Greetings. It is a pleasure to speak again at the Midwest Radical Scholars and Activist Conference. The eight years of this conference process has been a task of building an intellectual bridge into the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, and I would like to salute people like Carl Davidson, David Williams, Rado Mijanovich and many others for keeping us meeting and on task.

The year since we last met has been one in which systemic symptoms of crisis have erupted. One of the major events was the UPS strike, the first nationwide strike by the new class of marginal workers, in this case part time workers. Another major event was the over throw of the
criminal regime of Mobutu in Zaire, by the Democratic
forces led by Kabila. This marked the emergence of a new
independent coalition of militant leaders representing new
political options for Africa as she enters the 21st century.

These two events are the background for my remarks.

I would like to address three related topics:

a. The relationship between technological revolution
   and class struggle;

b. The class struggle in Africa in the era of
   globalization;

c. The challenge this represents for revolutionaries
   in the USA

My first point can be stated clearly in a simple
syllogism:
a. the capitalist revolution of information technology is producing a permanent qualitative downsizing of the global workforce;

b. this economically marginalized and socially excluded new proletarian class must fight global capital to survive

c. therefore the capitalist technological revolution is producing the condition for a new era of class struggle.

This simple syllogism might seem obvious and tautological, but it reveals a fundamental fact about this emerging historical period, the rise and birth of a new class.

The debate over this new class emerged as chronic unemployment became known as structural unemployment leading eventually to the debate over the "underclass."
Generally, a great deal of the descriptive statistics one finds in works by William Wilson among others was useful and correct. He made a contribution as he helped launch the debate, but he was wrong on at least three fundamental points:

a. The contradiction between the “truly disadvantaged” and capital is irreconcilable and therefore can’t be transformed through a New Deal type policy of reform

b. The new class is objective and material, but also it has its own subjectively and political potential as well;

c. The revolution is both possible and practical.

This is critical for radical scholars and activists alike to understand. We can represent it by referring to
the tools of basic Marxist political economy. Let me quote a recent analysis by the LRNA:

The widespread introduction of electronics-based production has led to a dramatic rise in the organic composition of capital (the relation of constant to variable capital). Variable capital (the purchase of labor power) as a component of capital is beginning to be driven down towards a minuscule proportion of the total composition of capital. Although Marx discussed this process in relation to the falling rate of profit, under today's conditions it becomes the determining factor in the end of the capitalist system. Since variable capital is the sole source of surplus value and hence profit, the very foundation of the capitalist system is called into question. Capitalism is a system of production based on
profit being extracted from the exploitation of labor power in the process of production. Exploitation becomes increasingly difficult when production begins to involve fewer and fewer workers.

What the UPS strike points to is that permanent well paying jobs are being exchanged for temporary part time and minimum wage jobs. The UPS strike also points to this new class group as being a vanguard force in this new period of class struggle. But we must make a distinction between the economic struggle and class war, one is the fight for reform and one is the fight for revolution. I am using the term class struggle in terms of class war as Van Clausewitz might have put it: war is an irreconcilable conflict of opposing forces in which one side tries to annihilate the other. When labor was necessary as in the rise of
industrial capitalism a social contract to mediate conflict was fought for and expressed in terms of agreement over mutual interest. If labor is increasingly not necessary, then the conflict of people being pushed down will increasingly be a fight for survival against genocidal conditions.

My second point refers to an article I have in the new collection called Cutting Edge: Technology, Information Capitalism and Social Revolution. I want to comment on how this theoretical argument in my syllogism applies to Africa
Greetings. It is a pleasure to speak again at the Midwest Radical Scholars and Activist Conference. The eight years of this conference process has been a task of building an intellectual bridge into the 21st century, and I would like to salute people like Carl Davidson, David Williams, Rado Mijanovich and many others for keeping us meeting and on task.

Recent events
The year since we last met has been one in which systemic symptoms of crisis have erupted. One of the major events was the UPS strike, the first nationwide strike by the new class of marginal workers, in this case part time workers. Another major event was the over throw of the
criminal regime of Mobutu in Zaire, by the Democratic
forces led by Kabila. This marked the emergence of a new
independent coalition of militant leaders representing new
political options for Africa as she enters the 21st century.

These two events are the background for my remarks.

I would like to address three related topics:

a. The relationship between technological revolution
and class struggle;

b. The class struggle in Africa in the era of
globalization;

c. The challenge this represents for revolutionaries
in the USA

My first point can be stated clearly in a simple
syllogism:
a. the capitalist revolution of information technology is producing a permanent qualitative downsizing of the global workforce;

b. this economically marginalized and socially excluded new proletarian class must fight global capital to survive

c. therefore the capitalist technological revolution is producing the condition for a new era of class struggle.

This simple syllogism might seem obvious and tautological, but it reveals a fundamental fact about this emerging historical period, the rise and birth of a new class.

The debate over this new class emerged as chronic unemployment became known as structural unemployment leading eventually to the debate over the "underclass."
Generally, a great deal of the descriptive statistics one finds in works by William Wilson among others was useful and correct. He made a contribution as he helped launch the debate, but he was wrong on at least three fundamental points:

a. The contradiction between the "truly disadvantaged" and capital is irreconcilable and therefore can't be transformed through a New Deal type policy of reform.

b. The new class is objective and material, but also it has its own subjectively and political potential as well;

c. The revolution is both possible and practical.

This is critical for radical scholars and activists alike to understand. We can represent it by referring to
the tools of basic Marxist political economy. Let me quote

a recent analysis by the LRNA:

The widespread introduction of electronics-based
production has led to a dramatic rise in the organic
composition of capital (the relation of constant to
variable capital). Variable capital (the purchase of labor
power) as a component of capital is beginning to be driven
down towards a minuscule proportion of the total
composition of capital. Although Marx discussed this
process in relation to the falling rate of profit, under
today's conditions it becomes the determining factor in the
end of the capitalist system. Since variable capital is the
sole source of surplus value and hence profit, the very
foundation of the capitalist system is called into
question. Capitalism is a system of production based on
profit being extracted from the exploitation of labor power in the process of production. Exploitation becomes increasingly difficult when production begins to involve fewer and fewer workers.

What the UPS strike points to is that permanent well paying jobs are being exchanged for temporary part time and minimum wage jobs. The UPS strike also points to this new class group as being a vanguard force in this new period of class struggle. But we must make a distinction between the economic struggle and class war, one is the fight for reform and one is the fight for revolution. I am using the term class struggle in terms of class war as Van Clausewitz might have put it: war is an irreconcilable conflict of opposing forces in which one side tries to annihilate the other. When labor was necessary as in the rise of
industrial capitalism a social contract to mediate conflict was fought for and expressed in terms of agreement over mutual interest. If labor is increasingly not necessary, then the conflict of people being pushed down will increasingly be a fight for survival against genocidal conditions.

My second point refers to an article I have in the new collection called Cutting Edge: Technology, Information Capitalism and Social Revolution. I want to comment on how this theoretical argument in my syllogism applies to Africa
Detailed Schedule as of October 21, 1997

Networking for Democracy
presents
the 8th Annual
Midwest Radical Scholars & Activists Conference

A Teach-In On Labor & New Alliances:
Strategies for Workplace, School & Community in the 21st Century

October 24 & 25, 1997

Co-sponsored by:
Committees of Correspondence
Democratic Socialists of America
Midwest Center for Labor Research
Open University of the Left

Roosevelt Co-Sponsor:
School of Policy Studies

Location: Roosevelt University
430 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

Program

Friday, October 24
12:00-1:00 PM  Registration, 2nd Floor Michigan Room
1:00 PM  Book Fair Opens, Michigan Room

1:00-3:00 PM Concurrent Sessions

A. Media, Labor & Labor's Media
   Roger Kerson, editor & publisher, National News Reporter
   Bob Ginsburg, Research Director, Midwest Center for Labor Research
   Liane Chlorfene-Casten, Chicago Media Watch, Chair

B. Radical Theory: Why Dialectics? Why Now?
   Bertell Ollman, Politics, New York University
   Peter Hudis, News & Letters
   Ron Aronson, Philosophy, Wayne State University
   Kevin Anderson, Sociology, Northern Illinois University, Chair

3:00-5:00 PM Concurrent Sessions

A. Labor’s Alliances: Learning from History
   William Adelman, Illinois Labor History Society
   Frank Girard, Editor, Discussion Bulletin
   Jack Metzger, Labor Education, Roosevelt University
   Rado Mijanovich, New Union Party, Chair

B. New Technology, Unions & Changes in Work
   Abdul Alkalimat, Africana Studies & Sociology, University of Toledo
   Pavlos Stavrakopoulos, Managing Editor, English Language Edition, Democracy & Nature
   Mike Parker, Labor Notes
   Jerry Harris, History, DeVry Institute of Technology
   Carl Davidson, Chicago Third Wave Study Group, Chair

C. Unfair Burdens: Working Women, Today’s Inequalities & the Tasks of Unions
   Judy Raicht, former official UAW Local 600 in Ann Arbor
   Carole Travis, union activist
   Anne Zecharias-Walsh, labor writer
   Ana Tennyson, teacher of independent living & problem solving skills,
   National Louis University
   Jan Boudart, Solidarity, Chair

6:00-7:00 PM Dinner Break

7:00-9:30 PM Plenary Session

Call to Order: Carl Davidson, Conference Organizer
Greetings from Roosevelt University School of Policy Studies

Speakers:
   Helen Shiller, Alderman, 46th Ward
   Bill Fletcher, National Education Director, AFL-CIO
   Carole Travis, Political Director, Illinois SEIU
   Manning Marable, African American History, Columbia University

Saturday, October 25
10:00 AM-12:00 Noon Concurrent Sessions

A. Market Socialism: A Debate among Socialists
   David Schweikart, Philosophy, Loyola University; For
   Bertell Ollman, Philosophy, New York University; Against
   Rado Mijanovich, New Union Party, Chair

B. Race, Nationality & Winning Alliances
   Bill Fletcher, National Education Director, AFL-CIO
   Manning Marable, African American History, Columbia University
   Mike Goldfield, Labor Studies, Wayne State University
   [Chair to be assigned]

C. Structural Reform, Mass Campaigns & New Alliances
   Bob Brown, South Shore Community
   Dan Winney, Director, Midwest Center for Labor Research
   Harry Targ, Political Science, Purdue University
   Sandra Patino, Committees of Correspondence, Chair

D. Cabini-Green and the Future of Public Housing, or Do We Really
   Want to Live in a ‘Communitarian City’?
   Wardell Yotaghah, Co-chair, Chgo Coalition to Preserve Public Housing
   David Petersen [to be confirmed]
   Larry Bennett, Political Science, DePaul University, Chair

E. Building Worldwide Resistance to Unfree Trade, Corporate Greed & the
   New Global Austerity Program
   Keith McHenry, Food Not Bombs, San Francisco
   Two members of Beladre, an Iberian organization fighting unemployment, poverty and social exclusion
   panel members are presently on a North American Tour to End Corporate Domination
   session organizers: The Autonomous Zone (A-Zone)
Saturday, October 25 (continued)

12:00–1:00 PM Lunch Break

1:00–3:00 PM Concurrent Sessions

A. Democratic Schools in a Democratic Society
   Linda Voss, Chicago elementary school teacher
   Beth Meeker, Chicago Public High School teacher
   George Searfoss, Coordinator, Labor in the Schools Program, Indiana
   University South Bend
   Edna Pardo, League of Women Voters
   Bill Ayres, Small Schools Workshop, UIC, Chair

B. Globalization, Neoliberalism & Labor Strategy
   Kim Moody, Labor Notes
   Dave Ranney, Center for Urban Economic Development, UIC
   [third person to be announced]
   Mel Rothenberg, Mathematician, University of Chicago, Chair

C. Independent Politics: Labor-Community Alliances
   Doug Gillis, Center for Urban Economic Development, UIC
   Todd Reardon, Independent Progressive Political Network
   Helen Shillar, Alderman, 46th Ward
   Julie Brow, IL Committee for Proportional Representation
   Dennis Dixon, Jobs With Justice, Networking for Democracy, Chair

D. Welfare Reform, Income Policy & Trade Unions
   John Hagedorn, Criminology & Sociology, UIC
   Helen Slesarev, Director, Urban Studies Program, Wheaton College;
   author of *The Betrayal of the Urban Poor* (1997)
   Wendy Pollock, Poverty Law Center
   Ken Gagala, Labor Education Service, University of Minnesota
   Rhon Baiman, Sociology, Roosevelt University, Chair

3:00–5:00 PM Concurrent Sessions

A. Expendable Youth: America's Child Welfare and Penal Systems
   Richard Dooman, Illinois DCFS worker, Chair

B. Anarchism, Ecology & Inclusive Democracy
   Pavlos Stavropoulos, Managing Editor, English Language Edition,
   Democracy & Nature
   Vic Speedwell, Autonome Zone

C. Abolishing Lawyer Tyranny
   Jane Doe, author of *Abolishing Lawyer Tyranny*, activist for across-the-board legal reform, founder, Just Cause for Legal Reform
   Bill Wendt, College of Complexes

D. Radical Philosophy at the End of the Twentieth Century
   Bill Martin, Philosophy, DePaul University
   Ron Aronson, Philosophy, Wayne State University

E. Contested Terrain: Identity, Space and the Social as Political Battlefields
   Dennis Bryson, Ph.D. in History, UC Irvine "The Politics of the Social"
   Talmadge Wright, Sociology, Loyola University, "Homeless Exclusions, Homeless Resistances: Urban Social-Physical Space as Contested Territory"
   Lauren Langman, Sociology, Loyola University, "The Political Economy of the Self"

F. The Role of Culture in the Movement
   Janet Kuyper, Scars Publications & Designs, "My Experience in the Small Press"
   William Leahy, foreign correspondent, Irish Times, "Reportage"
   Fred Whitehead, publisher of newsletters People's Culture and Freethought History, "The Need for Cultural Strategy"

G. Workshop on Proportional Representation: What is PR? Models of PR, Here and Abroad; What's Being Done and What Can You Do?
   Dan Johnson-Weinberger, founder of Illinois Citizens for Proportional Representation
   Julie Brow, Independent Progressive Political Network, IL Citizens for PR

H. Ntx-MOX: Is There A Way Out of the Nuclear Trap? (Plutonium-based mixed oxide)
   Sydney Baiman, Nuclear Energy Information Service (N.E.I.S.) on the health effects of radiation
   Corey Conn, N.E.I.S. on the dangers of high-level nuclear waste transport through Chicago by train and truck, and pending bills HR 1270 & S104

I. Free Liberation Nation: The Drug War & It's Cure
   [to be confirmed]

J. So You Think You Know Everything about Anarchism?
   Bill Burns and the A-Zone Free Skool Anarchist Study Group

K. Green Politics, Green Movement, Green Future?
   Lionel Trepanier, Greens Forestry Network
   Bob Rudner, Chicago Arcology Network, Chicago Greens Calendar
   Wes Wagar, Greens Regional Representative, Green Party, Greens Calendar

L. Midway [to be confirmed]
   Dick Reilly

M. Helms-Burton and Democracy in Cuba
   Slides & Discussion from recent visit

N. Civil Liberties & the Prison Growth Industry
   Todd Reardon, National Lawyers Guild
   [others to be confirmed]

P. Will Teach For Food [tentative]