

## Defend Immigrant Students Stop CUNY's "War Purge"!



Sue Kallong

Some 300 students, faculty, unionists, leftists and opponents of war on Afghanistan protested against purge of immigrant students by the City University of New York, Hunter College, November 28.

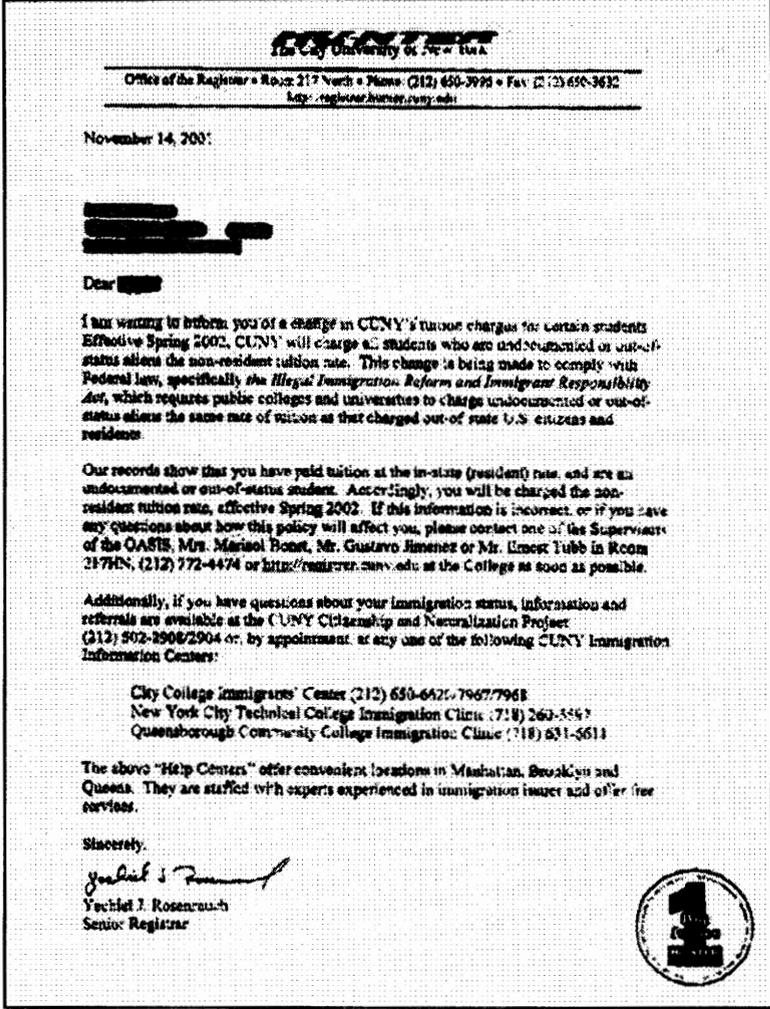
## Hundreds Protest Racist Tuition Hike and "Student Data Collection Program"

*An Internationalist Group Pamphlet*  
December 2001

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# The Infamous Purge Letter . . .

# . . . And What It Means for Immigrant Students



*The letter from a CUNY Registrar's office reproduced here (left) not only effectively means forcing thousands of immigrant students out of school, it also sets them up for repression and possible deportation by officially labeling them illegal immigrants. What this means in practice is shown by the following statement by a legal U.S. resident who has been hit by CUNY's racist exclusion.*

I have been a student at Hunter College since 1995. When I first registered, I was an undocumented alien in the U.S., but since I was able to prove that I lived in New York for over a year, the school allowed me to pay as an in-state resident.

I have since gotten married to a U.S. citizen. In 1999, I filed to become a legal resident of the U.S. I waited 18 months for my interview and in July 2000 I became a legal resident of the U.S. The interviewer stamped my foreign passport and congratulated me.

Two weeks ago, I received a letter from Hunter College telling me that undocumented immigrants will now need to pay as an out-of-state resident. I thought, "No problem, I have a stamp in my passport that states: 'Temporary proof of permanent residence.'" I brought that same passport into the registrar. A clerk looked at it and said, "What is that?" I told her what it was, and she said she has to check with her supervisor. The supervisor returned to me and said he has to check with his supervisor. They told me to call the next day to find out if it's acceptable. I called the next day and was told that my documentation is not acceptable. I was shocked.

I called INS to find out what can I do. INS told me I can have the school call and verify over the phone. I called the Registrar Office and told them what I learned, and to my surprise, once more they refused to listen to anything I had to say.

I called the immigrant hotline that was listed on the letter and was told that my verification is valid and should be accepted. I went to the Financial Aid Office to find out what they require and was told that they do accept my foreign passport with the stamp, but they will verify with INS.

I have been climbing the chain of command at the Registrar's Office and to my dismay, no one is educated in immigration law to know what is acceptable or not..



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### Universitarios inmigrantes protestan

RICARDO LEON PERA-BILLA

Ayer se llevó a cabo una demostración frente a las instalaciones del centro universitario Hunter College en protesta por lo que han denominado una purga contra los "estudiantes inmigrantes ilegales".

Aseguran que el aumento de la matrícula a casi 2000 dólares es una de las medidas para desplazar a la mayoría de esos estudiantes.

Además condenan las palabras del senador estatal por Queens, el republicano Frank Padavan, quien dijo al *New York Times* en su edición del 31 de octubre que "permitir que los inmigrantes ilegales estudien en CUNY (Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York) es una amenaza para la seguridad nacional y un insulto a todo ciudadano".

Jan Norden, uno de los organizadores de la protesta dijo a el diario LA PRENSA: "Estamos respaldados por diferentes grupos étnicos y diferentes organi-

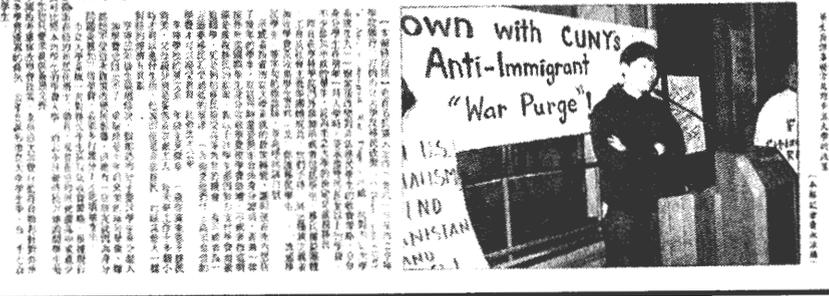
zaciones nacionales e internacionales. Esto no es contra los estudiantes solamente, es contra toda la comunidad".

"No se puede permitir lo que está haciendo el FBI e Inmigración, que han exigido a más de 200 universidades que les entreguen los datos de los estudiantes extranjeros; a la vez que se perderán visas para estudiantes y por eso hay que protestar", concluyó Norden, redactor del periódico del Grupo Internacionalista que organizó la protesta.

En la manifestación, que transcurrió de forma pacífica y donde se repartió información pertinente a los asuntos que se demandaban, se hicieron presentes diferentes organizaciones comunitarias, estudiantiles y de la minorías.

Cerca de 200 personas participaron de esta protesta, donde se pidió la no intervención del gobierno en los archivos universitarios y la libertad a los hijos de inmigrantes para educarse, ya que este es un país constituido por inmigrantes.

## 略策費收民移法非變改大市滿不 威示前院學特亨體團運社及生學



NYC Chinese-language newspaper *World's News* (29 November) reported: "Yesterday, several hundred protesters at the city government run university Hunter College demonstrated, demanding 'Down with CUNY's Anti-Immigrant Policy.'... The demonstration, attended by not a few Chinese students, considered that these measures were prejudiced against immigrants." English-language press was silent.

### El Diario-La Prensa (29 November), largest NYC Spanish-language paper carried article on protest initiated by Internationalist Group.

the demonstration. Another focus of organizing was Bronx Community College, singled out by the *New York Times* as a hotbed of opposition to the war on Afghanistan, where the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club organized a contingent.

Professor Bill Crain of City College led off the speakers, saying: "It should be considered a basic human right to get a higher education. Undocumented immigrants come here believing that if they work hard and they sacrifice they can develop their minds and have a chance for a better future. They are taking that away, in the most vicious and cruel way. We have to stand up against this." A Chinese student, Wu, gave an impassioned plea, saying "Because of Afghanistan, this is a backlash that we are not in any way related to. I speak for all of us here - Asian, African, Americans, Caucasians, Hispanics," saying "This is an injustice that we cannot let go."

Paula of the Hunter Colombian Club said, "Our parents clean the houses, they cut the grass, they wash the cars, they do all these jobs that others won't do. These jobs are not well-paid; it's not enough to pay for going to school, food, and other basic necessities. I know a lot of people who would have to leave school because of this." Daniel Tasripin of the Student Liberation Action Movement added, "The message that is being sent to immigrants, whether documented or undocumented, is that America loves your labor, the Calvin Klein clothes that you make and the strawberries that you pick - they love the labor, but they don't love the laborers. No matter whether you came here documented, undocumented, on a slave ship, or however, we cannot trust that rights will be given to us; we have to fight for them."

Significantly, in addition to drawing students from at least eight campuses of the CUNY system, there were numbers of immigrant workers present from union and solidarity groups that endorsed and actively helped build the demonstration. José Schifino of UNITE Local 169, an organizer for the unionization drive of greengrocers, sent a message that was read to demonstrators saying, "There is war being waged right now

by our government. I am not talking about the 'war against terrorism,' I am talking about the war that this government is waging right here amongst us: war against the working poor, war against immigrants.... They want to raise tuitions to drive you out. They want to give your names over to the government and they want to track you as if you were criminals."

Cleo Silvers spoke on behalf of Workers to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, the former Black Panther imprisoned on Pennsylvania's death row for the last two decades. She noted that the eloquent radical journalist, who faces execution in this climate of reactionary hysteria, has courageously denounced the war on Afghanistan and the ripping away of civil liberties in the U.S. Silvers recalled the time when there was no tuition in CUNY. "African-American working students fought for that, and we demanded it. We had open admissions - we fought for that.... We're going to help you get it again! Working people intend to unite with students."

Jan Norden of the Internationalist Group noted that the "tuition hike" aimed at driving out so-called undocumented immigrant students "is the same kind of purge that the Nazis did in Germany when they had a *numerus clausus* to limit the number of Jews, and then they expelled them all from the universities." He stressed that CUNY's "war purge" is inseparable from the war, in which it is necessary to fight to "defeat U.S. imperialism and to defend Afghanistan and Iraq." Norden called for building a revolutionary workers party which can mobilize the social force - the racially integrated working class, black, Latin, Asian, white and immigrants - which alone has the power to "defeat these warmongers, by overthrowing their rule and carrying out international socialist revolution."

The demonstrators were vociferous in their determination not to let this atrocity pass. "INS, FBI, CIA get out! ¡Migra fuera!" and "Down with the 'war purge!'" they chanted loudly. The rally ended with a chorus of "Asian, Latin, black and white - Workers of the world, unite!" and a vow to stop the witchhunters and racist purgers in their tracks.

## The Anti-Immigrant Purge Has Already Begun

Our records show that you have paid tuition at the in-state (resident) rate, and are an undocumented or out-of-status student. Accordingly, you will be charged the non-resident tuition rate, effective Spring 2002. If this information is incorrect, or if you have

Right before Thanksgiving break, CUNY administrators began sending out a letter (excerpt above) targeting several thousand students with tuition most cannot pay. In addition to effectively pushing them out of school, the letter points the finger at them as "illegal aliens."

# Down with CUNY's Anti-Immigrant "War Purge"!

## Stop Racist Tuition Hike and "Student Data Collection System"!

*We reprint here the leaflet calling the united-front demonstration at Hunter College on November 28.*

The City University of New York (CUNY) has launched a purge against so-called "illegal immigrant students," more than doubling tuition for them to almost \$7,000 a year – an amount guaranteed to drive most out of school. This is one of a series of assaults on democratic rights as part of the war on Afghanistan. As reported in the *New York Times* (31 October), state senator Frank Padavan from Queens ranted that allowing "illegal immigrants" to study at CUNY was a "national security" issue and "an insult to every citizen."

So now CUNY is moving to drive immigrant students out, "profiling" them for discrimination and exclusion! Immi-

grant workers, their sons and daughters – who make up a huge percentage of the working people of New York – are being deliberately deprived of a chance at higher education.

Meanwhile, the government has demanded and gotten over 200 universities to turn over information on foreign students to the FBI, INS and other agencies. The INS is pushing for a sinister "student data collection service," the White House has ordered a crackdown on student visas and U.S. Senators Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Kyl (R-Ariz.) are drafting a bill seeking even more draconian measures against immigrant students. After the attack on CUNY professors who participated in a teach-in on the war, the new anti-immigrant onslaught is part of a spreading witch hunt. **IT IS URGENT TO PROTEST THIS NOW!**

# *Protest Today!*

**Wednesday, November 28, from 5 to 7 p.m.**

**Outside Hunter College at Hunter West courtyard, 68th St. & Lexington Ave. (take 6 train to 68th St./Hunter College stop)**



**Endorsers of the demonstration demanding, "DOWN WITH CUNY'S ANTI-IMMIGRANT 'WAR PURGE'! Stop Racist Tuition Hike and 'Student Data Collection System'!":**

Asians for Mumia

Asociación México-Americana de Trabajadores (AMAT – Mexican American Workers Association)

Charles Brover, ABE teacher, York College\*

Mercedes S. Cano, activist, Queens College Voice, College of Staten Island\*

Committee for Workers Self-Defense

Bill Crain, professor, CCNY\*

Walter Daum, professor, CCNY\*

Jerry Domínguez, Director, AMAT

Pedro Flores, activist, Queens

Patricia Fraticelli, President, Bronx Community College Student Government Association\*

Freedom Socialist Party

Global Sweatshop Coalition

Robert Hollander, assistant professor, Hunter College\*

Hunter African Descendants Organization

Hunter African Students Union

Hunter Asian Students In Action (ASIA)

Hunter Capoeira Club

Hunter Colombian Club

Hunter Dominican Perspective Club

Hunter Hostos Puerto Rican Club

Hunter Indian Club

Hunter International Socialist Organization

Hunter Pakistani Club

Hunter Palestinian Club

Internationalist Group

Paul Kneisel, editor, The Internet Anti-Fascist

La Guardia Community College Student Government Association

La Guardia Black Student Union

La Guardia Circle K International

La Guardia Colombia Club

La Guardia Dominican Club

La Guardia Ecuadorian Club

La Guardia International Business Club

La Guardia Performing Arts Club

La Guardia Straight and Gay Alliance

La Guardia Student Advisory Council

Latino Workers' Center

League for the Revolutionary Party

Henry Lesnick, professor, Hostos Community College\*

Miguel Malo, Vice President, Hostos Student Senate\*

Ronald B. McGuire, attorney

Herb Michael, UFT chapter chairman\*

Naomi Miller, Grievance Committee, AFT #4780\*

NY Spartacist League

NY Spartacus Youth Club

New York Taxi Workers Alliance

October 22 Coalition to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation

Oscar Paul, President, Hostos Student Government Organization\*

Pat Purcell, Director of Organizing, UFCW 1500\*

Phi Theta Kappa, La Guardia chapter Radical Women

Refuse and Resist, NY chapter; Revolutionary Reconstruction Club (at Bronx Community College)

José Schiffino, organizer, UNITE Local 169\*

Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM!)

The Point

Workers to Free Mumia

Ali Zaidi, professor, BCC\*

\* organizational affiliation for identification purposes only

and 89 individual endorsers at La Guardia Community college

For more information, call: (212) 460-0983

[Text of Spanish-language leaflet calling for November 28 demonstration.]

# ¡Abajo la “purga de guerra” anti-inmigrante de CUNY!

## ¡Alto a la racista alza de cuotas y el “sistema de colección de datos estudiantiles”!

La City University of New York (CUNY – Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York) ha lanzado una purga contra los llamados “estudiantes inmigrantes ilegales”, aumentándoles la cuota a más del doble, hasta casi \$7,000 al año, cantidad que garantiza correr de la universidad a la mayoría de estos estudiantes. La medida es otra en la serie de ataques a los derechos democráticos que forma parte de la guerra contra Afganistán. Como informó el New York Times (31 de octubre), el senador estatal de Queens Frank Padavan espetaba que permitir que los “inmigrantes ilegales” estudien en CUNY es cuestión de “seguridad nacional” y “un insulto a todo ciudadano”.

Así que ahora CUNY da los pasos para echar a los estudiantes inmigrantes, haciendo de ellos un “perfil racial” para la discriminación y la exclusión! Los trabajadores inmigrantes, sus hijos e hijas, que representan gran parte

de la clase obrera de Nueva York, están siendo privados deliberadamente de una oportunidad a la educación superior.

Mientras tanto, el gobierno ha exigido y conseguido que más de 200 universidades entreguen datos acerca de estudiantes extranjeros al FBI, el INS (la “migra”) y otras agencias. La migra presiona para establecer un siniestro “sistema de colección de datos estudiantiles”, la Casa Blanca ordena más restricciones a las visas estudiantiles, y los senadores Feinstein (demócrata de California) y Kyl (republicano de Arizona) preparan una propuesta de ley para imponer medidas aún más draconianas contra los estudiantes inmigrantes. Tras el ataque a los profesores de CUNY que participaron en una foro-debate (“teach-in”) sobre la guerra, la nueva embestida anti-inmigrante forma parte de una creciente caza de bruja. ¡ES URGENTE PROTESTARLO AHORA!

### Miércoles, 28 de noviembre, de las 5 a las 7 de la tarde

**Frente de la entrada principal de Hunter College: Hunter West Courtyard,  
68th St. y Lexington Ave. (toma el tren 6 a 68th St./Hunter College)**

*Los siguientes respaldan la manifestación para exigir, “¡ABAJO LA PURGA DE GUERRA ANTI-INMIGRANTE DE CUNY! ¡Alto a la racista alza de cuotas y el ‘sistema de colección de datos estudiantiles!’”:*

Hasta el 26.11.01: Asociación México-Americana de Trabajadores (AMAT); Charles Brover, maestro de ABE, York College\*; Mercedes S. Cano, activista, Queens; College Voice; Committee for Workers Self-Defense; Walter Daum, profesor, CCNY\*; Jerry Domínguez, director, AMAT; Pedro Flores, activista, Queens; Patricia Fraticelli, presidente, Bronx Community College Student Government Association\*; Freedom Socialist Party; Global Sweatshop Coalition; Robert Hollander, profesor, Hunter College\*; Hunter African Students Union; Hunter Asian Students In Action (ASIA); Hunter Capoeira Club; Hunter Colombian Club; Hunter Dominican Perspective Club; Hunter Hostos Puerto Rican Club; Hunter Indian Club;

Hunter College International Socialist Organization; Hunter Pakistani Club; Internationalist Group/Grupo Internacionalista; Centro de Trabajadores Latinos; League for the Revolutionary Party; Henry Lesnick, profesor, Hostos Community College\*; Miguel Malo, vicepresidente, Hostos Student Senate\*; Ronald B. McGuire, abogado; Herb Michael, presidente de capítulo, UFT\*; Naomi Miller, Grievance Committee, AFT #4780\*; NY Spartacist League; NY Spartacus Youth Club; New York Taxi Workers Alliance; Oscar Paul, presidente, Hostos Community College Student Government Organization\*; Radical Women; Revolutionary Reconstruction Club (en Bronx Community College); José Schiffino, organizador, UNITE Local 169\*; Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM!); The Point; Workers to Free Mumia; Ali Zaidi, profesor, BCC\*

\* afiliación organizativa sólo para propósitos de identificación

Sue Kellogg



## Voices of Protest

*We print below excerpts from speeches at the November 28 protest against the purge of immigrant students by the City University of New York and government spying on students.*

### **Bill Crain, professor at City College of New York**

There is a right to better yourself and to get an education. I think that it should be considered a basic human right: to get a higher education. Undocumented immigrants come here believing that if they work hard and they sacrifice they can develop their minds and have a chance for a better future. They are taking that away, in the most vicious and cruel way. We

have to stand up against this. Keep your eyes open for the next Board of Trustees meeting, and I hope that we will all pile into that meeting.

### **Abram Negrete, Internationalist Group, organizer and moderator of the protest rally**

I want to emphasize that the way this attack has to be fought is through mass mobilization, particularly through mobilizing the power of the working class – the people whose daughters are sons are affected by this, and who themselves will also be affected by the \$12 million budget cuts. A student just said to me a minute ago: “I’m an immigrant student, but the U.S.-born students are going to be hit next.”

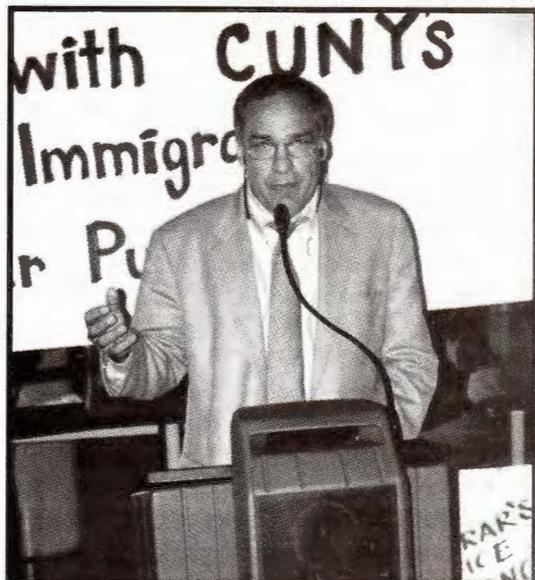
We need to remember that this is an imperialist country; it is a country that was built on the slavery of black people; a country that was built on the genocide against the Indians; and is maintained through a colonial empire and imperialist war, like the current war against Afghanistan.

We need to mobilize the power of the working class; we need to mobilize the powerful unions and the workers that are not in unions. We need to mobilize independently and against the Democratic and Republican politicians – and the Greens and Nader and all of the capitalist politicians – to bring out the power of the working class to defeat this racist attack.

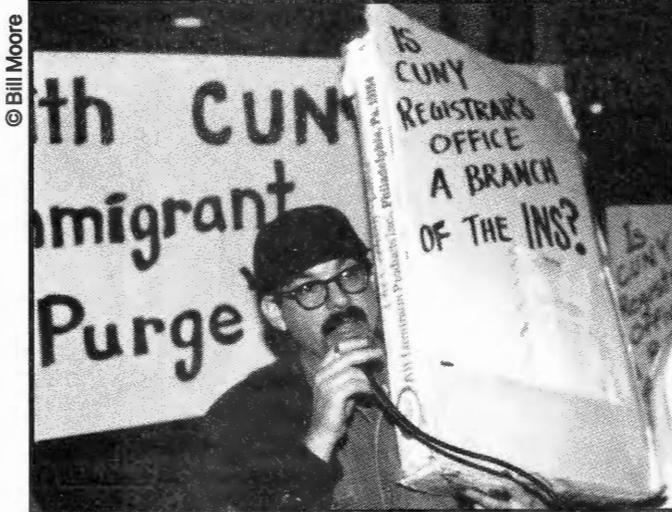
I want to bring to people’s attention the letter from the registrar’s office here that is fingering people, telling individuals they will be charged the new rate for so-called undocumented or out-of-status immigrants. What we want to know is: Is the registrar’s office a branch of the INS?

I want to thank the greengrocer workers and other proletarians of this city who have come out for this demonstration. I

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**CCNY professor Bill Crain**



**Abram Negrete, Internationalist Group**

think that the only thing that can defeat this war is a mobilization of the working class, here and around the world, a mobilization to defeat the imperialists and to defend the countries that they are attacking, to defend the immigrants and the working class here.

The labor movement in this city and around the country and around the world has the power to defeat this kind of racist attack. What the labor movement needs to unchain this power is a leadership committed to the international interests of the working class all around the world.

I want to point out that this rally has received important support from several different labor groups – there are people from the UFT (United Federation of Teachers), members of the PSC (Professional Staff Congress, representing CUNY faculty), immigrant workers groups like the Asociación Mexicana de Trabajadores, which has worked very hard to help build this demo. Many of the leaflets that were printed for this demonstration were printed by the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1500, and we are very thankful for this help.

I want to put in a plug for a labor struggle going on in South Carolina, nearby where the Charleston Five were victimized by that racist attorney general who tried to smear them as terrorists. That is the struggle of the Kentucky-Tennessee Clay miners who among other things have raised the slogan for freeing Mumia Abu Jamal.

#### **Daniel Tasripin, Student Liberation Action Movement**

I was asked to be here both as a member of the Student Liberation Action Movement and as a member of the Undergraduate Student Government at Hunter, but I wanted to mention something much more intimate to me, which is the fact that my father was born in Indonesia, a country with a history of U.S. intervention. He tried to escape the poverty there, first by working on cruise ships, which isn't as easy as they'd have you think it is. He was doing the hard manual labor, living from port to port.

The U.S. had no problem with him toiling on that ship, or with experiencing the abuse of labor that always happens against immigrants legal or not. But they did have a problem when he

stayed in America. He worked hard so that the people who owned the ship could get rich, but they didn't want him to stay. The INS came down on him hard: they deported him. And then he came back as a legal immigrant, and he continued to work hard.

The message that is being sent to immigrants, whether documented or undocumented, is that America loves your labor, the Calvin Klein clothes that you make and the strawberries that you pick – they love the labor, but they don't love the laborers. These are people who want a better life for themselves in this world, they want to get that degree, and they're not being allowed to.

Doubling the tuition is a racist attack. Bailouts are being given to the biggest corporations, to the CEOs, tax breaks are being given to people who already have enough lawyers to evade all the taxes that they want, but none is being given to the poor. That's one of the things that is wrong with our society now. No matter whether you came here documented, undocumented, on a slave ship, or however...we need to organize, organize, organize. We cannot trust that rights will be given to us; we have to fight for them.

#### **Ron McGuire, attorney who has defended CUNY activists**

CUNY has always been an institution of immigrants. There's been some talk about the budget cuts. This is not the first time CUNY has faced budget cuts. In the 1930s, during the Great Depression, what New York City did in the face of the worst financial crisis capitalism had ever seen was this: in 1929 Brooklyn College was opened, it was in 1930 that Queens College was opened, it was in 1937 that the uptown campus of Hunter College we now call Lehman College was opened, and it was in 1940, as the headstone says on the big building across the street, that this Hunter campus was opened. The political powers that be moved heaven and earth to keep CUNY open and free for the children of immigrants who were coming to CUNY then. We can do no less now.

I think it is important to speak about the context of the war that this attack on immigrants is happening in. I want to talk to you about two Georges. There was a George 125 years ago who was leading an "anti-terrorist" crusade, who was leading troops in an "anti-terrorist" war. That George Custer met his end at the Little Big Horn. When we think of Crazy Horse today, when we think of Sitting Bull and Geronimo today, we understand who were the terrorists who were committing genocide in the 19th century.

Let there be no mistake in your minds: George Bush is drawing a line in the sand, and he wants all of us to say we're on one side of the line. Who drew the first line in the sand: that was drawn by Colonel Jim Travis in Texas, at the Alamo, and that line in the sand was to divide the 200 white men who stood in that Spanish mission, surrounded by 5,000 people of color. I opposed the war in Vietnam 40 years ago, and I stand before you today to say I do not want to die in the Alamo with George Bush, and I do not want to see you wind up in the Alamo.

We're hearing now about prisoners revolting in Afghanistan. Prisoners who have been disarmed and have not been

fed for days do not revolt unless armed men unless they are desperate. Horrible things are being done in Afghanistan; the truth is being hidden, and what we're seeing in this country now is that it's beginning here, first with the immigrants, and then who is going to come next? I hope you will wrap up what CUNY is doing with its attack on immigrants, and what this country is doing with its attack on the people of the world.

### **Pedro Rivera, Hostos Community College**

It is my privilege to be here today and express my support. We have seen the need to organize, to unite and defend what belongs to us. It is totally shameful that we see the government utilizing our own tragedies, taking our tears and write unjust legislations that will only benefit them. But we all see an unjust declaration of war. We see the FBI intruding into our privacy. The press generally does not communicate the truth. But all this shows that we are not fighting individuals but a corrupt system that is designed to benefit the few. Other corrupt actions have been taken: the city told CUNY to cut \$20 million, attacking the two-year community colleges in which 72 percent are people of color, black people, poor people.

### **Laura John, Hunter College**

I came out to this demonstration today because I am a Hunter student, and I know a lot of my friends are going to be affected by this. It's really important that we come together to fight this policy, and I think it extends to an overall policy in this country, which is to target immigrants, black people and the working class. I think everybody to fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, including the students here at CUNY.

I have some personal background about repression and discrimination, from my family. My grandmother went through the concentration camps during the Holocaust. They started out with measures like kicking her and all the Jewish students out of



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### **Paula, Hunter Colombian Club**

the school that she attended, an integrated school where Christians and Jews had gone to school together. We need to speak out so the same thing doesn't happen here. And then they started making people wear yellow stars — in this case it's like the "data collection system," which would keep track of the students and label them as immigrants and a "threat to national security."

We need to learn from the lessons of history.

### **Paula, representative of the Hunter Colombian Club**

This is not fair for immigrants who come here looking for a better future. I received a letter from the registrar's office telling me that next semester I will have to pay out-of-state tuition, which means kicking a lot of us out of school, because we will not have enough money to pay for this. We are already struggling to pay those \$1,600 a semester, and now they want us to pay \$7,000 a year.

Our parents clean the houses, they cut the grass, they wash the cars, they do all these jobs that others won't do. These jobs are not well-paid; it's not enough to pay for going to school, food, and other basic necessities. If we want to get an education, it's because we want to make a difference, to show everybody that we are hard workers, that we can do it. I know a lot of people who would have to leave school because of this.

### **Helene Brosius, Spartacist League**

The Spartacist League and the International Communist League endorsed this demonstration. We stand strongly in solidarity against all attempts to target immigrant students, to kick them out of university and set them up for government persecution. But this current anti-immigrant frenzy is part and parcel of the drive joined with enthusiasm by both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party which targets the working class blacks and all the oppressed. And it tries to regiment



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### **Laura John, Hunter student**

us for this war drive, and to make the profits for the bosses with the economic downturn. We oppose the war on terrorism, carried out by the world's biggest terrorist, US imperialism and their international partners. We say: Defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack. U.S./UN/NATO out of Afghanistan, Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, and the Near East.

### Leslie Marcos, Bronx Community College Revolutionary Reconstruction Club

This is a very important protest. This is a big witch hunt against all immigrant students, and they are depriving us of an education. The Revolutionary Reconstruction Club endorsed and actively built for today's united-front demonstration. We are a newly-formed campus club dedicated to promoting struggles against social oppression. The intention of those who formed the RRC was to initiate discussions and bring awareness of the many struggles being waged around the world – struggles against police brutality in the ghettos and barrios of New York City; against the South African government's "inability" to stop the HIV epidemic in Africa. Struggles against the use of the racist death penalty and state's employment of systematic terror against black militants, such as Mumia Abu-Jamal. Struggles against the U.S. bombing of Iraqi citizens as well as the forced starvation of Iraqi children, etc.

In the midst of a war by the U.S. ruling class against the people of Afghanistan aboard and escalating repression against sections of the population within the U.S., we, as a Marxist club, must not only oppose and denounce these actions but we most simultaneously expose the profit motive which lies at its core; we must expose the capitalist class and its state. At Bronx Community College, we strive to be a rallying point for those who are against the war and the attacks on those who study and work at CUNY.

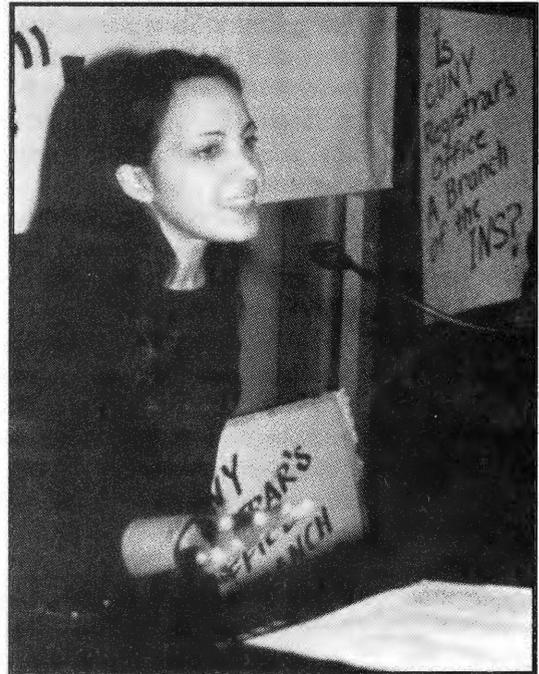
In the aftermath of September 11, we already understood that the U.S. ruling class had begun to use the victims of those attacks to push its own agenda. It soon became clear that the domestic side of the war against Afghanistan was increasing repression within the US. In the first instance, immigrants, the most vulnerable section of society, had been targeted the hardest. Within CUNY, the so-called "war against terrorism" manifested itself as an anti-immigrant 'war purge,' including the increased tuition hike aimed directly at immigrant students and workers.

We must not unite with the exploiters around the flag; we must unite in opposition to them and in defense of our own class interest. As CUNY students we must defend our right to study today as well as the right of those who will come after us. Here maybe we can learn a thing or two from the comrades in Mexico's UNAM who in 1999 dominated along with UNAM workers dominated the struggle for the right to an education.

The CUNY trustees are counting on little resistance, and if this appears to be the case, they will not only intensify their attacks on immigrant students but will extend it to all students.

### Jan Norden, Internationalist Group

I'm speaking on behalf of the Internationalist Group, United States section of the League for the Fourth International. We initiated this important demonstration today around



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### Leslie Marcos, Revolutionary Reconstruction Club, BCC

the demands: "Down with CUNY's anti-immigrant war purge" and "Stop the racist tuition hike and student data collect system." This is part of our fight to wage a class war against the imperialist war now under way in Afghanistan.

George W. Bush the Younger told the killer elite of the U.S. commandos of the 101st Airborne Division the other day that this is just the beginning, that this war is going to be global in scope and it's going to take years. Well, we say it's just the beginning too. We are calling for workers to fight against the imperialist war internationally, to defeat U.S. imperialism and to defend Afghanistan and Iraq. You have a situation today where the most powerful imperialist country in the world is attacking one of the poorest semi-colonial countries in the world. And in that fight it is necessary to take a stand, to defend the semi-colonial country under attack by imperialism and to fight to defeat the imperialist marauders.

In the 1930s, Ethiopia was attacked by fascist Italy. Italy was an imperialist country. Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International took the position that despite the fact that Haile Selassie ran a slave regime, it was necessary to defend Ethiopia against Italian imperialism. Today, the Taliban regime, which was put in with the permission, the encouragement, the financing of the United States government, is an oppressive regime. It is oppressive to the working people of Afghanistan, it is oppressive in particular to the women of Afghanistan. The United States now tries to use the woman question, the oppression of Afghan women in the *burqas*, the head-to-toe veils that keeps them imprisoned, by *purdah*, which keeps them imprisoned in the home. They try to use this as a war cry. But in fact the people who are carrying out that imprisonment of Afghan women were put there by the United States.

We fought against the Taliban, we fought against the Is-

Islamic fundamentalists when the United States was pushing them. Today, we continue to fight against the Islamic fundamentalists as we fight to overthrow the imperialist-imposed regimes throughout the region. Our fight is for socialist revolution in the United States, the heartland of imperialism and for socialist revolution throughout Asia and throughout the Near East.

Yesterday, there was a video of a massacre that was carried out at Mazar-i-Sharif. If you looked at those pictures, they had hundreds of bodies strung out along the ground. And for anybody who's been around for awhile, immediately when you saw those photos, it recalls one scene: *Attica*. The United States is carrying out the kind of repression, deliberate murder, targeting prisoners who are sitting ducks for U.S. bombs, just as they did in *Attica*. The United States ruling class claims to be democratic. In fact, they're a bunch of bloody murderers. This is a war crime that is carried out by United States imperialism in the name of democracy. It is a terrorist act.

[*Cry of "Hypocrites!"*]

They are hypocrites. But more than hypocrites, they are waging this war against the oppressed people of the world with the same method that they want to be used against the United States. Rockefeller in this country carried out just that kind of murder against the inmates in *Attica*. You will recall that the United States keeps saying about Israel, "why doesn't Arafat control his people?" When in fact the *intifada* in the occupied areas of Israel is directed both against Arafat and against the Israeli occupation. But what they want him to do is exactly what the United States is doing right now. What's necessary in Israel, in Palestine, is to unite the Hebrew and Arab workers in a common class struggle against the Zionist oppressors and against the Arab nationalists.

In waging this fight against the racist war purge at CUNY, it is necessary to raise a revolutionary program down the line. We call for *open admissions and no tuition*. And we call for a living stipend for the students. They complain all the time that it takes four to eight years for students to complete their studies at CUNY. Why? Because they are working two and three jobs to pay the tuition. And now they're going to more than double this tuition for what they call the "illegal immigrants." We say: *none of these immigrants are illegal*. They are here, they have a right to stay here and *we demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*

And now CUNY's raising a so-called tuition hike, which has the deliberate purpose of driving them out of school. The authorities know perfectly well that the vast majority of the so-called undocumented immigrant students cannot pay this. This is a deliberate purge. It is the same kind of purge that the Nazis did in Germany when they had a *numerus clausus* to limit the number of Jews, and then they expelled them all from the universities.

Two years ago, CUNY carried out another racist purge in the name of eliminating remediation. They said, "oh, we're just defending standards." Well, in the name of standards, in one year, between the fall of 1999 and the fall of the year 2000, 25,000 students were driven out of the senior colleges in CUNY. This is not an accident. It is a deliberate purge. And to fight that purge,

the most important thing that we have to remember it is necessary to mobilize the forces that have the power to do so.

That force is the working class. The racially-integrated working class, black, Latin, Asian, white and immigrants. There are with us here today significant numbers of immigrant workers groups who have endorsed and helped to build this demonstration.

This is one of the most powerful new elements of the proletariat. We in the Internationalist Group seek to win these workers to revolutionary consciousness, to communist consciousness, of the need to build an international workers party that's going to fight to defend the most oppressed. That's going to fight to defend democratic rights for all. Which is going to fight for a socialist revolution in which the oppressed will be liberated, in which the working class, the exploited, will overthrow the rule of the exploiters. Then we can talk about the genuine liberation of the women of Afghanistan, of the peasants and the poor throughout Latin America, and of the working people of the United States. It must be an international class struggle.

The pacifism of many in the peace movement will not solve this. The only way that you're going to defeat these warmongers is by overthrowing their rule and carrying out international socialist revolution. That means breaking with all the capitalist parties, not only the Democrats and Republicans, but also the Green Party. A lot of the left groups and the peace movement, they're always looking for the "Democratic doves". Well, the only one they've been able to find is a Green-breasted red, white and blue warbler named Ralph Nader. But I've got news for you, he's still a capitalist politician.

We fight to build a revolutionary workers party that is going to initiate demonstrations like this. It's going to help mobilize the power of the working class which can actually stop this, which can defeat it, which can achieve free tuition, for open admissions, for liberation of the working class at home and throughout the world.

### Marita Pereira, Indian and Pakistani Club

On behalf of the Indian and Pakistani Club we condemn the action of the CUNY Board. Raising tuition 120 percent for the international students is wrong.

CUNY is turning into an isolationist. CUNY is no longer bound to diversity, because two-thirds of New York City is made up of immigrants. By raising tuition, you're telling the world that we no longer want foreigners, when this country is based on foreigners. You're shutting out the next generation from diversifying and coming into contact with other cultures. CUNY schools are a reflection of New York City. By making it impossible for international students, you are adding fuel to fire by encouraging ignorance and making it impossible for tolerance.

On top of that, the tuition will take away from a student's living expenses. They will neither have a place to live or afford basic necessities such as food. What are you trying to do? Make them live at home, so we can daily commute from New York to New Delhi? Other states such as California and Texas are trying to make it possible for foreign students to attend

their schools. They're not as diversified as New York City, and they want to make their states as diversified as New York City. While everyone is moving forward, you are moving back. This is wrong! This is wrong! This is wrong!

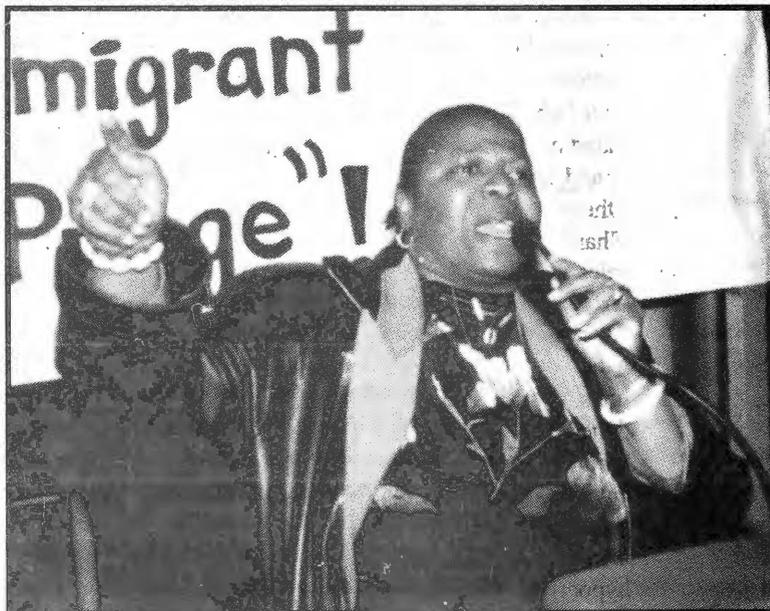
**Cleo Silvers, Workers To Free Mumia Abu-Jamal**

Free Mumia! Free Mumia Now!

My name is Cleo, I come here as a representative of working people and the struggles of African-Americans and integrated working people, multi-national working people. I do not know if you remember that at one time tuition was absolutely free in CUNY schools. African-American working students fought for that. We had open admissions. We fought for that. We intend to continue to fight. We lost it. It slipped away. But we are going to help you get it again! Working people intend to unite with students and we're going to get everything that we demand. And we're going to stop imperialism. That's our job.

I came here to talk to you a little bit about Mumia Abu-Jamal and what Mumia stands for. Mumia opposes imperialism. He opposes this nasty war in Afghanistan. He imposes the intimidation and the slipping away and the ripping away of our civil liberties in this country. We all have a right to stand up and say whatever we believe is the case in this country. We still have those rights. We're going to maintain that.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a victim of exploitation. He's a working man, he's a victim of oppression, he's a victim of racism in this country. If we unite together, we can free Mumia Abu-Jamal and all the political prisoners. The job the political prisoners did before you were born was to do what you are doing now. If we don't fight to free our political prisoners, you may be in that same situation and need people to support you and fight for our freedom.



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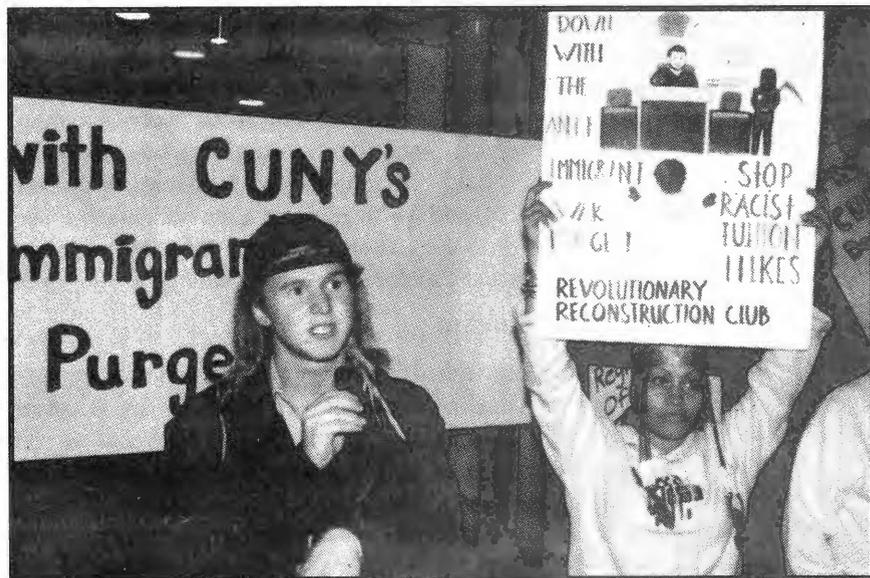
**Cleo Silvers, Workers for Mumia**

At the same time that we want to build a revolutionary socialist party inside the United States, we're going to fight against exploitation, oppression. We're going to unite with the immigrants, we're going to unite with the African-Americans, we're going to unite with the Latinos and we're going to unite with everybody who is working and exploited in this country. We're going to overturn a very unjust system and we're going to stop imperialism on an international basis. Free Mumia-Abu Jamal! Stop Imperialism!

**Zander of "Universal Spectrum" and Bronx Community College Poetry Club**

Understand these forces at hand / they're battl'and in this time span  
to control land and to govern man

giving not a thought to paths' end  
not began to comprehend the means to  
mend or defend  
from a movement materialized of the  
masses' frustration  
this generation  
plagued with the years and tears of past  
and present oppression  
on behalf of the progression of monetary  
aggression  
subliminal intervention / blocking us from  
the direct connection  
that breathes life into our soul / and yet  
still this rhythm roll  
this spirit does not grow old / and this  
love will never tire  
but burn higher the fire / that inspire the  
passion  
and in this fashion ignite the fusion  
to spark this revolution



**Zander (left) and supporter of Revolutionary Reconstruction Club**

lead light through confusion / to grow this evolution  
 that expand the conscience of our mind  
 universalize the bind / hold truth to find  
 the message of our time / encoded in this rhyme  
 subliminal sublime  
 to onset movements' motion  
 spread the notion of these times approachin'  
 and still the question remains to know:  
 where does this energy go?  
 when we release this flow / does it grow with an inner light  
 glow  
 so  
 is it that I can inspire minds / by painting signs of the times  
 on top of rhythms and rhymes / can I loosen those binds  
 that stay clenched upon our soul / and how do I know?  
 if all these efforts are not in vain / and remain the pain  
 that stain our generation's aim to  
 gain  
 purpose in our existence  
 resistance  
 against societal persistence

**Afsaneh Moradian, Hunter  
 College Internationalist  
 Socialist Organization**

I think that all of us have to be clear on what this war is actually doing. Our civil liberties are being swept away, and thousands of Afghans are being killed and wounded, massacred, and we're being told that this is being done in our name, that this is a just cause. I want to talk about why this war is actually happening; it's about oil in Afghanistan, and it's about taking a tragedy that went on here on September 11 and using it to cause misery on the Afghani people. To be able to have more control over the Middle East for the oil companies in this country. I think it's so important that we see the connection of the attack on civil liberties with the war being waged in Afghanistan and why we actually need to organize against it.

**Stephen Durham, Freedom Socialist Party  
 and Radical Women**

The Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women are sister organizations that work together around a socialist-feminist program. Bush & Co. and these war-mongers use the bombing of the Trade Towers, the 9-11 tragedy, to launch a war drive which already was in place. That's what we have to remember, that this war drive was already in place, because this system we live in doesn't know how to meet even the needs of the bourgeoisie, the ruling class, without war. I stand here today as a protester, as an anti-Vietnam war resister, representing 30 years of activism. And I want to tell you, today, it's rallies like

this that will change this country. I want to say that this racist purge here at CUNY is a calculated purge to depoliticize the campuses, because the youth are the people who truly fight for the future. What they are trying to kill here at CUNY is international consciousness and international solidarity. That should be the response to what happened in this city on September 11 – international solidarity. We need to tell the world we're on their side, not the side of Wall Street.

**Rosalind Petchesky, professor of political science,  
 Hunter College, statement read to the crowd**

I strongly endorse the spirit of this demonstration and am sorry not to be here with you in person. CUNY has a long and honorable tradition of opening its doors to immigrant students regardless of status. We must urge the CUNY administration to respect this tradition and the rights of *all* students to an education. We must remind them that most of our undocumented students have lived in New York from early childhood or birth and are not responsible for their "status." We must *insist* that CUNY not be part of the Bush administration's racist and unconstitutional campaign of preventive detentions, conducted in the name of an *undeclared* "war against terrorism." Stop racial profiling! Stop terrorizing Muslim and Arab students! Education is a right for all!

**Angelo, Mexican-American  
 Student Alliance**

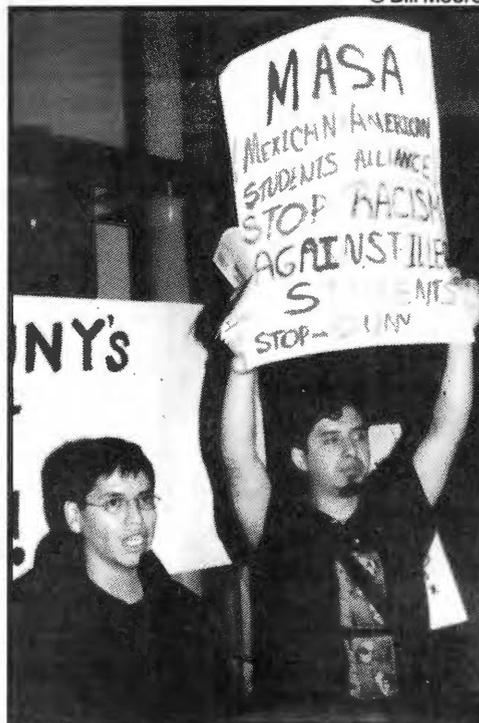
We are representing MASA. Since September 11, we have been worried about many Mexicans, many of them are undocumented students, and they attend CUNY. Many of them they won't be able to afford to the new tuition. Many of these students are going to have to drop out of school. We are worrying also about many incoming students from high schools, thousands of undocumented students. We want

to fight for them, and we're going to unite with many other associations. Stop the tuition raise, stop all attacks against new immigrants and undocumented students!

**Wu, Asian student**

My parents worked in sweatshops – my father in a restaurant, my mom in a sweatshop, worked 12 hours a day. Because of such things as Afghanistan, this is a backlash that we are not in any way related to. This is total injustice. I speak for all of us here: Asians, African Americans, Caucasians, Hispanics. This is an injustice that we cannot let go.

\* Please note: These views in no way reflect those of the Political Science Department.



**Angelo, Mexican-American Student  
 Alliance**

## “Living in Fear Constantly” An Immigrant Student’s Story

*Like many of those who have become involved in the fight to stop the racist purge of undocumented immigrant students from the City University of New York, the writer of the following eloquent account must remain anonymous.*

Two days before Thanksgiving I received a letter from the registrar to inform me that I will be charged as an out-of-status alien the non-resident tuition rate. I was shocked and didn’t know what to do. The first instinct that came to my mind was how am I supposed to pay that kind of amount on my tuition. There is just no way. A day before Thanksgiving, three of my cousins who are also current CUNY students also receive the same letter.

My parents and I have been living in New York City for more than 12 years. Most of my relatives have also been living here for more than 14 years. I came to New York with my parents as tourists when I was 10 years old. While we were here, our country’s economy was under recession. At that time, it was difficult for us to go back because it was pretty hard to make a living there. In order to make a living, my parents had no choice but staying and working in New York City instead. Since they decided to stay, I too had to stay here. Thus, I started going to school in Manhattan.

When I reached 12 years old, I had to start working in a garment factory in midtown Manhattan everyday after school. I had to work more than 8 hours a day and 7 days a week in order to help my parents pay off some of the rent each month. Sometimes I had to continue working in the factory after 12 o’clock midnight, even if I had to go school the next morning. I worked 65 hours a week and every week I only received \$160 or less. Sometimes the employer refused to pay me or cut my salary in half, by threatening me that he would inform the INS about me if I didn’t agree with him. Although I knew what he did was wrong and my salary was way below the minimum wage, I had no place to ask for help.

My parents also had the same situation and sometimes it was worse than mine. They were working in a Laundromat in Queens. Their employer pays them below minimum wage and sometimes they have to work overtime without any extra pay. Sometimes they have to work as long as 14 hours a day. Even then, we still managed to move on. We had learned to get used to it, and came to accept the fact that we are undocumented aliens. We realized that we have no right to ask for anything, thus whatever is available to us is the best we could get. Although \$160 is not much, at least it would help me ease some of my parents’ burden.

When I was in high school, everyone was talking about their everyday after-school activities such as going to the movies, joining the chess club, and other things most teenagers usually do. Frankly speaking, I never had that chance and luxury. All I could think about was how to finish the work at 12 o’clock midnight and still be able to study for the exam tomorrow. Hoping that my boss would not cut my salary by threatening me again.

Hoping that one day the government would help us and get us out of the hot water. Although all this seemed difficult, due to the current immigration laws, things are getting worse every single day. Now we have to live in fear constantly, not only from the INS but from our employers and landlords as well.

The worst of all is that we now make less money than we used to five years ago. Due to the current immigration law, our employers and landlords have learned some new ways to rip us off even more effectively than before. The current laws explicitly state that once a person is illegal in this country, he or she would remain illegal until Congress grants them “amnesty.” I believe that for Congress to grant amnesty to the illegal immigrants is almost impossible. At this moment, as you know, the majority in Congress is Republican. But the Democrats have shown they are against immigration too.

Now the employers and landlord know that we would never become legal and would always be afraid of the INS; thus they would threaten us even more often because we become even more vulnerable and the government will not protect us.

To all the undocumented aliens throughout the country, the INS is the last words we wish to hear and encounter. INS means nightmare to us. We will try to do anything to avoid any encounter with that agency. If an undocumented alien is arrested by the INS, he or she will be held indefinitely at the detention center or will possibly be deported.

Currently there are about six to nine million undocumented aliens living in the United States and they are the most voiceless people living in this country as well. They are too afraid to speak up due to the current immigration laws. Some of the people never actually care about undocumented aliens because they think they are lawbreakers. Although we are lawbreakers, we are human too. Nobody wants to be undocumented if they have a choice. No one wants to break the law if they have a choice. The undocumented aliens broke the laws in order to survive and to live a normal life. They become undocumented because there is no way for them to become legal due to the current laws.

Some of the people in the United States think undocumented aliens are nothing but troublemakers. “All they are doing is bringing this country down. All of them are uneducated, and unskilled.” But in reality, it is the complete opposite. Most of the undocumented aliens are hard-working people. Most of them even pay taxes annually, taking jobs that pay way below the minimum wage, and live in fear constantly. No one seems to care. No one even pays any attention to them at all, not even a pale sympathy, but with a ton of blame when things go wrong. Raising their children’s tuition and preventing them from receiving a higher education is a very cruel thing to do. Most of the undocumented aliens hope that their children would receive higher education and have a better future. This is their hope. But now someone is cruel enough to take away their only hope.

## As U.S. Bombs Afghanistan – Witchhunting, Racial Profiling and Ethnic Cleansing on Campus

# Mobilize Working-Class Power to Defeat CUNY's Anti-Immigrant "War Purge"!

*The following leaflet was issued by the Internationalist Group/U.S. on November 28.*

As the U.S. rains death on Afghanistan – wantonly terror-bombing civilian neighborhoods, incinerating Red Cross food warehouses and now carrying out a grisly massacre of many hundreds of prisoners – Washington's war also targets immigrants, minorities and labor here. "Well over a thousand" immigrants have been picked up in dragnets (the government has stopped releasing figures) and thousands of people of Near Eastern origin are being hauled in for questioning. While engaging in the most blatant racial profiling, the White House has simply decreed indefinite detention and military tribunals for "terrorist suspects."

Fundamental democratic rights are under full-scale attack by the United States government; black rights and labor gains are under the gun. The twin parties of American capitalism are marching in lockstep in this "war on terrorism" by the biggest state terrorists of all – U.S. imperialism. The Bush regime wants to ram through a longstanding program for regimenting the country before the initial shock and flag-waving war hysteria wear off. Democrats in Congress sign off on one item after another, occasionally trying to accuse the Republicans of being "soft" on terrorism.

The ordering of a "war purge" of undocumented immigrant students by the City University of New York (CUNY) is part and parcel of this wave of wartime repression. A right-wing state senator declares that "illegal aliens" are a threat to "national security" and the CUNY administration dutifully decides to drive out thousands of students by the convenient device of raising their tuition to astronomical levels that few can pay. Meanwhile, students who are purged under the "Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act," many of whom have lived here for years, are officially branded. Will their names be turned over to the INS, like the head of the Pakistani student association at the University of Oklahoma who complained to university officials that he was assaulted by racists and then was held on immigration charges? Today, the CUNY Registrar's office acts as a branch of the *migra*.

The racist logic is clear: minority poor and working people are a "security risk"; those that can afford to pay thousands of dollars of tuition get their "clearance" to study. This is also part of a longstanding effort to eliminate any vestiges of "open

admissions" and restrict higher education to an elite. *University authorities are racially profiling immigrants in order to ethnically cleanse CUNY.* This cynical purge must be vigorously resisted and *defeated*, by *mobilizing the power of the organized workers movement* to defend the most vulnerable. The militant labor slogan, "*An injury to one is an injury to all!*" was never truer.

The Internationalist Group initiated today's protest against the anti-immigrant tuition hike at New York's City University and the government's "student data collection program" that is collecting personal information about millions of students to be fed into the computer data banks of the police agencies. We undertook this action as part of our program to wage a *class war against the imperialist war.* The demonstration call has been endorsed by a significant number of immigrant organizations, student groups, socialist groups, faculty members, labor unionists and other defenders of democratic rights. The participants will put forward their respective viewpoints while joining in common action according to the norms of the united front, "march separately, strike together."

### As Police-State Measures Mount – Fight for Socialist Revolution!

U.S. war-criminal-in-chief George W. Bush declares triumphantly to the 101st Airborne Division that the war on Afghanistan is "just the beginning.... Across the world and across the years, we will fight these evil ones" (*New York Times*, 22 November). Next on the Pentagon's target list is Iraq. The Internationalist Group/U.S., section of the League for the Fourth International, upholds the program of V.I. Lenin and L.D. Trotsky, the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, that in such a war by U.S. imperialism (with its NATO imperialist allies and rivals in tow) against one of the poorest countries on earth, class-conscious workers must fight to *defeat* "their own" bourgeois ruling class and to defend semi-colonial countries under attack.

In our first (September 14) statement following the attack on the World Trade Center, the IG/LFI warned that the imperialist rulers would use this to launch a war drive abroad and a drive toward a police state at home. That was no exaggeration. Over the last month and a half, the U.S. government has passed the draconian "U.S.A. Patriot Act," allowing police agencies

**Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Defend Afghanistan and Iraq!  
For Class War Against the Imperialist War!**

to hold immigrants indefinitely without charge, search anyone's home, business or organizational offices, tap any phone they use, open their e-mail and track their Internet use, obtain records of any books or videos they buy or rent – all with secret authorization by special courts. The Justice Department issued orders allowing it to spy on lawyers' conversations with defendants, with no court authorization. The CIA was authorized to carry out wholesale assassinations.

A "Homeland Defense" czar was named (Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge, who has twice signed a death warrant against the courageous black radical journalist and death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal) to prepare for *internal war* on the U.S. population. The Internationalist Group calls to mobilize workers power internationally to *free Mumia now!*

Now the Bush White House has issued a presidential order allowing it to set up tribunals of U.S. military officers to try anyone it labels a "terrorist suspect" anywhere in the world, with no proof of hear-say accusations required and no information released to the public (or to the defendants). They can pass death sentences without a unanimous vote, with no right to appeal, and then carry out executions on the spot. This makes a mockery of the democratic rights supposedly "enshrined" in the Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution (entombed would be a more accurate description these days). As we wrote in *The Internationalist* No. 12 (Fall 2001), these measures go "a long ways toward expanding police-state powers to regiment the population for war." If it looks a lot like some Latin American dictatorship, it's because the people who designed these measures were the godfathers for the Central American death squad regimes of the '80s and the bloody juntas of the Southern Cone in the '70s.

The government refuses to give out any information about the numbers arrested, not one of whom has been charged with a crime in connection with the indiscriminate September 11 attack. Few names have been released, their places of detention are secret; prisoners are held incommunicado, denied access to a lawyer. In the face of the escalating police-state repression and blatant violation of democratic rights, the Internationalist Group demands the victims of this "anti-terrorist" dragnet be released, *now*. At the same time, we point out that this is the hideous face of bourgeois "democracy" in wartime. "Moderate" Supreme Court justices have already declared their support for restricting rights, the "free but responsible" bourgeois press salutes its commander and dutifully whips up the terrorist scare, and supposed defenders of civil liberties approve many of the repressive measures while uttering a barely audible peep of dissent about the rest. Today more than ever, defense of democratic rights under attack must be directly linked to the fight for socialist revolution. "Democratic" capitalism is a myth.

Yet many reformists and rad-lib peace protesters persist in their desperate search for "peace-loving" capitalist politicians, as opposed to the warmongering species. Groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and International Action Committee (IAC) parade around with placards calling for "Money for schools, not for war!" and chants that "the people united will never be defeated." But "uniting" the oppressed

with sections of the oppressors, as the competing popular-front "peace" coalitions do, is a guarantee of defeat. As triumphalism reigns in Washington, there has been a lull in the "peace" protests – whose lowest-common-denominator "point of unity" is bourgeois liberals' fear of a *losing* U.S. war in the Near East. Today most of the liberals and many Vietnam war protesters of yesteryear *support* Bush's "anti-terrorist" war on Afghanistan, just as they backed Clinton's "human rights" war on Yugoslavia.

Today as well, the former revolutionaries of the Spartacist League (SL) smear the Internationalist Group as "playing the Anti-Americanism card" in order to cover the SL's abandonment of the Leninist call to defeat the imperialist war, and their repeated lauding of statements by patriotic Democratic Party politicians critical of the war.

Among sectors of youth, oppressed racial minorities and union militants, some of the most conscious fighters realize that Democratic "doves" or Naderite Greens are no allies at all but enemies of a real struggle against imperialist war and repression. Yet faced with the firepower of the Pentagon juggernaut, they feel powerless. It is the task of Trotskyists to explain that the fight against the war must be a struggle to bring down capitalism by mobilizing the tremendous power of the *international* working class for socialist revolution.

### **Defeat Capitalist Assault on Public Education – For Open Admissions and Free Tuition!**

A few weeks before the CUNY administration under chancellor Matt Goldstein decreed the de facto expulsion of thousands of undocumented immigrant students under prodding from a right-wing state senator, City University was the scene of a witchhunt against anti-war professors. "CCNY Bashes America" screamed the *New York Post* (3 October), fingering City College professors Bill Crain, Walter Daum, Marina Fernando, M.A. Samad-Matias and others for criticizing the U.S.' war drive at a teach-in sponsored by the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), the union representing CUNY faculty. One trustee labeled the antiwar professors "seditious." True to form, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution upholding a statement by Goldstein against the CCNY professors.

This McCarthyite-style campaign is part of a nationwide drive by rightist forces linked to the government to blacklist professors considered "unpatriotic." The *New York Times* (24 November) reported on the search for "patriotic incorrectness" by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni. One of the founding members of this outfit is Lynne Cheney, wife of Vice President Dick Cheney, who under Ronald Reagan was in charge of cleansing the National Endowment for the Humanities of leftists and other "undesirables." Significantly, another ACTA founder was the Democrats' vice-presidential candidate, Joseph Lieberman. These bi-partisan witchhunters have compiled a list of 117 cases of "anti-American" statements by college professors and administrators

CUNY's attack on undocumented immigrant students is the latest chapter of an ongoing assault on public education in New York City and throughout the United States and the entire

capitalist world. Two years ago, City University administrators acting under the lash of NYC mayor Rudolph Giuliani rammed through the elimination of remedial courses for incoming students (see "Smash Racist Purge of CUNY, Fight for Open Admissions, Free Tuition!" *The Internationalist* No. 7, April-May 1999). At the same time, the Clinton administration's welfare "reform" ordered students from families receiving public assistance to drop out of school and take slave-labor "workfare" jobs or lose their benefits. The purpose of this double-barreled attack was not to uphold "standards" but to drive out thousands of immigrants, racial minorities and women. And it was successful. In one year alone, between the fall semester of 1999 and fall 2000, the enrollment of CUNY's senior colleges was cut by 25,000 students!

Meanwhile, there is a drive to privatize the public schools, such as the recent failed attempts to hand over several New York City schools and the entire Philadelphia school system to the Edison Corporation, a for-profit company headed by Benno Schmidt, the vice chairman of CUNY's Board of Trustees. This is part of an international program pushed by the World Bank to turn education into a profitable field for capitalist investment by imposing heavy tuition, eliminating hundreds of thousands of students and restricting higher education to the middle and upper classes while consigning working and poor people to vocational training. This worldwide capitalist onslaught against public education cannot be defeated by writing letters to trustees and administrators, legal challenges in the capitalist courts or the other usual tactics of liberal academics. Although free public education is no more than a bourgeois-democratic right, in this imperialist epoch of capitalist decay, as the bourgeoisie systematically tears down past gains, it will take socialist revolution to provide universal higher education.

Not only does this recent history demonstrate the illusion of achieving meaningful democratic educational reform *under capitalism*, simply to throw back the attacks by witchhunters and racist purgers with state power will require the mobilization of social forces capable of defeating the bourgeoisie. This means joining the social and economic power of the working class with the oppressed black, Latino and immigrant minorities who together make up a majority of New York City's population. When CUNY authorities tried to do away with the remnants of open admissions by jacking up tuition a decade ago, thousands of students occupied campus buildings and marched in the streets along with striking 1199 hospital workers and city workers fighting budget cuts. Indeed, open admissions was won in 1969 as a result of campus occupations by black and Puerto Rican students and the insistence of the powerful labor movement that opening up the elite city university system had to benefit all working people.

The 1999-2000 strike at Mexico's National University (UNAM), with almost a quarter million students the largest university in Latin America, demonstrated that even the most massive student militancy is insufficient to defeat the reactionary forces arrayed against them. For ten months, tens of thousands of students occupied the huge Mexico City campus day and night. Several police attacks were beaten off. Our

comrades of the Grupo Internacionalista/Mexico fought to link the students' struggle with the working class, and were successful in sparking the formation of workers defense guards involving the powerful electrical workers union who for more than a month stood guard in the face of threats of a police/army invasion. But in the end, the UNAM student strike remained isolated and in February 2000 the federal and capital police moved in, breaking the strike and arresting 1,000 students.

Various student radicals at CUNY combine some militant rhetoric with the outlook of campus office-holders. At the College of Staten Island, the College Voice group provides a variety of "leftism-on-one campus" mixed with pacifist phrases. Currently, the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM) at Hunter College is holding a "victory party" for winning a *student fee increase* to pay for various student government functions! During the fight over the elimination of remediation, SLAM supported the program of the CUNY Coalition for Open Admissions, which included the call for "democratic election of CUNY trustees." But as we wrote at the time:

"...the Board of Trustees and CUNY administration are the representatives of the ruling class whose task is to keep students, teachers and campus workers in check. Communists call for *abolishing the Board of Trustees and CUNY administration*. We fight for *student/teacher/worker control of the universities*."

While CUNY uses placement exams and draconian tuition hikes to drive out minority and immigrant students, the Internationalist Group calls for *open admissions* and the *elimination of tuition*, as well for a *state-paid living stipend for all students* and special programs to overcome the effects of educational deprivation suffered by students in run-down inner-city schools. In the face of pervasive spying on CUNY students by the campus police, we demand *all cops off campus! INS, FBI and CIA get out!*

### **Smash Xenophobic Reaction – Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!**

Just as every U.S. war and war drive in the last century has been accompanied by an anti-communist witchhunt against the "enemy within," American imperialism's wars are regularly accompanied by virulent anti-immigrant chauvinism and racist reaction. When the FBI launched the post-World War I "red" scare against the "spread of Communism," they started by deporting thousands of foreign-born socialists and executing the Italian anarchist workers Sacco and Vanzetti, while the Ku Klux Klan mushroomed in size. More than 100,000 Japanese Americans were rounded up and put in concentration camps in World War II. Under the anti-Soviet Cold War, new camps were built to house the tens of thousands on the FBI's "pick-up lists." (Several of these camps are still intact, ready to be put into service for the new imperialist war.)

The current persecution of Arab and other Near Eastern and Asian immigrants is a continuation of the chauvinist campaigns of the 1980s and '90s. "English-only" amendments and attempts to abolish bilingual education in the public schools

flourished in the Midwest and West Coast, coming to a head in the 1994 Proposition 187 referendum in California. The attempt to purge "illegal aliens" from CUNY is not limited to higher education. Prop 187 ordered the exclusion of children of undocumented immigrants from all public schools down to the kindergarten level, as well as denial of welfare, health and hospital care, driver's licenses and any other official services. The purpose of such xenophobic (anti-foreigner) campaigns is to intensify repression against the millions of immigrant workers who form a large and combative section of the U.S. working class. Liberal and reformist illusions that the U.S. would grant a widespread "amnesty" for undocumented immigrants are dead. Many immigrant rights groups have been politically paralyzed as they find no "allies" in the bourgeois parties with whom they can trade favors and political support. Communists demand *full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*

This is a democratic demand that goes back to the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of the 18th century. At the time of the French Revolution, the 1793 constitution approved by the Jacobins granted citizenship to any foreigner who joined the fight for liberty. Even before this, American radical democrat Thomas Paine was made a citizen of the French Republic. After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the founding constitution of the Soviet workers republic declared: "Acting on the principle of the solidarity of the toilers of all nations, the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic shall grant all political rights enjoyed by Russian citizens to foreigners resident within the territory of the Russian Republic," authorizing local soviets to "confer upon such foreigners without any troubles and formalities, the rights of Russian citizenship."

The 1994 battle over Prop 187 provoked a huge outpouring of protest by immigrants, students and much of the labor movement. Over 10,000 marched on Los Angeles city hall in May and in October some 80,000 jammed the center of L.A. with large contingents from dozens of area unions. High school students bolted from their classrooms. Yet in the end, this immigrant-bashing proposition was passed, although the courts have declared much of its provisions unconstitutional. That was then, and today it is likely that the judicial machinery of U.S. capitalism would rubber-stamp such victimization of immigrants in the name of "national security."

To fight against the capitalist onslaught against public education and immigrants the key is forging a revolutionary leadership. For more than a century, the pro-capitalist labor officialdom has tied the U.S. working class to the capitalist Democratic Party. Thus in the 1991 battle over CUNY, the students were ultimately sold out as the NYC Central Labor Council knuckled under to the cutbacks ordered by black Democratic mayor David ("they'll take it from me") Dinkins. (Dinkins, like many of the union officials, is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America.) In the '90s, the CLC launched a bogus "Working Families Party" to garner votes for Democrats from workers too fed up to vote on the Democratic Party line. Last year, various social-democratic reformists (notably the ISO) promoted the presidential bid of Ralph Nader's bourgeois Green Party, seeking to channel discontent into a capitalist "third

party." And in the recent NYC mayoral elections, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) bureaucracy led by Randy Weingarten backed one Democratic loser after another (Hevesi, Ferrer, Green), while allowing Giuliani to force teachers to work for more than a year now without a contract.

The result of chaining workers, blacks, Latinos and Asians to the capitalist Democrats has been to saddle the working people and oppressed with the reactionary Bush regime and NYC's new CEO, Michael Bloomberg, who just bought the mayoral election for a cool \$60 million. The Internationalist Group calls to oust the pro-capitalist misleaders of labor, break with all the bourgeois parties, and build a workers party like the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky. The fight to defend immigrant students at CUNY is inseparable from the fight to unionize immigrant workers in the sweatshops and delis, and the fight of working people across the globe. Instead of protectionist "anti-globalization," we fight for the communist program of global socialist revolution, led by a reformed Fourth International!

***Down with CUNY's Anti-Immigrant "War Purge!"  
Stop Racist Tuition Hike and "Student Data Collection System!"***

## League for the Fourth International

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Sue Kellera



## Struggle of Immigrant Students at CUNY Intimately Linked to Workers' Struggle

*A key aspect of the November 28 demonstration against CUNY's racist "war purge" of immigrant students was the active support from groups involved in organizing immigrant workers. We print below two statements from endorsers of the protest.*

### Statement from José Schiffino, organizer, UNITE Local 169 was read to the November 28 demo

We are now at a time in history where what we do and say really counts.

There is war being waged right now by our government. I am not talking about the war against terrorism, I am talking about the war that this government is waging right here amongst us.

War against the working poor, war against immigrants, war against those who believe that there is more to lose if we turn away from the problems that face us Right here in this country, right now. Problems that arise not from foreign agents or terrorist networks, but from politicians and a businessmen who are trying to turn the sad events of September 11 into an opportunity to turn back the wave of protest aimed at putting a halt to the ever expanding power of the rich and powerful, of the multinational corporations who trample the rights and very lives of the peoples of the earth.

They have put nations in debt and then as if to rub salt in their wounds, have placed before them an only option of austerity.

Austerity. We are now, here in this country, in this city, hearing the call for austerity. Is it the rich who are being asked to sacrifice of their vast wealth? No!

Is it the multinationals who are being asked to do with less. No! They have just been given a retroactive tax cut in the billions of dollars! It is you on a vast pile of wealth and they tell you that you can not gain the education you need to *earn* for yourselves, to do for yourselves, to free yourselves from the cycle of poverty they are imposing on the world.

All you who are the sons and daughters of immigrants know of the cycle of poverty they imposed on the countries your parents came from. Your parents came here fleeing the economic ruin of this countries business interests. They came here fleeing the tyrants they had placed upon their backs. They came here fleeing the wars waged in the name of democracy.

They came here and what did the vast majority of them do? They worked. They worked hard and they worked long. They worked to give their children an opportunity to make something of themselves. And you have made something of yourselves. Now they want to take that away.

They want to raise tuitions to drive you out. They want to give your names over to the government and they want to track you as if you were criminals. Are you to be blamed for

what a few angry and misguided men have done? Is it your fault? Are you to be judged guilty when in truth you are innocent?

We are told that we must sacrifice for this war. Must we sacrifice the education of the young people who live in this country "*no matter what their status*"? Do we have to sacrifice our freedoms?! Do we have to sacrifice all that has been gained in years of struggle, for justice, for peace? That I think is up to you, the new generation.

### Statement by the New York Taxi Workers Alliance

Ever since the tragic events of September 11th a wave of anti-immigrant attacks have unfolded in the U.S. These attacks are broad – from random acts of violence against individuals or more systematic violence against whole communities, harassment, denial of rights and economic and social assaults. As a grass roots working immigrant organization, the New York Taxi Workers Alliance is determined to fight these systematic acts of violence on every front.

The recent decisions of the CUNY administration to charge out of state tuition to undocumented immigrant youth and the threat to share student data with law enforcement agencies is clearly one of the most egregious of such systematic attacks. Under the cover of a racist anti-immigrant sentiment and on the coat tails of the words of bigoted public officials such as Senator Padavan the CUNY administration has chosen to deny education to thousands of young men and women who had dared to rise above the marginalization of the immigrant poor in the US and seek out educational opportunities. If there are struggles local to NYC that must be taken up on an urgent footing, this is surely one of them. We join the hundreds of right thinking people, the numerous student organizations and worker associations that have taken on this battle in condemning the CUNY administration and urge them to reverse the decisions immediately.

## Students: Ally with the Working Class

# Smash Racist Purge of CUNY— Fight for Open Admissions, Free Tuition!

The following article was issued as a leaflet by the Internationalist Group in February 1999 and reprinted in *The Internationalist* No. 7, April-May 1999.

In his annual “state of the city” speech last year, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani launched a campaign to exclude *more than half* of all incoming students from the City University of New York (CUNY). This year in his report the mayor ranted against CUNY, saying “that’s a system we would blow up.” A blatantly racist purge is being carried out in the name of “standards.” The door is to be slammed in the face of all those who fail even one of three entrance exams. Remedial courses

for incoming students are to be eliminated, first from the four-year colleges and then from the two-year community colleges. Particularly targeted for exclusion are racial minorities, immigrants and women. As one student protester’s sign proclaimed at a January 4 hearing on CUNY, the aim of this purge is to introduce “educational apartheid.”

Last May the CUNY Board of Trustees rammed through the new policy in a closed-door meeting after police cleared out the public, arresting more than two dozen. When that was challenged under a state “open meetings” law, this past January 25 the Board voted the exclusion resolution again, this time with several hundred protesting students and faculty shouting their opposition after navigating through a maze of police barricades, metal detectors, bag searches and pat-downs. With a majority of the trustees appointed by Giuliani and Governor George Pataki, the result was foreordained. But that does not end the struggle. It means that defenders of open admissions



Lynn Mayekawa/The Envoy

**Students protesting motion to eliminate open admissions at CUNY Board of Trustees meeting, La Guardia College, January 25.**

must escalate the fight and wage it not in bogus “hearings” but on the terrain of mass working-class action.

The government of the city and state of New York have declared war on CUNY. This not a local issue but part of the broader attack on the minority and working people of NYC and around the country and the world. Schools fall into disrepair while billions go into new prisons. Meanwhile, the strongarm tactics of CUNY’s campus cops reflect the methods of the New York Police, who work hand in hand with CUNY’s gun-toting “SAFE” cops. The Board of Trustees meeting at LaGuardia College on January 25 was barricaded in the same way the NYPD locked down central Harlem last September when a court ordered the city to permit the Million Youth March. And barely a week after the NYPD Street Crimes Unit gunned down black African immigrant Amadou Diallo in the doorway to his Bronx home (see page 10), four people were arrested at City College in Washington Heights at a conference demanding freedom for black radical

**Break with the Democrats and Republicans—  
Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

death row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The aim of the war on CUNY is to *eliminate what remains of "open admissions"* in this huge institution of 200,000 students on 20 campuses. Open admissions was a gain of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. In 1969 the student population of CUNY's senior colleges was *96 percent* white. The next year, after an explosive student strike that demanded the *right* to a university education for every high school graduate, under the new guidelines the number of black, Latino and Asian freshmen increased *seven times*. It is no accident that the drive to purge this public

university began just as the CUNY student body became majority non-white. Particularly targeted are those whose native language is not English. In May 1997, the regents denied degrees to over 500 prospective CUNY graduates, including more than 100 at the bilingual (Spanish-English) Hostos campus, by springing a punitive exam on them at the last minute. At Hunter College, for 55 percent of the students English is a second language.

The assault on open admissions at CUNY has national implications. Since 1970 close to half a million students have earned degrees from the City University, and over this period *the CUNY system has graduated more black and Latino students than any other university in the history of the United States*. It's not surprising, therefore, that open admissions at CUNY has been the target of racist attacks from the outset. Today Giuliani sneers, "By eliminating any meaningful standards of admission and continually defining down standards for continuation, the entire meaning and value of a college education has been put in jeopardy." In 1971, Nixon's Vice President Spiro Agnew said the same, denouncing the CUNY plan as a giveaway of "100,000 devalued diplomas." A study by CUNY professors David E. Lavin and David Hyllegard, *Changing the Odds: Open Admissions and the Life Chances of the Disadvantaged* (Yale University Press, 1996) notes that open admissions more than tripled the number of bachelor's degrees for blacks and doubled the number for Hispanics. It is this that has the racists incensed.

In fact, the purge at CUNY is an attack on the entire working class, aiming to exclude working people from the student body. Open admissions at CUNY opened the door for working-class

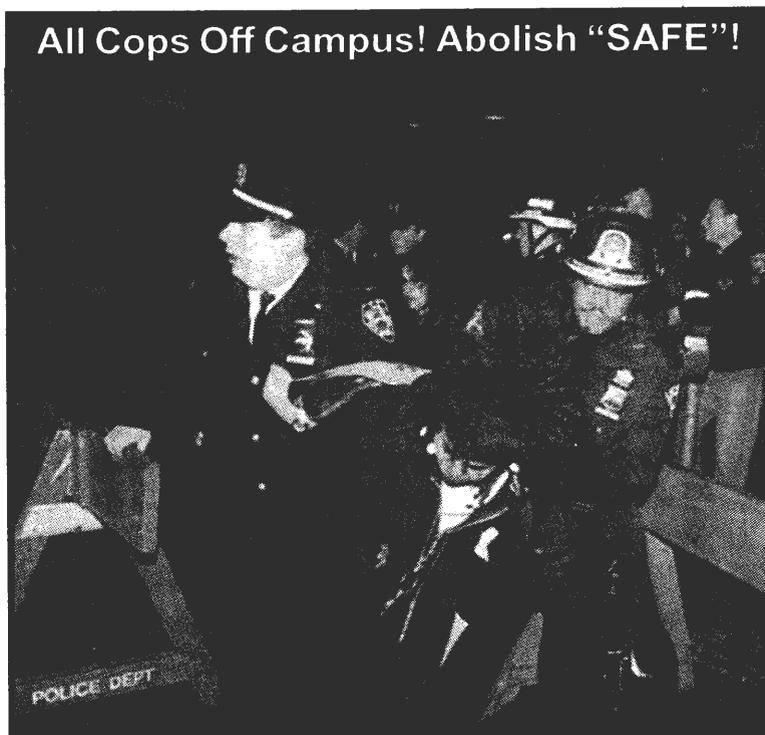
white students as well: the number of white freshmen went from 16,000 in 1969 to an average of 26,000 over the next three years. Now, in his 1999 state budget, Governor Pataki has announced plans to eliminate TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) grants for all students who take less than 15 credits (five courses) per semester. Tuition for the four-year colleges is already over \$3,600 a year, and \$3,200 for the two-year colleges—making them about the most expensive community colleges in the country. Already in the last three years more than *18,000* CUNY students receiving welfare have been driven out as the city implements the slave

labor "workfare" program. Now anyone who isn't a full-time student is to be denied state tuition aid. And since a huge percentage of CUNY students are working people who scrimp together enough to take a couple of courses a semester—almost 150,000 out of 350,000 CUNY students are part time—this new regulation will eliminate thousands more.

Giuliani makes no secret of his aim. "Open enrollment is a mistake," he declared last year. "Its consequences have been cruel." And what is "cruel" about allowing hundreds of thousands of poor, minority and working-class students to gain a university education? According to the mayor,

"It has created in CUNY students false expectations which the realities of life inevitably leave unfulfilled." The mayor echoes those who declared that it was cruel to teach slaves to read and write. A newsletter of the United Literacy Workers at CUNY (*In From the Margins*, April 1998) quoted Frederick Douglass' description of the outburst of the slavemaster who caught his wife teaching a young slave to write: not only would this "spoil" the slaves and make them "unmanageable," but "it could do him no good...it would make him discontented and unhappy." These are exactly the sentiments of the modern slavedriver Giuliani as he forces unpaid labor on welfare recipients and bars tens of thousands of wage slaves (as Karl Marx described "free" workers) from CUNY. Enforced ignorance is always the gospel of the oppressor.

A revolutionary civil war was fought to abolish chattel slavery, yet a century later the descendants of the slavemasters were still vowing massive resistance to school integration. Today Republican NYC mayor Rudolph Giuliani imitates Dixiecrat Alabama governor George Wallace, standing in the doorway of



Bill Moore photo

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

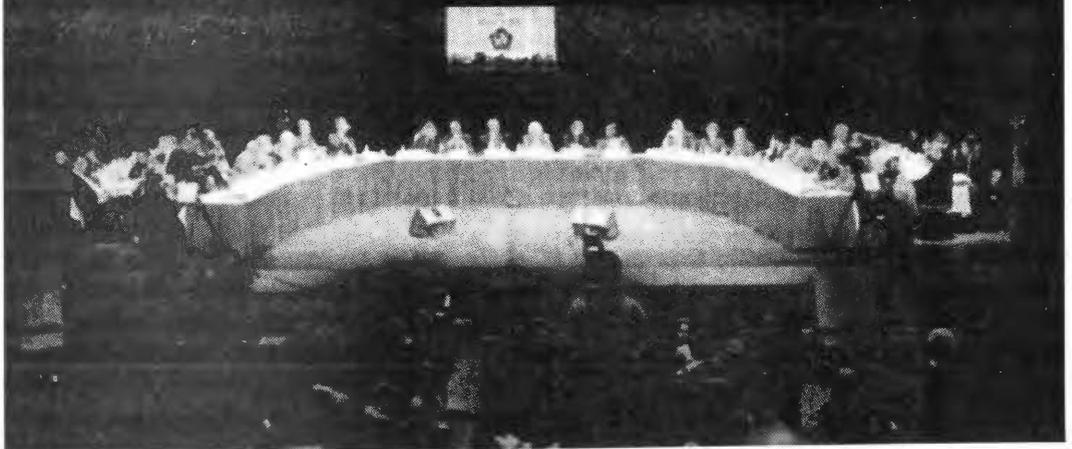
CUNY vowing to kick out minorities, immigrants, women in rolling back the minimal gains of the civil rights movement. It took a stormy struggle to win open admissions at CUNY as a partial corrective to the segregated and grossly unequal high schools and the virtual exclusion of minorities from the colleges. It will take no less today to stop the resegregation of higher education everywhere from UCal Berkeley (where eliminating "affirmative action" has decimated minority enrollment) to CUNY (where the last vestiges of open admissions are being scrapped).

Across the U.S. there is an onslaught against enrollment of minorities in universities, particularly of blacks, and more particularly of black men. Over the last two and a half decades, the proportion of expenditure on public education at all levels has sharply dropped. Internationally, as well, there are mounting attacks on public higher education as the capitalists seek to slash "unproductive" (not profitable) government expenditure on welfare, pensions health care and schools. This all-out capitalist attack has escalated in the wake of the counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state and toppled the deformed workers states of East Europe.

The privatizers feel they have the wind in their sails and are laying waste to one social program after another. Certainly this drive is spearheaded by a hard right wing, but it is the program of the entire bourgeoisie. Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives have all supported the cutbacks, only "differing" on how much to slice off. They all join hands in voting to deny food stamps to immigrants, to throw moms and kids off welfare, to replace schools with prisons, to extend the barbaric, racist death penalty and speed up the machinery of state murder. And while feuding over the impeachment spectacle in Washington, they unanimously support war criminal Clinton in raining bombs on Iraq. This is, after all, the era of imperialist decay, in which the bogus "American dream" (which was always a nightmare for black people) is seen as an anachronism, "unrealistic expectations" that must be done away with.

In New York state, according to a December 1998 study by the Justice Policy Institute, annual spending on prisons has gone up by \$761 million over the last decade (to \$1.6 billion), while funding of the State University of New York (SUNY) and CUNY is down \$615 million (to \$1.3 billion)—an almost perfect dollar-for-dollar match. Liberals and reformist pseudo socialists often argue for "butter vs. guns" (although in this case the biggest increases in prison funding came under liberal Democrat Cuomo). But this is not about a trade-off, it's about the capitalist state. For

## Abolish the Board of Trustees and CUNY Administration! For Student/Teacher/Worker Control of the Universities!



Board of Trustees votes under massive police protection to eliminate open admissions.

the capitalist ruling class, its military hardware is for use against its perceived enemies, including the "enemy within." And the prisons are an essential part of the increasingly paramilitary policing of America's inner cities, particularly as part of the racist "war on drugs" which is really a war on the ghettos and barrios.

Today the capitalists and their politicians are slashing away at public education at every level. Tens and hundreds of thousands of young people who want to study are being told, "Forget it, you're not wanted." That alone is a stark indictment of this society and the entire capitalist system, where the drive for profits is *counterposed* to the most basic human needs. The fight to make decent education available to all can only go forward as part of the struggle against the irrational and decaying profit system of racism and class oppression. It is necessary to build a workers party to lead the fight for *socialist revolution*, which is what it will take to secure genuine access to free, quality public education from preschool to university.

### The Battle for Open Admissions at CUNY

Open admissions at CUNY was legislated in 1969 in response to a strike and building takeover at City College, initially by a couple of hundred black and Puerto Rican students. The student strikers' demands were focused on raising black and Puerto Rican enrollment and instituting black and Puerto Rican studies. But the powerful city unions pushed for opening admissions to all high school graduates, and this was eventually adopted. The next freshman class grew by 75 percent, with significantly more white students as well as dramatically increased numbers of minorities. It was still not full open admissions, for the university was stratified into community colleges (today enrolling 160,000 students) and "senior" colleges (currently 40,000 students), with "placement" decided by rather arbitrary tests. Extensive "remediation" was introduced with non-credit courses preparing students to pass the exams.

Already a century and a half ago, the 1848 *Communist Manifesto* called for "free education for all children in public schools."

Communists fight for freely available public education at all levels as a gain for the working class, even as the content of that education under capitalism inevitably reflects the dominant bourgeois ideology. Marxism is based on the highest scientific achievements of capitalist society, and we demand that the exploited and oppressed have access to those achievements as necessary tools in their fight for emancipation. Open admissions in higher education is a basic democratic right. By itself, it is hardly incompatible with capitalism, any more than public primary and secondary schools are. (Some U.S. states had opened universities to all high school graduates in the 1930s, then with minimal or no tuition.) Even that is not enough to overcome poverty and the effects of entrenched educational segregation, which is as bad (or even worse) today in much of the North as it was before school integration was ordered by the Supreme Court in 1954.

In the struggle against the war on CUNY, the Internationalist Group calls for *open admissions and no tuition*, as well as for a *state-paid living stipend for all students and special programs* to overcome the effects of years of educational deprivation suffered by students in run-down, understaffed, underfunded inner-city schools. The whole history of the fight to win and defend even an approximation of open admissions demonstrates that it is crucial that *students must ally with the working class* in struggle against the cutbacks and takebacks

that affect all poor, minority and working people. A student strike can be a spark of militancy; a *citywide strike by New York workers* can stop Giuliani cold.

We fight for full and free access to public education at all levels, against tracking and elite secondary schools, and against stratified (two- or three-tier) college systems which are inherently discriminatory. As for "remediation," the very term reflects an ideology that puts the blame on the student, as if they are the problem. Yet students from Bushwick, East New York, Harlem and the South Bronx are taught in schools where classes are held on gym floors, in bathrooms and often in "temporary" trailers which occupy playgrounds for years. Forget about computers in the classroom, there is often no chalk for the blackboard and no books for students to take home. This state of affairs is a result of systematic discrimination against city schools. According to statistics presented by a member of the NY Board of Regents at a recent weekend meeting sponsored by the Black and Puerto Rican/Hispanic Caucus of the state legislature, New York City spends an annual average of \$8,213 per pupil in public schools, compared to \$12,052 per pupil in affluent districts—that is, one-third less. Not only does the funding of education by local property taxes mean that poor districts have less money, New York state contributes \$2,000 less per pupil to NYC schools than to other districts.

## War on CUNY an Attack on the Working Class

What the cancellation of "remediation" will mean can be predicted with considerable precision, since all entering students already take the admissions exams. (Previously these tests were to determine whether students went to community colleges or to the four-year "senior" colleges, and to determine the need for remedial classes; now these already skewed and discriminatory *placement* exams will be used to keep students out.) A flyer distributed by students at the January Board of Trustees meeting listed figures drawn from a study by David Lavin and Elliot Weininger ("Proposed New Admissions Criteria at the City University of New York: Ethnic and Enrollment Consequences," March 1998). Under the new standard (failure to pass any of the three tests is a bar to admission) those excluded from the senior colleges will include:

- 60% of all incoming freshmen
- 65% of Black freshmen
- 66% of Asian freshmen
- 68% of Latino freshmen
- 56% of women
- 75% of welfare (AFDC) recipients
- 81% of low-income women
- 82% of single mothers.

The City University of New York will be a very different place with these entrance criteria. The working class, poor and minorities educated in the city's public schools will be overwhelmingly excluded and CUNY will become a somewhat cheaper "public" university for part of the white middle

class. This is not the unintended consequence of enforcing "standards" but the intended purpose of the cuts. In line with this, in Giuliani's 1999 "state of the city" speech he called for the creation of elite "flagship" colleges, singling out Queens College as a prime candidate. And he proposed giving "vouchers" for remediation—a back-door way of *privatizing* post-secondary school education, placing in the hands of profit-minded companies the task of "weeding out" those with "unrealistic expectations." Simultaneously, the state Board of Regents is now requiring that all high school students take stiffened Regents exams in English, math, American history, global studies and science in order to get a diploma. Since only 18 percent of NYC students passed the Regents exam in biology in 1997, thousands more won't have to be stopped at the CUNY door *because they won't even graduate from secondary school*.

Behind the war on CUNY there is an unmistakable racist electoral calculation. As he has done in two successful mayoral campaigns, "crime-buster" Giuliani is now trying to build support for a bid for state or national office by whipping up a white backlash against gains for minorities and immigrants. A line-up of sinister right-wing forces wants to use the fight against open admissions at CUNY to launch an attack on public higher education throughout the U.S. But the offensive against public education and social services for the working people has received *bipartisan* support from the twin parties of American capital, Democrats and Republicans.

In order to ram through the attack on the remnants of open admissions, Giuliani and his flunkies on the Board of Trustees (first and foremost Herman Badillo, who like his boss seems to derive sadistic pleasure out of keeping Latinos, blacks and Asians out of the City University) spread a lot of lies. The first concerns graduation rates, with the claim that only 1 percent of community college students graduate "on time" in two years. Yet almost no community college students attend school full time (only 47 students out of 16,000 new admissions in 1995)! And the average age of CUNY students is 25, far older than the average nationally. The fact is that CUNY is a university for working people, in which the vast majority go to school while also holding down a job, struggling to make ends meet. Some 72 percent of community college students at CUNY are from households earning less than \$25,000 a year, compared to 29 percent of community college students nationally.

Giuliani's smears are particularly cynical as the city is legally required to pay one-third of the community college budget, but instead it is only paying 23 percent, putting it tens of millions of dollars in arrears. Concerning remediation, a fact sheet put together by Professor Bill Crain noted that "nearly two thirds of associate degree [community college] students and three quarters of bachelor's degree students complete remediation in one year, and most of the rest do in

three terms." As for graduation rates, "after 5 years, the graduation rates at our community colleges exceed the national average for public institutions (28 percent vs. 24 percent). After 8 years, CUNY bachelor's degree students graduate at a higher rate than the national average for public institutions (45 percent to about 40 percent)."

Moreover, some 78 percent of all colleges in the United States (and 81 percent of all public colleges) offer remedial courses. But no longer at CUNY, decrees the Board of Trustees. At the January 25 Board meeting, one trustee (George Rios) argued that by eliminating remediation CUNY would be setting the trend for the rest of U.S. higher education. The ruling class enemies of CUNY students, teachers and workers are conscious of their aim of sharply "downsizing" (gutting) public higher education, particularly for minorities, immigrants and working people. To defeat them, it is necessary for their intended victims to be fully conscious of the nature of the threat they face, and the revolutionary program needed to combat it.

### **A Communist Program for Free, Quality Public Higher Education for All**

How can the onslaught against open admissions and the racist purge of CUNY be defeated? Various lame proposals have been floated ranging from setting up a counter-commis-

It was Democrat Bill Clinton who legislated and signed the "welfare" reform which has thrown *five million women and children* off public assistance in the last half decade. Now the same operation is being performed on higher education. Today it is the Republicans Giuliani and Pataki who are leading the charge. Yet the slash-and-burn offensive against CUNY has been going on for more than two decades. The first attack on open admissions was the introduction of tuition in 1976 during the "fiscal crisis" provoked by Wall Street bankers with Democratic mayor Abe Beame acting as hatchet man: as many as 50,000 CUNY students were forced out then. Over the last decade, the number of full-time faculty has fallen from 10,000 to 5,200! Today some 60 percent of CUNY classes are taught by part-time, low-paid adjuncts. In 1990/91 tens of thousands of CUNY students took to the streets against cutbacks ordered by liberal Democratic governor Mario Cuomo and black Democratic mayor David Dinkins. Today Dinkins testifies against the elimination of remediation, but his administration slashed the CUNY budget while hiring thousands more cops.

The elimination of open admissions at CUNY is a part of a war against working people and minorities. It should be no surprise, then, that the capitalist rulers mobilize their state apparatus to ruthlessly squelch opposition or render it harmless through cop repression. Giuliani, Pataki & Co. may think they have already won the war, but that is only because their opponents have been playing by the rules of the ruling class.

There has been a lot of hand-wringing among liberal academics about how the students haven't mobilized. There have been sporadic demonstrations of several hundred, but these

have indeed been smaller than in past years. Why? For one thing, in the past CUNY student protests have been largely organized through student governments, often in conjunction with faculty and even administration discontent over budget cuts. Whether sitting down in the streets or lobbying in Albany, this amounted to bourgeois pressure politics. Today in the face of a concerted offensive by the bourgeois rulers, liberal bleatings about "priorities" go nowhere. This assault can only be defeated by mobilizing the power of the working class, and what is centrally lacking is a leadership with a program to mobilize that power in revolutionary struggle against the capitalist system itself.

Purging tens of thousands of CUNY students will inevitably mean layoffs of campus workers and eliminating more full-time faculty, possibly shutting down whole campuses. Meanwhile, more than 30,000 welfare recipients have been turned into slave laborers, toiling without wages in what the city cynically calls a "Work Experience Program." And several thousand city hospital workers' jobs have been slashed in the last year, with hundreds of layoffs planned for 1999. The battle to save CUNY can be a focal point for a common struggle uniting students, professors, campus workers and city workers against a common enemy.

The battle over CUNY is not just a "student issue," it is an assault on all working people, minorities and particularly immigrants. What's needed to defeat this attack is to bring out the power of the working class, the black ghettos, the Latino barrios and the Asian communities in a united struggle *against City Hall and Wall Street, against the State House in Albany and the White House in Washington.*

sion to the Schmidt/Giuliani operation, appealing to alumni, going on talk shows, appealing to Democrats in Albany like Attorney General Spitzer (who first made a name for himself as a supporter of the death penalty). The "Friends of CUNY" and "CUNY Is Our Future" coalitions call for writing letters to the state Board of Regents will step in to block the end of remediation. Yet this is the same Board that is proposing to cancel diplomas for 80 percent of NYC high school students!

All these schemes are based on the illusion that there is some kind of "dialogue" about educational policy going on, when the reality is an unadorned class war. The New Caucus of the Professional Staff Congress (the AFT-affiliated teachers union at CUNY) has collected testimony given before the Schmidt Commission. Yet it's worse than useless to try to "reason" with this wrecking crew. Giuliani's "task force," is on a search and destroy mission to drive minority and immigrant students out of CUNY! We say the Schmidt Commission should be *driven off campus through protest and exposure of their reactionary program!*

A leaflet put out by SLAM includes the program of the CUNY Coalition for Open Admissions calling for "democratic election of CUNY trustees." But the Board of Trustees and CUNY administration are the representatives of the ruling class

whose task is to keep students, teachers and campus workers in check. Communists call for *abolishing the Board of Trustees and CUNY administration. We fight for student/teacher/worker control of the universities.* Against those who would further privatize higher education, we call for *expropriation of private colleges, universities and technological institutes.*

Meanwhile, CUNY's highly paid (more than professors) campus police go about arresting faculty members, strip-searching student protesters and turning campus facilities into police pens. Last June, students were tipped off to a surveillance camera disguised as a smoke detector outside the main office for political activists at City College. In response to their exposure of this atrocity, the Graduate Student Council and its newspaper, the *Messenger*, were suspended. The "SAFE" unit was formed as a little red squad, compiling lists of campus activists, videotaping student activities. When students protested tuition increases in 1995, scores were arrested and brutalized by these grotesquely named "peace officers." The biggest threat to "peace" at CUNY are these provocative thugs. Students, faculty and campus workers should demand *all cops off campus—abolish "SAFE"!*

The CUNY trustees, administration and cops are stand-ins for the bourgeoisie, and any serious struggle against the racist

## Right Wing Yale Cabal Targets CUNY

The current attack on the City University did not originate with Giuliani. It is the brainchild of a clot of ultra-rightists centered around the Manhattan Institute, usually described as a conservative "think tank." Many of Giuliani's policies were first put forward in the Institute's *City Journal*. The Winter 1998 issue of the *City Journal* was dedicated to "An Agenda for Giuliani II." Among the articles is a foam-flecked diatribe by Heather McDonald ("CUNY Could Be Great Again") that makes explicit the racist aims of the battle plan against CUNY.

A blurb gives the message: "The sixties turned the once-proud city University into a backwater of remediation and race politics." Actually, prior to 1969 CUNY was a rigidly segregated enclave awash in anticommunist witchhunting, loyalty oaths and the like. McDonald ascribes its fall from grace to "educated adults cowering before know-nothing adolescents and outside agitators." She accuses liberal Republican mayor John Lindsay of "racial pacification" for undertaking a "college construction campaign in minority neighborhoods," as if there were "a huge pool of college-prepared students in those or other neighborhoods," she sneers. Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn and Hostos Community College in the Bronx should be shut down, she writes, accusing them of "ethnic separatism." The CUNY law school should also be closed because of its "1960s-style curriculum in political organizing and consciousness-raising."

The heart of McDonald's agenda is the total elimination of remedial programs, allegedly run by "theory-besotted post-Marxists." As for the half of all CUNY students for whom

English is a second language, she declares: "students who need an interpreter to register for classes should not be registering in the first place." The University should "mow down the costly multicultural institutes...and declare that the classic texts of Western culture are the basis of a CUNY education." Summing up, she writes, "CUNY can cut its size by half."

The verbal violence of McDonald's American nativist, immigrant-bashing, racist diatribe is almost fascistic in content, sounding like the ravings of a member of the John Birch Society. But rather than some Bircher yahoo, this is an elitist yearning for the "good old days" when the undeserving poor "knew their place" at the bottom of the heap. It draws its inspiration from William F. Buckley, Jr., the CIA spy who looked to Franco's Spain as his model.

Leading the charge in the Board of Trustees for the assault on CUNY has been its chairman, Ann Paolucci. Her late husband was once the candidate for New York governor of the Conservative Party, which acts as a rightist pressure group on the Republicans, pushing anti-abortion and virulent "English-only" chauvinism. Paolucci's equivalent on the Board of Trustees of the State University is Candace de Russy, described by the *Village Voice* (21 April 1998) education supplement on "Enemies of Public Education" as an "antitax, antisex, pro-God pundit." De Russy, a member of the arch-conservative National Association of Scholars (NAS), has called for eliminating English as a Second Language courses at SUNY, slashing state funding, closing down the schools of law and medicine, and imposing a "core curriculum" of Western civilization studies.

purge plans will quickly face the concentrated power of the capitalist state. To fight this battle, it is necessary to mobilize a greater force, namely the power of the working class. There are hundreds of thousands of organized union members in New York City, who make the city run and who can also make it stop. There is an awareness among those fighting the attack on CUNY of the need for broader "labor and community support." But this usually amounts to appeals for empty declarations by union bureaucrats. Some hailed the recent formation of a "New Century Movement" by the SEIU, Local 1199 and the United Federation of Teachers. Yet the present misleaders of labor supplied phone banks for the Democrats to elect welfare-slasher Clinton and rammed through wage freezes for Giuliani, rigging membership votes to squelch opposition, while the "dissidents" bring in the feds and courts who subject union after union to capitalist government control in the bogus claim of "fighting corruption."

Opponents of the racist purge at CUNY are not powerless. There are millions of poor, minority, immigrant and working people who will find their educational opportunities or those of their children canceled by the drive to slam the door on public higher education. They can be mobilized in struggle when they see that their interests are at stake, but that will take a leadership with a program to fight and win this class struggle.

When the Board of Trustees initial vote last May to eliminate remediation set off an uproar, Giuliani formed a Mayor's Advisory Task Force to study the City University. The commission is headed by Benno Schmidt, who was president of Yale University from 1986 until 1992, when he left it to head up the Edison Project whose aim is to set up a national network of hundreds of private secondary schools. While at Yale, Schmidt broke a walkout by graduate student teaching assistants and clerical workers unions, and slashed departmental budgets with abandon. Schmidt's Edison Project has hardly been a stunning success, so far totalling 95 schools. The Hartford School Board protested its decision to lay off 300 teachers and sharply increase class sizes to pay for computers. Baltimore schools canceled its contract due to Edison's failure to deliver on its promise of higher student test scores.

It is striking how many in this coterie of purgers and privatizers have common ties to Yale University, where William F. Buckley, Jr. wrote his McCarthyite diatribe against liberalism, *God and Man at Yale*. Before becoming university president, Schmidt headed the Yale Law School, alma mater of rightist Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas (a beneficiary of affirmative action who denounced his sister as a welfare queen), as well as of "centrist" Democrats Bill and Hillary Clinton who have taken over most of the right-wing Republicans' programs. The Manhattan Institute was set up in 1978 by President Bush's CIA director William Casey, like Buckley another Yale man out of the Skull and Bones Society that produced the leadership core of the U.S. spy agency. A Manhattan Institute trustee, Thomas Rhodes, is the president of Buckley's far-right *National Review*.

That poses above all a political task, to oust the present pro-capitalist misleaders of labor and break the ties with the Democrats and Republicans, to undertake the *forging of a revolutionary workers party*. "Education is a right—fight, fight, fight!" goes one of the student chants. Yes, free public higher education is a democratic right, but this fight must be part of the struggle to sweep away the capitalist system that in its epoch of decline is waging relentless war on the rights and gains of working people. The marauding cops who murdered Amadou Diallo, tortured Abner Louima and patrol CUNY are the symbol of a system that is flailing about in its death agony.

Above all, it is necessary also to understand that the battle at CUNY is not just against Giuliani and his cohorts. Democratic state assemblyman Ed Sullivan speaks today against the elimination of remediation at CUNY, but the fact remains (as cynically pointed out by Schmidt commission member and former Republican state senator Manfred Ohrenstein at the January hearing) that Sullivan has long headed the assembly committee on higher education and thus he—along with his fellow Democratic assemblymen and women—is co-responsible for approving the cutback budgets which have steadily slashed CUNY budgets and raised CUNY tuition for years. In fact, according to statistics of the OECD

These are some of the ideologists of the war on CUNY. They take their ammunition from a 1997 study by the RAND Corporation on "Breaking the Social Contract: The Fiscal Crisis in Higher Education." In the Schmidt Commission hearings in early January, a CUNY professor who worked for RAND during the Vietnam War related how this premier think tank for the "military-industrial complex" systematically cooked the data, upping the body count of Viet Cong casualties in order to please the Air Force, just as the mayor's stacked task force would be cooking the data to please the mayor. The RAND study emphasizes "greater mission differentiation" for institutions of higher education in the U.S. It wants to "lower costs" by "the kind of restructuring and streamlining that successful businesses have implemented."

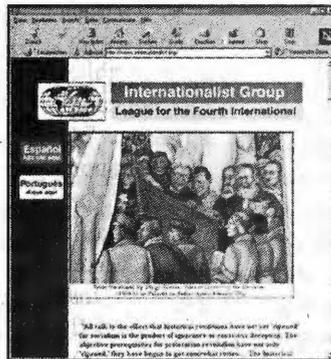
In particular, the RAND study denounces the "mission creep" of community colleges becoming full colleges. Instead, according to RAND, community colleges should become glorified vocational schools, focusing on "workforce preparation" and closely linked to employers. State colleges should concentrate on teacher training, while graduate education and research should be restricted to a few elite universities. This is precisely the program put forward by McDonald of the Manhattan Institute in advocating that CUNY's community colleges should closed down remedial education and redirect resources to technical programs. (McDonald is a member of the Schmidt Commission.) In the 1960s and '70s, RAND's "whiz kid" technocrats advocated bombing Vietnamese villages to "save" them from Communism. Today Giuliani and his Manhattan Institute advisers, following RAND's recommendations, want to "blow up" CUNY in order to "return it to greatness"!

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(Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), public expenditure on education in the United States has dropped from 5.7 percent of the gross domestic product in 1975 to 4.9 percent 20 years later. As capitalists push to drive up profit rates and slash spending on social programs, this trend is accelerating.

In recent years there have been sharp struggles waged in a number of countries against attacks on public education, and not just from governments of the right. In semi-colonial countries, the International Monetary Fund and local bourgeois rulers have sought to implement sharp increases on student fees and tuition while imposing restrictions to admissions. A battle is looming over this in Mexico. Currently, Greek university students are fighting pitched battles with the police, protesting against government plans to restrict access to higher education by imposing exclusionary exams. In Europe as well as the U.S., influential capitalist circles see education (on which OECD governments spend a trillion dollars a year) as a profitable new "market" to be milked. Social-democratic education minister Claude Allègre in France declared last year that it was necessary to "instill a spirit of enterprise" and that educational services constitute "the great market of the 21st century" (*Le Monde Diplomatique*, June 1998). In response, French secondary school teachers and students mobilized in more than a dozen marches against Allègre's educational counter-reform, demanding increased resources for poor regions. But their struggles were hamstrung by the fact that teachers union leaders are tied to the same popular-front government that is carrying out this "reform."

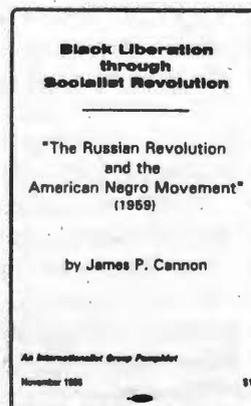
In the rising period of capitalism, the U.S. was a pioneer in mass public education, with free public libraries, land-grant colleges and other innovations unknown in Europe. The name of Horace Mann is famous worldwide as an architect of progressive education (and opponent of slavery) along with that

of the liberal educator John Dewey. The Russian Bolsheviks paid great attention to public education in the U.S. Lenin wrote articles on U.S. schools and in praise of the New York Public Library, pointing out that ordinary workers could go there after work to gain knowledge, and vowing to introduce such institutions in a workers Russia. Today, in the era of capitalist decline, many European countries still do not have public libraries, the NYPL is closed most evenings, and now the New York city government is planning to "blow up" the City University by cutting its size in half.

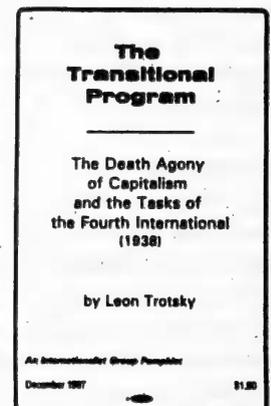
The bourgeoisie and pro-capitalist reformists seek to adjust the educational system to the needs of capital. This produces the spectacle of cutbacks in enrollment in higher education, particularly of black and Latino youth, at a time when technological developments require *more* skills not less. A chauvinist drive is underway against bilingual education and English as a Second Language instruction just as the immigrant population is exploding. In opposing the butchering of CUNY, liberals argue for a more "rational" educational policy. Yet the offensive against mass public higher education is an expression of the fundamental irrationality of the capitalist system, which destroys millions of jobs in the name of profitability and educates youth only to use them as cannon fodder in its wars.

Today, as 150 years ago with the dawn of scientific socialism, it is the communists who are the only consistent defenders of free public education for all. ■

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## Message from UNAM to CUNY...

*continued from page 32*

also against the starvation austerity program of the capitalists and their government.

Thousands of students prepared to strike – and the UNAM student strike broke out on 20 April 1999. From the beginning our organization sought to put into practice our call for extending the strike beyond the limits of the university itself. In the face of threats of repression in July 1999, we succeeded in initiating, in July 1999 worker-student defense guards, with the participation of hundreds of electrical workers as well as campus workers. This perspective requires a sharp break with the bourgeoisie and all its parties, and putting it into practice went together with the struggle against the nationalist popular-frontism preached by many forces participating in the UNAM strike.

Karl Marx observed that in our times, every real class struggle is a political struggle. Thus, in order to win struggles today it is necessary to have the right politics and the right policy. The leadership of the student strike at UNAM remained within the limits of popular-frontist reformism, relying on the idea that the bourgeoisie would eventually give way to the reason and justice of the students' demands. Yet the reason and logic of the capitalists is nothing but the logic of profit. What this means is that it is necessary to have a strategy of mobilization directed against capitalism's key points. A student strike, even one which is courageously defended by thousands of students – as was the case with the UNAM strike – can win only if it is backed by class-struggle mobilizations (including strikes) of the working class itself. And this is what we argued and fought for throughout the more than ten months of the National University strike.

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

When the repression reached its high point, we were among the hundreds arrested in February 2000 as we continued to defend the strike and put forward our proletarian program. While we were in jail, other comrades and friends faced the serious climate of repression to go once again to the workers unions in the effort to mobilize working-class power for the freedom of all those arrested.

Today, more than a year and a half after the strike was broken by this repression, it has become clear to many other young activists that the program we fought for was the real alternative showing the way to victory. The working class has the interest and power to wage a victorious struggle to make real the democratic right to education. Likewise, the working class has the interest and power to fight victoriously to defeat the imperialists' war in Asia, and against the attacks on immigrant students, the working people and all the oppressed at home.

Brothers and sisters: the fight you are engaged in is a crucial one. The defense of immigrant students (whom the bourgeoisie labels "illegal" simply because they lack a little piece of paper) is today an important part of a real revolutionary struggle. The capitalist rulers want to divide the exploited and oppressed along lines of race, religion, national origin. But the working class has no fatherland. The unity of the workers and oppressed, in which today black and white, Asian and Latin, workers and youth from the Middle East and Africa are struggling shoulder to shoulder against imperialist war and domestic repression – this is what the capitalists – both of the United States and of Latin America and the rest of the world – fear. The fight you are engaged in today is a real source of inspiration for those of us who side with the proletariat and the oppressed internationally.

With warmest revolutionary greetings,

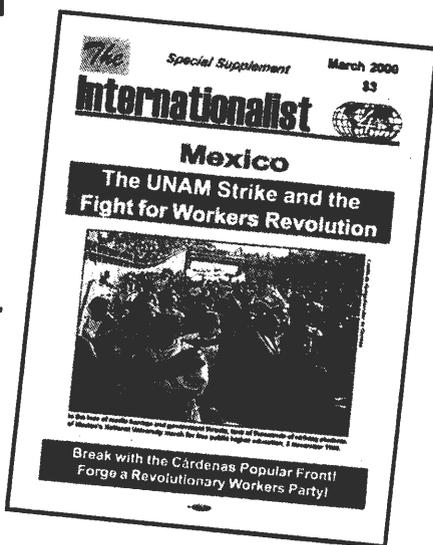
Ariel and Buenaventura

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### Mexico: The UNAM Strike and the Fight for Workers Revolution

March 2000 US\$3

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



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SME



Workers defense guards of the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME) at the National University, July 1999.

Brothers and sisters:

My name is Quetzal, and when the UNAM strike began I was a young woman 16 years of age. At that time I was in the last year of university preparatory school, but my interest in leftist ideas began when I was in secondary school and the Zapatista rebellion broke out in Chiapas. On one side I could see people who had nothing, and on the other side people who had very much indeed. The Indians, like so many other people in Mexico, live in such poverty that the uproar over the Chiapas uprising made me think that something had to be done against this system of inequality. So I began to look for alternatives.

Shortly before the UNAM strike broke out, when I was in the last year of preparatory school, I read the *Communist Manifesto*, because I related it to the movements of 1968.\* I wanted to know what it meant to be a Marxist and to fight for socialism.

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

On 17 April 1999 we Prepa 5 students took over our school, days before this was done in the majority of schools and campuses in the UNAM system. We had the solidarity and backing of the workers at our school, who helped us print leaflets, brought us food (which was very good), and most importantly partici-

pated in the strike pickets and defense. From very early on we had to fight against the representatives of the popular front, who wanted to sell out the strike, and who began to be known as the "moderates." What these people wanted was to accept a few crumbs from the government and put an end to the strike, all in the name of class collaboration.

Government repression began shortly thereafter. The Mexico City police brutally attacked student strikers in August, October and December 1999, alternating with frequent *porro* attacks against the strike. After almost ten months of the strike, which represented a difficult struggle against a bourgeoisie which was united against the strike, repression began accelerating rapidly on 1 February 2000, when the Federal Police (PFP) seized a preparatory school and arrested more than three hundred students.

I attended the following meeting of the Strike

General Council (CGH), convinced that it was urgent to do something to get the *compañeros* and *compañeras* out of jail and move the struggle forward to victory. However, this assembly was also dissolved by the PFP (which in reality is a military police force), and I was arrested together with more than 600 others.

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

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

It was after the strike had been broken that I really paid attention to the positions of the Grupo Internacionalista. In reality I wanted to know why the strike had been defeated, and it seemed to me that the key to this lay in the program. Remaining isolated on the university campuses, the strike was not able to strike a real blow against the bourgeoisie. What was necessary was to halt production and trade in the fight to stop the capitalists' offensive of hunger and repression.

Now you are carrying out an extremely important struggle against the purge of immigrant students from CUNY. I want to tell you, brothers and sisters, that we are with you in this fight. From Mexico City, I say to you: go forward and be brave. Victory will be yours.

Quetzal

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

## Over 200 Jailed

# Striking Jersey Teachers Defy Anti-Labor Laws

DECEMBER 7 -- As we go to press, the news reports that striking teachers in Middletown, New Jersey have agreed to return to work. The strike lasted barely a week, but the local School Board and Jersey judges immediately brought down the hammer. By the second day of the walkout, teachers were being thrown in jail for the "crime" of defending their jobs. As the courts systematically went down the alphabet, a total of 228 strikers were put behind bars before the union leadership folded.

The Middletown strike is a textbook example of the nature of the capitalist state. Far from being any kind of "neutral arbiter," the courts are a weapon in the hands of the bosses, along with the police and armed forces. For more than a century and a half, they have systematically been used against unions, just as this machinery of government repression is routinely used against black and Latino minorities. But in Middletown it has been used with a special vengeance, as the authorities use the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center as a carte blanche to regiment the country. The mass jailing of teachers was reportedly the first in the U.S. since 1978.

The walkout began over the School Board's demands to impose huge takebacks in medical insurance. But already for the last two years, Middletown teachers have been working under an imposed contract. In the middle of the U.S. war on Afghanistan, right-wingers in the community are whipping up anti-union sentiment with an orgy of flag-waving.

Meanwhile, in New York City, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) has been working for more than a year without a contract. The UFT bureaucracy under Randy Weingarten has let Mayor Giuliani walk all over the union, backing one losing Democrat after another and finally ending up with multibillionaire labor-hater Bloomberg.

A fighting leadership of labor would inevitably go against the government's straitjacket of anti-labor laws. In New York, it is the Taylor Law. A solid stand by hundreds of thousands of workers, backed up by the power of the entire union movement can turn these laws into a dead letter. A stand should have been made for the Middletown teachers by sending in hundreds of union militants to back their struggle. But the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy is incapable of fighting against the state to which they are themselves beholden.



Sue Kelloqq



Sue Kelloqq

IG supporters went to Middletown to show solidarity with strikers.

The Internationalist Group joined the hundreds of striking teachers in front of the Freehold, NJ courthouse as a demonstration of solidarity. The Jersey teachers showed real fighting spirit, but even their militant talking leaders were not prepared to go the course. What's urgently necessary is to oust the present bureaucratic misleaders of labor and build a class-struggle leadership with the program and determination to lead the struggle to free all the oppressed. This requires a break with all the capitalist parties – Democrats, Republicans and Greens – and a fight to build an international revolutionary workers party.

**A Message from UNAM to CUNY**

**Participants Draw Lessons of  
the Historic 1999-2000 Student Strike  
at the National University of Mexico**

Mexico City  
4 December 2001

Dear brothers and sisters:

We are sending this letter with our warmest internationalist and revolutionary greetings to all of you who are waging a head-on struggle against CUNY's racist purge of immigrant students. As the bombs continue to fall on Afghanistan and attacks are being prepared against Iraq, the U.S. imperialist bourgeoisie – together with its junior partners like the Mexican government and capitalists – is also carrying out a war on the “home front” against the working class and oppressed. It is urgently necessary to fight the plans of the would-be masters of the world, who are even prepared to sink humanity into the barbarity of a nuclear wasteland. The real alternative is to fight for socialism, which today requires the most resolute opposition to attacks on immigrants and the proletariat in the “belly of the beast” of imperialism.

We are members of the Grupo Internacionalista and the League for the Fourth International in Mexico, and we send you this greeting through our comrades of the Internationalist Group in the United States. We know that the struggle you are undertaking is a difficult one, but we also know that it can be won. The key is to guide this struggle with a class-struggle program, a revolutionary program. This is the fundamental lesson to be drawn from the fight against imposition of tuition at Mexico's National University (UNAM) in 1999-2000.

With more than 270,000 students, UNAM is the biggest university in Latin America. In early 1999 it announced the imposition of outrageous tuition charges, after years in which tuition had been virtually non-existent. The purpose of imposing tuition in the universities has nothing to do with the supposed “academic excellence” which the bourgeoisie loves to go on about all around the world. On the contrary, as you



AP/José Luis Magaña

**Some 100,000 striking students of Mexico's National University and supporters march on 21 May 1999 in defense of free public education.**

yourself are experiencing very directly now, the objective is to drastically limit the access to education of important sectors of the population. Far from considering education a basic democratic right, the capitalist rulers of the various countries want to make it a privilege, a luxury available only to a select few.

From the beginning, UNAM students began to mobilize against this measure announced by the Mexican government. Moreover, the announcement of UNAM's tuition hike coincided with a drive to privatize the electrical sector, which would bring mass layoffs in the electrical energy industry as well as the destruction of one of Mexico's most powerful labor unions. The possibility was therefore posed of a joint struggle of workers and students against the capitalist onslaught. In light of this, we of the Grupo Internacionalista began to put forward the call for a strike by UNAM's students and workers, *together with* the electrical workers and other sectors of the working class, not only against the imposition of tuition, but

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