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Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the Politics of Hope: Reclaiming Critical Pedagogy

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Over the past several years, there has been a renewed interest in the life and teachings of Che Guevara and Paulo Freire among the revolutionary-minded. This renewed interest in Che and Freire is occurring at a time when Left educators are attempting to address the consequences of the globalization of capital and the effects of transnational capital on public education. The educational Left's current enthrallment with postmodern theory has done little to advance the cause of critical pedagogy, especially in the face of the current corporate assault on public schooling. This article argues that a renewed engagement with historical materialist analysis and revolutionary politics is urgently necessary to cut through the equivocations and revisionism of the postmodern Left and develop a critical pedagogy that is able to challenge the devastating effects brought about by the globalization of capitalism. Education workers are encouraged to move beyond mere efforts at reforming institutions of public education and to take up a dynamic new revolutionary politics in keeping with the examples offered by the life and dialectical thought of Che Guevara and Paulo Freire.

On a recent voyage to the rain forests of Costa Rica, I rode a bus through the beautiful city of Cartago. From my window I noticed a young man with a long ponytail running beside the bus. As the bus passed him, he glanced up and our eyes momentarily met; I noticed that he was wearing a Che T-shirt with the inscription "¡Che Vive!" A fleeting sensation of plaintive connectedness overcame me, and I managed to give him a quick thumbs-up gesture of affirmation just in time for him to return a broad smile to the crazy gringo. For a brief moment, I felt that this ponytailed stranger and I were linked by a project larger than both of us. During that instant, I could tangibly sense between us a collective yearning for a world free from the burdens of this one, and I knew that I was not alone. The image of Che that he wore on his breast like a secular Panagia pointed to a realm of revolutionary values held in trust by all those who wish to break the chains of capital and be free. Che has a way of connecting—if only in this whimsical way—people who share a common resolve to fight injustice and

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liberate the world from cruelty and exploitation. There was no way of knowing the politics of this young man and how seriously he identified with the life and teachings of El Che. But Che's image brings out the promise of such a connection and the political fecundity of even this momentary reverie.

The great Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, shares with Che the ability to bring people together around an animated common trust in the power of love, a belief in the reciprocal power of dialogue, and a commitment to "conscientization" and political praxis. Few figures among the educational Left are as well known and as universally revered as Paulo Freire. Throughout my travels in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Europe, I have seen slogans by Freire scribbled on buildings alongside those of Che. Whenever I speak at revolutionary forums or academic conferences about political praxis—whether in Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Finland, Europe, or elsewhere—the names of Che Guevara and Paulo Freire (and more recently, the Zapatistas) inevitably come up. They not only draw attention to the crisis of the times, but also provide the singular hope that is necessary to move the struggle forward, *cueste lo que cueste*.

No one has done more to move the struggle forward over the role of education as a vehicle for liberatory praxis than Paulo Freire. From the moment he was jailed by the Brazilian military during the early days of the repression in 1964, to his exile and continuing struggle on behalf of peasants and the working class throughout the world (to whom he was dedicated in helping overcome their centuries-old marginalization from society), Paulo Freire has captured the political imagination of educators around the world. In an introduction to my book *Life in Schools* (1997), the great liberation theologian, Leonardo Boff, affirmed Freire's pedagogical project as one of action in and on the world:

The pedagogical project is created in order to place . . . lives inside the classroom and to employ knowledge and transformation as weapons to change the world. From the perspective of the social location of the condemned on Earth, it becomes clear that knowledge alone, as intended by the school, does not transform life. Only the conversion of knowledge into action can transform life. This concretely defines the meaning of practice: the dialectic movement between the conversion of transformative action into knowledge and the conversion of knowledge into transformative action. (p. xi)

Although Che is certainly a better known figure than Freire worldwide, one would be hard-pressed to find a more respected and celebrated "profe" in the field of education than Paulo Freire anywhere in the world. His most famous work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1993), has sold over a half million copies and has been translated into more than 20 languages. His theoretical developments have influenced the scholarly domains of sociology, anthropology, literacy, ecology, medicine, psychotherapy, philosophy, pedagogy, critical social theory, museology, history, journalism, and theater, to name just some of the fields indebted to his work. He is even credited with helping to found a new approach

to research known as participatory research (A.M.A. Freire & Macedo, 1998). According to Ana Maria Araújo Freire and Donaldo Macedo (1998), Freire was invited to visit approximately 100 cities throughout the world during his lifetime. They write, "His theory, which constitutes a reflection upon his practice, has served as the foundation for academic work and inspired practices in different parts of the world, from the mocambos of Recife to the barakumin in Brazil and abroad" (p. 27). Even before Freire's death in 1997, numerous schools, student organizations in schools of education, unions, popular libraries, and research scholarships bore his name. A list of his academic awards and honorary degrees would fill several pages.

Although Freire was an advocate of nonviolent insurrection and struggle, he was nevertheless jailed in Brazil as a politically dangerous subversive because of the counterhegemonic power of his ideas. Che remained convinced that reclamation of one's land from imperialist settlers by violent means was a form of self-defense, and that violent insurrection was the only way to defeat fascism and Yankee imperialism and reveal to the masses that the colonial god has feet of clay. Despite these divergences, Freire and Che remained brothers of the heart—brothers who never met in prison, in the theater of war, or in the arena of pedagogical struggle, but who shared a fraternal bond that opened up their hearts and minds to a similar vision of the world—a vision of what the world already was, where it was headed, and what it could become. As intellectual and political comrades, their lives represented the best of what the human spirit has to offer.

It is a feeling of kinship with Freire and Che that has served as the primary motivation for this investigation. In the preface to my book *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture* (1995), Freire writes:

When such a kinship develops we need to cultivate within ourselves the virtue of tolerance, which "teaches" us to live with that which is different; it is imperative that we learn from and that we teach our "intellectual relative," so that in the end we can unite in our fight against antagonistic forces. Unfortunately, as a group, we academics and politicians alike expend much of our energy on unjustifiable "fights" among ourselves, provoked by adjectival or, even worse, by purely adverbial differences. While we wear ourselves thin in petty "harangues," in which personal vanities are displayed and egos are scratched and bruised, we weaken ourselves for the real battle: the struggle against our antagonists. (p. x)

Paulo Freire was a dear friend and loving mentor. His words about kinship ring true, as do his warnings about the petty jealousies that infect academics, especially the small-minded ones (and the academy is filled to the brim with them) whose opportunism is wrapped in charm, whose narcissistic and vain-glorious search for attention and personal gain knows no bounds, and who will stoop to any level to personalize their criticisms and engage in acrimonious intellectual assaults or to sell their herringbone souls for power or fame. Freire would have none of that; he was a humble man who always put the project of

human freedom ahead of his own personal gain. One of the first of his many acts of kindness toward me was helping to arrange an invitation for me to speak at a conference in Cuba in 1987. After that, we would periodically see each other when he came to visit the United States. Once I had the opportunity to visit with him and his wife, Ana Maria (or “Nita”), in their home during a visit to São Paulo. Over the past 15 years, I’ve written a great deal about Paulo and his work. This is not surprising for somebody who, for 25 years, has been involved in educational transformation both in the domain of grassroots activism and in the politically quarantined precincts of the academy. And though the political project that guides my work has been influenced no less by the teachings and life of Che Guevara, I have written only several articles about him. Although I never had the opportunity to meet him (I was 19 when he was executed), his influence on my understanding of social justice and human courage has been inestimable.

It is saddening to witness how the figure of Paulo Freire has been domesticated by liberals, progressives, and pseudo-Freireans who have tried incessantly to claim his legacy and teachings—much as they have done to the figure of John Dewey, whose radical politics have been ominously blunted by his more politically sanguine followers in the academy. This can be traced to the history of the educational Left, a welter of squabbling factions in endless pursuit of relevance and notoriety that has minted its reputation in its singular dislike of Marxism and in its pseudo-Leftist dismissal of classical Marxism’s supposed “economic reductionism.” Hence, it is necessary to repossess Freire from those contemporary revisionists who would reduce him to the grand seigneur of classroom dialogue, and would antiseptically excise the corporeal force of history from his pedagogical practices. It is much more difficult to appropriate the figure of Che Guevara, given that he was an active guerrillero until the moment he was murdered under the hawkish eye and panoptic gaze of the Central Intelligence Agency. At the same time, it is much more difficult to argue for the relevance of Che for educators today, given that he remained an active opponent of U.S. imperialism throughout his entire life and called for “Vietnams” to arise on every continent of the globe. But when you consider that Malcolm X now appears on a U.S. postage stamp, it might well be the case that one day Che will be included in the U.S. pantheon of world heroes. After all, the United States has a seductive way of incorporating anything that it can’t defeat and transforming that thing into a weaker version of itself, much like the process of diluting the strength and efficacy of a virus through the creation of a vaccine. If the United States could find a Che vaccine, it is more than likely that a stronger version of the Che virus would rise up somewhere in the world where capital was laying waste to human dignity and the survival of the poor and dispossessed, to wreak its revenge. As long as Marx and Engels’s (1848/1952) homage—“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” (p. 40)—still captures the imagination due to its increasing relevance in the world today, that much is assured.

When I first began sketching ideas on Che's pedagogical imperatives and practices, I proposed readmitting into the debates over educational reform the legacy of Che Guevara as a model of moral leadership, political vision, and revolutionary praxis. I soon recognized, without surprise, that Che had never been officially admitted to the court of serious educational debate, most likely for the same reason that provoked Herb Kohl (1999) to write,

I am still not convinced that . . . [Che] had a pedagogy that is meaningful for our society at this historical juncture. We are not at a revolutionary moment and we are the center of capitalist oppression with no strong social movement committed to changing the situation. In fact I cannot think of any school textbooks that treat Guevara with dignity and complexity. (p. 308)

Kohl argues that because Che is not sympathetically portrayed in school textbooks, and because strong social movements against oppression are woefully lacking in the United States, we therefore should not place too much faith in the relevance of Che's message for our current condition. I wish Kohl could have been on the marches in which I have been privileged to participate, from Los Angeles to Porto Alegre, where banners of Che are clutched by proud working hands and held high. Kohl's defeatist comments about Che appear more symptomatic of a growing cynicism among progressive educators than a reasoned and convincing case against Che.

Why should educators bother to engage with the legacies of Che Guevara and Paulo Freire, especially now that the "end of history" has been declared? Especially, too, when broadside condemnations of Marxism abound uncontested and its perceived political obsolescence has been declared? And why now, at a time when the marketplace has transformed itself into a *deus ex machina* ordained to rescue humankind from economic disaster, and when voguish theories imported from France and Germany can abundantly supply North American radicals with veritable plantations of no-risk, no-fault, knockoff rebellion? Why should North American educators take seriously two men who were propelled to international fame for their devotion to the downtrodden of South America and Africa? One reason is that capitalism's Faustian urge to dominate the globe has generated a global ecological crisis. Another obvious, but no less important, reason is that the economic comfort enjoyed by North Americans is directly linked to the poverty of our South American brothers and sisters. As Elvia Alvarado proclaims in *Don't Be Afraid Gringo* (1987), "It's hard to think of change taking place in Central America without there first being changes in the United States. As we say in Honduras, 'Sin el perro, no hay rabia'—without the dog, there wouldn't be rabies" (p. 144). Yet another reason is that Che and Freire have given us a pedagogical course of action (not to be confused with a blueprint) for making bold steps to redress locally and globally current asymmetrical relations of power and privilege.

Why Che? Why Freire? Why now? For those who have been following world events, or taking even a cursory look at the conditions in our cities and small

towns all across the United States, it is evident that democracy has become an aerosol term; that it has transmogrified into the negation of its own principles; that there is a countertendency growing within it; that a beast is growing in its belly, bloated by capitalist greed; that human beings have made themselves subservient to, and at the very least, accessories of capital accumulation and consumption and the instruments of labor that dominate them through a powerfully cathected social amnesia; and that the international division of labor is widening into a crisis of monopoly capitalism—what Lenin so aptly termed *imperialism*. Che and Freire have never been needed more than at this current historical moment. It is not necessary to canvass the present political landscape with the discerning gaze of the sociologist or the trained academic eye to see that oppression has not been vanquished by capitalist democracy but continues to emerge unabated in new forms by means of innovative and decentralized production facilities, newly centralized economic power brought about by new media technologies, capitalist warfare against unions and social services, state-sanctioned Latinophobia, and the disproportionate incarceration of Latinos/as and African Americans in a rapidly expanding prison industry. Recent events surrounding education professor José Solís Jordán—who taught educational foundations at DePaul University and the University of Puerto Rico, and who was framed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and found guilty of planting two bombs at a military recruitment center—serve as only one of many indications that the U.S. government will stop at nothing short of breaking all peaceful opposition to its imperialist practices in Puerto Rico and elsewhere (see McLaren & Jordán, 1999).

The United States continues to portray Cuba as a terrorist nation that is a threat to the civilized world when, in fact, it is the United States that employs its vast military might to achieve whatever ends it deems to be in its own strategic interest. Take the recent war in Kosovo, for example. The United States did not go to war in Kosovo solely or mainly for humanitarian reasons, although many U.S. citizens are convinced that their government did just that. Kosovo did have implications for U.S. national and strategic interest. The United States bombed Kosovo not only to create a stable geopolitical power structure in Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc client-states, but also to strengthen its sphere of influence over European global markets. After all, sustaining the abstract system of globalization—that is, the globalization of capital and the hegemony of the United States in this imperialist enterprise—is the overarching priority of U.S. foreign policy. Ellen Meiksins Wood (2000) quotes liberal critic (and rabid supporter of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's bombing in Kosovo) Thomas L. Friedman, who writes, "The hidden hand of the market will never work without the hidden fist—McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps" (p. 195). Woods quotes Friedman as saying that although Americans "were ready to pay

any price and bear any burden in the Cold War," they were unwilling to die for the "abstract globalization system"—which is why "house-to-house fighting is out; cruise missiles are in" (p. 195). She goes on to add that Friedman "could just easily have said 'that's why ground troops are out and high-tech bombing is in. We don't want to die ourselves for globalization, but we don't mind killing others'" (p. 195). What made this imperialist aggression especially difficult to diagnose by rank-and-file U.S. citizens was that it occurred under the guise of what Wood calls "human rights imperialism," in which "the particular interests of the US and its arbitrary actions have effectively displaced the common interests of humanity and the international instruments designed to represent them" (pp. 196-197). In this case, the means used to achieve the "particular interests of the US" included the use of depleted uranium, ecological catastrophe through the bombing of refineries and chemical plants (indirect use of chemical warfare) that will lead to genetic damage for future generations, the immediate killing and maiming of civilians by bombs, and the destruction of Yugoslavia's infrastructure (Wood, 2000).

We don't need to chart current corporate strategies with a moral compass crafted by seminarians to know that the globe is fast becoming raw material for corporate greed and quick profit margins, as the gap between rich and poor is growing so large that the 300 largest corporations in the world now account for 70% of foreign direct investment and 25% of world capital assets (Bagdikian, 1998). Never before have media technologies been so sophisticated that they could effortlessly accelerate assets from the public to the private sector and consolidate so swiftly and smoothly the power of corporations. Not since the end of World War II has the United States been in the position—in military terms, at least—of being the world's only superpower and unchallenged. The neoliberal ideology of the free market—mediated through the triad multilateral institutions of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization—is accelerating capital accumulation throughout all parts of the globe. Such an acceleration of capitalist accumulation is occurring in direct proportion to a lack of opposition among world leaders who, at this moment in time, are unbearably burdened by political inertia and ethical quietism. Uneven or unequal development of the world system is devastating the poor and disadvantaged throughout Latin America, Africa, Russia, and elsewhere around the globe, as the world becomes inescapably polarized into peripheral and central economies. Global capitalism is propelling a mass exodus of "guest workers" to the industrialized West, and fueling in its wake a war against the Other. The legacy of European colonialism is being played out with a vengeance, this time through a deepening of the disparities within the international division of labor brought about by the circuits and flows of finance and monopoly capital within a globally abstracted transnational network.

As Fidel Castro (2000) announced recently at the Group of 77 South Summit,

Globalization has been held tight by the patterns of neoliberalism; thus, it is not development that goes global but poverty; it is not respect for the national sovereignty of our states but the violation of that respect; it is not solidarity amongst our peoples but *saue qui peut* (every man for himself) in the unequal competition prevailing in the marketplace. . . . In the hands of the rich countries, world trade is already an instrument of domination, which under neoliberal globalization will become an increasingly useful element to perpetuate and sharpen inequalities as well as a theater for strong disputes among developed countries for control over the present and future markets. . . . The developed countries—with 15 percent of the world's population—presently concentrate 88 percent of Internet users. Just in the United States, there are more computers than in the rest of the world put together. These countries control 97 percent of the patents the world over and receive over 90 percent of the international licensing rights, while for many South countries, the ability to exercise the right to intellectual property is nonexistent. . . . The world economic order works for 20 percent of the population, but leaves out, demeans, and degrades the remaining 80 percent. (pp. 150, 154, 158-159)

The unseen grammar of capital's commodity logic has lashed the Prometheus of humanity to the bloodstained altar of the global marketplace, to the indefinite unfolding of ruling class ideology transmogrified into the social hieroglyph of money. Never before has capital penetrated the spaces of the lifeworld that were previously off-limits (previously restricted to wage labor but now commodifying subjectivity itself) and done so throughout the entire planet. It is not so much that capitalism relentlessly commodifies all forms of social relationships worldwide until there is nothing left outside (Watkins, 1998), as much as the fact that capitalism discards from its pathways anything that is not of value (Dirlik, 1994). Dirlik (1994) notes that four fifths of the global population is treated as fetid wastage to be removed out of the pathways of global capital flow. Neoliberal policies have become infamous for removing people from capital pathways, and then fixing the blame on those removed (Watkins, 1998). Never before has the Malthusian spirit risen up with such violence in the rampant neoliberalism that condemns the worker to remain forever uninvited to capital's mighty feast. As the poor grow in numbers, as the homeless flood the streets of our cities, they are seen more and more as disrupting the natural order of capitalism. And facing this unraveling historical matrix we have, in the Western academy, postmodern theory's avant-garde celebration of cultural hybridity; discursive 'pointillism' leading to theoretical fragmentation; the incommensurability of discourses; pastiche, indeterminacy, and contingency; the ironic troping of its commodity status; its textual burlesque; and its celebration of cultural detritus such as kitsch, pop iconography, and samizdat publications as the apogee of cultural critique. Though not all postmodern theory is to be rejected, there is a virile species of it that remains loyal to capital's promotional culture where parody can be paraded as dissent and cultural parasitism masqueraded as subversion, and where one can avoid putting political commitment to the test. The academy is a place where Marxism is dismissed as innocent of complexity and where Marxist educators are

increasingly outflanked by fashionable, motley-minded apostates in svelte black suede jackets, black chinos, and black 1950s eyeglass frames with yellow-tint lenses, for whom the metropole has become a riotous mixture of postmodern mestiza narratives and where hubris shadows those who remain even remotely loyal to causal thinking. For these voguish hellions of the seminar room, postmodernism is the toxic intensity of bohemian nights, where the proscribed, the immiserated, and the wretched of the earth simply get in the way of their fun. Poverty, for them, is at the very least a purgative for an indulgent society, and at worst a necessary evil—if you want the material trappings of the American Dream, that is. Where Freire was implacably prosocialist, critical pedagogy—his stepchild—has become (at least in classrooms throughout the United States) little more than liberalism refurbished with some lexical help from Freire (as in words like *praxis* and *dialogue*), and such progressive nomenclature often is used to camouflage existing capitalist social relations under a plethora of irenic proclamations and pluralist classroom strategies. Real socialist alternatives are nowhere to be found, and if they are, few critical educators have *las tripas* to make them resoundingly heard in the classrooms of the nation.

I don't want to suggest that there are no important debates that postmodernism has ushered in—especially by some post-Marxists who have begun to refigure the topic of labor. Postmodern Marxists view as productivist and laborist the many articulations of orthodox Marxism; revolution becomes the consummation of the logic of the desiring machine where social actors “are reborn as ‘bodies without organs’ and remade as cyborgs” (Dinerstein & Neary, 1999, p. 1). For orthodox Marxists, postmodern Marxism dethrones the primacy of revolutionary praxis and discards the concrete quality of labor in favor of its more abstract potentialities, where human emancipation becomes an avoidance of reality (Dinerstein & Neary, 1999). Ultimately, one has to approach the relationship between postmodernism and Marxism dialectically. Dialectics is about mediation, not juxtaposition. The issue is not simply either Marxism or postmodernism. In some instances, postmodern theories may constitute less persiflage and may be more productive for understanding aspects of social life than current Marxist theories admit. In this article, my concern is with arguing against some versions of postmodern theory and their lack of attention to global capitalist social relations and attendant human suffering. However, I am even more concerned with what Marxist theory does best: analyze and challenge the very viability of capitalism in human society.

We live in unhappy times, in the midst of a global hegemony based on fraud, when our feelings of unhappiness do not appear to be connected to the deprivations of capitalist exploitation occurring within the external world. Rather, our feelings are attached to the shimmering surface effects of signs and simulations and the dull radiance that illuminates the spectacles of the everyday. Our external and internal worlds seem to have been split apart. Dinerstein and

Neary (1999) link this disconnection to the process of disutopia, an abstract crisis of theory. Their comments are worth quoting at length:

Disutopia is the most significant project of our time. It is not just the temporary absence of Utopia, but the political celebration of the end of social dreams. Disutopia should not be confused with apathy, since, although it appears in the form of indifference, the postmodern condition entails an active process involving simultaneously the struggle to control contradiction and diversity, and the acclamation of diversity; the repression of the struggles against Disutopia and the celebration of individual self-determination. The result of this is social Schizophrenia. In so far as diversity, struggle and contradiction cannot be eliminated by political or philosophical voluntarism, Disutopia has to be imposed. Its advocates spend a huge amount of time in de-construction, repentance, denial, forgetfulness. Neurotic Realism in Arts, the Third Way in Politics coupled with its academic justifications, the scientific classification of the horrors of our time, as well as the difficulties for personal relations to become meaningful are some examples that illustrate how the project of Disutopia works. The result of all this together is Mediocrity. (p. 3)

To challenge the current project of Disutopia, it is important that we do not lose sight of the particular in relation to the totality of determinate social relations. It is important that we are not enticed by the mistaken notion that the intensified competition made possible by the internationalization of capital has rendered the nation state obsolete. The nation state has been partially restructured, but not destroyed. Callinicos (1994) writes that

although the pronounced tendency towards the global integration of capital over the past generation has severely reduced the ability of states to control economic activities within their borders, private capitals continue to rely on the nation state to which they are most closely attached to protect them against the competition of other capitals, the effects of economic crisis, and the resistance of those they exploit. (p. 54)

John Rees concurs with Callinicos's view, arguing that although the state may have retreated from a direct role in production, it still serves to police the working class and to provide them with welfare (although even this form of relief is under attack). The state also serves to regulate competing capitals, especially in the realm of conflicts between states and trading blocs (Rees, 1994, p. 104). If the nation state still coordinates exploitation, then it can still serve as a site of anticapitalist and anti-imperialist struggle. Callinicos notes that capitalist development not only gives rise to imperialism but also to subimperialist conquest, such as that which we have seen between Greece and Turkey, India and Pakistan, and Iran and Iraq. As the most powerful imperialist nation in the world, the United States serves as the patron of numerous subimperialist powers. Although subimperialist countries most often serve as the regional Dobermans for their superpower masters, they may also defy the superpowers in certain instances (such as Iraq's defiance of its superpower sponsor, the United

States, in its invasion of Kuwait). The collapse of the Soviet Union has left the United States unmatched in its ability to flex its politico-military muscles, and to project its power on a global level (Callinicos, 1994). Few individuals can show us the expanse of the concrete social forces and relations that both entrap and enthrall us, as well as the consequences of contemporary interimperialist rivalry, as powerfully as Che Guevara and Paulo Freire can. Few can illustrate as effectively through their lives and their teachings how labor and the laboring class must serve as the agent of the transformation of capitalist social relations, and why the subjectivity of the working class must become the starting point for the development of the new man/woman of revolutionary social struggle. And what better and more effective way can critical agency be developed than through the educational efforts of Che and Freire? And although we continue to advocate the defeat of imperialism through the overthrow of capitalism, it is important to struggle against those bourgeois regimes that may, in fact, be taking the anti-imperialist side. As Callinicos (1994) notes, following Lenin, the real anti-imperialist force is that of the socialist proletariat. Heightening the revolutionary capabilities of the social proletariat should, in any case, be the prime objective of any revolutionary pedagogy.

In marked contrast to the phlegmatic response to the globalization of capital by the educational Left are the Marxist philippics against free trade and market liberalization. A major task of critical educators is to begin to tease out ways in which the pedagogy of these two historical figures can be used as the wellspring for creating the type of critical agency necessary to contest and transform current global relations of exploitation and oppression. Of course, many books have already been written about critical pedagogy, revolutionary pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, and the contributions that Freire has made toward their development. To this end, my own project in critical pedagogy has been to rescue critical pedagogical work from the kind of bourgeois humanism that has frequently made it functionally advantageous to existing social relations, the employer class, the high-echelon personnel of the educational establishment, and the international division of labor. And to rescue it from bourgeois Leftists who consider those of us engaged in anticapitalist struggle to be infantile.

Some critics on the Left argue that it is possible to ameliorate the debilitating impact of globalization by forcing capital to become democratically accountable. They have suggested that although there are problems with a competitive market option, we may wish instead to choose a form of market socialism. Before we can approach this question, we need to understand that capital is not simply a thing; rather, it is a social relation—a specific social relation of labor that is indifferent to human needs and aspirations (Rikowski, 2000). As the congealment of abstract, undifferentiated labor, capitalism reduces all concrete labor to its opposite (Hudis, 2000a, 2000b). Labor is the source of all value, only insofar as we acknowledge that value itself is abstract labor. Only that which is the product of abstract labor has value in capitalism. As Hudis (2000a, 2000b) notes, capital is a social relation of abstract labor that

cannot and must not be reduced to its “thing-ness” but should be conceived as a value relation. Capital acquires value by obtaining ever more surplus value, or unpaid hours of labor, from the worker who produces it. Capital feeds on devouring as many unpaid hours of abstract labor produced by the worker that it can. In this sense, Marx (1993) argues that

The aim of capital is not served merely by obtaining more “wealth” . . . but because it wants more *value*, to command more objectified labor. But indeed . . . it can command the latter only if wages fall; i.e. if more living work days are exchanged for the same capital with objectified labor, and hence a greater value is created. (p. 353)

Because the purpose of capital is to reproduce itself, any effort to control capital without fundamentally transforming its basis of value production will only serve to strengthen capital. Until value and surplus value are both targeted for elimination by social reformers, capital will continue relentlessly to self-expand. Although many socialists have tried over the years to control capital by ameliorating its more destructive capacities through the establishment of state planning or market socialism, these efforts have been limited because they allow value production to persist. Ken Cole (1998) provides a cogent explanation as to why market socialism is untenable as an option. Market socialism won't work because creating social relations on the basis of exchange value is flawed—in fact, it's a fundamental contradiction in terms. Value can't be evaluated in quantitative terms only. This is because value is a social relation—it is both qualitative and quantitative. What is valued is not just labor time but labor power (the abstract value of the concrete labor time that is worked). This, of course, will vary according to the social demand and social supply of the commodity that is produced, as well as the laborer's control of the means of production. With a model of development founded on commodity exchange, there will be qualitative changes in the value of the quantitative measure of labor time worked by wage labor, a value that varies with the process and practice of exploitation. Labor time is devalued—the same quantitative amount of labor time is qualitatively worth less as exploitation increases and intensifies. Exploitation is a consequence of power, of the control of the means of production. Labor power, for Marx, thus becomes a form of variable capital, whereas the means of production is a constant value (i.e., capital). Because value is a social relation, qualitative changes in the social relation of production—that is, the conflictual relation between capital and labor—bear directly on the quantitative expression of value as exchange, that is, as price. We notice that within current global capitalist arrangements, the same concrete labor time actually worked is worth substantially less than it was decades ago. This is because the relationship between capital and labor—expressed in the abstract valuation of concrete labor time—reflected in the exchange value of labor power on a world scale has declined.

Cole (1998) emphasizes that the objective of a large-scale investment program must be premised on a strategy independent of imperialism; a strategy, in other words, of sustainable development and “widely distributed benefits for the people as a whole” (p. 149). This implies decentralization and community participation, as well as creative, sustainable technologies, respect for a diversity of ecosystems and societies, and an emphasis on social justice. As Cole warns, when commodity exchange underwrites the economy, power becomes concentrated in rogue international agencies, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, that worship at the altar of accumulation. Here, consumer choice and the universal rule of property replace the imperative of citizen’s power and social justice. And again, market socialism is not an option, especially, as Cole emphasizes, when nation states are competing more ferociously than ever to attract foreign capital, and when the powers of the state to manage the economy are rapidly diminishing as the internationalization of capital grows stronger. An approach to economic development that supports the revolutionary principles of Freire and Che must work to defund and decommission capital, putting the enterprises of the global robber barons into receivership with the larger purpose of decommodifying and destratifying everyday life.

Reclaiming Critical Pedagogy

The roles and functions of critical pedagogy have changed over time in response to shifting societal configurations and needs and as a result of the conflictual processes of social transformation. What began as a tactical ploy—bringing critical pedagogy into mainstream teacher education programs—has become a defining priority, establishing an education policy and philosophy of classroom practice whose ideological spectrum runs from center-Left to Left liberal. One of the founding assumptions of critical pedagogy is that human beings, acting on the external world and transforming it, can, at the same time, change their own nature. However, many—if not most—approaches to critical pedagogy are today characterized by what Hegel referred to as bad infinity, because they postulate an endless series of causes and effects within the social order (not in a linear fashion, but dialectically), critically mediating the parts (schooling practices) and the whole (capitalist relations within the wider social totality). The contemporary constitution of critical pedagogy is governed by a series of contradictions. Lacking is a clear context and frame of reference that can capture these contradictions within global processes that are restructuring social, economic, and political life in profound ways at this present historical juncture. Against this background, it is important to fashion a historical materialist interpretation of critical pedagogy, and to formulate concrete proposals for its evolution and advancement as a crucial form of revolutionary praxis. In the dislocation between an educational system

that cries out for a renewed political economy of critical pedagogy and the current depoliticization of critical pedagogy, a revolutionary and reinvigorated model of critical pedagogy can be won. A recognition of such a disjunction affords a unique way of questioning the thematics of capitalist pedagogy and may provide a critical flashpoint for a reconsideration of important new possibilities for critical pedagogy.

Given the current times we live in, critical pedagogy needs to reflexively engage its own premises, to challenge its own decidability, and to be self-conscious of its own constructed character. Surely critical pedagogy must not only continue to be critical of its own status as a commodity; it must also remain critical of its own presumed role as the metatruth of educational criticism. The language of critical pedagogy, after all, is also a social system that inscribes subjects. In this regard, critical pedagogy will always be the Other to and at odds with itself.

It's important to recognize that now is the time to brush hard against the grain of teaching until the full range of revolutionary pedagogical options are made available in the public schools of the nation, realizing that none of these options is panacean and that all of them will require sustained theoretical and political engagement. Part of this task is exegetical: to recognize and research the distinctions among teaching, pedagogy, critical pedagogy, and revolutionary pedagogy. Part of the task is ethical: to make liberation and the abolition of human suffering the goal of the educative enterprise itself. Part of the task is political: to create a democratic socialist society in which democracy will be called on daily to live up to its promise.

Teaching is a process of organizing and integrating knowledge for the purpose of communicating this knowledge or awareness to students through an exchange of understanding in prespecified contexts and teacher/learner environments. *Pedagogy* is distinct from teaching in that it situates the teacher/learner encounter in a wider context of historical and sociopolitical forces, in which the act of knowing recognizes and takes into account the differentiated politics of reception surrounding the object of knowledge by the students. *Critical pedagogy* constitutes a dialectical and dialogical process that instantiates a reciprocal exchange between teachers and students—an exchange that engages in the task of reframing, refunctioning, and reposing the question of understanding itself, bringing into dialectical relief the structural and relational dimensions of knowledge and its hydra-headed power/knowledge dimensions. *Revolutionary pedagogy* goes further still. It puts power/knowledge relations on a collision course with their own internal contradictions; such a powerful and often unbearable collision gives birth not to an epistemological resolution at a higher level, but rather to a provisional glimpse of a new society freed from the bondage of the past, a vision in which the past reverberates in the present, standing at once outside and beside the world in a place of insight where the subject recognizes that he or she is in a world and subject to it, yet moving through it with the power to name it extopically so that hidden meanings can

be revealed in the accidental contingencies of the everyday. Revolutionary pedagogy creates a narrative space set against the naturalized flow of the everyday, against the daily poetics of agency, encounter, and conflict, in which subjectivity is constantly dissolved and reconstructed—that is, in which subjectivity turns back on itself, giving rise to an affirmation of the world through naming it and to an opposition to the world through unmasking and undoing the practices of concealment that are latent in the process of naming itself.

Che and Freire both recognized that categorizing the world is always a violent act in that it inevitably naturalizes dangerous hierarchies. The revolutionary educator always wounds the ordinary so that it can be seen not as something that is permanently sealed, but as a space of wild fluids, of shifting boundaries. The revolutionary educator engages the world reflexively, dedicated to the praxis of transforming knowledge through epistemological critique. Epistemological critique involves more than unpacking representations, but also exploring the how and why of their historical production. Revolutionary educators do not merely track the hemorrhaging of signifiers into other signifiers but also explore how these signifiers are concealed within larger organizational formations, institutional arrangements, and concrete and contradictory social relations. For revolutionary educators, knowledge exceeds its semiotic end products; it travels intertextually within demarcated systems of intelligibility. Critical knowledge is understood as persistently open, disclosive, incomplete, and open-ended. In this way it remains cautious in the presence of reified social relations and epistemological distortions that occlude the social ontology of knowledge and its processual journey from fact to value. In other words, critical epistemological practice examines not only the content of knowledge, but also its method of production. It seeks to understand how ideological constructions are encoded and administered, how metonymic and synecdochical gestures are performed so as to obscure relations of domination and oppression, how the interpretive and interpellative frameworks by which we organize our sentiments construct ruling stereotypes, and how the governing categories of our everyday discourse render invisible and obscure real social relations of exploitation (see Bannerji, 1995).

The struggle from the standpoint of revolutionary pedagogy is to construct sites—provisional sites—in which new structured mobilities and tendential lines of forces can be made to suture identity to the larger problematic of social justice. In other words, students and cultural workers need to attach themselves to modalities of belonging fashioned out of new economies of subjectivity and difference. This requires breaking the imaginary power of commodified identities within capitalism, as well as the forces and relations that produce and are products of capitalism.

In their best moments, the pedagogies of Freire and Che exemplify the characteristics of revolutionary pedagogy. Although both pedagogical approaches place a profound emphasis on critical literacy and are underwritten by an explicit political project, it is not surprising to find that Freire's project is more

systematic, more coherent, more dialogical, and more self-reflexive than that of Che. Che's pedagogy was more intuitive, but what made Che so remarkable was that this intuition was profoundly counterintuitive. Yet the political project that unites both Che and Freire speaks to mutual concerns (see McLaren & Jordán, 1999). It should be emphasized, too, that Che's pedagogy is most assuredly dialectical in nature, and grounded in the lived experiences of the oppressed becoming transformed into the "new man" through acquiring a revolutionary consciousness while at the same time living the life (what we might colloquially refer to as "walking the walk") of the revolutionary. This meant for Che, as it did for Freire, that education needs to take on an extra-ivory tower, public-sphere role in contemporary revolutionary movements and in politics in general. However, it was not imperative for Che that everyone become a guerrillero or guerrillera. But it was manifestly important that everyone develop a revolutionary consciousness and engage in actions that directly contribute to the furthering of the revolution.

For Che, the "new man" is not merely a zombified agent who has been whisked to critical consciousness by the winds of revolutionary indoctrination and the repeated declamations of ideologues from Politburo to pulpit. The point d'appui of critical pedagogy for both of these figures was the development of a dialectical grasp of history and of the contradictions of human labor under capitalism; for those of us working in education, this means recognizing and transforming those contradictions that create asymmetries of power in the manufacturing of relations of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Clearly, these revolutionaries did not equate political liberation with the exposure of dominative social practices as a *trompe l'oeil*, nor did they consider it sufficient to bewail the trials and tribulations of the dispossessed; they were both unwaveringly committed to transforming those social practices that lay at the root of human exploitation and misery.

Che's project of revolutionary life avoided the repressive desublimation of the totalitarian leader who enjoins his followers to transgress everyday moral rules in the name of some higher good; he did not insist that fellow fighters enjoy what they do. The rules that governed guerrilla life produced a psychic economy of privation and sacrifice that was only survivable when it became effectively invested in a profound desire to overcome the systematic abuses of tyranny and exploitation. To be a guerrilla fighter was not to engage in a stylized revolt against the cohesive, seamless, and sanitized bourgeois self. Nor was it an effort to push subversion into the ethereal realm of the sublime. Rather, to be a guerrilla fighter was, for Che, to stalk state-sponsored terror and defeat it at every turn. It was to create the initial momentum for the popular revolution that would follow in its wake.

In the theater of battle, Che did not have time to create the conditions for peasants to achieve conscientization before he tried to conscript them into his guerrilla project. Nevertheless, he never threatened to use force against—or to cajole or insult—those who were unable to or refused to join him. And to his

credit, he never tried to entice them with monetary rewards. Rather, he appealed to their sense of justice, and in entering into discussions with them enjoined them to follow his group of fighters for the good of the collectivity of the toilers of the world.

In addressing the General Assembly of the United Nations, Che proclaimed,

The United States intervenes in Latin America invoking the defense of free institutions. The time will come when this assembly will acquire greater maturity and demand of the United States government guarantees for the lives of the Blacks and Latin Americans who live in that country, most of them U.S. citizens by origin or adoption. Those who kill their own children and discriminate daily against them because of the color of their skin; those who let the murderers of Blacks remain free, protecting them, and furthermore punishing the Black population because they demand their legitimate rights as free men—how can those who do this consider themselves guardians of freedom? (cited in Castro & Guevara, 1992, p. 139)

Che was an internationalist warrior. That, and the *welanschauung* that gave his politics revolutionary ballast, is something that postmodernists would likely decry in an unearned tone of superiority as a totalizing position: universalizing and sanctifying what in essence is a particular position. In his reply to criticisms of the speech that he made in the United Nations General Assembly in 1964 (Adlai Stevenson was among his fiercest critics), he shared the following: “I am a patriot of Latin America and of all Latin American countries. Wherever necessary I would be ready to lay down my life for the liberation of any Latin American country, without asking anything from anyone, without demanding anything, without exploiting anyone” (cited in Castro & Guevara, 1992, p. 147). Che followed these words with a quotation by José Martí, noted poet and founder of the Cuban Revolutionary Party in 1892: “Every true man must feel on his own cheek every blow struck against the cheek of another” (cited in Castro & Guevara, 1992, p. 147). When Bolivian Lieutenant Colonel Selich was interrogating Che in the mud-walled schoolhouse in La Higuera shortly before Che was executed, he was reported to have asked, “Are you Cuban or Argentine?” Che is said to have answered, “I am Cuban, Argentine, Bolivian, Peruvian, Ecuadorian, etc. . . . You understand?” (cited in Anderson, 1997, p. 734). Post-Marxist educators who denounce in unequivocal terms the modernist sins of reductionism, functionalism, essentialism, and universalism typically find in the rational assertions of Che or classical Marxists evidence of unpardonable offenses against the postmodern theory of discourse. The adjudications of the postmodernists caught up in the cosmopolitan reveries of epistemic suspicion and its ineluctable hermeneutical delights have resulted in searing attacks on Marxists for their causal thinking (see McLennan, 1996). However, for many contemporary Marxists, it is understood that a certain amount of reductionism is necessary in any scientific explanation. Gregor

McLennan (1996) argues for a form of what he calls “weak reductionism” that postulates a broad, causal sense of connection between economic structures and capitalist class interests that does not substantively devalue the level of explained phenomena. Postmodernists often erroneously attack Marxists for believing that they possess a faultless, pristine, and metaphysical approach to the truth that hovers in some metaphysical ether outside the process of history, or else that the truth can only be understood from the perspective of the concrete immediacy of working-class consciousness. First of all, there is no homogeneous working class. Second, there are always perspectives that outbid those associated with the working class and the capitalist class. It is important always to generalize beyond immediate experience, because truth is not wholly internal to the language of experience. Any assessment of the truth must consider the fact that all truth claims are mediated by structural constraints, the summation of historical experience, the codification of meaning-systems, and are trapped within practices of commodity fetishism. To be recounted, any experience must enter into the domain of theory, because no experience is transparently self-evident. All shared experiences are, to a certain extent, generalized or codified within some community of discourse. No experience can majestically vacate its existence from the court of social mediation, not even revolutionary experience. This is a position that many astute Marxists hold, despite the chillingly irreverent assertion by postmodernists that they are to be condemned for essentializing working-class experience. Yet at the same time, many Marxists would agree that the class position of the proletariat can usefully serve as a unique vantage point from which the working class can contribute to a generalized theory of society. Rees (1998) notes that

it is not that the validity of marxism *only* flows from the immediate practice of the working class. It is a theoretical generalization based on the historical experience of the working class, and therefore a theory of society as a whole rather than merely the history of the oppressed. Consequently, its validity must be proven by its superior explanatory power—more internally coherent, more widely applicable, capable of greater empirical verification—in comparison with its competitors. (p. 237)

What is important to recognize is that the ultimate proving ground or final arbiter of a theory about society is its power to affect the world through praxis, that is, through theoretically informed struggle by the working class against the capitalist system. This is not the same as arguing that the truth about society can be reduced to the immediate consciousness of the working class. This is not to argue that Marxist theory invalidates any logic other than its own or that it has the capacity to predetermine the way it is “taken up” by workers engaged in revolutionary struggle. But because the working class has the strongest potential to see the truth about society as a class (both in and for itself), they offer a powerful and indispensable vantage point to test the validity of revolutionary praxis (Rees, 1998). Of course, such a pronouncement would undoubtedly

seem chronically anachronistic and metatheoretically hidebound to the fashionable apostates of postmodernism and the voguish pundits of post-Marxism (the two groups often coquette with each other in their rubbishing of modernist sociology) who signally claim that social class is an outmoded—not to mention unfashionable—category. Like the entrails of a corpse, it should be left alone to rot. Of course, classical Marxist theory does not hold the sociological patent on explanatory adequacy. The social context in which social agents struggle has shifted considerably since Marx's day, and new theories are needed to thicken the descriptive register of sociological analysis and provide a necessary epistemological critique that can help to map out contemporary terrains of social struggle and deal with new, ambivalent domains and subdomains of the social. In spite of this, the backdrop assumptions of Marxism still hold and the contributions of historical materialism repay close examination, not because of their archival sanctity, but because they are still unembarrassingly crucial for pushing forward the boundaries of emancipatory struggle in the current age of new imperialisms throughout the globe. Hence the importance of the work of Che and Freire in current pedagogical theorizing. Che and Freire serve as rear-guard activists against contemporary trends within postmodern theory that not only assert the autonomy of theory from its embeddedness in the productive processes of capitalism, but also maintain the separation of theory from the concrete materiality of the world. Their appreciation of the revolutionary potential of the working class to dethrone the reigning notion that the collective subject of history is dead and to recenter the educational left in challenging the dialectic of capitalist development in all of its capillary detail and tentacular reach cannot be overestimated.

Freire's pedagogy was fertilized more in the domain of critical dialogism than was Che's, and his vision of the new society was decidedly more open-ended. The revolutionary character of Freire's approach is lucidly reflected in Bertell Ollman's (1998) recent description of what constitutes a dialectical understanding of everyday life. Because he believes that the current stage of capitalism is characterized by far greater complexity and much faster change and interaction than at any time in human history, Ollman argues that a dialectical understanding of social life is "more indispensable now than ever before" (p. 342). Ollman articulates a dialectical method that he breaks down into six successive moments. The ontological moment has to do with the infinite number of mutually dependent processes that make up the totality or structured whole of social life. The epistemological moment deals with how to organize thinking to understand such a world, abstracting the main patterns of change and interaction. The moment of inquiry appropriates the patterns of these internal relationships to further the project of investigation. The moment of intellectual reconstruction or self-clarification puts together the results of such an investigation for oneself. The moment of exposition entails describing to a particular audience the dialectical grasp of the facts by taking into account how others think. Finally, the moment of praxis uses the clarification of the facts of

social life to act consciously in and on the world, changing it while simultaneously deepening one's understanding of it. These dialectical acts, which are traversed repeatedly over time, bear a striking similarity to the pedagogy of Paulo Freire. Adumbrating Freire's radical theory of knowledge, powered by a process of dialectical thinking, Allman, Mayo, Cavanagh, Heng, and Haddad (1998) write that

Freire's dialectical thinking, all dialectical thinking for that matter, treats history as a process. This is a key pre-condition that enabled Freire to convey a radical theory of what it means to be a human being (a radical ontology) and a radical theory of knowledge (a radical epistemology). Whether they recognize it or not, most people have ontological and epistemological theories or at least assumptions. Freire's ontological theory is radical because it critiques what it has meant thus far to be a human being and also offers the philosophy of what we could become. Therefore it is not only a theory of being but also a theory of becoming. His theory of knowledge is equally radical/dialectical. Accordingly, no person is an "empty vessel" or devoid of knowledge. Many people have valuable experiential knowledge; all of us have opinions and beliefs; others have greater or lesser degrees of extant—i.e. already existing—knowledge and may even hold qualifications that signify their "possession" of that knowledge. However, in Freirean education the affirmation or acquisition of these types of knowledge is not the end objective of learning but rather the beginning of the dialogical/problem-solving approach to learning. (p. 11)

The concept of dialectics is, of course, an abstraction intended to help explain the messy and sinewy web of concrete social life and to offer a way of overcoming its contradictions. Admittedly, however, it is difficult to overcome the contradictions of lived experience, even for somebody as politically erudite and sensitive as Freire. Schugurensky (1998) remarks that

Freire's analysis is based on Hegelian dialectics, in which unity is understood as a constant tension of theses, antitheses and syntheses, and change is the resolution of the conflict between two opposites. Theoretically, a dialectical approach overcomes dualism and false dichotomies, but to what extent Freire was able to accomplish this is still open to debate. Similarly, Freire's tendency to use bipolar strategies has led some disciples to advocate a monolithic rejection of banking education, colonialism, capitalist development and so forth. The complexity of the real world makes such a position difficult to sustain, as it was even for Freire himself. (pp. 24-25)

Freirean pedagogy is a story about the struggle for critical consciousness read against the powerful dialectical contradictions of capitalism that exist between productive labor and capital and between production and exchange and their historical linkage and development. Although to a large extent the guiding narratives of critical pedagogy concern the politics of interpreting revolutionary theory, they also constitute an immensely personal story of the journey of teachers toward critical consciousness. Regardless of the personal, epistemological, ontological, and moral paths that we choose to take as educa-

tors, at some point we have to come face-to-face with the naked reality of capitalist social relations in local and global contexts. We cannot ignore these relations, and if we are to engage in a revolutionary educational praxis, we need to do more than rail against the suffering and tribulations of the oppressed and instead seek ways of transforming them.

One of the most important contributions of Che and Freire was the emphasis that they placed on praxis. For both Che and Freire, the dialectic must be disencumbered by metaphysics and grounded in the concrete materiality of human struggle. In the process of becoming fully human, everyday life must be informed by a theory and practice relationship that truly alters ideas and experience within a larger revolutionary dialectic. Paraphrasing Marx, this dialectic operates from each according to his or her abilities, to each according to his or her needs, within a context in which the free development of each is the precondition for the free development of all. Raya Dunayevskaya (1982) captures this relationship:

Without a philosophy of revolution activism spends itself in mere anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism, without ever revealing what it is for. We have been made to see anew that, just as the movement from practice disclosed a break in the Absolute Idea that required both a new relationship of practice to theory, and a new unity of practice and theory, so that new unity is but a beginning: Absolute Idea as New Beginning. . . . Absolute negativity manifests its pivotal role in the Idea precisely because it is both totality (summation) and new beginning, which each generation must first work out for itself. . . . Only live human beings can recreate the revolutionary dialectic forever anew. And these live human beings must do so in theory as well as in practice. It is not a question only of meeting the challenge from practice, but of being able to meet the challenge from the self-development of the Idea, and of deepening theory to the point where it reaches Marx's concept of the philosophy of "revolution in permanence." (pp. 194-195)

As prisoners of global money lenders, we confront a seemingly intractable deprecation of the lifeworld through the loss of life-means and growing economic insecurity (McMurtry, 1999). Because of the insuperable greed of the capitalist overworlders, money is less available in the economy to serve the basic needs of people. Over 2 billion workers throughout the world remain chronically unemployed, whereas the unregulated movement of money capital across boundaries through private money cycles of investment and nonproductive speculative seizures of social incomes has created a frenzied money-to-more-money movement that has invaded everything (including the expanding educational business arena), defunding social justice, downsizing hope for a better future, deregulating responsibility, and opportunistically rescinding accountability (McMurtry, 1999). The world of Che and Freire offers apertures through which we can perceive possible lines of resistance to these growing trends.

Insofar as Che's life constituted a visible, palpable, and undeniable supersession of the private want-satisfaction that is the organizing principle of

exchange under capitalism, and conveyed instead a new way of living that animated unyielding service to the collective needs of the oppressed and disclaimed self-gratification as a vested bourgeois trait, he became functionally disabling in the transformation of human beings into organs of the capitalist marketplace. Freire waged a similar war against the embourgeoisement of the human spirit in the battlefields of literacy education, which made him—famously—a liability in the world of educational statecraft. That Che's message has survived the onslaught of antirepresentationalism, antifoundationalism, and postempiricism is not so much a testament to its metahistorical character or the dramatic historiographic dimensions of its performativity (his message was bodied forth in his life and death), but to its world-historical significance in the face of the contemporary crisis of global capitalism and the tumult and history of bloody struggles that have followed in its wake. Che's life was itself a symptomatic reading of the fate of the world. Che revealed to oppressed groups throughout the globe that there can occur a sea-shift of political transformation on the part of a small but resolute band of fighters. The oppressors in all of their seeming invincibility could be defeated by a much smaller group of dedicated guerrillas. But unless revolutionary struggle is conducted on a permanent basis, with the full backing of the oppressed, defeat is possible, even likely. It was a risk Che was willing to take. In his own way, Freire took a similar risk in the mine-sown fields of pedagogical practice where education functioned—and still does—on the part of the state as a vehicle for social control, for ethnic assimilation and the reproduction of privileging norms, for the defense of intergenerational class-based continuity, and for noninterference with social relations that are functionally advantageous to the ruling class and the dominant knowledge industry.

Freire managed to outlive Che by more than 30 years, and the world has been a greater place because of what he was able to accomplish in his long and arduous journey on the road to liberation. Few individuals have been as successful in moving the human spirit forward as these two men. They have taught us that history cannot erase revolutionary struggle based on the heroic aspirations of the uncommon lives of the "common" people. They have also revealed to us that the wounds of history cannot be healed without revolutionary love and a warrior's spirit tempered to do battle in the streets, in the boardrooms, in the classrooms, and in the factories of the capitalist present—and also in the caverns of the human heart.

Why Che? Why Freire? Why now? Why indeed.

Young people searching for "a new way of humanity" have the examples of Freire and Che to ponder, to inspire, and to emulate. For U.S. youth faced with an eviscerated public sphere, an absence of communal forms and relations, and the construction of an empty self cobbled out of the scraps and debris of a consumer-based economy, Che and Freire's example of collective solidarity offers a striking alternative.

At the moment of our birth we receive a ticket to our Death. No reservations are necessary, and our destination is assured. What remains open to fortune is what we choose to do along the way. Che and Freire both understood that we can rail against our fate, but we cannot injure eternity. They chose not to mourn destiny, but to celebrate the journey of life. To celebrate life always demands sacrificing our ontological security because, as Che and Freire both knew, it is impossible to celebrate life under conditions that do not obtain for all, that do not allow all others to enjoy the fruits of their struggle and labor. As long as others suffer, celebration is empty. But when collective struggle triumphs, that is—and continues to be—a cause for joy. Few figures as vivid as Che Guevara and Paulo Freire have crossed the stage of human history. It surely is tragic that their generation did not awaken at their call, but more tragic still is the possibility that future generations will choose not to heed their message or follow their bold example. We will never see the likes of them again.

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