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TRIBUTE TO COMRADE JOSE MARIA SISON – OUTSTANDING REVOLUTIONARY OF OUR TIME

by RAY LIGHT

on behalf of the Revolutionary Organization of Labor (USA)
(February 2023)

Jose Maria Sison was among the most honest, serious, consistent and internationalist anti-imperialist revolutionaries in the world of our time. Moreover, he was arguably the most prominent Filipino revolutionary of the past hundred years. Born in 1939, one of nine children of a well-to-do land-owner, over the more than twenty-five years we've had the privilege of working with him, it has been awe-inspiring to witness the love with which Joema has been appreciated by the masses of patriotic Filipino people and cadre as the finest son of the sorely oppressed Filipino nation. While long in exile, with his single-minded dedication to the cause of Filipino and proletarian liberation, he good-naturedly responded to practical jokes, "over-estimated" his own singing voice and was completely at home with the adoring delegations from the home country he interacted with, as they were with him.

He died at 83 on December 16, 2022, thousands of miles away from his beloved homeland, in exile in the Netherlands, which had granted him asylum in 1995. Among the exile community



survivors there is Julie de Lima, his wife and partner in all the struggles going back to the very founding of the modern Filipino liberation movement. We share with these dedicated veteran activists, the

Filipino people and the world proletariat our collective loss.

Joema founded the modern Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on December 26, 1968 at a clandestine meeting with thirteen of his young comrades. Three months later, with rebel leader, Bernabe Biscayno, he established the movement's armed wing, the New People's Army, (NPA) which grew within a few years to a force of 25 thousand armed guerillas scattered across the vast Philippine archipelago. According to the *New York Times* obituary (12-19-22), the party's political wing, the National Democratic Front (NDF), has long played a significant role in national politics. And, from exile, Joema served as the chief political consultant to the NDF in the peace negotiations conducted over decades between a series of imperialist puppet Philippine government regimes and the NDF.



Oslo Peace Talks

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The Times' obit writer, Seth Mydans, admitted that, "the threat of the communist insurgency was one factor in the ouster in 1986 of the entrenched Marcos Dictatorship [when the] U.S. government determined that Mr. Marcos' unpopularity was fueling the growth of the communist opposition [and] withdrew its support for him." U.S. imperialism replaced Marcos with Corazon Aquino, the newly widowed wife of the murdered Benigno Aquino, whose family included top military leaders and politicians and big land-owners and had amassed huge lands from the impoverished farmers in North Tarlac. It was the martyred Benigno Aquino with whom U.S. imperialism had initially attempted to replace Marcos before Marcos murdered him with the whole world watching.



CPP led New People's Army (NPA)

As Philippine President, Cory Aquino promptly released most political prisoners, including Marcos' enemy number #1, Jose Maria Sison. Joema had been captured in 1977 and spent most of his ten years in prison in isolation and experienced torture. But Marcos had been afraid of what the Filipino masses would do if he killed Joema.

At his first May Day celebration with a half million workers in Manila in 1986, soon after his release from prison, Joema Sison was seated just behind President Aquino, the new chief of state. More impressively, Joema immediately delivered a remarkable series of ten political lectures reaffirming the party's Marxist-Leninist-Maoist principles. This was quickly followed by a party rectification campaign to reorient and strengthen the CPP under the new conditions!

Years later, when a few of us representing our small revolutionary workers group from the USA first met comrade Sison, our second day's meeting was approximately twelve or fourteen hours long and mainly focused on our respective assessments of the so-called Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) in China. Though the GPCR had ended a decade earlier, we found ourselves on extreme opposite sides regarding this seismic event and it was clear that, at that point at least, we would not be able to resolve these differences.

Comrade Sison upheld the GPCR as the most advanced revolutionary socialist struggle up to that time, because it allegedly showed the international proletariat how to avoid the revisionist degeneration that had occurred in the USSR. (For many years now, however, led by Joema, the CPP has recognized the Chinese party, state and economy as capitalist.)

Meanwhile, I had written in 1968 that the GPCR's "August 12, 1966 foreign policy statement denies the common cause of all peoples struggling against imperialism and for socialism, the necessity for international solidarity which was so stressed by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Bourgeois nationalism was adopted as the main content of Chinese foreign and domestic policy. According to the 'Cultural Revolution' as well as Khrushchev, the main contradiction facing world capitalism in this period is between the socialist camp and the capitalist camp...the 'Cultural Revolution' substitutes China as the leader of the socialist countries in place of the Soviet Union." On the basis of this alleged "main contradiction," the 'Cultural Revolution' domestic policy [claimed] "the main task of the Chinese people is therefore to 'promote production'—any kind of production!" ("The Role of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the International Marxist-Leninist Movement: The October Revolution vs. the 'Cultural Revolution'" (1968), Youth for Stalin)

Neither Joema nor we ever fundamentally changed our view on the GPCR that we had initially shared with each other! As the years moved on, the global class struggle had other more pressing issues for us to discuss and strategize upon and we did not dwell on the GPCR, though one or the other would bring it up from time to time. *Yet, incredibly, we became and remained reliable and true comrades to each other over the next twenty-five years!!!*

(contd. on p. 3)

And indeed, respectively proceeding from our Marxist-Leninist and/or Maoist principles, we were among the most principled revolutionaries we each knew. For our part, despite our criticisms of Mao's line especially in the Cultural Revolution period, Jose Maria Sison, arguably the most prominent Maoist in the world during this period, was the contemporary revolutionary political leader we cited most frequently and positively in our Leninist-Stalinist publications! On his part, Joema ensured the widespread dissemination of our revolutionary material throughout the Philippines and beyond. Apparently, this even led to speculation among revolutionaries in the Philippines that "Ray O. Light" was another pseudonym for Joema, a fact that pleased me greatly.

On several occasions, too, Joema stated his belief that we were the best left group in the USA. More importantly, ***comrade Sison, far more than any other leftist in the world of any persuasion, fought to have our group, which became Revolutionary Organization of Labor-USA (ROL-USA), invited and welcomed to full participation in various international gatherings that our U.S. Leninist-Stalinist and pro-Mao (through the victorious 1949 Chinese Revolution) and anti-Cultural Revolution working class organization otherwise would have been kept out of.***

How could this happen? We both came through the Sino-Soviet dispute period as defenders of comrade Stalin and in principled opposition to Khrushchev revisionism and U.S. imperialism. We both were *serious* about contributing to the national democratic and proletarian revolutions globally against imperialism, headed by U.S. imperialism. This was clearly expressed in my 1968 observation on the first page of the Youth for Stalin document cited above: "Since the death of Stalin, the two main characteristics of the international situation have been (1) the intensification of the contradiction between the oppressed nations and U.S. imperialism; and (2) the development in most socialist countries of betrayal of the oppressed nations based on the ascendancy of the national bourgeois class in the socialist countries." (*ibid.*)

Following Joema's strong and successful recommendation that we be invited to

international gatherings hosted in Brussels and in Germany, as the means for introducing our small organization we brought our 1999 reprint of "A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement," the outstanding June 14, 1963 letter of the Central Committee of the CP of China (CPC) polemicizing against the Central Committee of the CPSU, with a Ray O. Light introduction. As we pointed out there, "Because the Chinese Party was still operating as a responsible proletarian internationalist component of an international communist movement which for the last time had a genuine revolutionary wing, we believe this historic letter of June 14, 1963 in response to the March 30, 1963 letter of the revisionists...of the Soviet Union led by Nikita Krushchev is an excellent starting point for genuine Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations of today to launch the struggle to develop a common general line for the reemerging international communist movement."

Regarding a General Line of the International Communist Movement (ICM), few other forces in these international gatherings agreed with us and comrade Sison on two of the most important ingredients in a general line: *the main contradiction and the main enemy*. In line with the anti-revisionist forces in the ICM of the early 1960's both our forces saw the main contradiction as the oppressed peoples fighting for national liberation and the main enemy as imperialism, headed by U.S. imperialism. Over the years, Joema expressed surprise regarding the disagreement of a number of "Maoist parties" with *both* these positions. I responded that they are not supporters of the actual Chinese Revolution that in 1949 liberated one-quarter of humanity but of the Chinese *Cultural* Revolution, in the realm of *ideas*.

While supporting our 1999 pamphlet, "Characteristic Features of the Worldwide Military Strategy of U.S. Imperialism," in his Afterword published under his pseudonym,



(contd. on p. 4)

(Tribute to Comrade Jose Maria Sison continued)

Armando Liwanag, comrade Sison discussed both the main contradiction and the main enemy. The comrade further observed, “Taking the Marxist-Leninist stand, Ray O. Light places the topic within the framework of understanding imperialism as a politico-economic phenomenon, as the last dying stage of capitalism.... What is excellent about **Ray O. Light’s** article in presenting the characteristic features of the worldwide military strategy of US imperialism is that it succeeds in exposing the basic weaknesses and vulnerabilities of such a strategy, exactly when US imperialism appears so mighty and daunting, especially to those who cannot recognize the global significance of protracted people’s war.

“US imperialism is actually afflicted with fatal problems of strategic overextension in economic and military terms. It has also become exceedingly dependent on capital-intensive high-tech weaponry, which increasingly binds it to a strategy of wars of quick decision and avoidance or minimization of US troop casualties.” The current U.S.-NATO proxy war in Ukraine is a tragic case in point.

We and comrade Joema also shared the rarely held view that Marxist-Leninists need to carry out “three-line struggle rather than two-line struggle.” That is, in simultaneously waging struggle against both right and left opportunism the revolutionary forces can generally position ourselves so as to be neither too far ahead nor dragging behind the masses.

Though Joema did far more for our small U.S. proletarian group than we were able to do for the Filipino movement, both provided sustained mutual principled support for each other. For example, when Joema and the CPP inspired an effort to form the International League of Peoples Struggles (ILPS) as an international anti-imperialist united front free from NGO domination, at their request we played an outsized role in its founding and in its early years and in leading the early ILPS-USA effort. Likewise, we cooperated in international gatherings hosted in Brussels and in Germany. In addition, as the only North American Marxist-Leninist group based north of Mexico invited for years to participate in an annual seminar on the Revolution in Latin America, hosted in Ecuador by formerly pro-Albanian Latin American organizations, our Leninist-Stalinist group made a sustained

effort to encourage closer relations between the forces there and the comrades of the Maoist CPP, led by comrade Sison.

The recent election in the Philippines brought into state power both a new ghost and an old ghost. These “ghosts of the past” go all the way back to Joema Sison’s revolutionary emergence in the 1960’s. For Vice President Duterte is the daughter of the most recent bloody tyrant there and President Marcos is the unapologetic son of Ferdinand Marcos, the old tyrant whom U.S. imperialism had to quickly replace before the CPP and the Filipino masses, under comrade Sison’s revolutionary leadership, could lead the revolutionary overthrow of Marcos *and* his U.S. imperialist masters. Certainly, today there is much for proletarian revolutionaries in the Philippines and internationally to ponder. We are not in a position to weigh in on the specifics.



However, comrade Jose Maria Sison has bequeathed to the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples of the Philippines and the world many gifts. Outstanding among these, in our opinion, is the 2006 Speech and Pamphlet entitled, “Impact of the Communist International (Comintern or CI) on the Founding and Development of the Communist Party of the Philippines” (May 5, 2006) Indeed, comrade Sison’s own long and deep political history, including with veteran Filipino Communists and trade unionists, gave him an almost unique connection to the CPPI that had been affiliated with the Comintern. And he

combined this knowledge and experience with the political courage to share the phenomenal Comintern role in the Filipino Revolution.

From my first reading of comrade Sison's "Impact of the Comintern on the Founding and Development of the Communist Party of the Philippines" I was stunned by his many substantial and well-documented criticisms of much of the Filipino leadership during this historical process in sharp contrast with his omission of *any* major criticism of the Comintern or its CPUSA, Chinese and other cadres dealing with the sharp and complex class and national struggles in the Philippines over the decades of the Comintern's organizational experience from 1919-1943!

My 2019 piece, entitled, "Further Reflections on the Communist International: Featuring the Comintern's Outstanding Contribution to the Philippine Revolution" (July-August 2019, *Ray O' Light Newsletter* Number #115) relied heavily on Joema's historical knowledge and veracity. I did not want to overstate comrade Sison's virtually unqualified support for the Comintern's role in advancing the Philippine Revolution. So I took the next opportunity to be in his presence to raise this very question. He read my draft and told me I had understood the facts exactly right! This was the historical truth.

It was on this basis that I characterized the Comintern role in the Philippine Revolution, as follows: [This is] "*the unqualified endorsement of the CI's contribution to the establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands (CPPI) by comrade Jose Maria Sison, the Filipino comrade whose own valor and deeds over the past half century in the struggle for Philippine revolution have earned him the preeminent credibility on this subject. His testimony is all the more remarkable because it flies in the face of the prevailing slightly negative/dismissive dogma regarding the Communist International and proletarian internationalism within the current Communist party of the Philippines (CPP) which comrade Sison founded!*" (*ibid.*, *Ray O' Light Newsletter* #115, p.11)

Comrade Jose Maria Sison, outstanding revolutionary of our time, has died. But his truth is marching on. Let us each lay claim



to some inspiring facet of Joema's theory and practice, the revolution he brought to his poetry and the poetry he brought to the revolution, his tremendous courage of conviction, his tireless labors of love and revolutionary optimism in the cause of the uplift of toiling humanity, his deep belief in the potential of the oppressed Filipino masses and the oppressed peoples of the earth in alliance with the international working class to vanquish monopoly capitalism and imperialism, headed by U.S. imperialism.

Yes, Joema. With you we believe "the international working class will be the human race."

Reflections on the Communist International (CI)

Featuring:

THE COMINTERN'S OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION*

by RAY LIGHT

Relying heavily on the invaluable documentation provided by comrade Jose Maria Sison in his 2006 Speech "Impact of the Communist International on the Founding and Development of the Communist Party of the Philippines," Ray Light sums up comrade Sison's assessment as an "unqualified endorsement" of the Comintern's role in the Philippines during its entire organizational existence (1919-1943).



James Allen - outstanding CPUSA comrade who as a Comintern representative helped free revolutionary leadership from prison in the Philippines and facilitated the Philippine effort of the Comintern's united front policy against fascism..



Crisanto Evangelista founder of the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands in unity with Indonesian and Chinese comrades working with the Comintern in the struggle against U.S. colonial rule in the 1920's.



Hukbalahap (Peoples Army Against Japan) was founded only in 1942 when the united front strategy of the Comintern was finally implemented in the face of the fascist Japanese invasion.

Suggested minimum donation
\$1/copy, \$3 for five copies of the article

*Originally appeared as the Lead Article in *Ray O' Light Newsletter* #115, July-August 2019

2019's Time Magazine Person of the Year is Still On the Case! Greta Thunberg and the Global Climate Crisis

by RAY O. LIGHT

INTRODUCTION: The article below, now being published for the first time, was written in December 2019 to promote the recognition given to honest, brave and wise Greta Thunberg. Then still only 16 years-old, the Swedish climate activist was providing bold and independent leadership of youth around the world in the fight to preserve Mother Earth from the rapidly unfolding environmental catastrophe.

Clearly, some powerful bourgeois forces connected to *Time Magazine*, while unwilling to tackle the capitalist system head-on, attempted to use this outstanding young woman and the thousands of young people everywhere that she inspired to take to the streets to help slow down the monopoly capitalist and imperialist-led path being taken toward the destruction of the planet Earth as a habitat for humanity and so many other living things.

The good news is that Greta Thunberg, recently turned twenty years-old, in spite of and also because of the global platform she has achieved, is still on the case, even more formidable now, with extensive political experience, maturity and militancy. The bad news is that the past several years have confirmed the unwillingness of the members of the global capitalist ruling class to sacrifice any of their own private individual profits to save Mother Earth.

-Recent Political Activities of Greta Thunberg and the Youthful Climate Activists She's Rallying With-

UN's COP #26 was held in November 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland.* Led by Greta, thousands protested the capitalist rulers in their unrelenting drive to put private profit first and planet Earth be damned! Addressing more than a hundred thousand protesters, she condemned the

two-week Glasgow conference as a "greenwashing" event in defense of the status quo and business as usual and exposed all the fancy talk as "blah, blah, blah."

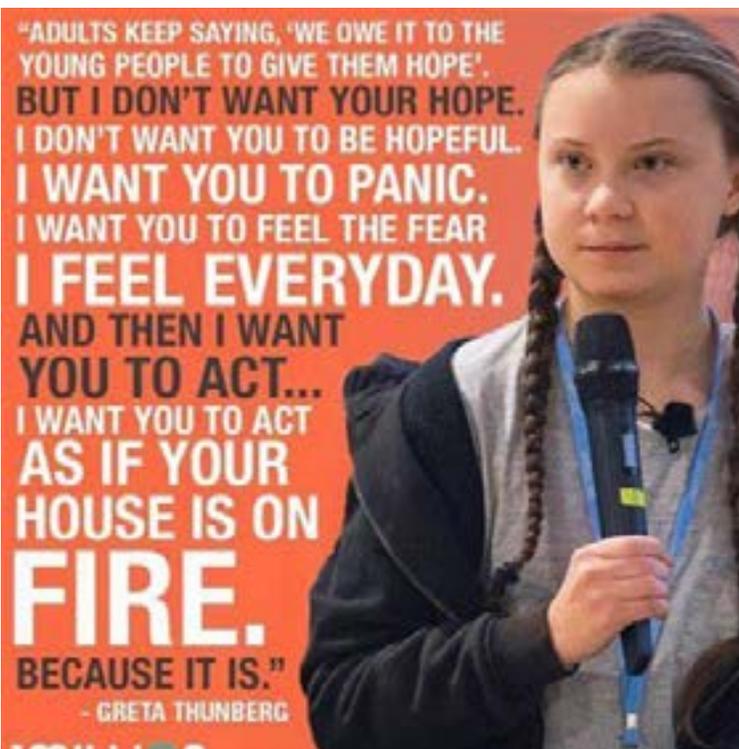
COP #27 was held in Egypt in November of 2022. With little opportunity for large scale protests there due to the repression of the Egyptian military dictatorship, Greta did not attend. However, in advance of the conference, she forcefully exposed the criminal inaction of the world's most powerful governments and business leaders, calling the conference a forum for "people in power to use greenwashing, lying and cheating."

She proved to be right on point. For example, language calling for the phasing out of fossil fuels was removed from the final agreement. The resurgence of fossil fuel production and use has largely resulted from the Biden-U.S.-led NATO war with Putin's Russia over Ukraine. Especially with the U.S. military-political destruction of NORDSTREAM I and II pipelines, and disruption of Russian oil supplies to

Europe, the U.S. fracking industry has been booming, in particular. This not only strengthened the U.S. economy at the expense of Russia and all of Europe but unleashed the new resurgence of fossil fuel use and accelerated global warming.*

Moreover, COP #27 culminated in the controversial selection of Dr. Sultan al-Jaber, the CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, as the President for COP #28! Reflecting the at least temporary global political rebound of the U.S. Empire based on its mobilization of Europe for its "holy war" against Russia, Biden's U.S. climate envoy John Kerry, and the former Obama Secretary of State, arrogantly stated, "I think that Dr. Sultan al-Jaber is a terrific choice because he is the

*Hopefully, a European-wide worker-based anti-imperialist war movement against "their own" capitalists and imperialists in the first place will develop strong connections with the Greta Thunberg-led European youth-based environmental movement. (contd. on p. 8)



(Thunberg & the Global Climate Crisis continued)

head of the company. That company knows it needs to transition. He knows—and the leadership of the UAE is committed to transitioning.” Helena Gualinga, an Ecuadorian indigenous campaigner, gets our last word on COP #27 looking toward COP #28 at the end of this year, “It [the selection of Sultan al-Jaber] sends this message of actually not taking it seriously.” She added, “the world is taking a really dangerous path.”

January 2023, brought Greta Thunberg, Helena Gualinga and other environmental activists to the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Greta arrived from Germany, where she had just participated in a demonstration in a town being wiped out in order to enable the expansion of a coal mine! She was among a number of high-profile activists removed from that town by police a day or so earlier. (Her boots were still covered with mud from the doomed town.)



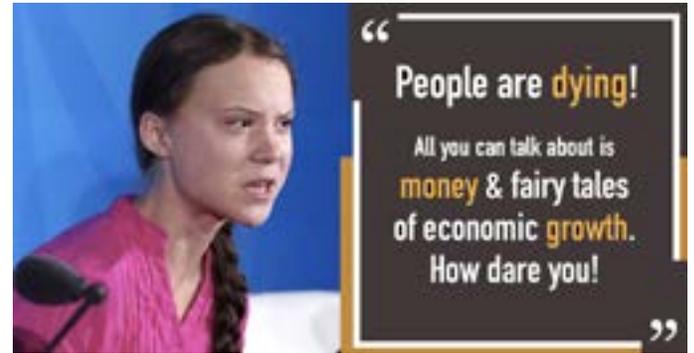
Greta Thunberg protesting destruction of German city by expanding coal mine

Responding to this town/coal mine situation, even German federal government climate envoy Jennifer Morgan expressed her own frustration, anger and desperation and saw the protest as “a signal of what we need not only in Germany but around the world.” Ms. Morgan, while acknowledging that Davos attendees are major decision-makers and have a role, in sharp contrast to her U.S. counterpart, John Kerry, she concludes “they’re not the answer.”

The activists, meanwhile, brought a “cease and desist” letter calling on the heads of fossil fuel companies to stop all new oil and natural gas projects, signed by nearly 900,000 people. This was in accord with the estimate by scientists that no new fossil fuel projects can be built in the world if we are to be in line with climate goals set in Paris in 2015.

During a roundtable with International Energy Agency Executive Director Fatih Birol, Greta Thunberg slammed the corporate bigwigs at Davos for “fueling the destruction of the planet” by investing in fossil fuels and prioritizing short-term profits over people affected by the climate crisis.” And Vanessa Nakate, a climate activist from Uganda, added that current levels of warming,

which have reached up to 1.2 degrees Celsius (2.2 F), means it is already a living hell for many communities across the African continent, across the Global South.”



Finally, Greta Thunberg observed, “The changes that we need ... I believe ... will come from the bottom up. Without massive public pressure from the outside, at least in my experience, these [Davos] people are going to go as far as they possibly can. As long as they can get away with it, they will continue to invest in fossil fuels, they will continue to throw people under the bus for their own gain.”

My December 2019 piece in response to Greta Thunberg’s well deserved recognition by *Time Magazine*, documents her journey to becoming a global leader of the struggle for a healthy world for our youth and our species. The fact that she still has her “eye on the prize” with all the obstacles that the 16 year old girl has encountered all the way to her current excellent work at age 20 gives us much reason to trust both Greta Thunberg and the noble and crucial cause she helps lead.



Greta Thunberg speaks out against police brutality in the U.S.

We who recognize that only the working class, organized internationally and through militant struggle for power, can defeat monopoly capitalism and imperialism and save humanity from global destruction need to heed the call of Greta Thunberg and the youth; we need to join those who are fighting for a brighter future for us all.

Greta Thunberg: Time Magazine's 2019 Person of the Year The People's Champion!

(December 2019)

In December, *Time Magazine* announced that its 2019 Person of the Year is Greta Thunberg, by far the youngest person ever chosen for this 92-year old award. Indeed, she had inspired four million people on all seven continents to join the global climate strike on September 20, 2019 in the largest climate demonstration in human history.

"The Conscience," one of the two *Time* articles explaining Thunberg's selection, states: "She is an ordinary teenage girl who, in summoning the courage to speak truth to power, became the icon of a generation. By clarifying an abstract danger with piercing outrage, Thunberg became the most compelling voice on the most important issue facing the planet. Along the way she emerged as a standard bearer in a generational battle, an avatar of youth activists across the globe ..." ("The Conscience," Alter, Haynes and Worland, *Time*, Vol.194-Nos 27-28/2019, p. 54)

"The Choice," the other *Time* piece, observes: "It is not a moment too soon: emissions would need to start falling by 7.6% annually and continue at that rate for a decade in order for the world to have any chance of hitting the widely accepted targets for stopping global warming. Thunberg's wake-up call is a necessary jolt." ("The Choice," Edward Felsenhal, *Time*, *ibid.*, p. 48)

"The Conscience" adds: "This is not fear-mongering; this is science. For decades, researchers and activists have struggled to get world leaders to take the climate threat seriously. But this year an unlikely teenager somehow got the world's attention." (p. 51, *ibid.*) To understand how "the world's attention" was captured, it is instructive to note, as *Time* recounts, that Greta Thunberg was herself inspired by the actions of U.S. high school students who responded boldly and decisively to a 2018 Valentine's Day massacre by a nineteen year old of seventeen students and school personnel at the Marjorie Douglas Stoneman High School in Parkland, FL. The Parkland youth had initiated a mobilization that extended across the USA, utilizing school strikes to pressure adults to take decisive action against the epidemic of gun violence, which made U.S. youth feel unsafe even in school.

In response to these high school students, I jointly wrote "A May Day 2018 Greeting and Salute to the High School Youth Protesting Violence in Public Schools and Communities Across the USA," with anti-imperialist war activist Cindy Sheehan. We observed: "**Indeed, after six decades of U.S. imperialist global hegemony and the creation of an Evil Empire, it is only 'natural' that the USA would be the most violent country on earth.**" In the tragedy's aftermath, Parkland, Florida's

high school students recognized that the powers that be in the USA do not care about them. Even more disturbing [for them], they recognized that their parents and adult family members and community leaders were too compromised to really fight the powers that be, even in defense of their own children!"

We continued, "Now, in the aftermath of Parkland's tragedy, many high school youth of the USA have expressed some initial 'independence' from the two corporate political parties that represent the Wall Street ruling class and its global U.S. Empire ..." It is precisely this recognition that they had been deserted by the adult generation that gave the Parkland students their strong and decisive initiative. And it was precisely this feature that inspired Greta Thunberg to follow their example.*



Accordingly, Greta recommended a school strike to the handful of Scandinavian activists who contacted her after she had an essay on climate change published in a Swedish newspaper. *They all opposed the idea.* But 16-year old Greta persisted. As she expressed on her handwritten sign, "Since you adults don't give a damn about

*This mass political desertion of the young, our current and future generations of humanity, is a crucial symptom of the fatal disease, including climate catastrophe, that humanity now exhibits-- corrupted, co-opted and cowed under virtually unchallenged monopoly capitalist and imperialist domination. Moribund capitalism seems intent on inflicting extinction upon our own and many other species currently inhabiting the planet we all share. Such are the catastrophic implications of the absence of a global proletariat-led Communist International capable of uniting the international working class and all oppressed humanity to smash international capitalism and place us in harmony with each other and with Mother Nature. (contd. on p. 10)

(Thunberg: Person of the Year continued)

my future, I won't either." She began a *solitary* "climate strike" outside her country's parliament in Stockholm on August 20, 2018. The next day she was exhilarated to be joined by a second person. As she observed, "This is not about me striking; this is now us striking from school." *Time* adds, "A few days later ... one person refusing to accept the status quo had become two, then eight, then 40, then hundreds. Then thousands." (p. 59, *ibid.*)

By early September enough people had joined her that Greta announced she would continue her school climate strike every Friday until the Swedish government became allied with the Paris Climate Agreement. The Fridays for Future movement was born. Within a few months it was replicated across Europe and thereafter across the globe. As *Time* observes, "In this moment when so many traditional institutions seem to be failing us, amid staggering inequality and social upheaval and political paralysis, we are seeing new kinds of influence take hold ... wielded by people like Thunberg." (p. 54, *ibid.*)

The *Time* reporters explain that, while Thunberg is not involved with all the disparate youth protests — from U.S. teenagers organizing against gun violence to "young people from South America to Europe" struggling to remake "the global economy" — "her insistent presence has come to represent the fury of youth worldwide." "She is a reminder that ... the young people that are inheriting dysfunctional governments, broken economies and an increasingly unlivable planet know just how much the adults have failed them." (p. 54, *ibid.*)

In her first big address at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Poland last December, Greta Thunberg said, "You say you love your children above all else. And yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes." (p. 61, *ibid.*) This September, speaking to heads of state during the U.N. General Assembly, Thunberg said, "We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!" (p. 61, *ibid.*)

Greta Thunberg seems to be polemicizing against the capitalist system. And her courage and militancy seems to have influenced *Time's* journalists. For they admit that the climate conversation has been stuck in "stasis" for too long and they expose how both the Democratic and Republican parties in the USA have been complicit. "In the US, Democrats have long given lip service to addressing global warming even as they prioritize other issues, while many Republicans have simply denied the science altogether." (p. 62, *ibid.*)

Clearly, 16-year old Greta Thunberg is an outstanding youth leader and many climate initiatives taken by youth around the world have been very positive. Moreover, in her appearance before the U.S. Congress, instead of presenting a paper of her own, she provided

each Congress member a copy of the "Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius" approved by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued in Fall 2018. The IPCC, a United Nations creation, is the leading world body for assessing science related to climate change, its impacts and potential future risks, and possible response options. It was this 2018 report that had moved Greta into action. She modestly but strongly urged the U.S. congress to *follow the science and scientists*.

Courageous Greta, who has now embraced her Asperger's diagnosis as a strength instead of a weakness, because it helps keep her eye on the prize, is impressively not impressed by her success thus far. "One person stops flying doesn't make much difference. The thing we should look at is the emissions curve—it's still rising." (p.64, *ibid.*)



The same 2018 IPCC report had prompted my initial climate article, entitled, "The Longer Monopoly Capitalism Survives, the more *Humanity's Survival* is in Jeopardy!" (*Ray O' Light Newsletter* #111, November-December 2018) I highlighted the fact that "the IPCC Report concludes that the greenhouse gas reduction pledges put forth under the Paris agreement will not be enough to avoid the higher, more catastrophic level of 2 degrees C. or 3.6 degrees F. of warming." The IPCC Reports that have been issued since have reflected the same worrisome reality.

As I observed then, "Unfortunately global finance capital corrupts all these governments and institutions, including the United Nations. It represents a crippling influence on those forces concerned or even dedicated to the defense of Mother Earth as a habitat for humanity." On a positive note, we can now add to the list of scientists, technocrats, some government leaders, especially in oppressed and dependent countries whose peoples are among the first being drastically impacted, and even some capitalist managers and strategists, ***the millions-strong youth movement that has emerged with Greta Thunberg's inspiration.***

The fact remains, as I wrote then, "Yet none of these class and national forces has the independence from
(contd. on p. 11)

(Thunberg: Person of the Year continued)

international capital to lead a successful defense of Mother Earth as a habitat of humanity. The one socio-economic class whose very strength is realized through its struggle against international capital is the international working class, the international proletariat. And it is under the leadership of the global proletariat that these other class and national forces can play an important role in saving our earthly habitat and ushering in a socialist world.” (*ibid.*)

The tipping point for human climate catastrophe is too near to wait for *spontaneous* evolutionary development of a consistent anti-capitalist, scientific socialist-based global environmental movement powerful enough to halt the global monopoly capitalist and imperialist system’s destruction of mother earth as a human habitat.

Indeed, the fact that openly anti-environmentalist rogue regimes remain in place, including in

the USA and Brazil under fascistic Trump and Bolsonaro *climate change deniers*, is a reflection of the impotence of the bourgeois dominated world in the face of this global menace.

To give the human species the best opportunity for survival, there is an urgent need for the unity of the international working class and its unity with the oppressed peoples and nations of the earth in struggle against international capital, headed by the U.S. Empire. A new Communist International, modeled on the Third Communist International, capable of organizing this unity and mobilizing this struggle against international capital, is on the order of the day.

The “Good News” is that such a powerful and effective international organization has *already* been built once in the world and thrived for more than a generation.

AFTERWORD (2023)

What Greta Thunberg’s journey thus far teaches us is that she and the climate change activist cause she helps lead globally *can and needs to be trusted*. She and her comrades need to be invited to join, learn from and teach and help inspire every working class, oppressed nationality and community struggle possible, especially where these “intersect” in the struggle for power against global finance capital and imperialism.

An example may help.



“NATIONALIZE THE U.S. RAILROAD SYSTEM!”

A. FACTS:

1. On February 3, 2023, an environmental disaster befell the region in and around East Palestine, Ohio. A Norfolk Southern train of 151 cars that stretched for almost two miles derailed there resulting in the release of combustible hazardous materials that may ultimately result in the entire area being unfit for human habitation for years.

2. This horrific disaster brought forth a slew of news coverage revealing that long before this fiery derailment “railroad industry leaders battled against regulations meant to boost freight train safety, including plans to bolster some of the very same tank cars that ruptured and released chemicals in Eastern Ohio.” (*Bloomberg News*) Revealingly, Pete Buttigieg, Biden’s Secretary of Transportation, when asked why he had not yet been to East Palestine responded that there are more than a thousand railroad accidents each year, – thus confirming

the railroad monopolies’ out-of-control domination of the industry and prioritizing of maximum private corporate profit at the expense of the people of this entire society.

3. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Chief Michael Regan immediately went to the site and quickly declared that Norfolk Southern Corporation would pay for the clean-up, clearly a sign that corporate greed had played a crucial role in this community’s catastrophe.

4. At the beginning of December 2022, a majority of U.S. union railroad workers had outlasted the dragging out of their contract negotiations by the federal government under the approximately one hundred year old National Railway Labor Act. This Act had basically deprived them of the right to strike. And they were now ready to strike for the first time in years. Railroad workers were stressed to the max under the weight of layoffs of about one-third of their workmates combined with repressive compulsory overtime! Moreover, their job responsibilities

(contd. on p. 12)

(Thunberg & the Global Climate Crisis continued)

around train safety were intensified by the railroad monopoly corporations' strategy of using longer and longer trains with substandard braking systems and fewer rail workers. Incredibly, in part, they were able to be treated as casual labor is treated because they had no sick days, despite being in union jobs with the longest U.S. labor history! The sticking point, then, was *the issue of paid sick leave*.

5. Under the Railway Act, the Biden Regime and the Democratic Party-controlled Congress now had the authority to craft the agreement. So they could have

provided a binding contract that included paid sick leave. Moreover, Biden had bragged that he was the most pro-union U. S. President. Despite all this, on December 2, following the Congressional votes, Biden announced that there were no paid sick days at all in the agreement!

6. Speaking with forked tongue, Biden then declared that the fight for leave is not over. But his message to the Railroad corporations and Wall Street capital was that they are still in complete control; and business as usual led inexorably to the environmental catastrophe in East Palestine, Ohio two months later!



B. PLAN OF ACTION:

From the Facts enumerated above, it is clear that the U.S. monopoly capitalist and imperialist state does not have the capacity to bring the powerful Railroad Barons and their Wall Street Partners under control. For the sake of the safety of thousands of communities and the many millions of people across the USA that reside anywhere near the railroad freight trains that crisscross this country; for the sake of the thousands of union railroad workers and their families and the millions of passengers that use the trains, and for the sake of the environment that has a great need for this most environmentally friendly form of transportation going forward —

A Countrywide Campaign to NATIONALIZE THE U.S. RAILROAD INDUSTRY WITHOUT COMPENSATION TO THE RAILROAD BARONS AND WALL STREET NEEDS TO BE LAUNCHED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

SUGGESTED LAUNCH LOCATION: AREA IN OR AROUND EAST PALESTINE, OHIO.

SUGGESTED KEY PARTICIPANTS:

****Community activists from the East Palestine and nearby Ohio and Pennsylvania communities and other geographical areas that have recently experienced similar horrific events**

****Militant Railway Union activists and leaders and other militant leaders of the U.S. and International Labor Movement, especially those involved in defense of worker safety and the environment**

****Militant Global Climate Activists and Environmentalists, including outstanding U.S. forces in these ranks**

****Greta Thunberg to keynote the powerful campaign launching rally**

For, as *Time Magazine* correctly observed in 2019, “Thunberg became the most compelling voice on the most important issue facing the planet.”

PRIORITIZE BUILDING A NEW COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL!

Introduction:

In the Fall of 2021, “the International Coordination of Revolutionary Organizations and Groups” (ICOR) held its fourth Conference. Revolutionary Organization of Labor-USA (ROL-USA) was unable to attend. However, we did send the following resolution for consideration by the affiliated groups participating. For we understood there was a most urgent need for the establishment of a new Communist International, in the marvelous and victorious proletarian revolutionary tradition of Comrades Marx and Engels and Comrades Lenin and Stalin.

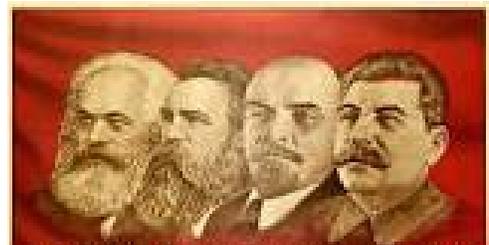
With the launching of an open war between Putin’s Russia and the U.S.-led NATO-sponsored Ukraine in February 2022, this became all the more urgent and clear. For a condition now exists, similar to the outbreak of World War I, when comrade Lenin taught that all the main government protagonists were imperialist and bourgeois reactionaries and the task of the working class of all these countries was to overthrow their own bourgeoisie in the course of the war.

These greatest of proletarian internationalist leaders constantly fought for the international working class to overcome any meekness and any chauvinism. They called on the workers to seize power as the first ruling class majority and one ready through international solidarity and power to establish and enforce the equality of peoples and nations in the process of the struggle for world socialism and communism.

For those who question the adjective “victorious” associated here with their names, let us remind you that Marx and Engels wrote *the Communist Manifesto* in 1847 at the request of the Communist League. This was a small organization of radical German apprentices, workers and intellectuals—mostly immigrants in wealthier Western European countries. Within seventy-five years, the *Manifesto* had been read by more working people in more languages than any other book in history.

Based on the work and struggle of Marx and Engels and the workers of their day, including their crucial roles in the establishment of the First and to an extent the Second International, Lenin and Stalin led the liberation of the masses of humanity in what had been Tsarist Russia. Moreover, they led the Bolshevik vanguard organization within the next decade that transformed what had been known as the “prisonhouse of nations” under the Tsars into the magnificent Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), in the largest state territory on earth.

And Stalin and the Soviet working people, with the Communist International, led the victorious struggle over the combined Axis Powers of fascism in World War II. In 1949, with the vital contribution of the Soviet-led and Comintern-led anti-fascist victory, Mao, on behalf of the Communist Party of China and one-quarter of all humanity was able to declare that “China has stood up.” ***Barely one hundred years after the publication of the Communist Manifesto there were approximately as many people living in the Socialist Camp as the Capitalist Camp! Victorious indeed!***



The common red thread of Lenin and Stalin with Marx and Engels is that, throughout their revolutionary lives they consistently fought for the unity of the international working class, to unite the workers in the same vanguard revolutionary organization *globally*. Please keep that in mind as you read our proposed resolution, “Prioritize Building A New Communist International.”

Comradely,

Ray Light

(March 1, 2023)

(contd. on p. 14)

ROL-USA Proposed Resolution:

Prioritize Building A New Communist International

Whereas, the International Working Class and the Oppressed Peoples today confront a number of grave global crises simultaneously — all spawned by the moribund system of monopoly capitalism and imperialism; and this general collapse of the global capitalist system is generating an increasingly powerful fascist motion throughout the world as well as the increasing likelihood of major regional and ultimately global war; and

Whereas, the U.N.'s Special Reports of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stemming from the 2015 Paris Agreement have continued to document that, under monopoly capitalist and imperialist domination, virtually all the world's nations have failed to live up to their mutual commitments to a set of environmentally conscious goals; and the unprecedented extreme weather events ever since that have occurred throughout the world have already brought about great mass suffering, with far more calamitous events for humanity on the horizon; and

Whereas, the Corona-virus (COVID19) Pandemic under global imperialist domination has produced both a devastating global health crisis and a prolonged economic crisis: Even with the introduction of "successful" vaccines their private profit-driven production and distribution has featured the hoarding of vaccine supplies by the rich nations while the peoples in the poorest nations are almost universally excluded from access to these life-saving medicines, increasing the danger for all humanity of the emergence of more and more virulent variants. All this has dramatically underscored the truth of comrade Lenin's teaching that the "essence of imperialism" lies in the "fundamental distinction between the oppressing and the oppressed nations;" and

Whereas, global capitalism has spawned rapacious finance capitalists, a ruling class for whom there is no compunction to pay taxes, to support national infrastructure, mass public

education, public health services or other national uplift; they are shameless privatizers of all public resources; and

Whereas, this same global capitalist system drives desperate populations of many countries to migrate from one continent to another (Africa to Europe, South America to North America) creating sharp dislocation for vulnerable populations in both the losing countries and the receiving countries and making them ripe for global chauvinist violence largely directed against migrant families and communities, and fueling a greater drive toward fascism and war; and

Whereas, imperialist wars of plunder and occupation are a continuing prominent feature of imperialist economic policy, devastating vast areas of the globe such as the Obama-led, U.S., Italian and French imperialist destruction of Libya and much of Northern Africa and the U.S.-led twenty year imperialist war and occupation of Afghanistan; and

*Whereas, global individualism promoted by capitalist market forces, now intensified by social media global monopolies like Facebook and Instagram and their algorithms, supplant national cultures with chauvinist hatred and crass consumerism, while huge populations no longer have *collective self-worth* based on the work they do, or on their contribution to society or their society's global contributions; instead, what they own, drive, wear, etc. now determines their identity and makes them more susceptible to fascist appeals and unjust imperialist war; and*

Whereas, the moribund system of monopoly capitalism and imperialism now is in perpetual crisis, is alienating billions of people and increasingly resorts to fascist leaders, right-wing "populist" movements of white supremacy, anti-Semitism and immigrant-bashing and various anti-democratic attempts to violently seize political power as the ongoing Trump-led

(Prioritize Communist International continued)

motion in the USA, one of the most powerful imperialist countries, demonstrates so clearly; and whereas, the growing competition between U.S. and Chinese imperialism for global hegemony continually heightens the danger of a major world war; and

Whereas, under the economic devastation wrought by the ravages of the COVID 19 global pandemic, workers all over the world are increasingly rising in strike struggles for higher wages and organizing themselves to bring social justice to the workplace and beyond. Examples include: several general strikes in Argentina launched against capitalist austerity, a recent South Korean general strike demanding the nationalization of some basic industry and an end to casualization of labor, powerful rural worker and peasant uprisings in India, South African steelworkers opposing a wage freeze, an upsurge in U.S. industrial strikes and a series of massive protests by the French workers in defense of their pensions; and

Whereas, it is the working class, who has for several years shown signs of waging protests on a global scale and on broad political questions including international working class solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement following the brutal police murder of George Floyd; U.S. airline workers refusal to cooperate with their corporate employers and the U.S. state apparatus in the kidnapping from their families of immigrant Latino children at the U.S.-Mexico border; Google tech workers' global walkout in 2018 from Japan to the USA to Europe in defense of women workers; and worker unrest that helped scuttle Google's project to help U.S. military drone warfare, and, similar worker protests at Amazon against facial recognition projects to assist police agencies resulted in a moratorium on such sales; and

Whereas, today the international working class remains the one socio-economic class whose very strength is realized through its struggle against international capitalism and it is under the leadership of the global proletariat

that other class and national forces can play a positive role in the struggle to overcome the current existential crises brought on by the moribund system of monopoly capitalism and imperialism; and finally,

Whereas, in the 1930's and 1940's, when the fascist movement was in power — from Italy, Portugal and Spain to Germany and Japan — it was the Soviet Union and the Soviet-led Communist International, the revolutionary organization of the international working class, that led the working class and oppressed masses in the successful victory over global fascism, including through the skillful use of the United Front Against Fascism;

Therefore, be it resolved that ICOR and its affiliated organizations as well as associated mass organizations including at the national democratic revolutionary and anti-fascist level be encouraged to carry out “unity of action” on the grave global crises in the fight for workers power leading to socialism and communism.

Be it further resolved that ICOR and its affiliates prioritize the building of a new Communist International for our time, guided by the exemplary, outstanding and victorious historical experience of the Third Communist International.

SUBMITTED On Behalf of:

The Revolutionary Organization of Labor(USA)

by:

Ray O. Light
General Secretary

October 2021

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*“The great appear great to us
Only because we are on our knees:
Let us rise.”*

— Camille Desmoulins

Revolutionary Organization of Labor (ROL), USA is a revolutionary working class organization that fights for working class power and the elimination of all human exploitation. ***Ray O’ Light Newsletter*** is the regular publication of ROL, USA. We believe, with comrade Lenin, that the working class “... needs the truth and there is nothing so harmful to its cause as plausible, respectable petty bourgeois lies.” In the spirit of Karl Marx who taught that “our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action,” we welcome your comments.

Comradely the Newsletter Staff,

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