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## **The Beijing Olympics: What Is Really Happening On and Off The Field; Four Radical Scholars Speak Out**

As the 2008 Olympics begin, two contending story lines dominate international media coverage. A great deal of world attention is being focused on this. Not surprisingly, there is considerable confusion among the broader public. The stakes are high: millions are going to be subjected to a barrage of one-sided distortions from both the U.S. and China.

1) From the U.S. elites: the Olympics are being used by the Chinese leadership to project a new-found self-confidence based on a robust market economy and to put forward their best face to the world—but they are also using them to cover their harsh authoritarian rule, human rights abuses, suppression of Tibetan desires for independence, etc.

2) From the Chinese leaders: the Olympics are a time for the world to discover a dynamic and vibrant China; the entire country is pulling together and expressing its national pride in being able to host these events—but some forces in the world, especially among U.S. elites, want to deny China its moment of national achievement and perpetuate misleading images and a legacy of foreign bullying and humiliation of the Chinese people.

Four radical scholars are challenging these one-sided narratives. They offer unique insights into China's maligned socialist past and brutal capitalist present, to break through on the hypocrisy, chauvinism, and great power maneuvering and military positioning on the part of the U.S. empire—while, on the other hand, exposing the oppressive character of the Chinese regime, how it is promoting nationalism to cover over exploitation and savage inequalities, and hypocritically denouncing foreign scheming when they in fact opened up the country wide to imperialist penetration.

These speakers bring a fresh and informed perspective to the controversies surrounding the highly charged Beijing Olympics. Among the main points are:

\*The 2008 Olympics are intensely politicized. What is being played out on and off the field in Beijing is growing geopolitical rivalry between the United States and China.

\*The United States as the dominant global power in the world seeks to control and contain a rising China—a continuation of the colonial past and “Cold War” era.

\*But the China of today has nothing in common with Mao or communism. This is an economy of sweatshops, a society of vast inequalities, and an ecological disaster zone.

\*The Chinese socialist past, including the Cultural Revolution, far from being a nightmare of persecution and senseless chaos, was a vast, complex social struggle with coherent and egalitarian goals, which brought great achievement for the working classes.

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Michael Dutton is research professor in Political Cultures, Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. His most recent book (with Stacy Lo and Dong Dong Wu) is *Beijing Time* (Harvard University Press, 2008). His previous book *Policing Chinese Politics: A History* (Duke, 2005) won the 2007 Levenson Prize for best book on contemporary China. He is also the author of *Streetlife China* (Cambridge, 1999) and *Policing and Punishment in China: From Patriarchy to "The People"* (Cambridge, 1992).

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Dongping Han grew up as a farmer and managed a collective village factory during the Cultural Revolution. He attended five universities in China, Singapore, and the U.S.; has taught in China and the U.S.; and is currently professor of political science and history at Warren Wilson College. His book *The Unknown Cultural Revolution* will be published in paperback this December by Monthly Review Press.

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Raymond Lotta is a Maoist political economist who has written extensively on the experience of socialist revolution in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and global economics, including China's rise in the world system. He has appeared on the BBC and Pacifica radio. He edited and wrote essays for *Maoist Economics and The Revolutionary Road to Communism* and is a contributing writer for *Revolution* newspaper.

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Robert Weil is the author of *Red Cat, White Cat: China and the Contradictions of "Market Socialism,"* (Monthly Review Press, 1996), and many articles and papers on Chinese economic, political and social issues. He has been a commentator on national and regional radio stations and TV channels regarding the current situation in China and its relations with the United States. He is currently a labor organizer on the University of California Santa Cruz campus, where he was a Visiting Assistant Professor and Lecturer.

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