

the Socialist

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RED HOT SUMMER

Editorial

Red Hot Summer

When a group of young Anarchists set the Christmas tree in central Athens ablaze, everyone thought Europe would be in store for a red hot summer. The New Anti-capitalist party in France sponsored eat-ins in local supermarkets. French workers followed up with a wave of boss-nappings. Even West Germany seemed alive with revolutionary fervor as bookstores sold out of copies of *Das Kapital*. All signs suggested an intense conflict between capital and labor would be raging across Europe all summer. Then Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stole the election. Iran exploded.

Direct actions slated for London and Paris shifted to the streets of Tehran. Millions of Iranians who have suffered under the boot heel of the Islamic Republic suddenly poured out demanding that their stolen votes be returned. "Death to the Dictator" rang out in normally serene neighborhoods, university students seized control of their campuses and in one huge outpouring of dissent, protesters filled the massive Azadi Square. Predictably, the regime did not collapse. Instead, it employed its substantive repressive capacities to quell the disturbances. Hundreds were killed and thousands disappeared, yet one fact is unescapable; The vast majority of Iranians oppose Ahmadinejad and are claiming their right to be free. No number of Basij militias or prison cells can quell this.

The movement in Iran was not entirely unexpected. Since the late 90s, the regime has embarked on an economic strategy designed by neo-liberal planners at the IMF and World Bank. Reformer and conservative alike have endorsed this strategy. In 2004, Ahmadinejad promised a break from this through a return to the radical populist roots of the Islamic Revolution. Not only did he fail to deliver on this

promise, his regime intensified the privatizations and encouraged direct foreign investment into the Iranian economy.

Workers and students fought hard against the sell-off of national industry. A militant movement among students commenced in the late 90s and has shaped student political culture for nearly a decade since. Despite being stripped of any formal rights, workers also resisted. The 17,000 strong Tehran Bus Drivers Syndicate carried out strikes in 2005 and 2006 which led to the imprisonment of their leader, Mansour Osanloo. Things came to head last May 1st as 2,000 workers asserted their right to celebrate May Day in Tehran. The ensuing clash with security forces foreshadowed the street fighting that would occur once the election was stolen in June.

All is not yet won in Iran, nor all lost in Europe. The protest movement in Iran demonstrated the latent power of the masses, yet was still conducted within the politically limited confines of Mir-Hussein Mousavi's campaign. A convergence between this movement and the equally just demands being pressed forward by the worker's movement could propel popular forces into power, eliminating the need for the reformer wing of the Islamic Republic.

In Europe, socialist and communist parties suffered serious setbacks in the European Union elections. The brilliant new militancy described above, translated into few results at the polls. Even worse, the elections provided an opening for the far-right in England and Holland to enter the EU parliament. Turnout was low and the traditional working class constituency for the left has never demonstrated much of an appetite

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Statement of Principles

THE SOCIALIST PARTY strives to establish a radical democracy that places people's lives under their own control - a non-racist, classless, feminist socialist society... where working people own and control the means of production and distribution through democratically-controlled public agencies; where full employment is realized for everyone who wants to work; where workers have the right to form unions freely, and to strike and engage in other forms of job actions; and where the production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not for the private profit of a few. We believe socialism and democracy are one and indivisible. The working class is in a key and central position to fight back against the ruling capitalist class and its power. The working class is the major force worldwide that can lead the way to a socialist future - to a real radical democracy from below. The Socialist Party fights for progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. We support militant working class struggles and electoral action, independent of the capitalist controlled two-party system, to present socialist alternatives. We strive for democratic revolutions - radical and fundamental changes in the structure and quality of economic, political, and personal relations - to abolish the power now exercised by the few who control great wealth and the government. The Socialist Party is a democratic, multi-tendency organization, with structure and practices visible and accessible to all members.

Dr. George Tiller, Presente!

The following is a testimonial written by a patient of Dr. George Tiller. Dr. Tiller was a provider of late term abortions in Kansas who bravely continued his practice despite the constant harrasment and threats of anti-abortionists. On May 31, 2009, Dr. Tiller was murdered. We offer this testimony as an example of the important work Dr. Tiller carried out in the name of women's rights.



In 1994, my wife and I found out that she was pregnant. The pregnancy was difficult and unusually uncomfortable, but her doctor repeatedly told her things were fine. Sometime early in the 8th month my wife, an RN, who at the time was working in an infertility clinic, asked the Dr. she was working for what he thought of her discomfort. He examined her and said that he couldn't be certain but thought that she might be having twins. We were thrilled and couldn't wait to get a new sonogram that hopefully would confirm his thoughts. Two days later, our joy was turned to unspeakable sadness when the new sonogram showed conjoined twins. Conjoined twins alone is not what was so difficult but the way they were joined meant that at best only one child would survive the surgery to separate them, and the survivor would more than likely live a brief

and painful life filled with surgery and organ transplants. We were advised that our options were to deliver into the world a child whose life would be filled with horrible pain and suffering or fly out to Wichita Kansas and terminate the pregnancy under the direction of Dr. George Tiller.

We made an informed decision to go to Kansas. One can only imagine the pain borne by a woman who happily carries a child for 8 months only to find out near the end of term that the children were not to be and that she had to make the decision to terminate the pregnancy and go against everything she had been taught to believe was right. This was what my wife had to do. Dr. Tiller is a true American hero. The nightmare of our decision and the aftermath was only made bearable by the warmth and compassion of Dr. Tiller and his remarkable staff.

Dr. Tiller understood that this decision was the most difficult thing that a woman could ever decide, and he took the time to educate us and guide us, along with the other two couples who at the time were being forced to make the same decision after discovering that they too were carrying children impacted by horrible fetal anomalies. I could describe in great detail the procedures and the pain and suffering that everyone is subjected to in these situations. However, that is not the point of the post. We can all imagine that this is not something that we would wish on anyone. The point is that the pain and suffering were only mitigated by the compassion and competence of Dr. George Tiller and his staff. We are all diminished today for a host of reasons, but most of all because a man of great compassion and courage has been lost to the world.

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Billy Wharton

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Contact the Editor

Billy Wharton, Editor, SP-USA

339 Lafayette St. #303

NYC 10012 billyspny@yahoo.com

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The Revolution Will be Tweeted: Activism in the Age of User Generated Content by Kristin Schall

The images coming out of the aftermath of the stolen election in Iran have ranged from inspiring to horrifying. Photos and videos depict streets flooded with hundreds of thousands of demonstrators. There also are the visual results of such bold acts—those beaten and bloodied being tended to by their compatriots. With professional journalists sidelined by Iranian officials, much of this media is being produced by amateur journalists and distributed via the internet. Despite the extraordinary measures taken by the Iranian government to restrict information flow, grassroots communications continue. Cell phone service is cut, the movement of international journalists' is restricted, and internet sites are blocked. Yet the pictures, videos and blog reports keep coming. Each, a testament to the power of mixing human will with advanced technology.

Iranian oppositionists have been able to do this through a variety of innovative tactics. One is the use of internet proxies. These proxies allow internet users in Iran to connect to friendly computers throughout the world in order to post information to the web. In addition, the social networking site, Twitter, has also proven extraordinarily valuable. Twitter allows users to post mini-blogs of up to 140 characters, called "Tweets." Updates about demonstrations, news from the streets and links to photos and videos have all tweeted their way past government censors. Twitter is, unlike say Facebook, decentralized. Each individual Twitter site is connected to a network of other sites. Users can post without ever going to a central Twitter home page.

Ok, so why hasn't the Iranian government just turned off the internet completely? The answer was provided on a recent edition of *All Things Considered*—since there is such a high level of internet use by all sectors of Iranian society, turning it off would bring everything to a standstill. A kind of digital general strike. This is the social power that opposition organizers are leveraging. The actions of the censors are just minor roadblocks. In the end, Ahmadinejad needs the internet as much as the protesters do.

The street protests in Iran are not the first international events to use the internet to globalize struggles. You Tube video releases introduced the world to the recent G20 demonstrations in London and the anarchist led uprisings in Greece. Viewers could watch the dignified speech of Tony Benn in Trafalgar Square or the successful anarchist arson of the main

Christmas tree in Athens. Internet resources have become fundamental not only to the new globalized economy, but also to social protest.

Cyber-protest had a powerful beginning. In 1999, WTO protestors in Seattle used the internet to release updates and to project on the ground actions to the world. Strategically placed video cameras brought internet viewers into the streets of Seattle to witness running battles between police and demonstrators. A network of de-centralized alternative media sources developed out of this event, including the Indymedia network. These networks, designed specifically for the purposes of publishing user generated content, are meant to circumvent mainstream media sources. They have become a main source for communication amongst activists. Today, mainstream developers such as You Tube, Facebook and Twitter have adapted many of these innovations and are presenting corporate-owned user-directed mass alternatives.

There may, however, be a downside to all this information sharing. This came to head during the recent student takeovers in New York City, of The New School and New York University. Internet organizing certainly played a useful role in the moments leading to the occupation and the organization of solidarity demonstrations during the events. However, live streams from inside both occupations revealed internal debates and the unpreparedness of some of the occupiers. In one instance, a New School occupier, returning to his dorms for a shower, used You Tube to share a summary of the occupiers' debates about defending themselves against the police. Foes in the administration and the New York Police Department were one click away from this information. A communications strategy for activists that carefully considers the potential audiences of their electronic media is clearly needed. Not all exposure is necessarily desired.

In the end, there is still no substitute for good old face-to-face organizing. Yet, it is comforting to know that when the time comes to organize, a world of sympathizers are just an upload away. So, readers might take some time out to send a tweet out to a pro-democracy demonstrator in Iran or even upload a video of your latest protest. The world awaits you.

Kristin Schall is the chairperson of the New York City Local. She has had articles published in Common Dreams and Dissident Voice.

Remember Stonewall

by Amber R. Clifford-Napoleone, Queer Commission Convener



Statement on the 40th Anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion

Queer Commission of the Socialist Party USA

The Stonewall Inn, a gay and lesbian neighborhood bar with a large number of African American and Latino patrons, was also well-known as a safe space for those who did not conform to gender norms: butch lesbians, effeminate gay men, and transsexual and transgendered persons before the terms were in popular use. All of these factors brought the police to Stonewall in 1969 for the purpose of illegally raiding the bar, and arresting its occupants -- an action not unknown in New York in the 1960s. In the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, the New York City police raided The Stonewall Inn. On that fateful day, however, the Stonewall's patrons had enough. Nobody knows who threw the first bottle that day. It may have been Sylvia Rivera, a transgendered activist and later a founding mother of political movements on behalf of transgendered and transsexual Americans. It may have been a still unidentified butch lesbian arrested in the bar. Over 2000 GLBTQ Americans clashed with 400 police officers on June 28. Arrests and beatings were concentrated among Stonewall's African American, Latino, butch and trans patrons. What ensued was known in the New York press and among the police as the Stonewall riots. For gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual and queer Americans, and later the world, that fateful day marked the beginning of the

Stonewall Rebellion. With shouts of "Gay Power," the rebellion that lasted five days in New York began to spread across the country. Gay, lesbian, trans and other queer Americans took to the streets to protest their continued oppression, objectification, and criminalization. This singular event, the Stonewall Rebellion, marked the beginning of the modern GLBTQ liberation movement, and brought GLBTQ political and social struggles out of the closets on onto American streets. Using this date as the flashpoint, cities across America and around the world continue to celebrate the last week of June as Pride Weekend, a weekend where we remember the Rebellion, organize to continue the fight for queer liberation, and celebrate our culture, community, families and history.

Stonewall never meant fundraising at black-tie galas. It never meant focusing on marriage as the sole agenda. It always meant, it still means, freedom and pride. The fight for marriage is just one piece of a worldwide fight about rights. In American states GLBTQ people can still be fired, evicted, violated, attacked, and murdered for being anything except a heterosexual. There are 1,100 federal and state rights that are guaranteed only to "legally married" couples in America in 2009. Among these are rights to government and veteran's pensions, judicial rights, and the right to be considered one's next-of-kin in an emergency. Hate crimes against GLBTQ individuals are up 6% from 2008 already, with only half of the year behind us. Americans serving in the military are

Capitalist Crisis, Socialist Renewal

by Rick Wolff

This much is clear: not in a long time has capitalism been so critically questioned in the US and “socialism” so widely debated as a social alternative. The left can and should seize this moment. One part of doing that is to formulate a new program -- including a new definition of socialism -- that could grasp a mass consciousness, become central to public political debate, and inspire a new left mobilization in the US.

First, we need to settle our accounts with the (definitions and practices of) socialisms of the past. As Engels did in his *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*,

we need to state both what past socialisms accomplished and why they could not overcome and replace capitalism. Despite ruthless and implacable opposition, powerful labor, left, and socialist organizations were built and progressive social changes achieved. A rich left tradition of socialist criticism and analysis was created and spread globally. Across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the first wave of modern, anti-capitalist socialism became a global social force. However, where and when socialists made revolutionary breakthroughs against capitalism -- whether or not they took state power -- socialism’s advances proved limited, vulnerable and therefore often temporary. The histories of the USSR and China, like those of socialist and communist programs and parties across the rest of the world, attest to distortions and reversals that enabled renewals of capitalism.

There were, of course, many contributors to socialism’s history: those that impinged from outside and those that worked their effects from within. I am concerned here with the latter. Following Engel’s model, I explore what has to change inside socialism to improve its chances to achieve new, further, and more secure breakthroughs in moving the human community beyond the injustice, limits, and costs of capitalism. Let’s begin by subtitling the remainder of this short essay: *Socialism: Macro and Micro*.

Socialisms of the past focused on two broad

social conditions: (1) the ownership of productive property, and (2) the mechanism of distributing productive resources and productive outputs. Capitalism was thus defined in terms of its reliance upon private ownership of productive property and markets. By contrast, socialism embraced socialized productive property and national economic planning (usually to be operated by a state apparatus controlled by socialists). Capitalism and socialism were thus differentiated in macro terms. What then did socialism mean at the micro level of society inside its individual enterprises?



The blunt answer is: not much. No clear differentiation of capitalism from socialism has so far emerged for the internal structures of enterprises. While socialists supported and often led workers’ struggles for better wages and working conditions inside capitalist enterprises, their chief concerns were more macro-oriented. They sought to coordinate workers’ struggles inside enterprises with developing political movements aimed to transform private into socialized property and markets into planning. Thus, when and where socialists became politically dominant, the basic internal structures of enterprises were not fundamentally altered. Laborers still finished their work days and departed, leaving behind

their labors’ fruits and leaving to others -- boards of directors -- the decisions about what to produce, how, and where, and what to do with the surpluses/profits. True, socialists emphasized state regulation of those boards’ decisions or sometimes replaced private corporate boards of directors with state officials. However, the basic structures connecting workers to enterprise decision-makers remained, where socialists shaped them, markedly like their counterparts under capitalism.

In *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Engels’ key point was that many early socialists believed that powerful utopian visions of a better, post-capitalist society could not only capture people’s imaginations but also thereby realize socialism. But utopian socialism, Engels argued, had not succeeded. Socialists therefore

had to supplement it with a materialistically grounded (i.e. “scientific”) strategy for practically transforming capitalism into socialism. Scientific socialism would identify key potential revolutionary agents and mobilize them politically for that transformation.

However, the macro focus of scientific socialism also proved inadequate to secure a transition from capitalism to socialism. It lacked the supplement of a micro focus, namely a definition of socialism at the level of each enterprise: specifically, that enterprises be reorganized such that the laborers become collectively their own board of directors. This micro dimension of socialism ends the classic divided organization of capitalist enterprises pitting those (the board of directors) who make the enterprise’s key decisions against those who labor but do not make those decisions.

The full range of new strengths and potentials available to 21st century socialism if it adds this micro dimension cannot be listed here, let alone elaborated. Consider just two examples. First, a macro-cum-micro socialism institutionalizes real worker participation in all aspects of production. Socialism will thereby mean that the workers themselves will be charged to transform the inherited capitalist enterprises by ending their divisions between manual and mental labor, directors and directed. Building a new socialist society will mean the workers’ continuous role in reorganizing enterprises based on equality, sharing, or rotating all specific functions, and continuous collective decision-making. Socialism would then engage all workers in a life-long process of self-transformation alongside and intertwined with macro-level socialist transformation. The end result would equip and motivate workers to participate fully in politics and culture as well as in the economy.

Second, such a macro-cum-micro socialism can bring a concrete, practical meaning to otherwise often vague references to socialist “democracy.” That kind of democracy would refer to how the collective of workers inside each enterprise reach all its key decisions. These enterprise collectives would necessarily enter into continuous deliberations and negotiations with one another and with similarly democratic collectives based on residency to reach genuinely democratic social decisions.

Utopian socialism contributed to the socialist tradition’s growth and maturity, but its limits provoked a self-critique formulated around the concept of scientific socialism advocated by Marx and Engels. Scientific socialism then enhanced the tradition’s further globalization and deepened both its theorizations and its practices. Nonetheless, scientific socialism has now outgrown its overly macro bias and thereby provoked

another self-criticism. The result is the resolve to add the micro level so that the macro and micro levels will together provide at once the indispensable supports for but also the democratic constraints on one another. Can such a reconstituted socialist conception and program also fail? Of course, but that is no argument against taking socialism another important step further just as the earlier socialists did. Today’s global crisis exposes all of capitalism’s fault lines, but it also offers socialists the chance to renew their project if they can learn and apply the lessons of socialism’s history.

*Rick Wolff is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Check out Rick Wolff’s new film **Capitalism Hits the Fan** www.capitalismhitsthefan.com*

Editorial
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for the EU. Yet important lessons are offered concerning the need to check right-wing xenophobia and form broad left-wing blocs for both campaigning and elections.

In the end, there was a red hot summer even if it happened where we least expected it. More struggles are almost certain to emerge. The global economic crisis continues to swell the ranks of the unemployed and create a general misery not experienced since the 1930s. Socialists, whether in Europe or the US or Iran, need to be out in front of this organizing - making demands, organizing more and more broadly and patiently explaining the systematic nature of human suffering. Our success may be just enough to fuel many more red hot summers all over the globe.



New Yorkers Suffer Under Private Electric Company by Zelig Stern

Con Edison was once a model of stability. Prior to deregulation of the industry, it delivered electricity at a reasonable rate to millions of New Yorkers. Then, in 1998, as part of a global trend of privatization and deregulation, private investors completed a process of buying out smaller companies and created the nation's largest privately-owned energy company - Consolidated Edison Inc. I felt the effects of this private company this month when I received an ominous note attached to my monthly bill entitled, "New Electric Rates Effective May 1, 2009."

It seemed that the Public Service Commission had approved an increase to Con Edison's electric-delivery service rate. The average New Yorker will now be paying an additional \$6 a month, only a year after the last hike of \$4.25. These hikes coincide with an approval from Albany for the natural gas delivery company, National Grid, to raise their monthly rates an average of \$6 per customer. New York City residents have also faced a 40% hike in water rates since 2006, as well as the MTA fare hikes. Between the economic crisis and the various rate hikes, Con Edison's higher costs could be enough to make thousands of New Yorkers choose between skipping meals and paying their bills.

The commissioner of the Public Service Commission claims to empathize with Con Edison's customers, "We are always concerned about the impacts on rate payers of any rate increase, but today's decision is particularly difficult... Unemployment has risen and consumers are having difficulty paying their bills." But the rate hike does only one thing - increase Con Edison's revenue to \$721 million. Why then would the Public Service Commission endorse such an action?

Part of the answer lies in the current fiscal crises in the State and City. Legislators are dealing with budget deficits by cutting public services desperately needed by working class and poor New Yorkers. Even these sharp cuts have not been enough to fill the budget gap, so they have resorted to increasing property taxes, including those on utilities such as Con Edison. This seems like a fair way to shift the burden on those most able to pay, but Con Edison and the Public Service Commission seem to disagree. \$239 million of the revenue generated by the rate hike is justified by the Public Service Commission to cover the increased property taxes. This is just another way in which the burden of the economic crisis is shifted to the already overburdened working class and poor.

The latest rate hikes are indicative of a larger



pattern of behavior that Con Edison has displayed since deregulation in 1998. The quality of service has decreased, prices have gone up, and the exploitation of Con Edison workers has increased. This is made clear through Con Edison's attempt to create divisions between workers and consumers by listing employee pensions as a motivation for the rate hike. Last year, after intense negotiations, Con Edison was able to win concessions from the Utility Workers Union of America Local 1-2 to reduce employee benefits. In exchange, Con Edison agreed to allow the employees to keep their traditional pensions and not switch to 401(k)s. Now, the company is trying to pass off even small gains by workers onto the customers in the form of rate hikes.

Another aspect of for-profit energy is the declining quality of service. In 2006, Con Edison's poor service resulted in the massive week-long blackout in Queens. The blackout particularly affected the sick and elderly. For example, 72-year-old Iris Long was recovering from triple bypass surgery when the blackout hit. She later testified that the black out contributed to chest pain and vocal chord problems: "I felt it was hindering my recovery," she said. In 2005, stray voltage killed a woman after she stepped on an electrified plate. In 2007 an 83 year-old steam pipe burst in Midtown, resulting in the death of one person and 40 injuries. These are just a few of the extreme examples

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Horses, Stocks, and Booze: Calculating the Losses of the Financial Crisis by Billy Wharton

Kate's is a local bar in a far northeast corner of the Bronx. During the day, elderly patrons wash away their remaining years in a sea of booze-inspired camaraderie. I peek in sometimes as much from curiosity as to remind myself of a future I hope to avoid. A few years back someone changed the television channel at Kate's. The seemingly timeless link between booze, the aged, and horse racing was suddenly severed. Off Track Betting was replaced by CNBC. Hazy patrons now seemed more concerned with 401k values and hot stock tips than who was running in the 7th at Aqueduct. This change seemed, at the time, to suggest a final victory for the marketplace. Now, as the economic miracle of Wall Street has degenerated into a nightmare of zombie banks, toxic assets, and state bailouts, Kate's patrons are left to wrestle with a destruction of wealth so monumental that it swept away their stock market illusions.

The enormity of the destruction is brought home by the private equity firm, Blackstone Group, who recently reported that nearly 45% of the world's wealth had been destroyed in the crisis. Blackstone CEO, Stephen Schwarzman, described the losses as "absolutely unprecedented in our lifetime." The International Monetary Fund (IMF) put the wealth destruction at around \$4 trillion dollars, or nearly double the annual budget of the US Federal Government. The losses are so staggering that even the free-market fundamentalists at the IMF now recognize the need to, "shore up institutions," "including nationalising them where necessary." This advice is all the more remarkable since it comes from an organization whose notorious Structural Adjustment Programs of the 80s and 90s forced governments throughout the world to privatize state-run enterprises.

But, for many, especially elderly workers who depend on monthly pension payments, the IMF's advice to act decisively and in the public interest is far too late. There has, for instance, been a 34% decrease in the assets held by the largest pension funds in the country over the last 14 months. Large funds have shed more than \$1 trillion in value during the same period. Nearly 40% of pension funds now report being, "under-funded," putting the future of millions of recipients at risk. These losses have wreaked havoc with state and local governments as they scramble to make up for Wall Street based revenue losses. New York City, for instance, mandates an 8% annual increase in pension funds. The City has, therefore, been forced to

use scarce public funds to fund the entire increase and cover the negative returns of stock and bond investments. It seems that the TARP is not the only way private investors are fleecing public funds -- state and local tax funds are equally profitable targets.

Private 401k's have also been savaged. The allure of the 1980s and 1990s bull market attracted trillions in retirement funds. In many cases, the returns from this period amounted to more than 15% a year. However, since the turn of the 21st century, Wall Street has produced annual losses of nearly 5%. As a result, Hewitt Associates LLC, a company which surveys 2.7 million 401k participants, reported that the proportion of 401k assets held in stocks fell from 67% in 2007 to 53% in 2008. This was not the result of changes in allocation by participants -- remarkably most 401k'ers continue to favor stock investment. Instead, the shift came from market-based wealth destruction which has accelerated over the last year and a half. Despite this, individual workers continue to pour their 401k money into the market, providing a monthly bonus to Wall Street speculators seeking to lay off losses on the public.

Of course, the market-invested pension funds and 401k's were simply pacifying neoliberal illusions sold to American workers for decades. Economic reality always dictated a distinction between the productive wealth controlled by the richest 5% of the population and the paper wealth of stock investments -- the value of one's stock account only represented potential -- not real wealth. Yet, irrational hopes and speculative dreams blurred this distinction. American workers have tended to avoid more contentious issues such as unionization or struggles for wage increases in favor of programs that were far cheaper for their employers. In the process, their future wellbeing was made heavily dependent on the financial bubble that was Wall Street. Neglecting struggles on the worksite allowed employers to create low-wage, no-benefit "new economy" jobs on worksites where workers have few rights. Now, Wall Street has destroyed even the illusions of the market and, with it, the futures of millions of American workers.

The resulting losses have not just been financial. Significant social stress produced by the financial shock has translated into externally and internally directed violence. The "Binghamton shooter" Jiverly Wong's loss of his job at IBM became the immediate trigger for a shooting rampage which claimed 13 vic-

New Yorkers Suffer Under Electric Company Continued from p8

of the effects of privatization, but the decreased quality of service is evident in Con Edison's slow response time to everyday complaints and lack of customer service.

Con Edison is a clear example that the mentality of "privatization and deregulation" has to go. Since it consolidated its private monopoly of power distribution, it has not operated in order to provide New Yorkers with the electricity they need at a reasonable price, or to provide its workers with a decent salary and benefits. Instead, Con Edison operates with the good of its shareholders in mind. As a result, New Yorkers are scraping to pay their bills, employees are losing benefits, and the public is being endangered, while executives and stockholders' wealth is on the rise.

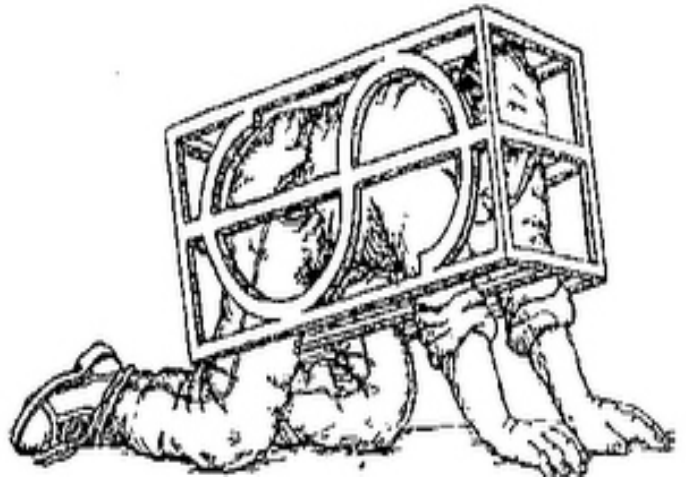
In contrast to the privatization model, Electric companies should be operated as well-regulated public utilities with the interest of workers and consumers in mind, NOT in the interests of business executives and stockholders. Revenues above running costs should be returned to the customer, and public utilities should be subject to democratic local control by the people affected by their actions.

It seems, however, that this will be a long struggle. Con Edison has publicly stated its plans for next year - another \$6 rate hike! It should be clear by now that privatization has not delivered the juice for New Yorkers.

Remember Stonewall Continued from p5

denied these 1,100 rights, and must remain silent for fear of being harmed and discharged under the repressive "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" doctrine. Everyday GLBTQ Americans are attacked, harassed, and forced to live in fear, but Americans are not the only ones. In Brazil, a GLBTQ person is killed every two days. In Iraq, homosexuality is still legally punishable by death. Stonewall was about refusing to submit to fear, tyranny, and violence. Stonewall was, and is, about a community that repudiated the very idea that being GLBTQ made you anything less than human. On this 40th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion, remember that.

Remember Stonewall.



Horses, Stocks, and Booze:

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tims at an immigration services center. Wanda Dunn made herself the victim of the stress-induced violence. Faced with the prospect of being evicted from the home her family had inhabited for three generations, Dunn killed herself with a shotgun and burned the house to the ground. Such spectacular moments of violence are heaped upon decades of overwork, lack of access to healthcare, deferred worksite struggles, and declining civil rights. These trends have produced a society defined by human isolation and individualistic survival strategies -- one in which a small bar in the Bronx offers the only solace. All the anti-depressants and counseling sessions in the world cannot paper over the real psychological damage done by capitalist society.

Curious to measure the effects of the financial meltdown, I popped my head into Kate's the other day. A crowd of drinkers was again gathered. This time, however, the conversation revolved around the relative merits of Mayflower or Golden Girl in the 2nd at Yonkers Raceway. Bar patrons had exacted some symbolic revenge against Wall Street by vanquishing CNBC. Yet, if this was a victory it was a bitter one. Gone were the irrational stock market bubble hopes for comfortable retirements. Gone also were much of their account balances. In their place were some new bar mates. Far younger than the rest of the crowd, this group's beverages were likely paid for with recently printed unemployment checks. Perhaps these younger workers will be far less susceptible to the illusions sold and ingested by their elders. One day, the call of the horse races may be drowned out by demands for a society in which a better future is possible. For now, though, we calculate the losses produced by the chaos of the market with hopes that another world is possible.

ZICHRONOS – Memories of a Communist

The following is a story discovered in a dusty file. It describes the youthful hubris of young Communists, one the grandfather of a New York City Local member, in the halcyon days of New York City left politics in the 1930s.

Dedication to a cause can even attain total futility

Time: During the Gun Boat Period of our country's foreign policy

Locale: New York City

Issue: The Free Puerto Rico Movement

My age: Was I ever that young?

My ideological structure was a mish-mash of a scholarly-Chassidic father, trade union activist sisters, militant labor Zionist older brothers, a personality evolution that included all of the socio-political philosophical concepts of my generation: - vegetarianism for health reasons – vegetarianism for ethical reasons – a worship of the body beautiful – the cooperative movement – return to nature – the Anarchist theories of Bakunin and Prince Peter Kropotkin: - add to this admixture, my conversion to Marxism, and, dear reader, you will appreciate my addiction to social change. All within me yearned for the martyrdom of a cracked skull from a cop's wielded club; - hopefully, even a jail sentence that would have enabled me to savor the ecstasies of my ancestors who, during the Spanish Inquisition, chose death on the torture wrack,

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Socialists Confront “Private-Property” Politician by Jason Merritt



Brian Moore is trying to do what few people are willing to do these days — stand up for what he believes in. Moore, last year's Socialist Party U.S.A. presidential

candidate and chair of the Nature Coast Coalition for Peace and Justice (NCCPJ), believes that we need to bring our troops in Iraq home immediately, and that we need a health care plan that covers everyone, regardless of class or employment. He also believes in the right to public assembly, but local authorities in Florida's 5th district aren't making it easy for Moore to exercise this right.

Back in April, Moore and other members of the NCCPJ attempted to hold a protest against the war in Iraq and for universal health care in front of Congresswoman Ginny Brown-Waite's new office, but were barred from protesting in front of her office because she claims that her new office is on private property. Instead, demonstrators were forced to hold their demonstration 50 feet away, in a ditch, next to the busy Spring Hill Drive. Moore tried to negotiate the closing of one lane of the road arguing that the conditions of the location were not safe to hold a demonstration, but his negotiations were unsuccessful.

On June 24, Moore and several fellow activists once again attempted to hold a demonstration promoting health care reform in front of Brown-Waite's office. They were again denied access to the property by a representative of Regent Properties, the company in charge of managing the site, the Sheriff's Office was called in and demonstrators once again found their demonstration relegated to the busy Spring Hill Drive.

In response to this denial of assembly rights Moore, in conjunction with the American Civil Liberties Union, is currently in the process of building a case against Congresswoman Brown-Waite. In Moore's words, “We need to keep the pressure on Congress and the President.” But how is that possible when the general trend is to marginalize grassroots activism? As Moore puts it, “If you say you believe in freedom of speech, of assembly, of dissent, then why are you stopping such actions? Why are you saying you are a public servant, but then using private property as an excuse to hide behind?”

Moore is committed to the principles of democracy and vows to continue to fight against this blatant attack on political activism and free speech: “We might be able to pressure Congress to formally establish the policy that all elected representatives of the U.S. Congress should occupy public facilities, or, if private, they must ... assure constituent access publicly.” Moore and the NCCPJ will continue to oppose the Congresswoman's denial of access both through the legal system and in the street, even if, for now, that means holding demonstrations in a ditch along a busy Florida road.

REPRODUCE & REVOLT

SP-USA Local Updates

SOWING THE SEEDS OF SOCIALISM

Memphis Local Report

The Socialist Party of Memphis began organizing last September, after it was announced that David Duke would be holding his European-American Unity Rights Conference in the area. The audacity of holding a white supremacist gathering in a city so scarred by racial tensions motivated us to find the location of the event and leak it to the media. The disgust and outrage of the citizens of Memphis pressured the venue into dropping the event, and David Duke's three-day hate conference became a pathetic search for accommodations, as he was turned out of one hotel after another. Though many folks at the time still bought into the "ignore them and they'll go away" philosophy, the recent escalation in violence from white supremacist and far-right groups has illustrated the folly of ignoring this dangerous and massive movement.

Since then, the Socialist Party of Memphis has hosted a successful art show, held a May Day picnic, and established a charming organic community garden. We are becoming increasingly involved in local issues as we have attracted new members. We were the first organization to bring to light severe staffing shortages and mismanagement at our regional rape crisis center. This prompted local peace & justice and women's rights groups to successfully force the uncooperative city and county governments to work together toward a solution. We were also active supporters of a proposed county non-discrimination ordinance to protect the rights of all to work, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. A hugely successful Unity Rally in support of this ordinance was organized by one of our members, who is also on the board of the Memphis Gay & Lesbian Community Center. Although the rally was attended by many local politicians, religious leaders and activists, and though it garnered front page press, the ordinance did not pass in its proposed form; instead, it was passed as a resolution stating vaguely

that no workers ought to be discriminated against. We cannot be discouraged, however, as each small step in the right direction is part of a larger struggle, and we have a long road to walk.



Northern NJ Local Report

The Northern NJ Local has been working on a few projects and has been helping to promote and support the work of other area organizations. In June, local members organized a discussion on Participatory Economics, followed by a concert "Punk for Economic Justice." Members are also involved in the struggle for single-payer healthcare. Local members are on the



steering committee of Northern NJ Healthcare Now! and helped organize a march and rally in Englewood on June 20th. Socialist Party Gubernatorial candidate Greg Pason co-led the march. Other Northern NJ members have been supporting regular anti-war vigils. SPNJ member Jerry Caprio is an organizer of the regular anti-war vigil in Montclair NJ and Andrea & Greg Pason are Local reps to the Bergen Peace & Justice Coalition. The Local will be busy this summer on the Pason for Governor campaign and hopes to work closely with the NYC Local on a series of discussion groups.

NYC Local Report

The New York City local has continued its activity within the movement for single payer healthcare reform by remaining active in the grassroots healthcare organization, Private Health Insurance Must Go (PHIMG). Members of the local recently participated in a vigil for the victims of private health insurance. The local also remains committed to fighting the proposed New York City and State budget cuts. We have been active in the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Economic Justice, including helping to plan a demonstration against the proposed closing of a post office in Northern Manhattan. In addition, the local has consistently released statements opposing all areas of the budget cuts and continues to develop ties with opposition groups in the municipal labor unions. The local also has members who are active in Domestic Workers United, a group dedicated to gaining workplace rights for domestic workers.



In addition to these grassroots efforts to build coalitions, the local is committed to general outreach. They have recently done community tabling in Crown Heights, Brooklyn and had a booth at the Clearwater Festival in Croton on the Hudson, NY. We also continue to hold monthly membership meetings, movie screenings and activist meetings and have sponsored a

regional organizing conference with the Northern New Jersey Local.

Central Virginia Local Report

Working for a True Commonwealth of Virginia



A new SP-USA local has been formed in Virginia, called the Socialist Party of Central Virginia! Socialist Party members from around the state were joined by National Secretary Greg Pason, a comrade from Maryland, and one other curious comrade on May 16 to meet and form the new local in Charlottesville, Virginia. The National Committee unanimously approved the charter on June 13. The new local stretches from Harrisonburg down to Virginia Beach and back, and includes the cities of Richmond, Virginia Beach and Charlottesville.

Before forming the local, SP-ers in Virginia organized to get Brian Moore on the ballot. Recognizing the impossibility, we settled for gaining official write-in status. SP-ers in Virginia have been involved in actively opposing the new, for-profit, immigrant detention center in Farmville by helping to organize a benefit for People United, the main group behind the campaign, and then participating in the march and rally in Farmville on March 7th. A few Virginia socialists were able to join our comrades on the march on the Pentagon last March 21st.

Besides getting our local up and running, we are actively involved in Workers And Students United (WASU), a group working for a living wage at the University of Virginia. WASU is struggling to sow the seeds for a long lasting living wage movement at UVA, which is where SP-CVA comes in. We can be there, with workers and other community members, when the students aren't around (vacation, after graduating). UVA, like every other institution in the country is dealing with the recession by freezing salary

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increases and hiring. Besides attending meetings and helping stay organized, we recently spent time on the grounds meeting with workers in person and building contacts.



Virginia’s politics have been dominated for a very long time by the Republican Party but in the past few years, the state has “turned blue” with the elections of Sens. Warner and Webb, and our electoral votes to Obama. This actually puts socialists in a good spot for finding support. As folks realize that their long awaited shift from Republican control has changed things very little, left leaning working people may look for a better way to be heard. Democrats in Virginia have made it increasingly apparent that they might as well be Republicans, especially concerning new coal plants, nuclear power, off shore drilling, EFCA, gay marriage, single-payer health care, immigrant rights, the death penalty, and the wars, bombings and occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Palestine. In a nutshell, every issue of concern to socialists nationwide is present in Virginia. With the two capitalist parties sharing the same stances, it is up to activists and organizers to promote a socialist worldview.

Unfortunately, we have not yet organized enough to the point of being able to run a gubernatorial candidate in order to highlight the similarities of the two candidates. However, we do look forward to running noisy statewide campaigns in the future, as well as encouraging the formation of other locals in Virginia, helping to coordinate SP-USA efforts in Washington DC, and working with people on a whole host of issues facing Virginia and the rest of the world. For now, SP-CVA is working on picking a big project that we might “cut our teeth” on and have some real positive effect on issues facing our communities, nation and workers the world over.

South East Florida Local Report

A new local has been organized in Southeast Florida, comprising the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale-Palm Beach metropolitan area. Local comrades have been active for years in the antiwar movement and other local political actions (housing rights, environmental issues, anti-privatization, anti-police brutality, opposing right-wing Cuban politics, etc), and have been holding educational meetings. The Southeast Florida local also recently hosted the June meeting of the National Committee. We finally elected officers June 28th, to formally take our place in the party as a local.



GREETINGS OF SOLIDARITY!

FROM THE WISCONSIN LOCAL, SP-USA



Report from the Central/Eastern CT Local

The local participated in the annual May Day Celebration in Hew Haven. Due to intermittent showers, the celebration was held indoors at the United Church on the Green. As in years past, the SPCT presented a table offering a wide range of SP-USA literature and statements. The table was topped off by a few copies of Todd Vachon’s no-compromise hip-hop socialist CD Mista Mayday. The SPCT used the occasion as an opportunity to strengthen its relations with like-minded activist groups in CT.



all in the name of “Kidush Ha-ashem” – in the name of the lord.

The New York Movement of that period was acutely short of young, willing to be expendable, English speaking devotees. Most members of the Party were Yiddish speaking immigrants from Eastern Europe.

Happy day. I was instructed to report to the District Office for an Assignment. Gathered, was a small conspiratorial group of Comrades. I was to be a member of this elite handful, stage a demonstration in the Times Square Section of Manhattan, in support of the Free Puerto Rico Struggle then raging on that Island colonial possession of the U.S.A.

Two others and I were to be responsible for staging a demonstration in the Times Square Section in support of this Movement. Since we gathered to plan a political action that would help remove the Iron Heel of U.S.S. Foreign Policy from the necks of oppressed Puerto Ricans, levity, the humorous phrase, was out of the question. Anything other than solemnity would have been in as bad taste as, - laughter in the Synagogue on the eve of chanting of the Kol Nidre on Yom Kippur.

Our plan was simple in design. We were to drop leaflets from a hotel window facing Times Square, also unfurl a banner “Free Puerto Rico” and shout the same slogan.

Two of us, man and woman were to register as “husband and wife”, on the lowest level of the Hotel Astor. Another member of the group was to engage a connecting “escape” room. At the peak pedestrian hour of Times Square, we two, “husband and wife” were to pitch hundreds of leaflets from our hotel window, suspend a banner with the slogan of: FREE PUERTO RICO, stick our heads out of the window and shout

the same slogan: - enter the connecting room, lock the connecting floor as well as the outer door of our room, walk upstairs, take the elevator to the lobby, - mission accomplished.

Since this was my first Revolutionary Mission, the District leader detained me for a private briefing session re my behavior if I should be arrested; not to talk regardless of the severity of the beating.

THE DAY finally arrived. With my entry into the Hotel Astor Room, our plot began to disintegrate. The woman with whom I was to register as “wife” was of an age to be my youngish grandmother, certainly neither wife nor mistress. Instead of connecting rooms on the lowest level, we were assigned a room at the very top.

We phoned the desk, asked if Mr. . . . , our co-conspirator who was to have rented the connecting room, had for some arcane reason failed in his assignment. However, being dedicated to a cause, my “wife” and I decided to proceed with our mission minus the escape room, risking being apprehended by the hotel security guards.

Soldiers do not ask, neither do they change battle plans. Soldiers do or die. The thrill of an even greater bodily risk flowing from the flaws in our plan, more nourishingly sated my martyrdom aspirations.

From the upper floor of the Hotel Astor overlooking Times Square where our room was situated, not a soul would be able to see, or read the emblazoned slogan, but we did, as per instructions, suspend the banner, anchor it by closing the bottom window frame on the upper edge of the banner.

We had also been specifically instructed to lean out of the window and loudly shout our slogan: - FREE PUERTO RICO.

The leaflets? Despite our height, we threw each handbill out of the window. My youthful enthusiasm even infected my comrade, a woman, seasoned, battle scarred veteran who had seen the inside of Tzarist Russia jails.

She gleefully joined my shouting voice and busy hands in casting handfuls of leaflets into the wind. All this, dear reader, even though someone in the Agit-Prop department had grievously erred.

Instead of leaflets calling for “FREE PUERTO RICO”, he had packed, an announcement of:

A concert by the chorus of the
Greater N.Y. Yiddish Speaking
Workers Club.

Before economic and political control of a colonial country superseded military occupation.

Socialist Party USA National Directory

NATIONAL OFFICE
339 LAFAYETTE ST. #303
NEW YORK, NY 10012
(212) 982-4586
natsec@socialistparty-usa.org

California

Socialist Party of California
c/o Stewart Alexander
40485 Murrieta Hot Springs Rd. #149
Murrieta, CA 92563

Connecticut

Socialist Party of Connecticut
PO Box 2151
Salem, CT 06415
www.socialistpartyct.org

Central & Eastern Connecticut Local

PO Box 2151
Salem, CT 06415
SPCentralCT@gmail.com

Florida

Socialist Party of Florida
PO Box 22953
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33335
www.myspace.com/spflorida

Socialist Party of Tampa Bay

www.sptampabay.org

Illinois

Chicago Socialist Party
c/o PO Box 618124
Chicago, IL 60661-8124
www.chicagosocialistparty.org/

Indiana

Greater Indianapolis Socialist Party
c/o 2440 N. Park Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46205
ronjane@igc.org

Kansas

Socialist Party of Kansas
Po Box 20156
Wichita, KS 67208
www.sunflowersocialists.org

Massachusetts

Socialist Party of Massachusetts
c/o PO Box 15342
Boston, MA 02215

Socialist Party of Boston

PO Box 15342
Boston, MA 02215

Tom Mooney Local

(Western Massachusetts)
c/o Michael Lindberg
51 Pilgrim Rd.
Springfield, MA 0118

Michigan

Socialist Party of Michigan
PO Box 844
Marquette, MI 49855
www.spmichigan.org

Socialist Party of Washtenaw County

c/o Ted McTaggart
211 N. Adams St. #4
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Socialist Party of Marquette County

PO Box 844
Marquette, MI 49855

Minnesota

Central/Eastern Minnesota Socialist Party
c/o 2536 Cedar Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55414
www.spminn.org/

New Jersey

Socialist Party of New Jersey
PO Box 8622
Saddle Brook, NJ 07663
www.njsocialistparty.org

Northern New Jersey Socialist Party

c/o Greg Pason
PO Box 86
Rochelle Park, NJ 07662
www.njsocialistparty.org/northjerseylocal/

New York

New York State Socialist Party
c/o 339 Lafayette St. #303
New York, NY 10012

Socialist Party of New York City

c/o 339 Lafayette St. #303
New York, NY 10012

Socialist Party of Central New York

PO Box 35113
University Station
Syracuse, NY 13235

Oklahoma

Greater Oklahoma City Socialist Party
c/o Chris Henderson
12437 S.E. 149th St.
Oklahoma City, OK 73165

South Dakota

Southern South Dakota Socialist Party
c/o PO Box 697
Sioux Falls, SD 57101

Tennessee

Memphis Socialist Party
c/o 658 N. Evergreen
Memphis, TN 38107

Texas

Socialist Party of Texas
c/o 1012 West Warren St.
Pharr, TX 78577
www.socialistpartyoftexas.org

Partido Socialista de Valle

Socialist Party of the Rio Grande Valley
c/o 1012 West Warren St.
Pharr, TX 78577

Vermont

Brattleboro Socialist Party
71 Westminster Rd.
Putney, VT 05346

Virginia

Socialist Party of Central Virginia
c/o Brandon Collins
320 1/2 Meade Ave.
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Wisconsin

Socialist Party of Wisconsin
1001 East Keefe
Milwaukee, WI 53212
www.spwi.org/ 414-332-0654

Socialist Party of Milwaukee County

1001 East Keefe
Milwaukee, WI 53212

www.socialistparty-usa.org

www.socialistwebzine.blogspot.com