabilization and rent control laws for 2.5 million New Yorkers looming on the horizon, tenant activists are set to head to Albany to make their voices heard.

In addition to a mass mobilization to Albany on June 13, The Real Rent Reform Campaign is prepared to bus tenants up to Albany every day after June 15 if the rent laws are not renewed. For more information, visit realrentreform.blogspot.com.

The Metropolitan Council on Housing is encouraging New Yorkers to call Gov. Cuomo (212-681-4580) to both renew rent regulation and extend protections to all tenants. Visit metcouncil.net to learn more.

FIGHT FOR FAIR RENT

BENEFIT: On June 2 The Indypendent and the Brooklyn Food Coalition (BFC) teamed up for a joint event, which was held in Park Slope, Brooklyn at the home of Nancy Romer and Lew Friedman. Jeremy Scahill, the author of Blackwater: The Rise of the World’s Most Powerful Mercenary Army, attended the event and spoke to attendees about the importance of media activism and food justice.

Nearly 200 people attended, and guests enjoyed a home-cooked Indian feast, as well as dancing under the stars. Romer, the BFC Founder and General Coordinator, and Indypendent General Manager Arun Gupta said the fundraiser was a success, and both organizations look forward to working together again in the future.

Stay on the look out for future Indypendent benefits and events by visiting indypendent.org. PHOto: Lew Friedman
By James D. Fernández

On May 15, 2011, Spain exploded into protest. Tens of thousands of people, mainly youth, began occupying public spaces in Madrid and other cities all over Spain, protesting against, among other things, a flawed political system, corrupt government, austerity for people and bailouts for banks. It's not easy to make sense of the complex processes unleashed on May 15. The mainstream Spanish press seems unable to grasp their significance or has resorted to sensationalism. The movement itself is in movement, in flux. In fact, its mobility and unscripted nature are probably the main sources of its disquieting power.

We would do well to recall that Spain's two major experiments in democracy have been conducted during extremely inauspicious times for democratic movements worldwide. The country's first sustained attempt at a modern democracy took place from 1931 to 1936, a time of global economic depression and rising totalitarian ideologies on both the left and the right. The short-lived Second Republic made a valiant effort, under adverse circumstances, to create democratic citizens out of monarchical and even feudal subjects. It began the arduous, and still incomplete, task of separating church and state, implementing land reform and promoting gender equality. But Franco, Hitler and Mussolini snuffed out Spain's democratic spring, asked by France, England and the United States, the dithering would-be defenders of democracy that in the late 1930s appeared Hitler, while denouncing the “excesses” on the left. The Republic's valiant struggle against all odds undoubtedly contributed to the way in which the Spanish Civil War — and the memory of that war — was seared into the consciousness of progressives all over the world, and still remains a point of reference and a reservoir of images of democratic hope and courage for underdogs everywhere.

There was no Youtube in 1936, but there were newspapers; there wasn't Flickr, there were no Facebook walls or blogs, but there were wall newspapers and posters and pamphlets. All the latest innovations in communication and networking were tapped to mobilize global public opinion in support of the beleaguered Spanish Republic.

The second serious experiment in democracy began after Franco's death in 1975. Spain's transition to democracy has been admirable in many ways, but it has coincided with a dramatic impoverishment of democratic ideals and processes worldwide. Some would even say, though it sounds like a cruel joke, that Spain, whose first bid for democracy was squashed by fascism, has now become a normal democracy, but only at the very time when that concept has been hollowed out of meaning.

Many Spaniards today feel that their country — much like the United States — has settled on austerity for people and bailouts for banks, while cuts in social provision, brutal assaults on basic rights, and welfare cuts promoted by neoliberalism. The movement itself is in movement, in flux. In fact, its mobility and unscripted nature are probably the main sources of its disquieting power.

This movement is linked to a wider current of European protests against austerity. These protests defy the image of a silent mass of Europeans, an image that serves the interests of elites. These include campaigns like UK Uncut against Conservative Party policies, mass mobilizations of Geração a Raça in Portugal, general strikes in Greece and France, and what happened in Iceland after the people decided not to bail out the bankers. And, of course, inspiration is found above all in the Arab Spring, the democratic revolts in Egypt and Tunisia that overturned their corrupt leaders.

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We now have at least two routes out of this crisis: implementing yet more cuts or constructing a real democracy. The first has failed to bring back economic “normality”; it has created an atmosphere of “every man for himself,” a war of all against all. The second promises an absolute and constituent democracy. It has just started to lay down its path. But this is the path we choose.

Tomás Herreros and Emmanuel Rodríguez are members of Universidad Nomada a collective of autonomous education. Translated by Yaiza Hernández Velázquez.
The Roots of Spain’s Revolution

I n late April, the progressive Spanish daily Público asked why there was so little resistance to the economic crisis, despite 5 million jobless and rising misery. The union and social movement leaders and left academics interviewed pointed to the numbing impact of mass unemployment, the casualization of work, the bureaucratization of organized labor, widespread repression that striking could achieve anything and the economic cushion provided by Spain’s extended families. They also cited the apparent failure of French and Greek general strikes against austerity. The consensus was that, given the absence in Europe of even one successful struggle, people in Spain were resigned to beating their way through the crisis as best they could. Just over one month later, camps of thousands of los indignados (“the outraged”) are pitched in the squares of at least 80 Spanish cities and towns.

The eyes of the world are on Madrid’s Puerta del Sol and Barcelona’s Plaza Catalunya, where the occupiers are denouncing corporate austerity, political corruption and demanding a “new system.” How did it come about? It is not for lack of anger.

In January, the leaders of the two major union confederations — the Workers Commissions (CC.OO.) and General Union of Workers (UGT) — agreed to a rise in the retirement age and a “social accord” with the national government and the employers. The unions led a general strike last Sept. 29. But once this deal was done, nothing more could be expected of them — any resistance would have to come from elsewhere.

Polls showed 70 to 75 percent of Spaniards opposed the moves. Similar majorities have opposed bank bailouts, the forced restructuring of the credit unions and cuts to the welfare system. The signs of a fight back emerged in early 2011 among young people in Spain, one of the most internet-savvy groups in Europe. In February, the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero introduced Europe’s toughest law against illegal internet downloads — with the support of the main conservative parties, the Popular Party (PP) and the Catalan Convergence and Union (CIU).

In reaction, the website “Don’t Vote for Them” was launched against the PSOE, PP and CIU — becoming the hot site in Spanish cyberspace. “Don’t Vote for Them” also posted a devastating Googlemaps corruption guide to Spain.

In January, another activist website appeared, “Franco Did Not Die,” in reference to Spain’s fascist dictator who died in 1975. Its initial purpose was to raise funds in support of Judge Baltasar Garzón, who was suspended in May 2010 after investigating the crimes of Franco’s regime too enthusiastically, but the campaign broadened into a movement against political manipulation of the judiciary.

The site “State of Malaise,” dedicated to bringing democracy and transparency into political life, began calling for weekly Friday protests across the country.

“Acuable.es,” the main online petitioning site, combined with global site Avaaz to launch a campaign against candidates charged with corruption running in the May 22 local government elections.

The growing mood of defiance was shown by the success of the short essay “Get Out-raged” by 93-year-old French Resistance veteran Stephane Hessel. This call to arms against the destruction of the European welfare state and democratic rights is one of the hottest books in Spain.

The trigger that brought these cyber-tests onto the streets came from neighboring Portugal. On March 15, a 300,000-strong protest was held in Lisbon by the “generation on the scrapheap,” a “non-party political” outpouring of young people demanding a future.

On April 7, the newly formed Spanish “Youth Without a Future” collective called a demonstration under the slogan “without work, without house, without pension, without fear.”

Hundreds were expected; about 5,000 showed up, encouraging organizers to call another protest on May 15. This call was supported by the Real Democracy Now! group. This slogan captured the widespread conviction that no matter how the people vote, bankers get richer, politicians do their bidding and life gets worse.

This rejection of institutional politics was expressed in the now-famous saying: “We are not merchandise in the hands of bankers and politicians.”

About 50,000 turned out across Spain on May 15 — giving birth to the “May 15 Movement.”

The first encampment took place that day in Madrid’s central plaza, Puerta del Sol. Police attempts to close it down were defeated by the thousands pouring into the site after appeals on Facebook and Twitter.

The Madrid camp was reproduced across Spain, showing people wanted to do more than march and go home. The camps have become the centers of an ongoing teach-in, of what one activist has called “a continuous exercise in liberation.”

They have given heart to millions of working people who share the campers hatred for “the politicians,” and who cheered on May 27 as police attempts to close down the camp in Barcelona’s Plaza Catalunya were humiliatingly defeated by sheer force of numbers.

Whatever happens next, the May 15 Movement has won a huge victory. Resistance is possible, it can win, and with greater organization and participation it will win more.
The Global Nuclear Regime

By Sabu Kohso

Three months after the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters that struck on March 11, Japan has plunged from an advanced and well-managed consumerist society to an epicenter of planetary radiation and imploding social and bureaucratic apparatuses. While the Japanese government is desperately attempting to maintain its sovereignty, it is unable to solve the amassing problems. In the broad picture, the national territory is being divided up into enclaves of inaccessible regions and the national economy is sinking into the abyss.

Since the 1970s, Japan's technology, along with its society and bureaucracy, established a model for innovation. The international business community and conservative forces alike praised Japan for efficiency and good management. The events of 3/11, as the disaster is now known, revealed both the immense problems inherent in nuclear power and the failings of the bureaucratic system, technology and civil society that make up the apparatus called Japan, a pinnacle of modern industrial civilization.

One result appears to be the formation of a “global nuclear regime.” Capitalism has no intention of abolishing nuclear power. Instead, it is re-organizing the technocracy to manage it primarily by managing nuclear disaster, forcing people to live with different forms and degrees of radiation. The management of nuclear disaster may develop into a strategy for profit making, rule and control. Nature estimates the clean up may take a century, and the Japan Center for Economic Research puts the costs over the next 10 years at $71 to $250 billion. Japan's government will likely assume the liabilities of the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), meaning the public will pay. Those funds will flow to corporations, while capital will pressure the government in coming years to make the huge swaths of land now rendered inhospitable available for profit-making enterprises.

Fukushima is a new form of nuclear war, no longer being fought between the states, but between the global nuclear regime and all life forms including humans. The first rescue units and corporations that showed interest in Fukushima were from the United States, France and Israel. Leading developers both of nuclear weapons and energy, these nations are in a position to play a central role in a global nuclear regime. Some of the first clean-up contracts have already gone to firms in California and France. People in stricken areas such as Fukushima prefecture, location of the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear energy plant where the reactors melted down, continue to suffer from physical devastation and intense radiation. Some 140 miles away to the south, the 13 million residents of metropolitan Tokyo are enclosed in an invisible cloud of low-level radiation.

Nuclear Age: One goal of a “global nuclear regime” would be to make people accept different levels and types of radiation.

MELTDOWNS

We know now that three of the plant’s six reactors experienced complete meltdowns a few days after 3/11. Reactor 1 began melting down five hours after the earthquake, meaning the public will pay. Those funds will flow to corporations, while capital will pressure the government in coming years to make the huge swaths of land now rendered inhospitable available for profit-making enterprises.

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ing down five hours after the earthquake, which, contrary to official reports, caused the reactor’s cooling system to fail, not the subsequent tsunami. The breadth of the cover-up by the government and the quasi-public TEPCO, compounded by the fact most corporate media outlets downplayed the dangers, is evidence of a general disregard for the health and safety of Japan’s population as well as the rest of humanity who will be exposed to the radiation sooner or later. The cover-ups, similar to the official white-wash of the health dangers to New York City residents following the months-long toxic fire after the 9/11 attacks, shows the overriding concern is to maintain business activity at all costs.

FUKUSHIMA

Is Fukushima an ecological disaster? It is a natural and man-made disaster. It is a disaster caused by the same system of capitalist exploitation and in turn represent an unprecedented threat to capitalism. Revolution and disaster together are forcing the planetary apparatus to undo and redo itself. In this sense, they are “One Event” in the ultimate dimension, the dimension where the world and the earth clash and interact.

The events of 3/11 expose the fundamental paradox of human laws regarding nature. The well-being of humans depends upon the well-being of nature. But the law assumes nature is a mere object, mere resources to exploit. Laws are designed to expropriate, privatize and divide the ultimate commons called the earth. If we think about the rights of mother earth we must accept limiting the unilateral rights of humanity.

Fukushima 3/11 has unveiled the discrepancy between the world and the earth. The world is the stage where human societies play out the drama of their interactions with structural languages such as international politics and laws. The earth is the factory that produces and reproduces the players and the stage itself but by using different languages that are machinic (in the words of Felix Guattari). The machinic operates differently from the structural in that it penetrates through and moves between the conscious and the unconscious in the planetary whole.

In this sense, Fukushima 3/11 is not associated with “the world.” The event radically questions the concepts associated with the global governance such as G20, the United Nations or Empire, mainly consisting of the representatives of nation-states and capital. These representatives cannot embody a will to solution but only to manage the problems of all the discrepancies between humanity and nature, the world and the earth.

The nature of the event lies on the level of the unconscious called the earth, upon which the apparatus is built and we live.

Continued on page 11

WHY THE JAPANESE DON’T TRUST THEIR GOVERNMENT

By Harry Harootunian

Natural disasters in Japan — drought, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and the appearance of foreigners — used to be interpreted as signs of moral failure in the leadership of the nation. The social order was aligned with nature, so any divergence between national order and nature seemed to denote a moral failure that might lead to worse catastrophes.

After Japan’s March 11 earthquake and tsunami, an elderly Tokyo resident said: “When a country’s leaders are bad, natural disasters occur.” A similar thought also seems to have crossed the minds of some in power in Japan. A post-disaster speech made by the prime minister only added to the devastation of the country at the end of the second world war, the 1923 Tokyo earthquake and the 1995 Kobe earthquake.

The governor of Tokyo, Ishihara Shintaro, blurted out that the earthquake and tsunami were “divine retribution” (tenbatsu) for Japan’s selfishness, materialism and the worship of money, a warning to amend this wayward lifestyle and return to the correct path. The 1923 Kanto earthquake had been viewed the same way, and Emperor Hirohito wrote in 1946, when threatened with being tried as a war criminal, that the recent war had been caused by the moral laxity of the people, seduced by materialism and consumerism.

Ishihara conveniently shifted responsibility for the political leadership to the people, a callous response to such vast human suffering — the untold dead, more than 400,000 homeless, damage to property and infrastructure, and then the fear of radioactive emissions. Perhaps more frightening, though, was the response, in both actions and presentation, of the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), to what happened at its Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant, where the earthquake and tsunami had put out of commission both sets of fail-safe equipment for reactors and storage pools for spent nuclear rods, leading to the release of radiation into the atmosphere and evacuation of the surrounding area.

The head of TEPCO broke down in tears during a televised address to the nation. While TEPCO, he offered profuse, traditional-style apologies — and inadvertently suggested that the company was not at all sure about its actions. It has since been claimed that although TEPCO’s executives knew exactly what should have been done in the emergency, they took too much time to decide when to begin cooling down the reactors because they did not want to ruin them. The government then put TEPCO in charge of running electricity blackouts across Japan, meant to conserve power for essential services, allowing for reduced generation capacity and a damaged grid. The unstated cause of the relationship between state and bureaucracy is that major groups had long questioned, was suddenly made clear.

Both state and company have a well-doc-umented history of nuclear accidents or the very high potential, given Japan’s tectonics, for such accidents. In 2007, an earthquake in northwest Japan of far less magnitude (almost unprecedented 9.0) damaged the TEPCO nuclear facility at Kashiwazaki-Kariwa but not critically — luckily, for it had not been designed to withstand a quake of even that smaller size.

Northeast Japan had remained, since the
19th century, less developed than Tokyo and central and western Japan. The decision by the government to site nuclear energy facilities on its coast was partly an attempt to generate economic growth and prevent the southward migration of the population. The local economy has been devastated, and the displaced and homeless appear to be very conscious they have been left alone to cope, almost unsupported by the government: Food, fuel, water, shelter arrived (where they arrived) only very slowly. They remember the government’s ineptitude after the Kobe earthquake in 1995, when it took days even to recognize the severity of the damage and organize any relief. While initial news reports focused on the immediate needs of evacuees, for most Japanese the ongoing threat of radioactive contamination is the greater concern. It also threatens the political system dominated by a single party that has presided over them for 60 years, where electoral swings have led to changes of government but not of policy.

Since WWII, the Japanese have been disciplined into a society that emphasizes hard work, uncomplaining sacrifices, conformism, steadiness, loyalty and acceptance. Paradoxically, this has produced indifference to an unresponsive political class, and postponement of distrust and criticism of its leadership.

The emperor called on the people to remain calm and hopeful and take care of each other, and reminded them of a similar broadcast by his father Hirohito in 1945 that announced the end of the war, asking the nation to “endure the unendurable.” Akihito does not claim divinity (Hirohito renounced that) but only the status of a national symbol, and this appeal consolidated the government’s request that people should remain patient, and make more sacrifices. Using the emperor in this way reinforces Ishihara’s statement and suggests an attempt to shift the responsibility from the government to the people. Most Japanese would say the imperial institution is not important, yet the fact that the government summoned the emperor to make the speech revealed that in fact it is. Few Japanese question the symbolic status of the emperor.

The government“contemplates of the nation and is therefore in a position to ask people to accept the existing political arrangements (going against the constitution, which says that the people are sovereign). The idea is to transfer the Japanese people’s loyalties towards their social and ethnic community onto the state and the form of political rule that has been constructed to control them.

The government called the emperor in as damage control, an attempt to calm a mistrustful population and to protect the present system of authority. But the clear failure of the government to act decisively and give prompt and accurate information and aid, risks damaging the carefully constructed identity between popular sovereignty and political leadership in Japan. This attempt to undermine any chance of managing the difficult task of recovery that lies ahead.

Harry Harootunian is professor at Duke University and the Department of East Asian Studies at Columbia University, and author of The Empire’s New Clothes.

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Fukushima’s ‘Zones of Sacrifice’

BY WENDY MATSUMURA

In the 2008 edition of his book Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space, Neil Smith might have been writing about Japan and its ongoing nuclear crisis in the following passage: “while many states have variously unhitched themselves from responsibility for the social reproduction of their national populations, they have selectively rendered the state apparatus as its own entrepreneurial entity, a purer catalyst of capitalist expansion than ever before.”

The nuclear meltdowns that began with the 9.0 magnitude earthquake and tsunami on March 11 have highlighted the Japanese government’s role in brokering nuclear technology contracts, uranium mining deals, and massive subsidies for its utilities and other nuclear energy-related corporations despite its desperate attempts to render such ties invisible.

These unproductive spaces, which Valerie Kurletz terms “zones of sacrifice” in her book, Tainted Desert: Environmental and Social Ruin in the American West, often overlap with other spaces — rural spaces or newly built industrial-scientific complexes — that serve to resolve energy crises caused by cities through building nuclear and other power plants.

Kurletz writes that these zones are “desirable because of their undesirability.” They will remain central to the global landscape until the disposal of industrial waste is resolved. They are desirable for their function of capital accumulation, but at the cost of inflicting violence upon peoples who inhabit the zones.

Tainted Desert is a powerful and heart-breaking analysis of the intentional ruin of Native American reservations in the West by the nuclear industry, the U.S. government, the military and scientific establishment since the 1940s. Kurletz proposes “nuclear-ism” as a form of internal colonialism that feeds off and exacerbates political, social and economic inequalities between regions — geographical, cultural and racial/ethnic — within a given society.

Nuclearism relies on a practice of deter-ritorality — the indifference by modern nation-states and the international community toward particular lands or regions and populations that inhabit them.

Zones of sacrifice are pieces in the global puzzle of energy exploitation. They link areas like Nevada’s Yucca Mountain, an unfinished “permanent” nuclear waste disposal site, to uranium mines in indigenous lands in Northern Saskatchewan, Western Australia and Gabon. The zones include Kazakhstan, “an engine of global uranium production” in the words of one analyst and target of Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry as a new source of uranium; Rokkasho village in Aomori prefecture, Japan’s own nuclear reprocessing site; Tsuruga city in Fukui prefecture, which houses Japan’s only operational fast breeder reactor; England’s Sellafield nuclear reprocessing complex, which reprocesses Japanese reactors’ spent nuclear fuel; and the U.S. military’s Cold War-era nuclear weapons facility in Hanford, Washington.

These sites are where raw material extraction, waste disposal, nuclear testing and radioactive contamination tend to occur. For communities in these areas, workers often have no other option than to toil in these health-sapping industries, and everyone is forced to live in the toxic spaces. Within these landscapes multinational corporations engage in “co-siting,” which means housing many dangerous facilities together because, as Colin Macilwain recently reported in Nature, “the only communities that will accept new nuclear plants are those that already have them.” Powerful government agencies like the U.S. Department of Energy, the Pentagon and the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry serve as defender and benefactor to the corporations, helping secure local settlements and the facilities and providing massive subsidies to municipalities and contracts to companies in order to realize these locally undesirable but nationally “necessary” projects. (Macilwain lays bare the absurdity of co-siting: “Not only are all the reactors exposed simultaneously to the same dangers — whether flood, earthquake, war or terrorist attack — but radiation release at one reactor or fuel tank could cripple recovery efforts at the others.”)

“Zones of sacrifice” rely on vague rhetoric about shared sacrifice that obscure the vested interests that benefit from establishing these spaces while making invisible the concrete sacrifices forced upon humans and non-humans occupying those lands. In the process, these regions-turned-wastelands are sacralized — as a backdrop to the site and monuments of national security, international stability and the pursuit of scientific knowledge. The lands may be rendered unhabitable, but their value to the nation-state, industry and science are great.

Another characteristic of the zones of sacrifice is that they are the site of complex negotiations about nuclear power plants and waste facilities, nuclear pollution perpetuates boundaries — even as boundaries are extremely useful for doling out subsidies and compensation and...
WIND AND WAVE, SOLAR AND GEO.

By Oriana Visintini

The main advantages of wind, wave, tidal, solar and geothermal energy are their wide availability, freedom from fuel, and minimal environmental impact. However, they also face challenges, such as high capital costs and variable production. In this article, we explore the potential of these technologies and discuss how they might contribute to a more sustainable energy future.

The vast amount of energy available is enormous, with an estimated 2,000 terawatts of renewable energy potential worldwide. However, the energy conversion efficiencies of these technologies are relatively low, ranging from 20% for wind to 12% for geothermal. This limits their practicality and makes it difficult to integrate them into the existing energy grid.

One of the most promising technologies is wind energy, which has the potential to provide a significant share of the world's energy needs. However, the installation of wind turbines can be costly and may face opposition from local communities. Additionally, wind energy is highly variable, making it difficult to integrate into an existing grid.

Solar energy is another promising technology, with the potential to provide a substantial portion of the world's energy needs. However, the high capital costs of solar panels can be a barrier to widespread adoption, especially in developing countries.

Wave and tidal energy are also promising, with the potential to provide a significant portion of the world's energy needs. However, the high capital costs and technical challenges of these technologies can limit their adoption.

Geothermal energy is also a promising technology, with the potential to provide a significant portion of the world's energy needs. However, the high capital costs and technical challenges of these technologies can limit their adoption.

In conclusion, while these technologies have the potential to provide a significant portion of the world's energy needs, they face challenges that must be addressed if they are to reach their full potential. Further research and development are needed to improve the cost-effectiveness and integration of these technologies into the existing grid.

**The Cost of Subsidies**

Perhaps the most concerning argument leveled against renewable energy is the higher cost of subsidies. While there is no denying that subsidies are necessary to encourage the development and adoption of renewable energy technologies, the question remains: are the costs justified? In this section, we explore the costs of subsidies and the impact they have on renewable energy adoption.

**The Tricky Part**

However, the question of how to integrate renewable energy into the existing grid remains a challenge. There are different potential solutions, such as increasing the grid's flexibility and developing new storage technologies. These solutions have the potential to increase the grid's ability to handle variable energy sources, but they also come with their own costs and challenges.

In conclusion, while renewable energy offers many advantages, it also faces challenges. Further research and development are needed to improve the cost-effectiveness and integration of these technologies into the existing grid.
AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

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TRANSLATED BY ROLF FJELDE BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH SAMUEL FRENCH INC.

“People want only special revolutions, in externals, in politics and so on. But that’s just tinkering. What really is called for is a revolution of the Human mind.”

(IBSEN, LETTER TO BRANDES, 1871)

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everyday life without thinking. The unconsciuos earth surfaced in the conscious world in the form of natural disaster and began to open fissures in the apparatus that had been expanding larger and larger, and embedded deeper and deeper into the planetary body, becoming one with it. The implication of the apparatus took place at the forefront of the merger where the language of the planetary unconscious is now sinking everything about us: its being, subjectivity, society, history and the world.

There are the stirrings of a global movement to oust capitalism, the nation and the state, to undo the apparatus, but we are also headed toward collective suicide in a world whose immiseration and oppression are getting steadily worsening in the post-3/11 climate.

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**Global Nuclear**

*Continued from page 6*

If such a movement is coming, an ultimate class struggle between the global nuclear regime and the living beings — it will have to be fought within world politics to a large extent. Its real and potential battleground will be the planetary unconscious or the ultimate commons called the earth, the nurturing mother and the goddess of wrath at the same time. The struggle will be unprecedented. The forms it takes are yet to be discovered. The only certainty is that it will involve not only the negotiation processes called politics, but also everything about our minds, society and ecology.

Saba Kohso is an independent writer and translator of Japanese origin, living in New York City. He is currently working on a blog fssatares.org in the wake of 3/11.

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**Fukushima**

*Continued from page 7*

For the nuclear industry, a Shrinking terrain upon which capital can deterritorialize and reterritorialize is a limited obstacle. That area is by no means unprofitable in the short term. Nuclear-energy companies have organized themselves into three multinational conglomerates: Toshiba-Westinghouse, Hitachi-GE and Mitsubishi-Arenva. They control 90 percent of the global nuclear industry from uranium mining to plant construction, and they have quickly regrouped after 3/11 to devote their profit-making energies to the inevitable stage of nuclear power plant construction, the decommissioning process.

While the Tokyo Electric Power Company may find it hard to recover from this crisis — it will have to shell out tens of billions of dollars for decommissioning and compensation to victims, unless the public is forced to pick up the tab — at least one of the nuclear giants will prosper. Each one has already submitted proposals for decommissioning. Included in these plans are Fluor and the Shaw Group, two well-known profiteers of disaster capitalism in Iraq and the Gulf Coast. It would be ironic if either Toshiba or Hitachi receives this decommissioning contract, as both were involved in the development and supply of the reactors that were at the root of the nuclear crisis today.

Anti-capitalist struggles brought forth or revitalized by this current crisis require a recognition of the key role that these multinationals have played in producing the nuclear crisis in Japan, and will play in the post-3/11 reconstruction process in Fukushima and beyond. Their strategies of capital accumulation by dispossession may have destroyed the concrete spaces from which nuclear energy emerges. What implications does this crisis have on the ability of mobile capital to manage crises of over-accumulation of available for capital, which untiringly seeks for shifting patterns of fallout.

Of the 20-kilometer zone in Fukushima prefecture that includes Futaba, Okuma and Tomioka cities and six other municipalities, the three-kilometer ring around the Daiichi plant will likely not be actively redeveloped by the state. This is a “zone of sacrifice.” The three-kilometer zone may no longer available as a space in which capital accumulation can take place, but what of the wider 20-kilometer zone: will it, threat of radiation andall, be converted into territory available for capital, which unwillingly seeks to manage crises of over-accumulation of capital by re-organizing space? What about the space around Japan’s 54 nuclear power plants, many of them located in areas vulnerable to hurricanes, tsunamis, and earthquakes, especially if Japan turns away from nuclear energy? What implications does this crisis have on the ability of mobile capital to settle on new sites? And if Japan’s government eventually resurrects nuclear power, what will happen to these communities that host these facilities now revealed to be current or eventual nuclear wastelands?
Ross Perlin

**Life Under Feudalism**

_Agent: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy_  
ROSS PERLIN

_Agent: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy_

**Review**

About five years ago, when I’d just graduated from college and was crashing on friends’ couches, I found myself filling out an online loan application. At the time, I let everyone who asked know that I was a photographer, and was working at an exciting start-up photo agency in west Chelsea (I neglected to add, “for free.”) My actual occupation, as evidenced by the applications I filled out for apartments or for Medicaid, was “waitress.”

The corporate media got it wrong on Iraq. Tune in to the show that got it right.

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**DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG**

Audio, Video, and Transcripts

Online banking, however, gave me another option. The drop-down menu next to the required question of employment status, included “employed full-time,” “employed part-time” and “intern.”

Really? The acceptance of unpaid labor as a norm by a global financial institution, not just peers and professors, in 2006, should have been a signal to me of just how deeply entrenched this phenomenon has become. The internship explosion has largely gone unexamined, however: it’s only five years later that we see the first mass-market book on the subject. Ross Perlin’s _Intern Nation: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy_ investigates the depths of this phenomenon. A masterful expose blending reporting and analysis, _Intern Nation_ shows that internships are far more degrading and widespread than many of us thought they were — and it’s in employers’ best interest to keep them that way.

First, let’s dispense with the obvious: internships aren’t entitled to legal protections afforded to students, but, exempt from the minimum wage, they aren’t employees, either. Harassment suits filed by interns against former employers have been thrown out of courts throughout the country, including New York, Massachusetts and California, setting a dangerous legal precedent.

Besides their ubiquity, the most salient quality of internships is their very indefinability. Despite the internship explosion of the past two decades — which grew out of the highly-regulated field of medical internships — the Department of Labor doesn’t define or even track internships, which means statistics are nearly impossible to find. Internships, which are now a crucial part of white-collar industries, are similar to abstract art: If an employer calls something an internship, and a student calls something an internship, who’s to say otherwise?

Perlin highlights some eye-opening numbers. More than half of current college graduates have been interns at some point in their nascent careers. Perlin’s own conservative estimate places the number of interns in America right now at two million. (To contrast, there are currently 800,000 interns in France.) Whether or not they’re legal (and a _New York Times_ article last year suggested that most current internships aren’t) they are seen as a vital stepping-stone to landing a good job, with most entry-level jobs now requiring experience — in the form of internships.

As a category of work, if you can call it that, internships are the fastest-growing segment of the American economy. They are especially coveted in what he calls the “glamour” industries — publishing, entertainment and finance. Indeed, though most interns expect their stint to lead to paid employment, or teach them about a particular field, the purpose of many internships is to fob off mind-numbing, though vital, administrative work as a “learning experience.” Using unpaid interns saves America’s largest firms up to $2 billion a year. (Apprenticeships, on the other hand, common in blue-collar trades, involve a well-defined period of supervised paid training, followed by union membership and the option of steady work.)

One student, for her summer internship, spent 35 hours a week stuffing envelopes for a major publisher. They were able to avoid paying her since the internship was an “edu-
Feudalism

cultural competence needed to understand Malick’s dreamy modernist epic. The pleasure the film gives is an elitist one. It re-
firms how much cultural capital a viewer has. Sitting in the dark theater, viewing the Big Bang and DNA coiling into life we in-
hert centuries of science and feel like we are a part of the grand narrative of human progress. We inherit a sense of our separate-
ness from the masses. Art-house films and theaters are sites of social reproduction of ruling class legitimacy; they recreate class hierarchy through aesthetics.

And yet when the movie ended, I saw the world through Malick’s eyes — my shadow on the sidewalk or the swell of moonlight in the clouds seemed like small miracles. It was then I realized that aside from its social role, art transforms perceptions. It can lib-
erate us from the daily routine that deadens the mind. Despite the status seeking elitism that drives a segment of the audience to see it, the film is a gift. It opens the senses and political change is impossible without first transforming how we experience the world.

I stood in the street, gasping in awe at a how a tree swayed or at faces illuminated by the flash of car headlights — and realized the world itself was a Rorschach test. On it we can project all the beauty we have missed, all the freedom we have lost.

—Nicholas Powers

in the past three decades has swelled with part-time, casual, freelance and temp labor. Internships are just the latest frontier in the wild west of the de-regulating labor market. Perlín is adamantly that interns need to “stop underbidding each other” and assert their power by a show of force. I agree, and would love to see interns’ rights reach the public consciousness. And there is hope out there. The book closes with an example of how the architecture industry as a whole stemmed the growth of exploitative intern-
ships during the 1990s. Perlín suggests a range of university- and federal-level poli-
cies that have the potential to do the same for the nation. Just as in the discussion around reviving organized labor, criticism of individual internship programs or partici-
pants obscure the very real policy issues that must first be addressed for any organizing to be truly effective.

—Irina Ivanova
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McClure will discuss her book and share her adventures of that Bolshevik broad, I demand Tony, if you’re going to force me to deal with this Bolshevik broad, I demand Tony from dumping on Israel, so he can keep getting awards. That’s great for me — I’m a bigger guy in Hell since they showed reruns of that Angels play of his on HBO.

ROY: You're a sick man, Roy.

ROY: No sicker than anybody else about this thing, Ethel. So Wiesenfeld gets props from the conservatives; Tony gets props from the liberals, and Israel gets props from everybody. It’s a win-win-win situation!

ETHEL: For not the Palestinians, Tony. You write about them! Put, for instance, a Palestinian in this script. You call yourself a socialist? You stand up, Mr. Socialist Writer! World’s a stage, Ethel. People love to play “commie,” put on the T-shirts. Don’t mean anybody’s a goddamn radical about anything. It’s all show biz.

(Actors playing ROY AND ETHEL shrug, turn off their lights, and works at Gay City New)
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