

Democrats, Republicans: Pro-War, Anti-Worker, Anti-Immigrant



Sue Kelllogg

Internationalist Group's red banners on August 29, counterposed to pro-Democratic Party politics of "antiwar" march.

No to Bush, Kerry, Nader: For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Why We Need a Revolution

The following article is based on a forum held by the Internationalist Club at Hunter College (City University of New York) on September 30.

The presidential election race comes down to who would be the toughest boss of the world's biggest Murder Inc., U.S. imperialism. The carefully scripted "debates" are dominated by the question of who has a better "plan" for subjugating Iraq. George W. Bush pledges to "stay the course" in Iraq, while John Kerry stresses: "Nobody's talking about leaving... we're talking about winning and getting the job done right." In answer to Kerry's insistent call for tens of thousands more troops, Bush played to fears of a renewed military draft.

The imperialists are systematically terror-bombing Falluja and the impoverished Shiite areas of Baghdad, and using A-130 gunships to kill anything that moves. Their purpose is to cause large numbers of civilian casualties, seeking to force an end to Iraqi resistance. Yet resistance to the colonial occupation has continued. Every blow against imperialist aggression should be greeted by the workers and poor here "at home." As fighters for international socialist revolution, we call to defeat the imperialists and defend Iraq, as part of our program of international socialist revolution.

The following article is based on a forum held by the Internationalist Club at Hunter College (City University of New York) on September 30.

Aubeen Lopez (Revolutionary Reconstruction Club, Bronx Community College): The "debate" between Republican George Bush and Democrat John Kerry really is more like a joint press conference. Both parties represent the interests of the same class, and

they're trying to outdo each other on the same issues. Both pledge to escalate the "war on terror," which is really U.S. imperialism's terrorist drive for world conquest. Both call for tighter Homeland Security repression "at home." The USA Patriot Act was passed by both parties, in line with plans put in place long before 9/11. It's a system of keeping the working class down.

Everyone knows Bush lied about "WMD" (weapons of mass destruction) in Iraq. Meanwhile Kerry and the Democrats call

to expand the size of the military, and for putting 40,000 more U.S. troops in Iraq. So military recruiters on our campuses will push even harder to send working-class students to fight and become torturers in Iraq and around the world. If they can't get enough cannon fodder that way, they will reinstate the draft.

The "get out the vote" movements on the campuses pretend the Democrats represent something different, but we're here to say that Bush and the Democrats both represent capitalism. This means imperialism

and war; it means oppression and poverty, it means racism and the oppression of women.

At Bronx Community College we've been active against these military recruiters who send working-class students, particularly black, Latino and immigrant students, to war in the fight for profits for the ruling class, killing our class brothers and sisters abroad. We have held protests and published articles in the school newspaper as well as *Revolution* continued on page 2

Abu Ghraib 101 at BMCC?

"Fatherland Security" Hits CUNY

by **Abram Negrete**

A sinister "Homeland Security" course with links to the Guantánamo prison camp, death squads, and the Israeli Mossad spy agency is in the works at CUNY's Borough of Manhattan Community College. Presented to BMCC's Faculty Council last May, the course is the keystone of a proposed Security Management Certificate Program.

Originally scheduled to begin in Fall 2004, the program will begin soon but is still "being developed," according to officials at the lower Manhattan school. Now is the time for militant protests to stop it cold!

The BMCC program, which includes study of "interrogation techniques" and "technology for surveillance," is part of a trend promoted by the Task Force on Homeland Security of the American Association of Community Colleges. Among the twenty-one members of this task force, CUNY is represented by BMCC President Antonio

Perez. A look at its activities, as well as the BMCC program's advisory board, exposes a veritable rogue's gallery of repression.

Front and center is the Guantánamo connection:

The task force boasts of the upstate Homeland Security Management Institute opened last December: "The institute is directed by Col. John J. Perrone Jr., [who] previously served as commander of the Joint Detainee Operations Group...in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba" (*Community College Times* special Homeland Security issue, 28 September). Perrone was the "first employee" of the institute, which is to be "a national model for homeland security training," "extending its reach through the country's network of 1,100 community colleges," proclaims its host campus (*Monroe Community College News* [Rochester, New York], 9 December 2003).

Perrone "can speak to Home Land Security issues from a unique perspective: he

has been on the front lines," says a puff piece on the colonel. That's one way of describing the former Camp Commandant at the infamous prison camp for "suspected terrorists."

Then there is the union-busting connection:

The "BMCC Advisory Board - Security Management Committee" for the proposed certificate program includes representatives of companies like OCS Security, Guard Screen and Hill & Associates, whose activities include "confidential investigations and business intelligence." Also represented is the American Society for Industrial Security, whose affiliates include firms specializing in strikebreaking and union-busting: one advertises "protection of over a hundred businesses during labor disputes and organization drives"; another notes that when "a strike is taking place," picket-

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Democrats, Republicans...

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and *The Internationalist*.

What is a real answer to Democrat-Republican “lesser of two evils” politics? Here at Hunter College, Ralph Nader is pushed as a supposed answer. But if you check it out you’ll see Nader is *not* an alternative. At CUNY a huge number of students are immigrants or sons and daughters of immigrants. As internationalists, we fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. Yet on this key issue Nader is actually *to the right* of Democrats with their bogus talk about “amnesty” for some so-called “illegal aliens.” Here is what Nader said: “This is very difficult because you are giving a green light to cross the border illegally. I don’t like the idea of legalization because then the question is how do you prevent the next wave and the next?” (interview with *American Conservative* [21 June], posted on voteformader.org). With his chauvinist positions and calls to “return” to smaller-scale capitalism, Nader has been endorsed by the right-wing Reform Party.

Some groups that call themselves socialists openly back the Democrats, while here at Hunter the Nader pushers are the International Socialist Organization. They say they like Karl Marx. But what did Karl Marx have to say about supporting capitalist politicians? That we need a workers party, a party that represents the working class as opposed to *all* the bourgeois parties, which represent the interests of the ruling class.

Marx said, “Our politics must be working-class politics. The workers’ party must never be the tagtail of any bourgeois party; it must be independent and have its own policy.” This was in a speech he made to the First International, the International Workingmen’s Association, in September 1871. The following year, he and Friedrich Engels wrote: “Against the collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes” (“Resolution on the Establishment of Working-Class Parties,” September 1872). That is part of the ABC of Marxism.

In Chile under Salvador Allende, we saw what happens when leftists ally with bourgeois politicians. The working class wanted to fight for its interests and take power, but class collaboration disarmed them politically and militarily. This led to the bloody military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, a right-wing military officer who overthrew Allende in September 1973, after Allende appointed him defense minister. Allying with the bourgeoisie leads to us, the working class, being massacred, as in Chile, as in Spain and France in the ’30s.

That is why we of the Internationalist Group call for building a revolutionary party that represents the interests of the working class. We cannot tail after the capitalist parties. The Democrats are run by the same class of people who run the Republicans. You get your choice between Pepsi-Cola and Coca-

Cola: they both give money to both parties. They say, “If this guy wins, our interests will be served, and if that guy wins, our interests will be served.”

The road to defeating imperialist wars, to ending racism and poverty, is not through bourgeois elections. You can’t elect out imperialist wars like the one against Iraq; you can’t elect out racism or sexism. You can’t defeat them by a vote in ruling-class elections, but only by building our own party and fighting to take the means of production, which is owned by the property classes, into our own hands. You can only do that by building revolutionary leadership, and that is what we’re working to do here.

Abram Negrete (Hunter Internationalist Club): The way Marxists approach politics and elections is fundamentally different from what we’re taught in school and the media. We’re taught to look at politics as if it were a spectrum: you get liberal, less liberal, middle-of-the-road, conservative, as if the electorate consists of consumers being offered a range of different flavors of ice cream. In this view, if you like the freakazoid right-wing flavor, you get one option; or you can buy the current Democrat special. If you like sort-of-liberal capitalist politics with some populist sprinkles on top, then you get the Nader flavor.

Marxists, in contrast, look at politics from the viewpoint of class. What is the social class whose interests are represented by the given parties and politicians? Does this party or politician represent the social class which owns and runs a capitalist society like the United States? Or does the given party or spokesperson represent the working class, the exploited and oppressed?

This is a very fundamental difference from the viewpoint put forward by virtually every organization claiming to speak in the name of working-class people, of students, oppressed minorities, etc. What we’re told is, “You really should vote for Kerry because on the spectrum of horribleness, he is – supposedly – slightly less horrible”; or “You should vote for Nader, because if you compare a laundry list of positions, Nader is somewhat more liberal than the current Democratic candidate – if we ignore immigration.”

The starting point for Marxists is the struggle to organize the vast majority of the



Nicole Benjivno/New York Times

Dress rehearsal for internal war: NYC rulers screamed about “anarchist threat” as they prepared to carry out mass arrests of more than 1,800 protesters on the flimsiest of trumped-up charges. Drop all charges against RNC protesters!

“Guantánamo on the Hudson”

by Zander Scott

Zander, a student at Hunter College, was among those arrested at antiwar protests during the Republican National Convention in New York; excerpts from his account are printed below. See the front-page article in this issue of Revolution for our view of the struggle against all the capitalist parties and their increasing police-state measures.

Upon arriving the first thing I noticed was that there seemed to be more cops than protesters and the cops were prepared for some sort of battle. The captain got on a loudspeaker and announced: “This is an un-permitted march and as long as you follow New York laws you will go unbothered. However, if you step out of line you will be subject to arrest.” With that the march proceeded to begin. Ironically, I moved in with a group of senior citizens from the Sierra Club, thinking it would decrease my chances of getting arrested.

The march moved slowly, waiting for the walk sign before crossing the street. At the end of the first block the police stopped the movement, and when the entire block was filled up with protesters they wrapped the block up in orange netting and announced: “You are all under arrest.” This, I can say, seemed suspiciously like a set-up. One by one they handcuffed and loaded some 500 of us, old and young, on a bus

to go to their mass arrest processing center on Pier 57, dubbed “Guantánamo on the Hudson.”

There we were put in gated barbed-wire holding pens, where the process of sitting and waiting for your name to be called began. The pens didn’t have enough seats for the hundred-plus packed into each one, and the floors were dirty with oil slicks. It was an intimidating place, and if it wasn’t for the good company it would have been miserable. From there we went to central booking for more sitting and waiting until we would get to meet with a lawyer and appear in front of a judge. My friend, arrested at the same time, was held for 48 hours.

They never tell you the whole time what you’re being charged with, and they don’t give you an arrest number, so you are unable to be located from the outside – kind of creepy. Two guys in my cell block who were also arrested with me chose to not give their names, and they were charged with possession of a weapon, menacing the police, graffiti, and selling of noxious chemicals, all of which were completely unfounded.

I hope this account gives you all a strong sense of the absurdity that took place in NYC that week. Thanks to all my friends and family for your support. All in all, after the anger and disgust, I can say I was proud to be “jailed for justice.”

world’s population, which consists of those exploited and oppressed by the capitalist system, and to organize them around the power of the social class upon whose labor this system rests: the working class. Our policy towards a given election or party starts out by asking: What advances the struggle for the revolutionary independence of the working class, and what stands in the way of that struggle for political independence?

This is the standpoint the founders of modern socialism, Marx and Engels, put forward in the latter half of the 19th century, as Aubeen noted. To fight for its own interests, they said, the working class needs its own party. It cannot support, and it must oppose, every single party which represents the interests of another class. Because supporting any capitalist party or candidate means the working class subordinating itself to its own enemy.

Suppose you’re working at a deli down the street, or you’re a waitress or a waiter, or if you work at Wal-Mart and you’re trying to organize to defend yourself against the boss. You’re not going to vote for your boss to be your union steward – if you’re lucky enough to even have a union. You’re not going to vote for your boss to represent you. Yet we

are told to vote for the organized representatives of the boss class to continue running not only the workplace but the whole country, and as much of the planet as they can sink their claws into.

When we talk about a revolutionary workers party, we’re talking about an independent party that stands for the interests of the working class and all the oppressed. These interests are fundamentally, irreconcilably opposed to those of the capitalist class. For that reason, such a party must be revolutionary. It must approach each struggle from the standpoint of the real way to defeat every form of oppression, from colonial occupation abroad to racial oppression “at home”: through a revolution which takes political power and property away from the tiny minority, the capitalist class, and puts it in the hands of the working class.

Such a party cannot start from the question of how many votes it would get in elections whose purpose, in Marx’s phrase, is to choose which exploiter of the working people will run things for the next four years. A large part of the working class here in New York City cannot even vote, since they are undocumented immigrants, who by definition are discriminated against and denied voting

Revolution

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and other rights.

A revolutionary party will not base itself on whether you can vote, if you have a piece of paper saying you are “legal” or “illegal,” but on who has social power. Those who can have the most decisive social power are the working class. The subways we took to get here tonight are operated by a multi-racial, multiethnic workforce which, if it had a revolutionary leadership, could shut the city down in the fight against racism, against imperialist war. Yet the current labor leadership knifes strikes, leaves organizing drives starved for cash, while bowing to the bosses’ rules and pouring millions into the bosses’ Democratic Party, no matter how many times in kicks them in the teeth. What is lacking is the revolutionary leadership commensurate with the real needs and interests of the working class and oppressed.

Many people are so frightened and disgusted by Bush, whom they compare unfavorably to the lower simians, that they would vote for a fire hydrant instead. Yet even today’s *New York Times* says “on many foreign policy subjects, from relations with China to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, [Bush and Kerry] differ only slightly, if at all.” The same article stresses that both candidates stand for continued colonial occupation of Iraq. Kerry rattles off a list of generals and admirals who support him, including architects of the first Desert Slaughter unleashed by George Bush the First. Meanwhile Kerry criticizes Bush for not cracking down enough on North Korea – a bureaucratically deformed workers state which we defend against imperialism – and another member of Bush’s “axis of evil” list, Iran.

A real workers party must be an internationalist party. In the present war of U.S. imperialism, we have a very different viewpoint from that expressed in the huge demonstrations against the Republican National Convention. Overwhelmingly, they sought to elect John Kerry, who advertises himself as the stronger, better commander-in-chief of the capitalist war machine. Kerry says the problem with Bush is, he’s not an effective enough leader of American imperialism.

What we are saying is not that we want everybody to go home and be friends. We are saying: we take a side *against* the U.S. imperialists, for their *defeat*, and for the formation of a revolutionary leadership, not just here but in Iraq and around the world. That is what we mean when we talk about reforging the world revolutionary party founded by Leon Trotsky, the Fourth International.

What about Latin America? We have a statement here protesting repression against university students in the mining center of Bolivia, the city of Oruro. John Kerry, who is promoted by so much of what passes for a left in this country, criticizes George Bush for “allowing” the working people of Bolivia and Ecuador to throw out the previous pro-U.S. presidents (who were replaced by others no less beholden to the imperialists). So he would have intervened militarily to crush the workers, peasants, indigenous peoples and youth of those countries? In relation to Latin America, the Democratic Party presents itself as a more effective, violent and ruthless policeman against the working people.

Political discourse has been pushed further and further to the right. An example occurred in a class I had today, when a student defined liberalism as “loving to hate America.” Against the Democrats, the Republican right pushes bigotry on “hot-button social issues” to scare up votes: against gay marriage, abortion rights. Meanwhile black voters are massively disenfranchised.

Marxists are opposed to every form of oppression. We are 100 percent opposed to every form of discriminations against gays and lesbians. So of course we are for gays and lesbians having equal rights to get married! Not that marriage is wonderful for most

“Purge Tests,” CPE:

Weapons of Mass Exclusion

By Aubeen Lopez

U.S. imperialism continues to slaughter Iraqi men, women and children in its failed attempt to stifle resistance to colonial occupation. At “home,” CUNY is under attack, by the same racist ruling class. They’re using *weapons of mass exclusion*. Seeking to resegregate the classroom, they have raised tuition, cut Tuition Assistance (TAP) and other programs, and now plan to cut back on financial aid. The purpose, and result: forcing out thousands of immigrant, minority and working-class students.

Purge tests are part of the CUNY administration’s arsenal. In 2000 they introduced the CUNY Proficiency Exam (CPE). If a student takes and fails this examination three times, he or she is booted out of school regardless of whether they have successfully completed all the courses required by their major. The CPE exclusionary sword is aimed at all of us, while cutting most sharply against students who speak English as a second language. This is one more obstacle placed in the path of immigrant students, recalling the anti-immigrant “war purge” we waged a campaign against in Fall 2001.

Even the administration’s own figures show what the CPE test is about. Take Bronx Community College. In the 2002-2003 school year, only 57 percent of BCC students required to take the CPE actually passed it. If you take into account students who failed because they were unable to take the exam, the passing rate was 49 percent. So 51 percent were not given their diploma, not allowed to graduate. (The same report records 96 percent of BCC students as “minority.” Almost half had household incomes under \$15,000 a year. Students at campuses like BCC are the targets of racism and poverty, two central features of this capitalist society.)

Yet BCC President Carolyn Williams actually cited with pride that the “BCC pass rate of 49% is fourth among all CUNY schools” (*Annual FY03 Performance Report*). After all, the highest pass rate was only a bit over half at Baruch, while at the College of Staten Island only one quarter passed!

CPE is far from the only purge-exam out there. They want to push out working-class youth long before they get near the college door. Last spring New York City’s Mayor Michael Bloomberg and his loyal lackey, schools chancellor Joel Klein, imposed a test designed to flunk thousands of third-graders. We noted:

people, but in this society you are denied all sorts of things if you are not allowed to get married. We are 100 percent for defending and extending the remaining abortion rights that women have. We are for free abortion on demand. We point out that the disenfranchising of black voters reflects the legacy of the slavery this country was built on.

What’s most crucial about these issues is to stress that if they are subordinated to the Democratic Party, the oppressed will lose. Because the guiding line for the Democratic Party is not democratic rights for the populace – it grew up as the party of the slaveowners – but defense of the property rights of the ruling class. Among the black population whose oppression has always been the axis of politics in this society, widespread illusions in the Democrats must be combated. It is not possible to fight against racism and for black liberation through supporting a party whose last president, Clinton, gloried in the racist

“This is child abuse on a grand scale. The racist city rulers have set out to ruin the lives of these primarily black, Latino and immigrant students....

“This is what the ‘No Child Left Behind Act’ is all about. The 3rd grade mass flunk out is a graphic demonstration of what a fraud this is: here is a deliberate plan to leave 15,000 children behind.” – “Forced Flunk-Outs and the Assault on Public Education” (*The Internationalist*, May-June 2004, available on line at www.internationalist.org)

Remember this when you see Kerry and Bush “debating” who is the biggest promoter of that “Leave Poor and Minority Children Behind” law.

Now the mayoral mafia has put the 5th grade on their hit list! The idea seems to be, if kids make it past the 3rd grade, stop ’em at the 5th. At the end of September the city’s Panel for Educational Policy voted to “hold back” at least 12,000 fifth graders who do not “meet standards.” The “12-to-0 vote by the panel, stacked with mayoral appointees, was no surprise,” said *Newsday* (27 September). No kidding: last March the mayor threw out three members for opposing the third-grade purge, right before the panel “voted” to approve it.

Open Admissions, No Tuition!

If kids do manage to make it to high school, purge tests are waiting for them there as well. In the late 1990s New York State started requiring students to pass five Regents tests to graduate from high school. The rate of “dropouts” – *pushouts* is the more accurate term – has gone up steadily.

Meanwhile, the high schools are undercounting the number of students really being pushed out. The official dropout figure of twenty percent would go up to 25 or 30 percent if it counted those sent to “alternative” programs (like those that give you a GED) who do not complete them. The name of this numbers game was captured by a headline in the *New York Times* (31 July 2003): “To Cut Failure Rate, Schools Shed Students.” The real failure is that of a society which does not provide education because it is run for the interests of capital. If education doesn’t generate profit, they throw it on the scrap heap!

As we pointed out in the first issue of *Revolution*:

“Lest any more proof be needed of the CUNY administration’s intentions, chancellor Matthew Goldstein – who attended City College when it was free – [said in July 2003] that if students can’t

pass the test ‘after so many attempts, they ought to be thinking about doing something else with their lives.’

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

Open admissions was won at CUNY in 1969 in a student strike started by black and Puerto Rican students and then backed by the powerful city unions. CUNY had been almost all white, but this mass struggle opened the university’s doors to oppressed minorities. Since then the CUNY system has graduated more black and Latino students than any other university in the history of the United States. It was against this gain that the administration, following the orders of its capitalist masters, instituted tuition and went after one form of access after another, eventually rolling back and wiping out open admissions.

It’s no accident that former mayor Rudolph Giuliani made a point of attacking open admissions. In his 1998 State of the City Address, this kingpin of racist repression and police-state measures (remember Amadou Diallo and Abner Louima!) proclaimed: “Open enrollment is a mistake. It should be changed.... It has created in CUNY students false expectations which the realities of life inevitably leave unfulfilled.”

In other words, the rulers want us to accept the “inevitable realities” of class and race oppression, and resign ourselves to no education. Forget about it! We fight for open admissions, no tuition, a living stipend so students can devote themselves to their studies, abolition of the capitalists’ Board of Trustees, student/teacher/worker control of the schools. And to hell with the CPE and all the other purge tests!

These attacks underline the most important fact: to win education for all, we need a socialist revolution. That is what the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at BCC fights for, together with the Internationalist Group and the Internationalist Clubs on other campuses. We fight to build a revolutionary workers party which alone can end the rule of profit and profiteers, against the Democrats, Republicans and all bourgeois politicians who enforce our oppression.

death penalty and starved welfare moms and kids. Attacks on social programs crucial to all escalated when Clinton proclaimed he put an end to welfare as we know it – except of course for huge corporations, merchants of death and agribusinesses getting billions in subsidies.

The media went wild during the RNC (Republican National Convention) protests over a supposed flood of “anarchists,” amid the sea of Kerry buttons. Of course, only a minuscule percentage of the marchers considered themselves anarchists, despite the increase in interest in anarchism among young people since the fall of the Soviet Union. One reason, frankly, is that calling yourself an anarchist doesn’t commit you to any specific program or viewpoint. I mention this because, while we militantly defend them against repression and media witch hunts, Marxists are not anarchists. We’re not political indifferentists, we don’t reject politics in general. We are for *working-class* politics. We are for the work-

ing class taking power in order to pave the way for a classless, stateless society, a socialist society.

Nor are we opposed in principle to presenting workers candidates in bourgeois elections. In fact Marjorie, who is here today, was once a revolutionary candidate for New York mayor. At certain times a revolutionary party may put forward candidates, not for the purpose of taking office – as Aubeen said, you can’t vote exploitation out of office – but as another means of presenting its own program. In this subject as in all others, our central criterion is: Does it advance the constitution of the working class as a class conscious of its own international and revolutionary tasks, or does it stand in the way of this struggle? And supporting any bourgeois party is directly counterposed to this struggle.

We are not for peace between the classes, or between the oppressed of semi-colonial

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Capitalist Nader's "Socialist" Foot Soldiers

By Moises Delgado

They chant, "Don't be a hater, Vote for Nader!" They advertise him as "the antiwar candidate" and "the only serious left-wing alternative in Election 2004." That's the claim by the main Nader support group at CUNY: the International Socialist Organization (ISO).

Antiwar? They admit he "does not call for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces" from Iraq. Left-wing? Nader "accept[ed] the right-wing, anti-immigrant Reform Party's endorsement." Alternative? He met with John Kerry to "give his advice" to the Democratic contender and hopes his candidacy will "help" the Democrats.

While proclaiming "Vote for Nader/Camejo," the ISO admits all this in their newspaper (*Socialist Worker*, 24 September). Yet it says: "The campaign of Ralph Nader and running mate Peter Camejo attempts to raise the bar on what we should expect from political candidates." These are "socialists" who sound like a patriotic civics class.

In reality, this is the *opposite* of what socialist politics stands for. Supporting capitalist candidates is what Marxists call class collaboration. Revolutionaries fight to free the workers and oppressed from illusions in bourgeois politicians of every kind.

We are often asked the differences between us and other groups that say they're leftists. This is a very clear example.

Marxists fight to build a revolutionary workers party. Only a socialist revolution can get rid of war, racism and poverty. Reformists spread illusions. In particular, they spread the illusion that capitalist politicians and the state apparatus they administer can be pressured into serving the oppressed. For the ISO today (as well as Socialist Alternative and some other groups), this means being public relations people for Ralph Nader. But Nader is an anti-immigrant millionaire who proudly states his support for capitalism. So the ISO & Co. have to engage in false advertising.

Helping Nader Pressure the Democrats

Reformism comes in many shades, but one thing all its varieties have in common is that they orbit around the Democratic Party. The Democrats are one of two parties, the Republicans are the other, through which the American ruling class runs its government. The Democratic Party generally receives the support of labor and, even though it was the slave owners' party, of most black voters.

This goes back to Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal coalition of the 1930s. Big struggles during the Great Depression made the ruling class fear a revolution like the one V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky led in Russia in 1917. With the aid of the union bureaucracy, the Democrat FDR tightened control over labor while enacting a number of social programs like unemployment compensation and Social Security.

What is crucial to understanding the collaborationist "left" in America is that its predominant ideology, liberal reformism, has been manifested through the vehicle the ruling class historically allowed it: the Democratic Party. In Europe reformist organizations enjoy a certain degree of political life through a social-democratic union bureaucracy. But in the U.S., social democrats find that reformism is a field monopolized by the Democratic Party's hold on labor. Today, reformists are upset and frightened because old-line liberalism has lost its influence in the Democratic Party.

That's where Nader comes in. He entered as a political factor when traditional liberals were losing control of the Democratic Party to Bill Clinton and his Democratic Leadership Council. This was in line with the "New World Order" proclaimed by the American ruling class

in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nader appealed to disenchanted liberals who felt abused by Clinton and Gore. He proclaimed that his goal was to pressure and push the Democrats.

Today, "Nader believes his campaign can help Kerry," as a headline in the *Seattle Times* (1 April) noted. Just look at his web site, voteformader.org. He writes: "the Democrats need to be shown in the field how to appeal to the millions of voters whom they have turned their back on" (like those who "are against abortion"!)." This will help them "defeat Bush and the Republicans" and "restore the House and/or Senate to the Democrats," Nader vows.

In the same "Dear Anybody But Bush Liberal Democrats" letter (30 March), Nader asks them to consider "how many more votes the Democratic nominee will receive" by being "pressed to appeal more forcefully to the interests of the people" and seeing the "effective modes and critiques he can pick up from the independent candidate." Of his 2000 race, he writes that "pushing Gore to more populist rhetoric allowed Gore to get many more voters."

Ask Nader's supposedly socialist cheering squad this: If Nader really opposed the Democrats, would he help them choose their ticket? In June Nader wrote to Kerry: "I want to urge you to select Senator John Edwards as your vice presidential candidate." Nader got his wish. Pro-war, pro-Patriot Act Kerry chose pro-war Edwards, who not only voted for the Patriot Act but helped design it.

Last spring, some young ISO members were perturbed at the idea of backing Nader again, as their group did last time around, in 2000. For a while the ISO couldn't make up its mind. Asking "Is Nader offering a left alternative?" it said he "gave a dying right-wing organization a breath of life" by accepting the Reform Party endorsement. It criticized his "all-too-friendly meeting" with Kerry, saying this did "a disservice to his supporters and severely undermined the case that he presents a left-wing alternative" (*Socialist Worker*, 28 May). But after some waffling, the ISO decided to tag along with Ralph again. They figured his loss of support actually gave them an opening to be the biggest Nader's Raiders on campus. If students didn't have illusions in Nader, they would try to create them.

As reformists, they actually *share* the outlook of pressuring the Democrats. In the same article, the ISO wrote that "Nader's kid-gloves treatment is letting Kerry off the hook.... Rather than push Kerry on the most important issue in U.S. [Iraq], Nader didn't pursue it" in his meeting with the Democratic nominee. What kind of heavyweight stylings would the ISO have in mind? Last April the ISO got a chance to show everyone: Kerry visited City College and the ISO unfurled a banner reading "Kerry Take A Stand: Bring the Troops Home Now." Take a stand? Kerry stands 100 percent with the American capitalist ruling class (which he is part of) whose army is occupying and killing the people of Iraq. He is for sending 40,000 *more* troops to do this dirty work. The ISO's pathetic banner showed their politics are the opposite of class opposition to imperialist politicians.

Social-Patriotism

Pressuring the imperialists to be for "peace" is the name of the game for the ISO. Last semester they circulated a petition calling on the "Members of the United States Congress" to "embrace international law" and "promote a new approach that will accelerate the movement toward peace, self-determination and security for Iraq." In other words, they asked the imperialist wolves to dress in more sheep-like clothing. When the Abu Ghraib prison torture scandal broke, the

Hunter ISO asked students to sign a call for Donald Rumsfeld to resign. This meant helping Democrats try to fool people into thinking it was the work of "one bad apple" rather than the barbaric *system* of capitalist imperialism.

Like their support to Nader, ISOers justify this as "finding ways to talk to people where they're at." In reality it means reinforcing liberal bourgeois ideology. You couldn't ask for clearer examples of what Marx and Lenin called opportunism.

Asking for capitalism to change its "priorities" is the essence of slogans raised by the ISO (and other reformists like the moribund Student Liberation Action Movement). Their all-purpose one is "Money for ___ not for war": you just fill in the blank with "jobs," "schools," "books" or whatever you think appeals most to the given crowd. This reflects the outlook of *social-patriotism*, which says murdering Iraqis is just too expensive – instead of the internationalist position for the *defeat* of the imperialists and militant *defense* of those they target for aggression.

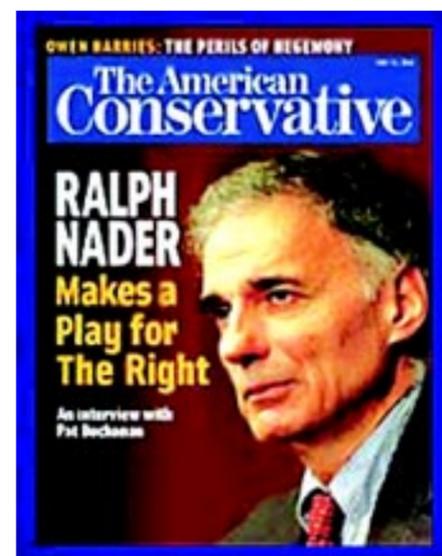
The ISO cannot be anti-imperialist because it was born of support to U.S. (and British) imperialism, going back to its guru Tony Cliff. Cliff was the social democrat who broke from Trotskyism half a century ago in order to denounce defense of North Korea, China and the Soviet Union during the imperialists' Korean War, which killed millions in a drive for counterrevolution. He justified this with a hocus-pocus theory that the USSR, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state whose destruction was the key goal of the capitalists' Cold War, was really "state capitalist."

In Cold War II during the 1980s, Cliff and his followers supported the CIA's "freedom fighters" in Afghanistan. These were the woman-killing feudalists against whom we revolutionaries said "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" When George Bush I's man Boris Yeltsin led capitalist counterrevolution to destroy the USSR, the ISO said: "Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing" (*Socialist Worker*, 31 August 1991). This is what Trotskyists call "State Department socialism." Rejoicing is what the U.S. imperialists were doing as they proclaimed the supposed "death of communism" and a U.S.-dictated New World Order born in the first Operation Desert Slaughter.

Thus it is no accident for the ISO that "their" candidate Nader wraps himself in the American flag. Last Fourth of July he wrote "The Repudiation of Patriotism by US Multinational Corporations," in which he says they should be "pledging allegiance...to the flag and Republic for which it stands." In a "Dear Conservatives" letter fishing for more support from right-wingers, he wrote: "Our country's local, state and national sovereignties are important to conservative Republicans" who want withdrawal from "autocratic systems of international governance that pull America down."

This is the context for Nader's rants against "illegal" immigration, which we discuss in the front-page article of this issue of *Revolution*. Oh yes, for slave-labor work "that Americans don't want to do," Nader is willing to have a *bracero*-type system of "work permits for people who come in and do work for short periods of time" (*Fresno Bee*, 22 October 2000). This chauvinist stance means "let" some immigrants do the most dangerous, dirty jobs, so long as they don't stay or get any rights. Against this, we fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

Nader makes clear that his "anti-corporatism" (endlessly praised by the ISO, Socialist Alternative, et al.) is just a different recipe for defending *American capitalism*. During the 2000 campaign he said, "I think big corporations are destroying capitalism"



Nader's anti-immigrant, anti-China tirades are part of "play for the right."

(CNN's Talk Back Live, 5 July 2000). Playing the populist card, he appeals to "small" capitalists' utopian dream of going back to an era where they were not so completely dominated by monopoly and finance capital. Yet, as Lenin pointed out in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), this domination is characteristic of the capitalist system in its final, decaying phase.

The outlook of xenophobic "small" capitalists feeling squeezed by the "big guys" has frequently been the fuel of *right-wing* movements, so it is not surprising or contradictory that Nader gained support from the fascistic Pat Buchanan and the Reform Party.

For Revolutionary Politics, Not the Bourgeois Electoral Circus!

The ISO and other reformists are fond of talking about an "alternative," appealing to those who would like a more "progressive" leadership of the Democratic Party. Their role is to sucker young people back into the shell game of capitalist electoral politics. For Marxists, it is not a matter of picking between ruling-class "lesser evils," but building a *revolutionary* party that tells the truth. The truth is that all bourgeois politicians are our enemies. The truth is that capitalism cannot be reformed. We need a revolution, a socialist revolution centered on the working class.

Our politics are *class* politics. We fight to organize the working class and all the oppressed. It is the international proletariat that has the social power and class interest to do away with every kind of exploitation and oppression.

Because of the *class* they represent, ruling-class politicians of every stripe are the enemies of full citizenship rights for immigrants, of a genuine fight for black liberation and women's emancipation, of the struggle to defeat U.S. imperialism. For this reason they are the enemies of young people who want to change the world instead of trying to find a place in the capitalist electoral circus as illusion-peddlers for the bourgeoisie.

* * *

The following comments on the Nader campaign were made by comrade Abram at the Hunter Internationalist Club forum on September 30.

It's unlikely that people coming to a meeting like this would vote for George Bush. Some might be thinking about voting for Kerry. But many would agree Democrats and Republicans are two heads of the same beast. It's more likely they would want to know what Marxist revolutionaries have to say about Nader. Especially here at Hunter College, where Nader is being pushed, by people who claim to be leftists, as a supposed antiwar candidate. But Nader supported the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, and on Iraq what he calls for

is – and this only after six months – a “smart withdrawal” of U.S. troops and establishment of an “international” imperialist occupation.

The fact that the U.S. has only two parties which most people consider voting for most of the time is a historical peculiarity of this country. It has a lot to do with the racial/ethnic division of the working class by the bourgeoisie and the specific history of ruling-class politics here. Most capitalist countries have a series of flavors of ruling-class candidate so you can choose who’s going to rob, cheat, lie, oppress and kill you.

But there is a whole history in the U.S. of bourgeois third parties. What we mean by *bourgeois* is parties that, in their program and the class they represent, defend the interests of the capitalist class. For decades, third parties arose as supposed alternatives to the Republicrat – Republican and Democrat – duopoly. Among them was the so-called Progressive Party of one Teddy Roosevelt, the quintessential colonialist who subjugated the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Panama, Guam.... In the ’20s there was the La Follette “Farmer-Labor” candidacy. In 1948, the “peace” candidacy of Henry Wallace, FDR’s former vice president. The Stalinists pushed Wallace like the ISO (all proportions guarded) pushes Nader today. These third parties serve to channel discontent back into the capitalist electoral system. Rather than a step towards a workers party, they are one more obstacle to building one.

On a range of positions Nader is not to the left of classic Democratic Party liberalism. What kind of supposed left-leaning candidate would be endorsed by Pat Buchanan, who thinks Hitler fascism was not so bad?

Nader states explicitly that his starting point is how best to defend the interests of the U.S., in other words of U.S. capitalism in the world today. The explicit anti-immigrant chauvinism spewed out by Nader comes from his defense of “small” capitalists against “big” ones. He even rails against giving visas to “Third World software programmers.” His program is directed *against* many of the people our program is directed towards, who are on the receiving end of racism and imperialist oppression. ■

Iraqis Resist Colonial Occupation Military Recruiters Try to Snare Students

By Aubeen Lopez

The following article is reprinted from The Communicator (11 March 2004), the student newspaper of Bronx Community College, City University of New York.

As the United States of Capitalist Oppression continues its colonial occupation of Iraq, it is met with fierce resistance. The colonial enslavers have slaughtered more than 10,000 Iraqis with their bombing and repression, but the heroic resistance of the Iraqi people continues. Over 500 U.S. and “allied” troops have been killed; more helicopters are shot down every week. For the exploited and oppressed around the world, continued Iraqi resistance is a very good thing. Our enemy is U.S. imperialism, which must be driven out of Iraq, and defeated by the world’s working people.

In the face of continued struggle against the colonial occupiers, dozens of U.S. soldiers have gone AWOL (absent without leave). At bases in the U.S., officers have fled from meetings with angry relatives of soldiers.

The U.S. finds itself in need of more recruits. As a result, the U.S. has ordered a “temporary” increase in the size of the Army, and stepped up military recruiting on college campuses and high schools throughout the U.S. The cynically named Leave No Child Behind Act demands that colleges and high schools hand over student information to military recruiters, who are calling students at home, using information supplied by school administrations. They recruit on the basis of sweet promises, promising “a better future” to thousands of minority, working-class students, who are being driven out of schools because of tuition hikes and, now, TAP cuts. They try to con and pressure students to sign on to “see the world” through the riflescopes of the imperialist army, pointed pointblank against our class brothers and sisters around the world.

“Undocumented” students are also feeling the brunt of this economic conscription to the military. They are herded off the schools and towards the battalions of capital. In 2001, while the U.S. was waging an imperialist war in Afghanistan, the rulers heightened their war against workers and minorities “at home.” CUNY more than doubled tuition for “undocumented students,” which meant purging thousands and pushing them towards birds of prey like the military recruiters. This January, 19-year-old Luis Moreno, an undocumented student from the Dominican Republic living in the Bronx, was recruited to the military immediately after graduating high school. Moreno had hoped to gain U.S. citizenship to live the “American Dream.” What he got was a body bag and an early burial.

Mayor Bloomberg and other ruling-class politicians used Moreno’s death as an opportunity for patriotic hot air, and citizenship was granted to his dead body. His mother told CNN that her “son was used as cannon fodder.” In the Bronx, many students now think about the fate of Luis Moreno when they hear the military recruiters’ phony promises.

In the fall of 2003, at Bronx Community College the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club received heightened support from students for our efforts to drive military and police recruiters off campus, after an inci-



Internationalist photo

The Revolutionary Reconstruction Club and IG are campaigning to drive military recruiters off campus.

dent in the cafeteria where recruiters insulted students who were having a discussion on the real reasons why the recruiters are here. The incident showed students the contempt military recruiters have towards those of us who expose the truth behind their sweet lies. This February in Puerto Rico, as a result of mounting opposition to the imperialist occupation of Iraq, students took over the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) building at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) Mayagüez campus and painted antiwar and anti-ROTC murals on two of the outside walls.

Most recently, our struggle to drive military and cop recruiters off the BCC campus has received extensive coverage in the Italian daily *Il Manifesto*. In accord with the Trotskyist program put forward in *The Internationalist*, *El Internacionalista* and *Revolution*, we struggle for the defeat of U.S. imperialism, the defense of Iraq and an international socialist revolution to put an end to imperialist oppression once and for all. ■

Democrats, Republicans...

continued from page 3

countries and their imperialist overlords. We are for the class war of the working class all around the world, from Iraq to Bolivia to here in New York City, a class war against imperialist war and for an end to capitalism. No choice between capitalist candidates and no capitalist election will ever solve the basic problems confronting working people. What it’s going to take is a socialist revolution. We encourage you to join us in this struggle.

There was a lively discussion at the forum, including on what a workers revolution in the U.S. would look like, and other issues.

Marjorie Stamberg: The speakers noted that the differences between Bush and Kerry are over who’s going to oppress the working class harder. I’m a teacher. I woke up this morning and saw today’s *New York Times* article that says: “The New York City Education Department has shut down dozens of sites used by dropouts” – that’s the word they use – “to prepare for the high school equivalency exam.” A lot of people didn’t notice this. They’re talking about a program called the Auxiliary High Schools which was quite important. A very large number of students in New York City drop out or cannot finish high schools within four years. Among second-language students it’s 40 percent. Their only opportunity to go on with

their education or to get into CUNY were these GED (general equivalency degree) programs. They were popular because they meant you could get your diploma, you could go back to school. So now of the 55 centers, they’ve just cut them down to 11. There were 50 centers around the city at night, and now there will be five. This means gutting the GED programs in this city. It means closing the opportunity for large numbers of young people to do go to college or do anything but serving up burgers. This is the kind of issue addressed in this pamphlet on the capitalist onslaught against public education [*Marxism and the Battle Over Education*, published by the Internationalist Group]. It’s part of the push for a two-tiered education system, with open opportunities if you’re white, rich and can pay tuition. If you’re a minority or second-language student, they’re pushing you out.

Life or death often depends on social inequities as well as politics, as we just saw with the latest hurricanes. Thousands of people died in Hurricane Ivan in Jamaica, in Hurricane Jeanne in Haiti and Grenada. Because these are very poor countries under the boot of U.S. imperialism, this is vastly more than the number of people who died in Florida during the same hurricane.

Aubeen: A question brought up Cuba, the Caribbean country that did *not* have the same catastrophe from the recent hurricanes. That’s because there was a revolution there against imperialism and capitalism, and they estab-

lished a planned economy. It makes a huge difference, even with the U.S. embargo and the increased problems after the fall of the USSR. This is despite the nationalist bureaucracy that governs Cuba, which is a bureaucratically deformed workers state; there isn’t the proletarian democracy of soviets (workers councils) that existed in the beginning of the Russian Revolution under Lenin and Trotsky. Meanwhile catastrophes have hit much of Latin America, where even one of the richer countries, Argentina, had a complete economic collapse. Capitalism means sacrificing everything for profit, the way the big drug companies had the U.S. government block AIDS medicines to millions of people in Africa. Under a workers government, life and death won’t depend on profit and how much money you have.

Leslie Marcos (president of the Hunter Internationalist Club): Someone asked how we would get rid of world hunger. A socialist revolution would take care of that problem right away. More than enough food can already be produced for everyone in the world. But under capitalism, including here in the United States, you and your family go hungry if you are poor and don’t have enough money. Socialism can only be international, you can’t have socialism in one country. An international socialist economy would easily produce and distribute enough food and organize a world effort against diseases and other crucial problems. It would create abundance. But you need a revolution to be able to do that. ■

Defend Miguel Malo!

In August 2001, Hostos Community College student leader Miguel Malo was arrested and brutally beaten by campus “peace officers.” His crime? Holding up a sign protesting cuts in bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) courses at this school that was founded to service the millions of Spanish-speaking New Yorkers. More than three years later – 38 months and counting – Miguel’s case is still mired in the courts.

Last December, a travesty of a trial ended in a mistrial, as his lawyer was systematically barred from raising Miguel’s right to free speech. Even though the charge of resisting arrest was thrown out, he still faces up to a year in jail on bogus charges of beating the campus cops who in fact beat him. Meanwhile, Miguel’s new lawyer, Lynne Stewart, is herself on trial in federal court on frame-up charges of aiding a “terrorist conspiracy.”

The next hearing in Miguel Malo’s odyssey through the nightmare of the capitalist courts is at 9:30 a.m. on November 5, at Bronx Criminal Court, 215 East 161st Street in the Bronx. We urge CUNY students, faculty and staff to attend, and to demand that all charges against Miguel Malo be dropped, now!

Bloody Repression Against Oruro Campus Takeover

Solidarity with Bolivian Student Struggle!

by Juana B.

On September 18, the Internationalist Club organized a meeting at Hunter College in solidarity with Bolivian students and workers. We showed videos of U.S.-armed government forces shooting down demonstrators in October 2003. The Hunter meeting voted to circulate a declaration on CUNY campuses protesting the current attacks on student activists at the Universidad Técnica de Oruro (UTO – Technical University of Oruro), in the heart of Bolivia's tin-mining district.

This South American country, one of the poorest in the Western Hemisphere, has seen repeated waves of repression against the workers, peasants and indigenous peoples. Last October, the army and police killed more than 80 slum dwellers, workers, peasants and youth in a failed attempt to stop mass mobilizations that led to the resignation of U.S.-backed president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada ("Goni") Extensive coverage of these events was published in The Internationalist No. 18 (October-November 2003).

Acts of repression continue today under Goni's vice president and successor, Carlos Mesa, including attempts to smash the struggle at the Oruro university. The UTO's 18,000 students, most of them from impoverished working-class families, face an administration installed by right-wing government parties who vote themselves huge salaries while willfully hiking all the costs of education. That's certainly familiar to CUNY students!

As stated in our declaration: "Authorities have decreed 'expulsions' of UTO student activists, arrested six students as well as leftist newspaper editor Javo Ferreira (the UTO students and Ferreira were later released), and have jailed Peruvian student activist César Zelada. We demand Zelada's immediate release and an end to acts of repression against the students of Oruro." Bolivian activist Juana B. wrote us the following report.

ORURO, 11 October – The struggle at the Technical University of Oruro (UTO) is not an isolated event. One year after the upsurge of October 2003, conflicts continue throughout Bolivia, as the government of Carlos Mesa together with the fake "opposition" parties drop their masks.



Indymedia Bolivia

March in support of OTU students in Oruro, Bolivia, October 7. Banner is that of the local labor federation.

This past July, Mesa held a "democratic" farce of a referendum on his policy regarding the country's natural gas, which continues to be a huge present to the imperialist companies – a key issue in last year's protests. Meanwhile, the "opposition" led by Evo Morales, despite its base among the coca-growing peasants of the Chapare region, did nothing against the latest escalation of the forcible eradication of their crops. This involved brutal military and police repression, killing one peasant and wounded dozens at the end of September.

The students of Oruro started their protest in August, sparked by the flagrant corruption and nepotism of the university authorities and right-wing faculty, as well as the high cost of registration and books. The UTO rector and administration make up to 18,000 pesos a month (US\$2,249 – an astronomical salary in Bolivia), whereas the starvation minimum wage for workers is 450 pesos (US\$55). In fact the big salaries ate up all of the university budget, leaving a deficit of 3 million pesos, so not a cent has been put into infrastructure, books, benches or the minimum conditions for students to study. They want the students to cover the deficit by paying ever higher costs of materials and registration.

The Federación Universitaria Local (Local University Federation) denounced this

situation. On September 2 the students held a militant demonstration, punctuated by the blasts of dynamite sticks [a protest tradition of the Bolivian miners] and slogans against the administration and the national government. They took over the administration building, refused to let members of the administration out, and forced the rector to resign. The march was also sponsored by the COD (Oruro Labor Federation, affiliated to the national COB union confederation) and a civic committee protesting the rise in fuel prices, demanding the resignation of the head of the national pension system, and that former president Sánchez de Lozada be tried for his crimes.

There were some clashes with right-wing students from the law and engineering schools, who sold themselves to the authorities, but a group of miners from Huanuni helped defend the student protesters and take over the campus.

A few hours later the students proclaimed a "revolutionary government of the university." They voted to throw out the entire administration, and that the university would be run by teachers, workers and students, with the participation of the Miners Federation, the COD and the civic committee. They called for open admissions, and that the university reflect "the interests of the proletariat."

On September 21 the former rector signed

an agreement for "university reform." But the *camarillas* (cliques) of campus right-wingers reacted to defend their privileges. On October 1, they hired trained thugs who attacked student leaders and activists and threw them out of the buildings. These criminals put *compañeros* Roxana Monzón and Alexander Chino in the hospital. Then Ivone Ibarra Condarco, a handicapped activist who uses crutches, was "mysteriously" hit by a car shortly after an argument with some of the rightists.

In reality, the university crisis expresses the deep-going crisis of the whole system. The university can only be transformed in the framework of a social revolution on the national and international scale. The struggles must make an ever more solid alliance with the working class, the first step towards transforming education. Movements without leadership will not work. We must not allow the UTO struggle to be isolated, and above all, we need to join in forming the political instrument of the working class. ■

On October 11 Revolution spoke with María Lima, UTO delegate to Oruro's Central Labor Federation:

The objective of the struggle here has been to seize control of the university from the hands of the administration's cliques, who represent the interests of the ruling class within the university.

We are also fighting for universal suffrage on campus. Up until now there has been a "privileged vote," in which the vote of each member of the administration and faculty is worth the votes of 30 students. We oppose the administration's moves towards privatization, while all the costs of education go up every year. And we have proposed inversely proportional salary increases, to raise wages most for the campus workers who make the least.

The right-wing cliques want to shut the doors of the university to the people and open them to the police. For us, university autonomy means shutting the doors to the bourgeois state and opening them to the population.

"Fatherland Security" ...

continued from page 1

ers "can be a true hindrance to company productivity".

There is the SAS/Northern Ireland and Iraq connection:

William J. Daly, Senior Vice President also sits on the Security Management Committee for the BMCC course, representing Control Risks Group, Inc. The Center for Public Integrity notes that this company was a pioneer in "military privatization" in the 1970s, hiring officers from Britain's deadly Special Air Services (SAS). "The SAS is an assassination squad, like the South American death squads," notes Raymond Murray in his 1998 book *State Violence: Northern Island 1969-1997*. The agency ran a covert war in the 1960s against leftists in North Yemen, and carried out innumerable other murderous actions in the service of imperialism. Today, Control Risks, like the American Kroll & Associates, carries out "security" operations in Iraq ("Ex-SAS Flock to Iraq," London *Telegraph*, 12 October 2003).

Most sinister of all is the Mossad/death squad connection:

The BMCC course advisory board includes another company whose name spells deadly repression: International Security and Defense Systems (ISDS), an Israeli firm represented by its president, Leo Gleser. The ISDS web site says the company was "established in 1982 by highly experienced officers, former operatives of I.S.A. Israeli Security Agency, the MOSSAD and the Defence Forces." The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* (31 August) says Gleser and partner Arye Avnat "met in the early 1970s during their military service in the Haruv reconnaissance unit" and later set up ISDS, which recently hired "former Mossad department chief Yehiam Meret" and Israel's former police commissioner. Together with the CIA, the Mossad is one of the deadliest, dirtiest instruments of state terror in the world.

When Gleser attended a Homeland Security fair in Chile last year, the Chilean news magazine *Qué Pasa* (31 October 2003) ran an article titled "Ex-Mossad Men Come to Chile." It reported that the presence of this purportedly retired colonel of Israeli intelligence "captivated the attention of military

circles." His company "has become known for its services as advisor to the State Department of the U.S." – godfather of former military dictator Pinochet – and "has the authorization and sponsorship of the Israeli Defense Ministry for its projects."

Among Gleser's "projects," the article cites the following:

"Leo Gleser has some strong detractors.... One of the harshest criticisms is that in the early '80s Israeli intelligence sent him to train members of the military in Central America. During his stay there he trained the leaders of the legendary Intelligence Battalion 316, a squad operating with the Honduran Army, which human rights organizations blame for disappearing 191 persons."

In other words, this death squad – part of the CIA's reign of terror during Reagan's campaign of exterminating Central American insurgents – used techniques of "disappearing" people perfected by Israel's intelligence agencies against Palestinian Arabs, (as well as Mordechai Vanunu, who blew the whistle on Israel's huge nuclear bomb factory), and innumerable others around the world. Coverage of Gleser's training of this Honduran

death squad has also cited the 1991 exposé by Andrew and Leslie Cockburn in their book *Dangerous Liaison: The Inside Story of the US-Israeli Covert Relationship*.

In 1997, ISDS went to Mexico to provide "antiterrorist" training to a special "urban intervention" unit of the Judicial Police, a force so detested for its brutality and corruption that it was later disbanded by Mexico's president.

BMCC and "World War IV"

In the special Homeland Security issue of the AACC's *Community College Times* (28 September), BMCC President Perez writes that the attacks of September 11, 2001 were "the first salvo of what one observer has called World War IV." He goes on: "Community colleges need to be in the vanguard of those institutions helping to prepare our nation and its defenders to respond to attacks."

The proposed 30-credit BMCC security management certificate consists of ten required courses. Top of the list is the "Homeland Security" course. It features a guest speaker from the New York State Department of Homeland Security and readings from Tom Ridge's Big Brother agency. Noting that

Immigrant Restaurant Workers Fight “Inhuman Exploitation”

Students of the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club and the Internationalist Clubs at CUNY have actively supported the struggle to unionize immigrant workers, who in turn have participated in demonstrations in defense of Miguel Malo (see box page 5). We publish here the account of a woman worker who has played an important role in the unionization struggle and as a result was fired from her job.

For the last four years I have been one of the thousands of workers in New York City’s restaurants, delis and greengrocer markets. Almost all of us are immigrants, almost all undocumented, mainly from Mexico. Here in the streets of New York, there are large numbers of immigrants looking for work. When I first arrived in the United States eight years ago, I worked in a cosmetics factory in Brooklyn. There was a union there, but at the time I paid little attention to these issues. Now I’ve seen we have to organize to defend ourselves against exploitation.

Inhuman exploitation is what goes on in these restaurants. The work is extremely hard, and it doesn’t end after eight hours. Sometimes you work 16 hours in one day. The place I got stuck working was the “Burritoville” restaurant chain. It consists of twelve stores, with a total of about 150 workers.

The worst treated are the delivery guys: they have to arrive very early, wash pots and pans and then deliver the food. For ten years after the Burritoville company was founded, the delivery workers made a bit more than \$3 an hour. This was legal because they get a few lousy tips. It’s interesting that when we began the union organizing drive, the owners raised this to \$4.50 and then \$5.15, in an attempt to buy these workers’ votes.

In the main kitchen, around ten workers

have to make all the food for all twelve restaurants. Sometimes there were accidents in the kitchen, or when delivery workers fell off their bikes or got hit by cars. They have to go to the hospital or stay at home, sometimes for two weeks or more, without pay. And it’s the worker who has to pay the hospital bill. On one occasion, a worker’s arm got broken in three places and he lost the use of it forever. He didn’t want to sue the company and have to wait years in the hopes of getting compensation, so he went back to Mexico.

We knew the owners were violating even those regulations contained in the labor laws. Nobody was being paid overtime. On top of this, they were treating us like thieves. The owners made eight workers take a lie-detector test. Finally we decided enough was enough.

I realized our challenge was to change the situation, and to show who was robbing whom. The owners almost never went to the restaurants, they just took money out, reporting \$12 million in annual profits, which they made from the workers’ exploitation.

We were tired of the way they treat us. We saw you cannot trust the bosses’ “good intentions.” We got in touch with two of the guys who were forced to take the lie-detector test, and together with other workers we organized a committee to try to unionize the company. This was actually part of a series of unionization struggles among this part of New York’s workforce in recent years. [See “New York Greengrocer Union Drive at the Crossroads,” *The Internationalist* No. 12, Fall 2001.—*Editors’ note.*]

In the beginning everything had to be hush-hush, until the campaign got organized and got off the ground. Little by little, more than 30 of us workers from different Burritoville stores began holding meetings. We sued the owners for a half million dollars in back wages, but up to now nobody has

gotten their back pay. In fact, in response to the lawsuit, the old owners sold the company. After reporting all those millions in profits, they sold the company for just \$750,000. This made me wonder if they really did sell it, or if the new owners may just be frontmen for the old ones. After this, we decided to get in contact with organizers for a union, Local 1500 of the UFCW (United Food and Commercial Workers).

In the beginning we thought it would be easy to get a union, and to get the company to sign a contract. We found out it’s not so simple. Something we hadn’t expected was the company launching an anti-union campaign based on lies and buying people off. They hired a union-busting firm that, using pressure and manipulation against workers unaware of their labor rights, managed to make us lose the first union representation election. A second election was held, which the union also lost, this time by a very small margin.

The second time around, the employers had lost a lot of credibility among workers who had been there for a while. The only way they won was by pressuring and buying off new hires. For example, they lied by claiming that the union would take 30 percent of the benefits contained in a union contract. Meanwhile, various of us were fired.

Before the vote, some protests were held in front of the restaurants, and later we protested at the office of the Labor Department, which doesn’t support the workers but does make life easier for the bosses. We chanted slogans like “What’s outrageous? Sweatshop wages,” “*Departamento laboral, instrumento patronal*” (Labor Department, bosses’ tool), “Mobilization and consciousness for workers rights,” “*La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras*” (The workers struggle has no borders) and others.

I realize that many workers are still afraid.

Fear often keeps us from going forward in the struggle, but when you’re fighting for your rights as a worker, you can’t let fear hold you back. At Burritoville, even though we worked hard to get a union, the workers lost the vote. What we have to do is bring consciousness to the whole working class so we can use our power as workers and defeat the bosses.

The workers did win one recently, at a smaller deli called Bully’s. I helped organize the unionization drive of these workers, so they could see how this would help them improve their situation at work. They were even worse off than we were at Burritoville.

Fortunately, the Bully’s workers saw the changes they could make, and when the union election finally came, they managed to win the vote for union recognition. However, no negotiations for a contract have been held since the vote. In contrast, at two “Pick a Bagel” delis, after more than nine months, a union contract has been signed and will go into effect in January 2005, although many of the workers who voted for the union left in desperation as the months went by.

This shows that a struggle has to be constant, you have to stick it out to the end. What we really need is a stronger fight. We, the working class, need to gain consciousness and fight for our rights, to fight exploitation. Above all, all workers must unite to follow the same ideals in favor of all the workers.

What I would like to say to students is this: At the same time as you carry out your studies, don’t forget the world outside, the real world, which does not consist of wonderful stories. Some may opt for capitalism and find their place among the exploiters. Those of you who don’t like that idea, come over to the side of those who defend the workers and the exploited.

—Natalia

“trends clearly demonstrate increased demand” for “investigative services” and “surveillance systems,” the course defines “national security” as protecting “national values, interests, and institutions.” This requires “understand[ing] current threats against domestic and international assets.” Like what, political protests and “Third World” insurgencies? You bet.

Next on the list of classes is “Security Management Principles,” which includes “Intelligence gathering” and “Interview and interrogation techniques.” Readings include an interrogation textbook written by a top FBI agent and member of the Philadelphia police. Also on the syllabus: *Undercover Investigations in the Workplace*. That’s the kind of investigation employers carry out against union organizing drives.

How about the CIA interrogation handbook for Central American death squads? Is that going to be on the reading list as well?

Or will Col. Perrone of Guantánamo come to lecture on interrogation techniques? After all, he told Rochester TV (15 December 2003): “The time to retrieve...information is generally in the first few days of captivity.” He could also lecture on the use of hoods, shackles, prisoners being forced to kneel for days at a time, and other ways to “retrieve” information. And who will they choose for subjects for interrogation? Members of student governments who have lost elections, perhaps?

Then we come to the proposed BMCC

course on “Terrorism and Counterterrorism.” This part of the certificate program uses the feds’ definition of terrorism as any “violent” act “against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian populations, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.” So a militant labor struggle, a march against racist police brutality or protest of military recruiters can be branded terrorist. The proposed course defines counterterrorism as “any act intended to combat, control, or resolve terrorism.” This is the No. 1 pretext for torture in the world today, so Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib would fit right in.

Repression Is a Growth Industry

Programs similar to the one BMCC seeks to establish are cited with pride by the American Association of Community Colleges. The Homeland Security Management Institute is just one, and AACC notes Perrone’s institute it is “working with” the State University of New York (SUNY) as well as the League for Innovation in the Community Colleges and the AACC itself.

Still looking for those weapons of mass destruction? George W. Bush’s hand-picked expert now says...guess what, no “WMD” in Iraq—as if the world didn’t already know this was a transparent pretext all along. But the AACC is not to be deterred. The association did a survey of community colleges and says “One in every five colleges had programs or courses in weapons of mass destruction (WMD) awareness or WMD preparedness.”

And the threat to corn keeps them up at night. Corn? “The cornfields of Iowa may seem an unlikely target of terrorists, but experts believe they are,” the association paper reports. Therefore, Iowa’s Kirkwood Community College got a \$3.2 million grant in August, one of 14 approved by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. *Community College Times* (28 September) notes the Homeland Security “received more than 215 applications for the grant.”

The same paper reports that the U.S. Department of Defense has funded a program on cyberterrorism at the Community College of Allegheny County in Pennsylvania. Cyberterrorism? How about the FBI’s seizure, on October 7, of servers used by Indymedia. The feds’ assault affected at least twenty of the news collective’s sites around the world. And the American spy agency did it *in England*. The action was reportedly retaliation for someone, somewhere having taken pictures of undercover agents photographing demonstrators.

For Militant Protest to Stop BMCC “Security” Course!

CUNY is no stranger to repression. The most prominent case is the relentless prosecution of Hostos student leader Miguel Malo for holding up a sign protesting cuts in Spanish and ESL programs (see box, page 5). Last semester Baruch College arrested widely respected CCNY psychology professor Bill Crain for the “crime” of entering campus without an appointment.

As for “electronic surveillance,” mentioned in the “Letter of Intent” (14 November 2003) for the certificate program, CUNY has done plenty of that itself. Just ask student activists at CCNY: 1998 they found out a surveillance camera, disguised as a smoke detector, was aimed at their offices—a fact the campus paper was shut down for revealing!

Nor is CUNY new to connections with “private” spy companies linked to the long and bloody trail of the intelligence agencies. Last year Hunter College hired the notorious, CIA-linked Kroll & Associates for a “thorough survey” of campus “security” (Hunter *Envoy*, 2 October 2003). The only outcome Hunter students heard about was the decision to lock the main entrance of the Thomas Hunter building—a move reversed after students kept going through anyway (setting off the alarm each time). CUNY students should demand to know the full story of what happened with Kroll.

The sinister course at BMCC is part of the wholesale onslaught against the most basic civil liberties and democratic rights carried out through the USA Patriot Act, passed and administered by Democrats and Republicans, and a vast array of repressive measures. Fighting against this repression is part of the struggle for the defeat of U.S. imperialist aggression abroad and police terror, racism and exploitation here “at home.”

BMCC’s Repression 101 can and must be stopped. Students, faculty, workers and defenders of democratic rights must mobilize to protest and expose it massively, now! ■



Trabajadores de los restaurantes Burritoville frente al Edificio Federal en Nueva York, el 30 de junio. “Departamento Laboral, ¡instrumento patronal!” gritaron.

Trabajadores de restaurantes y *delis* de Nueva York **“Necesitamos concientizarnos para combatir la explotación”**

Estudiantes del Revolutionary Reconstruction Club y de los Internationalist Clubs en la CUNY han apoyado activamente la campaña por la sindicalización de los trabajadores inmigrantes, quienes a su vez han participado en las manifestaciones en defensa de Miguel Malo (ver recuadro, página 5). Publicamos aquí el testimonio de una trabajadora que jugó un papel importante en dicha campaña y por eso fue despedido.

Yo he sido por cuatro años una de los miles de trabajadores de los restaurantes, *delis* y *marquetas* (tiendas de comida y abarrotes) de la ciudad de Nueva York. Casi todos somos inmigrantes, casi todos indocumentados, la mayoría de México.

Aquí en las calles de Nueva York hay mucha gente inmigrante buscando trabajo. Cuando llegué a Estados Unidos hace ocho años, trabajé en una fábrica de cosméticos en Brooklyn. Había sindicato en esa fábrica, pero en aquel entonces yo no prestaba atención a estas cuestiones. Ahora he visto que tenemos que organizarnos para defendernos contra la explotación.

En los restaurantes es una explotación inhumana, en la que se tiene que trabajar muy fuerte. No es que se trabaje ocho horas, sino a veces 16 horas en un mismo día. A mí me tocó trabajar en la cadena de restaurantes “Burritoville”. Tiene doce tiendas con alrededor de 150 trabajadores en total.

Los peor tratados son los que hacen *deliveries* (entregas a domicilio): tienen que llegar muy temprano, lavar trastes y aparte llevar la comida. Durante diez años después de que se fundó la compañía Burritoville, éstos ganaron un poco más de US\$3 la hora, siendo legal eso porque reciben unas propinas bastante miserables. Es interesante que cuando empezamos un movimiento para tratar de sindicalizarnos, los dueños les aumentaron eso a \$4.50 y luego a \$5.15 para tratar de comprar su voto.

En la cocina principal, alrededor de diez trabajadores tienen que hacer toda la comida para doce restaurantes. Algunas veces hubo accidentes en la cocina o cuando los *deliveries* se caen de la bicicleta o son atropellados por un auto. Se tienen que ir al hospital o a la casa, a veces dos semanas o más, sin salario, y aparte el trabajador tiene que pagar el hos-

pital. En una ocasión a un trabajador se le fracturó el brazo en tres partes y el brazo quedó inmóvil de forma permanente. No quiso demandar a la empresa y quedarse años esperando una posible indemnización, por lo tanto volvió a México.

Sabíamos que los dueños estaban violando incluso lo que reglamentan las leyes del trabajo. A nadie les estaban pagando *overtime* (pago de tiempo y medio por las horas extras). Incluso nos estaban tratando como si fuéramos ladrones. Los dueños llevaron a más de ocho trabajadores a someterse a la prueba de un detector de mentiras. Llegó un punto en que decidimos poner límite.

Me di cuenta que nuestro reto era cambiar la situación, demostrando quién estaba robando a quién. Los dueños casi nunca iban a los restaurantes, sólo sacaban dinero, reportando unos 12 millones de dólares en ganancias anuales, en base a la labor de los trabajadores explotados.

Estábamos cansados de la forma en que nos tratan. Vimos que no se puede confiar en las “buenas intenciones” de los patrones. Nos contactamos con dos de los muchachos que fueron obligados a tomar la prueba de detector de mentiras, y con otros trabajadores organizamos un comité a favor de la sindicalización. De hecho forma parte de una serie de luchas por la sindicalización entre este sector de trabajadores en los últimos años en Nueva York. [Ver “La campaña por la sindicalización de las *marquetas* de Nueva York, en la encrucijada”, *El Internacionalista*, 4 de octubre de 2003. – Nota de la redacción.]

Al comienzo todo tenía que empezar muy silencioso, hasta que fuera bien organizado. Nos juntamos poco a poco más de 30 trabajadores de diferentes tiendas de Burritoville. Demandamos a los dueños por medio millón de dólares en salarios atrasados, pero todavía no se remunera a nadie. De hecho, como respuesta a la demanda, los viejos dueños vendieron la compañía. Tras reportar esos millones en ganancias, vendieron la empresa en sólo 750,000 dólares. Por eso me pregunté si realmente habían hecho la venta o tal vez los nuevos dueños eran nada más prestanombres. Luego decidimos ponernos en contacto con los organizadores de un sindicato, la Local 1500 de la UFCW (United Food and Commercial Workers).

Al principio pensamos que iba a ser fácil conseguir un sindicato y un contrato colectivo. Luego vimos que no era tan fácil. Con algo que no contábamos era que la compañía iba a lanzar una campaña basada en mentiras y sobornos. Contrató una firma antisindical que utilizando las presiones y manipulaciones a los trabajadores que no conocen sus derechos laborales, logró que perdiéramos la primera elección para el reconocimiento sindical. Se llegó a una segunda elección en la cual también se perdió, pero esa vez fue por una mínima diferencia.

En la segunda vuelta los empleadores habían perdido mucha credibilidad entre los trabajadores antiguos, y la única manera en que ganaron fue presionando y sobornando a los trabajadores nuevos. Por ejemplo, mintieron diciendo que un sindicato llevaría el 30 por ciento de las prestaciones contenidas en un contrato colectivo. A varios nos despidieron.

Antes de la votación se hizo unas protestas frente a los restaurantes y luego protestamos frente al Departamento de Trabajo, que nunca apoya a los trabajadores sino que hace la vida fácil a los patrones. Gritamos consignas como “Departamento laboral, instrumento patronal”, “Movilización y conciencia para los derechos laborales”, “La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras”, “*What’s outrageous? Sweatshop wages*” (¿Qué es infame? Salarios de talleres de sudor), y otras.

He podido darme cuenta de que muchos trabajadores siguen teniendo miedo. Cuando estás luchando por tus derechos como trabajador, no hay que detenerse por el miedo, el miedo muchas veces es lo que hace que no avancemos en la lucha. En Burritoville los trabajadores fueron derrotados en la votación, a pesar de que

nos esforzamos mucho. Lo que se necesita es concientizar a toda la clase obrera para usar nuestra fuerza como trabajadores y vencer a los patrones.

Recientemente hubo cierto triunfo, en un *deli* más pequeño que se llama “Bully’s”. Ayudé a organizar la campaña de sindicalización de estos trabajadores y hacerles ver cuáles pueden ser sus mejoras laborales. Me pude dar cuenta que ellos estaban aún peor que lo que nosotros estábamos en Burritoville.

Afortunadamente los trabajadores de Bully’s se dieron cuenta del cambio que podría haber en ese lugar, y en las elecciones finalmente pudieron ganar el voto a favor del reconocimiento sindical. Sin embargo, no ha habido ninguna negociación de un contrato después de la votación. En cambio, en dos tiendas de “Pick a Bagel”, después de más de nueve meses, se ha ratificado un contrato colectivo y se pondrá en vigencia en enero de 2005, aunque muchos de los trabajadores que votaron ya no están, se desesperaron después de varios meses.

Esto muestra que una lucha tiene que ser constante, hay que estar hasta el final. Realmente necesitamos una lucha más fuerte, nosotros la clase trabajadora necesitamos concientizarnos, luchar por nuestros derechos para combatir la explotación. Más que nada, todos los trabajadores tenemos que unificarnos y seguir los mismos ideales en beneficio de todos los trabajadores.

A los estudiantes les quisiera decir que a la vez que estudian, no deben olvidarse del mundo exterior, el mundo real, que no consiste en historias maravillosas. Algunos tal vez van a irse por el capitalismo y van a estar explotando, pero los que no están conformes deben irse al lado de los que van a defender a los trabajadores y a los más explotados.

– Natalia

Brutal Repression of Oruro Campus Takeover

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