

ROTC Reinstated, War Criminal Hired David “Death Squad” Petraeus, Out of CUNY Now!

SEPTEMBER 15 – In April 2013, the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York announced the hiring of former General David Petraeus to teach “public policy” at CUNY’s Macaulay Honors College. The news was met with widespread outrage among students, faculty and workers at CUNY: Petraeus headed U.S. imperialism’s Murder Inc. – the CIA – and commanded the bloody wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This poster boy for imperialist war is a key architect for Obama’s current drive to attack Syria.

Many CUNY students’ families come from countries directly targeted by the death squads, military coups, drones, spying and mass bombing organized by the likes of Petraeus. The ex-CIA chief’s right-hand man in Iraq, Colonel James Steele, created death squads and torture centers, based on his hands-on experience organizing death squads in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua during the 1980s. The result of Petraeus’ rule in Iraq: tens of thousands of corpses and torture victims. (For more on the “bloody brotherhood” of Petraeus, Steele, and John Negroponte, see p. 4.)

The day after Petraeus’ hiring was announced, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs responded with a leaflet, printed page 2, “War Criminal Petraeus, Out of CUNY!” It outlined Petraeus’ war crimes and called for mass protest against his “class.” (Title: “Are We on the Threshold of the North



Internationalist photo

City University of New York (CUNY) students and supporters demonstrate outside Macaulay Honors College, September 9, demanding ouster of war criminal Petraeus.

American Decade?”) An accompanying petition was widely circulated within CUNY demanding the appointment be rescinded.

On June 27, Petraeus was interviewed by TV host Charlie Rose at the 92nd Street Y. The Internationalist Group, CUNY Internationalist

Clubs and Class Struggle Education Workers participated in a picket of this public adulation of a man responsible for torture and mass murder.

Over the summer, members of the CUNY Internationalists, Revolutionary

Student Coordinating Committee (RSCC), Class Struggle Education Workers, IGNITE, Students Without Borders and others met to plan protest actions. The Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY was established for this purpose shortly before the fall semester began. It is a united front of different groups which have joined together to organize the protests on the basis of two demands: “CUNY Must Not be a War College!” and “War Criminal Petraeus, ROTC, Military Recruiters and Military Contracts: Out of CUNY!” The goal is to mobilize mass protest and exposure to drive out “Death Squad” Petraeus and ROTC.

As school opened this semester, activists hit the campuses with a campaign of mass leafleting, class announcements, tabling (including the use of some hard-hitting videos on what Petraeus and Steele did in Iraq, the massacres at El Mozote and My Lai, and the history of U.S. imperialism). Internationalist activists initiated a research group at Hunter College to study the Central America/Iraq death squad connection.

On September 3, the committee organized a protest against a CUNY recruiting meeting held by the ROTC (Reserve Officers’ Training Corps) in midtown Manhattan. Then, on September 9, Petraeus was greeted by an angry demonstration at Macaulay on

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(Left) National Defense University (Right) Gilles Perress/Magnum



Beribboned Gen. David Petraeus and his Iraqi death squads (right). Special Police Commandos under his command were notorious for torturing and “disappearing” prisoners in the Samara region. U.S. “advisors” in rear of photo.

Petraeus Out...

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the first day of his class. About 100 students, faculty, left, labor and immigrant rights activists demonstrated, demanding “War criminal Petraeus, out of CUNY now!” Later as Petraeus left class, he was confronted by students from the RSCC and others, who loudly denounced him as the bloody murderer he is; the video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1b128O99Lg>) quickly went viral. More protests are planned against the presence of this war criminal and ROTC on CUNY campuses. Join us!

Petraeus’ appointment is part of a CUNY-wide administration effort to further militarize the university. While pushing for an ever longer list of lucrative contracts and cosponsorships with death merchants like Lockheed Martin, they renamed the CCNY social sciences division for Colin Powell, the ROTC grad who helped cover up the My Lai massacre in Vietnam, led the invasion of Panama (1989) as well as “Operation Desert Slaughter” (1991) under George Bush Sr., and as U.S. Secretary of State brazenly lied to the world about supposed “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq as Bush Jr. launched the second Gulf war in 2003.

Last spring the CUNY Board and administration – puppets for city and state rulers displaying blatant contempt and racist disdain for most CUNY students – brought back ROTC, which was ousted in 1971 as a result of massive protests against its role in the Vietnam War. One of the most popular slogans at this fall’s protests has been the Internationalist chant “ROTC: Officer corps for the bourgeoisie,” drawing the class line against this recruitment operation for war and repression in the service of the capitalist rulers.

Having initiated the campaign for mass protest and exposure to drive out Petraeus and ROTC, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs insist that the largest public university in the



Scenes from video “Collateral Murder” of wanton killing of five civilians in Baghdad by fire from Army Apache attack helicopters, 12 July 2007. No one was ever tried for this crime. Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning has been sentenced to 35 years in jail for releasing this and other evidence of U.S. dirty war tactics. Yet David Petraeus, who was then commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, is now a “distinguished visiting professor” at CUNY!

United States must not become a branch of the U.S. Army War College or the infamous School of the Americas (known as “School of the Assassins”) where generations of Latin American military officers and dictators have been trained in the techniques of torture, mass murder and counterrevolution.

In the spirit of Karl Liebknecht – leader of Marxist campaigns against militarism before and during World War I – we “educate, agitate and organize” to link today’s struggles to the understanding that **capitalism** is the source of endless imperialist wars abroad and racist repression “at home.” Working to win CUNY students to the communism of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, we say: “Not a person, not a penny for the capitalist military” and “Washington, Wall Street: the enemy is at home.” Join us in the fight to **defeat U.S. imperialism once and for all** through international socialist revolution.

Reprinted below is the text of a leaflet issued by the CUNY Internationalist Clubs the day after Petraeus’ appointment was announced.

We’ve all seen the photos from Abu Ghraib. Now, an extensive report in the London *Guardian* (6 March) based on a 15-month investigation together with the BBC, on “Pentagon’s Link to Iraqi Torture Centers,” headlined: “Exclusive: General David Petraeus and ‘dirty wars’ veteran behind commando units implicated in detainee abuse.” *The Week* (London, 7 March) summarized: “General David Petraeus, the former commander of US forces in Iraq, [was] directly involved in a systematic campaign of torture and atrocity” carried out by “paramilitary units connected to the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior.”

Afghanistan war commander: As commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan in 2010-11, Petraeus was in charge of numerous bombings in which hundreds of Afghan civilians – including whole families attending weddings – were slain...

CIA chief: As head of the CIA, Petraeus was responsible for Obama’s program of “targeted killings” by drones, which in Pakistan alone has killed more than 200 children. From Vietnam to Chile and Central America, the infamous spy agency is synonymous with mass murder in the service of counterrevolution. In line with the Democratic/Republican war party’s endless colonial carnage abroad, “The Company” helps shred the most basic civil liberties “at home.”

Widespread outrage at CUNY and beyond has greeted the announcement of Petraeus’ Macaulay appointment.

What’s needed, now, is **mass protest**. The Internationalist Clubs call on students, faculty, staff and campus workers to: **Drive war criminal Petraeus out of CUNY with protest and exposure!**

Back in 2005, we initiated the campaign which spiked the sinister “Homeland Security” program at BMCC. At Bronx Community College we led protests that ousted military recruiters. Today, mass protest against Petraeus can also help root out CUNY’s war contracts at CCNY (where a Colin Powell Center was established in “honor” of the commander of “Desert Slaughter” I).

The Petraeus appointment is the latest outrage committed by the CUNY administration and Board of Trustees, and comes on the heels of the truly obscene golden (more accurately, platinum) parachute for retiring Chancellor Goldstein, richly rewarded by the ruling class after getting a \$490,000/year salary and \$90,000 housing allowance – for presiding over the destruction of the last remnants of open admissions, a string of tuition hikes, poverty pay for adjuncts, and the notorious Pathways program.

Rather than plead for the Trustees to “consider” the opinion of those who work and study here, we say: Abolish the administration and Board of Trustees; CUNY should be run by democratically elected councils of students, teachers and workers. It’s high time to make this happen – **before they turn the City University into one big “war college”!** ■

Macaulay War College?

War Criminal Petraeus, Out of CUNY!

APRIL 25 – Yesterday, the news spread through the City University of New York like wildfire: CUNY’s Macaulay Honors College has appointed former general David Petraeus – ex-commander of the Iraq/Afghanistan wars and former CIA chief – as visiting professor of public policy in the university’s Macaulay Honors College. One faculty member said, “I did not realize Macaulay is a war college.”

Some asked, is this a sick joke? No: it’s serious – deadly serious. *David Petraeus is a war criminal*. What is he going to teach – seminars on “enhanced interrogation,” drone strikes and massacre by helicopter


gunship?

Iraq war commander: The images shocked the world: a video (www.collateral-murder.com) released by WikiLeaks showed Apache attack helicopters mowing down five unarmed civilians in Iraq, including the father of two children who were wounded while sitting in a van, as well as two Reuters journalists. Accused of releasing this and other materials on U.S. war crimes and dirty tricks, PFC Bradley Manning is rotting in the brig. Gen. Petraeus was commander of the “coalition” forces during the imperialist onslaught that produced this and innumerable other war crimes.



**Visit the League for the Fourth International/
Internationalist Group on the Internet**
<http://www.internationalist.org>
Write to CUNY Internationalist Clubs: cunyinternationalists@gmail.com

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Internationalist protesters at June 27 picket of former spy chief Petraeus.

How the Bourgeoisie Brought ROTC and Petraeus to CUNY

The Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) is a central part of U.S. imperialism's military apparatus. Indeed, "Army ROTC produces 75% of all Army officers" and "has produced more than one-half million lieutenants for America's Army" ("What Is ROTC?" on cuny.edu). There is also an Air Force ROTC and Navy ROTC. First established in 1916, ROTC enrolled its first City College student in 1917, the year the United States entered the first imperialist World War. During the 1960s and '70s, growing opposition to the U.S. war in Vietnam – heightened by the My Lai Massacre personified by Army Lieutenant William Calley – included mass demonstrations that drove ROTC out of CUNY in 1971.

According to the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) – which the Right Wing Watch website calls "one of the oldest and most influential of the pro-business right-wing think tanks" – ROTC's absence from the country's largest public university has been a big problem. In May 2011, AEI published a "Case Study of ROTC in New York City," written by Cheryl Miller, previously of the White House Office of Presidential Speechwriting under George W. Bush, with an enthusiastic introduction by a retired Army general. The AEI called on the military to target the New York region, and CUNY in particular:

"The absence of ROTC units on urban campuses, especially in the Northeast, prevents the military from taking full

advantage of their large, ethnically diverse populations. This is particularly true in the case of the City University of New York (CUNY), the third-largest public university system in the country. The Army does not have a single ROTC program in the twenty-three-campus CUNY system...."

To remedy this absence, the study called to "Make restoring ROTC to the Northeast and urban areas a priority" (emphasis in original). In line with this, it stated: "By providing university presidents and high-level administrators valuable face time with prominent senior officers (and often favorable publicity), the military could garner support for its activities...." It called on universities to:

"Demonstrate real partnership in building new ROTC programs. While the Pentagon must be willing to step forward, universities can also shoulder some of the costs involved in establishing new ROTC programs." (emphasis in original)

It is no coincidence that David "Death Squad" Petraeus figures prominently in the AEI study, which states on page 29: "In many respects, General David Petraeus, commander of the International Security Assistance Force and commander of US Forces Afghanistan, is the model of a warrior-scholar." Highlighting his academic connections, it stated with open cynicism: "Of growing importance for this new breed of officer is so-called cultural competency," and stressed the need for officers to be

educated in "winning hearts and minds." Eerily, this phrase – proclaimed by Lyndon Johnson, the Democratic president who massively escalated the Vietnam War in 1964 – is the title of the famous documentary on U.S. war atrocities in Southeast Asia, *Hearts and Minds*.

As for Petraeus, after resigning from the CIA, supposedly due to an extra-marital affair, Obama's former top spy and invasion and occupation commander wanted to restore his reputation as servant of U.S. imperialism by heightening his academic profile. Speculation has grown that he could be put forward as Republican candidate for U.S. president. He would follow predecessors like bomber McCain or death squad leader and former head of the New School Bob Kerrey, who exterminated a village in Vietnam and went on to be governor of Nebraska, a U.S. senator, and a (failed) presidential candidate

Hearing the voice of its masters in the Pentagon, White House and Wall Street, the CUNY administration snapped to attention. Not only would it bring back ROTC, but



Protesters outside Macaulay, September 16.

signing up Petraeus meant "Look Who's Teaching in CUNY" would be writ large – in letters of blood. Not only that, but as part of his new "academic" career Petraeus would "mentor ROTC members," as CBS News (2 May) noted in an article on his other "assignment...in the trenches of academia," at the University of Southern California, from which he is now shutting back and forth to CUNY's Macaulay Honors College.

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CUNY Must Not Be a War College War Criminal Petraeus, ROTC, Military Contracts and Military Recruiters: OUT OF CUNY!

Protest Petraeus's first day of class
Monday, September 9th, 2:30 PM
Macaulay Honors College, 35 West
67th St. (between Central Park West
and Columbus Ave.)

Below is the text of the leaflet by the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY.

CUNY has signed up a war criminal to "teach" at the Macaulay Honors College. Join with us in protesting this outrage.

The Board of Trustees has appointed former CIA chief David Petraeus – ex-commander of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars – to give a course titled "Are We On the Threshold of the North American Decade?" at the Macaulay Honors College. Whether being paid \$200,000 or \$1 (the amount his pay has been reduced to following widespread indignation at his salary), this mass murderer must not be allowed to teach at CUNY. The importance of mass protest is highlighted by the fact that many CUNY students and their families come from countries targeted by the U.S. military and dominated by U.S. imperialism.

• As commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, Petraeus rained death on Afghan civilians. As commander of "coalition" forces in Iraq, he ran the imperialist

slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. Petraeus brought Col. James Steele – who commanded death squads in Vietnam and Central America – to Iraq to organize and train death squads which carried out "the worst acts of torture" during the U.S. occupation (London *Guardian*, 6 March). As CIA chief, Petraeus was the architect of almost 3,000 "targeted killings" by drones.

• Meanwhile, the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program is being revived at CCNY, York, Medgar Evers and the College of Staten Island. ROTC was ousted from CUNY in 1971 after widespread protests against its role recruiting and training officers for the U.S. war in Vietnam that killed an estimated 3 million Vietnamese.

• The appointment of Petraeus follows CCNY's recent establishment of the Colin Powell Center, named after the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the U.S. invasion of Panama (1989) and the first Persian Gulf War (1991).

• The increasing militarization of CUNY is also reflected in military recruiters; Army and Navy "missile command" and "air warfare" representatives' participation in a CCNY conference on "Automatic Target Sensing"; arms manufacturers Raytheon, Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin's backing for CCNY's \$198 million

Advanced Science Research Center, etc.

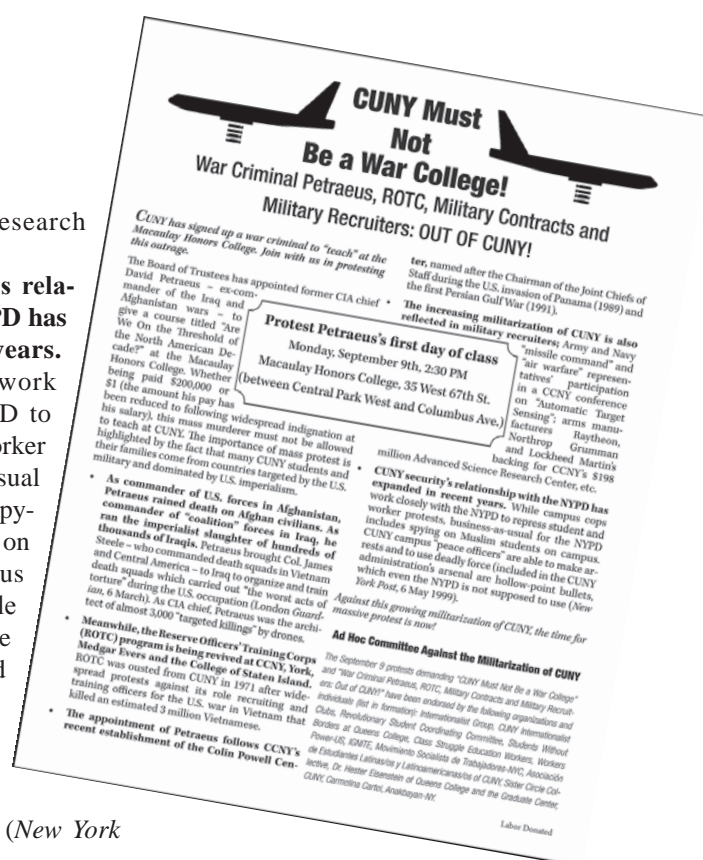
• CUNY security's relationship with the NYPD has expanded in recent years.

While campus cops work closely with the NYPD to repress student and worker protests, business-as-usual for the NYPD includes spying on Muslim students on campus. CUNY campus "peace officers" are able to make arrests and to use deadly force (included in the CUNY administration's arsenal are hollow-point bullets, which even the NYPD is not supposed to use (*New York Post*, 6 May 1999).

Against this growing militarization of CUNY, the time for massive protest is now!

Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY

The September 9 protests demanding "CUNY Must Not Be a War College" and "War Criminal Petraeus, ROTC, Military Contracts and Military Recruiters: Out of CUNY!" have been endorsed by the following organizations and individuals (list in formation): Internationalist Group, CUNY



From El Salvador to Iraq:

The Bloody Trail of Col. James Steele and David “Death Squad” Petraeus

The following article by the CUNY Internationalist Clubs is based on the work of the research group on the “death squad” connection with Gen. David Petraeus that we initiated at Hunter College.

It has been known as far back as 2005 that the U.S. occupiers of Iraq, first under George Bush II and now under Obama, applied the “Salvador Option” there. This term refers to rule by *death squad*: subduing the population through mass torture and killing carried out by specially organized paramilitary and military units.

The grim strategy actually goes back to the Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* in World War II and the CIA’s Phoenix program in the Vietnam War. The U.S. government implemented this strategy in El Salvador to drown in blood the worker and peasant resistance to the brutal military dictatorship Washington backed. In El Salvador the death squads – whether they were paramilitary groups or units of the Salvadoran army (like the U.S.-trained Atlacatl Battalion) – killed at least 70,000 civilians.

A new UK *Guardian*-BBC Arabic investigation brought broader public awareness of the murderous made-in-USA campaign of terror in Iraq, while directly connecting U.S. “advisers” to the torture and murder. Also, significantly, it spelled out the connection to General David Petraeus, who had been lionized by the “mainstream” media, both conservative and liberal.

The products of the investigation, the documentary film *James Steele, Mystery Man in Iraq*¹ and accompanying stories, were made possible by documents released to WikiLeaks by the heroic actions of Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning. The Manning documents and the investigation reveal how the U.S. constituted and trained

¹ The trailer for this film is on line at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGfYfbPS6zU>; the full film is available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ca1HsC6MH0 or on the *Guardian* website: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2013/mar/06/james-steele-america-iraq-video>

the death squads, mainly recruiting from reactionary Shia militias, and set them on their murderous course.

The mission of these Special Police Commandos was to kill suspected opponents of the U.S. occupation, by either shooting them on the spot or bringing them to specially established “detention centers” to be tortured to death. A prime torture center was the library in the town of Samara, Iraq, where Col. James Steele had his office.

A photographer on assignment for the *New York Times*, Gilles Peress, reported: “We were in a room in the library interviewing Steele and I’m looking around I see blood everywhere.” The *Times* reporter working on the story, Peter Maass, noted “while this interview was going on with a Saudi jihadi with Jim Steele also in the room, there were these terrible screams ... screams of pain and terror.”

Thousands of Iraqis were being killed in these horrific ways each month. This much had been known previously, though never confirmed officially (and denied by War Secretary Donald Rumsfeld). But the millions of classified military logs released to WikiLeaks documents included long lists (shown in the documentary) listing times, places, and sometimes names of the victims, with a meticulousness that recalled the lists kept by Nazi jailers in Hitler’s death camps.

The campaign, which is still operating today, has evolved into a bloody sectarian war that has claimed the lives of tens of thousands of Iraqis. The three U.S. officers



Gilles Peress/Magnum

Special Police Commando death squad at work in Samara, Iraq

most responsible for creating this murder machine are Col. Steele and Col. James Coffman and their boss, Gen. Petraeus. “Coffman reported to Petraeus and described himself in an interview with the US military newspaper Stars and Stripes as Petraeus’s ‘eyes and ears out on the ground’ in Iraq,” a *Guardian* article on the investigation reported.²

Petraeus, who had commanded the 101st Airborne Division during the U.S.’ 2003 invasion of Iraq, was sent back in June 2004, after the warmakers in Washington realized that their imperialist army was meeting determined Iraqi resistance. Petraeus’ plan for destroying the resistance was simple: mass murder. He brought in veteran U.S. operatives who in the 1980s were instrumental in creating the reign of terror in Central America.

Steele and Coffman, working under Petraeus, set up death squads on the model that U.S. presidents Carter and Reagan used in El Salvador, to terrorize the native population into submission to the rule of Washington and its puppet military dictators. When in 2004 *Newsweek* magazine reported that the “Salvador Option” was being considered for Iraq by Rumsfeld, Bush’s Secretary of Defense, it was probably already in place. By early 2005 the *New York Times* could report that the death squads were indeed up and running.³

Steele, Petraeus, and Negroponte: A Bloody Brotherhood

The Bush II team had fired their failed commandants, including chief “administrator” L. Paul Bremer and the low-life thug² Mona Mahmood, Maggie O’Kane, et al., “From El Salvador to Iraq: Washington’s Man behind Brutal Police Squads,” *Guardian* [London], 6 March 2013.

³ Peter Maass, “The Way of the Commandos,” *New York Times Magazine*, 1 May 2005; “Iraq Death Squads,” *Washington Post* editorial, 4 December 2005.

at his side, Bernie Kerik (supplied by the NYPD). In went the professional mass murderers, led by Petraeus and John Negroponte. In the 1960s Negroponte was the chief U.S. political officer in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), when the CIA launched its campaign of torture chambers and mass murder known as the Phoenix program. As Reagan’s ambassador to Honduras in the 1980s, Negroponte initiated a Phoenix-program-like regime there, organizing torture centers and death squads from his headquarters in Tegucigalpa.

Negroponte also coordinated a multinational campaign of mass murder including the death-squad regime in El Salvador and the “Contra” war in Nicaragua.⁴ This bipartisan war on the population of Central America left *hundreds of thousands* of corpses in its awful wake – in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras. In neighboring Guatemala, the U.S. helped dictators including Efraín Ríos Montt perpetrate a holocaust against the Mayan people, killing 200,000 in the 1980s. It was all done in the name of stopping communism and ensuring U.S. domination of Latin America.

Twenty or so years later the same actors assembled to rerun their blood-soaked strategy in Iraq. Negroponte was reunited there with his old accomplice James Steele. Steele had been the Pentagon’s commander on the ground in El Salvador from 1984 to 1986 and as such presided over the brutal repression of Salvadoran workers and peasants. No crime was too savage for Steele and his killers: torture of every kind on a mass scale, babies murdered in front of their mothers, daughters raped before their parents, defenseless villagers set upon by Nazi-admiring sadists who enjoyed slitting open the bellies of animals and drinking their blood.

⁴ Dahr Jamail, “Negroponte and the Escalation of Death,” [Hong Kong] *Asia Times Online*, 7 January 2007.

Col. James Steele, right, with Iraqi Police Commandos chief Gen. Adnan Thabit, left, in library at Samara, Iraq which was torture center for death squads. There was “blood everywhere,” said photographer Gilles Peress.



Gilles Peress/Magnum for the New York Times



Site of the 11 December 1981 massacre of the village of El Mozote: nearly 800 confirmed dead, mostly women and children, slaughtered by the U.S.-trained Atlacatl Brigade. Col. James Steele was an “advisor” to the brigade when it returned to Morazán province to kill again in 1984.

Atlacatl and El Mozote

The U.S. government under Democrat Carter and Republican Reagan funded the killing 100%, supplied the weapons, including M16s, M60 machine guns, 90mm cannons, attack helicopters and A-37 assault aircraft, supervised the building of the torture chambers, and supplied military advisors to plan the atrocities and direct them on the ground. Col. Steele advised in the operations of the Atlacatl Battalion, for example. This unit of the Salvadoran army was organized and trained at the “School of the Americas” – aka the “School of Assassins” – now located in Fort Benning, Georgia.

On 11 December 1981, the Atlacatl Battalion carried out one of the most heinous crimes of the Salvadoran Civil War, the El Mozote massacre in Morazán province, where an entire village was annihilated, with nearly 800 confirmed dead. In a carefully planned operation, the soldiers fell upon unarmed villagers, torturing, raping and murdering with almost unimaginable depravity. Every dwelling was burned, the church was burned, the raped and tortured bodies were burned. Every animal was killed and burned. Total destruction.

One of the murderers thought that instead of killing all the children, they could kidnap some (like the Argentine junta did in the 1970s and 1980s, when many children were raised by the murderers of their leftist parents). A fellow Atlacatl soldier is reported to have told the would-be kidnapper:

“We have to finish everyone, you know that. That’s the colonel’s order. This is an *operativo de tierra arrasada* here [a scorched-earth operation] and we have to kill the kids as well, or we’ll get it ourselves.”⁵

They did indeed kill all the children, in one place herding many preteens into a room and opening up on them with their machine-guns until all were dead.

The U.S. government and their Salvadoran puppets long denied that the massacre at El Mozote had taken place. Officials sought to discredit the careful reporting of the massacre by *Washington Post* reporter Alma Guillermoprieto; Raymond Bonner, the *New York Times* reporter who helped

break the story, was smeared as a communist dupe by the U.S. government and reassigned by his scornful boss Abe Rosenthal. His replacement, James LeMoyné, was not above fabricating stories of nonexistent communist atrocities in El Salvador and as such was much more to the government’s liking.⁶

The awful truth of the 1981 massacre was confirmed in 1992 when at the insistence of courageous survivor Rufina Amaya and supporters, hundreds of human skeletons, including those of many children, were dug up by an Argentine forensic team. Since then, Salvadoran politicians have admitted that U.S. advisors were present at the killings. The full-length account by Mark Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote* (Vintage Books, 1994), is must reading for everyone who wants to learn the bloody reality behind initials from CIA to ROTC.

Enter Petraeus’ Henchman, James Steele

The identities of the U.S. advisers in the massacre at El Mozote carried out by the Atlacatl Battalion have not yet been discovered. What is known is that Petraeus’ henchman Steele was “advising” the same Atlacatl killers by 1984 at the latest. When the perpetrators of El Mozote were flown back to Morazán province that year to commit further horrors, Steele was on the scene, as the *New York Times* (19 October 1984) reported: “The head of the United States military group, Col. James Steele, and two other United States military advisers wearing combat uniforms and carrying semi-automatic CAR-15 rifles watched the operation.”

The massacre at El Mozote was one horrendous episode in the long war of U.S. imperialism and its puppet dictatorship against the workers and peasants of El Salvador. The Atlacatl unit and the death squads of Roberto D’Aubuisson (a U.S.-trained military officer and torturer known as “Blowtorch Bob”) committed countless atrocities, backed to the hilt by the U.S. government. One such crime was the murder of Oscar Romero, Catholic archbishop of San Salvador, on 24 March 1980. This killing was organized by D’Aubuisson, and carried out by Héctor Antonio Regalado,

⁶ Jeff Cohen, Norman Solomon, “The War Crimes Cover-Up in El Salvador,” *Seattle Times*, 17 April 1993.

D’Aubuisson’s security chief when he was head of the Constituent Assembly.

Trained at the infamous School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, Regalado was called “Dr. Death” because he was a dentist who practiced medical torture on his victims, including ripping out teeth. Dr. Death was assigned by Steele to train Salvadoran police units supposedly for drug enforcement. But Celerino Castillo, a former agent of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, states that under Steele and Regalado he was really training death squads (see his book, *Powderburns: Cocaine, Contras, and the Drug War* [Mosaic

Press, 1994].

Today James Steele is a “motivational speaker” and in his profile brags that he “commanded the U.S. Military Group in El Salvador during the height of the guerrilla war.” He doesn’t mention that he was also one of the main players in the operation known as “Iran-Contra” – when Reagan sold arms to the Khomeini regime in Iran and used the proceeds from those sales (and, it was later revealed, from the sale of cocaine) to fund the counterrevolutionary mercenary army known as the Contras.

The Contras were secretly formed by the U.S. government to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. The Sandinistas had in 1979 toppled the U.S.-backed dictator, Anastasio Somoza. Somoza’s brutal National Guardsmen fled across the border to Honduras, where with desperados recruited from many countries they were organized and armed under the direction of Negroponte and Oliver North. Thousands of U.S. Marines and hundreds of special advisers were on the scene, to oversee the construction of bases and an airstrip.

The Contras were designed to be every bit as brutal as the death-squad army in El Salvador. In their many forays into Nicaragua they did what their U.S. advisers had trained them to do: fall upon the peasant population and torture, murder, rape and pillage at will. The Contra war was another made-in-USA atrocity, but it was secret and secretly funded. Arms and ammo were not sent directly to Negroponte’s bases in Honduras: instead the deadly supplies were sent to the military airbase in Ilopango, El Salvador, where North’s accomplice Colonel James Steele oversaw the transfer to the Contras.⁷ According to the *Guardian* investigation, Petraeus visited Steele there at the time this operation was going on and even stayed at his house near the airport.

War Criminal Petraeus, ROTC, Military Contracts and Recruiters: Out of CUNY!

“When the WikiLeaks documents came out in December of 2011 . . . there was a reference to Frago 242, which was a US military order instructing US soldiers to

⁷ David Corn, “From Iran Contra to Iraq,” *Nation*, 7 May 2005; Peter Watt, “Negroponte, Honduras, and Iraq,” *ZNet*, 9 July 2004.

ignore Iraqi-on-Iraqi torture. This incidence, this Frago 242, came up over 1,000 times in the documents as we looked at it and we wondered why this order was issued and what was the story behind it. . . . The WikiLeaks documents, because they were the actual documents and what the State Department was sending back to Washington about what was going on, that this was a real treasure trove that we should explore.”

– Maggie O’Kane, on “Democracy Now” radio program, 22 March 2013.

Maggie O’Kane is one of the authors of the *Guardian* documentary that exposes Petraeus and Steele as the organizers of the Iraq death squads. Her statement that the WikiLeaks documents enabled the journalists to confirm the death squad killings in Iraq underscores the selfless courage of Chelsea (formerly Bradley). Manning, too, was tortured and has now been condemned to 35 years in jail for exposing the lies and crimes of U.S. imperialism. Her actions were the highest form of personal solidarity with the countless men, women, and children who were (and continue to be) the victims of Petraeus’ torturers and murderers. Chelsea Manning is an inspiration to the oppressed the world over: we salute her valor and fight for her freedom.

Imperialism is not a policy but a system, the highest stage of capitalism as Lenin defined it, characterized by the subjugation and superexploitation of semi-colonial nations and peoples by the capitalist-imperialist powers. The history of imperialism is the history of wars of domination, almost always through mass terror against the civilian population. While U.S. leaders rail against “terrorists,” in fact terror is a fundamental strategy of the imperialists, not an aberration, whether carried out directly by the imperialist armed forces or by organized surrogates like Petraeus’ Iraq death squads.

Today, the United States remains the most powerful imperialism in the world, and as one of its leading officers, Gen. David Petraeus organized the murder of tens of thousands in Iraq and Afghanistan. As CIA director Petraeus oversaw the drone attacks which have killed thousands of civilians in “targeted killings” (assassinations) from Afghanistan to Yemen. Last year, Petraeus pushed hard for deeper U.S. intervention against Syria, seeking to turn the “rebel” bands fighting the Assad government more

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Ex-CIA chief Petraeus has been pushing for bombing Syria. Defend Syria against U.S. imperialist attack!

Students Today Need to Know This History

U.S. Imperialism's War Crimes and Mass Murder in Vietnam

A Review of *Kill Anything That Moves*

By Mia

As CUNY students, faculty and workers seek to drive U.S. imperialism's recruiters – General David “Death Squad” Petraeus and ROTC – off the campuses through protest and exposure, a new book provides a look back at some of imperialism's bloodiest crimes. For ten years the U.S. government brought death and destruction to Vietnam, killing millions, maiming millions more, torturing uncounted thousands. *Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam* (Henry Holt, 2013), written by Nick Turse, should be read by every young militant seeking to understand the essence of capitalism in the imperialist era.

The book documents the murderous truth of the dirty colonial war against Vietnam: that the killing and torture were routinized on a massive scale; that the treatment of “noncombatants” reconfirmed in every sense the depravity of the U.S. bourgeoisie that A-bombed the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; that these massive crimes were the work of both liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans. This is captured in the slogan chanted in the demonstrations against Petraeus, “Remember Hiroshima, remember Vietnam – Democratic Party, we know which side you're on.”

“Two, Three, Many Defeats for U.S. Imperialism”

Despite the unbelievable violence directed against them, the Vietnamese workers and peasants fought with great courage – and won. They kicked out the U.S. imperialists, uprooted their puppet police state and overthrew capitalism. Their victory was a victory for the oppressed of the whole world.

While defeated U.S. liberals – later



Ronald L. Haeblerle

My Lai massacre, 16 March 1968. Over 500 villagers murdered by U.S. troops. The government first tried to cover up the war crime, then blamed it on a rogue army unit. Later it was established that the massacre was part of the Phoenix program of systematic assassinations of supposed Viet Cong cadre. Then-Major Colin Powell played a leading role in the cover-up of this heinous war crime. Now CUNY renames a whole department after this war criminal who commanded the 1991 Gulf War on Iraq (aka “Desert Slaughter”).

echoed by Richard Nixon – said “no more Vietnams” (only because they lost), revolutionaries proclaimed that we want “two, three, many defeats for US imperialism!” The war in Vietnam was also a *social revolution*. As the imperialists geared up their murder machine to stem the red tide in Southeast Asia, revolutionaries said “All Indochina Must Go Communist!” and “For Workers' Strikes Against the War!”

This meant a struggle to mobilize the class power of the workers against both of the capitalist parties. Taking over from the French colonialists who were defeated

by the heroic Vietnamese at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the United States government directed, armed, financed and trained the puppet government and army of “South Vietnam” as a force for counterrevolution. Starting under Republican Dwight Eisenhower, the genocidal U.S. war against Vietnam revved up under Cold War Democrat John F. Kennedy, then escalated massively under Democrat Lyndon Johnson.

Since every imperialist war has its faked-up *casus belli* (official “cause” or pretext for war) – from “Remember the Maine” in 1898 (when the U.S. invaded Cuba) to Colin Powell's infamous “WMD” speech to the UN (to justify the U.S.' 2003 invasion of Iraq) – LBJ fabricated one through the notorious “Tonkin Gulf Incident” in 1964. The massive escalation he unleashed was continued by his Republican successor Richard Nixon, advised by all-purpose war criminal Henry Kissinger.

In the historic struggle for the *defeat* of the imperialists and the *victory* of the Vietnamese workers and peasants, pleading for “peace” was no answer. We had a side! And our side, the workers and peasants of Vietnam – who inspired struggles against imperialism and oppression from southern Africa to Central America – won.

Trotskyists understood that there is no middle ground between socialist revolution and capitalism in all its guises. Despite the wishes of the Stalinists then, in Moscow, Peking, and even Hanoi, the Vietnamese revolution was not just about “self-determination” – it was about a social revolution, without which there could be no genuine national liberation for peoples oppressed

by capitalist imperialism.

In defeating the imperialists, the National Liberation Front of Vietnam (NLF, also known as the Viet Cong) also defeated their local bourgeois puppets, servants and junior partners, establishing a workers state, albeit one that is bureaucratically deformed. Saluting these courageous fighters, we defend Vietnam (as well as the other bureaucratically deformed workers states of China, Cuba and North Korea) against imperialist attack or counterrevolution from within.

Key to this is the working people of these countries carrying out a proletarian political revolution that establishes workers democracy – like the soviets (workers councils) of Lenin and Trotsky's 1917 Bolshevik Revolution – and a policy of revolutionary internationalism to extend revolution worldwide.

The U.S. in Vietnam: Mass Murder in the Name of “Democracy”

The revolutionary victory in Vietnam was costly, as the imperialists killed an estimated 3 million Vietnamese. Some were killed by bombs, like those dropped by Air Force officer John McCain; some were murdered by death squads led by depraved killers, like former Democratic Nebraska senator and New School president Bob Kerrey, who got the Bronze Star for wiping out the village of Thanh Phong in 1969.

The U.S. accelerated its onslaught after the NLF's “Têt Offensive” of January 1968. In that heroic advance, imperialist military installations were attacked simultaneously all over southern Vietnam. The Viet Cong even took over the grounds of the U.S. embassy in Saigon! Outraged at the resistance by these incredibly courageous men and women determined to free their country from the colonialist overlords, the U.S. occupiers took it out on unarmed civilians.

In March of that year, the My Lai massacre took place, in which hundreds of villagers, mainly women, children, and elders, were murdered by an American unit led by Captain Ernest Medina and Lieutenant William Calley. Many of the women and girls were raped by the Americans before being murdered. Mothers threw themselves on top of their children, but Calley made sure that the children did not escape alive.

The killing went on for two days and covered several hamlets. As many as 500 corpses were piled up, when it was finally stopped by a courageous helicopter pilot named Hugh Thompson, who landed his chopper and instructed his men to train their weapons on the killers. The story was not reported for well over a year, as the Army engaged in a cover-up, led at one point by then-Major Colin Powell, whose complicity in this atrocity helped assure his promotion.

Powell is an alumnus of City College,

Nick Ut/AP



Famous photo of children fleeing after napalm attack on Trang Bang district in June 1972. Nine-year-old Kim Phuc (naked, center) suffered extensive burns on her back. Today Washington falsely accuses Syria of chemical attack on its own people, while in the Vietnam War the U.S. dropped over 400,000 tons of napalm on Vietnam while killing over 3 million Vietnamese.

and in its drive to militarize the City University of New York, the CUNY administration in 1997 set up the “Colin L. Powell Center for Leadership and Service.” What an outrage, to name a program named after the general who wantonly killed tens of thousands of Iraqis in the 1991 “Desert Slaughter” and then lied about “weapons of mass destruction” to justify the 2003 war on Iraq. In April, as the CUNY administration was announcing the return of the ROTC and the appointment of Gen. Petraeus, it grotesquely renamed the CCNY Division of Social Sciences the “Colin L. Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership.”

In 1971, Vietnam veteran Charles McDuff naïvely wrote a letter to Richard Nixon, apprising the mass-murderer-in-chief that “the atrocities committed in My Lai are eclipsed by similar American actions throughout the country.” While McDuff received a predictably lying response from the government, many of his fellow soldiers, organized as the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, had already convened the Winter Soldier hearings in Detroit. There scores of veterans told of the atrocities they committed or witnessed, proving that the My Lai massacre was not an exception, but “standard operating procedure.”

The “ubiquity of atrocity” committed against civilians is the focus of *Kill Anything That Moves*. Author Nick Turse has assembled many personal and official accounts of U.S. war crimes, interviewing Vietnamese, war crimes investigators, U.S. generals and over one hundred veterans who had “witnessed or personally committed terrible acts.”

Turse combines this testimony with extensive findings from his research of military records. He studied the files of the “Vietnam War Crimes Working Group,” a top-secret Pentagon unit. In 1994, 9,000 pages of its files were declassified; Turse came upon these files in 2003 and first wrote about them in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Culminating his research, *Kill Anything That Moves* demonstrates that mass killing of civilians was even more central role to the U.S. war strategy than previously documented. “The real aberration” of the My Lai massacre, Turse explains, “was the unprecedented and unparalleled investigation and exposure” it received. The war produced countless My Lai massacres, but most were not widely publicized nor known abroad for many years.

Turse tells the story of civilian suffering during the Vietnam War through serial vignettes that he calls “snapshots culled from a vast album of horrors.” His accounts of individual atrocities serve to epitomize the large-scale U.S. military policies aimed at defeating the Vietnamese Revolution and stemming the tide of revolt across Asia.

Acts of mass murder like My Lai are just one part of the story of genocidal, “industrial-scale slaughter” that the U.S. administered in Vietnam. Turse documents how “murder, torture, rape, abuse, displacement, home burnings, specious arrests, imprisonment without due process” were commonplace occurrences, and were “directly attributable to deliberate policies dictated from the highest levels of the military.”

The methodical strategy of sheer brutality and terror was intended to cut off the NLF from its key source of support, the rural population of Vietnam. The imperialists called their holocaust in the countryside “pacification.” To carry it out, they

used aerial bombardment with napalm and defoliants, artillery barrages, death squads and torture chambers known as “Tiger Cages.” The object was to achieve systematic destruction, area by grid-like area.

Forests, crops, villages, and homes across southern Vietnam were burned; the countryside was hit with 3,000 bombs per sq. km during the war. At least 12 million acres of forest were saturated with bombs. The environmental devastation was massive. Survivors were removed to concentration camps, called “strategic hamlets” by the U.S. commandants, where they were crowded into barbed-wire enclosures with barely any food, shelter or basic sanitation.

For most U.S. officers on the ground, the “body count” was the metric of success. They drove their men to kill, kill, kill. “If it’s dead and Vietnamese, it’s VC (Viet Cong)” was a common phrase. The killers established “free-fire zones” all over the countryside, ordering troops to “kill anything that moves,” especially in areas with a history of resistance. Whole villages were routinely wiped out. Since men were slated for 100 percent execution, they often hid at the first sign of U.S. soldiers. The victims of these massacres were consequently mainly elders, women, and children. If villagers had any livestock, this too was wiped out.

Remorseless killing was legitimized by the racist indoctrination that was part of U.S. military training. Recruits and draftees were taught to have racist contempt for the Vietnamese, the better to engage in all manner of atrocities against them. Troops were instructed to treat Vietnamese as “little more than animals who could be killed or abused at will.” “That they were less than human was clearly the message,” one veteran remembered. The American racism against the Vietnamese was infamously expressed by General Westmoreland, top U.S. commander in Vietnam from 1964-1968, who proclaimed “life is cheap in the Orient.”

Air Force, Dow, Monsanto Bring Death and Destruction

The U.S. imperialists systematically and massively used chemical weapons and torture in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. In addition to dropping 7 million tons of “conventional” bombs on Vietnam – twice as much as was dropped by all sides in WWII – they also dropped 400,000 tons of napalm and more than 3 million white phosphorous rockets. The number of *anti-personnel* “cluster” bombs may have reached one billion (260 million were dropped on tiny Laos alone, 80 million of which failed to explode on impact, only to kill later).

The U.S. sprayed the countryside with 20 million gallons of deadly poisons in “Operation Ranch Hand,” killing an estimated 400,000 people and destroying the land and food supply. These poisons, like Agent Orange, are still present in Vietnam today, and have caused severe deformations among a large number of babies and



Victory! Vietnamese Communist (“Viet Cong”) troops take Saigon, 30 April 1975, bringing down the South Vietnamese puppet regime and delivering a stinging blow to imperialism. Trotskyists call for “Two, three, many defeats for U.S. imperialism!”

children. The Vietnamese estimate that over 500,000 babies have been born with severe deformities; many do not survive infancy; countless others were aborted or born dead, as the chemical warfare made them biologically unviable.

The crimes of U.S. imperialism are almost unspeakable. But Nick Turse’s book speaks of them. He is following an admirable tradition of outrage and indignation, including a photographic exposé of the victims of America’s chemical war, among them skinless children, that appeared in *Ramparts* magazine in 1967 that was said to contribute to the stand eventually taken against the war by Martin Luther King. But King didn’t speak out strongly against the Vietnam war until 1967, when many liberal Democrats were concluding that the war was unwinnable.

Death Squad Template: The Phoenix Program and My Lai

The torture and killing of prisoners was widespread and commonplace, often premeditated, carried out strategically to terrorize the local population. The CIA’s Phoenix Program, designed to “neutralize” the NLF’s civilian base, systematically targeted noncombatants for torture and murder. Through “uncontrolled violence” and “wholesale killing,” as the book documents, civilians suspected of having ties with the NLF were identified, kidnapped, tortured and killed.

In the Phoenix Program, the U.S. borrowed the death squad tactic from the Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* (extermination squads) and followed this template in Vietnam, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Turse observes that in Vietnam the “pervasiveness of brutality ... went hand-in-hand with a culture of defensiveness, denial, and ultimately, impunity.” The Pentagon went to great lengths to conceal the atrocities, dismissing reports of war crimes as communist propaganda. When word did get out, as with My Lai, the strategy was to portray the massacres as aberrations. The U.S. military’s own (secret) investigation of My Lai detailed a “pattern of deliberate suppression and withholding of information... at every command level from company to division.”

Threats and intimidation were used to

keep soldiers from reporting crimes. The American bourgeois media routinely refused to report U.S. war crimes until after Têt when it became clear that America was losing the war, and some bourgeois liberals began to call for an end to the war by “bringing our boys home.” This was echoed by reformist groups that claimed to be socialist, but for revolutionary communists, “our boys” (and girls) were the Viet Cong.

“Civilian suffering was everywhere and yet nowhere in the American media,” Turse laments. He stresses that it was courageous antiwar (and in many cases anti-imperialist) U.S. GIs and veterans that came forward to help rip the mask off of “democratic” U.S. imperialism and reveal the mountains of dead and tortured bodies it left behind. The countless atrocities that Turse details, he hopes will become “the essence of what we think of when we say ‘the Vietnam War’”: naked imperialism in which the U.S. war machine practiced industrial mass murder.

Revulsion at those atrocities gave rise to massive dissent and discontent on the “home front,” symbolized by the popular-front antiwar movement, and to the subsequent “Vietnam syndrome” of aversion to U.S. involvement in (losing) colonial wars. At the same time, it must be remembered that the fundamental factor in defeating the imperialist war on Vietnam was the resistance by revolutionary Vietnamese workers and peasants. And popular opposition to imperialist war didn’t stop the U.S. from invading Iraq and occupying it for almost a decade.

Remember Vietnam! ROTC, Petraeus: Out of CUNY!

Turse does a real service by documenting and retelling this history, because workers and students the world over need to know the whole truth about U.S. imperialism’s brutal campaign in Vietnam. The chemical attacks, the bombings, the torture, the death squads – all are with us today, as U.S. imperialism continues to maraud throughout the world.

At CUNY, the re-establishment of ROTC (Reserve Officers’ Training Corps) on several campuses reminds us that the imperialists want a new crop of officers to lead new murderous campaigns. In the Vietnam era, ROTC was driven off campus

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Revolutionary Class Politics or “People Power” Studentism?

The Struggle at CUNY: A Trotskyist View

By Abram Negrete

La lucha educa – “Struggle educates.” It’s a point that Internationalist comrades often make. The slogan was the watchword of the massive, “illegal” Puerto Rican teachers’ strike of 2008, where we joined thousands marching in the streets against capital’s international assault on public education.¹ Today our comrades of the Grupo Internacionalista have been in the forefront of occupying schools in and around Mexico City to support the heroic teachers’ strike against the reactionary and racist educational “reform” dictated by the World Bank. There the chant is: “*El maestro, luchando, también está enseñando*” – the teacher, in struggle, is also teaching. Nothing educates us like struggle.

The same is true of the current battle against CUNY’s appointment of ex-CIA chief David “Death Squad” Petraeus and the reinstatement of the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC). One of the main slogans chanted by demonstrators is “1, 2, 3, 4 – Defeat U.S. imperialist war! 5, 6, 7, 8 – Petraeus out, we won’t wait!” This poses a key question: *how* to defeat imperialist war? The fact is, the *imperialist system* – that is, capitalism in its death agony – keeps generating war after war. That is certainly true for the youth of today, who have hardly known a year when the U.S. was not attacking or occupying some country. To uproot that entire *system*, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs seek to win students to the struggle for international socialist revolution.

The protests have been spearheaded by the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY, which has organized united-front actions in the past few weeks against ROTC and outside Macaulay Honors College (where Petraeus “teaches”).

¹ See Internationalist articles “Puerto Rico: All Out to Defend the Teachers’ Struggle!” (at <http://www.internationalist.org/defend-fmrprstruggle0802.html>) and “Puerto Rican Teachers: Unbought and Unbowed,” *The Internationalist* No. 27, May-June 2008.



Protesters outside Macaulay College, September 9, call to oust Petraeus, defeat imperialist war and remember massacres carried out by U.S. imperialism.

“United front,” because the protests have brought together a range of groups and individuals with different viewpoints and programs to carry out a common action. The fact that we come together to strike a blow against capitalist forces that want to turn the City University of New York into a feeder school for the military doesn’t mean papering over or downplaying political differences. On the contrary, the counterposed programs and strategies are debated out and tested in the class struggle.

Two of the main groups active in the Ad Hoc Committee have been the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee (RSCC) which works together with Ignite, a fledgling Maoist group, and the Internationalist Group/CUNY Internationalist Clubs which stand on the program of revolutionary Trotskyism. While we and others have come together in rallies, marches and meetings to plan actions against the ominous militarization of CUNY, as well as in defense of comrades who have

been arrested and brutally beaten by police for protesting, as a vital part of this struggle we have been discussing and polemicizing about some of the big issues and key questions posed for revolutionaries.

That’s the way it’s supposed to be in any real united front. The purpose of this article is to dig deeper into some of the issues raised in these debates.

It’s About Power – Class Power

The fight to drive war criminal Petraeus and ROTC out of CUNY through mass protest and exposure has naturally come up against determined and vicious opposition from ruling-class forces. These people do not play. They are serious about showing the world that they stand by their war criminals; and that they will brook no opposition to their drive to militarize CUNY, which is part of a broader program to *regiment the universities* to better serve the interests of imperialist capital. When the Nazis purged German universities in the 1930s they called it *Gleichschaltung* – “synchronization,” enforced conformity. U.S. rulers, too, want to “synchronize” and discipline the universities, so that they march in step with the Pentagon.

Those who today hold the reins of power in Washington and Wall Street imagine themselves to be the policemen of the world and masters of the universe. While unable to refute the documented truth about the crimes of U.S. imperialism’s killer elite, they can and do deploy the brute force of their repressive apparatus in the attempt to silence that truth. Eliminating the vestiges of open admissions, “standardizing” the curriculum (Pathways), dividing the faculty between low-paid adjuncts without job security and high-priced “stars,” raising tuition and loading students down with debt, privatizing whatever they can – it’s all part of the same capitalist program. To defeat it, we need a program to sweep away the

rotting capitalist system.

So a first lesson to be drawn from this struggle is that we are up against powerful class forces, and to overcome them we must mobilize a *stronger power*, which can only be the working class. Demonstrations by students and faculty are very important – they are necessary, but far from sufficient. A perspective for winning the struggle means moving beyond the confines of the university and linking up concretely with the enormous potential power of NYC’s multi-racial, multiethnic working class. Workers have a vital interest in defending their own daughters and sons from the billy clubs, fists and chokeholds of the racist NYPD; defending their right to attend CUNY, and their right to protest its subjugation to the imperialist war machine.

We are talking about the *class power* that brought New York City to a crawl in the three-day 2005 transit workers’ strike. This strike by a strategic, largely black and immigrant workforce was 100% “illegal” according to the infamous Taylor Law, but it shook the world center of finance capital to its core, gaining massive support among oppressed layers of the population by defying billionaire Mayor Bloomberg as he hurled racist insults about union “thugs.” This is the kind of power that must be mobilized against racist police terror like the murder of Kimani Grey, Ramarley Graham and Sean Bell – and against the vile spectacle of NYPD cops sadistically pummeling radical students for daring to protest Petraeus and ROTC.

Under Mayor Giuliani, the police went after African American and Latino youth with a vengeance under the motto of “zero tolerance,” arresting them on any excuse, in order to pin a record on them. Mayor Bloomberg escalated this with the “stop and frisk” program of racial profiling, with almost 90% of those subjected to this blatant victimization being black and brown. Both mayors have tried to suppress political dissent with massive police presence, forcing demonstrators to march in a “cop sandwich,” and penning protesters behind metal barricades. Now liberal Democrat Bill De Blasio will likely be elected mayor, but it won’t check cop power. Under liberal black Democratic mayor David Dinkins there was a huge expansion of the police.

The overwhelmingly white, petty-bourgeois Occupy Wall Street movement fostered dangerous illusions in the racist police – appealing to them as supposedly part of the “99%” instead of seeing them for what they are, the armed fist of capital. Occupy “peacekeepers” (*sic*) tried to shut up the Internationalists as we chanted “We are all Sean Bell, NYPD go to hell!” on a march (we refused to be silenced).² But even when protesters are clear-eyed about the nature of the cops, small demonstrations cannot overcome massive displays of police power. On the other hand, a mass mobilization of working-class power can. As we have pointed out:

² See “NYPD: Guard Dogs of Finance Capital,” *Revolution* No. 9, November 2011.



In Oakland, California during the 2 November 2011 “general strike” protesting brutal police eviction of Occupy camp.



When construction workers shut down Midtown Manhattan over MTA plans to use scab labor, 29 June 1998.

"[I]n 1998, tens of thousands of construction workers turned out to picket the Metropolitan Transit Authority headquarters for hiring a non-union construction firm, Roy Kay Inc. The workers marched through Midtown shutting down construction sites and blocking traffic. The NYPD mobilized 1,000 cops, but couldn't stop them."

—"Mobilize New York Unions' Power to Win the Stella d'Oro Strike!" *The Internationalist* No. 29, Summer 2009

There are, of course, real obstacles to mobilizing working-class power. Above all, the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy chains labor to the bosses' Democratic Party under imperialist commander-in-chief Obama. While most of the left refuses to take on this issue for fear of breaking with their bourgeois liberal "allies," Class Struggle Education Workers (an opposition tendency in New York teacher unions, politically supported by the Internationalist Group) has uniquely fought inside the unions against political support to the Democrats, Republicans or any capitalist party. We seek to build a revolutionary workers party, and students who become Leninist revolutionaries can play a vital role in forging this party to lead the struggle for socialist revolution.

The Bolsheviks and the United Front

In the course of organizing protests, the question of what is – and what isn't – a united front has been discussed and fought out in fruitful and instructive ways in planning meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY. This clarification has been essential for the

success of joint actions in which every participating group defends its own views and contributes its own perspective about how to achieve the common objective of ousting David "Death Squad" Petraeus and ROTC through protest and exposure. It has been stressed that frank and forthright *debate and polemic* are inseparable from the definition of the united front, which is a temporary joint action rather than an ongoing "coalition."

This contrasts sharply with the practice of reformist left groups that routinely build class-collaborationist coalitions on a lowest-common-denominator program, which is invariably that of the bourgeois component. This is the staple of the International Socialist Organization, Workers World Party, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, Socialist Action, Socialist Alternative, etc., who have built antiwar movements (and just about everything they touch) as "popular fronts" with Democratic Party liberals. They put forward bourgeois reform programs (such as "money for education/jobs/health care, not for war") rather than openly calling to defeat imperialist war. And of course they often censor radical leftists in order not to upset their bourgeois allies

It is notable, therefore, that *the ISO, WWP, PSL et al. have been conspicuously absent from the protests.* In the case of the ISO, we can say for a fact that they have *deliberately boycotted* the Ad Hoc Committee and the struggle against the militarization of CUNY, except occasionally sending a lone observer. Ever since the Occupy movement started dissolving, these social democrats have seen the main danger as "ultra-leftism," which is pretty comical since the vast majority of the left in the U.S. is outright reformist, with very few centrists who (sometimes) pretend to be revolutionary. What is true is that the ISO, which all but endorsed Obama in 2008, is well to the right of most of those protesting Petraeus and ROTC.

Genuine ultra-lefts, such as those Lenin polemicized with in his pamphlet *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder* (1920), were those who refused to work in the existing mass organizations of the working class, such as the unions. They also rejected the *united front*. The Bolsheviks used this tactic already in 1917, fighting together with supporters of Provisional Government leader Kerensky to defeat the attempted military coup by reactionary general Kornilov. At the same time, they relentlessly exposed how Kerensky paved the way for Kornilov, and won workers, soldiers and peasants away from the Mensheviks and populist Social Revolutionaries, who



The Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee that organized the 1917 October Revolution. Who was not there was Stalin.

October 2013



Lenin and Trotsky (center, top) with Red Army troops on second anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, 7 November 1919. Stalinist falsifiers later airbrushed Trotsky out of the photo.

were part of Kerensky's regime. This cleared the way for the proletarian seizure of power in the October Revolution.

Basing himself on this experience, Lenin summarized the united front in the phrase: "March separately, strike together." In other words, the *united front* is a tactic in which different organizations join forces in specific actions while each marches under its own programmatic banners.

The October 1917 Russian Revolution, led by Lenin and Trotsky, was carried out on the program of international socialist revolution.³ Stalin played no role in the revolution, and earlier that year had called for critical support for the bourgeois Provisional Government, a call Lenin sharply denounced in his "April Theses." Following the October victory, the end of WWI led to upheavals and failed insurrections across Europe, in Hungary, Austria, Italy, Germany and elsewhere. This showed the potential for world revolution, but also that the key element for successful proletarian seizure of power was still lacking: Bolshevik-type parties, rooted in the workers and all strata of the oppressed and exploited, and tempered in the fire of class struggle.

In 1919, Lenin and Trotsky founded the Third (Communist) International to overcome this crisis of revolutionary leadership. Bringing together elements from different origins, notably former Socialists and revolutionary syndicalists, meant a struggle for clear conceptions of revolutionary strategy and tactics. Moreover, the new Communist parties were everywhere in the minority. So long as key proletarian sectors were under the leadership of the reformist Second (Socialist) International and a centrist grouping the Bolsheviks dubbed the "2½ International," the Third Congress of

³ No less an authority than J.V. Stalin himself wrote on the first anniversary of the October Revolution ("The Role of the Most Eminent Party Leaders," 6 November 1918): "All the work of practical organization of the insurrection was conducted under the immediate leadership of the chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, Trotsky. It is possible to declare that the swift passing of garrison to the side of the Soviet and the bold execution of the work of the Military Revolutionary Committee, the Party owes principally and above all to comrade Trotsky." Needless to say, this particular article didn't make into Stalin's *Collected Works*. See also Robert Slusser, *Stalin in October: The Man Who Missed the Revolution* (John Hopkins University Press, 1987).

the Comintern (1921) called for the tactic of the united front – common *actions* for specific, limited objectives, while waging political struggle against the opportunists.

Far from replacing the political struggle to expose the reformist leaders, who had supported their "own" bourgeoisies in the imperialist war, the united-front tactic would help demonstrate in action that only the program of Bolshevism showed how to win. So a genuine united front has nothing in common with a "popular front" coalition with bourgeois sectors, nor is it a "propaganda bloc" or programmatic non-aggression pact in which different organizations bury their differences and pretend they agree on strategy, program or general political outlook. Internationalist comrades (and others) have emphasized this point in meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY, but we didn't invent it. We learned it from Lenin, and Trotsky.

The Communist International hammered this home in its "Theses on the United Front," in a key passage worth quoting here:

"The Executive Committee of the Communist International considers that the chief and categorical condition, the same for all Communist Parties, is: the absolute autonomy and complete independence of every Communist Party entering into any agreement with the parties of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, and its freedom to present its own views and its criticisms of those who oppose the Communists. While accepting the need for discipline in action, Communists must at the same time retain both the right and the opportunity to voice, not only before and after but if necessary during actions, their opinion on the politics of all the organisations of the working class without exception. The waiving of this condition is not permissible in any circumstances. Whilst supporting the slogan of maximum unity of all workers' organisations in every practical action against the capitalist front, Communists cannot in any circumstances refrain from putting forward their views, which are the only consistent expression of the interests of the working class as a whole."
 –"Theses On the United Front" (December 1921)

While the Comintern resolution dealt with united fronts between mass-based workers *continued on page 14*

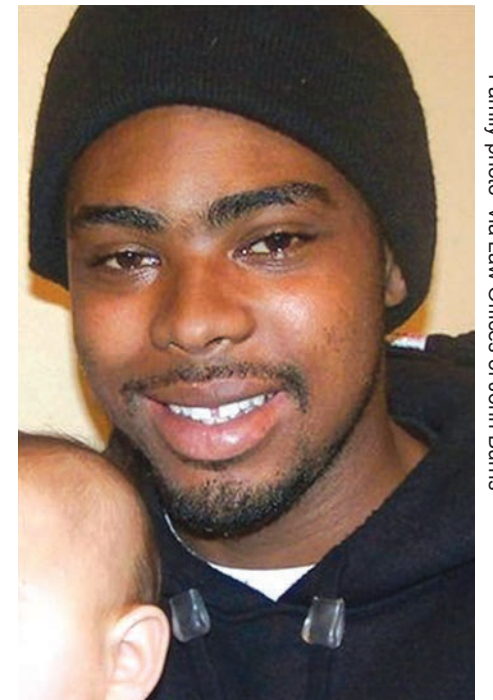
David King, The Commissar Vanishes

Fruitvale Station and the Fight for Black Freedom

Internationalist photos



The CUNY Internationalist Clubs, Class Struggle Education Workers and the Internationalist Group joined with thousands of others in NYC in protesting the acquittal of the racist vigilante George Zimmerman, July 14 and 15. Trayvon Martin and Oscar Grant (right) were victims of the racist capitalist system.



Family photo via Law Offices of John Burris

By Marxist Study Student

On July 23, participants in the Internationalist Clubs' Marxist study group went together to see the film *Fruitvale Station*. This movie depicts the life of Oscar Grant, a young (22-year-old) worker in Oakland, California. While riding the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system, on his way to a New Year's Eve celebration, Grant was accosted by another passenger, who started a scuffle. Racially profiling Grant and his friends, BART police singled them out, made them sit on the platform, and then shot Oscar.

The horrifying images were captured on a cell phone and shown on the Internet. Because of the tremendous public uproar, the officer who murdered Grant was put on trial. Typically, though, the killer got off with just a slap on the wrist.

The opening of *Fruitvale Station* in movie theaters coincided with the nationwide protests against the verdict in the

trial of Trayvon Martin's murderer, George Zimmerman, which reflected the systematic racial oppression that is as much a reality of our present as it is of our past.

We met in Washington Square Park afterwards to discuss the film. Many of us were silent at first as we coped with our feelings for the loss of Oscar Grant, especially after watching the last scene where Oscar's daughter asks her mother where her daddy is the day after he is murdered.

Several members of the group mentioned that the film was poignant and did a great job showing this young man's daily life, the deep connection with his daughter and mother, his sometimes stormy relation with his girlfriend, and didn't make him either a fake saint or someone to be demonized.

At the same time, many challenged the idea that a young black man needs to be "humanized" before the audience can feel indignant at his murder by a racist cop

– which demonstrates the inherent racism embedded in this society. Systematic oppression and police murder, spurred by this racist reality and ideology, rob communities of their black youth every day.

Melissa, a recent college graduate, stated, "Often, people become desensitized to the violence against our black youth and overlook the deep injustice from the police force faced by our black community." She said that the film reminds everyone that Oscar Grant was a father, a son, a boyfriend, and a member of the world community.

A few participants in the discussion were at first concerned that the film was painting a negative picture of Oscar Grant since the movie depicted him sometimes dealing small amounts of drugs. However, we agreed that the director Ryan Coogler gave an accurate depiction of the decisions and consequence for Oscar of being a black working-class youth. This idea is clear when Grant loses his job and turns to selling weed to pay the rent and take care of his family. Viewers see and begin to understand that Grant does not want to do this but is basically forced to.

Shanelle, an undergraduate student from Trinity College, said she believes that the everyday life for many working-class black youth portrayed in the movie highlights the faults of our capitalist system, such as unemployment and poverty. Gian, a sophomore in college, mentioned the systematic racism inherent in American capitalism. "Racist murderers get off with practically a slap on the wrist," he related to the group as he connected racist police to the racist justice system.

Oscar Grant's killer Mehserle received eleven months in prison for "involuntary manslaughter" – after claiming that he mistook his taser for his gun. Black men like Amadou Diallo, Sean Bell, and Trayvon Martin and so many others were all victims of racist slaughter and their killers all walked free.

It is chilling to watch the videos that recorded Oscar Grant's death. On the floor against the wall of the BART station, Oscar has his hands out in front of him the whole

time, he is on the phone, he proceeds to get off the floor, two cops get on him to bring him back down, Oscar argues verbally with them while on his knees, they pin him on the ground and he's shot dead. It seemed almost like a video game where you shoot the people who get in the way.

This cop was obviously motivated by racism to take Oscar's life for no reason at all. Under the current system of capitalism, the inequality gap from rich to poor will always continue to widen as the capitalists seek to maximize their profits. Poor and working-class people continue to lose services they depend on like day care, quality public schools and access to higher education.

Oppressed communities of darker-skinned people are hit the hardest by these increasing inequalities and are then faced with mass imprisonment for "crime." In a systematic way cops profile black youth as troublesome and worthless. Racist killer cops therefore see no injustice in eliminating black members of society.

The judicial system allows these killings by letting the murderers off the hook – the judicial system and the police force practice racism on the institutional level, as part of what we've studied about the social function of what Marxists call the bourgeois state.

In following study group sessions we saw the film *Deacons for Defense*, in which Forest Whitaker – who produced *Fruitvale Station* – portrays the leader of that determined group of black workers in Louisiana who organized and practiced self-defense against the KKK. We also read further on the material roots of racial oppression, the fight for black freedom and socialist revolution.

The profit-motivated system of capitalism is the root of institutionalized oppression and racism. Despite what the capitalist distorters have taught us with miseducation about socialism, it is the only real way to get freedom. Workers and students must unite to create a new world; we cannot depend on capitalist politicians or others protectors of capitalism to change our life for us, we must change it for ourselves. ■

Steve Rhodes/Flickr



On 13 November 2010 International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 shut down the Port of Oakland and held mass rally (above) of hundreds to protest the outrageous "involuntary manslaughter" verdict of cop who murdered Oscar Grant. Mobilizing power of the working class in defense of African American, Latino, Asian and other oppressed sectors is key to combatting racist cop violence. See "ILWU Shuts Ports Demanding Justice for Oscar Grant," *Revolution* No. 8, April 2011.

Militant “Teacher Insurgency” Shakes Mexico



El Internacionalista

Above: Burning tents as federal and local riot police retake Mexico City’s main square, the Zócalo, September 13 after it had been occupied for over three weeks by up to 40,000 striking teachers of the CNTE. Below: strikers shut down Chamber of Deputies August 21 to prevent vote of anti-teacher “reform.”

Revolution is proud to present below, in slightly edited form, a series of eyewitness reports by NYC school teacher, United Federation of Teachers union delegate and Class Struggle Education Workers activist Marjorie Stamberg, about the ongoing mass “teacher insurgency” taking place in Mexico. The militant mobilization has opposed and now seeks to overturn the program of draconian “evaluations,” union-busting and measures targeting indigenous education in particular that the government of President Enrique Peña Nieto has rammed through under orders from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank

Mexico City, August 22: Schools are shut down in Mexico City today, amid the teachers’ protest that has brought more than 40,000 teachers to occupy and sit-in in the main square in the capital, the Zócalo. I went on a huge teachers’ march on Tuesday (August 20) and last night we went back to the sit-in to talk to teachers. Thousands of them from school districts from Oaxaca to Michoacán and Guerrero had spent the day surrounding and blocking the two houses of Congress to try to prevent the passage of the so-called “education reform.” This, of course, is no reform at all, but part of the global corporate assault on teachers’ rights and attempts to impose new student and teacher evaluations that are punitive to both.

Yesterday, with teachers blocking the congressional buildings, the legislators could not even get in to the Chamber of Deputies, which was surrounded by about 20,000 teachers starting at 3 a.m. in the teachers’ “Operación Hormiga” (Operation Anthill). They also surrounded the federal

Palace of Justice and the Mexico City police headquarters. So the right honorable deputies had to find another place to meet and try to pass their laws. Where did they go? First they went to the Senate, but several thousand teachers were dispatched to blockade that as well. Figuring the teachers would chase them anywhere they went in Mexico City, the deputies fled the Federal District to the surrounding state of Mexico, where they finally held their session in the Banamex Center (owned by Citibank) in Naucalpan. Today, the Senate decamped to Banamex as well. This act alone made clear to all whose interests are being represented – the people or the banks? Guess which.

Late last night, in front of the Senate, we had an interview with Norma Cleyver, a representative of the Oaxaca teachers. Thousands of teachers from Oaxaca [a largely indigenous state in Mexico’s south] have come up to Mexico City; they declared an unlimited strike at the opening of school, for the first time in history. Norma is regional coordinator of the Valles Centrales of Section 22 of the Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (CNTE–National Coordinating Committee



Juan Pablo Zamora/Cuartoscuro

of Education Workers, the mass movement of “dissident” teachers). They have risked jail and death squads. She told us that teachers’ blood has already been spilled and some may give their lives in this struggle as they fight for their impoverished students in the rural and poor areas of southern Mexico, and for their own rights. These are the same Oaxaca teachers who sparked the rebellion in 2006 of teachers, health workers and many other unionists, as well as indigenous peoples, parents and community groups, which attracted worldwide attention.

We were talking on a bench in front of the Senate after teachers had spent hours

chanting outside. I spoke about our struggles in New York and across the U.S to defend public education and against union-busting and privatization. A Brazilian teacher from São Paulo also participated in our interview. Norma and Yazodara – another teacher from Oaxaca – stressed over and over again that it is not just in Oaxaca, or Mexico, or Brazil, but a global struggle against capitalism’s drive to turn the schools into test-prep institutions that serve corporations’ needs for low-level technicians; and that this drive aims to push out the poorest and neediest students. They are also fighting against the “corporatist” (government-controlled) fake

union, the SNTE, which is supporting the anti-teacher, anti-education “reform.”

The Mexico City CNTE teachers have a poster-sticker that I got to use in the classroom. Translated, it says: “Education is about learning how to think, not to obey.”

Norma told us that since the current struggle against the imposition of the “education reform” laws last spring, five teachers in the most militant areas have been kidnapped and tortured.

Although the change in the constitution permitting these teacher evals was passed in February, the current laws are for their specific implementation. The papers today are reporting that two of the three implementation laws were rammed through in a midnight vote, but the third, which among other things will impose sanctions on teachers who refuse to implement the laws, was taken off the table.

Mass Protest Blocks Airport

Mexico City, August 23: I just got back from the airport, where thousands of teachers are sitting on the main access road to Mexico City airport. They came early this morning, by the thousands, after a march that started from the sit-in in the main plaza, the Zócalo. The teachers have cut off subway access to the airport, and they are occupying the main access road which stretches about a kilometer up to the airport entrance. Up at the front of this blockade is a line of hundreds of riot cops with machine guns, so the strikers can’t get any further.

Overhead, the noise of the planes coming in is deafening, and the planes are very low. As I am posting this, there are rumors going around that the police may move in and try to push the strikers out in the early morning hours. Yesterday, the teachers’ blocking the Senate and Congress, not permitting anyone to pass – no senators, no office people, nobody – was a historic action. So is the airport access blockade.

No cars or taxis or buses can get through to the airport to drop passengers off. Many probably did not make their flights or went back home. There is the rather comical sight of people shlepping up the long access road dragging wheelie bags behind them, trying to get to the entrance doors. Particularly striking are the well-dressed elegant women in spike heels and Hermès bags trudging the kilometer, and preoccupied businessmen looking worriedly at their Rolex watches as they rush with their briefcases to their international flights.

Last night starting at 11 p.m., there was a meeting of all the teachers’ union districts, in the local hall of Mexico City teachers’ Section 9. Many groups offered greetings to the meeting, including our comrades in the Grupo Internacionalista, but everyone



Thousands of teachers blockaded Mexico City’s international airport August 23. CNTE poster says: “Total Rejection of the Educational Reform.”

was then asked to leave and only the union members were allowed back in. There they decided to escalate their action – hence the airport access blockade.

This action must have seriously disrupted international and national air travel in Mexico, but I don’t have any figures yet. Yesterday, the papers described the central district of Mexico City as a “parking lot,” with teachers’ tents and camp sites stretching down the fancy main commercial streets, and traffic blocked.

Late this afternoon, Mexican president Peña Nieto’s government Interior Minister announced that at 5 p.m. they will set up a *mesa de negociaciones* (negotiating round table) with the teachers. This is after the government put full-page ads in yesterday’s papers saying there was no pulling back on passing the education “reform,” they would absolutely not give an inch. But now the teachers’ mobilization, by virtually paralyzing important commercial districts in the capital, has led to this move.

However, the teachers are taking it with a huge grain of salt. After passing the constitutional changes for the reform laws, the government promised to hold forums across the country to get parents’, community and teachers’ input. These forums took place, people participated by the thousands, and then ... their recommendations were never passed on to the legislators – the government-controlled SNTE officials just sat on the suggestions! So no wonder the teachers are skeptical of this new move to come to the table.

By the time I got off the subway to go home, I got a call. At 7 p.m., representatives from the Oaxaca teachers’ local, Section 22, came to the teachers blocking the airport, and reported on the negotiations. The government said it might offer some modifications but *first*, the teachers had to move off the airport access road. The union said no, they are not moving an inch.

P.S.: Gloria [another UFT activist] mentioned in her earlier post the problems of students in indigenous communities in the south who don’t speak Spanish and will find these tests particularly punitive. A teacher I met today works in the Mixtec areas, and she said that as early as pre-school, students will be given test

questions, and even if they only speak Mixtec, for example, and get the answers wrong, not only will they fail the test, but the teacher can be fired for this! She also said there are trick questions, where all the answers are wrong. This type of racist discrimination is one of the main reasons the teachers are so determined to smash this so-called education reform.

Oaxaca, August 27: The “Dialogue Round Table” that the government agreed to on August 23, as teachers blockaded the airport, began yesterday. Over the weekend, Interior Minister Osorio Chung declared that, first, nothing would stop the educational reform, and second, if the “dialogue” doesn’t produce results acceptable to the government, it will proceed with repression. A columnist in yesterday’s *La Jornada* (Mexico City, 26 August) put it this way:

“One of the first sessions between the leaders of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate which will take place today will determine the course to be taken both by a movement determined not to let itself be swindled and by the ‘reform’ powers who are preparing an iron fist underneath the silken glove of dialogue.”

Meanwhile the teachers say they are still “on battle footing.” Yesterday they surrounded the embassies of the United States, Spain and Britain. Another 10,000 teachers are arriving in Mexico City today to join the massive tent city that is stretched out across the main plaza and several blocks into side streets of the Centro Histórico. (Tourists stepping out of the Holiday Inn on Cinco de Mayo street have to wend their way through the maze of tents.) The main negotiator for the dissident teachers of the CNTE warned the government, “You think we’re going to swallow this bait, but we are prepared for anything,” adding that the teachers had categorically no confidence that this was leading to a solution. In fact, the dialogue is a trap.

New York Times Echoes Government Union-Bashers

The view of business sectors, right-wing politicians and television monopolies who have demonized teachers was synthesized in a particularly ignorant and snooty article by Karla Zabudovsky in Sunday’s *New York Times* (25 August). As she portrayed it, the problems of Mexican education consist of nepotism, “poorly performing teachers,” unions, and the “radical teachers’ group,” the CNTE.

In fact, Mexican public schools have

been systematically starved of funds for several decades, and teachers in rural and impoverished urban areas go through hell to bring education to their students, often without blackboards, let alone computers. The so-called reforms are an attempt to eliminate any form of job security for teachers, and, step by step, to privatize as much as possible. Two of the three implementation laws were passed last week, laying the basis for the introduction of school fees and tuition that would gut the constitutional guarantee of free public secular education for all.

But in the face of the teachers’ protests, the government has not yet been able to ram through the third law, including the punitive teacher evaluations, which is called “Professional Teaching Service.” This would effectively eliminate all job security for teachers. They would have to take a multiple-choice test every year, in which failing scores would lead to removal from the classroom for tenured teachers, together with firing for teachers under a new probation law.

Teachers I have talked with at the *plantón* and blockades have been struck by the parallels between our fight in the U.S. and theirs. And no accident. These reforms come straight from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and other think-tanks of global capital. Obviously this has nothing to do with improving education and everything to do with union-bashing, profit for venders and producing a “disciplined” work force of low-level technicians to meet the needs of the big multinationals. The upper and middle classes will send their offspring to private schools.

With the supposed “dialogue,” which is actually the doorway to massive repression, the government is trying to portray teachers as only out for themselves. But the teachers have responded, as one newspaper reported, that they would “take whatever action they considered necessary in defense of free, quality education and teachers’ rights.”

Faced with the government’s sinister maneuvers, the key now is to extend the strike and make it national. Teachers in Michoacán and here in Oaxaca are still out on indefinite strike; they’ve been out for six days in Tabasco; they’re walking out tomorrow in Chiapas. They may go out in Veracruz. The government is particularly worried that the strikes could continue into September, when the so-called energy reform – calling for the introduction of private capital into the state-owned Pemex oil monopoly – is coming to a vote. Massive protests by teachers and other workers blocking Pemex installations in the oil states of Veracruz and Tabasco would have a major effect on the Mexican economy.

One final note: On Sunday, the notorious train called *La Bestia* (The Beast), which carries hundreds of Central American immigrants through southern Mexico – riding on freight-car roofs in the scorching heat, beset by violent gangs and corrupt police – derailed and overturned, killing at least six and injuring many more. There is an excellent documentary by the same name (*La Bestia*), which shows the harrowing experience many of our students go through before they get to the U.S. It is available on Netflix.

La lucha continúa

This will be my last post, as I head back to school. I want to see if we can put together a forum-discussion on the Mexican teachers strike, in New York. [The event was held



Speaking with teachers from Mixtec region of Oaxaca during airport blockade, August 23.

Hunter Internationalist Clubs Build Solidarity with Hot & Crusty Workers

By Mira and Rudi

For many students in the United States today, the class struggle is an abstract idea if they have heard the term at all, perhaps fleetingly referred to by some left-inclined professors. This is the case as well at the City University of New York, where the majority come from working-class families, often originating from countries with a rich history of sharp class struggle. CUNY students, largely the daughters and sons of the working class, study within an academic institution of the ruling class – the same capitalist class that exploits and oppresses their parents, friends and coworkers beyond the university walls.

So when immigrant workers at the Hot and Crusty bakery/deli near Hunter College began a campaign for union rights last year, it was important to bring CUNY students, faculty and workers to the picket lines to support them. Locked out by the former boss after voting to establish their own union, the mainly Mexican and Ecuadoran workers held firm on the picket for 55 days. During this inspiring struggle, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs worked every day to bring students and adjuncts to the picket line. We organized forums, classroom visits and tabling with Hot and Crusty workers to build solidarity with their struggle. Activists gained important support from the Hunter chapter of the CUNY

faculty staff union, the Professional Staff Congress. And the workers won, including something almost unheard of these days: union control of hiring!

The workers of Hot and Crusty launched their struggle almost two years ago, determined to resist super-exploitive conditions at the Upper East Side restaurant, including below-minimum wage pay and up to 72-hour workweeks with no overtime. As calls to the bosses' Labor Department went unanswered, the workers found support from the Laundry Workers Center organizing group. In May 2012, despite the bosses' usual vicious tricks to intimidate workers from organizing (including threatening to call the *migra* immigration cops and bringing in professional union-busters), the Hot and Crusty Workers Association (HCWA) won the election for union representation in the shop. The owners' response was to abruptly close down the restaurant in August.

But the workers at Hot & Crusty were determined not to let go of their hard-earned union recognition, and vowed to keep fighting. As the struggle developed, class lines appeared more sharply on the street as workers picketed. We saw working-class people who keep the city running (delivery men, nannies, utility workers, etc.) expressing interest and a growing identification with what this

small group was doing to defend its right to organize against exploitation. But we also witnessed venomous hostility from upper-class denizens who couldn't contain or conceal their deep hostility to workers they had long treated as little more than disembodied hands serving them their food.

We also saw students with a desire to oppose racism and injustice gain more understanding of the importance of the workers' struggle. A significant episode was the 18 October 2012 Labor/Immigrant Rights solidarity rally heavily built

by Internationalist activists to help bring support from NYC unionists and immigrant rights activists for the Hot and Crusty workers' fight. It was through fierce resolve and solidarity – which are key to class-struggle unionism – that the workers won.

The outcome won by the Hot and Crusty workers was a solid union victory: full union recognition, a pay increase, sick



CUNY Internationalist Clubs actively supported struggle to unionize Hot and Crusty bakery.

days, overtime, vacation and crucially, a union hiring hall, allowing the small workers organization to control the hiring of workers in the shop. In the super-lucrative restaurant industry in New York City, built on the backs of immigrant workers, this victory has the potential to be a beacon towards organizing the masses of unorganized workers in the city and beyond. ■

on September 24, at the CUNY Graduate Center.] I hope everyone can come, as we are facing the same urgent issues.

Things here came to a head over the weekend as Peña Nieto delivered his first annual "State of the Union" report to Congress. But nobody paid much attention, as the real action was pushing through the teacher evaluations.

While up to 50,000 teachers, youth and other supporters were in the streets facing an army of riot police, the three major parties in Congress – the president's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the rightist National Action Party (PAN) and "center-left" nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) – met behind a wall of nine-foot-high steel plates where they voted for the punitive teacher evaluations. This was even as the supposed "dialogue" with the leaders of the dissident teachers CNTE union was taking place in a downtown hotel.

But today in the tent city in the main plaza, teachers were not cowed. Wednesday there is a nationwide "mega-march" to kick off what they are calling a "teacher insurrection."

The PRD Mexico City government has been under fire from the right-wing for not cracking down hard enough on the teachers. New York's own former mayor Rudy Giuliani – who was an advisor to the Mexico City mayor on security matters – got into the act, calling for demonstrators to be jailed.

But yesterday there were reportedly 6,000 city riot police, 2,000 federal police, 3,000 bank police, 2,000 state police from outside Mexico City, an anti-riot squad, a battalion of grenadiers, a regiment of mounted police, a helicopter and two armored water cannon vehicles to keep the demonstrators at bay. There were two dozen arrests – many of them when police stopped

a metro train and arrested every university student in the car!

The evals are very punitive. A leading political scientist at Mexico's National University, John Ackerman, denounced the law as one that would "literally throw out on the street a multitude of highly trained teachers dedicated to their students, with the excuse that they had 'failed' slanted tests designed for that purpose." "It's a classic 'three strikes and they're out,'" he remarked.

Ackermann said the real danger is that the classrooms will be staffed by people who would be disposed to be unconditionally obedient to supervisors who could fire them at the least excuse. Or the classrooms would be left empty as teachers are forced to abandon their school books and go drive a taxi, become a dishwasher in the United States, or... (you can fill in the blank).

Going together with the anti-teacher "reform," the government of the "Pact for Mexico" plans to introduce sales tax (a whopping 16 percent) on food and medicine. This will literally deprive people of life, as one legislator said.

The teachers here are incredibly dedicated. Particularly in the south of Mexico, in Oaxaca and Chiapas, and in Guerrero, Michoacán and other centers of the resistance, they travel to small rural villages every day to teach in schools that often have no electricity or running water. Forget about computers or smart boards, many of them don't have blackboards. There are no school lunches or breakfasts. Under the "reform," the authorities are talking about introducing 8-hour school days, and lunches will be paid for by the parents.

The condition of the computers in the urban schools is notorious. Yesterday we were walking past a school in Oaxaca City (shut down because of the strike) and no-

ticed that they had used the carcasses of old monitors as planters, with very pretty plants growing out of them!

What is going to happen next? It's hard to say at this point. There is a growing cleavage between CNTE union leaders (some of whom have tried to soften the blow by saying they won the right to appeal the evals – where have we heard that before, UFT members?). There has also been a lot of talk that in Oaxaca, the returning teachers of Sección 22 may fight to declare the state in rebellion and refuse to carry out the national law. Not impossible, they've done it before. ■

El Salvador...

continued from page 3

directly into U.S. surrogates with more arms and cash. As such, Petraeus is one of the main architects of the current U.S. drive to war against Syria.⁸

In his gruesome work in Iraq, Petraeus drew on the services and expertise of the war criminals who set up some of the most notorious death squads in the history of Latin America. In the name of his victims, we call for massive resistance to Petraeus' presence at the City University of New York until he is driven out through protest and exposure. ■

⁸ "White House Rebuffed Clinton-Petraeus Plan to Arm Syrian Rebels," Reuters (2 February 2013).

Vietnam ...

continued from page 7

after campus – and was thrown out of CUNY in 1971 through mass protests exposing its role in Vietnam. Since the administration and trustees reinstated ROTC last semester, today CUNY students and workers are

organizing to give the boot to the recruiters of death.

Meanwhile, the administration has also infamously appointed David "Death Squad" Petraeus, commander of U.S. imperialism in Afghanistan and Iraq, co-architect of war against Syria, as a visiting professor of Public Policy (mass murder?) at the Macaulay Honors College. What will he be "teaching" – waterboarding, drone attacks, enhanced interrogation, death squads, mass electronic spying and updated version of the Phoenix Program and tiger cages?

Petraeus, it should be noted, wrote his PhD thesis on the need to overcome the "conservatism and caution" among the military "that springs from the lessons of Vietnam," and in particular the fear that "involvement in a counter insurgency should be avoided." He wrote the U.S. Army-Marine Counter-Insurgency Field Manual, and brought to Iraq the "dirty war" techniques and the personnel who organized the death squads in Central America. But now he faces student protests at CUNY which have drawn very different lessons of Vietnam.

The CUNY administration is pushing to further militarize CUNY to better serve U.S. imperialism. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs call on all students and workers at CUNY to solidarize with the countless victims of ROTC, Petraeus and their bloody ilk – and to join the struggle against their deadly campaigns! "Two, three, many defeats for U.S. imperialism!" In unity with the toiling masses in poor and "semi-colonial" countries who are in the gun sights of the U.S. war machine, for whom U.S. interventions – whether self-proclaimed counterinsurgency or lying claims of "humanitarianism" – pose a real and imminent danger, we must fight at every turn to mobilize the working class to defeat U.S. imperialism. ■

Trotskyist View...

continued from page 9

parties in the 1920s, the basic guidelines it lays out are very important today, since they help provide much-needed clarity in marking out the parameters for principled joint action between different organizations in certain circumstances. This is key to avoiding the traps of unprincipled “propaganda blocs” and popular-front coalitionism, as well as the kind of organizational sectarianism that (in the case of groups like Progressive Labor Party) often provides “leftist” covering for amicable coexistence with union bureaucrats and reformists.

Trotskyists do not make a fetish of the united front. It is not a strategy but a tactic that can be employed in different struggles. The Internationalist Group has initiated united-front protests on many occasions, including against the purge of undocumented students from CUNY following 9/11⁴ and against Obama’s use of the Coast Guard against ILWU longshore workers in January 2012. We have participated in others, such as strike support for Stella d’Oro bakery workers in 2009 and demonstrations against the U.S. invasion of Haiti in January 2010 in the guise of humanitarian earthquake relief. In each case we have engaged in common action while continuing polemical struggle for the revolutionary program.

In the 1920s, the U.S. Communist Party’s Young Workers League raised the slogan of “Clarity and Action.” This motto was adopted by the Trotskyist youth in the 1930s as they supported the struggle of the Communist League of America which led the 1934 Minneapolis Teamster strike, joined in defending the nine Scottsboro youth facing a lynch law trial in Alabama, formed united fronts against fascist attacks on the left in New York, and defended students suspended by CCNY for anti-fascist protests. Then as now, the struggle for Marxist political clarity was key to upholding the principled Leninist tactic of the united front against its opportunist perversion by Stalinism on the latter’s zigzag journey to popular-front reformism.

⁴ See *Defend Immigrant Students – Stop CUNY’s “War Purge”!* (Internationalist Group pamphlet, December 2001).

“The People United”: Recipe for Defeat

The workers republic of Soviet Russia was soon invaded by 14 capitalist countries, among them the United States under racist Democrat Woodrow Wilson. Backed by the imperialist powers, Tsarist generals joined with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries to form a White Army in the attempt to overthrow the Bolsheviks. At Lenin’s request, Leon Trotsky founded and led a workers’ and peasants’ Red Army that defeated the imperialists and counterrevolutionaries. In a 1923 interview in Moscow, Claude McKay, the great poet and writer of the Harlem Renaissance, reported that Trotsky expressed great interest in learning about the situation of American and African black people and “said he would like to set a practical example in his own department and proposed the training of a group of Negroes as officers in the Red Army.”⁵

Although the imperialist and white-guard armies lost the war, they inflicted terrible damage on the world’s first workers state, in an impoverished peasant land already devastated by World War I. With the failure of the post-WWI insurrections, the isolation and poverty of Soviet Russia led to the rise of a conservative, nationalist bureaucracy personified by Joseph Stalin, who after Lenin’s death launched the doctrine of building “socialism in one country.” This was in stark contradiction with everything that Marx (and Lenin, and Stalin before Lenin’s death) had written about the necessarily *international* nature of socialism. The purpose of this blatant revisionism was the vain attempt to induce capitalist governments to leave the USSR alone in exchange for sacrificing working people world-wide.

In his search for capitalist “friends,” Stalin embraced the nationalist Goumindang in China led by the militarist Chiang Kai-shek, going so far as to make it a “fraternal party” in the Comintern. In the name of a supposed “anti-imperialist united front,” he

⁵ Winston James reports about a cadre of “black Bolsheviks” who were “mainly descendants of Africans who had settled several generations before along the Black Sea. They fought, distinguished themselves and rose in Trotsky’s Red Army” (*Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia* [Verso, 1999]).

ordered the Chinese Communists to subordinate workers’ and peasants’ struggles to the Guomindang. The result was the slaughter of thousands of heroic Chinese revolutionaries when Chiang’s troops entered Shanghai in April 1927. In a panicked about-face, Stalin declared a “Third Period” of supposedly imminent capitalist collapse. In Germany this translated into denouncing the Social Democrats as “social-fascists,” and allowing the Nazis to take power without a shot being fired.

Trotsky fought unrelentingly for a workers united front in Germany that could have smashed the fascists and opened the road to revolution in the key country of Europe. This perspective was so obviously necessary that it won wide support, far beyond the handful of German Trotskyists. In the aftermath of Hitler’s victory, Stalin panicked yet again, and swung decisively to the right with the policy of the *popular front* proclaimed at the Seventh Congress of the by-then Stalinized Comintern in 1935. This was brazen class collaboration, first and foremost with the imperialists of France, Britain and the United States under FDR. Directly causing the defeat of the Spanish Revolution, the popular front has been a formula for terrible defeats ever since.

The lessons of this history – documented in our pamphlet *What is Trotskyism?* – are of the utmost importance today. For those who see themselves as communists and want to fight for the victory of revolution, there is no way around coming to grips with the counterposition between Stalinism – a reformist and nationalist standpoint whose centerpiece is the popular front of class collaboration – and the revolutionary, internationalist and proletarian line of Lenin and



The working people united with their oppressors were defeated. Salvador Allende (right) with Augusto Pinochet in August 1973, shortly after Chilean president appointed the future dictator head of the army. Mao’s China rushed to recognize the Pinochet junta, and closed its embassy’s doors to leftists trying to escape.

Trotsky. *The popular front means workers’ blood*, from France and Spain in the 1930s to Indonesia in 1965, where Mao’s line of a “bloc of four classes” with bourgeois nationalists (theorized as “New Democracy” in some of his best-known works) directly led to the slaughter of a million Communists.

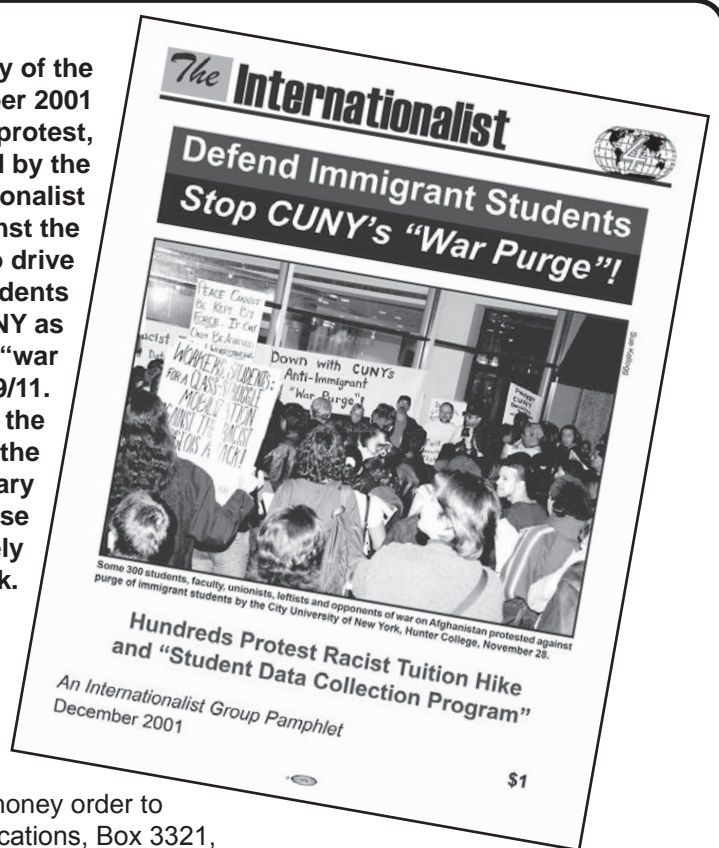
There Ain’t No “Power of the People”

This history is an important reference point for understanding why we Trotskyists sharply criticize all kinds of slogans and rhetoric about “the people.” This came up at the September 3 demonstration against ROTC called by the Ad Hoc Committee, when a RSCC comrade (exercising the right to put forward his programmatic views) started a chant counterposing “people’s war” to imperialist war. An Internationalist comrade took the opportunity to emphasize: We are for *class* war against imperialist war. We call for workers’ strikes against the war, and this struggle led to the longshore workers shutting down all the ports of the West Coast against the Iraq/Afghanistan wars on May Day 2008.

Under capitalism, “the people” doesn’t exist. The starting point for a Marxist understanding of the world is that society is divided into classes whose interests are irreconcilably counterposed. It is not enough

The story of the November 2001 united-front protest, initiated by the Internationalist Group, against the attempt to drive immigrant students out of CUNY as part of the “war effort” after 9/11. As a result of the mobilization, the exclusionary tuition increase was largely rolled back.

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Hundreds Protest Racist Tuition Hike and “Student Data Collection Program”
An Internationalist Group Pamphlet
December 2001

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Claude McKay, celebrated writer of the Harlem Renaissance, speaking at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1923. In response to questions from Trotsky, McKay wrote series of reports and a small book on *Blacks in America*.

to lay claim to this understanding or pay lip service to it: for any Marxist, this fact the foundation of your political program which must be applied concretely in every aspect of political work. And the conclusion is that only a proletarian revolution can end imperialism and its wars, or make it possible to eliminate racism and racial oppression, or the oppression of women, by undertaking the construction of a socialist society in which for the first time social equality and the emancipation of all can be possible.

“People’s” politics at CUNY has often led activists rather directly from a nationalist/Third Worldist/studentist outlook to the Democratic Party. Just look at the history of the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM) at CUNY. After helping organize some large and relatively militant student protests against tuition hikes in the early ’90s, SLAM settled into a role as “official CUNY radicals” effectively subsidized by the university through their control of the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) and Student Resource Center at Hunter College. After losing USG elections at Hunter in 2004, SLAM basically disappeared. Many of its former leaders can now be found staffing the offices of Democrat-run NGOs like PIRG, “progressive” Democratic City Council members and pro-Democratic union bureaucracies.

Despite its demise, one of SLAM’s favorite slogans lives on, exemplifying the kind of classless outlook that is counterposed to Marxist class politics: “There ain’t no power like the power of the people, ’cuz the power of the people don’t stop!” The crowd is supposed to answer “Say what?!” That’s a good question, since this populist jingle is designed to make people feel good but not think about what the vapid tautology actually means, which in essence is *bourgeois* politics. It may appeal to those yearning for a popular front of class collaboration with liberals and “folks” looking for a career as Democrats or union bureaucrats – but it’s the antithesis of revolutionary Marxism, which stands for working-class independence from the bourgeoisie.

Occupy’s trademark catchphrase about “the 99 percent” was enormously popular among liberals and reformist left groups. However, we in the CUNY Internationalist Clubs rejected this bourgeois populist slogan, pointing out, for example, how it was used to appeal to cops to “join us,” when in fact the police are the professional enforcers for the bosses. (Some social-democratic groups like Socialist Alternative claim that police are part of the working class, which only shows their appetite to administer the capitalist state.) RSCC comrades and many African American, Latino and Asian youth have also reacted with scorn to the grotesque idea that the racist police are potential allies of the oppressed.

So what about “Power to the People”? This slogan was popularized by the Black Panther Party, founded in 1966, which won worldwide fame for its valiant stand for black self-defense against racist police terror. (A vivid memoir of the time – recommended for every CUNY activist’s reading list – is *We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party*, by America’s No. 1 class war prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal.) The BPP was admired by radicalizing youth for carrying forward Malcolm X’s sharp denunciations of the racism and war crimes of the Democratic Party, its bold identification with anti-imperialist struggles around the world, as well as its willingness to polemicize sharply against “pork chop nationalism,” “black capitalism” and other open



In March 2009 protests against tuition hike, cutbacks and layoffs affecting CUNY and city workers, hundreds took up Internationalists’ chant, “Students and labor, shut the city down!”

accommodations to the racist status quo.

Moreover, at its height many of the BPP’s most dedicated and heroic activists – like the young Chicago Panther leader Fred Hampton – were grappling with issues like how to really apply Marxism to the fight for black liberation, as part of the fight to defeat capitalism right here “in the belly of the beast.” Such efforts were cut short by the FBI’s infamous COINTELPRO (“counterintelligence”) program, symbolized by the cold-blooded murder of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in December 1969, as dozens of Panthers were gunned down and many more framed up and locked away, sometimes for decades.

Yet even in its heyday, the BPP was characterized by deep contradictions between a desire for revolution and its radical-nationalist ideology which blocked it from fighting to mobilize strategically-placed black workers in a revolutionary proletarian struggle for *black liberation through socialist revolution*. This is the strategy of Leninism, which fights to build a communist vanguard party wielding the power of the proletariat against every form of oppression, centrally – in this country founded on chattel slavery – the oppression of black people that is written into the DNA of American capitalism.

The “power to the people” slogan could only obscure the *class* polarization fundamental to any fight to overthrow capitalism. As a result, left-wing Panthers’ efforts were increasingly channeled into social service programs to “serve the people” in alliance with black churches and local bourgeois politicians. In July 1971 the BPP split between a wing led by Eldridge Cleaver, who went quickly from “ultra-revolutionary” posturing to Republican reaction; and another led by Huey Newton and Elaine Brown, who (with the “help” of the Soviet-line reformist Communist Party) made a turn to the Democratic Party. But with its internal contradictions and nationalist program, the Panthers could not go forward on a path to communism.

As for the characteristic slogan of the popular-frontist left, “*The people united will never be defeated*,” here the consequences of “people” politics instead of proletarian class politics are written in blood. This motto of Salvador Allende’s Chilean popular front – “*El pueblo unido jamás será vencido*” – is chanted in innumerable demonstrations to this day, summing up the politics of class collaboration. Yet in “uniting” the workers and oppressed with “progressive” sectors of the bourgeoisie, Allende’s Unidad Popular

opened the road for the bloody military coup of Augusto Pinochet on 11 September 1973. Asked why he wasn’t chanting this slogan at a protest last year, an immigrant worker unionist replied curtly, “Because it is a lie.”

As for Mao Zedong, RSCC comrades should seriously investigate why his government ostentatiously rushed to recognize the U.S.-backed Chilean military regime, leading Pinochet to declare: “China has behaved well.” (See the pamphlet *China’s Alliance with U.S. Imperialism* [1976], available from the CUNY Internationalist Clubs.)

Class Struggle – or “Red University” Fantasies?

Several articles in this issue of *Revolution* illustrate how CUNY’s reinstatement of ROTC, and appointment of David “Death Squad” Petraeus, are part and parcel of the international capitalist offensive against public education. In Mexico, our comrades of the Grupo Internacionalista (GI) have been intervening daily in the heroic teachers’ strike against the imperialist-dictated “education reform” on the basis of a program for revolutionary class struggle. This has meant helping lead the takeover of schools – like the National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH) that sent greetings from the barricades supporting the CUNY Six. It also means fighting to bring in some of the “heavy battalions” of the proletariat to buttress the teachers.

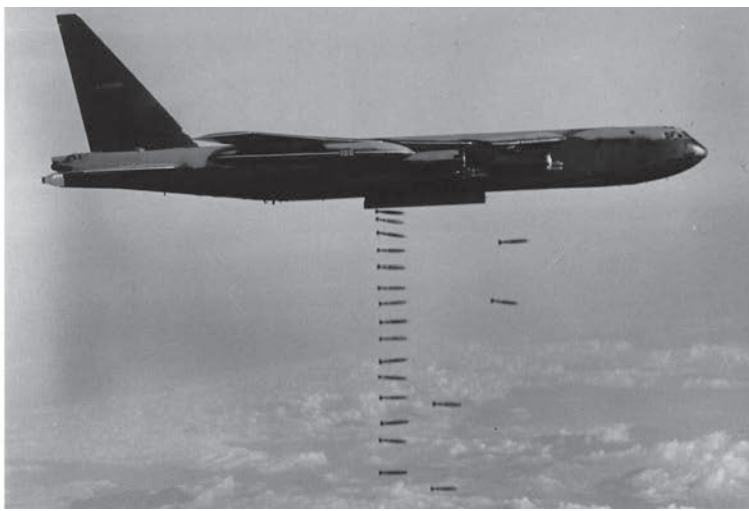
At CUNY, the Internationalist Clubs call to abolish the administration and Board of Trustees, and for the university to be run by democratically elected committees of students, teachers and workers. This is a democratic rather than a socialist demand, but one that is highly unlikely to be realized under capitalism. Moreover, it is linked to our demands for *open admissions with no tuition* and *living stipends* so working-class students can afford to study; for free 24-hour childcare, equal rights for gays, lesbians and transgender people, and full citizenship rights for all immigrants. We clearly and explicitly tie these demands to the revolutionary class perspective of Trotskyism:

“What we need is to break with all bourgeois parties and build a revolutionary workers party that fights to overthrow the capitalist system....The revolutionary party we need must be one that champions the cause of all those exploited and oppressed by capitalist society, bringing revolutionary class consciousness to the mass of workers in the course of the class struggle. Students and youth can play



CUNY Internationalist Clubs at protest against cop murder of Kimani Gray in East Flatbush, March 25. For workers mobilization against racist police terror!

Internationalist photo



Stalinist betrayal: Mao Zedong feted Richard Nixon as U.S. was carpet-bombing North Vietnam in 1972. These are the bitter fruits of “building socialism in one country.” After Mao-Nixon deal, Maoist movement hemorrhaged.

an important role in this struggle, if we understand what we’re fighting for and get organized, allied with the power of the working class.”

–“Join the CUNY Internationalist Clubs!”
Revolution No. 8, April 2011

This revolutionary working-class perspective has guided our participation in struggles at CUNY – against budget cuts, tuition hikes and layoffs; in support of Hunter cafeteria workers’ resistance to union-busting bosses; against the police attack on students protesting the Board of Trustees meeting at Baruch College in November 2011, and many others. And although our program is far to the left of the other student groups’, Internationalists have gotten an enthusiastic response to our slogan, “Workers and Students: Shut the City Down!” (See video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZUesdAn33M>)

Violent repression by CUNY’s “security” force and the NYPD played a part in radicalizing a small but significant number of activists at the City University. A number had participated in Students United for a Free CUNY (SUFC), a reformist group linked to New York Students Rising, which in turn is an NGO (“non-governmental organization”) which receives funding, for example, from the New York Foundation, representing some of the biggest Wall Street banks.⁶ Seeking a more militant perspective, a sector of SUFC split to the left to form the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee.

On 21 November 2011, many of these activists, together with other CUNY students and faculty, witnessed campus cops slamming students to the ground, dragging them by the hair, and delivering them to the NYPD during the infamous cop attack on a protest against the tuition hike being rubber-stamped at a Board of Trustees meeting at Baruch College. A week later, more than 1,000 defenders of students’ rights gathered in front of Baruch to protest the police attack. This rally was called by the Professional Staff Congress as a result of Internationalist and CSEW comrades’ fight for the “CUNY General Assembly” to appeal to the faculty/staff union to initiate the protest, and to call on other unionists to join it.

The point was to gain support for the students from the labor organization that represents 25,000 faculty and staff at CUNY, and could (if its social-democratic leader-

⁶ And check this out, “NYSR is Looking for Organizers for PAID Positions!” (<http://nystudentsrising.org>). If you are a SUNY/CUNY student or recent graduate, you could be a campus organizer for up to \$500 a semester (hardly a princely sum), or a regional organizer for \$2,500 (since raised to \$4,000) a semester. But you may be too late for the last two positions, one of which has apparently been taken by a SUFC leader.

ship were obligated to do so) reach out to powerful sectors of NYC labor to provide some real muscle in defense of CUNY students. At this demonstration, as a black transit worker – one of several TWU and CWA (Verizon) unionists invited by the Internationalist Group – was giving solidarity greetings to the crowd, a top SUFC spokesman ostentatiously took the bullhorn away from the worker and gave it to Democratic councilman Charles Barron, a bourgeois politician who sometimes strikes a radical pose, in between campaigning for Obama.

RSCC members polemicize against what they rightly characterize as the “*studentist*” outlook of groups like SUFC, which resist raising demands that go beyond the limits of “student issues,” as if some kind of “student power” could somehow fix up the university. Yet CUNY’s conflicts and crises are rooted in the social reality of oppression and poverty, and reflect the efforts of the trustees and the administration to carry through a race and class purge of the City University. In fact, such “studentist” groups provide a vehicle for budding student bureaucrats to advance their careers via foundation-funded NGOs like NYPIRG and NY Communities for Change as an entrée into the corridors of power where bourgeois politicians do their wheeling and dealing.

RSCC members’ polemical jabs against “studentism,” their disgust with the careerist swamp of student bureaucrats and their desire to identify as revolutionaries, have not, however, yet led to a *fundamental* break from the “studentist” outlook. Their attraction to the classless Maoist rhetoric about

“the people” is one symptom of this. This question is directly relevant to the current struggle at CUNY. The basic Marxist point that the decisive element in any real struggle is *power* is particularly crucial if what you are up against are structures of the bourgeois state itself, like the armed forces’ officer corps, the CIA or NYPD. This might sound uncontroversial – but in the fight against the militarization of CUNY it has been necessary to emphasize that no dramatic spectacle or defiant gesture can take the place of mobilizing real power.

In New York City, the crucial *class power* to mobilize effectively against repressive attacks on student protests – and to fight the militarization of CUNY – lies *outside* the university walls: it is in the hands of the workers from all around the world whose labor keeps everything in this city running and who can bring it to a screeching halt. Mobilizing this power means fighting for a class-struggle program, and the fight to politically defeat the pro-Democratic misleaders of the workers, the fight for a revolutionary workers party, is key to this task.

RSCC’s failure to actually take on revolutionary class politics is also demonstrated in chants for a “people’s university,” as well as the RSCC Platform’s call: “We want to transform the schools into base areas for advancing all of the peoples’ struggles for liberation. We want CUNY to be a tool for achieving these goals.” What is this if not “studentism” with a Mao button? In 1965, Mao’s right-hand man Lin Biao (later accused of trying to assassinate the Great Helmsman and defect to the USSR)



Paris, 13 May 1968: “Workers and Students, United We Will Win.” French May ’68 raised spectre of red revolution when students joined with workers. But general strike was sold out because key element was lacking: a revolutionary leadership rooted in the factories and among the oppressed.

published *Long Live the Victory of People’s War*, in which he called to “rely on the peasants and establish rural base areas.” Now we have RSCC in effect relying on the students to create “base areas,” establish a “liberatory education,” and transform CUNY into a tool for “peoples’ struggles.”

Is this some kind of peasant/student guerrilla war fantasy? Actually, what it comes down to is much more prosaic. To choose just a few of the demands in RSCC’s Platform and Points of Unity: While calling for “all police to be permanently banned from CUNY,” it adds, “We want any security force to be controlled by the community.” This is, quite simply, a reformist concept – and a dangerous one, promoting the illusion that the “community” (or “the people”) could somehow control campus security, which is by its very nature part of capitalism’s repressive apparatus.

Equally reformist is the call for CUNY to “remove” administrators and teachers who do bad things, including “suppress progressive and revolutionary ideas.” In fact, the CUNY administration and Board of Trustees have repeatedly sought to “remove” teachers they see as radical or subversive. As for the call for “liberatory education,” this can only be illusory so long as capitalism is not overthrown and replaced with a workers state. Yet conspicuously absent from RSCC’s Platform and Points of Unity is any call for proletarian revolution, socialism, or anything of the kind.

In the late 1960s, sectors of the New Left launched the call for a “red university.” This call to paint the ivory tower red represented a self-consciously petty-bourgeois counterposition to the real task of the day: for students radicalized by imperialism’s crimes in Vietnam and around the world to find a path to the working class. The urgency and opportunity to do so was vividly shown by the May-June 1968 events in France, when after student demonstrators were brutally attacked by police, millions of workers occupied the factories and raised the red flag in a general strike, posing the spectre of revolution in the heart of Europe in the midst of the Vietnam War.

To make this nightmare of the bourgeoisie – and hope of the oppressed and exploited – come to pass, a Bolshevik party was the irreplaceable element. Many radicalized students and young workers were fed up with the reformist passivity and outright betrayals of the French Communist Party. But they had to confront the great international, programmatic and historical dividing lines in the communist movement. Above all, they couldn’t elude the counterposition between the program of world socialist revolution, embodied in the Bolshevik Revolution of Lenin and Trotsky, and Stalinist reformism, in both its pro-Moscow and Maoist variants which under various names (popular front, bloc of four classes, New Democracy, etc.) all came down to class collaboration.

Four years later, in 1972, the international left was shaken by the sudden announcement that Mao Zedong – then in the midst of his “Cultural Revolution” – was *meeting with the biggest war criminal on the face of the planet: Richard Nixon*. While the U.S. imperialist war chief and his mass murderer sidekick Henry Kissinger were carpet-bombing the heroic Vietnamese, here Mao was giving them the red carpet treatment in Beijing. The moment the photos of this were published, militants

Revolution

began streaming out of Maoist groups in the U.S. and Western Europe. Like Soviet leader Brezhnev with his pipe dreams of “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism, Mao’s alliance with Nixon showed yet again that the nationalist dogma of “socialism in one country” means *betrayal* of revolution worldwide, and undermining the gains of revolution at home.

Any comrade who still views Maoism as revolutionary must come to grips with this fundamental fact.

From the Clouds Back Down to Earth

A polemic entitled “From the Ground to the Sky,”⁷ posted on September 24 by the “Secretariat of the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee” and the “Secretariat of Ignite,” provides us with the opportunity to make some summary remarks about how political program intersects key issues posed by the struggle to oust war criminal Petraeus and ROTC through protest and exposure. The subject of the article is the protests against Petraeus that took place on September 9.

It’s tough going trying to cut through the thicket of high-flown phrases, that read in places like a speaker trying to channel Slavoj Žižek at some kind of post-modern Maoist academic symposium – instead of seeking the hard-edged political *clarity* essential to struggles like the one we’re engaged in. The article begins with a critical reference to “what we might call the *revisionist protest-structure*,” based on “a unity that does not affirm a rupture with all forms of power of the adversary,” and other recondite phrases. This is contrasted to a “demonstration of an essentially different type: let us call it a *ruptural action*.” It goes on: “To paraphrase [Bertolt] Brecht, it was if the rain began to fall from the ground to the sky.”

And what caused this alleged revolutionary weather phenomenon and herniation of the time-space continuum? The “spectacle we staged” on September 9. Dizzy with excess, the article continues: “What it activated was precisely a *qualitative rupture* with the revisionist protest-structure, and beyond that, with existing social relations.” Not only that, it was, we are told, “a leap into the future.” And on and on like that. Talk about needing to “keep it real”!

So what they’re referring to is what happened after Petraeus’ first class at Macaulay Honors College, when a group of students spontaneously took the initiative to follow him and vocally proclaim the truth about his war crimes. Let’s be clear: CUNY Internationalist and CSEW militants have not only supported but hailed this courageous action, defending the comrades who undertook it against attempts to stigmatize them launched by the “Death Squad” David fan club. This includes not only right-wing nut jobs like Fox News or the racist National Association of Scholars, but also liberals (including administration lackeys in the University Faculty Senate) who want to show that they will stick by Barack Obama’s favorite military officer.

The students’ denunciation of Petraeus was a very good element, and utterly justified action, in the broader campaign of protest and exposure of a man responsible for murder and torture on a massive scale, – and of the “military-academic complex” he personifies. But a “leap into the future”? The idea that a “spectacle” captured in a

YouTube video represents a “qualitative rupture” with existing social relations bears an uncomfortably clear relation to the social-media-obsessed vision of the populist Occupy movement which RSCC members rightly criticize. (For OWS devotees, who really do think politics is a big spectacle, “I have an iPad/MacBook Air, therefore I am,” and the revolution will be live-streamed or it will not be⁸.) Politically, it boils down to a *rejection of a class perspective* of mobilizing proletarian power, of real masses of the workers and oppressed.

Sometimes a bold and dramatic action can set off a chain reaction with major consequences. Such an action was the 1969 occupation of City College by the Black and Puerto Rican Student Community (joined by a small group of white radicals): as a result of three months of mass agitation over the lily-white composition of CCNY, it ultimately led to open admissions for NYC high school graduates at CUNY. As we have noted, the broadening of the demands to achieve open admissions was the result not only of the students’ action but also of the intervention of the powerful city unions (see “How Open Admissions Was Won in 1969 and Debates on the Struggle at CUNY,” *Revolution* No. 6, April 2009).

In the late 1960s, when talk of “red universities” was in vogue, the context for student radicalization was a vast expansion of higher education, mass protest against the Vietnam War, upheavals against cop terror in the northern ghettos and barrios, and growing labor unrest. Today, workers are under attack across the board, students are weighed down with skyrocketing tuition and debt, and public education is targeted by both major capitalist parties. More than ever, in order to prevail against the powerful capitalist forces who stand behind *their* war criminal, Gen. Petraeus, it is necessary to mobilize the multiethnic working class along with African American, Latino, Asian, immigrant and other oppressed sectors in a revolutionary *class* struggle.

So our challenge to the comrades from RSCC is to bring it down from the clouds and back to earth. What wins struggles is not *spectacles* but *power*. This is only one front in a class war, including the fight against racist police brutality, stop and frisk and school closings, against charterization, privatization and standardization of curriculum (Common Core in city schools, Pathways at CUNY) aimed at turning education into a commodity and skills training for the corporations. In the struggle to oust Petraeus and ROTC, what’s needed is to mobilize significant numbers of students from CUNY campuses, together with faculty and campus workers, and tap into the *working-class power* capable of defeating the class enemy.

In this fight, concrete experience will continue to put the different political conceptions and strategies to the test, providing some great opportunities for the kind of political clarification, including sharp polemic and debate, needed to help transform revolutionary aspirations into real advances in the struggle to *defeat U.S. imperialism through international workers revolution*. ■

⁸ And soon you will be able to get your very own Occupy prepaid debit card, which urges you to “join the revolution” and register a “protest with every purchase.” The issuer, the Occupy Money Cooperative, has a board of directors including a former Deutsche Bank director and a banking law professor who consults for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the International Monetary Fund.

Class Struggle Against the War on Education

Currently, as the Mexican teachers continue to strike in resistance to the anti-education “reform” law, our comrades of the Grupo Internacionalista have been calling for oil refineries to be shut by mass mobilization (as occurred in Salina Cruz, Oaxaca and is now happening in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas). They are also fighting to bring about class-struggle mobilizations by auto workers at Volkswagen (Puebla) and Nissan (Cuernavaca). During the historic ten-month occupation of Mexico’s National University, the UNAM, in 1999-2000, the fledgling GI sparked the formation of workers defense guards by the electrical workers union (SME) to defend the strike against threats of an army attack. That strike succeeded in stopping the imposition of tuition at Latin America’s largest university.¹

In the NYC public schools, Class Struggle Education Workers (CSEW) has fought against the school closings carried out by Bloomberg’s “puppet education panel,” while emphasizing that this is a racist measure that comes straight from Obama’s White House. The union bureaucracy and the liberal/reformist opposition (which includes supporters of the ISO, Socialist Alternative, PLP and other left groups) shy away from stating the obvious fact that these closings are *racist*, for fear of alienating white teachers and parents, and, fearing to alienate Democrats, they avoid the fact that the assault on public education is led by U.S. imperialism’s commander-in-chief, Obama. The CSEW calls to shred the no-strike Taylor Law with powerful strike action, and “to bring parents and working people together with teachers and students for occupying closing schools” (CSEW, Occupy Closing Schools!, 8 February 2012).

The basic question is whether to fight openly for a program of revolutionary class struggle, or to push a laundry list of reforms (which will never be carried out by decaying capitalism) keeping the struggle within the bounds of the system. The reformist/liberal opposition group in the teachers union, Movement of Rank and File Educators (MORE), may criticize the Taylor Law but

¹ See “Mexico: Worker-Student Defense Guards Formed” in our pamphlet *The UNAM Strike and the Fight for Workers Revolution (The Internationalist special issue, March 2000)*.

it never calls to defy it, and never ever calls for a strike. The liberals and reformists talk of the drive to privatize public education, but pin the blame on “corporate” education reform and “neoliberal” policy, not capitalism. In contrast, the CSEW says straight-out that this a capitalist attack supported by both bourgeois parties, and to fight it we need to mobilize working-class power, notably that of the transit workers.

When the largely Haitian and Dominican immigrant city school bus drivers and matrons hit the bricks to defend their jobs this past January and February, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and CSEW brought CUNY students and adjuncts to the picket lines day after day, putting forward a class-struggle program to bring out strategic sectors of the working class, together with parents’ and community groups, to defeat Bloomberg’s union-busting offensive. In contrast, this strike of blue-collar education workers was all but ignored by MORE. (See “School Bus Drivers’ Strike: Mobilize NYC Labor to Win!” 21 January 2013; and “The Betrayal of the NYC School Bus Strike” in *The Internationalist* No. 34, March-April 2013.)

And when the CSEW spokeswoman in the United Federation of Teachers delegate assembly speaks out against endorsing Democrats, Republicans or any capitalist candidate, MORE supporters keep quiet and sit on their hands when the vote comes. Those aligned with left groups calling themselves socialist or communist provide a textbook example of what the word “opportunism” means in practice: they made a “coalition” with liberals who voted for Obama, and are afraid that telling the truth about the Democratic Party would break it up. Now union bureaucrats and pseudo-leftists are ecstatic at the prospect of liberal Democrat Bill De Blasio as mayor.

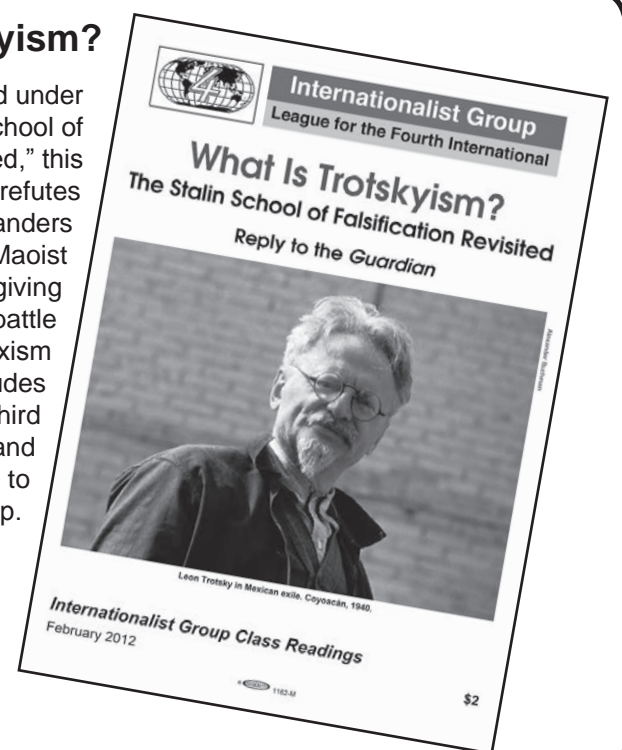
The union leaders in office, and the “opposition” groups based on a liberal/reformist coalition, share the same basic program – and when the reformers get into office, as in the Chicago Teachers Union, they are no more able to resist the capitalist onslaught than the old-line labor tops. From Mexico to NYC, fighting for a program of intransigent *class* struggle is the most basic task of those committed to victory for the workers and oppressed. ■

What Is Trotskyism?

Originally published under the title “The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited,” this powerful pamphlet refutes the distortions and slanders of Trotskyism by then-Maoist Carl Davidson, while giving an overview of the battle between authentic Marxism and Stalinism. Includes chapters on the Third Chinese Revolution and Mao’s China, from Stalin to Nixon. 56 pp.

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⁷ Available at <http://www.signalfire.org>

Solidarity from Mexican Student Strikers with the “CUNY Six”

The following is a translation of a resolution passed on the night of September 18 by the students on the barricades of the strike and occupation of Mexico’s National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH). The resolution, submitted by our comrades of the Grupo Internacionalista, was confirmed the next day by an assembly of some 80 strikers. The strike at the ENAH, located on the south side of Mexico City, began following the police eviction of striking teachers on Friday, September 13, as part of the fight to mobilize a *huelga nacional* (national strike) of labor, together with students and other sectors, in support of the “teacher insurgency” gripping Mexico for the past several weeks.

Comrades:

We have been informed that yesterday [September 17], the New York police brutally attacked the peaceful demonstration you were carrying out in repudiation of war criminal David Petraeus at the City University of New York. The attempt to militarize CUNY in the service of the U.S. imperialist murderers must not and shall not pass! The result of this violent attack by the racist New York police is the arrest of six comrades. From the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH – National School of Anthropology and History), on strike since September 13, we send you a warm salute of internationalist solidarity. We demand that all the charges against you be dropped immediately.

We would like you to know that here in Mexico City we are mobilizing in defense of public education. Since August 20, tens of thousands of valiant education workers from the Coordinadora Nacional

de Trabajadores de la Educación (CNTE – National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers) have been in Mexico City mobilizing in defense of public education. Last Friday, their *plantón* [tent city] of protest in the Zócalo [Mexico City’s central plaza] was destroyed in a police/military attack so that the president could carry out the annual ritual of the flag-waving independence day commemoration. The capital city’s government solicitously participated in the repression against the teachers, also unleashing its *granadero* riot police to repress us with their billy clubs and tear gas when we blocked the Periphery Ring roadway while the repression was taking place in the Zócalo.

It was against this repressive onslaught that we decided to start a strike of unlimited duration. Various schools throughout the Valley of Mexico are joining this strike: the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, the South campus of the College of Sciences and Humanities, the National School of Music, and other parts of the UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico); three of the four campuses of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (Autonomous Metropolitan University), the four campuses of the Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México (Autonomous University of Mexico City), etc.

Comrades: Your struggle inspires us. We hope that you will also make the struggle we are carrying out here your own struggle too. Down with capital’s attacks on education throughout the world!

ENAH students on strike

Cuicuilco, Mexico City,
18 September 2013

must enlist in, and train themselves politically to help lead, the world-wide struggle for socialist revolution – the only way to put an end to imperialism once and for all. ■

Outrage...

continued from page 20

officers. The only obstruction that happened was from the police” (New York Daily News, 19 September).

Many of the arrestees’ supporters attended the arraignment, and it is clear that many will return on the scheduled court date of October 17. Standing up to the establishment media and the state’s attempts to intimidate them into silence, the defense of the “CUNY Six” is an important part of the struggle against militarization and police-state repression.

As stated in the call for a September 23 demonstration to “Defend CUNY Students’ Right to Protest!”: “Students, faculty, workers; labor, community, anti-racist and immigrant rights activists; opponents of police brutality, ‘stop and frisk,’ and militarization and imperialist war – all should come out... defending CUNY students’ basic right to protest.” Over 125 people came out, including a number of trade unionists who held signs with messages like “NYC transit workers’ kids go to CUNY too. We say: NYPD stop beating them up now!” Two dozen faculty members chanted “NYPD, CUNY Board of Trustees: Hands Off Our Students!”

As a CUNY Internationalist Clubs militant active in the anti-militarization protests pointed out: “Petraeus’ backers cannot answer the documented truth about his actions as CIA chief and war commander – so they send enforcers in blue to try to silence our voice. But the truth of our message will not and cannot be silenced by the NYPD’s billy clubs, choke holds and fists.”

A press release about the September 17 arrests from the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY declared:

“A broad range of CUNY students, faculty and staff members have been carrying out a campaign of ‘protest and exposure’ against the Board of Trustees’ appointment of Petraeus, whose documented actions as Iraq and Afghanistan war commander and CIA chief include drone attacks upon civilians, and the creation of torture centers and death squads.... With the NYPD being sent to brutalize and arrest CUNY students on behalf of a certified war criminal, organizers state that this blatant use of police brutality against peaceful protesters will not intimidate or deter those who expose the truth about the actions of David ‘Death Squad’ Petraeus and oppose attempts to turn the City University into ‘a war college.’”

CUNY Administration Stands Behind Sadistic NYPD Attack

Backing up the certified war criminal they have employed as part of the concerted effort to target the university for militarization, the City University’s administration and Board of Trustees unleashed the notorious blue- and white-shirted thugs of the NYPD to brutalize CUNY students and other demonstrators for the “crime” of exercising their basic right to protest. Abandoning any hypocritical pretense of speaking for what mealy-mouthed administrators like to call “the CUNY community,” interim chancellor William Kelly said not a word about the *savage police violence against CUNY students*. Instead, he sanctioned the attack, saying the administration will “ensure that Dr. Petraeus is able to teach without harassment or obstruction.”

So according to the ruling-class mouthpieces who run CUNY on behalf of capital, protests against the ex-chief of U.S. imperialism’s Murder Inc. constitute “harassment” and “obstruction,” while cops’ sadistic beat-downs of CUNY students are justified. Kelly’s Kover-Up goes together with repeated falsification – lip-synced by administration fans in the University Faculty Senate executive committee, which in a grotesque September 13 statement declaimed: “Because they disagree with Professor Petraeus’ views, these demonstrators intend to deprive him of his ability to teach and the ability of his students to learn from him.” This is a flat-out lie.

Avidly licking the general’s boots, these lackeys jumped to join the storm of media abuse directed against students who had vocally denounced Petraeus’ war crimes when the former general left his first “class” on September 9. In fact the protests are not about Petraeus’ “views” but about his documented *acts* of promoting the creation



Bring out labor to defend the CUNY Six!

of death squads and torture centers, running drone attacks against civilians, and the other war crimes he carried out as Iraq/Afghanistan war commander and then head of the world’s most notorious agency of murderous “dirty tricks,” the CIA.

As a speaker from the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee said at the September 23 protest outside Macaulay, “We’re not here to take away professors’ right to teach. We’re here to remove a war criminal with blood on his hands from our university.”

As for “learning from him,” one can only ask if the UFS dons in their academic robes and their friends in CUNY central envisage seminars in water boarding, “enhanced interrogation,” or the use of white phosphorus in Fallujah, Iraq. Or perhaps they have in mind how-to instruction in the use of extermination squads against Central American villages under the direction of the likes of “Petraeus’ man” Col. James Steele.

The key to counterinsurgency, Steele said to one interviewer, is “getting people to talk to you” (*The Guardian* [London], 6 March). He had his own particular ways of “winning hearts and minds.” In Samara, Iraq, Steele ran a blood-soaked interrogation center for Petraeus in the local library where suspects were hung upside down by their feet. Luckily, the Macaulay College townhouse on 67th Street doesn’t have a library.

The UFS execs were echoing an earlier screed by Macaulay Dean Ann Kirschner, who went on about Petraeus’ appointment showing that the university is “a place... where complex issues and points of view... are considered and debated.” Try telling that to those whose voices were silenced forever, from the mass graves of El Mozote, El Salvador to those whose tortured bodies were dumped on the roadside by Petraeus’ Special Police Commandos in northern Iraq!

And to see what we mean about militarization going together with privatization and corporatization of public education, consider this: as reported by The Dissenter blog on the liberal Firedoglake website (September 13), “Kirschner – despite serving as a Dean of a public university – also sits on the Board of Directors of the Apollo Group. Apollo owns ... the for-profit college behemoth – and scandal-ridden – Phoenix University.”

This puts her in good company with CUNY’s Board of Trustees, which is headed by the (failed) school privatization entrepreneur Benno Schmidt. (See our article “Look Who’s Trusteeing at CUNY,” *Revolution* No. 5 [September 2008].²)

² Reproduced on line at: <http://free-cuny.net/article/look-who%E2%80%99s-trusteeing-cuny>

ROTC...

continued from page 3

A CUNY press blurb, “ROTC Returns to CUNY” (21 May 2013 on cuny.edu) blared:

“After a four-decade absence, the Army Senior Reserve Officers Training Corps is returning to City College, which will serve as The City University of New York headquarters for the new University-wide ROTC program.... Maj. Gen. Jeff Smith, commander of the U.S. Army Cadet Command, and Chancellor Matthew Goldstein launched the program at the college’s historic Great Hall in a special signing ceremony that included former U.S. Secretary of State and retired Army Gen. Colin Powell....”

In line with the proclaimed goal of “taking full advantage of [the] large, ethnically diverse populations” in NYC and CUNY specifically, ROTC immediately moved on to set up shop at the predominantly African American and Latino York and Medgar Evers CUNY campuses.

That ROTC recruits the “officer corps of the bourgeoisie” is no empty phrase. As the AEI report shows, capitalism has its cadres, organizers and propagandists. With these cynical servants of the ruling class turning CUNY into a hunting ground for imperialism’s killer elite, it is the task of revolutionaries to help mobilize massive protest and exposure to drive them out. To defeat them, a new generation of revolutionaries

“O’Reilly Factor” Ambush Interview Backfires

On Friday, September 20, the right-wing TV show “The O’Reilly Factor” on Fox TV broadcast a segment featuring an “ambush interview” with Sándor John, an adjunct professor of Latin American history at the City University of New York who has been



active in protesting against CUNY’s appointment of death squad organizer ex-Gen. David Petraeus.

The “interviewer,” Jesse Watters, is used to intimidating his prey when he pounces on them unexpectedly, but this time he picked the wrong target. In response to the false accusation of organizing a “hate mob,” John calmly explained that “Students and faculty at the City University of New York are not okay with this death squad organizer, and somebody who organized drone attacks.”

John pointed out that the *Guardian* newspaper has amply documented how Petraeus brought to Iraq the man, Col. James Steele, associated with the Atlacatl Battalion in El Salvador which carried out the infamous El Mozote massacre, exterminating an entire village. Followed into the subway, John reiterated that

CUNY faculty, students and staff would not let their university be turned into an Abu Ghraib on the island of Manhattan.

When Watters noted that taxpayers paid the professor’s salary, John countered asking if the Fox TV interviewer had any idea how little adjuncts make. The Fox hit-piece also reveled in the police violence against arrested CUNY students, and raised fabrications designed to incite.

John ended by asking if this was supposed to be a news interview, or Senator Joseph McCarthy reincarnated. Clearly, the intent was the latter, but it flopped.

Watters and O’Reilly both demanded that Prof. John be fired, but despite the campaign of hate mail and pressure on the university, they have not succeeded. Instead they produced widespread support for the professor for standing up to the Fox TV attack dog.

Outrage Spreads

Outrage at the cowardly cop assault has quickly spread. The fact that administration flaks and their UFS apologists do *not* speak for CUNY faculty, staff *or* students was underlined by indignant protests from CUNY’s faculty/staff union, the Professional Staff Congress (PSC). At a joint meeting of the Hunter College PSC chapter and campus Delegate Assembly a day after the police attack, a resolution was passed unanimously denouncing “the assault by the NYPD on Tuesday, September 17, 2013 against CUNY students who were protesting peacefully, in front of the CUNY Macaulay Honors College,” reaffirming students’ right to protest, and raising the “call for all charges against the students to be dropped immediately.”

This was followed the next day by the Delegate Assembly of the entire PSC – representing over 25,000 faculty and staff – where a video clip of a student being beaten brought many delegates to tears. Denise Ford, one of the arrested students, addressed the body, which unanimously passed a “PSC Resolution in Protest of Violent Police Response to Peaceful Protest by CUNY Students,” stating in part:

“Documentary video evidence shows a plainclothes police officer gratuitously kidney-punching a protester who was already held down by other police officers and immobilized. The demonstration was called by the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY.

“As the union representing faculty and professional staff at CUNY – and as people who have dedicated our professional lives to the well-being of CUNY students – the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY expresses outrage at the violent and unprovoked actions by the NYPD against students peacefully protesting the appointment of David Petraeus

as a Visiting Professor at the Macaulay Honors College of CUNY. We deplore the use of violence and brutal tactics against CUNY students and faculty who were peacefully protesting outside the college. And we call for a formal investigation of the use of force against the protestors.”

The union subsequently invited two of the CUNY Six to address its “Contract Now!” rally on September 30 in front of a Board of Trustees meeting held in Baruch College.

Meanwhile a petition from CUNY graduate students and educators has already attracted hundreds of signatories from within CUNY and hundreds more from students and educators across the United States and beyond. It reads in part:

“As graduate students and educators of CUNY, we express our outrage at the violent and unprovoked actions by the NYPD against CUNY students peacefully protesting the appointment of war criminal David Petraeus as a lecturer at the Macaulay Honors College. We deplore the use of violence and brutal tactics against CUNY students and faculty who were protesting outside the college. It is unacceptable for the university to allow the police to violently arrest students.

“**We emphatically support the efforts of these CUNY students** to resist the attempts by the U.S. government and the CUNY administration to turn the university into an infamous ‘war college’ with the appointment of Petraeus. Petraeus is responsible for countless deaths and destruction in Iraq and Afghanistan as a war commander and chief of the CIA.... Most recently Petraeus has called on Congress to back a military strike on Syria.

“**We call on CUNY to terminate Petraeus’ appointment and to ask for the charges against these students to be dropped immediately.**”³

³ Read the full report at <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2013/cuny190913.html>

Stand With CUNY Students Who Have Stood Up to Militarization

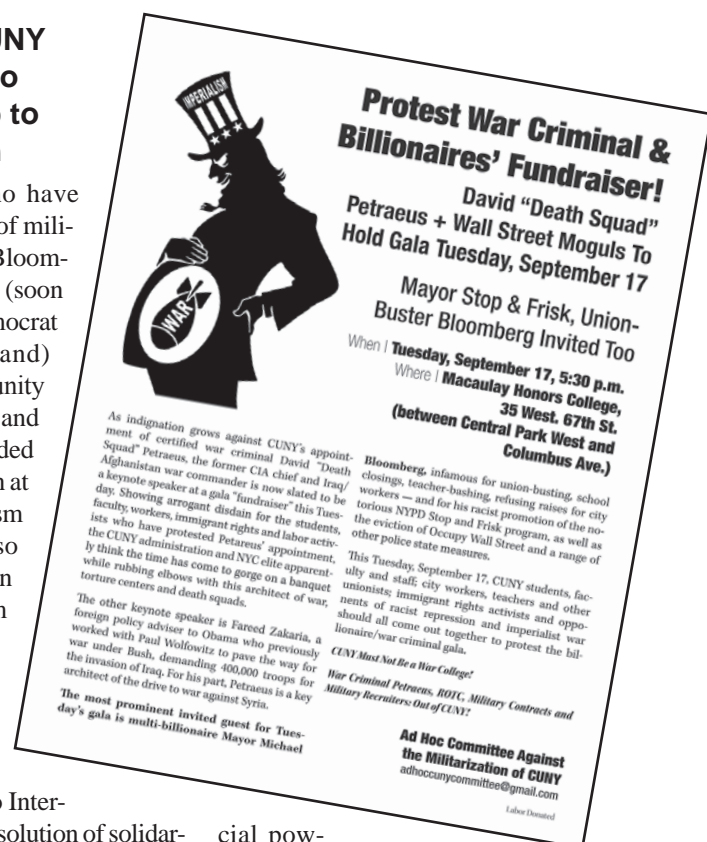
CUNY students who have stood up to the onslaught of militarism at CUNY and to Bloomberg’s NYPD police state (soon to be turned over to Democrat Bill de Blasio’s command) have a significant opportunity to link up with students and workers who are the intended targets of police repression at home and U.S. imperialism abroad. Their actions also help ensure that the fallen are not forgotten – from the NYPD’s many black and Latino victims to the mountains of corpses that Petraeus and his henchmen leave in their wake.

In Mexico, the Grupo Internacionalista submitted a resolution of solidarity with the CUNY protestors to the student body of the National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH) in Mexico City. ENAH students went on strike and occupied their school in support of Mexico’s teachers, who are facing massive attacks on public education there. The ENAH students took time out in their struggle to build a national student-worker strike to salute their CUNY comrades:

“We have been informed that yesterday [September 17], the New York police brutally attacked the peaceful demonstration you were carrying out in repudiation of war criminal David Petraeus at the City University of New York. The attempt to militarize CUNY in the service of the U.S. imperialist murderers must not and shall not pass! A result of this violent attack by the racist New York police is the arrest of six comrades. From the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, on strike since September 13, we send you a warm salute of internationalist solidarity. We demand that all the charges against you be dropped immediately.”

The full resolution can be read on page 18 (opposite).

The workers of the world have the so-



cial power to stop Petraeus and U.S. imperialism – through class-struggle means led by a revolutionary party to overthrow the capitalist order in an international socialist revolution. The fight against militarization at CUNY is part of an international struggle to oppose the U.S. imperialist war machine from Petraeus to the NYPD, from Syria and Iraq to New York!

Two important events will be held in mid-October:

On Tuesday, October 15, beginning at 5:00 p.m., an indoor public rally will take place demanding “Defend the CUNY Six! Drop the Charges Now!” It will be held in the New Building of John Jay College, 11th Avenue and 59th Street, Room 9.64 (9th floor).

On Wednesday, October 16, at 5:30 p.m., the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY is calling a protest demonstration in front of a gala at John Jay College, where Petraeus will be “honored” as a featured speaker on “Educating for Justice” (!).

Readers are encouraged to attend.

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Outrage!

Brutal NYPD Assault on Students Protesting Petraeus



from Internationalist video

NYPD supervisor (in white shirt) twice punches protester in face during brutal cop attack on demonstrators protesting war criminal ex-Gen. David Petraeus outside CUNY's Macaulay Honors College on September 17.

On the evening of Tuesday, September 17, a protest against the increasing incorporation of the City University of New York into U.S. imperialist war plans was suddenly and viciously attacked by the racist New York City cops. Six participants in the demonstration called by the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY – all black or Latino – were arrested on a variety of trumped-up charges, with two of the arrestees facing felony charges. The cop attack took place in front of the elite Macaulay Honors College where ex-General Petraeus has been hired by CUNY's Board of Trustees to teach a "class" on public policy.

Inside, the CUNY tops were holding a ghoulish fundraiser; in attendance were

Defend the CUNY 6 – Drop the Charges!

Petraeus, various of the real-estate moguls and capitalists who constitute the Board of Trustees, and Fareed Zakaria, a war-mongering TV talking-head who was part of George Bush II's Iraq invasion council. New York's snarling "let-them-eat-cake" mayor, Michael "Stop-and-Frisk" Bloomberg, was among the invitees, notwithstanding his obsessive hatred for public education.

Protesters were punched, slammed against vehicles and against the pavement by police supervisors and officers, after the NYPD forced them off the pavement and onto the street. "As students were chant-

ing 'War Criminal Petraeus Out of CUNY Now,' I was shocked to see several police officers grab and brutalize one of the demonstrators," related one City College student quoted in a press release issued by the Ad Hoc Committee. "This was completely unprovoked, as demonstrators made clear that they were there to defend our university in a peaceful protest."

A student from Hunter College explained: "Protesters were marching in a circle on the sidewalk and chanting, but the police forced them into the street and then charged. One of the most brutal things

seen holding down an unresisting student, while a plainclothes accomplice takes him time preparing, then pulls up the student's shirt and kidney-punches him repeatedly.

In an extended uncut segment, the Internationalist video "Police Attack CUNY Protest Against War Criminal Petraeus"¹ shows how students, faculty and supporters were peacefully demonstrating; how police forced protesters into the street and then charged, singling out individuals; and how police officers and supervisors brutally beat one of those arrested. The scene (see photos above) was eerily reminiscent of the video of a white-shirted NYPD supervisor punching an Occupy demonstrator in the face in an October 2011 Wall Street demo.

Drop All Charges Now!

The six arrested demonstrators were cuffed and brought to the 20th Precinct by their cop attackers. Fellow protesters followed their comrades to the precinct house, and while inquiring about the physical safety of those arrested were themselves threatened with arrest, by a white-shirted captain, who had been one of the most prominent perpetrators of the violence. The arrestees were eventually transported downtown, to Central Booking at 100 Centre St. in lower Manhattan, where they were forced to spend the night and much of the next day.

At their arraignment on September 18, the cops' fabricated charges were read: disorderly conduct, riot, resisting arrest and obstruction of governmental administration. Lamis Deek, a lawyer from the National Lawyers Guild representing the students, told the judge the simple if understated truth: the students "did not touch or threaten those

¹ See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUw71O9XepM&feature=youtu.be>
continued on page 18



Julia Reinhardt/Demotix

At September 23 protest against Petraeus, demonstrators defend arrested students.