

Bush, Democrats: Mass Murder, Inc.

CUNY and the Imperialist War

By Fred Bergen and Charlie Morán

These days, it's easy to find people who say that they're against the war in Iraq, but opposition to the war and actually ending it are two different things. To end the criminal slaughter in Iraq and Afghanistan, you have to understand what this war really is, and how to fight it. What is the conflict about? Beneath all the rhetoric about terrorism and democracy, the "war on terror" is an *imperialist war*, a war to oppress and enslave the people of Iraq and Afghanistan for profit and to nail down U.S. world domination. The ruling class of the United States wants to force Iraq to sell its oil to Exxon and buy its power plants from Bechtel. But above all, it seeks to strengthen the United States' position against other world powers by locking them out of the strategic Persian Gulf region.

Imperialist war is class war waged by the capitalists, the parasites who live off profit, against the oppressed peoples that they must enslave to get it, and against the workers and oppressed "at home." Imperialist war cannot be opposed apart from the capitalist state and the social order that gives rise to it. It cannot be ended without overturning the capitalist system itself.

CUNY students and staff are highly sensitive to the war stealing the all-too-slim chances of education from working-class and minority youth. Reformist antiwar groups want to line up this outrage behind one or another Democratic politician with calls to "bring our troops home" and to re-factor government budgets to provide "money for education, not for war." When leftists appeal to patriotic sentiments ("social-patriotism"), they reinforce the ideology that the ruling class uses to subjugate the oppressed.

And imperialist war has always been accompanied by racism, anti-immigrant attacks, and assaults on the rights and living standards of working people "at home." Although troops sent to Iraq and Afghanistan are drawn largely from the working class, they are not "our" troops. They have been signed up and shipped out to fight for our enemy, the ruling class whose armed thugs bomb wedding parties in Afghanistan and gun down Sean Bell in Queens with 50 shots on his wedding day. As Internationalist Group (IG) contingents have chanted in antiwar marches: "Washington, Wall Street – The enemy's at home!"

Imperialism is not a matter of confused "priorities." *War is built into the system*, no matter which of the twin capitalist parties – Democrats or Republicans – is in power in Washington. Even the tiny Greens only want to avoid a U.S. defeat in the *losing* imperialist war in Iraq. The IG and Internationalist Clubs at City University, in contrast, call to break with all the capitalist parties and to

Immigrants, Minorities Under the Gun



Oscar Durant/El Diario-La Prensa

Imperialist war brings racism, repression "at home." Front page of *El Diario-La Prensa* (10 April) featured photo of Internationalist Clubs at NYU protest against Minuteman vigilantes (see p. 3).

mobilize the workers internationally in sharp class struggle – including strikes against the war – to *defeat* the imperialist occupation forces who have laid waste to Afghanistan and Iraq!

Military Recruiters and Research Out!

The government uses campuses not only as a source of soldiers but – literally – as labs for the horrors of war. Back in 2004, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs blew the whistle on a "Homeland Security" program at BMCC with links to Central American death squads and the Guantánamo torture camp ("Abu Ghraib 101 at BMCC? 'Fatherland Security' Hits CUNY," *Revolution* No. 2, October 2004). This sparked student and faculty protests that stopped the sinister program.

But this was far from the only link to the imperialist war machine. On the *cunynotonics.com* website, the administration boasts that the Center for Advanced Technology in Photonics Applications (CUNY-CAT), located at City College, received \$600,000 from the Navy for "Underwater Target Detection," \$6 million from NASA (including for "imaging targets"), with millions more pouring in from the "De-

fense" Department for a series of projects. Since killing is big business, the private sector has gotten in on the act: CUNY-CAT notes it has "partnered with" Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman, some of the most notorious arms manufacturers around.

Meanwhile, military recruiters stalk the halls of CUNY, while high-school and college students' names and addresses are fed to these vultures. Many working-class and minority students realize this is a rich man's war: "I'm not really into going overseas with guns and fighting other people's wars," said Adeyefa Finch of the Bronx to the *New York Times* (22 August), explaining why he ignores the recruiters who swarm around inner-city high schools.

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Internationalist photo

August 18 protest pauses at 181st St. building housing CUNY office and armed forces recruiters.

CUNY and War...

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So the military tries to deafen us with hype. A recent report detailed students' complaints of recruiters harassing them in school hallways, setting up camp in school gymnasiums, rolling up to inner-city high schools in tricked-out SUV's, music blaring "like drug dealers" ("The Re-Militarized Zone," published in the usually reactionary *New York Press*, 27 June). "Recruiting is a \$4 billion industry," the article reveals, "working furiously to find willing bodies to fill empty boots on the ground." The military "spent an average of \$16,199 for each of its 73,373 individual recruits" in 2005, "nearly \$5,000 more than what the city spent on education per student in 2004."

Despite its frenzied efforts, the Pentagon is failing to recruit enough bodies for its killing machine. Some soldiers already sent to Iraq will go to any lengths to avoid going back, like twenty-year-old Jonathan Aponte from the Bronx, who paid a hit-man \$500 to shoot him in the leg. "I have nightmares all the time. I hear people screaming, gunshots, explosions, and I can smell burning flesh in my dreams," he told the *Daily News* (July 14).

Six CUNY students who fell into the recruiters' trap have died in Iraq to date. Parents, teachers, and fellow students are furious. The mother of Hai Ming Hsia, a BMCC student who was the fifth from CUNY to die in Iraq, said: "Bush doesn't care. It's as if he killed my son himself." Nigerian immigrant Segun F. Akintade, a City Tech student killed in Iraq, "didn't agree at all with the decision to go to war"; his friends said, "the only reason he signed up was so he could afford college" (CUNY Professional Staff Congress *Clarion*, September 2006 and January 2005).

With recruiters desperate to fill quotas and body bags, the government is launching new schemes. They are even exploiting a proposed reform measure publicized as a way for undocumented immigrant students to pursue higher education: the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act. As reported in "Immigration and Military Enlistment: Pentagon's Push for the DREAM Act Heats Up" (*Draft Notices*, July-September 2007), a "hidden provision in the DREAM Act ...would tie permanent legal residency to military service," providing "a bonanza of warm bodies

to increasingly desperate recruiters." So immigrant youth are supposed to choose between racist persecution by the *migra* (immigration) Gestapo or maybe getting a green card by helping the U.S. military be cops of the world. One of the political points here is the very real link between fighting against the imperialist war and fighting for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*.

The Internationalist Clubs fight to *drive military recruiters off campus – not one person, not one penny for the war machine*. At Bronx Community College our comrades organized protests that made recruiters for the Army, Marines, and Air Force flee the campus, as students and campus workers responded to leaflets that said "We Won't Kill or Torture for the Ruling Class – Drive Military Recruiters Out of BCC!" Speakers told how they had lost co-workers and family in the Iraq war, and compared military recruiters to the slave-catchers who were paid to do the masters' dirty work (see "Bronx Community College Students Drive Out Military Recruiters," *Revolution* No. 3, November 2005).

CUNY Tops Take Aim with New Guns...

The City University of New York keeps showing what we mean when we say imperialist war abroad means racist repression "at home." In a recent article on young Mexican immigrants, *The New York Times* (16 July) wrote: "In 2002, immigrants successfully pushed for the City University system to preserve in-state tuition rates for students here illegally." The real story is that there was a months-long struggle, launched by the Internationalist Group, against the *anti-immigrant war purge* that the administration unleashed in response to 9/11. As we wrote in November 2001:

"The ordering of a 'war purge' of undocumented immigrant students by the City University of New York (CUNY) is part and parcel of [the] wave of wartime repression. A right-wing state senator declares that 'illegal aliens' are a threat to 'national security' and the CUNY administration dutifully decides to drive out thousands of students by the convenient device of raising their tuition to astronomical levels that few can pay.... The racist logic is clear: minority poor and working people are a 'security risk'; those that can afford to pay thousands of dollars of tuition get their 'clearance' to study."

Revolutionary Reconstruction Club and CUNY Internationalist Clubs sparked protests that ran military recruiters out of Bronx Community College every week for more than a month. Left: 17 March 2005 demonstration.



Internationalist photo



Internationalist photo

Internationalist Clubs joined TWU strikers on picket lines and leafletted CUNY campuses to build student support for December 2005 transit strike.

The CUNY Internationalist Clubs were born from this struggle, which forced the administration to back away from its plan.

But the bureaucrats at CUNY central on 80th Street have a conditioned reflex: jump to use any new tragedy as a pretext for repression. A tiny article in the *New York Post* (7 May) reported: "Two days after the Virginia Tech. massacre, the City University of New York bought two dozen Glock 9mm pistols to beef up security at five of its campuses." The guns went to the Lehman, Brooklyn, Hostos, La Guardia and Graduate Center campuses. This adds to the bizarre stockpile of weapons piled up by CUNY cops, with "100,000 rounds of ammunition – including at least 4000 rounds of nine-millimeter hollow point bullets" purchased in the late '90s (*Village Voice*, 5 May 1999). As we know, CUNY "security" has an itchy finger even with pepper spray, which they used in 2003 at Brooklyn's Medgar Evers College against *parents at a graduation ceremony!*

CUNY's arsenal is part of its obsession with stopping campus protest, which led to the vicious, years-long effort to railroad Hostos Communist College student leader Miguel Malo to jail for the "crime" of holding up a sign to protest cuts and fee hikes in bilingual and ESL programs at the South Brox campus. This attempt was defeated by the vigorous defense campaign we spearheaded (see "Miguel Malo Is Innocent!" in *Revolution* No. 3, November 2005).

Now the Virginia Tech massacre is being used an excuse to revive attempts by the Hunter College administration to end Hunter's status as one of the few remaining open campuses by installing turnstiles in the entrances to each building, where a "peace" officer would check for a valid CUNY ID. Of course, this makes no sense if taken at face value: the student who went nuts and shot people in Virginia was, duh, on campus already.

Again, the secret is repression. At Baruch, where intrusive turnstiles are manned by aggressive cops, psychology professor Bill Crain was arrested in June 2004 and charged with "criminal trespass" and (of course!) resisting arrest when he tried to go through the turnstile after showing his City College ID. Imagine the threat that turnstiles would pose to students, faculty and campus workers at Hunter. Everyone knows the escalators and elevators pile up dangerously every time classes change – imagine having to go through turnstiles to get out of Hunter West during a fire or other disaster! A couple of years ago the campus cops tried to seal off the main exit from the Thomas Hunter building, causing dangerous havoc until students banged through so many times they had to nix the noxious scheme.

The last time the proposal was pushed at

Hunter, heated opposition broke out on the faculty senate (normally a pretty staid institution). If the powers that be try to ram this through, they should be stopped by an outpouring of protest. However, the CUNY administration (headed by Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, who sits on the board of the J.P. Morgan investment bank) will keep making trouble until it's *abolished and replaced by student-teacher-worker committees* to democratically run the schools, tossing out the bourgeoisie's armed enforcers (cops) as well.

...and New "Academic Standards"

Chancellor Goldstein has just announced that CUNY will raise admissions requirements and "standards." One of the most controversial measures is that beginning next fall, freshmen will be required to have math SAT scores "20 to 30 points higher than the current scores needed for admission to the university's five top-tier colleges, Baruch, Brooklyn, City, Hunter and Queens and 11 senior colleges," notes a 31 July news story on the web site of *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* magazine, which quotes faculty members who oppose this drive for "elitization."

CUNY's new rules "may make it harder for Black and Hispanic students to gain admittance," *Diverse* points out. Math education is abysmal at many inner-city schools, which are starved of resources and crammed with metal detectors and cops who act like prison guards and go wild confiscating cell-phones. The magazine further notes that while black enrollment rose in the college system as a whole, it stayed static or fell at the "top-tier" CUNY schools. During the 2005-2006 academic year, black enrollment fell from 24 percent to 14 percent at Baruch, while at Hunter it fell from 20 percent to 15 percent. CUNY is staging a *racist purge*.

These measures are exclusionary by nature; that is their whole point. The administration's outcry is the usual claim that students are to blame if they are badly prepared. So by "raising standards" students will become more prepared? As if! No, this is just the latest obstacle to the education of students from working-class, poor and minority families. It is part of a *worldwide crusade against public education* that has reached from the U.S. to Europe to Latin America (where it sparked the heroic strike at Mexico's National University referred to in the article on the back page by our Mexican comrades).

Today, many CUNY students are surprised to learn that the university used to be *free*. Not only that, but in 1969 a sit-in and protest movement by black and Puerto Rican students won *open admissions* after powerful city labor unions backed this demand. As soon as the CUNY student body became majority non-white, the racist rulers launched a counteroffensive, which introduced tuition

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and keeps jacking it up all the time. New fees and charges cropped up all over. Then remediation programs were killed. TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) got chopped back.

It keeps going on, not because the bosses are broke but because they want to push more and more of us out of school. Ideologically, they hate public education. They figure their system needs a lot less of it, especially since the fall of the Soviet bloc (as a result of decades of capitalist pressure, abetted by the Stalinist bureaucracies that misused the name of socialism). They calculate that flipping burgers doesn't require a degree, and the less are in school the more will go to fight their wars. Besides, education can also be dangerous: it can lead to questions. The slave-owners made it a capital crime for slaves to learn to read and write.

In NYC, billionaire mayor Bloomberg and his school chancellor Klein set a quota of 15,000 eight-year-olds to be flunked out by a special test for getting into the fourth grade (see "Forced Flunk-Outs and the Assault on Public Education," *The Internationalist*, May-June 2004, and the pamphlet *Marxism and the Battle Over Education* [September 2003]). Now the U.S. Supreme Court has essentially reversed the famous 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* that laid the legal basis for integrating education! Re-segregation of the schools shows again that even the limited gains of the civil rights movement are not secure under capitalism. The fight against racism is bound up with the fight against capitalist exploitation, which in the U.S. was founded on slavery, segregation and Ku Klux Klan terror.

No Doubt About It: We Need a Revolution

Our fight for *open admissions, no tuition*, with a living stipend so students can actually study, is part of the struggle for a society based on human needs, not profit: a socialist society. The unending attack on education is a very good example of the fact that to get the most basic things we need, and even to defend the little that working people and oppressed minorities have been able to win in the past, *we need a revolution*.

To defend our right to education, what's posed is a struggle for *power*. This means looking to the only class capable of defeating these attacks once and for all. The multi-ethnic, multinational working class of New York City gave a taste of that power in the transit workers' strike that came close to shutting the city down in December 2005. While the media screamed bloody murder, working people saluted the courage of strikers who defied the slave-labor Taylor Law. We brought CUNY students out to the picket lines and helped distribute daily Internationalist strike bulletins.

Today, the Iraq war is going so badly that Washington is having problems with its own puppets in the colonial "government." The Democrats keep the war going at the same time as they try to cash in on antiwar sentiment to fool workers, minorities and youth once again. In this effort, they receive assistance from the various "popular-front" (class-collaborationist) coalitions set up by groups that falsely advertise themselves as Marxist, like the Workers World Party, International Socialist Organization, Revolutionary Communist Party and others (see the article in this issue on "World Can't Wait" and similar groups).

Our differences with these groups begin with the fact that we stand for the *defeat* of the imperialists and their war, and link the struggle against every form of oppression to a real *program for socialist revolution* by the international working class. This is the program for mobilizing the power of the working class, from the streets and subways of NYC to the barricades of Oaxaca, Mexico. *Join us!* ■

Hundreds Protest NYU Republicans' Racist "Illegal Immigrant" Hunt

FEBRUARY 23 – Yesterday the College Republicans at New York University (NYU) staged a blatant racist provocation – a "game" of "catch the illegal immigrant." This grotesque stunt unleashed an outpouring of anger among NYU students and many others. More than 400 protesters turned out and kept up a steady din for three hours, chanting, picketing and drowning out the handful of racist vigilantes. Protesters' signs included "Racism is Not a Game," "No One is Illegal" "Legalize, Don't Criminalize Immigrants" and "Un Mundo Sin Fronteras/A World Without Borders." Demonstrators chanted "What do we want? —immigrant rights, When do we want them? Now!" The racists clearly sought to draw media attention, which they did. But what was vividly shown was the overwhelming repudiation of their chauvinist filth.

The NYU event was only the latest chapter in a nationwide campaign by campus right-wingers. It started at North Texas University, in the spring of 2005 where the Young Conservatives chased members wearing orange T-shirts with the words "illegal immigrant" around campus. In April of last year, the College Republicans at Penn State tried the same ploy but were stymied by 150 students and faculty protesters. Last fall, the ultra-rightist Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) at Michigan State U. and College Republicans at the University of Michigan announced plans for a similar manhunt. While cynically pretending this is just "fun and games," they're clearly imitating the Minuteman Project vigilantes who for the last two years have been targeting immigrants along the Mexican border, where a number have been shot and killed.

This is deadly serious. As a homemade sign at the NYU protest declared, "Thousands Have Died on Our Borders. This Is Not a Game." Some of the "official" printed slogans appealed to conservative sentiments like "Immigrant Values are Family Values," and at one point some demonstrators chanted for a "debate" with the wannabe vigilantes who were going to put on stickers saying "INS," the acronym for the hated *migra* immigration cops, now known as ICE (for Immigration Control and Enforcement Division of the Homeland Security Department). But many in the crowd understood that there is nothing to discuss with these proponents of racist terror. Last September when hundreds came out at Columbia University to denounce a speech by Minutemen *fürher* Jim Gilchrist, he hightailed it off the stage while his minions punched anti-racist protesters.

At the NYU protest, the Internationalist Group carried signs calling for "Full

Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants," "Mobilize NYC Labor to Defend Immigrant Workers" and "Sweep Racist Vigilantes Off the Streets!" A number of demonstrators joined us in chanting "Racist vigilantes out of New York" and "Racists out!" We distributed leaflets highlighting the struggle for unionization by immigrant workers in Brooklyn. The need to bring the power of the working class to bear is key. The fact that such racist scum are raising their heads today is a reflection of the defeat last year of the drawn-out strike of graduate students at NYU by the vicious union-busting of university president John Sexton. A solid victory by campus unions acting together would put Sexton's auxiliaries on the run.

The sinister "game" by these right-wing xenophobes is not some kind of "Animal House" antics of a bunch of lunatic fringe morons. These are Ivy League careerists like those in the mid-1980s who destroyed a shantytown at Dartmouth that was protesting university complicity with apartheid slavery in South Africa. Some graduated to become operatives in the Republican Party "dirty tricks" department, like Reaganite Lee Atwater who orchestrated campaigns to intimidate black and Latino voters at the polls. Others went on to run imperialist war from the corridors of the Pentagon, design police-state repression by the "Justice" Department and plan the destruction of social welfare programs at the Heritage Foundation. But they don't have to be Republicans: the Democrats have supported every one of these vicious attacks, while Democratic president Bill Clinton pushed through the 1996 immigration "control" act.

The current crop of junior G-men may yearn to be commandants in the Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo torture camps of U.S. imperialism. Whatever their sick ambitions, now is the time to stop them in their tracks.

On April 9, a month and a half after holding their grotesque "immigrant hunt," the College Republicans at NYU sponsored a talk by a leader of the xenophobic "Minuteman" vigilantes. For report of the protest against this racist provocation, see *The Internationalist No. 26 (July 2007)*. We print below the speech at the protest rally given by our comrade which was greeted enthusiastically by the crowd.

My name is Erica Torres and I am a student at City College and a member of the Internationalist Club. Together with the Inter-



"Game's Over": Front page of New York's *El Diario* (23 February) shows IG signs calling for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and for labor to defend immigrant workers.

nationalist Group, we've been working to bring out students from several CUNY campuses today along with workers from key unions and immigrant organizations in the city.

Let's be clear: the "Minutemen" are not some kind of debating society. They are violent racist vigilantes who work hand in hand with the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations and other fascists. At Columbia University last October one of these racist thugs kicked a student protestor in the head with a steel-toed boot.

The Internationalists joined many others to protest the Minuteman provocation at Columbia, where protestors stood up to this racist violence and succeeded in shutting down the Minuteman provocation. We must all defend the Columbia protestors against administration reprisals.

We say: "Minute-Klan" get the hell out of New York! That means they should be driven out whenever they try to stage one of their provocations to whip up lynch-type terror against immigrants. And that goes for junior "Minute-Klan" types like those who staged the vile "Find the Illegal Alien" stunt here at NYU in February.

Like the working class of New York, CUNY students are largely immigrants. We must unite with the *power* of the working class to drive out the Minutemen, because this is a question of power. The Minutemen are part of the attack on immigrants that has brought large-scale raids by the ICE immigration cops – "*la migra*" – all around the country.

We need to mobilize a stronger power to defeat these attacks, which are coming from the very top, from both the Republicans and the Democrats. That means joining with the power of the working class, including huge numbers of immigrants, who keep this city and this country running. We have to unite with workers around the world like the teachers of Oaxaca, Mexico, who continue to face bloody repression.

My family comes from Puerto Rico, which was the biggest colony in the world until it was surpassed by Iraq. We say: *DEFEAT U.S. imperialism*. The racist attacks on immigrants are closely connected to the imperialist war in Iraq that we *can* and *must* defeat. The fight against racism and colonialism can only succeed if it is a revolutionary fight. We need a revolutionary workers party for a socialist revolution.

La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras. THE WORKERS' STRUGGLE HAS NO BORDERS! Minuteman racists out of New York!! ■



Internationalist Group joined hundreds of NYU students and others protesting racist "illegal immigrant hunt" last February.

Internationalist photo

Gay Rights and Socialist Revolution

by Aubeen Lopez and
Abram Negrete

As the United States continues its imperialist occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, on the home front the rulers wage a war of terror against the working class and basic democratic rights. One of the “hot button” issues for reactionary crusades is the assault against same-sex marriage. We don’t pretend that marriage is bliss – if anything, it’s more often the opposite. It is an institution of capitalist society to shore up the nuclear family. But revolutionary Marxists oppose every type of discrimination, defend gays’ and lesbians’ right to get married like anyone else and oppose the hateful attempt by governmental bigots to deny same-sex couples benefits married couples get, such as shared health insurance, breaks on taxes and social security inheritance benefits.

War-Mongers and Gay-Bashers

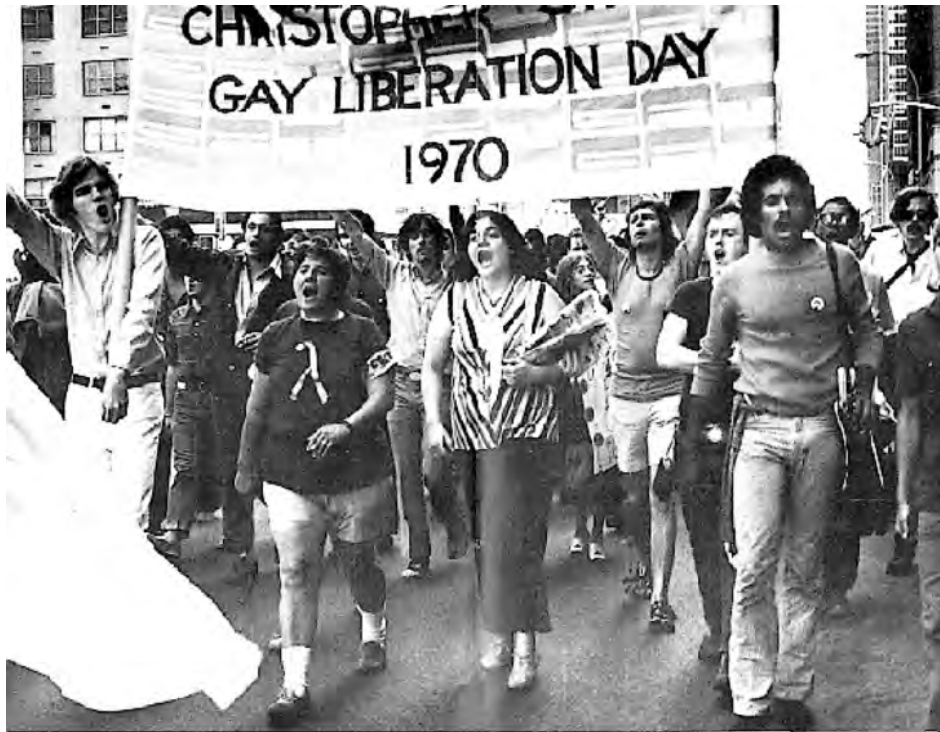
It’s no accident that the biggest war-mongers in the media also jump to whip up anti-gay hysteria, as in the media frenzy over the so-called “Lesbian 7,” young black women from Newark tried for felony assault and gang assault after a confrontation with a man who accosted them in Greenwich Village. (Some had been friends of Sakia Gunn, a Newark teen who was accosted at a bus stop and then murdered when she identified herself as gay.) The press seized on the incident to whip up homophobia, as the New York Post (April 12) ranted about the “Attack of the Killer Lesbians” and the “seething sapphic septet” of “bloodthirsty young lesbians,” while the Daily News (April 19) called them a “lesbian wolf pack.”

Hot to fan the flames of bigotry, Fox News Channel’s O’Reilly Factor (June 21) ran a piece on a supposed “Lesbian Gang Epidemic,” warning of a “national underground network” of hundreds of such gangs (“150 such crews in the Washington, D.C. area alone”) dedicated to “terrorizing” people, “recruiting” kids and “indoctrinating” them with homosexuality. Sounding like an old-time B-movie, it warned, “some of these gangs carry pink pistols, they call themselves the Pink Pistol Packers.”

The rabid rantings of O’Reilly soon went south as the cops’ own gang investigation units disowned the wild claims. O’Reilly mumbled on the air that he had “overstated the extent of gay gangs in the Washington area,” but then hastened to call the seven women from Newark a “pack of lesbians.” Once again, racist vocabulary and homophobia spew from spin doctors notorious for beating the war drums over invented “WMD” in Iraq.

Ludicrous as these professional liars seem, their smears are no joke but an incitement to repression and lynch-mob terror. The same terrorist “war on terror” that escalates racist police violence like the NYPD murder of Sean Bell encourages storm trooper incidents like the July 2006 SWAT team raid on a gay gym in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where cops “bullied, terrorized and humiliated” patrons, many of them elderly, forcing them to lie handcuffed on the floor as the police ran “background checks” (ACLU report, July 2006). Is it a stretch to link the war in Iraq and government- and media-incited bigotry to heightened violence against gays? Not if you read the “Anti-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Violence” report (2007 edition) put out by the liberal National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, which registered a sharp rise in such violence in 2003-05, noting the “clear cultural and political factors that contributed” to this, including:

“the all out assault on lesbian and gay relationships through anti-same-sex



Gay rights activists march in New York City on first anniversary of Stonewall “riots” against brutal police attack.

marriage initiatives across the country and at the federal level, the reaction of the religious and political right to the Supreme Court’s striking down of sodomy laws, and religious backlash to the high visibility of LGBT people in popular culture.”

The Nuclear Family and Homosexual Oppression

Attacks on homosexuals do not just stem from a few bad journalists, right-wing politicians or plain and simple ignorance. They are rooted in the capitalist system! Their origins lie with the rise of class society, the development of capitalism and the consolidation of the nuclear (bourgeois) family. As explained by Friedrich Engels in his classic book *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, the division of society into classes was interwoven historically with the subjugation of women, the central institution of which is the patriarchal family. For the capitalists who became the ruling class of modern times, the family was a tool ensuring that their private property was safeguarded and passed from one generation to the next through the male lineage. The home became women’s “domestic sphere,” with wives charged with supplying and rearing a male heir to inherit this property. Working-class women were subjected to double oppression, supplying cheap labor to factories as well as housework and child-rearing to bring up new generations of wage slaves.

Thus the enforcement of the family was (and remains) crucial to the capitalist system as a whole. The capitalist, in order to make sure the heir being produced was *his* and not the mailman’s, enforced monogamy; and women, with the institution of marriage, became the sole “property” of men. Ensuring the reproductive value of women in producing heirs for the capitalists and workers for the factories required bans, prejudices and superstitions against sexual activity outside of marriage and procreation. The bourgeois family gave rise to what historians have called the institutionalization of heterosexuality, including categorizing homosexuality as a “unnatural.” Sodomy bans were made into laws punishing a “type” of person who committed such acts. Many writers over the past decades have discussed this process from the now-fashionable Michel Foucault to John Boswell’s essay “Revolutions, Universals and Sexual Categories” in Martin Duberman et al., *Hidden From History* [1989].

As those who practiced same-sex rela-

tions were being demonized and driven to the fringes of society, a movement championing their rights began to emerge. Emerging in late 19th-century Germany, where the radical labor movement was growing, it demanded the abolition of anti-homosexual laws like Germany’s infamous Paragraph 175, which criminalized sex between men and was only abolished in 1994. Among its leaders were Karl Maria Kertbeny, who coined the term *homosexual*, and Magnus Hirschfeld, who later founded the first homosexual rights organization, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee. Socialists such as the gay British poet Edward Carpenter, German Social Democratic Party leader August Bebel (who had been a close friend of Karl Marx) and others were among the most vocal opponents of bourgeois campaigns against homosexuality. A *cause célèbre* was the notorious 1895 trial and imprisonment of the Irish playwright Oscar Wilde. While serving a prison sentence that broke his health, Wilde – who also considered himself a socialist – wrote his famous poem “The Ballad of Reading Gaol,” portraying the violence and degradation imposed by the jails of “civilized” British capitalism.

Bolshevism vs. Stalinism

It was the October 1917 Revolution in Russia that opened a new historical chapter, emboldening and lifting to their feet those persecuted under capitalism. Led by the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, the new Soviet state immediately abolished the tsarist empire’s laws against homosexuality. This went hand in hand with measures towards women’s emancipation unequalled in any capitalist country, as the Bolsheviks sought to lay the material basis for overcoming the oppressive nuclear family.

While some anti-communist gay historians have claimed otherwise, the Bolsheviks’ “decriminalization of homosexuality was not an incidental by-product of broader legal reforms, but a conscious act of state policy,” as David F. Greenberg noted in his book, *The Construction of Homosexuality* [1988]. This is underlined by official Soviet declarations of “the absolute noninterference of the state and society into sexual matters” except where there is “force or duress,” as stated by the head of the Moscow Institute of Social Hygiene. The latter also wrote in 1923 that “Homosexuality, sodomy and various other forms of sexual gratification set forth in European legislation as offences against public morality are treated by Soviet legislation exactly as is so called ‘natural’ intercourse.”

In the same year, the Soviet Commissar of Health visited Hirschfeld’s Institute of Sex Research in Berlin, where he spoke about the Bolshevik regime’s decriminalization of homosexuality. In 1926 the Soviets invited Hirschfeld to Moscow and Leningrad. It is also significant that the revolutionary government’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Grigori Chicherin, was openly gay and had been closely associated with important homosexual cultural figures like Sergei Diaghilev and the poet Mikhail Kuzmin.

Key figures of the Harlem Renaissance who were drawn to the liberating message of the Russian Revolution, like Langston Hughes and Claude McKay, were also involved in Harlem’s lively gay cultural scene, as discussed in works like A.B. Christa Schwarz’s *Gay Voices of the Harlem Renaissance* (2003) and the films *Looking for Langston* (1988) and *Brother to Brother* (2004). Important campaigners for gay rights came out of a number of Communist parties, such as Harry Hay, founder of the first gay rights group in the U.S., the Mattachine Society, later followed by the courageous lesbian rights pioneers of the Daughters of Bilitis. Witch hunts against “commies” often combined with crusades against homosexuals (the “lavender scare”), whose supposed moral weakness was deemed a threat to “national security.”

While the Bolshevik Revolution was a beacon for freedom struggles around the world, Russia’s poverty and economic backwardness, compounded by years of war, encirclement and intervention by 14 capitalist powers, led to the revolution’s degeneration. Joseph Stalin led the political take-over by a privileged, nationalist bureaucracy that sought to bury Lenin’s program of international socialist revolution. Reanimating social conservatism on a wide range of fronts, the Stalinist bureaucracy proclaimed the family a “unit of socialism” and re-criminalized homosexuality as well as abortion. Stalinist parties around the world echoed bourgeois homophobia – a vile tradition that some continue to this day. This is the polar opposite of Bolshevism’s commitment to mobilize the power of the working class against every form of oppression.

Four decades after Lenin and Trotsky led the Russian workers to power, the Cuban Revolution inflicted a humiliating defeat on Yankee imperialism in its own “backyard.” Millions around the world were inspired by Cuba’s advances in health, education and many other fields. Yet Stalinist homophobia again reared its ugly head as a manifestation of the bureaucratic deformation of the Cuban workers state, as gays and lesbians faced purges, prejudice and campaigns of incarceration. Interestingly, in recent years a campaign against homophobia has been carried out by Mariela Castro, director of the government’s National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX) and daughter of Raúl Castro. Among the center’s proposals is that Cuba become the first Caribbean country to recognize gay and lesbian couples’ civil and inheritance rights, and that its free medical system cover surgery for transsexuals.

Stonewall and After

The civil rights movement, the Cuban Revolution and the Vietnam War paved the way for new social struggles in the 1960s. The year 1968 began with the Tet Offensive by the National Liberation Front (Vietcong), followed by ten million French workers occupying factories and raising the red flag, mass student protests in Mexico and upheavals on U.S. college campuses. The looming defeat of Washington’s dirty colonial war on Indochina brought, among other

things, the legalization of abortion (though not the elementary right to free abortion on demand), which anti-woman reactionaries have been trying to overturn ever since.

This was the context for the events that erupted on in June 1969 after a police raid on the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Greenwich Village. Used to harassing, abusing and shaking down the patrons of gay and lesbian nightspots, the cops were taken aback when those at the Stonewall defended themselves. The yellow press pumped out bigotry with headlines like “Homo Nest Raided, Queen Bees Are Stinging Mad” (*Daily News*, 6 July 1969). Today, respectability-seeking history texts often tone down the fact that Stonewall was an all-out street battle lasting four days. Hundreds of people, many of them young black and Puerto Rican gays, repeatedly drove the cops to retreat, using rocks, cobblestones, bricks, bottles, even Molotov cocktails.

Echoing the black power slogan (first launched by activists fed up with Martin Luther King-style pacifism), that of “gay power” was coined by activists shaped by the New Left conception each sector of the oppressed was responsible for fighting its own oppression. In contrast, Marxists seek to build a genuine revolutionary party that, as Lenin put it in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), acts as a “tribune of the people ... able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears,” mo-

bilizing the *power* of the working class, whose emancipation cannot be accomplished except by uprooting all social oppression.

New Left sectoralism opened new channels for the Democratic Party’s time-honored “pork-barrel politics”: piecing off leaders of different groups and “communities” to quell challenges to the status quo. The Democrats, party of the old slaveocracy, of Hiroshima and Vietnam, which hunted reds and gays cheek by jowl with Nixon and J. Edgar Hoover (whose vicious homophobia didn’t stop him from cross-dressing on occasion) – this party of oppression was now remarketed as a gay-friendly “rainbow coalition.” Upwardly mobile former activists sought to climb on the bandwagon, embracing a self-defeating illusion while turning their backs on a struggle for genuine change and leaving working-class and minority gays and lesbians by the wayside. Some even sought to win over the party of Jerry Falwell by forming the Log Cabin Republicans.

As new anti-sex witch hunts descended during the Reagan years, and Bible-thumping crazies clogged the airwaves claiming AIDS was god’s retribution against gays, mainstream gay and lesbian organizations shed remnants of radical vocabulary in a drive for respectability. Symptomatic was their ostracism of groups like the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), condemned for the thought-

crime of criticizing the “age of consent” laws that arbitrarily criminalize consensual sex between people of different age groups. Scandalously, the reactionary hysteria that screams “pedophile!” at such critics is echoed by some on the left (the small Socialist Alternative group is an especially egregious example).

Today, the bloody colonial occupation of Iraq, the endless lies, frauds and attacks on basic rights perpetrated by Bush and his Republican cronies led to the Democrats regaining control of Congress, led by Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco, a bastion of gay and lesbian voters. Despite fatuous illusions peddled by pro-capitalist “progressives” and much of what passes for a left in the United States, the Democrats have kept the war going, because they serve the same master as Bush: the capitalist rulers for whom imperialism is not a “mistaken policy” but the essence of their outmoded social system.

As Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and other Democrats vie to be the next Mass-Murderer-In-Chief of U.S. imperialism, don’t forget what the last Democratic president did. Bill Clinton appealed to homosexuals by promising to overturn the ban on gays in the military, only to sign the vicious “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. (In part this was a ploy to cash in on some gay groups’ attempt to outdo the right in flag-waving. We Marxists oppose discrimination in the military, as

everywhere else, while saying “Down with the bourgeois army – Not a person or a penny for the imperialist war machine!”) Less known is Clinton’s signing of the Defense of Marriage Act of 1996, which bans the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriage and says no state has to recognize such marriages even if officially sanctioned by another state. This is precisely the foundation for the latest crusades against gay marriage, with which Bush and Bible-pounding bigots have emboldened gay-bashers all over the country.

Against all the parties, politicians and apologists of this rotten system – Republicans and Democrats, their electoral satellites and pressure groups like the Greens and Ralph Nader (the multi-millionaire who denounces “illegal aliens”) – we fight to win students and youth to help build a *revolutionary workers party*. As “Solidarity Forever,” one of the most popular working-class anthems from the radical IWW (“Wobblies”) said: “We will bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old.” Those ashes must and will include the oppression of gays and lesbians. Born of class society with its imprisoning nuclear family, stifling hypocritical morality and constant “war of each against all,” that oppression is part of the barbaric system of modern slavery called *capitalism*. Join us in the fight for international socialist revolution! ■

Professors Under Attack – Stop the Witch Hunt Against Ward Churchill

The war on Iraq has escalated to fever pitch the attempts by bigots and censors to shut the mouths of professors and students who speak out against it or tell the truth about the crimes of U.S. imperialism. Here at CUNY we have experienced repeated waves of these assaults on our basic rights (see “Witchhunters Target the ‘Unpatriotic University,’” *Revolution* No. 3, November 2005). The usual scenario is for the *New York Post* and *Sun* to start baying for blood, at which point the administration, trustees, and sometimes the mayor himself join the pack.

In a piece on witch hunts on campuses around the country, Columbia University Professor Joseph Massad wrote: “What is at stake in this assault is not only academic freedom, but scholarship per se” (*CounterPunch*, 3 June 2005), like his own scholarship on his native Palestine and criticisms of Zionism, the apartheid-like basis of the Israeli state. Massad’s Jewish, Arab American and other students defended him against the attempt to run him out orchestrated by a veritable Zion-

ist hit squad that viciously smears any and all opponents or critics of Israel’s oppression as “anti-Semitic” (which Massad most definitely is not). Now the world-famous DePaul University professor Norman Finkelstein, an outspoken critic of Israel whose parents survived the Warsaw Ghetto and Hitler’s concentration camps, has been denied tenure in a blatant case of political censorship.

On July 26, the University of Colorado’s Board of Regents voted to fire Professor Ward Churchill, an activist for Native American rights and former chair of the University of Colorado’s Ethnic Studies Department (where the governor of Colorado helped force him out). Churchill’s case has ramifications across the academic world, as it involved the firing of a *tenured* professor, blatantly because of his political views. Many educators are asking, “Who will be next?”

The witchhunt against Churchill was whipped up over statements he made on the 2001 World Trade Center attack, including his reference to Malcolm X’s remark upon

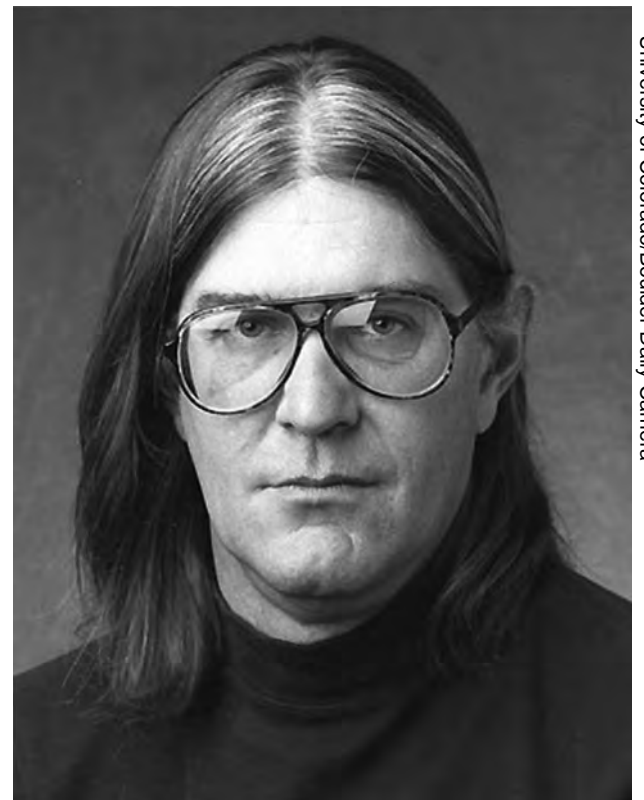
the assassination of President Kennedy that it was a case of “chickens coming home to roost.” Fox news, campus Republicans and rightist academics rushed in to whip up hysteria, twisting Churchill’s remarks to portray him as a supporter of indiscriminate terror and demanding his firing. The campaign was spearheaded by the Association of College Trustees and Alumni, a group founded by hard-right ideologue Lynne Cheney (wife of the vice president) and right-wing Democrat Joe Lieberman. A typical publication of this group, modeled on the Cold War witch hunts of Joseph McCarthy, is called *Defending Civilization: How Our Universities Are Failing America*.

Ward Churchill has been in the cross hairs of the right-wing hit squad for a long time, their vendetta stoked by his well-known books like *Agents of Repression: The FBI’s Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*, *The COINTELPO Papers*, *The Politics of Imprisonment in the United States* and *A Little Matter Of Genocide: Holocaust And Denial In The Americas, 1492 To The Present*. As a supporter of the American Indian Movement, he has told the world about the continued repression of Native Americans at places like Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota (a state whose name, like its land, was stolen from indigenous people), where the average lifespan is one third less than in the rest of the country, the per capita income is \$3,000, teenage suicide is rampant and unemployment often reaches 90 percent.

Although he is an outspoken ideological opponent of Marxism, Churchill links the history of theft and murder against Native Americans to American imperialism’s crimes

from the war against Vietnam to present-day torture of prisoners at Guantánamo. In a February 2005 speech at the University of Colorado, Churchill gave some examples of the history which led him to refer to lower Manhattan as the “technical core of empire,” from the spot where the early Dutch capitalists first ripped off the Indians who supposedly “sold” Manhattan Island for a handful of glass beads to Wall Street’s depredations against the world’s peoples today. At the same time he denounced those who presented him as uncaring towards working people who died in the WTC attacks.

Many academic groups and individuals have spoken out against the witch hunt, among them are Margaret LeCompte, president of the CU-Boulder chapter of the American Association of University Professors, who denounced the supposed “independent investigation” which led to Churchill’s firing, and the entire process of ripping up his tenure, as “a sham.” Indian law specialist Eric Cheyfitz of Cornell University denounced the frame-up of Churchill, including the investigation report, saying “it should be rescinded as a disgrace to scholarship.” Ward Churchill must get his job back with full rights, restitution of back pay and seniority, now!



Ward Churchill

University of Colorado/Boulder Daily Camera



Demonstrator at University of Colorado in Boulder protests right-wing mobilization to silence Professor Ward Churchill.

Joshua Lawton/Daily Camera

Democrats and Republicans, Parties of Imperialist War

“World Can’t Wait”: Reformism through Orange-Colored Glasses

by Erica Torres

“The only way to stop the war: Bush and Cheney out the door,” chanted a cluster of orange-clad participants in a recent Times Square antiwar rally. “2008 IS TOO LATE!” blares a bright orange leaflet handed out at another. If you go to a demonstration, protest or march, chances are you’ll run into some people who will breathlessly tell you to “Wear Orange!” Is this some quirky ad campaign? Not exactly, but close: it’s the latest gimmick of “The World Can’t Wait,” the latest “broad coalition” formed by a very reformist, truly un-communist group that calls itself the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP).*

Looking behind the slogans, we can see the difference between reformism and revolutionary politics. If Bush is impeached, as World Can’t Wait and others request (keep dreaming), and he and Cheney are “out the door,” who would come through that White House door? According to the U.S. Constitution, next in line is the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi. And why the references to 2008? The RCP, a Maoist group coming out of the ’60s, claims not to support the Democratic Party itself. But the whole point of its campaign is to pretend that Bush and the Republicans are *the* cause of war and to hook up with those who yearn for the return of “better days” with Hillary, Obama or another Democrat as U.S. imperialism’s Commander-in-Chief.

But even the color orange reminds us that the horrors of Guantánamo, the carnage against the Iraqi people and the trampling of civil liberties “at home” have been brought by the Democrats *and* Republicans. The Democratic Party voted for the war, the Patriot Act and additional funding to keep the blood flowing in Iraq. And the last Democratic presidential hopeful, John Kerry, called for 40,000 *more* troops to be sent to Iraq, telling *USA Today* (19 April 2004) that “if it requires more troops in order to create the stability that eliminates the chaos, that’s what we have to do.” Make no mistake: the Democrats, like the Republicans, are no friends of the working class, minorities or students who hate the war: they only serve the class interests of their rich capitalist masters!

Revolutionary Marxists know that imperialist war doesn’t just come from some “bad apples” in government, but from the social *system* of capitalism. It must be defeated, and the only way to defeat it once and for all is by uprooting the capitalist-imperialist system through workers revolution. We support any genuine reform that strengthens the working class in its struggle, but we oppose *reformism*, the deadly illusion that war, racism and exploitation can be reformed away by changing a few faces in government or pressuring the government to “reverse its program,” in the words of World Can’t Wait.

The “World Can’t Wait: Drive Out the Bush Regime” coalition follows other RCP creations like “Not In Our Name,” whose names and slogans are deliberately vague so anyone can claim they mean anything at any given time. This latest campaign calls for

people to flood the streets wearing orange “making the invisible a visible material force.” RCP media star Sunsara Taylor issues denunciations of the Democratic Party, but the whole operation is geared to picking up disappointed democrats. WCW was launched after the 2004 elections when many antiwar activists felt demoralized by Bush’s new presidential term, and the impeachment drive was launched after the 2006 elections that gave the Democrats the majority in Congress.

The purpose is to channel struggle against the war in Iraq into a pacifist movement where “everyone” can show their desire to end the war with a “unified” color wardrobe. In practice what does this really do? General liberal sentiments are used as the glue to hold together an alliance with capitalist politicians. Illusions are spread, appealing to the warmongers’ morality and begging them to end this war. With its appeal to unite “all the people who care about the future of humanity and the planet we live on,” where is the *class* struggle that Marx and Lenin insisted is the basis of any effective fight against war and oppression? And whom do these appeals to class collaboration really help? The capitalist rulers, because they help subordinate, blunt and dilute the real power that must be mobilized against the war: that of the working class.

This is an expression of the policy of forming “popular fronts,” in which reformist left groups seek to subordinate the workers movement and opponents of imperialist war to the ruling class through an alliance with one or another bourgeois sector. The World Can’t Wait’s website boasts a bunch of Democratic politicians as supporters, among them U.S. Reps. John Conyers, Jesse L. Jackson Jr., Cynthia McKinney, Major Owens, Bobby Rush and Maxine Waters, Senator (and would-be 2008 presidential candidate) Mike Gravel, Al Sharpton, and even Brig. Gen. (Ret) Janis Karpinski, the commander of the Abu Ghraib torture prison who “saw the light” after she was made a sacrificial lamb by the Pentagon tops!

Popular fronts are a hallmark of Stalinism, the politics of the conservative, nationalist bureaucracy that took over political power in the former Soviet Union in the mid-1920s under the leadership of Joseph Stalin, as a result of the encirclement and isolation of the revolution. Stalinism is the opposite of the program of the Bolshevik Party founded by V.I. Lenin. In his article “Lenin on Imperialism” (February 1939), Leon Trotsky, who together with Lenin led the October 1917 Russian Revolution, pointed out that Lenin emphasized that “abstract propaganda for peace” is “one of the ways of fooling the working class.” Under capitalism, “especially in its imperialist stage, wars are inevitable” and can only be ended by “a number of revolutions,” Lenin insisted. Lenin and Trotsky founded the Communist International (Comintern) to spread the workers revolution worldwide, but under Stalin it promoted popular-front alliances “for peace, against fascism” and so on, with “democratic” imperialist politicians. Stalin’s line was carried on by Mao Zedong, the RCP’s icon, who even made an “alliance” with Richard Nixon while the U.S. was carpet-bombing Vietnam.

What is really striking is how the RCP’s present-day appeals and gimmicks come from that recipe book. In the 1930s a Comintern



Reformist illusions on the march: World Can’t Wait pleads for imperialists’ Congress to impeach Bush (Washington Heights antiwar protest, August 18).

spokesman named Willi Münzenberg specialized in organizing grand conferences and congresses gathering “people of good will” to tell each that war is bad. One of the most famous was the 1932 Amsterdam Antiwar Congress starring left-liberal French writers Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse. It appealed to “all people, all groups, regardless of their political affiliations” to “join us in the International Congress” against war.

The rhetoric is almost identical to what the RCP-promoted World Can’t Wait and Not In Our Name say today to rope people into allying with class enemies like the Democrats and retired torture-generals in an effort to confuse people into believing that there really is no distinction between us (the working class) and them (the ruling class). This is the real vision of those who want us to see the world through rose- or orange-colored glasses that make our enemies appear to be friends so long as they say “Bush must go.”

As the war goes on despite dozens and hundreds of peace appeals and marches, we need to learn from this history. As Trotsky wrote in his “Declaration to the Antiwar Congress at Amsterdam” (July 1932):

“To condemn war is easy; to overcome it is difficult. The struggle against war is a struggle against the classes which rule society and which hold in their hands both its productive forces and its destructive weapons. It is not possible to prevent war by moral indignation, by meetings, by resolutions, by newspaper articles, and by congresses....

“The propertied classes never cede power without a struggle... *Imperialist war* can be stopped only by *civil war*.... Whoever attempts to put all the programs, all the parties, all the flags into one package in the name of pacifism, that is, of a superficial struggle against war in words, performs the greatest service for imperialism.”

As he explains in the same article, “The principal force against war is the proletariat,” the working class. Today the Internationalist Group/League for the Fourth International is fighting for *workers strikes against the war* and “hot-cargoing” (workers’ refusal to ship or handle) war materiel for the U.S. war and occupation. This is part of the struggle to *defeat* the U.S. imperialist war, which goes together with all the oppression, poverty, police brutality and racism that the multiethnic working class faces at the hands of this system.

CUNY students can play an important role in this struggle. As sons and daughters of the working class (and often workers ourselves) who are at the biggest urban public university in the country, in the heart of the financial capital of imperialism, we have a lot to contribute to a real struggle against war and oppression, bringing the Trotskyist program into student protests and antiwar events, helping spread the call for workers strikes against the war, and above all winning new forces to the cause of international socialist revolution. Showing the difference between reformist illusions and the revolutionary program is a crucial part of that effort. ■

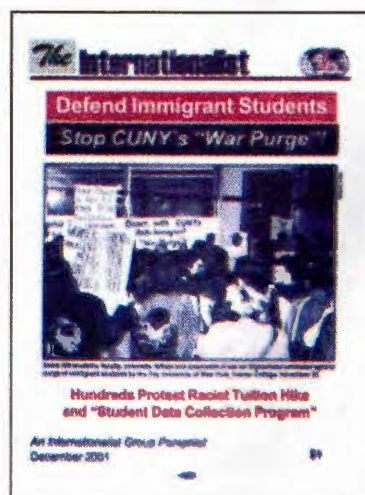
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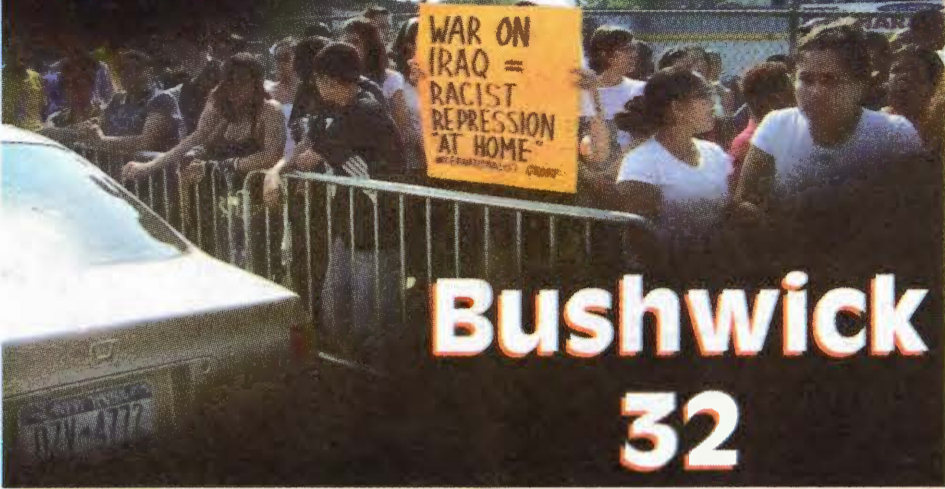
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Imperialist War Abroad, Racist Repression and Censorship "At Home"

Defend the

Bushwick 32



Internationalist photo

Students, teachers and community activists rallied outside the 83rd police precinct in Brooklyn on July 9 (see photo above) to demand that all charges be dropped against the "Bushwick 32." These black and Latino high-school and college students – some just 13 years old – were arrested while peaceably walking to the L train to attend the wake of a friend murdered in street violence. With guns drawn, cops handcuffed them and took them to the precinct house, where they were charged with "unlawful assembly." Some were jailed for a day and a half, even denied food or water.

As usual when they want to cover up their racist profiling and brutality (remember Sean Bell!), the cops' story keeps changing, as they try one lie after another ("suspected gang activity," "rampaging" and so forth). Columnist Bob Herbert wrote in the *New York Times* (26 May):

"Some of the youngsters were carrying notes from school saying that they were allowed to be absent to attend the wake. There is no evidence that I've been able to find – other than uncorroborated statements by the police – that the teenagers were misbehaving in any way."

A study by the New York Civil Liberties Union, *Criminalizing the Classroom* (March 2007) connects police brutality on the streets with repression in the schools. Along with corporatization and privatization of public

schools come the metal detectors, the stop-and-search operations, the arrests of students and teachers who take a stand in defense of their students. "War in Iraq = Racist Repression 'At Home'" was the sign a United Federation of Teachers (UFT) member and Internationalist Group supporter carried at the July 9 rally. An Internationalist leaflet distributed at the rally demanded "Cops Out of the Schools! Stop Racist Profiling!"

Among those attending the rally were students from Bushwick Community High School, where last year students and teachers protested the NY Regents Social Studies exam which told students to "state two ways British imperialism would benefit Africans"! Democratic City Councilman Charles Barron was one of the main speakers at the rally, which also received "support" from a black police officers' group. Several speakers appealed to black and Latino cops to "do the right thing" and support the students. But as NYC students experience all the time, the police (black, white, Hispanic or Asian) "protect and serve" this system of racist oppression and inequality. As for the Democrats, they keep the war on Iraq running abroad while chaining workers, minorities and youth to capitalism here. And as long as capitalism continues, so will its offspring, racism and police brutality. We need a revolution, a socialist revolution, to put a stop to it. ■

Lynch Law in Louisiana Free the Jena 6!



Michael David Murphy

While cops and courts do the dirty work "Up North," down South in Louisiana black high-school students in the mainly white town of Jena have been targeted by a frame-up that echoes the infamous Scottsboro case of the 1930s and the whole KKK-infested history of the region.

At Jena High there is a place for white students to sit during recess, under what is called "the white tree." After black students sat there (after asking a school administrator's permission!) on a day in September 2006, three nooses were strung from the tree. Although the principal found three white students responsible for this threat of lynching, the school superintendent said they had just committed a youthful "prank." When black students responded with a sit-in under the tree, the district attorney showed up with a passel of cops, clamped a lockdown on the school and threatened: "I can take your lives away with a stroke of my pen."

This is exactly what he is now trying to do. After the noose incident, racist attacks on Jena's black population escalated; at the high school, a black student who went to a "white" party was beaten. On December 4, allegedly one of the most vocal and threatening campus racists got the worst of it in a campus confrontation. He was taken to the hospital but then showed up at a social event. The response of the DA and cops was to arrest six

black Jena High students and charge them with attempted second-degree murder! The supposed "murder weapon" was the tennis shoes worn by what the prosecutor called "the gang of white boys." The first target of this legal lynching was 16-year-old Mychal Bell; the other five are still awaiting trial.

Parents, friends and supporters of the victims of this racist attack rallied as the trial opened, June 25 (see photo). An all-white jury was brought together, a series of white (and no black) witnesses were called, an incompetent and indifferent public defender called no witnesses at all, and on June 28 Bell was declared guilty of conspiracy and aggravated second-degree battery. The only conspiracy here is that of the white racist "justice" system, backed up by most of the national press which have tried to keep this outrage from public view. Mychal Bell is facing sentencing which could bring up to 22 years in jail.

One year before the Jena case started, the Katrina catastrophe showed that racism in Louisiana is not a local issue or isolated survival of the past. It is the expression of the nation-wide capitalist system in which the lives of black people, immigrants, the poor and working-class are sacrificed to the god of profit. We urge readers and supporters of *Revolution* to publicize the case and the call to *Free Mychal Bell – Drop all charges against the Jena 6!* ■

CUNY Faculty Union Calls for Freedom Now for Mumia Abu-Jamal

The resolution reprinted below, calling for labor action to win freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, was unanimously passed by the Hunter College chapter and Hostos Community College chapter executive board of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), the union of teaching personnel at the City University of New York. Jamal is the former Black Panther and renowned radical journalist who has sat on Pennsylvania's death row for the past 25 years, for a murder he did not commit. Mumia is an innocent man framed up by the racist capitalist injustice system.

The Hunter and Hostos chapters introduced the motion at the PSC's April 19 Delegate Assembly, for approval by the union as a whole. However, the social-democratic leadership had the motion tabled to the PSC executive committee to be "redrafted," while vowing it would not be watered down.

A political battle erupted at the following Delegate Assembly, on May 31, when the PSC leadership brought in a new text which sought to gut the original motion, removing the reference to the NYPD murder of Sean Bell as well as the call for union

action. Outrageously, it sought to replace the demand for Mumia's freedom with the call for "a new and fair trial" – that is, an appeal for confidence in what it called the "appropriate legal authorities."

This set off a heated debate, beginning with the PSC activist (a supporter of the Internationalist Group) who had introduced the original motion in April. Nelson Mandela sat in a South African jail for a quarter century, he noted, but no one called for a "new trial" by the apartheid courts – the call was to "Free Mandela," period. (Another PSC member and IG supporter, who sat through Mumia's 1995 appeal hearing and sought to report on how the courts trampled on Jamal's rights, was repeatedly denied the floor.) Several delegates spoke passionately against "the idea that a black radical journalist can get justice out of the court system" and referred to the government's murderous COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence Program) against Mumia and other former Black Panthers.

Proponents of the "redrafted" motion fought a losing battle. One chapter chair-

woman summed up the sentiment of many when she called on the delegates to "have the courage" to "do the right thing" by calling forthrightly for Jamal's freedom. In a victory for Mumia's partisans, the outcome was a 2/3 vote in favor of striking out the calls for a "new and fair trial" and replacing them with the original demand, "Freedom now for Mumia Abu-Jamal." It is more essential than ever to translate this into labor action as outlined in the original motion below.

RESOLUTION ON MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

WHEREAS, the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal is a focus and symbol of the fight against racism and state repression, which is keenly felt by large numbers of our coworkers, students and others in light of events like the Sean Bell case; and

WHEREAS, his appeal is before the federal circuit court, and this could be the last judicial decision in the case; and

WHEREAS, dozens of unions and labor councils around the country have come out for Jamal's freedom, insisting that an in-



© Lou Jones

Mumia Abu-Jamal

nocent man should not pass another day in prison for his radical views; and

WHEREAS, as far away as Brazil, the Rio de Janeiro state teachers union held a work stoppage for Mumia's freedom in 1999, at the same time as the SF longshore workers' stoppage for Mumia, and the Oakland teachers' union has held actions for this crucial cause as well; and

WHEREAS, an injury to one is an injury to all;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Professional Staff Congress calls for freedom now for Mumia Abu-Jamal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the PSC shall take up the fight for coordinated labor action to free Mumia Abu-Jamal (including strikes and work stoppages) with unions around the city.

**Workers Strikes Against the War! Hot-Cargo War Materiel!
Defeat US Imperialism With Workers' Revolution!**

Boston: How To End The War?

Reformist Movement Leaders Have No Answer

By Fred Bergen

The Greater Boston Stop the Wars Coalition (STWC) is organizing a meeting for Friday, May 18, headlined “Ending the War: Peace Movement Leaders Ask, ‘Which Way Forward?’” The panelists, ranging from self-proclaimed socialists to representatives of beltway lobbying groups and the Quakers, are a representative sample of the “peace movement” nationwide. Although the movement is divided between a variety of coalitions, both nationally and locally, they all have the same basic political makeup. You have one or two socialist groups at the core posing as “just us peace folks”; they all put forward a minimum “democratic” program aimed at attracting support from mainstream liberals; and they all manage to drag one or another bourgeois politician onto the speakers platform for their demonstrations to gain the desired veneer of “respectability.” What none of these coalitions have is a program to mobilize power to stop the warmongers in their tracks: the power of the working class.

Not that they ignore workers, of course. They all want to include “labor” as one more constituency in their “broad” movements. Socialist Alternative (SAlt), which leads the Boston-area STWC, in an article calling to “Build the Antiwar Movement” in its newspaper *Justice* (April-May 2007) talks of the need to “broaden the antiwar opposition into the working class.” Yet what’s needed is not to get some “labor leaders” to sign on to toothless petitions begging the Democratic Congress to withdraw troops from Iraq, or even to have union contingents in peace parades in Washington or locally, but to organize workers *action* against the *imperialist* war on a *class* basis. An article on the SAlt web site claims that the Boston STWC, is “independent of the Democrats and has a democratic-making process.” Yet while national groups like United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC), ANSWER and the rest may get the big-name Democrats like Jesse Jackson, Dennis Kucinich or Cynthia McKinney. STWC gets Boston city councilors like Felix Arroyo and Chuck Turner. The basic politics are the same.

For decades a host of opportunist socialists have organized such “coalitions” as *popular fronts*, which chain the workers organizations and sectors of the oppressed to would-be bourgeois “allies.” The term *popular front* was coined by the followers of Joseph Stalin in the mid-1930s as the once-revolutionary Communist parties turned into vulgar reformists who do not seek to overthrow capitalist rule, only to “reform” the unreformable. As a spokesman for the American Trotskyists wrote in the 1930s:

“Most significant of all is the application of the People’s Front policy to ‘antiwar work.’ Through a multitude of pacifist organizations, and especially through the directly controlled American League against War and Fascism, the Stalinists aim at the creation of a ‘broad, classless, People’s Front of all those opposed to war.’ The class col-

laborationist character of the People’s Front policy is strikingly revealed through the Stalinist attitude in these organizations. They rule out in advance the Marxist analysis of war as necessarily resulting from the inner conflicts of capitalism and therefore genuinely opposed only by revolutionary class struggle against the capitalist order; and, in contrast, maintain that all persons, from whatever social class or group, whether or not opposed to capitalism, can ‘unite’ to stop war.”

—James Burnham, *The Peoples Front – The New Betrayal* (1937)

STWC “independent of the Democrats”? Let’s see. According to the article on the Socialist Alternative web site quoted above, a March 24 STWC protest, SAlt members chanted, “What the hell is Congress for? Cut the funding, stop the war!” What the hell is Congress for? It’s a legislative body of the *capitalist ruling class* whose job is to rubber-stamp imperialist wars, outlaw strikes and the like, as any real Marxist could tell you! By playing to democratic illusions, SAlt’s slogans subordinate antiwar protesters to the Democratic party. History has shown that if the imperialists are not defeated by workers revolution, the end of one bloody adventure only marks the beginning of the next. Each imperialist slaughter is decried by protests that implore the rulers to redirect the billions spent on senseless carnage to social needs (“books not bombs,” “jobs not war,” etc.), which invariably and *inevitably* fall on deaf ears because *you can’t stop war under capitalism*.

If we don’t attack the root cause of imperialist war, today’s youthful anti-war protesters will be shuffling from one anti-war “movement” to the next until they are drafted or exchange their sneakers for walkers. The struggle against war is necessarily a *class* struggle, because it is the capitalist drive for ever-expanding markets and resources, the competition between the great imperialist powers for domination over the oppressed and colonized peoples, and inter-imperialist struggles for world hegemony that are behind the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. That’s why we of the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International insist that it is necessary to *fight imperialist war with class war*, and that we must *defeat imperialism* and its endless wars through *international socialist revolution*.

The only “anti-war movement” that succeeded in stopping an imperialist war was the Russian revolution of 1917, led by the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky. For the Bolsheviks, ending the war was inextricably tied to proletarian revolution: getting to the root cause of imperialist war by turning the imperialist war into a civil war of the oppressed against their oppressors. Without the Bolsheviks’ uncompromising stance for the defeat of their “own” capitalist government and for the defense of the weaker nations oppressed by their government, they could never have ended the imperialist slaughter of World War I.

“Bring the Troops Home”?



New Orleans, September 2005: SWAT teams and National Guard sent to “shoot to kill” survivors of Hurricane Katrina. (Photo: Eric Gay/AP)



Detroit, July 1967: 101st Airborne and National Guard troops sent to crush black uprising against police brutality. IG calls to mobilize workers’ power to defeat U.S. imperialism. (Photo: © Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University)

Today’s fake-socialists pursue the opposite policy: they build a class-collaborationist antiwar movement dedicated to pressuring “their own” imperialist government, rather than propagandizing to the workers to sweep away the rule of capital. The opportunists’ first and only consideration is not “what will it take to end the war,” but “what will be acceptable to our liberal and reformist allies in the ‘broad’ movement.” These cynics end up reinforcing the bourgeoisie in its moment of greatest crisis: they are obstacles to socialist revolution.

In its pretense of being “independent of the Democrats,” what is Socialist Alternative’s “alternative”? In an article titled “Time to Break with the Democratic Party – Build an Antiwar, Anti-corporate Alternative!” (*Justice*, March-April 2007) SAlt writes: “Imagine if the main leaders of the antiwar, immigrant rights, civil

rights, and women’s organizations also threw their resources and authority into building a new broad-based, antiwar, anti-corporate, working-class political party” (*Justice*, March-April 2007). In the first place, the present *misleaders* of all these organizations are bound hand-and-foot to capitalist politics. To call on them to set up a new party is to spread illusions – anything they set up is just going to be a pressure group on the Democrats. Moreover, most antiwar, civil rights, women’s and immigrant rights organizations are themselves bourgeois organizations or coalitions. The purpose of SAlt’s whole elaborate formula is to dance around and water down the straightforward call for a revolutionary workers party. And the real content of their article is a barely-disguised plea for Ralph Nader to run for president again in 2008.

In 2000 and 2004, Socialist Alternative

**Break with the “Antiwar” Popular Front!
Build a Revolutionary Workers’ Party!**

endorsed Nader, pitching him as an “anti-war,” “anti-corporate” candidate against the Democrats Al Gore and John Kerry. “Anti-war”? Ralph Nader’s 2004 election platform called for the “development of an appropriate international peace-keeping force.” Like NATO “peacekeeping” forces in Bosnia and Kosovo? What about Iraq? “We want to have a responsible six-month withdrawal of the US military and corporate occupation,” Nader told NPR on 9 July 2004 in a debate with Democrat Howard Dean. These days, that would put Nader to the right of some Congressional Democrats, roughly in the camp of the war hawk and former Marine general John Murtha. Some “antiwar” alternative! Nader is also an immigrant-basher, opposing calls for legalization of undocumented workers “because you are giving a green light to cross the border illegally!” Nader made this disgusting statement in an interview with the fascistic Pat Buchanan in the latter’s magazine, *American Conservative* (21 June 2004). Nader’s support for the “anti-globalization movement” is based on national-chauvinist protectionism, a platform which “unites” him (and Socialist Alternative) with the likes of Buchanan.

It is from such “movements” that SAlt intends to fashion its “broad” “anti-corporate” “alternative” to the Democrats. To unite the multinational working class in struggle against imperialist war, we need an internationalist, working-class revolutionary program. The Internationalist Group says: No to protectionism, yes to proletarian internationalism! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

Socialist Alternative constantly seeks to fudge the class line, and nowhere is this more clear than over the question of the police. A week after the September 11 terrorist attacks, in a statement calling to “End the Cycle of Terrorism” (how “even-handed”!) SAlt wrote, “If the police fail to protect immigrants, Arabs, or Muslims from violent attacks, defense committees should be formed...” *If the cops fail to protect immigrants?! Hold on a minute.* The police are the armed fist of the capitalist state, and their job, before and after September 11, has been to keep the “peace” of racist exploitation, which includes persecuting, imprisoning and even murdering blacks, immigrants and workers. In response to the NYPD’s assassination of Sean Bell on 26 November 2006, SAlt’s refrain (in a 17 December 2006 leaflet) was: “Establish independent, elected labor-community bodies to investigate charges of police abuse and review police activities with powers to meaningfully punish misconduct.” The experience of “civilian review boards” and “cop watch” programs is that they are toothless devices to divert and demobilize mass protests against racist police atrocities.

“Labor-community bodies” to “meaningfully punish” killer cops?! Not without a revolution. As Karl Marx noted in drawing the lessons of the 1871 Paris Commune, “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes” (*The Civil War in France*). This understanding is a key difference separating revolutionary communists from social-democratic reformists like Socialist Alternative who think that it is possible to deal with racist cop terror by pressuring the institutions of the capitalist state. These are just the sort of dangerous illusions that the German Social Democrats had who thought that the police could “protect” workers against the threat of fascism. When Hitler came to power and used this repressive apparatus to jail and kill hundreds of thousands of socialists and communists and to murder millions of Jews in the Nazi extermination camps, they all paid for the reformists’ suicidal illusions.

Socialist Alternative and the Stop the Wars Coalition are not the only peace group active in the Boston area. The Workers World Party (WWP) and its International

Action Center (IAC) periodically hold anti-war demonstrations. In Boston, the WWP/IAC have joined with some priests and local bourgeois politicians in the Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Coalition. Trading on the civil rights movement icon’s name, in the fall of 2005 they organized an event to scold black and Latino youth to “stop the violence.” WWP recently hailed the non-binding resolution passed by the Boston City Council on February 14 to “support our troops by bringing them home” as an “anti-war” resolution. Yet this resolution states, “Whereas, officials of the Boston Police Department have testified at City Council hearings that a major difficulty in maintaining the number of officers on the streets at 1990 levels results from the cut backs in federal resources that were provided during that period.” So WWP/IAC wants to “bring ‘our’ troops home” so they can trade in their rifles and fatigues for pistols and badges!

Any serious opponent of imperialist war must ask what are they accomplishing by building the STWC, the Rosa Parks Committee or any of the other “antiwar coalitions”? In reality, they chain the oppressed to the “liberal” wing of the ruling class, the ones who currently bemoan “Bush’s war” in Iraq but yesterday hailed Clinton’s wars on Yugoslavia. All they are doing, in short, is to give war a chance. Today the Democrats have become the main war party, because for all their belly-aching about “setting a date” to “begin” withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq (but not Afghanistan), it is their votes in Congress that fund the imperialist war machine. This what the popular front does, just as in the 1930s when it lined up the militant workers of the

CIO industrial unions behind Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Democratic Party and ultimately the second imperialist world war.

The tactic of the united front, as developed by Lenin and Trotsky’s Communist International, sought to bring mass working-class organizations into struggle around common, immediate goals, and to expose the treachery of the reformist leaders of the workers’ organizations who opposed the struggle. This requires that the revolutionary elements retain their full political program and openly criticize the reformists. “Antiwar coalitions” like STWC (or UFPI, TONC, ANSWER, etc.) are something else entirely: the pseudo-socialist organizations that do the donkey work agree with the churches, non-profits and various irrelevant paper organizations on a lowest common denominator program in the framework of bourgeois politics: “bring the troops home,” for “no (American) blood for (Iraqi) oil.” This program *cannot* stop this and future wars, because it accepts the basic capitalist framework that generates endless war.

The Internationalist Group/League for the Fourth International, in contrast, calls for workplace meetings, labor protests, walkouts, and strikes against the war. We call on workers in the key shipping industries to refuse to move, that is, “hot-cargo”

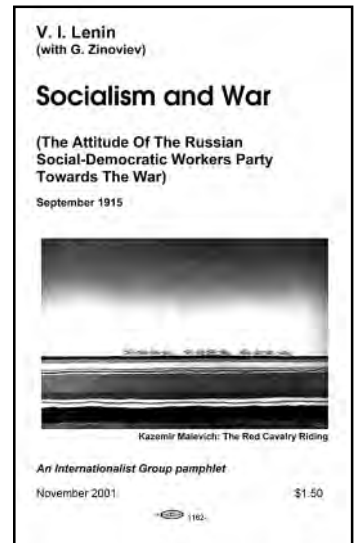
supplies for the war. We say that the only way to defeat imperialism and free the world from the threat of war is through socialist revolution. It is necessary to break with the Democrats and *all* the bourgeois parties and politicians, like the Greens and the Naders, and to oust the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats and other misleaders who lead the oppressed to embrace their oppressors. There is no half-way solution: the hard truth is that there is no “alternative” to, no short-cut to get around the struggle for a revolutionary workers’ party. The mission of the Internationalist Group/League for the Fourth International is to build the nucleus of this party. ■

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Hands Off Víctor Toro! Stop the Deportations!

On July 6, immigrant rights activist Víctor Toro was arrested by the U.S. Border Patrol. Toro, who is widely known for his work in the South Bronx, was detained with other undocumented immigrants during a *migra* (immigration police) sweep of an Amtrak train at Rochester, NY, and later transferred to a detention center in Auburn. Family, friends and supporters were able to post the \$5,000 bond demanded by the feds, but he now faces deportation. *U.S. government hands off compañero Toro!*

As a prominent leftist in Chile, Víctor Toro was targeted for death by the junta that seized power on 11 September 1973 in the CIA-backed military coup of General Augusto Pinochet. Named one of the “13 most wanted men” in the country, he was arrested and for the next couple of years he was tortured over and over. He was exiled to Europe and was warned never to come back. In 1978 the military junta declared him dead in one of the official Chilean newspapers, thus making him a stateless person.

After trying his luck in different countries of Europe, Cuba and Mexico, in 1984 he crossed the U.S. border and established himself in one of the poorest sectors of the South Bronx, N.Y. In 1987, Victor along with his companion Nieves Ayress, both ex-political prisoners, opened up the community center *Vamos a la Peña del Bronx*. For more than two decades these relentless community activists fought for immigrants’ rights, held classes in the prevention of HIV/AIDS, provided shelter for women who faced domestic violence, and allowed street artists and musicians to use the center for their activities.

Because of the different political activities at the center Victor and his supporters were constantly harassed by the police and on various occasions he was arrested and

spent time in the 40th Precinct of the NYPD. After many years of hard struggle, in 2003 La Peña was evicted by the police in tandem with the landlords of the building where the center had stood for a decade.

When *La Peña del Bronx* was located near Hostos Community College, Victor and Nieves opened up the doors of the community center for the Internationalist Group to hold the memorial concert for our comrade Fernando Lopez, an immigrant worker who died in a tragic train accident (see *The Internationalist* No. 7, April-May 1999). The IG along with various CUNY student activists and trade unionists also held an event for the campaign against CUNY’s anti-immigrant war drive (see main article in this issue).

The U.S. imperialists are bent on silencing those who courageously dare to speak in defense of the millions of undocumented immigrant workers living in the country. Just recently, Elvira Arellano, the undocumented immigrant worker turned activist who sought refuge inside a Chicago church for a year, was arrested in Los Angeles on August 19, by the utterly racist LAPD. Later that night the hated *migra* announced:

“Officers in Los Angeles today arrested criminal alien and immigration fugitive Elvira Arellano...[she] is being processed for removal to Mexico based upon a deportation order originally issued by a federal immigration judge in 1997...Arresting and removing criminal aliens is one of ICE’s top enforcement priorities and the agency will continue

to pursue these cases vigorously” (*Chicago Tribune*, 19 August).

Elvira is now in Mexico. For Victor Toro, though, it will be a very different story if he is deported. As mentioned above, he is officially dead in Chile and this presents a very real threat if he was to be sent back there. He could face arrest or worse at the hands of members of Pinochet’s death squads, who still go free. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs demand that all the charges against Victor Toro be dropped!

Asking the U.S. imperialists to grant him asylum is not enough, we demand *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*. As demonstrators chanted recently in Los Angeles (and IG supporters have chanted for years): *Arriba, abajo, ¡la migra p’al carajo!* (Immigration police, go to hell). ■



Victor Toro

Internationalist photo

Down with the Racist Witch Hunt at CCNY!

Defend the Morales/Shakur Center!

The CUNY Internationalist Clubs stand with the City College Guillermo Morales/Assata Shakur Center against the vicious witch hunt launched by the gutter press and seconded by City University Chancellor Matthew Goldstein. In the dead of the night on December 12, in an act of official vandalism, CUNY officials took down the sign over the Morales/Shakur Center. Blatantly violating students' rights, CCNY threatened disciplinary action against students if they replace the sign.

Is it any coincidence that in the midst of massive outrage over the NYPD murder of Sean Bell, the racist *Daily News* tries to whip up a frenzy over a student center that has existed for 17 years and is named after the courageous black militant they lyingly call a "terrorist" and "cop-killer"? Of course not! But this cynical ploy will not work.

Like the millions of working-class, black, Latino and immigrant people who keep this city running, CUNY students will not be intimidated or cowed into silence in the face of murderous cops, imperialist wars or crude attempts at censorship. We will not forget Sean Bell! Assata yes – *Daily News*/Administration witch-hunters, never!

Playing second fiddle to the rabid racists and warmongers of the *News*, the CUNY administration is fulfilling the role assigned to it by its ruling-class masters. City University is run by hard-line rightist ideologues who want to gut public education. (Board of Trustees chairman Benno Schmidt, a notorious union-buster at Yale, is also an education profiteer as president of Edison Schools.) Once again they show the hollowness of their pious claims to uphold "free speech and academic freedom."

But this is far from the first time. In Fall 2001, Rupert Murdoch's tabloid sewer press, the *New York Post*, launched a hue and cry against City College professors and students who dared to hold a teach-in discussing U.S. imperialism. As Bush and his Democratic yes-men used 9/11 to rev up their terrorist "war on terror," launching dirty colonial wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, Goldstein & Co. jumped to attention like wooden marionettes.

Shortly after, when a racist Queens politician targeted "undocumented" immigrant students at CUNY, grotesquely claiming they were a "security" threat, the Administration more than doubled tuition for these students in an "anti-immigrant war purge." The CUNY Internationalist Clubs grew out of the protests initiated by the Internationalist Group which mobilized labor, immigrant and student groups, largely reversing this attack.

Sinister right-wing anti-communist fingerman David Horowitz also targeted City University students and professors in his Internet smear sheet, *FrontPage*, labeling CUNY "The Unpatriotic University." When *FrontPage*, upstate right-wingers, cops and FBI "associates" complained about Susan Rosenberg, a one-time supporter of the Weather Underground and adjunct at John Jay College, the college president simply "terminated" her.

Later, CUNY officials tried to set up "Abu Ghraib on the Hudson" with a Homeland Security certificate program at Borough of Manhattan Community College, but had to cancel it after exposure of the sinister program led to student and faculty protest (see *Revolution* No. 3, November 2005).

The latest censorship and threatened purge was touched off by one Sergey Kadinsky, a right-wing fanatic who is well known at City College for spending his time

trying to provoke conflicts with leftist and activist groups on campus. Indeed, in a recent posting Kadinsky states his wish that vigilantes would "visit my campus to teach these leftists a lesson in justice."

The phony indignation from the *News* and CUNY administration is aimed at the student center formed in 1989 by activists who successfully mobilized against a tuition hike and named the center after a Puerto Rican independence fighter and Assata Shakur (Joanne Chesimard), the former Black Panther who is the aunt and godmother of the late Tupac Shakur.

Sister Assata was a victim of the racist injustice system after she was part of a group ambushed by state troopers in New Jersey, the world capital of racial profiling. Acquitted three times, she was eventually railroaded to prison, but escaped and found refuge in Cuba, where she has continued to speak out against U.S. imperialism and its system of racial oppression.

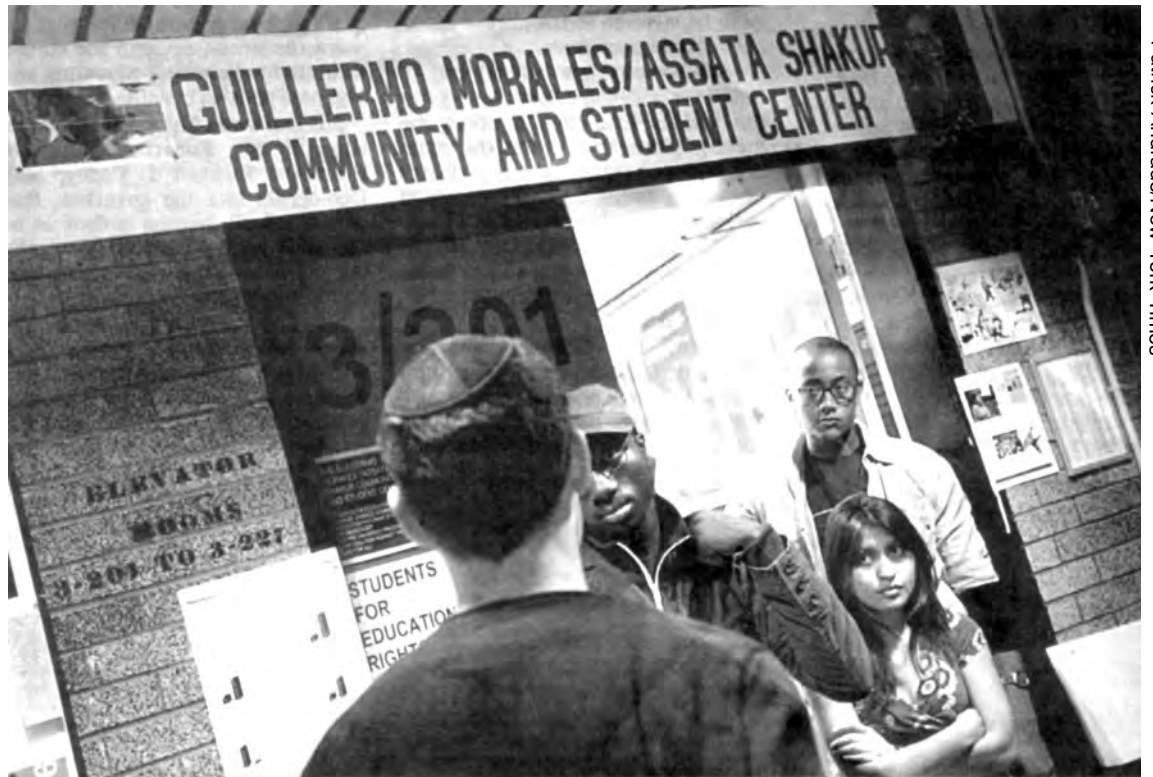
The *Daily News* smear calls Shakur a "terrorist," but the real terrorists are the United States government and its cops who murdered 38 Black Panthers. Some, like Fred Hampton, they shot in their beds, others they assassinated at night on the streets or in broad daylight on the highways as they tried to do with Assata.

The current censorship comes shortly after the U.S. Congress voted 336-31 to condemn the French city of St. Denis for naming a street after radical journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, another former Black Panther, who has spent more than two decades on Pennsylvania's death row after being framed up for the death of a Philadelphia police officer.

Celebrating "terrorists"? NYC's Columbus Avenue is named after the man who initiated the enslavement and subjugation of the indigenous peoples of this hemisphere. The capital of this country is named after the slave owner and Indian killer whose interest in independence was largely because the British refused to let him expand his slave plantations as fast as he wanted to. Kennedy Airport is named after the president responsible for the Vietnam War and the Bay of Pigs, who threatened to nuke Cuba. We could go on, but you get the point.

City College authorities have engaged in a genuine vendetta against the Morales/Shakur Center, even hiding a surveillance camera in a smoke detector outside it in 1998. When the campus newspaper *The Messenger* exposed this, the administration shut the paper down. It's nothing new. Back in the days of Joe McCarthy and before, CCNY officials enthusiastically joined the persecutors of "un-American" views.

The witch-hunters in cap and gown feel a deep kinship with gutter press scandal sheets like the *News* and *Post*. They have been the enforcers in the vicious drive to silence professors at Columbia, CUNY and elsewhere who have criticized the Iraq war, the Israeli government's oppression of the Palestinian people, and the ripping up of the



CUNY authorities tore down sign for CCNY students' Morales/Shakur Center after right-wing provocation and smear job in racist *Daily News*.

most basic democratic rights and civil liberties under the USA PATRIOT Act and the so-called "war on terror."

The terrorists are Bush and his co-conspirators (Democrats and Republicans alike) who are waging an imperialist war of occupation, torture and mass murder. The criminals on campus are their military recruiters, who prey on working-class, poor and minority students, as well as those who authorize and carry out military research to help the armed forces hunt down and kill those targeted by the U.S. rulers. As sons and daughters of the working people who make this city run, we will not be cowed, intimidated or censored into silence by latter-day McCarthyites.

Those who should be shut down are the Administration and Board of Trustees, who are a clear and present danger to the most basic rights of students, faculty and campus workers and are proven enemies of public higher education. They should be replaced by student/teacher/worker control of the campuses, which would promptly restore open admissions and free tuition, and send the military recruiters packing.

Hands Off the Morales/Shakur Center! Assata Yes, *Daily News* Dictatorship Never! Defeat U.S. Imperialism and Its Witch-Hunting Mouthpieces on Campus! CUNY Internationalist Clubs 13 December 2006

**"La lucha obrera no tiene frontera"
(Workers Struggle Has No Borders)**



CUNY Internationalist Clubs, Internationalist Group and others join August 13 action in Williamsburg, Brooklyn supporting immigrant workers' unionization drive organized by IWW Foodstuff Workers Industrial Union. Internationalist Clubs, Internationalist Group and others join August 13 action in Williamsburg, Brooklyn supporting immigrant workers' unionization drive organized by IWW Foodstuff Workers Industrial Union.

Patrick Andrade/New York Times

Internationalist photo

Principal Purged in Censorship Frenzy

An outrageous campaign of censorship, smears and “guilt” by association forced the resignation in August of Debbie Almontaser, principal of the Khalil Gibran Academy, a new middle school which the New York Department of Education had announced as the first to focus on Arabic language and culture. Mayor Bloomberg himself announced the resignation on his weekly radio show, after a months-long campaign against Almontaser sparked, yet again, by the *New York Post*.

The pretext for driving Almontaser out was that she is a leader of a Yemeni American immigrant group that shares office space with an organization called Arab Women Active in Art and Media. So? It turns out this organization sells T-shirts. Horrors! And? Well, it sells a shirt reading “Intifada NYC.” The *intifada* (literally “shaking off”) is the Palestinian rebellion that began in 1987 against the brutal Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Millions of people around the world were inspired by the heroism of Palestinian youth targeted for savage reprisals for throwing rocks at Israeli tanks.

For the witch-hunt crew, any solidarity with the besieged Palestinian people must be demonized, silenced and smeared as support to “terrorism.” (Meanwhile, speaking of T-shirts, we remember the case of the Dearborn High student banned from wearing one that rightly called George Bush an “international terrorist.”) So the shirt was presented as some kind of crime, Almontaser was declared guilty of association with the group selling it, and the foam-flecked frenzy was on.

The United Federation of Teachers should have denounced the censorship, which is a direct threat to every student and teacher in the city. Disgracefully (but predictably), UFT President Randi Weingarten piled on, adding her voice to the gang screaming for blood, saying “maybe [Almontaser] should not be a principal” because she did not jump unconditionally to condemn the shirt, which Weingarten called “warmongering.” *Warmongering* more accurately describes the political legacy of the



Debbie Almontaser

UFT leadership, which for decades displayed an unbounded, fanatical zeal for U.S. foreign policy, from the Cold War and Vietnam to the arming and backing of Israeli-style apartheid (Zionism). Woody Allen’s movie *Sleeper* is about a man who wakes from a coma to find that “a man called Albert Shanker” – the UFT leader who mentored Weingarten – had gotten hold of atom bombs and started World War III.

Internationalist activists remember Almontaser from the weekly protests to “Free the Detainees” that we participated in for months at Brooklyn’s Metropolitan Detention Center after the racist round-ups of Muslim, Arab and South Asian men in the wake of 11 September 2001. A leader of the Arab American Family Support Center, she spoke eloquently about the anguish and deprivation suffered by the families of the detainees (none of whom were ever even charged with involvement in the World Trade Center attack). We condemn the purge of Debbie Almontaser as a threat to the most basic rights of us all. ■

We members of the GI took part in and defended the barricades against the police, while underscoring that street barricades would not be enough to halt the repression, that it would be necessary to mobilize the power of the workers. “They are the ones who make everything move, and they can stop everything by throwing the switch,” we said. On the barricades, we were talking about the communism of Lenin and Trotsky, the working class, etc. One comrade recalls: “Shortly after we began to block the avenue, a truckful of 50 uniformed capital police pulled up. They dismounted and formed a wall between us and the automobiles, who pulled back a bit; several GI supporters and others formed up behind tables that we had brought to prevent the police from breaking the blockade. At one point, a cop beat one of our youngest members on her legs.” That same day, *los internacionalistas* – as we’re known here – organized brigades to visit the electrical workers of a nearby plant to speak to them about the need to mobilize, not just against the repression, but against the privatizations that the government is imposing.

Then the heroic struggle of the teachers and workers of Oaxaca broke out. In September and October of last year, we invited students of the Benito Juárez Autonomous University of Oaxaca (UABJO) to the CCH, where we organized a rally with hundreds of students, and collected funds to aid them. When the teachers of the Section 22 of the SNTE-CNTE (the teachers’ union in Oaxaca) marched from Oaxaca to Mexico City, we went out to accompany them on the last leg of their journey, entering the city together. At the same time, the GI

tried to put into practice our call for a nationwide strike, agitating for the organization of *paros* (“stoppages” or strikes), a number of which we were able to spark on the campus. The first took place on October 26. Contrary to what the anarchists tried to do, the GI emphasized that it was necessary for the workers to play a central role in the work stoppages. So in an assembly of the workers of STUNAM (university workers’ union) on October 30 blockade, the comrades confronted the pro-PRD environment that dominated the meeting. We explained that the principal obstacle to mobilizing the power of the workers was their subjugation to the bourgeoisie through a “popular front” with a bosses’ party, the PRD.

We also emphasized that what was necessary was not a “collective absence” from work, but an active strike of students, teachers and campus workers, that should extend to the entire university and eventually to key sectors of the workers movement. At the evening meeting, this position gained wide support among the workers, who voted unanimously to come out for the strike called for October 31. That night, *internacionalistas* stood guard with a workers’ picket, which in the morning prevented the University police from breaking the strike. That morning we sent brigades to electricity company plants, while one of our comrades led a group of 150 students who went to show their solidarity with the encampment of the Oaxaca teachers outside the national Senate. Some of these students later went with us to the Electrical Workers Union (SME) hall to explain the necessity of these workers going on strike to stop the ominously growing threats of repression in Oaxaca.

Along with all this, there was a marked increase in attacks by *porro* groups at UNAM and other parts of the public education system. The *porros* did not stand with their arms folded given the constant student mobilizations of the past year. They constantly harassed students who participated in protests, and even murdered an activist at the CCH in Naucalpan. These storm troopers, used by the school authorities and many levels of government to control rebellious students, were a legacy of the corporatist control methods of the old PRI government. Despite the changing of the guard in the presidential palace, while the “institutional” state-run “unions” have decided to offer their services to the new bosses of the National Action Party (PAN), today the *porro* gangs serve the politicians of the PRD (which controls the government of the capital city) and the PRI equally. As we had in the past, the GI insisted on the massive



Supporters of the Internationalist Club at CCH-Sur as they marched with Oaxaca teachers last October.

mobilization of students, workers, and teachers to throw the *porros* out of the schools.

During the mobilizations of the month of October against the military invasion of Oaxaca, militants of the GI, together with anarchist activists, organized a rescue operation against the *porros*. What happened was that the students of Preparatory School No. 5 were getting ready to join a march, when they noticed a band of *porros* menacingly awaiting them at the gates of the school. They made calls for help on their cell phones to various schools, alerting them to the situation. When the news reached CCH-Sur, we quickly decided to take a city bus down to pick up the students of Prepa 5... As the bus approached, we gave precise directions to an entry to the campus that was not blocked by the *porros*, where we quickly got them on board the bus. The operation was a complete success, and later the students of both schools joined the march together, while the *porros* were left at the front gate wondering what had happened.

On the basis of this activity together with reading and discussing works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky in our weekly study circle, at the end of November 2006 we formed the Internationalist Committee of CCH-Sur. While discussing, agitating in meetings, participating in street blockades, making barricades, working for and joining in strikes, we have sought to carry out the revolutionary proletarian program of Trotskyism. We have learned that the key is the fight for the independent mobilization of the working class, and that this means struggle against the present leaderships, both of the workers and student movements, who capitulate to or even promote one or another form of class collaboration. We stress the necessity of struggle at all times and in all places against every form of oppression: against the anti-indigenous and anti-black racism which pervades capitalist Mexico, against the brutal machismo that oppresses women and denies the most elemental democratic rights to homosexuals.

We understand that our place is in the struggle of the working class, which is the class with the most at stake in defending and extending public education. We learned – and continue to learn – from books, but also in the struggles of the real world, trying to guide our action and the action of the workers with the lessons of decades of class struggle that are distilled in the program of revolutionary Marxism. We send greetings to readers, friends and comrades new and old with whom we go forward on the path of Lenin and Trotsky! ■

Mexico...

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newspapers: the state police, under the command of Governor Lázaro Cárdenas Batel of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), used their assault rifles to shoot at the workers. On the other side, the workers heroically resisted, finally beating back the police at the cost of two strikers’ lives.

A few days later, on May 4, similar scenes were repeated much closer to the capital, in San Salvador Atenco. In the evening there were reports in the school to the effect that police from the State of Mexico – under orders from the governor, a member of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), and at the call of the PRD mayor of Texcoco – had murdered a youth. The next day, hundreds of PFP agents stormed the town, arresting scores of inhabitants in a clear example of “collective punishment,” and raping many of the women that they took prisoner. On that same day, many CCH students decided to take to the streets near the campus to protest this brutal repression.

Visit the League for the Fourth International/
Internationalist Group on the Internet
<http://www.internationalist.org>

Mexico: Internationalists Fight for Worker-Student Action

By Camila, Julio,
Miranda and Samuel

We helped to found the Internationalist Committee at the College of Sciences and Humanities-South (CCH-Sur), one of the preparatory secondary-school campuses of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), in order to dedicate our best efforts to fighting for a socialist revolution in Mexico, and for the international extension of revolution. We know that this is the task of the working class of the world, which students can join in accomplishing; we also know that the struggle to end exploitation must at the same time put an end to every form of oppression. Key to advancing this struggle is the unity of thought and action, matching what is said to what is done.

Our committee was formed in solidarity with the Grupo Internacionalista (GI), Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International. It is the fruit of an effort that began a number of years ago. Starting in 2004, the GI established contact with a group of left-wing students in the Emiliano Zapata Collective (CEZ) of the CCH-Sur, a small collective born after the great UNAM strike of 1999-2000. This group, like many others, was inspired by the Zapatista uprising that had shaken Mexico since 1994. The group's activities were centered on talks about Zapatismo and Guevarism (which supports guerrilla warfare as practiced by Che Guevara), with a touch of Marxism, but fundamentally it did not go beyond the limits of middle-class "student power" politics. After gaining a few sympathizers on campus, the small campus office that had borne the signboard was of the CEZ was converted into the GI office at the school.

A strong point of the GI's work was its insistence on the necessity of joint worker-

student actions. This was shown in the struggle against the "porros," thugs backed by the administration and the government. After the Federal Preventive Police (PFP) broke the student strike of 1999-2000 that had held out for ten months at UNAM, university authorities and the bourgeois government were in a rage. Even though they had sent hundreds of strikers to prison, they were unable to impose the tuition fees that would have made it even harder for working-class students to get a university education. So once "normalcy" had been reestablished, they began a campaign of persecution against student activists with summary judgments before the university tribunal, and with increasing frequency, violent thug provocations.

In the preparatory schools and some college campuses, the "porro" gangs were revived with heavy infusions of resources, under the constant protection of the university authorities, the police chiefs and Mexico City district governments. Beginning at Preparatory School 8, and later at CCH-Sur, our comrades faced direct gangster attacks. In re-

sponse, the Grupo Internacionalista sought to put into practice a policy quite different from the individual "anti-porro hunts" undertaken by the anarchists, or petitions to the authorities for the porros' expulsion. The GI began to appeal to workers' assemblies to come out against the porros, who represented a serious threat not only to student activists, but to the workers themselves. Little by little the GI gained the support of the workers, while organizing mass meetings that united students, teachers and workers to drive out the porros together.

At CCH-Sur, the porro gang known as GES was a serious threat to every left group on campus. The gangs of thugs organized by the state began threatening some of the anarchists. Even when the anarchists proposed "direct action," these actions did not go beyond inconclusive scuffles. The Grupo Internacionalista, on the other hand, proposed to intervene in workers' assemblies to call on them to form defense guards of workers, students and teachers. The anarchists argued that the workers were in the pocket of the union

bureaucracy and that nothing could be gained by appealing to them. We began to go to the workers' assemblies, and gradually we gained a hearing. Meanwhile, the anarchists identified those responsible for attacking their comrades, but every time they unmasked one of the porros, they appealed to the administration to formally charge them so that they could be suspended or expelled.

We made it clear to the anarchists that instead of calling on the authorities to drive out the gangsters, this was the task of the students and workers themselves. We proposed that every time one of these gangsters was discovered, he should be tossed out and humiliated by a mass action, and that all should take part in driving them out. This began to be put into practice. Hundreds of students showed up at some of those meetings. This practically drove the administration insane, and in some cases they physically blocked us from driving out the gangsters. We responded that not only had the authorities not expelled these thugs, those who had filed complaints against their attackers had begun to suffer threats from the porros. We gained the sympathy of many who were interested in real results, and our authority grew, because at this moment the workers had begun to make their presence felt on our side.

SICARTSA, Atenco, Oaxaca

The origins of the Internationalist Committee at CCH-Sur are directly linked to the workers' struggles of the past year. Throughout the morning of 20 April 2006, the news began to arrive that a thousand-strong attack squad of police had opened fire on workers at the SICARTSA steel plant in Michoacán state. Later, we saw the infernal scenes of repression on the TV news and in the next day's

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Contingent of the Grupo Internacionalista and the Internationalist Club of CCH-Sur at march protesting attack on government workers' pensions, March 27.



Grupo Internacionalista banner at March 27 march says: "From Mexico to the U.S.: Defeat Yankee Imperialism! For International Socialist Revolution!"