CUNY and the Imperialist War

By Fred Bergen and Charlie Morán

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

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

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

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

Imperialism is not a matter of confused “priorities.” “War is built into the system, no matter which of the twin capitalist parties – Democrats or Republicans – is in power in Washington. Even the tinny Greens only want to avoid a U.S. defeat in the losing imperialist war in Iraq. The IG and Internationalist Clubs at City University, in contrast, call to break with all the capitalist parties and to mobilize the workers internationally in sharp class struggle – including strikes against the war – to defeat the imperialist occupation forces who have laid waste to Afghanistan and Iraq!”

Military Recruiters and Research Out!

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

But this was far from the only link to the imperialist war machine. On the cunyphononics.com website, the administration boasts that the Center for Advanced Technology in Photonics Applications (CUNY-CAT), located at City College, received $600,000 from the Navy for “Underwater Target Detection,” $6 million from NASA (including for “imagining targets”), $14 million millions more pouring in from the “Defense” Department for a series of projects. Since killing is big business, the private sector has gotten in on the act: CUNY-CAT notes it has “partnered with” Lockheed Martin, and Northrop Grumman, some of the most notorious arms manufacturers around.

Meanwhile, military recruiters stalk the halls of CUNY, while high-school and college students’ names and addresses are fed to these vultures. Many working-class and minority students realize this is a rich man’s war: “I’m not really into going overseas with guns and fighting other people’s wars,” said Adeyefa Finch of the Bronx High School of Science.

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

Immunized, Minorities Under the Gun

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

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So the military tries to deceive us with hype. A recent report detailed students' complaints of recruiters harassing them in school hallways, setting up camp in school gymnasiums, roping up to inner-city high schools, and tricking-out SUVs, music blaring "like drug dealers." ("The Re-Militarized Zone," published in the usually reactionary New York Press, 27 June.) Recruiting is a $4 billion industry, the article reveals, "working furiously to find willing bodies to fill empty boots on the ground." The military "spent an average of $16,199 for each of its 73,733 individual recruits" in 2005, "nearly $5,000 more than what the city spent on education per student in 2004." Despite its frenzied efforts, the Pentagon is failing to recruit enough bodies for its killing machine. Some soldiers already sent to Iraq will go to any lengths to avoid going back, like twenty-year-old Jonathan Aponte from the Bronx, who paid a hit-man $500 to shoot him in the leg. "I have nightmares all the time. I hear people screaming, gunshots, explosions, and I can smell burning flesh in my dreams," he told the Daily News (July 4).

Six CUNY students who fell into the recruiters' trap have died in Iraq to date. Parents, teachers, and fellow students are furious. The mother of Hai Ming Hsu, a BMCC student who was the fifth from CUNY to die in Iraq, said, "Bush doesn't care. It's as if he killed my son himself." Nigerian immigrant student Segun F. Akintade, a City Tech student killed last February, wrote: "My son killed my son himself." Nigerian immigrant student who was the fifth from CUNY to die in Iraq will go to any lengths to avoid going back, like twenty-year-old Jonathan Aponte from the Bronx, who paid a hit-man $500 to shoot him in the leg. "I have nightmares all the time. I hear people screaming, gunshots, explosions, and I can smell burning flesh in my dreams," he told the Daily News (July 4). Despite its frenzied efforts, the Pentagon is failing to recruit enough bodies for its killing machine. Some soldiers already sent to Iraq will go to any lengths to avoid going back, like twenty-year-old Jonathan Aponte from the Bronx, who paid a hit-man $500 to shoot him in the leg. "I have nightmares all the time. I hear people screaming, gunshots, explosions, and I can smell burning flesh in my dreams," he told the Daily News (July 4).

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Hundreds Protest NYU Republicans’ Racist “Illegal Immigrant” Hunt

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

The NYU event was only the latest chapter in a nationwide campaign by campus right-wingers. It started at North Texas University, where a number have been shot and killed. The current crop of junior “Minute-Klan” types like those who played a role in the South African apartheid army come as a shock to many people, not least to New Yorkers who defied the slave-labor Taylor Law.

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

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

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

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

We need to mobilize a stronger power to defeat these attacks, which are coming from the very top, from both the Republicans and the Democrats. That means joining with the power of the working class to drive out the Minutemen. Because this is a question of power. The Minutemen are part of the attack on immigrants that has brought large-scale raids by the ICE immigration cops – “la migra” – all over the country.

Our differences with these groups begin with the fact that we stand for the defeat of the imperialists and their war, and link the struggle for civil rights to a real program for socialist revolution by the international working class. This is the only way to defeat the racist program of the working class, from the streets and subways of NYC to the barricades of Oaxaca, Mexico. Join us!

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Internationalist Group carried signs calling for “Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants.” “Mobilize NYC Labor to Defend Immigrant Workers” and “Sweep Racist Vigilantes Out of the Streets!” A number of de- monstrators joined us in chanting “Racist vigilantes out of New York!” and “Racists out!” We distributed leaflets highlighting the struggle for unionization by immi- grant workers in Brooklyn. The need to bring the power of the working class to bear is key. The fact that the racist scam is raising their heads today is a reflec- tion of the defeat last year of the drawn-out strike of graduate students at NYU by the vicious union-busting of univer- sity president John Sexton. A solid vic- tory by campus unions acting together would put Sexton’s auxiliaries on the run. The sinister “game” by these right- wing xenophobes is not some kind of “Animal House” antics of a bunch of luma- ntic fringe morons. These are Ivy League careerists like those in the mid-1980s who destroyed a shantytown at Dartmouth that was protesting university complicity with apartheid slavers in South Africa. Some graduated to become operatives in the Republican Party (“dirty tricks” depart- ment, like Reaganite Lee Atwater who or- chestrated campaigns to intimidate black and Latino voters at the polls. Others went on to run imperialist war from the corri- dors of the Pentagon, design police-state repression by the “Justice” Department and plan the destruction of social welfare programs at the Heritage Foundation. But they don’t have to be Republicans: the Democrats have supported every one of these vicious attacks, while Democratic president Bill Clinton pushed through the 1996 immigration “control” act.

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

On April 9, a month and a half after holding their grotesque “immigrant hunt,” the College Republicans at NYU sponsored a talk by a leader of the xenophobic “Min- uteman” vigilantes. For report on the protest against this racist provocation, see The Internationalist No. 26 (July 2007). We point below the speech at the protest rally given by our comrade which was greeted enthu- siastically by the crowd.

My name is Erica Dreves and I am a stu- dent at City College and a member of the Internationalist Club. Together with the Inter- nationalist Group we’ve been working to bring out students from several CUNY campuses today along with workers from key unions and immigrant organizations in the city. Let’s be clear: the “Minutemen” are not some kind of debating society. They are vi- lent racist vigilantes who work hand in hand with the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations and other fascists. At Columbia University last October one of these racist thugs kicked a student protestor in the head with a steel- toed boot. The Internationalists joined many others to protest the Minuteman provocation at Columbia, where protestors stood up to this racist violence and succeeded in shutting down the Minuteman provocation. We must defend all the Columbia protestors against administration reprisals.

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Gay Rights and Socialist Revolution

by Aubeen Lopez and Abram Negrete

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

War-Mongers and Gay-Bashers

It’s no accident that the biggest war-mongers in the media also jump to whip up anti-gay hysteria, as in the media frenzy over the so-called “Lesbian 7,” young black women from Newark tried for felony assault and gang assault after a confrontation with a man who accosted them in Greenwich Village. A couple years back, a New York teenager who was accosted at a bus stop and then mortally wounded when she identified herself as a lesbian, was described as a suspect in a crime against one man, ex- tended to whip up homophobia, as the New York Post (April 12) ranted about the “Attack of the Killer Lesbians” and the “seething sapphic sepsis” of “bloodthirsty young lesbians,” while the Daily News (April 19) called them a “lesbian wolf pack.”

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

The implications of O’Reilly’s soon went south as the cops’ own gang investigation units discounted the claims. O’Reilly had probably never heard that the air that he had “overstated the extent of gay gangs in the Washington unit,” but then hastened to call the seven women from Newark a “pack of lesbians.” Once again, racist vocabulary and homophobia spewed from spin doctors noto- rioulslys for beating the war drums over in- vented “WMD” in Iraq.

Ludicrous as these professional liars seem, their smears are no joke but an incite- ment to repression and lynch mobs. The same type of war on terror that escalated racist police violence like the NYPD murder of Sean Bell encourages storm trooper incidents like the July 2006 SWAT team raid on a gay gym in New Orleans, where cops “bullied, terrorized and humiliated” pa- trons, many of them elderly, forcing them to lie handcuffed on the floor in police cars “back to back,” as the LACLR (July 6, 2006) is it. A stretch to link the war in Iraq and government- and media- incited bigotry to hegemony, but it’s truly the same crowd. We may read the “Anti-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Violence” report (2007 edition) put out by the liberal National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) and read a sharp rise in such violence in 2005-06, noting the “clear cultural and political factors that contribute to this violence, including: “the all-out assault on lesbian and gay relationships through anti-same-sex marriage initiatives across the country and at the federal level, the reaction of the religious and political right to the Supreme Court’s striking down of sodomy laws, and religious backlash to the high visibility of LGBT people in popu- lar culture.”

The Nuclear Family and Homosexual Oppression

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

Thus the enforcement of the family was (and remains) crucial to the capitalist sys- tem as a whole. The capitalist, in order to make sure the heir being produced was his and not the mailman’s, enforced monogamy; and women, with the institution of marriage, became the sole “property” of men. Ensuring the economic value of women in produc- ing heirs for the capitalists and workers for the factories required bans, prejudices and superstitions against sexual activity outside of marriage and procreation. The bourgeois family gave rise to what histori- ans have called the institutionalization of heterosexuality, including categorizing ho- mosexuality as a “unnatural” Sodomy bans were made into laws punishing a “type” of person who committed such acts. Many writers over the past decades have dis- cussed this process from the new-fashion- able Michel Foucault to John Boswell’s es- say “Revolutions, Universals and Sexual Categories” in Martin Duberman et al., Hid- den From History (1989).

As those who practiced same-sex rela-

tions were being demonized and drove to the fringes of society, a movement champion- ing their rights began to emerge. Emerg- ing in late 19th-century Germany, where liberal labor movement was growing, it de- manded the abolition of anti-homosexual laws like Germany’s infamous Paragraph 175, which criminalized sex between men and was only abolished in 1994. Among its leaders were Karl Maria Kertbeny, who coined the term homosexual, and Magnus Hirschfeld, who later founded the first homosexual rights organization, the Scientific Humani- tarian Committee. Socialists such as the gay British poet Edward Carpenter, German So- ciologist Georg Simmel, Socialist Party leader August Bebel (who had been a close friend of Karl Marx) and others were among the most vocal op- ponents of bourgeois campaigns against homosexuality. A cause célèbre was the no- torious 1895 trial and imprisonment of the Irish playwright Oscar Wilde. While serving a prison sentence that broke his health, Wilde—who also considered himself a socialist—wrote his famous poem “The Ballad of Read- ing Gaol,” portraying the violence and degrada- tion imposed by the jails of “civilized” British capitalism.

Bolshevism vs. Stalinism

It was the October 1917 Revolution in Russia that opened a new historical chapter, in which socialists and lesbians fought to their feet those persecuted under capitalism. Led by the Bol- scheviki Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, the new Soviet state immediately abolished the turist empire’s laws against homosexual- ity. This went hand in hand with measures towards women’s emancipation unequalled in any capitalist country, as the Bolsheviks sought to lay the material basis for overcom- ing the oppressive nuclear family.

While some anti-communist gay histo- rians have claimed otherwise, the Bolshe- viki’s deep institutionalization of homosexuality was not an incidental by-product of broader legal reforms, but a conscious act of state policy, as David F. Greenberg noted in his book, The Construction of Homosexuality [1988]. This is underlined by official Soviet declarations of “the absolute noninterfer- ence of the state and society into sexual matters” except where there is “force or du- rass,” as stated by the head of the Moscow Institute for Social Hygiene. The latter also wrote in 1923 that “those who are of the opposite sex and various other forms of sexual gratifica- tion set forth in European legislation as of- fense against public morality are treated by Soviet legislation exactly as is so called ‘natural intercourse.’”

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

Key figures of the Harlem Renaissance who were drawn to the liberating message of the Russian Revolution, like Langston Hughes and Claude McKay, were also in- volved in Harlem’s lively gay cultural scene, discussed in works like A.B. Chrisya Schwartz’s Gay Voices of the Harlem Renaiss- ance (2003) and the films Looking for Langston (1988) and Brother to Brother (2004). Important campaigns for gay rights came out of a number of Communist parties, such as Harry Hay, founder of the first gay rights group in the United States, the Mattachine So- ciety, later followed by the courageous les- bian rights pioneers of the Daughters of Bilitis. Witch hunts against “commies” of- ten combined with anti-gay hysteria. Sounding like the “lavender scare,” whose sup- posed moral weakness was deemed a threat to national security.

While the Bolsheviki Revolution was a beacon for freedom struggles around the world, Russia’s poverty and economic back- wardness, compounded by years of war, en- cased it under a reactionary Stalinist bureau- cracy, later followed by the courageous les- bian rights pioneers of the Daughters of Bilitis. Witch hunts against “commies” of- ten combined with anti-gay hysteria. Sounding like the “lavender scare,” whose sup- posed moral weakness was deemed a threat to national security.

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oppression, no matter where it appears,” react to every manifestation of tyranny and discrimination, but scholarship per se’ (Professor Joseph Massad wrote: “What is at stake here”). What is at stake here is the New Left conception each sector of the bourgeoisie, not the elementary right to free abortion on demand, which anti-woman reactionaries have been trying to overturn ever since.

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

Echoing the black power slogan (first launched by activists fed up with Martin Luther King-style pacifism), that of “gay power” was coined by activists shaped by the New Left conception each sector of the oppressed was responsible for fighting its own oppression. In contrast, Marxists seek to build a genuine revolutionary party that, as Lenin put it in What Is To Be Done? (1902), acts as a “tribune of the people... able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears,” notwithstanding the fact that Stonewall was an all-out street battle lasting four days. Hundreds of people, many of them young black and Puerto Rican gays, repeatedly drove the cops to retreat, using rocks, cobbled stones, bricks, bottles, even Molotov cocktails.

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by Erica Torres

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

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

So who are they? Behind the slogans of the horrors of Guantanamo, the campaign against the Iraqi people and the trampling of civil liberties "at home" have been brought by the Democrats and Republicans. The Democratic Party voted for the war, the Patriot Act and additional funding to keep the blood flowing in Iraq. And the Democrats, with their presidential hopeful, John Kerry, called for more troops in order to create the stability that is, of a superficial struggle against war in words, perform the greatest service for imperialism. As he explains in the same article, "The principal force against war is the proletariat, the working class. Today the International Group/League for the Fourth International is fighting for workers strikes against the war and "not-caring" (workers' refusal to ship or handle) war material for the U.S. in Iraq and occupation. This is part of the struggle to defeat the U.S. imperialist war, which goes together with the oppression, poverty, police brutality and racism that the multiethnic working class faces at the hands of this system. CLNY students can play an important role in this struggle. As sons and daughters of the working class (and often workers ourselves) who are at the biggest urban public university in the country, in the heart of the financial capital of imperialism, we have a lot to contribute to a real struggle against war and oppression, bringing the Trotskyist program into student protests and antiwar events, helping spread the call for workers strikes against the war, and above all winning new forces to the cause of international socialist revolution. Showing the difference between reformist illusions and the revolutionary program is a crucial part of that effort.

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

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

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

A study by the New York Civil Liberties Union, Criminalizing the Classroom (March 2007) connects police brutality on the streets with repression in the schools. Along with corporatization and privatization of public schools come the metal detectors, the stop-and-search operations, the arrests of students and teachers who take a stand in defense of their students. “War in Iraq = Racist Repression ‘At Home’” was the sign a United Federation of Teachers (UFT) member and internationalist Group supporter carried at the July 9 rally. An International Leftist distributor at the rally demanded “Cops Out of the Schools! Stop Racist Profiling!”

Among those attending the rally were students from Bushwick Community High School, where last year students and teachers protested the NY Regents Social Studies exam which told students to “state two ways British imperialism would benefit Africans”! Democratic City Councilman Charles Barron was one of the main speakers at the rally, which also maintained “support” from a black police officers’ group. Several speakers appealed to black and Latino cops to “do the right thing” and support the students. But as NYC students experience all the time, the police (black, white, Hispanic or Asian) “protect and serve” this system of racist oppression and inequality.

For the Democrats, they keep the war on Iraq running abroad while chainwalking workers, minorities and youth to capitalism here. And as long as capitalism continues, so will its offsprings, racism and police brutality. We need a revolution, a socialist revolution, to put a stop to it.

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

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

This is exactly what he is now trying to do. After the noose incident, racist attacks on Jena’s black population escalated; at the high school, a black student who went to a “white” party was beaten. On December 4, allegedly one of the most vocal and threatening campus racists got the worst of it in a campus confrontation. He was taken to the hospital but then showed up at a social event. The response of the DA and cops was to arrest six black Jena High students and charge them with attempted second-degree murder! The supposed “murder weapon” was the tennis shoes worn by what the prosecutor called “the gang of white boys.” The first target of this legal lynching was 16-year-old Mychal Bell; the other five are still awaiting trial.

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

One year before the Jena case started, the Katrina catastrophe showed that racism in Louisiana is not a local issue isolated survival of the past. It is the expression of the nation-wide capitalist system in which the lives of black people, immigrants, the poor and working-class are sacrificed to the god of profit. We urge readers and supporters of Resolution to publicize the case and the call to Free Mychal Bell—Drop all charges against the Jena 6! [Image 0x0 to 828x1224]

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

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

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

A political battle erupted at the following Delegate Assembly, on May 31, when the PSC leadership brought in a new text which sought to gut the original motion, removing the reference to the NYPD murder of Sean Bell as well as the call for union action. Outragedly, it sought to replace the demand for Mumia’s freedom with the call for “a new and fair trial”—that is, an appeal for confidence in what it called the “appropriate legal authorities.”

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

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

RESOLUTION ON MUMIAABU-JAMAL

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

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

WHEREAS, dozens of unions and labor councils around the country have come out for Jamal’s freedom, insisting that an innocent man should not pass another day in prison for his radical views; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

For decades a host of opportunist socialists have organized such “coalitions” as popular fronts, which chain the workers organizations and sectors of the oppressed to be bourgeoisie “allies.” The term popular front was coined by the followers of Joseph Stalin in the mid-1930s as the once-revolutionary Communist parties turned into vulgar reformists who do not seek to overthrow capitalist rule, only to “reform” the unreformable. As a spokesman for the American Trotskyists wrote in the 1930s: “Most significant of all is the application of the People’s Front policy to anti-war work.” Through a multitude of pacifists, the STWC gives itself a new gloss through the directly controlled American League against War and Fascism, the Stalinists aim at the creation of a ‘broad, classless, People’s Front of all those opposed to war.’ The class collaborationist character of the People’s Front policy is strikingly revealed through the Stalinist attitude in these organizations. They rule out in advance the Marxist analysis of war as necessarily resulting from the inner conflicts of capitalism and therefore genuinely opposed only by revolutionary class struggle against the capitalist order; and, in contrast, maintain that all persons, from whatever social class or group, whether or not opposed to capitalism, can ‘unite’ to stop war.”


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The Workers' Union, the Nazi extermination camps, they all paid for the threat of fascists who thought that the police could fully punish "killer cops"?!! Not without a revolution. As Karl Marx noted in drawing the lessons of the French Revolution, there is nothing else someone who talks about the police and fascist "alternative" to the Democrats. To unite with the likes of Buchanan, SALT intends to fashion its "broad" "anti-corporate" "alternative" to the Democrats. If the cops fail to "do their job," the police are the arm of the fascist state, and their job, and after before September 11, has been to keep the "peace" of racist terror. The Civil War in France

Elvira Arellano, the undocumented immigrant workers living in the country. Just recently, Elvira Arellano, the undocumented immigrant worker turned activist who sought refuge inside Iglesia del Hogar church for a year, was arrested in Los Angeles on August 19, by the utterly racist LAPD. Later. was exiled to Europe and was warned never to come back. In 1978 the military junta declared him dead in one of the official Chilean newspapers, thus making him a stateless person. After trying his luck in different countries of Europe, Cuba and Mexico, in 1984 he crossed the U.S. border and established himself in one of the poorest sections of South Bronx, N.Y. In 1987, Victor along with his com companion Nieves Ayres, both ex-political pris oners, opened up the community center Víctor y sus amigos. The community center Víctor and his supporters have chanted for years: "Hands off Victor Toro! Stop the Deportations!"

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ToroVictor Toro

Hands Off Victor Toro!
Stop the Deportations!

On July 6, immigrant rights activist Victor Toro was arrested by the U.S. Border Patrol. Toro, who is widely known for his work in the South Bronx, was detained with other undocumented immigrants during a "sweep" (immigration police) sweep of an Amtrak train at Rochester, NY, and later transferred to a detention center in Auburn. Family, friends and supporters were able to post the $5,000 bond demanded by the feds, but he now faces deportation. The Internationalist Group/League for the Fourth International, in conjunction with the Greenwich Peace Action Center (IAC) periodically held anti-war demonstrations. In Boston, the WWP/ IAC have joined with some priests and local bourgeois politicians in the Rosa Parks Bu-

...
Down with the Racist Witch Hunt at CCNY!
Defend the Morales/Shakur Center!

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

Is it any coincidence that in the midst of massive outrage over the NYPD murder of Sean Bell, the racist Daily News tries to whip up a frenzy over a student center that has existed for 17 years and is named after the courageous black militant they lingly call a “terrorist” and “cop-killer”? Of course not! But this cynical ploy will not work. Like the millions of working-class, black, Latino and immigrant people who keep this city running, CUNY students will not be intimidated or cowed into silence in the face of murderous cops, imperialist wars or crude attempts at censorship. We will not forget Sean Bell. Assata is still there.

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

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

Hands Off the Morales/Shakur Center!
Assata Yes, Daily News Dictatorship Never!
Defeat U.S. Imperialism and Its Witch-Hunting

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

Those that have been targeted for a witch hunt are those who make this city run, we will not be cowed, intimidated or censored into silence by latter-day McCarthyites.

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

“La lucha obrera no tiene frontera”
(Workers Struggle Has No Borders)
Principal Purged in Censorship Frenzy

An outrageous campaign of censorship, smears and “guilt” by association fundamentally misrepresents the struggles of the summer of August of Debbie Almontaser, principal of the Khalil Gibran Academy, a new middle school which the New York Department of Education described as “The first to focus on Arab American youth.”

On August 26, the New York Post announced as the first to focus on Arab American youth as the first to focus on Arab American youth. The story included a photo showing students of Prepa 5, who were getting ready to join a march, when they were left at the gate wondering what had happened. What happened was that the students of Prepa 5, along with all this, there was a marked

Mexico...

Visit the League for the Fourth International/Internationalist Group on the Internet

http://www.internationalist.org

Debbie Almontaser

The operation was a complete success, and later the students of both schools joined the march together, while the porros were left at the front gate wondering what had happened.

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

We understand that our place is in the struggle of the working class, which is the class with the most stake in defending and extending public education. We learned – and continue to learn – from books, but also in the struggles of the real world, trying to gain action and the active role of the workers with the lessons of decades of class struggle, a number of which we were able to mobilize.

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

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Censorship Frenzy

That evening there were reports in the school to the capital, in San Salvador Atenco. In the scenes were repeated much closer to the university a few blocks away, during a strike called for October 1. That day, the encampment of the Oaxaca teachers outside the national Senate. Some of these students later went with us to the Electrical Workers’ Union – and continue to learn – from books, but also in the struggles of the real world, trying to gain action and the active role of the workers with the lessons of decades of class struggle, that are still being distilled in the program of the National Action Party (PAN), today the porros gang serves the politicians of the PRI (which controls the government of the capital city) and the PRI equally. As we had in the past, the GI insisted on the massive mobilization of students, workers, and teachers to throw the porros out of the schools.

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

We understand that our place is in the struggle of the working class, which is the class with the most stake in defending and extending public education. We learned – and continue to learn – from books, but also in the struggles of the real world, trying to gain action and the active role of the workers with the lessons of decades of class struggle, that are still being distilled in the program of the National Action Party (PAN), today the porros gang serves the politicians of the PRI (which controls the government of the capital city) and the PRI equally. As we had in the past, the GI insisted on the massive mobilization of students, workers, and teachers to throw the porros out of the schools.

Censorship Frenzy

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El Internacionalista

Imperialism! For International Socialist Revolution!

Grupo Internacionalista banner at March 27 march says: “From Mexico to the U.S.: Defeat Yankee insistence on the necessity of joint worker-

By Camila, Julio, Miranda and Samuel

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

Our committee was formed in solidarity with the Grupo Internacionalista (GI), Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International. It is the fruit of an effort that began a number of years ago. Starting in 2004, the GI established contact with a group of left-wing students in the Emiliano Zapata Collective (CEZ) of the CCH-Sur, a small collective born after the great UNAM strike of 1999-2000. This group, like many others, was inspired by the Zapatista uprising that had shaken Mexico since 1994. The group’s activities were centered on talks about Zapatismo and Guevarism (which supports guerrilla warfare as practiced by Che Guevara), with a touch of Marxism, but fundamentally it did not go beyond the limits of middle-class “student power” politics. After gaining a few sympathizers on campus, the small campus office had borne the signboard was of the CEZ was converted into the GI office at the school. A strong point of the GI’s work was its insistence on the necessity of joint worker-student actions. This was shown in the struggle against the “porros,” thugs backed by the administration and the government. After the Federal Preventive Police (PFP) broke the student strike of 1999-2000 that had held out for ten months at UNAM, university authorities and the bourgeois government were in a rage. Even though they had sent hundreds of strikers to prison, they were unable to impose the tuition fees that would have made it even harder for working-class students to get a university education. So once “normalcy” had been reestablished, they began a campaign of persecution against student activists with summary judgments before the university tribunal, and with increasing frequency, violent thug provocations.

In the preparatory schools and some college campuses, the “porros” gangs were revived with heavy infusions of resources, under the constant protection of the university authorities, the police chiefs and Mexico City district governments. Beginning at Preparatory School 8, and later at CCH-Sur, our comrades faced direct gangster attacks. In response, the Grupo Internacionalista sought to put into practice a policy quite different from the individual “anti-porro hunts” undertaken by the anarchists, or petitions to the authorities for the porros’ expulsion. The GI began to appeal to workers’ assemblies to come out against the porros, who represented a serious threat not only to student activists, but to the workers themselves. Little by little the GI gained the support of the workers, while organizing mass meetings that united students, teachers and workers to drive out the porros together.

At CCH-Sur, the porro gang known as GES was a serious threat to every left group on campus. The gangs of thugs organized by the state began threatening some of the anarchists. Even when the anarchists proposed “direct action,” these actions did not go beyond inconclusive scuffles. The Grupo Internacionalista, on the other hand, proposed to intervene in workers’ assemblies to call on them to form defense guards of workers, students and teachers. The anarchists argued that the workers were in the pocket of the union bureaucracy and that nothing could be gained by appealing to them. We began to go to the workers’ assemblies, and gradually we gained a hearing. Meanwhile, the anarchists identified those responsible for attacking their comrades, but every time they uncovered one of the porros, they appealed to the administration to formally charge them so that they could be suspended or expelled.

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

SICARTSA, Atenco, Oaxaca

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

September 2007

Mexico:
Internationalists Fight for Worker-Student Action

De Irak a México y en EE.UU.
DERROTAR AL IMPERIALISMO YANQUI
REVOLUCIÓN SOCIALISTA INTERNACIONAL
Grupo Internacionalista/Liga por la IV Internacional

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