

# MONTHLY REVIEW FOUNDATION

146 WEST 29TH STREET | SUITE 6W  
NEW YORK, NY 10001  
T: 212.691.2555 | F: 212.727.3676

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Dear Friend of *Monthly Review*:

In November the U.S. electorate, under conditions not entirely of its own choosing but mediated by money, corporate media, political parties, and the electoral college system, will be choosing a new president. The nature and extent of the choice between the leading political nominees will by now be sufficiently clear to you as *MR* readers and we will not comment on it here. We would, however, like to draw your attention to the truly remarkable fact that neither party in this campaign has seriously addressed the deep structural problems—as great or greater than any time in human history—now facing U.S. and world society. A full inventory of these problems would require a very long list, but in our view they can be boiled down to the following:

1. Growing income and wealth inequality at both the U.S. and world levels (today inequality in the United States is probably at its highest since 1929, with the worst conditions faced by women and people of color—inequalities in access to health care make this more severe);
2. Economic stagnation and financial crisis (the U.S. and most economies are again facing sluggish economic growth accompanied by the worst financial crisis since 1929 spreading out from the U.S. housing sector);
3. Global ecological destruction threatening the planet as we know it (with irreversible ecological tipping points emerging within decades under business as usual);
4. A world food crisis (an enormous upturn in food unavailability to poor nations and people across the globe complicated by the worsening ecological and economic crises);
5. Expanding militarism and imperialism (a reality induced by such factors as declining U.S. hegemony, economic stagnation, and expanding resource wars—and including new nuclear threats, not least of all by the United States itself);
6. Increased prostitution of the media and privatization of education (the once-hoped for democratization of the media through the Internet is now under attack; public education—the very possibility of critical learning—is under assault due to No Child Left Behind and similar measures at every level).

What hope is there that a change of guard in the White House—even one for the better within the limits proscribed by the current system—will result in serious attempts to address these dire

trends? Our answer is virtually none. The reason is that all of these contradictions are deeply rooted in the development of capitalism itself, in what might be called its monopoly-finance capital phase.

Fortunately, there are other movements and forces in the world that are raising the issue of a change in the rules of the game, and indeed the question of *The World We Wish to See*—to refer to the title of Samir Amin’s latest book, published by Monthly Review Press. These include revolutions and revolutionary movements in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nepal. Cuba (now approaching its 50th year since the revolution) has made great ecological strides. And, as James Gustave Speth, former head of the United Nations Human Development Programme has recently stated, there is now an “international social movement for change,” which refers to itself as “the irresistible rise of global anti-capitalism.”

For the big “surprises” of the last year—for example the debt crisis, the speed of global warming, or the end of the monarchy and Maoist electoral victory in Nepal—*Monthly Review* readers already had a clue. We have been able to give a clear view of the basic trends. But this (of course limited) foresight produces neither ad revenues nor foundation support, rather the reverse. What we are able to do is wholly the result of our community; without the extra contributions of MR Associates we would not exist.

And our community is expanding: MRZine viewers have increased in number, as have the readers of our editions published outside the United States and in languages other than English. We sense, from the response to our occasional public talks and from our correspondence, a sharp increase in interest in our perspective and its history. Many in our community have made use of the *MR* archive we put online, an archive we plan to make fully searchable in the coming years. Of course much of the increased interest is from cash-strapped students in the metropolis, and from some of the poorest countries on the globe. For those of us able to help this is an extra challenge. By becoming a Monthly Review Associate or by upgrading and renewing your Associate membership we can together keep up the fight to expand the space of socialist sanity in the global flood of the Murdoch-poisoned media. Please write us a check today.

In solidarity,



John Bellamy Foster