Dear friend,

Warm May Day greetings to each of you!

This letter concerns the forthcoming conference, "From Port Huron to Kent State," to be held at Kent State University from Friday evening May 31 through Sunday noon June 2.

I shall discuss: 1. Update on Logistics and the Need for Early Registration; 2. Political Rationale for the Gathering and the May 19 Meeting to Finalize the Agenda; 3. Questions of Process.

1. Update on Logistics and the Need for Early Registration. Alice and I visited Kent State on April 30 and spoke with Mark Weber, who first suggested a conference at that site, and with the folks who plan Kent State conference logistics.

In the past we in Youngstown have tried very hard to make it possible for all who attend a conference to stay in people's homes. Our thought about May 31-June 2 is that it will be too big for any of the cities where different ones of us live (Youngstown, Toledo, Ann Arbor, etc.) comfortably to host it in that way. Hence we turned to a college campus, as we so often did in the 1960s.

The conference price of $95-100 is about two-thirds of what we find comparable retreats and gatherings charge for six meals (Friday dinner through Sunday lunch), lodging for two nights, and rent of meeting rooms. In addition we will provide financial assistance if needed (see registration form). We appreciate the expense and effort folks will be making to come to Kent, Ohio, and we want no one to be excluded because of money.

The essential thing Alice and I learned on April 30 is that we must tell the conference planners at Kent State, about a week in advance, the number of persons who will need overnight housing and the number of persons who will be at meals.

Thanks to those who have already registered! For those who have not, I AM PERSONALLY APPEALING TO EACH OF YOU 1) TO TRY TO DECIDE WHETHER YOU WILL BE COMING TO THE KENT STATE CONFERENCE; 2) IF YOU ARE COMING, TO FILL OUT AND MAIL THE ENCLOSED REGISTRATION FORM TO ALICE AND MYSELF AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS SO THAT IT WILL REACH US BY FRIDAY MAY 17; 3) IF YOU CAN DO SO WITHOUT HARDSHIP AT THIS TIME, TO ENCLOSE A CHECK MADE OUT TO "KENT STATE UNIVERSITY" FOR ALL OR PART OF THE CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEE.

More about logistics:
HOUSING. Housing will be at Leebrick Hall (see enclosed map: it is just west of Loop Road, about two-thirds of the distance between Summit Street and Horning Road). Linens and blankets will be provided. However, all housing is in single-bed dormitory rooms. If you check "share room" on the registration form, we will assign you and your partner to nearby rooms.

Persons attending the conference who will need housing should register for the conference at Leebrick Hall between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. on Friday May 31. You will receive a parking permit when you register.

MEALS AND GENERAL REGISTRATION. All registration for persons who do not need housing or who arrive late will be at the meeting rooms on the third floor of the Kent Student Center (near the middle of the map and easy walking distance from Leebrick Hall). Persons who do not plan to spend the night can park in the "Visitor Parking" lot near the Student Center. Friday evening you will need to have your parking ticket validated which you can do at dinner. On Saturday and Sunday the gates to the lot will be open.

We have ordered economical but hopefully appropriate meals. (If we receive registration forms for sixty people by May 24 we can consider making one or more of the meals a buffet.) There will be a vegetarian alternative for each meal. For folks who eat Vegan we will attempt to have fresh fruit and vegetables at each meal. There will also be fast-food joints two floors below in the Student Center.

2. **Political Rationale for the Gathering and the May 19 Meeting to Finalize the Agenda.** From the beginning, our hope has been to bring together two groups of activists: first, rank-and-file workers, and secondly, students, particularly youthful anti-globalization protesters.

Recent events underline the need for these two kinds of folks to get to know one another. We believe that anti-globalization activists and rank-and-file workers need to do their own political thinking and reach out to each other -- personally, directly, horizontally -- without going through intermediaries.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT. Since September 11 the leadership of the trade union movement has supported the Bush Administration's war. Indeed it appears that the AFL-CIO helped to finance the coup in Venezuela against the democratically elected Chavez government. Even Jobs with Justice decided to sit out the recent anti-war and pro-Palestinian demonstration in Washington DC.

Thus for those working in the labor movement, the landscape has suddenly shifted. The context is no longer Seattle, where, whatever their motives and however timid their tactics, the Steelworkers and Teamsters showed up at an anti-globalization event. Now the scene is more like the 1960s, when "social movement" unionist Walter Reuther sabotaged the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the 1964 Democratic Party convention and uncritically supported the Vietnam war.
Alexis Buss and others from the IWW, Tom Laney from the Ford plant in Minneapolis-St. Paul, and comrades from Canada, will be present to help in thinking through a rank-and-file labor strategy. Many of us are embattled in local unions or particular workplaces. We are not enamored of the TDU/Labor Notes strategy of electing new top trade union officials. But what kind of national movement can we imagine? Could there be "one big union" in the form of a confederation of independent local unions, maverick locals of existing national unions, rank-and-file caucuses, and individual dissidents?

THE ANTI-GLOBALIZATION MOVEMENT. Meantime, the anti-globalization movement has itself reached what may be a strategic crossroads. Since Seattle, the police chiefs of the world have become more sophisticated and effective in containing our protests. Some of the most faithful and persistent anti-globalization activists have asked whether there is a "burnout" among their troops. How can the anti-globalization movement develop new tactics and unite with the emerging peace movement without losing its hardwon anti-capitalist perspective?

The Near East offers some possibilities of a new departure. When Arafat was trapped in his Ramallah compound a number of peace activists walked past the Israeli troops and joined him there, in effect saying to the Israelis: If you kill him you will have to kill us, too. Jeff Guntzel -- who will be at Kent State -- and others made their way from Israel to the Jenin refugee camp, where they tape recorded several dozen interviews. These are expressions of what Monsignor Romero called "accompaniment."

Palestine is obviously also in need of an unlimited amount of what Gandhi called "constructive work": rebuilding the infrastructure destroyed by the Israeli invasion.

With all this in mind, European and American organizers have called for a "Freedom Summer" in Palestine, involving accompaniment, constructive work, and nonviolent direct action. Further information will be available at Kent State.

We will also have information about the RORAC trinational summer school associated with the Frente Autentico del Trabajo in Mexico. The program provides an opportunity to observe the effects of globalization (particularly NAFTA) on rural and urban workers.

Personally, I see the questions of rank-and-file labor strategy and anti-globalization strategy as the two dominant challenges facing our new movement and, as a result, dictating an agenda at Kent State.

But others may have other ideas! Agenda issues are to be determined at a meeting on Sunday May 19, beginning at 12 noon, at 310 South Ashley Street in Ann Arbor. Make your views known by coming to Ann Arbor.

3. Questions of Process. In his autobiography, Myles Horton, co-founder of the Highlander Folk School, tells how he discovered the pedagogical method of folks teaching each other.
He was a summer volunteer for the YMCA in a Tennessee mountain hamlet named Ozone. At some point he decided that he could not continue to teach Bible studies while people were starving (this was during the Depression). He called a meeting to discuss the here-and-now. People walked across the mountains barefoot to get there. As the gathering began, Myles realized that he did not have anything substantial to propose. In desperation he suggested that they go around the circle and see what ideas emerged. It worked! He "taught" in this way for the rest of his life.

Something like this is what we hope will happen at Kent State. We don't have big name speakers. You -- that is, we -- will have to make it happen together.

On May 19, we should probably take a few moments to think about how to respond if highly-organized Left groups show up with literature tables and resolutions they seek to have adopted. Here are some preliminary thoughts on this subject:

Alice suggests that since we won't need a speakers' table (and the conference planners apparently intend to provide one) we use that for literature.

Mark Weber adds that at one conference he attended, groups with their own literature were told that whatever tables were available should be considered a "commons," and they would need to share the available space.

I feel strongly that there should be a No Resolutions rule and that any one who insists on presenting a resolution should be asked to cease and desist. On the other hand, on Sunday morning we shall no doubt wish to seek consensus as to 1) whether we wish to convene another such gathering at a future time, 2) if the answer is Yes, whether between now and then we wish to have a continuations committee and/or a drafting committee (the latter in the event we decide to try our collective hands at drafting a new Port Huron Statement).

Maybe I can say a word in conclusion about May Day. On May 1, 1936, a young man named Sam Levinger carried me on his shoulders in the New York City May Day parade. Sam was a member of the Young Peoples Socialist League. He went to Spain, fought with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, and was killed in August 1937.

Before the battle Sam wrote a letter to his parents (his father was a Columbus rabbi, his mother a writer). It was to be delivered if he were killed. He wrote in part:

As for my friends, give them my love if you run across them. Tell them I said there's only one thing to remember -- that there's one less comrade to do the job of soldier of discontent. They'll all have to do some work to make up for my getting perforated.

Ever since I have been trying to live the life Sam Levinger might have lived had he been spared. You can, too. Join us at Kent State.
BUILDING A NEW MOVEMENT
held at
Kent State University

May 31 – June 2, 2002

2002 Conference Registration Form

Please complete and return this registration form by Wednesday, May 15, 2002.

Name: ____________________________________________

Mailing Address: ____________________________________

E-mail Address: ______________________________________

Phone: _____________________________________________

Conference Information:

Housing Costs: $19 each night/Friday & Saturday night total $38.00
(Leebrock Hall, check-in time 1 pm – 5 pm)

Food, Conference Room Rental and Parking Pass: $57.00
Includes Friday dinner, 3 meals on Saturday, and
Sunday breakfast and lunch

Total Conference Cost (if registered by May 15th): $95.00

On site conference registration: $100.00

☐ Yes, I will be attending the conference and will need lodging.

☐ Single room preferred ☐ Share room with ________________________

☐ Yes, I will be attending the conference, but will not need lodging.

☐ Yes, I will need a parking pass.

☐ I will need financial aid $25 $50 Other $______
**Friday, May 31, 2002**

- **1:00 - 5:00 pm** Check-in at Tri Towers Lobby
- **5:00 - 7:00 pm** Dinner
- **7:00 - 10:00 pm** Plenary

**Saturday, June 1, 2002**

- **8:00 - 9:00 am** Breakfast
- **9:00 - Noon** Workshops
- **Noon - 1:00 pm** Lunch
- **1:00 - 5:00 pm** Workshops
- **5:00 - 7:00 pm** Dinner
- **7:00 - 10:00 pm** Party

**Sunday, June 2, 2002**

- **8:00 - 9:00** Breakfast
- **9:00 - Noon** Plenary
- **Noon - 1:00 pm** Lunch (check-out by 1 pm)

**Workshops**

What are you working on that you would like to discuss with others in a workshop?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What other workshops would you attend if others would like them too?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

*Please make checks payable to: Kent State University*

*Please mail check and registration form to: Stoughton and Alice Lynd 1694 Timbers Court Niles, OH 44446-3941*

For information about accommodations, you may contact: Mark Weber at (330-672-2962) or e-mail: markw@lms.kent.edu
THE NEW SITUATION AND THE GREAT CHALLENGES

By Bob Avakian, Chairman of the RCP, USA

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What is at Stake?

"I want to speak first of all to the strategic dimension involved in the current and developing situation since September 11.... To put it in stark terms, the range of possibilities involves everything from, on the one hand, on the negative side, devastating defeats for the proletariat and the proletarian revolution internationally, of a character that would set us back for decades...and at the same time to very great advances and consolidations by the imperialists, the U.S. imperialists in particular.

"Or, on the other extreme, on the positive side - and this too is possible - the whole course that the imperialists are embarking on could turn into its opposite for them in a profound, and perhaps even an unprecedented, way - it could lead to tremendous advances for the revolutionary struggle of the people all over the globe...."

"As can be seen in many ways, including in the major speeches by Bush since September 11, 2001, these imperialists - the U.S. imperialists in particular - certainly have wild ambitions. But they also have a great deal of necessity they're facing. And we need to look at both.

"They have ambitions of essentially reshuffling the whole deck, reordering the whole situation - beginning with the strategic areas of Central and South Asia and the Middle East that are more immediately involved now - but, even beyond that, on a world scale."

Building Opposition

"I want to emphasize a fundamental point in relation to the war and repression juggernaut of the imperialists: It is good that many people have made statements of opposition and have mobilized, and are mobilizing, in various ways against this; and it is also good that many others are at least raising questions, concerns, and even criticisms; but there is a profound and increasingly urgent need for things to be developed to a qualitatively greater and more profound as well as broader level. What the powers-that-be are already doing and, beyond that, what they are clearly indicating they are planning on doing - both internationally and within the U.S., both in terms of war and in terms of repression - must not only be questioned, must not only give rise to the expression of concerns, must not only be criticized or just opposed. There must be an orientation of actively resisting and of stopping this, through the mobilization of hundreds of thousands and ultimately millions of people.

"We are called on to rise to the challenges that are posed with both a sense of real urgency and with a broad overview."

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Protester against the US war in Afghanistan detained by riot police in Istanbul, Turkey

Kabul, Afghanistan, Dec. 2001

Union Square, NYC, Sept. 2001