

Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Bloody Conquest of Iraq, Racist Attack on CUNY Same Enemy, Same Fight!

By Moises Delgado

The U.S. colonization of Iraq is directly linked to the attack on CUNY – both are part of an all-out war on the oppressed. This war is being waged by the capitalist rulers and their Democratic and Republican politicians. It can be defeated only by mobilizing a more powerful social force: that of the working class, at the head of all the oppressed, here, in Iraq, and around the world. Our role as students who want to change the world is to put our energies and skills in the service of this worldwide fight.

Iraqis are fighting back. Good! Our enemy is here at home: the ruling class that wants us to be cannon-fodder for their imperialist wars for world domination, that wants us to work for poverty wages (if we are lucky enough to get any job at all), and is trying to throw large numbers of black, Latino, working-class and immigrant students out of school. After all, learning can be dangerous – it can lead to questions. Military and police recruiters on campus use phony promises to trick people into joining up for wars of conquest abroad and repression at home. The more students know about the real workings and history of this society, the harder it may be to fool them. This is another link between imperialist war and the drive to push tens of thousands of us out of school.

So on June 28 tuition was hiked 25 percent! It is the biggest tuition hike since 1995. Across the U.S., tuition is being jacked up, particularly at public colleges. State governments claim poverty and cite budget deficits caused by the war drive. Here in New York this goes together with the hike in transit fares that makes getting to school even less affordable than before – even though the excuses for this increase were shown to be a fraud.

Most recently, capitalist greed and capitalist incompetence brought us the huge NYC blackout. The ruling class wants to keep you in the dark so you won't know the truth about their system. One way they do this is through bourgeois "peace" candidates like Democrat Howard Dean, or Green candidate Nader in 2000, whose job is to hoodwink opponents of the war and lead them into the trap of capitalist electoral politics.

Revolutionary Marxism brings to light that the program of socialist revolution shows the only way to put an end to capitalism's endless wars, racism and exploitation.

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Sue Kellogg

Antiwar protesters chanting at March 5 rally at Hunter College, New York City. Internationalist Group banner calls to defeat U.S. imperialism, defend Iraq.

Defend Hostos Student Leader Miguel Malo!

By Abram Negrete

This is a crucial moment in the fight against the repressive vendetta that the administration of the City University of New York (CUNY) and District Attorney's office have been waging against Miguel Malo, Student Senate president at Hostos Community College.

For almost two years now, they have been trying to railroad Miguel for the "crime" of holding up a sign at an August 2001 protest against cuts in Spanish and bilingual programs. They have pressed the false, dangerous and downright ridiculous charge that Miguel supposedly "assaulted" two CUNY "peace officers" – when numerous faculty and student witnesses saw that it was Miguel who was assaulted, by several campus cops

who threw him to the ground. They have "amended" their story and charges over and over (for the sixth time now on April 14), refused to turn over their videotapes of the protest where Miguel was arrested, failed to bring key witnesses to court, and even tried to throw Miguel's lawyer off the case.

On March 17, the DA's office made a verbal motion to disqualify Miguel's attorney, Ron McGuire, who has been defending CUNY students for many years. The DA's "argument" was that McGuire should be disqualified because he is also representing Miguel and others in a civil rights lawsuit against CUNY and the campus police. McGuire filed the civil suit last November on behalf of students at various CUNY campuses, charging that CUNY "peace officers" are systematically violating students' free speech rights.

The DA's blatant and punitive attempt to prevent a defendant from having the legal counsel of his choice visibly shocked just about everyone present that day, including jaded court personnel and lawyers



AFP Revolution photo

Miguel Malo

present for other cases. The judge denied the verbal motion.

The DA's highly unusual attempt showed how determined the authorities are to make an example of Miguel Malo. Clearly,

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Imperialist War on Iraq

In reality, the war on Iraq never stopped since the first Gulf War of 1990-91 by George Bush Senior. The deliberate bombing of waterworks and electrical plants followed by a decade of brutal economic "sanctions," sponsored by the UN, resulted in the deaths of one million children. On March 20 of this year, having occupied Afghanistan and installed a puppet regime, George Bush Junior and his cohorts in the twin capitalist parties launched a new war of aggression and conquest against Iraq.

Their pretexts and excuses have been shown to be a pack of lies. While the U.S. rulers have huge stocks of weapons of mass destruction, and have used them repeatedly, there are no and were no WMDs in Iraq. The "documentation" claimed by Bush & Co. was provided by Britain's Tony Blair, who doctored his dossier and drove a weapons expert who objected to suicide. It turned out Blair cribbed an old paper by a grad student! Such plagiarism that would get these frat boys kicked out of any college.

The assault on Iraq has been an *imperialist* war in every sense of the word. The Hunter Internationalist Club and the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at Bronx Community College support the Trotskyist politics of the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International. In demonstration against the Iraq war, the IG stood for the *defeat* of the imperialists and the defense of Iraq against this mass murder, invasion and colonial occupation. Student bureaucrats and reformists often tried to drown out our revolutionary chants with social-patriotic rhetoric about "books not bombs," as if it's a matter of budget "priorities."

We look centrally to mobilize the power of the working class against the bosses' wars, including by refusing to handle ("hot-cargoing") war materiel and workers' strikes against the war. But the main obstacle to this is the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy which ties the unions to the bourgeois parties like the Democrats.

Faced with all the modern technology and massive firepower of the U.S. military, Iraqis sought to resist. Within days it became apparent to the Pentagon heads that their fantasy of the Iraqi population rising up to greet American "liberators" wasn't panning out. The road to Baghdad included resistance by Iraqis determined to fight off the foreign invasion. The colonial occupation is generating continued opposition and resistance, and claims by the White House and Pentagon that everything is under control run up against mounting casualties among the forces of colonial occupation.

U.S. troops received orders to use increasingly brutal treatment in dealing with the occupied Iraqi people. Special viciousness is employed in dealing with anti-occupation demonstrations in Iraq that have brought thousands into the streets time and time again. Politically well-connected U.S. oilfield companies Halliburton and Bechtel, armed with multi-billion-dollar contracts, have taken control of key oil fields. The real goal of this second Desert Slaughter against Iraq is putting the U.S. capitalists' hands firmly on the Near East oil tap, giving them crucial leverage against their European and



Faley Kheiber/Reuters

Demonstration by former Iraqi soldiers under American bayonets in Baghdad, June 17. U.S. soldiers shot point-blank into the crowd, killing two.

Japanese imperialist rivals, who (unlike the U.S.) depend on Middle Eastern oil.

The Iraq war will turn many of those who did this dirty work for U.S. imperialism into pathological killers. Timothy McVeigh, who blew up the Oklahoma City federal building, was trained to be a mass murderer in the 1991 Gulf War where he drove a bulldozer that buried surrendering Iraqi soldiers alive. Some of these returning soldiers will be put to work in local police precincts in inner-city communities all over the country to join the ranks of armed enforcers of capitalist rule – yet another connection between the war against the oppressed abroad, and attacks on the oppressed here "at home."

This connection was shown once again when the NYPD added black city worker Alberta Spruill to the long list of those killed by the cops. At a march in Harlem on May 24, Revolutionary Reconstruction Club (RRC) and Internationalist Club members chanted, 1, 2, 3, 4, Defeat U.S. imperialist War! 5, 6, 7, 8, Smash the racist police state! Just days afterwards, African immigrant Ousmane Zongo was killed by police bullets, reminding us all of how Amadou Diallo was gunned down here in the Bronx. As the RRC emphasized in a forum last semester commemorating Diallo, the fight for black freedom, for immigrant rights and against racist police terror can only be a fight to defeat the imperialist rulers once and for all. It is a fight to put an end to the social system rooted historically in slavery and based on unending exploitation: the capitalist system.

Racist War on CUNY

The all-out assault on the education of the sons and daughters of New York City's poor, immigrants and workers is a battle in the racist rulers' overall war, launched under the phony name of a "war on terrorism" after the indiscriminate World Trade Center attacks. Proof of this is that the prelude to this June's tuition hike was the "war purge" declared against undocumented students in fall 2001 under cover of "national security" – with undocumented students being cynically described as the supposed threat.

In 2001, CUNY officials openly declared their tuition increase for undocumented immigrant students was a response to the September 11 attacks. Working hand-in-hand with the capitalist politicians (Democrat and Re-

publicans), they carry out the racist orders of the bourgeoisie, the class of owners who lord it over us in workplaces across the country. As far as they're concerned, we're good enough to work ourselves to death for them or die fighting their dirty imperialist wars, but not worthy enough to receive a proper education. Our worth to them is that miserable monetary value printed on that miserable paycheck.

The Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at BCC and the Internationalist Club at Hunter are proud that alongside the Internationalist Group, we worked to organized a militant demonstration at Hunter College in November 2001 that drew hundreds to protest that anti-immigrant war purge. We warned that this attack against immigrants would be followed by an attack against all CUNY students.

The onslaught against us by Pataki and the Democratic/Republican war party seeks to accelerate the devastation of CUNY. Not only in New York but all over the country,

Moises Delgado in Harlem protest against cop murder of Alberta Spruill, May 2003.



Sue Kellogg

there is a push to accelerate re-segregation of schools (insofar as they were even minimally desegregated), with minority students warehoused in rundown inner-city facilities. The rulers seek to fit us into their racist portrayal of us as uneducable troublemakers who deserve to spend our lives in broken-down ghettos or in their prisons. As industrial jobs have been decimated, the ruling class sees less and less reason to educate working-class youth (white as well as doubly-oppressed minorities). Today in NYC, unemployment officially stands at 8.1 percent. A liberal charity notes, "1.5 million New Yorkers are now in need of food. ... 500,000 children [in the city] simply don't get enough to eat" (Food Bank for New York City statement, August 2003).

What access we have won to education has always been through our own struggles. Power never yields anything without a battle, and the concessions the ruling class is sometimes forced to make can always be taken away so long as the capital-

ists have the power.

From the beginning the slave masters feared what might happen if their slaves were to become educated. So great was the fear that it was a crime to teach a slave to read. A century and a half after the Civil War destroyed chattel slavery, they fear what can happen if their wage-slaves become too wise to the real nature of this society. Above all else, they're fearful of the revolutionary implications when black people see that the struggle for their liberation is bound up with the struggle for workers power.

The CUNY system is a blot in their portrait of us as an uneducable people because it continues to produce brilliant minds that often excel in their respective fields. Add that the CUNY system is "guilty" of graduating more black and Latino students than any other university in the history of the United States and you will begin to understand why CUNY is constantly under attack. In reality CUNY's gates were opened to oppressed minorities' student population by the massive 1969 struggle that led to the establishment of open admissions. This was the result of campus occupations by black and Puerto Rican students and the insistence of the powerful labor movement that opening up the elite city university system had to benefit all working people. This victory transformed CUNY, and has been a target of the racist rulers ever since.

In 1976, the same year that the freshmen CUNY class was for the first time in its majority composed of minority students, racists in office determined to destroy open admissions and put a stop to the influx of minority students.

The first attack on open admissions came that year in the form of the introduction of tuition during the "fiscal crisis" provoked by Wall Street bankers with Democratic mayor Abe Beame acting as hatchet man. As many as 50,000 CUNY students were forced out then. In 1979 tuition was hiked by \$900 per year. In 1982 Democratic Governor Mario Cuomo proposed a hike of \$200 more per year.

In 1985 another attack was launched, this time a tuition hike of \$750 led to the forced exit of some 8,000 more students. In 1990-91 tens of thousands of CUNY students took to the streets against cutbacks ordered by liberal Democratic governor Mario Cuomo and black Democratic mayor David Dinkins. Thousands of students occupied campus buildings and marched in the streets with striking 1199 hospital workers and others.

Tuition was increased again in 1996, causing thousands more to drop out of college. In 1999 the CUNY Board of Trustees voted to eliminate remedial classes at CUNY's senior colleges, a backhanded way of knifing the policy of open admissions that had existed since the 1969 struggles.

But the rulers are not content to stop at the destruction of the 1969 gains; their success only encourages them to go further. On June 23 of this year, in a lightning-quick stealth attack in the auditorium at Baruch College – while the campuses were close to empty – the

Revolution

Newspaper of CUNY students from the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club and Internationalist Club, for the program of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, published in accord with the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International

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Snuggling up to Governor Cutback: Groups like NYPIRG (pictured in photo with New York Gov. Pataki) chain campus activists to capitalist parties. Democrats praised Republican Pataki as he signed bill to allow some “undocumented” students to go back to paying in-state tuition. Then they turned around and hiked everyone’s tuition. Thanks a bunch, NYPIRG.

Board of Trustees voted the 25 percent tuition increase. This means students must pay \$4,000 per year at the four-year colleges, and \$2,800 at the two-year colleges. Only days later, on June 30, the State University of New York (SUNY) decreed a \$950 increase for in-state students and a whopping \$2,000 increase for out of state students.

It’s nothing more or less than a racist, anti-working-class purge. The Republicans and the Democrats have found that one of the most effective methods is the use of the bursar to “build a color wall,” as Jimmy Breslin called it in *Newsday* (June 24).

Ruling-Class Cynicism

Another weapon in CUNY officials’ arsenal is that of purge-tests. A July 5 *New York Times* article reports “hundreds of students at the City University of New York are quietly being bounced out of college because they could not pass a test intended to gauge whether they have reading, writing and thinking skills appropriate for students halfway through college.” This exam was introduced two years ago and has been used by CUNY officials to unfairly weed out students they deem unqualified regardless of whether they have successfully completed all the courses required by their major. Currently, if a student takes and fails the examination three times he or she is booted out of school. Of the students who took the purge-test in March 2003, about 25 percent failed.

Lest any more proof be needed of the CUNY administration’s intentions, chancellor Matthew Goldstein – who attended City College when it was free – is quoted in the same July 5 *New York Times* article as saying that if students can’t pass the test “after so many attempts, they ought to be thinking about doing something else with their lives.”

No doubt what the chancellor has in mind is something along the lines of cleaning his house, taking his food orders, or pumping gas into his car. Or maybe he would have us go to the nearest military recruiting stations which have been working overtime to find economic conscripts to serve as frontline killers for the U.S. imperialist war machine.

At heavily minority CUNY campuses like BCC, military recruiters have been calling students up at home, talking about their majors and courses, and trying to sucker them into the army with promises of education aid. We demand to know what information the CUNY administrators are giving to these bloodsuckers, and that this practice be stopped now. At BCC opposition to military recruiters led them to stop showing up in uniform; now they sneak around the cafeteria in civvies. At high schools, meanwhile, under Bush’s cynically

titled “No Child Left Behind” Act, Pentagon recruiters are demanding lists of names, addresses and phone numbers of seniors so they can be pressured into the military.

We demand all cops and military recruiters off campus!

Pressuring students into the military goes together with targeting many for programmed non-graduation: as an August 27 *Times* article notes, “A preliminary report on the problems with a statewide math test needed for graduation from high school in New York State has found that even early trials of the test indicated that the average student would be unable to pass.” Obviously this is no fluke. Excluding huge numbers of students is the whole *point* of these tests, tuition hikes and budget cuts.

Mobilize the Power of the Working Class

Against this onslaught there must be an all-out fight for the basic democratic right of free public education for *all*. A revolutionary leadership is needed to link students to the enormous potential power of the multiracial working class, which has a vital interest in the right of its children to education. In its absence, the hand-raising of a few miserable capitalist appointees was enough to ram through the tuition hike.

As part of our efforts to build that revolutionary leadership, we participated in the protest of students (and some faculty) inside the CUNY board meeting in June. Among the chants we raised were: “*Open Admissions, No Tuition*” and “*Abolish the Board of Trustees!*” Student-teacher-worker control of the universities, nationalizing private universities, providing a living stipend for students so they can devote themselves to their studies; ripping out the turnstiles so public transit is free to the public; cops and military recruiters off campus – these demands are part of the overall fight for a workers government that can make quality, integrated education a reality for all.

As opposed to this, the reformists, though employing different “tactics” and different degrees of militancy, are always reduced to bourgeois pressure politics. So many trips have been made to Albany (shrine of the state legislature) that an outsider might mistake this for some sort of recurring religious ritual. But this pilgrimage can lead to only one revelation: the reverence of reformists for the myth that they can appeal to the morals of the masters of society to make things fairer. And how else to reach them – these pious pleaders ask – than through their political agents (Republicans and Democrats alike) at the altars of Albany and City

Hall, from which alone one can communicate their plea to the almighty capitalist lords.

At Hunter, shortly after the bombing of Iraq began, SLAM (Student Action Liberation Movement, that is, the student government bureaucracy with “militant” verbiage) sat in at the office of college president Jennifer Raab trying to get this right-winger (a former “issues director” for Rudy Giuliani’s mayoral campaign) to “take a stand” against the war and tuition hikes. Pathetic! Instead, campuses should have been shut down by student, teacher and campus worker action.

For its part, before the trustees’ vote the CUNY4All coalition put out a statement subtitled “Whose Side Are You On,” asking the Board if they stood with the students or with the millionaires.

The answer is not rocket science. The Board of Trustees and CUNY administration are the representatives of the ruling class whose task is to keep students, teachers and campus workers in check. There is a world of difference between a strategy of pressuring the rulers while criticizing the “policies” of their figureheads and administrators, and fighting for their defeat and expropriation as a class.

And here as in other things the communists set themselves apart as the one political tendency fighting against every form of illusion, deception and self-deception, to educate young people in class politics and win them to participate in forging a revolutionary vanguard party of the working class that will take up their battles as its own. That is where the *power* lies to defeat all the attacks launched by the capitalist ruling class, and knock them off their pedestal of oppression through a revolution based on the proletariat, the workers of the world.

Why We Publish *Revolution*

It is not in the interest of the working people – black, Latino, Asian, white, immigrants or U.S.-born – to live and work only to make enormous profits for a filthy rich class of exploiters while being repressed and even killed by their police.

Nor is it in our interest to be sent to kill our class brothers and sisters anywhere around the world.

Nor is it in the interest of the workers and oppressed to support the government of our “own” exploiters, whether it is administered by their Democrats or by their Republicans. On the contrary, our interest lies in their defeat.

Finally, it is not in our interest to stand by as the racist rulers steal our access to an education. The battle over CUNY is not just a “student issue,” it is an assault on all working people, minorities and immigrants. The working class has the interest and power to defeat this assault, just as it has the power and interest to defeat the imperialists’ colonization of Iraq; to put an end to imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation through international socialist revolution.

The Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at Bronx Community College, and the Internationalist Club at Hunter College, are launching *Revolution* to help win young people to the revolutionary program of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, advanced today by the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International.

We are publishing *Revolution* to help bring revolutionary Marxism to students at CUNY and other college and high-school campuses. We publish *Revolution* because we are fighting for the liberation of all the oppressed, for a revolution by the working class all around the world – and we want you join us in this fight.

Moises Delgado

President of the *Revolutionary Reconstruction Club* (@ BCC-CUNY)

Member of the Internationalist Group/ League for the Fourth International

Defend Miguel Malo...

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their interest goes beyond this one case. They are using the prosecution of Miguel to clear the way for even greater repression throughout the CUNY system. This is part of the broader onslaught against oppressed minorities, labor and basic civil rights. Racist profiling, mass round-ups of immigrants, the sinister “Patriot Acts” I and II, and the overall escalation of police-state measures – these are the “home front” of the ever-expanding imperialist war waged by the U.S. ruling class abroad.

Hostos, a miniature police state:

Hostos Community College is run like a small police state. Located in the heart of the Bronx barrio, it is a campus of immigrant, black and Hispanic students from poor and working-class families. “Controlling” minority and working-class youth is a central concern of the ruling class as it escalates its attacks on democratic rights and social programs. At Hostos, many crucial policy decisions are openly made by the campus police chief himself. Hostos cops have gone so far as to tell supporters of my organization that they are forbidden to distribute leaflets on the same city block as the main campus entrance.

When students protested racist cuts in bilingual and Spanish programs in August 2001, the brittle Hostos regime freaked out and unleashed the campus cops to run wild. Their response to the protest has been aptly described as a “lock-down” of the campus. They decreed that no protest of any kind would be permitted in the building where registration was taking place, and arrested Miguel when he held up a sign in a public atrium that is the traditional “free speech area” in that building. They prohibited professors from other campuses, and even the president of the faculty union, from entering Hostos at all. The campus police openly proclaimed that Hostos had been closed to “outsiders.” They arrested four students and the next day arrested CCNY professor Bill Crain when he tried to go on campus.

Charges against everyone but Miguel Malo were eventually dropped. Hit with phony charges of assault, resisting arrest, harassment and disorderly conduct, Miguel faces up to a year in jail if convicted.

The crime of holding up a sign: The fact that Miguel was arrested *for holding up a sign* was proclaimed at the very beginning of the complaint CUNY filed in court against him. It states: “Deponent is informed by (CUNY Peace Officer) Sgt. Sean White, that at the above time and place, the defendant began to hold up a sign and protest against the college administration inside the above location after being told by the informant that such protest would only be permitted outside the building, away from where school registration was taking place. Deponent is further informed by informant that defendant was asked to leave the registration area and refused at which time the informant attempted to lawfully place the deponent under arrest.”

Test case for repression at CUNY: The prosecution of Miguel Malo is a *test case for repression at CUNY*. The DA’s office and CUNY administration obviously see it that way – and activists throughout CUNY and beyond need to see it just as clearly, in order to fight this repression.

In pushing the frame-up charge that Miguel supposedly assaulted two CUNY

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The Role of Students in the Workers Movement

by Aubeen López

Students have sometimes played a significant role in helping the workers' struggle against capitalism. But not always. Under certain circumstances, they have played a reactionary role in helping to defeat such struggles. Marxists are often asked, what is the relationship of radical students to the workers movement and how can they help it? This question deserves special attention. To address it, we must first understand students' social position.

In capitalist society, students constitute the younger elements of the intelligentsia. Tomorrow they will make up society's professors, technicians, administrators, scientists. Many will become part of the backbone of capitalist society. Yet others will join the fight to abolish capitalist exploitation, and make a real contribution by joining the ranks of revolutionaries.

The intelligentsia constitutes the most unstable section of the *non-propertied petty bourgeoisie* (the lower middle class). The petty bourgeoisie is highly unstable. It is a social group which, at times of intense social conflict, wavers between the two major, stable classes: the *proletariat* (working class) and the *bourgeoisie* (capitalist class).

Can the petty bourgeoisie and specifically the intelligentsia, of which students are a part, constitute a *revolutionary* class? The answer is no. The petty bourgeoisie is not and cannot constitute a revolutionary class. Why? Because as a group, they lack the collective and cohesive common interest neces-

sary to form a revolutionary class such as the proletariat. *Only* by aligning wholeheartedly with the proletariat and its revolutionary leadership can students break with their petty-bourgeois origins and become communists. Which class they are drawn to is influenced by the social and political climate of the time, but mainly by a *revolutionary proletarian leadership capable of bringing all sectors of the oppressed and exploited behind its Leninist program*.

For example, in the U.S., as a result of the growing militancy of the struggle against black oppression, the imperialist war on Vietnam and a number of intense workers struggles in the late '60s and early '70s (such as the 1969 General Electric and 1970 General Motors strikes), many students shifted to support of these historic struggles. Yet the fact that students can be used *against* the working class and oppressed was shown in Germany in the early 1930's, when students played an extremely reactionary role in helping Hitler's fascism rise to power.

In the U.S., not long after the height of '60s radicalism, the fascistic cult-like organization led by Lyndon LaRouche, based largely on students, launched "Operation Mop-Up," a vicious campaign of physical attacks on left organizations, like the Communist Party USA. (The LaRouche group, which boasts of its links to ultra-rightist military officers in Latin America, tried to get a foothold at Bronx Community College at one point last school year, but we ran them off.)

If students and the petty bourgeoisie in general are not a revolutionary class, can they lead a revolutionary class in a revolutionary movement, can they become the vanguard of the oppressed or what Lenin called the "tribune of the people"? The answer is again no. Students cannot by themselves constitute the political leadership of the revolutionary proletariat and the rest of the oppressed; they can't even constitute the political leadership of their own social group, the petty bourgeoisie. Only the proletariat and its revolutionary leadership, the Leninist vanguard party, can lead the rest of the oppressed against the ruling class, the bourgeoisie. As Marx and Engels noted in the *Communist Manifesto*: "Of all the classes



Members of the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at Bronx Community College and the Internationalist Club at Hunter College joined in unionization drive at Burritoville, July 2003.

that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat *alone* is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product."

Thus there is no correct political basis whatsoever for the call of "student power," posed by groups like the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM) – which disdain communists' call for students to look to the power of the working class. The call for student power can only breed illusions and block students from understanding which force in society really does have the power to carry through revolutionary change: the working class.

So what is the relationship of radical students to the workers movement and how can they help it? The workers general strike in France in 1968 was sparked when young workers joined barricades students set up against police attacks. In Mexico City in 1999, at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), students occupied the huge campus against a tuition fee which meant purging tens of thousands of students. The strike lasted ten months, and soon faced the danger of police attack. During this strike the Grupo Internacionalista (GI), Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International (LFI), fought to mobilize sectors of labor who faced mass layoffs and capitalist attacks themselves (electrical workers, teachers and university workers).

The GI played a key role in sparking workers defense guards for the UNAM

strike, in which hundreds of electrical and university workers did guard duty round the clock to ward off an invasion by the army and police. The GI also called for a class-struggle mobilization based on strikes by powerful sectors of the working class. This contrasted sharply with the positions of all wings of the student leadership, which in the final analysis were part of a "popular front" of class collaboration with bourgeois nationalist politicians. Others, such as the Grupo Espartaquista de México (Spartacist Group of Mexico) talked of workers action but did absolutely nothing to bring it about.

At the beginning of 2000, the Mexican government sent a newly formed police force to invade the campus and repress the UNAM strike. Several of our comrades were arrested along with hundreds of others and held for days for their role in the UNAM strike. Through the experience of the UNAM strike the Grupo Internacionalista showed how students could link struggles to the power of the workers movement. Smuggling revolutionary texts into jail and taking students on brigades to bring Trotskyist literature to the working class, the GI won young strike activists, who had gone through the experience of struggle and repression, to join the struggle for a revolutionary workers party – fighting to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International. That is the most important contribution revolutionary-minded students can make: transforming themselves into cadres of the world party of socialist revolution.

Aubeen López, Revolutionary Reconstruction Club (@BCC-CUNY)

Dear God:

Why don't you please stop your lies,
 You say if we "believe" we'd live longer, but instead we just die,
 You say when in need just look toward the sky,
 But when in need we look, the sun just burns our eyes.
 When in victory or triumph, "Thank God" is what everyone says,
 But when the stench of defeat rises, "He works in mysterious ways."
 You say follow your footsteps and we have nothing to fear,
 But as soon as we move your footprints disappear.
 You say you'll bring peace, but how many have been killed in your name?
 You say it isn't you, that it's the devil to blame.
 But I think you're no different, in fact you're exactly the same,
 The devil's your scapegoat, an excuse, and it's despicably lame.
 You say there are no tricks, but I can see right through your sleeves,
 You snuck one by on the world but you didn't sneak one by me.
 To you the world is blind, but you see; not me, I can see,
 I see what no one else sees, I see the sad sorry truth,
 While everyone else sees a tree, I dig deep down to the roots.
 What is the truth? Well, the truth is this and only this:
 While everyone else is wondering where you are, "God,"
 The truth is...you don't even exist!
 Truly yours,
 Aubeen



Grupo Internacionalista played key role in sparking workers defense guards (above) in 1999 National University of Mexico (UNAM) strike.

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Revolutionary Reconstruction Group Joins the Internationalist Group

The following article is reprinted from The Internationalist No. 14, September-October 2002.

The Revolutionary Reconstruction Group, the core of young Marxist activists who lead the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at Bronx Community College in New York, joined the Internationalist Group at a meeting of the two organizations on August 25. This follows the RRG's presentation of the following statement to an IG meeting earlier this month:

"After a period of joint work between the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club and the Internationalist Group, during which time the ruling class, amidst an imperialist war in the U.S. and other countries, has engaged in increasingly repressive measures against workers and the oppressed, we of the RRG have seen for ourselves that the League for the Fourth International today continues the principled struggle for workers power. Our own desire to struggle for workers revolution, and the recognition that this requires the creation of vanguard parties around the world as part of the process of reforging the Fourth International, leads us to join forces with the IG, which today is carrying out this task. We therefore request membership in the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International."

The origins of the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club go back to fall of 2000, when a young Puerto Rican Trotskyist began trying to establish a Marxist student group at Bronx Community College. Active in the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and other issues, he was at that time a sympathizer of the Spartacist League. The core of the RRC also includes comrades won to Bolshevism from the New York Zapatista group and through polemicizing against religious obscurantism and nationalism on campus.

Efforts to build the club received an enthusiastic response from students at Bronx Community College (BCC), an overwhelmingly black, Hispanic and immigrant campus of the City University of New York (CUNY) that was singled out by the *New York Times* as a hotbed of opposition to the war on Afghanistan. CUNY officials try to run campuses like BCC like a small police state. (At nearby Hostos Community College, CUNY is waging a repressive vendetta against student leaders for leading protests against cuts in bilingual and Spanish-language programs.) Putting up one obstacle after another, BCC functionaries even tried to censor the club from describing itself as Marxist in its statement of purpose!

The Revolutionary Reconstruction Club was formally established in spring 2001. The name was chosen for two reasons. In the historic context of the U.S., it reflects the point that the full liberation of black people from social oppression cannot be solved under the lordship of capital. The "Radical Reconstruction" carried out in the U.S. South after the Civil War ended in the betrayal by the northern bourgeoisie of hopes for black equality. This task would require a revolutionary reconstruction of society, possible only in the form of another social revolution, one led by the working class, and aimed directly at the bedrock of black oppression,



Joint contingent of Revolutionary Reconstruction Club and IG marches across Brooklyn Bridge at demonstration protesting Israel's attack on West Bank, April 6.

U.S. capitalism.

Simultaneously, in a broader sense, the term "revolutionary reconstruction" is borrowed from Marx and Engels, whose *Communist Manifesto* calls for the "revolutionary reconstitution of society" by means of a proletarian revolution.

The intention of those who formed the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club was to bring awareness of Marxist ideas and the many crucial struggles being waged across the world, while waging war against bourgeois liberalism, which saturates the outlook even of the so-called left in the United States. It sought to model itself after the Marxist study groups found in the early 1890s in Russia. The club was an idea born of the need to recruit fellow black, Latino and other poor students to the ranks of communist fighters, thinkers and militants. Until its inception the only recruiters at BCC were those of the U.S. military, who recruit cannon fodder on the basis of "economic conscription." The only political group on campus was NYPIRG (New York Political Interest Research Group), a student lobbying group and Democratic Party satellite based among student government bureaucrats.



Revolutionary Reconstruction Club speaker Leslie Marcos (left) at 28 November 2001 demonstration against CUNY's "war purge" of immigrant students. The RRC at Bronx Community College joined with Internationalist Group in building the protest.

There is considerable potential for winning youth to revolutionary Marxism at CUNY, the largest urban university in the United States with approximately 200,000 students at over a dozen colleges. Enrolled at CUNY are students from more than 115 countries, and according to its own statistics its student body is 32 percent black, 31 percent white, 21 percent Hispanic and 12 percent Asian; a large majority of these students are working-class. Yet obeying the dictates of capital, after putting an end to the open admissions won by student and labor struggles in 1969 the CUNY administration has been escalating attacks on educational access for the sons and daughters of New York City's proletariat.

Joint work with the Internationalist Group began at a November 2001 RRC meeting attended by a dozen people. An IG representative invited the club to join in building a united-front demonstration against the anti-immigrant war purge in which CUNY sought to force thousands of "undocumented immigrants" out of school, through a discriminatory and exorbitant tuition hike, as part of the U.S. imperialists' "war on terrorism." The demonstration proposal was

greeted enthusiastically (despite the lame attempts of a Spartacist League spokesman to convince the club not to endorse the rally), and a period of intensive work began. In the course of this work RRG activists extended their activity to several different campuses and went head to head against student reformists and bureaucrats. In the effort to take a real step in class struggle against the U.S. war, an important part of the 28 November 2001 demonstration was the presence of immigrant workers from union and solidarity groups.

The joining together of the RRG with the Internationalist Group is an example of the kind of revolutionary regroupment made possible on the basis of a class fight against imperialist war. For RRG members, intensive joint work provided an important on-the-ground lesson on the Marxist stance on wars. The understanding that the "war purge" at CUNY was but a manifestation of the very real global war provided a powerful weapon against those who sought to confine the struggle to "student issues."

Linking the defense of immigrants to the fight against imperialist war, the IG printed in pamphlet form Lenin's classic *Socialism and War*. Over the course of the next months the IG's position for the defeat of the U.S. imperialist attack and the defense of Afghanistan and Iraq proved to be the only one in accordance with the principles of the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin. The Spartacist League's abandonment of the Leninist fight for the defeat of "one's own" imperialist rulers in war dramatically brought home its step-by-step renunciation of key revolutionary principles. The comrades were particularly repelled by the SL's attempt to smear the IG with pandering to "anti-Americanism" for upholding Lenin's position.

Also important in the RRG activists' evolution has been the ongoing and polarizing struggle against a wide range of opportunist positions pushed by reformists and campus bureaucrats who tail after the Democratic Party. RRG and IG comrades intervened together at a range of events to fight for "no discrimination" against the reformists' promotion of "less" discrimination against immigrants via legislation to "allow" some and only some immigrants to go back



to paying the prior tuition rate. We linked the fight for open admissions and free tuition to the broader program of class struggle and socialist revolution, and connected the fight to defeat specific attacks to the struggle to defeat the capitalist rulers' war and their entire system of exploitation and racism.

Joint work continued with the publication of an IG/RRC leaflet for International Women's Day and common contingents and sales teams at demonstrations in New York and Washington, D.C. in defense of the Palestinian people. The two organizations also had a joint presence in support of unionization drives among immigrant workers, at rallies by New York teachers and a strike by bus drivers in Queens. In this period comrades of the RRG saw the meaning of the IG's commitment, in deeds and not merely words, to the tasks of bringing the Trotskyist program into the class struggle. An important part in this has been played by joint activity with worker cadres of the IG. Systematic Internationalist Group educationals, together with encouragement to present Marxist classes themselves, played a crucial part in the comrades' development. This intensive course of study has included key works by Lenin and Trotsky, classes on revolutions of the 20th century, and a range of other subjects.

A central focus in these study classes has been the Marxist theory and analysis of the state, including the origin and history of bureaucratically deformed workers states such as Cuba and China, and the tasks of their defense in the period since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the

Soviet Union. Bringing the RRG comrades closer to the IG/LFI, this underscored the crucial tasks that Trotskyists are called upon to lead, in particular the fight for proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy whose betrayals open the way for capitalist restoration. Such a political revolution in China would immediately pose the task of extending the revolution worldwide, with enormous appeal to the workers and oppressed throughout the region and elsewhere.

Joint work and study led RRG comrades to take the measure of the opportunism of those who have fought bitterly against the IG's Marxist politics, strengthening and deepening the comrades' political and programmatic understanding. In coming closer to the Internationalist Group – and especially because the comrade who founded the RRC had been a sympathizer of the SL for most of his political life while others were subscribers to the SL's press – the comrades carefully investigated the differences between both groups and came to the conclusion that the SL's series of "new" positions add up to a fundamental break with Bolshevism, which the IG continues to uphold.

The Trotskyist program reflects the accumulation of crucial lessons drawn from past proletarian struggles and paid in blood. Yet the current leadership of the SL and International Communist League makes a mockery both of the programmatic content and of more than a century of courageous struggles to implement this program in the "boiling water" of the class struggle, and

the present fight to bring the Fourth Internationalist program into the struggles of the working class. RRG comrades came to compare the present ICL leadership's attitude to the Marxist program with the outlook of "a spoiled rich kid who inherits a priceless asset and squanders it."

Members of the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club repeatedly witnessed the inability of SL spokesmen to defend their organization's abandonment of Leninism on a series of questions, among them the SL/ICL's refusal to call for unconditional independence of the colonies, a question which Lenin and Trotsky rightly saw as a dividing line between communism and social democracy (and essential in the fight against all forms of nationalism), and its repudiation of the core of Trotsky's Transitional Program, the understanding that the crisis of humanity is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership. Instead of historically and theoretically-derived assessment, the SL/ICL is guided by temporary appearances, and shrouds its revisions in vague and evasive language. A crucial example is over the nature of fascist formations such as the National Front in France, just when it is most important to strive for the greatest clarity.

The comrades of the RRG join the Internationalist Group as full members, with the rights and responsibilities of Bolshevik militants. At the same time, they are youth whose ongoing training as professional revolutionaries will mean integrating the IG's new opportunities for campus work into the overall fight to build a Leninist vanguard

party. Needed is the kind of leadership training that can be acquired only in applying yesterday's lessons to solve today's problems on the burning terrain of the class struggle; the transformation of raw experience into conscious revolutionary lessons. That this can be achieved only in the fight to win new elements among the youth to the proletarian class struggle is a key lesson of another recent struggle in which LFI comrades fought for the Trotskyist program: the 10-month strike at the National University of Mexico (UNAM). The Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at Bronx Community College, together with the Internationalist Club at CUNY's Hunter College, will continue to win students to Marxism and struggles such as the fight against militarism (such as the increasingly aggressive military and police recruiters) and imperialist war.

In *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky wrote that "every revolutionary party finds its chief support in the youngest generation of the rising class" while noting that "healthy young lungs find it intolerable to breathe in the atmosphere of hypocrisy." In joining the Internationalist Group, the comrades of the Revolutionary Reconstruction Group join in the task of winning the next generation of young workers and intellectuals to the cause of the world proletariat and its vanguard party, which in Lenin's words much serve as "tribune of the people," mobilizing the power of the proletariat for the emancipation of all the oppressed and exploited throughout the world through victorious socialist revolution.

Letter from Mexico to CUNY Students



Duijio Rodríguez/La Jornada

Parents of arrested student strikers confront police at UNAM's Ciudad Universitaria on 6 February 2000, demanding their children be released.

For ten months beginning in April 1999, Mexico's National University (UNAM) was occupied by a student strike against tuition, fees and cuts the government tried to impose on direct orders from the World Bank. The dramatic story of the strike, and its crucial political lessons, are related in the Internationalist pamphlet *The UNAM Strike and the Fight for Workers Revolution* (see ad below).

In Fall 2001 during the fight against CUNY's anti-immigrant "war purge," young comrades from Mexico's Grupo Internacionalista wrote "A Message from UNAM to CUNY. Relating their experiences in the UNAM strike, they pointed out key lessons for the struggle against the attack on public education launched by capitalist governments around the world. We reprint excerpts from their message (the full text is in the December 2001 Internationalist pamphlet *Defend Immigrant Students – Stop CUNY's "War Purge"*!).

Dear brothers and sisters:

With more than 270,000 students,

UNAM is the biggest university in Latin America. In early 1999 it announced the imposition of outrageous tuition charges, after years in which tuition had been virtually non-existent. The tuition hike coincided with a drive to privatize the electrical sector, which would bring mass layoffs in the electrical energy industry as well as the destruction of one of Mexico's most powerful labor unions. We of the Grupo Internacionalista began to put forward the call for a strike by UNAM's students and workers, together with the electrical workers and other sectors of the working class, not only against the imposition of tuition, but also against the starvation austerity program of the capitalists and their government.

Thousands of students prepared to strike – and the UNAM student strike broke out on 20 April 1999. From the beginning our organization sought to put into practice our call for extending the strike beyond the limits of the university itself. In the face of threats of repression in July 1999, we succeeded in initiating,

in July 1999 worker-student defense guards.

We appealed to the working class to call for its active backing – which was received in some important cases. We visited plants of the Compañía de Luz y Fuerza (Electrical Company) where we spoke with the workers, we participated in union meetings and assemblies, and we worked regularly at a wide range of different campuses and schools with the slogan of extending the strike. We defended the strike assemblies against the administration's *porros* (hired goons), and we fought for campus cops (Auxilio UNAM) off campus and out of the university workers union. Repression was unleashed against the UNAM strikers by the federal government, then in the hands of the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) with the support of the PAN (National Action Party of the current president, Vicente Fox) and by the Federal District government of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution), which sent *granaderos* (riot police) against the strikers.

When the repression reached its high point, we were among the hundreds arrested in February 2000 as we continued to defend the strike and put forward our proletarian program. The working class has the interest

and power to wage a victorious struggle to make real the democratic right to education. Likewise, the working class has the interest and power to fight victoriously to defeat the imperialists' war...

– Ariel and Buenaventura

Brothers and sisters:

My name is Quetzal, and when the UNAM strike began I was a young woman 16 years of age. I was in the last year of university preparatory school, but my interest in leftist ideas began when I was in secondary school and the Zapatista rebellion broke out in Chiapas. On one side I could see people who had nothing, and on the other side people who had very much indeed. The Indians, like so many other people in Mexico, live in such poverty that the uproar over the Chiapas uprising made me think that something had to be done against this system of inequality. Shortly before the UNAM strike broke out, when I was in the last year of preparatory school, I read the *Communist Manifesto*, because I related it to the movements of 1968.* I wanted to know what it meant to be a Marxist and to fight for socialism.

When it was announced that tuition

Mexico: The UNAM Strike and the Fight for Workers Revolution

March 2000 US\$3

For almost a year, tens of thousands of students occupied the largest university in Latin America, facing repression by both the PRI government and the PRD opposition. This 64-page special supplement tells the story of the strike and documents the intervention of the Grupo Internacionalista.

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would be imposed at UNAM, I participated in organizing the strike at the Preparatoria No. 5 school, which is part of the UNAM system. I researched how much money was going to “rescue” bankers in a huge government bail-out, as contrasted with how much was going for education. The so-called “bank rescue” program called Fobaproa meant spending the equivalent of eighty times UNAM’s annual budget. So when they tried to raise tuition I became very indignant. I understood that this economic policy was part of a system which exploits the working people, oppresses the Indians and is prepared to do absolutely anything to squeeze the last drop of sweat (and blood) out of the vast majority of the population here and around the world.

On 17 April 1999 we Prepa 5 students took over our school, days before this was done in the majority of schools and campuses in the UNAM system. We had the solidarity and backing of the workers at our school, who helped us print leaflets, brought us food, and most importantly participated in the strike pickets and defense. From very early on we had to fight against the representatives of the popular front, who wanted to sell out the strike, and who began to be known as the “moderates.” What these people wanted was to accept a few crumbs from the government and put an end to the strike, all in the name of class collaboration.

Government repression began shortly thereafter. The Mexico City police brutally attacked student strikers in August, October and December 1999, alternating with frequent *porro* attacks against the strike. On 1 February 2000, the Federal Police (PFP) seized a preparatory school and arrested more than three hundred students. I attended the following meeting of the Strike General Council (CGH), convinced that it was urgent to do something to get the *compañeros* and *compañeras* out of jail and move the struggle forward to victory. However, this assembly was also dissolved by the PFP, and I was arrested together with more than 600 others.

I was held in the women’s section of the Consejo Tutelar de Menores (Minors’ Jail), where we were treated terribly. For example, they doused us with cold water at dawn and forced us to do exercises nude. In addition, when we were transported to the jail, police threatened to rape us.

When I got out I rejoined the fight. I met the Grupo Internacionalista during the strike, when it was fighting to organize a march of striking students, together with workers, for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal. At the time I was a delegate from my school in the Strike General Council, and a comrade from the Group approached me to ask that I propose that the Prepa 5 strikers’ assembly back the march.

After the strike had been broken I really paid attention to the positions of the Grupo Internacionalista. I wanted to know why the strike had been defeated, and it seemed to

me that the key to this lay in the program. Remaining isolated on the university campuses, the strike was not able to strike a real blow against the bourgeoisie. What was necessary was to halt production and trade in the fight to stop the capitalists’ offensive of hunger and repression.

Now you are carrying out an extremely important struggle. I want to tell you, brothers and sisters, that we are with you in this fight. From Mexico City, I say to you: go forward and be brave. Victory will be yours. – Quetzal

*[Note: these included the massive student movement in Mexico, the repression of which in the 2 October 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre drew attention world-wide to the brutal nature of the Mexican capitalist regime.]

State Repression...

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The unending racist killings by the police show it is not a matter of a few “bad apples,” but of a system of racial oppression and the function of police in capitalist society, which by its nature is racist. This basic fact is covered over by Democratic politicians like Al Sharpton, who responded to the torture of Abner Louima and the killing of Amadou Diallo by preaching the deadly illusion that the cops can be made more “responsive” to the “community” (and whose demands for “police reforms” even included higher pay for the police!).

When there is a strike, for example for higher wages and better working conditions in a factory, it is the job (“duty”) of the state to protect private property and put an end to the strike by any means necessary, to keep things in *order*, the order of the ruling capitalist class against the working class.

When there are protests or student strikes against tuition hikes and budget cuts, the cops are called out for repression. In Mexico in February 2000, a special, newly created police force (the Federal Preventive Police) was used to break the ten-month strike of the National University (UNAM). Several of our comrades of the Grupo Internacionalista were among the *one thousand* students jailed at the time.

But isn’t it true, some ask, that police, prison guards, security guards and other professional guardians of capitalist property, “law and order” are recruited largely out of the working class? In Germany in the 1920s and early ’30s, this was the argument of the social democrats who, to justify support for the capitalist state, claimed cops were “workers.” Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, had a clear answer: “The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state is a bourgeois cop, not a worker” (“What Next?” [1932]).

As for the idea that racist terror by the cops will stop if more police are black or Latino, or are required to live within city limits, it was a black cop who killed 16-year-old

Black Panther leader Fred Hampton as he lay in his bed sleeping in Chicago. Over thirty years later, there are many more black and Latino cops, and they have carried out innumerable killings of black, Latino and other workers and youth. Lots of prison guards, including those who have kept Mumia under lock and key for two decades, are recruited from poor, working-class and minority backgrounds.

In obscuring these truths, reformist groups on the left follow the tradition of the social democrats Trotsky exposed in the ’30s, and reflect the outlook of the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats today. Among them are groups like the International Socialist Organization, which hails “unionization” and “strikes” by prison guards like those at Rikers Island; Socialist Alternative, which argues that cops and guards are “workers”; and reformist organizations in Brazil which hailed “strikes” by the very military police who routinely kill black street children. Sowing confidence and illusions in the capitalist state, they mislead the workers about the very nature of the “armed fist of the bourgeoisie.” Such positions can only divert the workers struggle against capitalism onto a path that leads to its bitter defeat. Socialist revolution is only possible when workers and their allies clearly see the nature of the bourgeois state.

We of the Internationalist Group call for *all cops out of the unions* and on the campuses demand *all cops and military recruiters off campus!*

Sinister “SEVIS”...

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selves, and then deported many of them when they did.

The SEVIS program’s *racist profiling of international students* is one more facet of the racism that is a central part of capitalist society. It goes hand in hand with police-state measures like the USA Patriot Act, enacted not just by Bush Republicans but the Democratic Party, including virtually all the Democratic members of Congress who student bureaucrats and reformist groups on the campuses try to get students to support. The Patriot Act’s provisions even authorize the feds to secretly examine all library users’ records to find out which books they have checked out.

In April, CUNY’s University Faculty Senate passed a resolution protesting SEVIS. While noting that such government surveillance measures “create fear and intimidation among the international students and faculty,” it merely stated that the faculty body “objects to” SEVIS — when what is required is organized, militant and massive refusal to collaborate in any way with this racist program.

We demand *no university cooperation with the racist SEVIS program*. Down with SEVIS and all racial and ethnic profiling! We demand to know *which campus offices have provided information to the feds, and exactly what kind of information they have turned in*. We demand to know exactly which federal spy agencies have paid visits to which departments at each campus, exactly *when and where*, and what transpired. *We demand they all get off our campuses!*

The fight against racism must be a fight against the capitalist system which constantly breeds it. The program of the Internationalist Group and its supporters in the Internationalist Club (Hunter College) and Revolutionary Reconstruction Club (BCC) points the way for the international working class to put an end to racist oppression through socialist revolution!

Leslie Marcos, President, Internationalist Club (@Hunter College–CUNY)

Defend Miguel Malo...

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“peace officers,” the CUNY administration and DA’s office seek to push through a major change: to have “assault on campus cops” made legally equivalent to “assault on NYPD officers.” *The purpose is to greatly strengthen their apparatus for repression of student protests against the war and against tuition hikes, budget cuts, and all the attacks on the minority and working-class students at the largest urban university in the United States.*

Repression on CUNY campuses has been growing rapidly over the past period, with repeated incidents at Hostos, the College of Staten Island, CCNY, Hunter and elsewhere. What many activists do not know is that CUNY’s campus police force, “SAFE,” purchased 100,000 rounds of live ammunition, including hollow-point bullets and birdshot. (Even the NYPD is legally prohibited from having some of the items the SAFE cops bought.)

A recent posting to the CUNY Senate discussion forum noted that CUNY’s “public safety director,” William Barry, is a former FBI agent. It cited an article from the *Washington Post* (25 January) reporting that as part of the repressive onslaught packaged as the “war on terror,” the “FBI has strengthened or established working relationships with hundreds of campus police departments.” As we have previously noted, “the ‘SAFE’ unit was formed as a little red squad, compiling lists of student activists, videotaping student activities.” It even disguised a surveillance camera as a smoke detector outside the main office for political activists at City College. When the CCNY Graduate Student Council and its newspaper exposed this, they were suspended. (See “Smash Racist Purge of CUNY—Fight for Open Admissions, Free Tuition!” reprinted in the December 2001 Internationalist Group pamphlet *Defend Immigrant Students – Stop CUNY’s “War Purge”!*)

The way that phony charges of “assaulting a police officer” are used against demonstrators after police attack them was shown again when three Hunter students were hit with this charge, as well as resisting arrest and “inciting to riot,” after cops brutalized them near Times Square during an antiwar protest on March 20. Their case is coming up in early June; we must demand all charges against them be dropped now!

Defending Miguel Malo is crucial to the fight against repression at CUNY; it is crucial to defending the rights of us all. It is necessary to publicize this case much more widely than has been done so far, so that students at all CUNY campuses become thoroughly familiar with it; and to mobilize powerfully to demand DROP THE CHARGES NOW!

* * * *

It is important that as many people as possible come to court to show their support for Miguel Malo. There must be energetic mobilization and a big turnout, as no confidence can be placed in “justice” from the courts.

The next court appearance will be on *Wednesday, September 3, 2003*, at 9:30 A.M. At: Bronx County Criminal Court at 215 East 161st Street, one block east of the Grand Concourse. Room: Part TAP-1.

The nearest subway station is 161st Street on the 4 and D trains. Please arrive early, there’s often a long line outside the court. Make sure you have the right court, since there is another court nearby.

– Abram Negrete, Hunter Internationalist Club

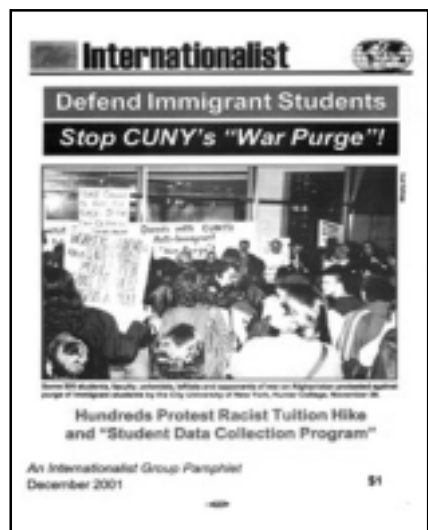
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Sinister "SEVIS" Program:

Racist Profiling of International Students

By Leslie Marcos

Deported for changing majors, moving to a new apartment – or even for skipping a class? These are some of the threats facing international students as the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) has moved into high gear. SEVIS is a huge Federal database for surveillance and tracking of foreign citizens studying here with student visas, as well as professors and other staff who acquired their work visas prior to stepping on U.S. soil.

As with so many other repressive measures, SEVIS was in the works for years, but the government yelled "9/11" as an excuse to make it fully operational. Students and faculty across the U.S. have denounced the unjust and sinister program, which requires colleges and schools nationwide to upload information about foreign students and professors. Schools that refuse to take part in the scrutiny, declining to become informers for the feds, are denied the right to enroll foreign students or employ staff from other countries.

The \$36 million SEVIS program monitors even the slightest change in the academic life of international students. The scrutiny includes their major, their enrollment every semester, how many classes they are taking, their graduation date, whether they have moved from one dorm room to another, whether any disciplinary action has been taken against them, and even something most of us do in our life as students, skip a class.

University of Colorado student Yashar Zendeheh got a taste of what this all means. Detained with other Middle Eastern students during the "special registration" ordered by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, he was threatened with deportation. His "crime"? Falling below the minimum course load for full-time students when he changed majors and dropped a course. The university's director of international students noted that the feds' new snooping programs have had a "chilling effect on students" (*New York Times*, 17 February).

SEVIS has already caused many colleges to lose professors, assistants, tutors and students. Some have reported a drop of more than 20 percent in enrollment of foreign graduate students. "Having fewer international students can lead to fewer teaching assistantships, less research and ultimately less diversity," noted the University of Minnesota's director of graduate admissions (*Minnesota Daily*, 30 June). In majors such as math, engineering and science, many are being denied visas because the Federal government categorizes their nationality or ethnicity as suspect. In physics, those most often denied visas are students from China, followed by those from the Middle East, according to a report from the American Institute of Physics' Statistical Research Center.

Those who do get visas often face enormous delays and obstacles. The AIP report states that a fifth of students admitted into physics graduate programs will be delayed by visa application problems for at least a full term, and some will not make it to the lab table at all. Engineering students are often on the receiving end of this treatment, and international students make up more than half the staff of civil, electrical and mechanical engineering departments. Yet "for countries with developing economies, engineering is of course very important," as a spokesman for

the Statistical Research Center noted (Inside Science News Service, 30 June).

With SEVIS, "we are concerned that there is a very strong possibility things could go crazy," said the director of international student programs at the California Institute of Technology, Parandeh Kia (*Pasadena Star-News*, 11 April). A female Caltech graduate student was stranded in China for months after Christmas break, Kia noted. Because of cases like this, many international students do not want to travel to their countries to visit family members because they are afraid they will be denied re-entry to the United States and will not be able to continue their studies.

As if the scrutiny, threats of deportation, racism, discrimination and other headaches were not enough, SEVIS makes very dangerous technical mistakes when printing students' personal information. Sometimes printouts end up at other schools, in random departments, putting students in even more danger if the information was to fall into the hands of the wrong individual who could change the document in order to get the student in trouble. To cite one example, on a single day last term all the foreign student records from the University of Arizona were electronically transmitted to Michigan State University. On March 12, FBI agents arrested a Southeastern University student after the school had reported erro-



Internationalist photo

CUNY students participate in labor demo to free detained immigrants, 16 March 2002.

neously that she had dropped out and the school was unable to correct the error.

But the racist functioning of SEVIS is no random glitch, and if the system is "crazy," as Caltech's Kia called it, there is a method to the madness: the method of racist discrimination and social regimentation. Thousands of Japanese Americans being locked up in camps during World War II is supposedly "ancient history." But today as

well, imperialist war abroad means racist roundups here "at home." In the dragnet launched after September 11, 2001, over a thousand Arab and Muslim men were imprisoned without trial. A CCNY student was seized and held with her whole family for the "crime" of being born in the "wrong" country. The INS forced huge numbers of undocumented workers to report them-

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State Repression on Campus

By Aubeen López

As the United States continues its imperialist military occupation in Iraq, the imperialists have got their iron heel on the working class in the U.S. as well. In recent months, the war in Iraq has led to escalating police-state measures. Soldiers with machine guns stalked the subway stations here in New York. Can it be long before someone is shot for the "terrible" crime of hopping the turnstiles?

At college and high-school campuses, the government and school administrations have stepped up measures to keep students in line. From the war to tuition hikes, students have cause to protest, and ruling-class repression is the reaction. The instruments of this repression are what Friedrich Engels called the "special bodies of armed men" whose job is to protect the interests of the ruling class.

Earlier this year at the High School for Enterprise, Business and Technology, a black student named Javon Ross refused to stand for the pledge of allegiance during a basketball game. A security guard immediately ordered him to leave the gymnasium for exercising his democratic rights. As for CUNY "peace" officers being peaceful, nothing could be further from the truth. One of countless examples occurred on June 17 at the Medgar Evers campus, there, parents who were attending graduation ceremonies for their fifth-grade children at PS 92 were pepper-sprayed and beaten by CUNY peace officers. The *Daily News* published a photo of a black woman parent dressed in a formal gown and with a breathing device as a result of this attack.

In August 2001 at Hostos Community College, student government leader Miguel Malo was arrested for simply holding up a



Bill Moore photo

Student protester being arrested outside CUNY Board of Trustees meeting, 25 January 1999.

sign during registration to protest the slashing of bilingual and Spanish programs during registration. CUNY "peace" officers then slapped Miguel with phony charges of assault, resisting arrest, harassment and disorderly conduct!

CUNY cops are no different in their function and methods from other professionals of repression whose job is to "serve and protect" those in power who have the capital. As radical black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal wrote in 1996, in support of our Brazilian comrades' fight to oust police from the unions, police are not part of, but enemies of, labor. Police of all kinds are the fist of the capitalist class and the shield of its private property.

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