

## Uproot Racism – Only Revolution Can Bring Justice! From Ferguson to New York: **All Out Against Police Terror!**



Jewel Samad/AFP



Internationalist photo

**Racist decision sets off firestorm of outrage. (Left) Protester facing police in Ferguson. (Right) CUNY Internationalist Clubs in march to Times Square that night.**

All across the country hundreds of thousands anxiously awaited the news from Missouri on Monday evening, November 24. A thousand gathered outside police headquarters in Ferguson listening as car radios blared. In New York City's Union Square we joined a young and multiracial crowd of several hundred. Eyes glued to handheld screens, they held their breath as the hour approached for the announcement.

Then came the dreaded news: white killer cop Darren Wilson would face no charges for gunning down 18-year-old black youth Michael Brown in the St. Louis suburb last August. Mixed with the outrage, fury and indignation, many felt devastated by the inescapable truth: there is *no* justice in racist America.

For months, people expected this outcome to the vile staged drama of racist

injustice. Even so, the announcement of the grand jury decision stunned, like a punch to the gut. In New York the angry crowd poured into the street with arms raised, like Michael Brown when he was shot. In Ferguson, patrol cars and businesses near police headquarters went up in flames, along with stores near the scene of the August 9 murder. From coast to coast, there was a wave of revulsion at the monstrosity of

letting a killer cop walk after murdering another unarmed African American youth. On Monday night, thousands protested in at least 90 U.S. cities; by the next night there were tens of thousands of protesters in 170 cities nationwide. And they haven't stopped.

The Ferguson decision couldn't be more ominous. The grand jury gave a green light for police brutality and murder of black and Latino youth, particularly young men. That no charges were filed, as is almost always the case, confirms that racist cops can kill with impunity. Barack Obama, the first black president of the United States, whom many young people voted for, told African Americans and others they had to eat it. Like hell! We and many others refuse to bow down to this machinery of racist injustice. Many chant that "the whole damn system is guilty." We point out that the system is *capitalism*, which from the days of chattel slavery to Jim Crow segregation to mass incarceration today has been built on black oppression. *And the only way to end cop terror is through revolution – socialist revolution – to bring this racist system down.*

On the night of the announcement, shopping malls in the St. Louis area shut down and angry protesters occupied the I-44 freeway. In New York, hundreds marched to Times Square disrupting traffic, while some headed on to Harlem and the bridges.

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### **Racist Outrage: NYPD Killer Cop Walks**

## **"Eric Garner, Michael Brown – Shut the Whole System Down!"**

On December 3 a Staten Island grand jury announced that no charges would be filed against the NYPD cop who choked Eric Garner to death in late July. Several thousand furious protesters took to the streets of New York to protest this horror, and more in cities around the country. There was a symbolic "die-in" at Grand Central terminal, crawling with police. Over and over protesters chanted Eric's last words, "I can't breathe." And also, "Hands up, don't shoot!" referring to the racist police murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in early August. "Black lives matter" was

another chant, a searing indictment of racist America, where black people were brought in chains as property to make others rich, where property is still all that matters – and will be until we make a revolution.

Pouring into the streets, we voiced our rage and anger over the grand jury decisions letting off the killer cops, who got away with murder, literally. It's official: not only down South, also "up North" in New York, police can shoot down and strangle black men with impunity. In the case of Eric Garner, they couldn't even twist the facts: it was all there on a cellphone video, viewed by millions

the world over. But the murderers were not indicted, while the bystander who took the video was. It was a modern-day lynching, by the forces of "law and order."

The next night, even the New York police said 10,000 were marching for hours, disrupting traffic throughout Lower and Midtown Manhattan and downtown Brooklyn, blocking bridges, tunnels and highways. TV news commentators said they had never seen anything like it. And everywhere, demonstrators were greeted by blocked motorists honking their horns in

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**From Ferguson to Mexico, Revolt Against Capitalist Police Terror**



# Ferguson...

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In Oakland, California protesters occupied I-580. Everywhere they chanted, "Hands up, don't shoot," which became the iconic slogan of protests last August. The next day, the numbers swelled. In NYC, protesters shut down an entrance to the Lincoln Tunnel, blocked the Williamsburg Bridge and thousands poured onto the FDR Drive blocking traffic in both directions as they marched more than two miles for over an hour as drivers honked support.

The Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York (CUNY), along with the Internationalist Group and Class Struggle Education Workers, marched in the protests on both nights and called a speak-out November 25 which drew over 100 students, faculty and workers at Hunter College. We put forward a revolutionary, working-class program: our signs declared, "No Justice in the Capitalist Courts" and called for worker/black/immigrant mobilization against police terror. We linked cop terror in Ferguson with the police massacre of students from Ayotzinapa in Mexico. While many repeated, "No justice, no peace," we chanted "Only revolution can bring justice" – which many picked up. We came off the FDR Drive, our red flags in the lead, chanting, "Workers and students, shut the city down." In Portland, Oregon IG comrades joined in with some 3,000 protesters at the so-called "Justice Center."

But the images accompanying the Ferguson grand jury decision were of burning buildings, cop cars aflame and "looting." No accident, the authorities wanted it that way. To announce the decision at 8 p.m. when it could have been made hours earlier was itself a provocation, to put a damper on organized protest. For weeks, the media and authorities had predicted "violence" when the grand jury decision was announced. Already on November 17, Missouri governor Jeremiah Nixon had declared a "state of emergency," even though no such emergency existed. When the fateful night arrived, with a mass demonstration outside the Ferguson police HQ, media cameras sped off to record mayhem. The rulers wanted visuals of "violence" and they got them. Yet the rage those images showed was real.

The government and media are campaigning to get people to be angry not at police murdering black people with impunity over and over again, but against black "looters" showing insufficient respect for what really matters to this society: property. On the first night there were 80 arrests in Ferguson as a dozen buildings went up in flames. The media howled about vandalism. Yet the couple of police cars that were torched were symbols of the racist cops who

have long terrorized this black community. And even black Democrat Jesse Jackson Sr. could recognize that "the shooting started before the looting," that banks looted black people, "stealing homes with predatory loans," but they got bailed out while the black poor and middle class got "left out." Obama piously called for protesters to seek "constructive" outlets for their anger.

As Marxists we call for protesters against the cop murder of Mike Brown, the grand jury decision and the racist police to mobilize against the ruling class, its repressive apparatus and the capitalist system. Charges should be dropped against *all* those arrested during the nights of protest and fury against racist injustice in Ferguson. The system just demonstrated that it won't allow a "constructive" response, the only answer is to bring it down and replace it (and their entire police forces and military officer corps) with the rule of the poor, oppressed and working people.

## American Capitalism: Racist to the Core

Over and over in recent marches demonstrators chanted "Black Lives Matter." What an indictment of racist American society! The names of those killed by racist police and vigilantes were on everyone's lips. Only days before Mike Brown was murdered, **Eric Garner** was choked to death on Staten Island by New York police: his mother, sister and wife followed reports from Ferguson as they anxiously awaited a grand jury decision on the cops who killed Eric. Last year a Florida jury absolved the racist vigilante killer of **Trayvon Martin**. Before that, **Kimani Gray**, killed by the NYPD in East Flatbush: no charges filed against the killer cops. **Oscar Grant** in Oakland, shot to death on New Year's Day 2009 by a BART transit cop, who was out in six months. And the Ferguson decision came on the anniversary of the murder of **Sean Bell**, cut down by a hail of 50 cop bullets on his wedding day in 2006: the NYPD death squad walked.

Since Mike Brown's death, the list of black victims of racist cop terror keeps growing:

- Kajieme Powell**, 25, whose killing by St. Louis police on August 19 was caught in a horrifying video;
- Ezell Ford**, 25, known to police to be mentally handicapped, shot in the back on August 11 by a Los Angeles cop;
- VonDerrit Myers**, 18, chased down and killed by 17 bullets from a moonlighting St. Louis police officer in the Shaw neighborhood on October 8;
- Akai Gurley**, 28, shot dead by a rookie NYPD cop on drug patrol in a dark stairwell of a Brooklyn housing project on November 20;
- Tamir Rice**, a 12-year-old child, shot dead by police in Cleveland on November 23 because he had a toy gun.

The list goes on and on. Last year, FBI statistics report that 461 "felony suspects" were shot and killed by police in the United States, the highest number in two decades and the third consecutive annual increase. According to a *USA Today* (15 August) analysis, nearly twice a week a black person is killed by a white cop. The actual numbers are certainly far higher, since only a fraction of the 17,000 police agencies are included in the FBI database and some have not reported for years (Florida since 1997, New York City since 2007). Another study reported that in 2012, at least 313 African Americans were killed by police officers, security guards or vigilantes – one every 28 hours (Alternet, 28 May 2013). A ProPublica (10 October) analysis concluded that young black men were *21 times* more likely to be shot dead by police than young white men.

All attempts to reform the police have come to naught. Hire black cops? Black police kill black youth, too. Black police commissioners? The co-chair of Obama's new commission on "21st century policing," Charles Ramsey, as head of D.C. police carried out mass arrests of protesters at World Bank summits, and as Philadelphia top cop has "stopped and frisked" black youth as much as the NYPD. The Don't Shoot Coalition in St. Louis wants a civilian review board. New York City has had one since 1993, and although chokeholds were banned that hasn't stopped beat cops and white-shirt supervisors from using them. The coalition also calls for a federal investigation of Wilson. One's underway, and won't produce anything. Ban racial profiling? Already banned, but it's SOP (standard operating procedure) for the cops.

Now Barack Obama and NYC mayor Bill de Blasio want to "experiment" with police wearing body cameras. Yet the existence of a cellphone video didn't stop NYC cops from choke-holding Eric Garner to death, and it hasn't brought action against his murderer, killer cop Daniel Pantaleo. As demonstrators in New York chant, "How do you spell racism? NYPD, How do you spell murderers? NYPD." No "police reforms," no review boards or body cams, will change that. ***It will take nothing less than revolution to stop racist cop terror, by bringing down the capitalist state and replacing it with a workers government.***

Ferguson has brought all this to a head. Obama tells protesters that "We are a nation based on the rule of law" and "so we need to accept that this was the special jury's decision to make." Sure, laws like the U.S. Constitution that declared black slaves to be equivalent to 3/5 of a person. Or the Jim Crow segregation laws that Rosa Parks (and before her 15-year-old Claudette Colvin) violated to sit in the front of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. And no, we don't have to accept that a grand jury led by the nose by a pro-cop prosecutor hears the case in secret, or that a court can let off racist murderers like Darren Wilson. "The law" codifies the interests of the oppressive ruling class, the capitalist exploiters, in particular to keep down those they exploit, the poor, oppressed and working people. And the cops are the armed fist of the bourgeoisie.

Wilson, in his vile self-justifying interview on ABC-TV, declared he was just doing his job by killing Mike Brown, and that he did it "right." In fact, the job of the police in America is to terrorize and repress African Americans, Latinos, poor people, immigrants, workers, leftists and anyone else perceived as

## Michael Brown



Photos: Facebook: Twitter



**Michael Brown (top) had just graduated high school and was about to start vocational college. Bottom: police left Michael's body lying in the street for four and a half hours as a threat while they went after residents who complained about the wanton murder.**

## Eric Garner



New York Daily News

**Swarm of killer cops piles onto and choke Eric Garner to death in Staten Island last July. Although officially ruled a homicide, none were charged. They got away with murder.**

a threat to the rule of capital. That is also the job of the courts, the prosecutors, the legislators, the mayors, governors and presidents. And they all rest on the guns of the police and military, those "special bodies of armed men" that Friedrich Engels, co-author with Karl Marx of the *Communist Manifesto*, pointed to as the core of the capitalist state. Engels notes that since society became divided into classes with conflicting economic interests producing irreconcilable antagonisms, it was necessary to have a power to regulate the inevitable class conflict and "keep it within the bounds of 'order'":

"This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons, and institutions of coercion of all kinds...."

–Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884)

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## Revolution

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St. Louis County police with armored vehicle advance on protesters in Ferguson, Mo., August 18.

The cops will keep on defending the interests of the racist rulers until the capitalist class they “serve and protect” is overthrown. Obama claims: “We have made enormous progress in race relations over the course of the past several decades. I’ve witnessed that in my own life. And to deny that progress I think is to deny America’s capacity for change.” Yet at that very moment, as viewers saw on a split screen on their TV, protesters in Ferguson were overturning police cars, furious that nothing had changed, that cops could still murder unarmed African American young men and get away with it. As for the supposed “progress in race relations,” blacks in Ferguson replied that the Harvard-educated black president “had a silver platter” and “don’t feel the pain” (*The Guardian* [U.S. edition], 25 November). What Obama has seen in his life is that the rulers put “a few black faces in high places” like him, in order to keep the same old same old.

*Barack Obama to the contrary, there is not going to be a “post-racial” capitalist America.*

The undeniable fact is that murderous racism, particularly against black men, is built into U.S. capitalism today, as it has been since the American colonies and the U.S. economy were built on the basis of slave production. It was the profits from the Southern slave system that fueled Northern industry, financed New York banks and drove westward expansion. Chattel slavery was formally abolished as a result of the Civil War – the second American Revolu-

tion. But following the brief democratic interlude of Radical Reconstruction, the racist rulers have devised one method or another to deny black rights, through Jim Crow segregation until the 1960s civil rights movement and by systematic racist police terror since then. Police massively arrest and harass black youth to keep as many African American men as possible under the control of the “justice system.”

In the past, U.S. rulers would occasionally carry out limited social reforms, always ensuring that the repressive apparatus was strengthened. When Northern inner cities exploded over police brutality in the late 1960s, the National Guard was brought in to suppress “rioters,” but they also initiated or greatly expanded a host of poverty programs as well as affirmative action plans. Since genuine equality was out, they instead offered “diversity” for a select few. While militants called for black power, the rulers used black Democrats to push “empowerment” via black-owned businesses. They enabled many in the black middle class to leave the ghettos for Nassau County outside New York, Montgomery County outside Washington, D.C., Fulton County outside Atlanta. But this hasn’t stopped police from regularly pulling over black legislators, city officials and even CEOs driving expensive cars.

Nowadays, however, in these times of “privatizing,” no section of the ruling class would support new social programs or reforms. As a result, the official response to black unrest today is different from the 1960s:

all stick and no carrot. Thus we get Governor Nixon’s preemptive “state of emergency” in Missouri, preparing for martial law. And despite the hand-wringing over militarized police back in August, the Obama administration just announced that it will *not* reduce the amount of military hardware being funneled to local police departments, and will instead focus on “training.” The *police state* we saw in Ferguson in August and again in November is the harbinger of what’s in store for black America, and all those who defy the capitalist rulers.

The problem isn’t confined to Missouri, New York City or even the United States. As the recent massacre of students of the Ayotzinapa teachers college in the state of Guerrero, Mexico (six confirmed dead, 43 “disappeared”) gruesomely showed, cop terror is international. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs joined in the first protests against the massacre (including with signs saying “Mexican Militarization Made in U.S.A.”), we have held film showings and discussions at Hunter College, and marched to Times Square with signs saying, “From Ayotzinapa to Ferguson, Down with Capitalist Police Terror.” We have underlined that *imperialist war abroad means racist repression “at home,”* dramatically shown by police use against protesters of armored vehicles brought back from the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq.

What’s needed is to bring out the power of the force that can defeat the capitalist state: the multiracial working class. Unions should be out in force, using their muscle to stop racist cop terror. Contrary to myths spread by academics and petty-bourgeois pseudo-leftists, African Americans and Latinos are heavily represented in the ranks of labor, even more than white workers. Michael Brown’s mother, Lesley McSpadden, is a member of the UFCW (food and commercial workers), and Eric Garner’s mother and sister are in the TWU (transit workers). We have called for *labor/black/immigrant mobilization against racist police terror*, and for *workers action to stop migra raids, deportations, racist attacks*. Class-conscious workers should demand *all police and military forces out*. It’s the killer cops and their accomplices who endanger the population, in Missouri and elsewhere, not those who are protesting police repression.

Especially after Ferguson, there must be no illusions in the so-called “justice system,” which is in fact a machine for imposing racist injustice. A popular chant, from Missouri to New York, has been “Indict, convict, send the killer cops to jail, the whole damn system is guilty as hell!” Yes, the capitalist system is guilty of systematic racist murder, and for that reason, the idea that it will be pressured to “jail killer cops” (as posed by reformists such as Workers World or the Revolutionary Communist Party) can only build illusions. The capitalists back their armed thugs to the hilt, count on it. And when demonstrators chant “No justice, no peace” we warn that this deceptive slogan – popularized by black

Democrat Al Sharpton, who has for decades acted as a fireman for the ruling class, seeking to douse the flames of struggle, from Ferguson to New York – hides the stark fact that *there will be no justice for the oppressed under capitalism*.

Nor will the answer be found at the ballot box. The fact is, *all the police and military forces active in Ferguson in November are commanded by Democrats*: St. Louis County chief executive Charlie Dooley, Missouri governor Nixon and U.S. president Obama. *Democrats and Republicans = racist police terror*, we must *build a revolutionary workers party*. As our signs have proclaimed, *workers revolution will avenge victims of police murder* including Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Kimani Gray, Sean Bell, Amadou Diallo, Patrick Dorismond, Eleanor Bumpurs, Anthony Baez, Alberta Spruill, Ramarley Graham “and so many others.”

The protests over Ferguson have been described as the biggest civil rights demonstrations in decades. Not exactly. The angry marches coast-to-coast over the murder of Trayvon Martin and again when his vigilante murderer was let off were huge. Those were largely of youth who voted for (and believed in) Obama and were then shocked when the ugly reality of racist murder raised its head. What’s different this time is that the illusion has worn off, bitter reality has set in. And the reality is, *only revolution can bring justice* – socialist revolution, of black, white, Latino, Asian and immigrant working people, acting as champions of all the oppressed and led by a multiracial revolutionary workers party. The upheaval in Ferguson, Missouri proves it. For young people fed up with racist injustice, the message should be loud and clear. ■

### “How Many More Have to Die? The Time for Action Is Now”

*When Eric Garner was choked to death last July by a squad of NYPD cops, the Internationalist Group noted that Eric’s mother and sister both worked for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. In calling for workers mobilization against police terror, the IG made a special appeal to Transport Workers Union Local 100: “The TWU should strike to shut the city down in protest against this cold-blooded killing of their members’ brother and son” (see The Internationalist No. 38, October-November 2014).*

*Following the Staten Island grand jury’s refusal to charge the killer cops, we again turned to Local 100. We print below a statement by Christine Williams, former TWU executive board member (2010-2012), sent to the CUNY Internationalist Clubs for their December 4 speak-out:*

Twice in one week we have proof of how this system really works. This system was designed to keep a select few in total control of the working class. This system controls the media, wages, and basic human rights like housing and health care. The police are the enforcement of this system. This system was not made to protect people of color and the working class. How many more examples do we need before the masses organize to replace the system? How many have to die by the hands of this system of corruption? The time for debate is over. The time for action is now.



In Missouri and New York, Democrats are in charge of racist repression. Build a revolutionary workers party!



# Bourgeois Feminism vs. Women's Liberation Democratic Party: Faux Friends of Women

By Mira

When the Republican Party defeated its fellow ruling-class party, the Democrats, in the November midterm elections, liberals and not a few would-be leftists groaned in exasperation. How could this happen? How much worse will things get? Surely the Republicans will go after any remaining shreds of rights for women and minorities, imposing a semi-fascist hell. And, they claimed, young people who couldn't bring themselves to vote for either of the discredited parties of Wall Street were to blame for the Democrats losing control of the Senate in addition to the House.

As the election campaign got down to the wire, the Democrats appealed to their base, desperately trying to get out the black and women's vote. Investing heavily in the issue of women's rights, they ran candidates like Wendy Davis for governor in Texas, who got headlines in 2013 for holding an eleven-hour filibuster to block anti-abortion legislation. Mark Udall in Colorado was demonized by the right wing for campaigning for over-the-counter access to birth control and opposing his Republican opponent's call to outlaw abortion altogether. Both lost.

The post-election lament over the Democrats' loss ignores the hellish conditions that *already exist* in this country for millions of African American, Latino, Asian, and immigrant workers and youth. Attacks on women's basic democratic rights have accelerated with Obama in the White House, and not just because the Republicans are determined to undermine the Democrats. Every single state has recently passed anti-woman laws. The root of this recent wave of racism and misogyny is in the capitalist system itself, and it comes from *both* the bosses' parties.

There has indeed been a slew of legislative measures against women lately – 231 state laws restricting abortions in the last three years alone, according to the Guttmacher Institute. That's more than at any time since the Supreme Court established a constitutional right to abortion in the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. Access to birth control and reproductive healthcare has been systematically shredded. In Texas, the number of abortion clinics is down from 42 in May



**The Clinton Foundation declares, "We're all in it together." Really?! Multimillionaire and imperialist ruler (then U.S. secretary of state) Hillary Clinton visits garment factory in Caracol industrial park she sponsored in Haiti where women workers make less than \$5 a day.**

2013 to 20, and may soon fall to seven if an appeals court lifts a temporary stay on the Texas HB-2 law.

Among the clinics that would be closed is the last clinic in the Rio Grande Valley, one that serves mainly Mexican and other Latina women. Those that would remain are in wealthier urban areas, underscoring that working-class women are the primary targets of anti-abortion legislation. According to the RH Reality Check news site, it would cost a woman worker in the Valley over a month's wages to travel to the nearest clinic in San Antonio. This is a life-and-death matter: for low-income women in many parts of the U.S., it is back to coat-hangers and bleach.

With abortion rights under siege, women have an equally difficult time accessing safe and effective birth control. Many insurance policies will not cover contraceptives, and under Obama's "Affordable Care Act" as before, many poor and working women do not have health insurance, and cannot afford any

form of birth control or reproductive health-care. The maternal mortality rate in the U.S. is sharply increasing – up 70% from 1999 to 2009 – and is almost four times as high for black women as for whites. Last year, 1,200 women died in childbirth in the United States, making it next to last among economically advanced countries in the OECD.

Much of this grim reality is seen as coming from the Republican Party. Certainly, the male chauvinism of Republican politicians is grotesque. Who can forget Todd Akin, the Missouri Republican politician who infamously declared that, for victims of "legitimate rape," pregnancy is impossible, for "the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down"? This year they got Fox News host Kimberly Guilfoyle's comment that "healthy and hot" young women should not vote or serve on juries; they are too busy online dating and "running around without a care in the world."

As one commentator noted, the majority of young women in the U.S. are busy working, with seven out of ten college graduates paying off student loans averaging \$30,000, among other bills; one in five will be sexually assaulted or raped during her life, and upwards of 300,000 teenagers give birth every year – hardly a picture of young women "without a care in the world" aside from their Tinder or Match.com profiles.

The Democratic Party, while appealing for women's votes, regularly ducks "hot button issues" and quickly backpedals under attack. In New York, Democrats tried to put a pro-woman gloss on their campaign ads, touting a state "Women's Equality Act." This infuriated the right wing for permitting third-trimester abortions should a woman's health be in danger. But as soon as the elections were over, with Republicans still in control of the Senate, the WEA became

a dead letter, just like previous bills for in-state tuition for undocumented immigrant students.

As revolutionary Marxists, we in the CUNY Internationalist Clubs fight for women's basic democratic rights, including the fundamental right to control their own reproductive systems. We are for free, high-quality abortion on demand, with the decision being hers and hers alone. As Latin American women activists chant, "*Nosotras parimos, nosotras decidimos*" (we give birth, we decide).

While capitalist politicians hack away at these basic democratic rights of women, the Democrats "triangulate" by posing soft-core versions of Republican policies, and then cynically trying to get votes as defenders of women. A prime example is Hillary Clinton, who in her husband's administration played a leading role in designing the 1996 bill to "end welfare as we know it." She and Barack Obama hail this as "greatly beneficial" in dumping a "divisive" issue. Not so beneficial, though, for the millions of African American, Latina and white poor and working women thrown off AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children).

Or consider Hillary's sponsorship of the Caracol industrial park in northern Haiti. Largely funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Inter-American Development Bank, the project siphoned off millions of dollars of relief money from the hard-hit earthquake area at the other end of the country. The "park" includes a big sweatshop garment factory with over 1,200 women workers paid an average of \$4.67 a day. That's less than the legal minimum wage, way less than enough to raise a family, and the lowest-paid of garment plants in Haiti. Hillary Clinton a friend of women? Haitian women workers know the answer.<sup>1</sup>

What is behind the Democrats' faux-passionate appeals to "feminism" and women's rights? The Democratic Party poses as the "friend" of women, labor and every oppressed group in order to control their struggles in the interest of capital. Democrat Obama can sell imperialist war, capitalist austerity and privatization to the masses better than Republican Bush. And the *bipartisan* war on women goes hand in hand with the war on workers, on immigrants, on public education and for world imperialist hegemony.

We haven't come such a long way after all, and life is definitely getting worse for poor and working women. Genuine equality and full emancipation for women will not be achieved by feminism, a bourgeois ideology that claims all women (both exploited women workers and exploiters like Hillary and her ilk) are sisters, or the bourgeois electoral circus, but through revolutionary class struggle of working women and men leading all the oppressed. It will take the working class organized in its own party – independent of and against all the capitalist parties – to stop the descent into barbarism, by seizing control of society from the reactionary bourgeoisie.

As Marxists, we recognize the basis of women's oppression in capitalism, private property and the nuclear family. It is only through tearing up the roots of this system in a socialist revolution that women and all oppressed groups will be liberated. ■

<sup>1</sup> See "Haiti: Women Workers Strike Against Starvation Wages," *The Internationalist* No. 36, January-February 2014 (<http://www.internationalist.org/haitiminimumwage1312.html>).



**When Haitian women garment workers struck for a higher minimum wage in December 2013, CUNY Internationalist Clubs helped mobilize solidarity.**



# Colorado Students Protest Censoring of History, Attacks on Teachers

By Mia

This fall, hundreds of high school students in Colorado's second largest school district participated in massive walkouts in protest of the censorship of their history curriculum. Students held daily demonstrations for two weeks in late September and early October, holding signs that said "Stop Censoring History" and "We Support Our Teachers." Nevertheless, the conservative Jefferson County school board majority insisted it would continue its plan to purge the curriculum, while referring it to a committee hoping to defuse protests. Why are these reactionaries so afraid of history? Because they fear that questioning patriotic myths about America's past will lead to students challenging capitalism's status quo today.

The students and teachers in the Denver suburbs were protesting outrages such as the removal of all mention of civil disobedience from texts and classroom materials. The school board would replace the College Board-approved Advanced Placement history courses with lessons that "promote citizenship, patriotism, essentials and benefits of the free enterprise system" and do "not encourage or condone civil disorder, social strife or disregard of the law." This thought control comes from the Koch brothers' Americans for Prosperity outfit that financed the school board election takeover.

Liberals seized on the controversy, as the pro-Democratic Party NGO ("non-governmental organization") MoveOn.org sponsored student petitions against the curriculum censorship. Colorado's lieutenant governor Joe García, a former college professor, showed up at a student rally. The protests showed the potential for united student-teacher struggle. But while their protest was directed at a particularly reactionary school board, *the ruling-class assault on public education is coming from conservatives and liberals, Republicans and Democrats alike.*

What's going on in Colorado is part of the national battle over public education, in which Democrat Obama and his education "czar" Arne Duncan are spearheading the privatizers and bashers of teacher unions. The White House is demanding that schools adopt a national "Common Core" curriculum while pushing "pay for performance" schemes and seeking to eliminate seniority rights and teacher tenure, which is nothing more than protection against arbitrary firings. Yet teacher unions keep rounding up votes for Democrats, in Colorado and elsewhere.

The initial "Jeffco" student walkouts in late September coincided with the first of two teacher sickouts which forced the district to cancel class at four schools in two weeks. The Jefferson County teachers union (JCEA) had been involved in a bitter fight with the dictatorial school board over its imposition of pay determined by administrators' ratings, and the board decision to cut raises for teachers deemed "partially effective." The teachers responded with a unanimous vote of no confidence in board chair Ken Witt.

Next door in Douglas County, a like-minded right-wing school board (also financed by the Koch brothers juggernaut) instituted "market-based" salary schedules and "school choice," evaluated educators



Students outside Ralston Valley High School in Jefferson County, Colorado protest right-wing school board attempt to censor history curriculum, Sept. 23.

according to a state "teacher effectiveness" law and eliminated collective bargaining, leading to a sharp membership loss (25%) for the local teachers union and a big increase in teacher turnover (70% higher than the state average). Jeffco teachers could see the handwriting on the wall as their own school board followed the Koch playbook.

Meanwhile, the Jefferson County curriculum review panel was set up to investigate and cleanse the new AP U.S. History curriculum (APUSH), aligned with the national Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The panel would ensure that "objectionable material" would be removed. The plan's author called the APUSH framework "American-bashing" for stressing "race, gender, class, ethnicity [and] grievance" over traditional American ideals, such as "respect for authority."

This reflected the sentiment of right-wingers nationwide who oppose the new education standards (as distinct from opposition from the left by teacher activists and others). The Republican National Committee came out against the APUSH framework, saying it

"reflects a radically revisionist view of American history that emphasizes negative aspects of our nation's history while omitting or minimizing positive aspects..."<sup>1</sup>

The Jefferson County school board is following in the footsteps of Texas, whose state school board has rejected the APUSH and the Common Core, revising the state's social studies curriculum to (according to critics) "promote Christian fundamentalism, boost conservative political figures, and force-feed American 'exceptionalism,' while downplaying the historical contributions of minorities."<sup>2</sup> Texas is the second largest buyer of textbooks in the country, making its curriculum influential to national publishers.

Reactionary critics of the national standards cry "liberal bias," and oppose them in no small part because they have been imposed by Obama. Yet the recent attacks on education are part of a bipartisan ruling-

<sup>1</sup> <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/RNC.jpg>

<sup>2</sup> National Education Association <http://www.nea.org/home/39060.htm>

class effort to promote the privatization, regimentation and dismantling of public education. The Obama administration's \$4 billion Race to the Top (RTTT) program is a continuation of George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind (NCLB), both instigated by billionaire "education reformers" like Bill and Melinda Gates, Eli Broad and the Walton (Wal-Mart) family.

Under RTTT, 43 states in five years have "voluntarily" adopted the CCSS. To receive RTTT grants, school districts must agree to high-stakes testing (beginning as early as kindergarten), student test-based evaluations of teachers, the Common Core, and lift caps on charter schools. With the rhetoric of "school choice and competition," many liberals and conservatives champion the spread of the privately-operated for-profit charters, which take public funding and space from public schools, but under-serve special needs students and English language learners.

Money for smaller classes, experienced educators, and resources for underserved public schools in poor and working class areas will instead go to education monopolies like the textbook-publishing, test-developing and grading juggernaut Pearson, and their expensive CCSS aligned materials and technology.<sup>3</sup> Educators are forced to "teach to the test," as teacher evaluation systems are increasingly based on student test scores. "Failing" public schools are closed to make way for more charters.

Liberals who have denounced acts of censorship on the part of ultraconservatives remain largely silent on the dumbed-down, scripted training proffered by the Common Core. As Marxists, we understand the attacks on working-class education and the increasing privatization and corporatization are part of a movement to restrict public education for the vast majority of working class students and reorient it to the needs of employers and the imperialist war machine, combined with the deskilling of teachers and busting of their unions.

But the sustained attacks by the capitalist ruling class are about more than the massive profits which stand to be made through

<sup>3</sup> See Class Struggle Education Workers Newsletter No. 4, Summer-Fall 2014.

the privatization of education. Under capitalism, the masses of poor, oppressed and working people are denied high-quality, critical education, since education for the masses is ultimately an institution for training future generations of wage-labor while the future bosses and managers are given an entirely different treatment in private schools. The Common Core's goal is to discipline the population for "competition in the global market."

Thus capable students are now being tracked into STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields. The capitalist system requires schooling which produces compliant and uncritical workers, or cannon fodder for imperialist wars. The function of capitalist education was made explicit by College Board president and CCSS architect David Coleman, who made these infamous remarks when addressing a group of New York State educators on personal writing in the curriculum:

"[A]s you grow up in this world you realize people really don't give a shit about what you feel or what you think... It is rare in a working environment that someone says, 'Johnson, I need a market analysis by Friday, but before that I need a compelling account of your childhood.'"

This is the principle underpinning the CCSS: the purpose of schooling is not to prepare students to think – only to be what Karl Marx called "wage slaves." The ruling class has little need for, and indeed is threatened by, students who know the lessons of history. But students and teachers in Jefferson County, Colorado have refused to be regimented, and their example is spreading.

*In mid-November, thousands of high school seniors in the Denver metropolitan area refused to take high-stakes, state-mandated science and social studies tests, including more than 1,500 in Boulder high schools and nearly 1,900 students in nine Douglas County high schools, more than half the students affected. This points the way to fighting the capitalist assault on public education, but it poses sharply the need for a class-struggle leadership of teachers unions to replace the present misleaders who have sold out students and teachers to the Democrats.*

Historically, denying education to the oppressed has been a means of reinforcing social control and constraining working-class consciousness. Under slavery, it was illegal, and often subject to heavy punishments, to teach slaves to read or write. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs fight for free quality lifetime public education for all under student-teacher-worker-parent control. This simple democratic demand can only be fully realized as part of the broader fight for the socialist revolution that alone can make it possible for education to serve the interests of working people and the oppressed.

This fight is international, as the attacks on public education are being orchestrated by the imperialists worldwide, affecting students in Mexico as well as the United States, Europe and around the world. And to lead that fight we need a revolutionary workers party. As internationalist students and class-conscious educators, we must do our part to build it. ■



## To Break the Chains of Slavery, We Must Expropriate the Bourgeoisie!

The CUNY Internationalist Clubs have held speak-outs at Hunter College three times this fall – at the beginning of the semester on September 3 (see opposite page), on November 25 and again a week later on December 4 – to protest police terror, from Ferguson to New York City and Ayotzinapa, Mexico. Scores, and in the most recent case some 200 students, faculty and staff came out to voice their outrage.

The most fundamental question posed is how to fight the escalating racist repression. At the November 25 protest, the day after the racist Ferguson decision, Daniel of the Hunter Internationalist Club spoke to this issue. Here are his remarks:

Racism and class are not separate issues. The only way to truly unravel the chains of African slavery whose legacy still exists to this very day is to expropriate

the bourgeoisie, to expropriate the ruling class, who keep keep black people, Latinos, Asians, gays, lesbians, transgender people down. The workers, united with the students, united with all oppressed groups, have the opportunity to change things. Not the “non-violence” bullshit rhetoric of the Democratic Party. Organization of the working class, with the students and the oppressed – this is the path to liberation.

How can you make this system fall? Not by yourselves. With the organized proletariat. [Cheers.] Only an organized working class can shut the city down. In Mexico, the workers stood in solidarity with the students. An organized working class is the most terrifying thing to the police, to Bloomberg, to de Blasio, to the Democratic Party, to the Republican Party. Workers and students: shut the city down.

## Garner, Brown...

*continued from page 1*

support to the rhythm of the chants. But the police were undeterred, arresting 100 people the first night, over 200 the next, and more on December 5 as demonstrators took the anger to Macy’s and the Apple Store.

The CUNY Internationalist Clubs joined in the protests from the first hour, gathering in Union Square, marching to Rockefeller Center, then to the West Side Highway. On December 4, we held a speak-out in the plaza at Hunter College which drew 200, with powerful and moving contributions by many who had never given a speech before. We headed downtown with a contingent of several dozen African American, Latino, Asian and white students to Foley Square, and then back into the streets. “Eric Garner, Michael Brown – Shut the whole system down!” we chanted, and “Only revolution can bring justice!” Hundreds of marchers picked up our chants.

Coming on the heels of the Ferguson decision letting off the murderer of Michael Brown, the fact that killer cop Daniel

Pantaleo walked makes clear that the entire legal system is stacked against black people. As our signs said, “No Justice in the Capitalist Courts.” And the fact that the murder of Eric Garner was caught on video and still the murderers got off exposes all the phony talk by NYC Democratic mayor de Blasio and Democratic president Obama about “retraining” police and putting body cameras on cops (which they can turn off at any time).

The chokehold cop (who has made hundreds of “collars” under NYPD commissioner Bratton’s policy of massive arrests for minor “crimes”) isn’t the only guilty one. Add the cops who piled on top of Garner, pushing his face into the sidewalk and crushing his chest so he couldn’t breathe; the EMS technicians who didn’t try to save him, and the prosecutor who let Pantaleo off and granted the rest immunity. They all belong behind bars – but it won’t happen, because the bourgeois ruling class backs its snarling, racist guard dogs to the hilt, whether in blue uniforms, plainclothes or suits and ties.

Police killing of African Americans doesn’t stop. Three days after the Garner

## From Ayotzinapa to Ferguson: One Struggle

Greetings from the Grupo Internacionalista/Mexico to speak-out at Hunter College called by CUNY Internationalist Clubs, November 25.

Dear comrades:

From Mexico City, we send internationalist greetings to your protest today. The abominable reality of racist U.S. capitalism has shown itself yet again, as have the bloody jaws of Mexican capitalism. From Ayotzinapa to Ferguson, the struggle is one: it is not just against this or that group of politicians, be they Democrats or Republicans, members of the PRI, PAN or PRD, but against the capitalist system itself, founded in both countries – as throughout the world – on the brutal exploitation of the workers, the oppression of women, racism against black and indigenous people, etc. The struggle of the working class on both sides of the border has the potential to defeat the bourgeoisie. From here, in the midst of the struggle in defense of the *normalistas* (teachers college students) of Ayotzinapa, we say that your fight is our fight. ¡Luchar, vencer, obreros al poder! (Fight, win, workers to power!)



decision they buried Akai Gurley, shot in the stairwell of a Brooklyn housing project by a rookie cop who didn’t report the incident as Akai lay dying and instead texted the PBA (Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association, i.e., the cop protection racket) rep for advice. In Cleveland, 12-year-old Tamir Rice was shot to death on a playground by a white cop dismissed from his last job for using firearms dangerously. And in Phoenix, a cop chased Romain Brisson into his home as he was bringing dinner from McDonald’s, and shot him in front of two women and two kids.

Now various empty “reform” proposals are being floated, like appointing special prosecutors when police are investigated. Cops and prosecutors are all part of the same “team,” and they run the grand juries. The courts are just as much part of this apparatus of repression. Walk into any courthouse, through the metal detectors, past the intimidating gun-toting police lining the halls, into a courtroom and watch how they process defendants like a factory assembly line. A special prosecutor would be just another cog in this well-greased machinery of injustice.

Some protesters yell at the police, “you

serve us.” Like hell they do. Anyone who says the police are potential allies, “part of the 99%” or “fellow workers” is spreading deadly dangerous illusions. The cops are the first line of defense for the exploiters and oppressors. Who do CUNY administrators call to suppress us when we protest their attacks on student rights, or war criminals like David Petraeus? The NYPD. The one-two punch of racist injustice, from Ferguson to NYC, should drive home that basic truth about the forces of repression. It’s Marxism 101, shown on the streets of New York.

To do away with racist police terror for good, we must kick out the racist ruling class that the police “serve and protect.” This is what Marx and Lenin meant by the capitalist state. And it will take a revolution, a workers revolution championing all the exploited and oppressed, to bring it down, to sweep away the cops, courts and capitalist politicians and replace the dictatorship of capital with the rule of the working people who produce all the wealth.

As revolutionary students, we Internationalists seek to do our bit to help build a workers party to lead that fight. ■



A speak-out on December 4 at Hunter College (left) called by CUNY Internationalist Clubs to protest the grand jury decision not to charge the cop who murdered Eric Garner, drew 200 participants. Later, a contingent of dozens of students (right) went to Foley Square. “Only revolution can bring justice,” they chanted.

Internationalist photos



# CUNY Students, Faculty Speak Out Against Racist Repression

This report from a CUNY Internationalist activist on the September 3 “speak-out” at the City University’s Hunter College campus includes edited excerpts from speeches made at the protest.

The heinous police murder of Eric Garner in Staten Island, followed by that of Michael Brown and the military/police occupation of Ferguson, Missouri, brought a wave of outrage across the United States and around the world. Thousands of anti-racist young and working people of all ethnicities took to the streets in solidarity with the besieged African American population of Ferguson, and with the families of Brown, Garner and others targeted by deadly police brutality. Backlash bigots eventually got up the nerve to start collections for the cop who gunned down Michael Brown, while in New York their counterparts howled in lynch-mob fury against the teachers union for daring to join a march in support of the Garner family. Faced with the unending horror of racist police terror, the question was posed to all, in the words of the old miners’ song: “Which side are you on?”

For its part, the Democratic Obama administration did its job for the ruling class, which decided some time ago that it would be useful to have some “black faces in high places” to help administer the system of racist oppression called capitalism in the U.S.A. Having funneled high-tech weapons to police across the country, while waging ever-expanding wars abroad, they tried to head off protests with speeches about non-violence (for the oppressed only). Meanwhile, Missouri Governor Jay Nixon (also a Democrat) mobilized the National Guard to try to terrorize the black people of Ferguson. Attorney General Eric Holder, seconded by cool-things-out operatives Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, worked to drown mass indignation in illusions about police “reform.” These are the same illusions pumped out time and time again when revolution against systemic police violence has reached crisis proportions.

At the largest urban public university in the U.S., the City University of New York, police harassment is a basic fact of life for innumerable students, together with economic crisis and spiraling inequality that keep making life harder for them and their families. As students and faculty returned for the fall semester, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs got a strong response to our call for a “Speak-Out Against Racist Repression” on September 3, at CUNY’s Hunter College in midtown Manhattan. With Internationalist activists leafleting intensively from the beginning of the school year, students were drawn into animated discussion on the roots of racist police terror and what needs to be done to end it. Club members noted a lot of responsiveness to our point

that police brutality is endemic because “U.S. capitalism is racist to the core” and has been since its origins in chattel slavery. They also saw a marked upswing in interest from black women students in particular, as well as many first-year students.

During last school year’s protests against CUNY’s hiring of former Iraq/Afghanistan war commander and CIA head David “Death Squad” Petraeus (see *Revolution* No. 10, October 2013, as well as additional articles on the web page of *Revolution*), the Board of Trustees ramped up its efforts to eliminate student protest, pushing for an “expressive conduct” policy that would gut the most basic rights. Reflecting this, hours before the September 3 speak-out on police repression, a sign-making and literature table inside the Hunter campus was shut down by campus police (on the pretext that a “permit” was needed to use otherwise empty tables). That this was no coincidence was highlighted as they ostentatiously turned a large sign announcing the protest so it was facing the wall and could not be read.

Held outside the Hunter West building, the September 3 speak-out drew upwards of 75 participants at its peak, with a core of about 45 staying the full two hours. Immigrant restaurant workers came down from the Bronx as part of a delegation from the Laundry Workers Center organizing group. A group of African American workers from the New York Blood Center, located near the campus, were drawn to the protest and stayed for a while listening intently to the

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.internationalist.org/revolutiontoc.html>



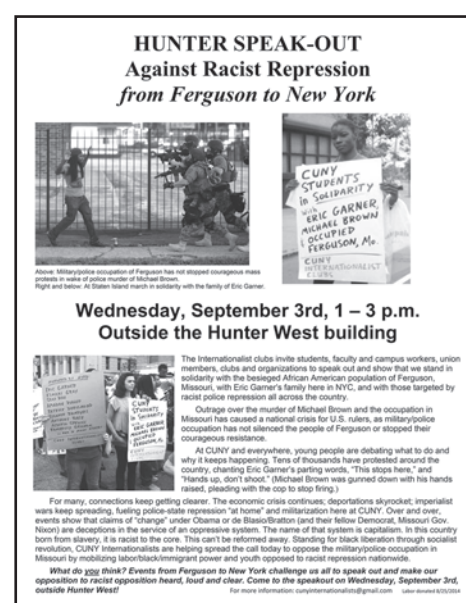
Students and faculty at Hunter College, City University of New York, at September 3 speak-out organized by CUNY Internationalist Clubs against racist repression, from Ferguson, Missouri to New York City.

speeches, as did some Hunter maintenance workers. Apart from the Internationalist Clubs and Class Struggle Education Workers, the CUNY “left” was completely absent, with the honorable exception of one Progressive Labor Party activist at Hunter.

It was noteworthy that a number of people who had never participated in any kind of protest before stepped forward to voice their own responses, ideas and experiences regarding racist repression. Building on this and deepening the political discussions from the September 3 event will be key to our work. We print below excerpts from some of the remarks by participants:

**Portia, CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Class Struggle Education Workers, opened the event:** Join with us today in this Speak-Out Against Racist Repression, from the murder of Michael Brown and the racist occupation that was carried out in Ferguson, Missouri to the case of Eric Garner and all those killed by the NYPD. It’s not a case of “some bad apples” in the police – this is a system of racist police brutality built to enforce capitalist power. This is what we’re protesting against. We’d like to hear what people have to say, to speak out and take a stand. Come grab a sign and stand in solidarity.

Ferguson, Missouri was put under a militarized lockdown. The anti-racist protesters were facing assault rifles, tanks, all kind of military equipment, all of this brought out to back up the police power that killed an innocent teenager just because he was black. We see this repeated over and over again. The killings of Eric Garner and



## Leaflet for September 3 speakout.

Michael Brown happened within a short time in 2014, but this goes back centuries in this racist capitalist country that was built on slavery.

We need to speak out against the kind of system that causes the murders of black and Latino youth in order to protect its profits, to protect its chokehold on the working class and other oppressed groups. So I’d like to ask people to speak up, if you’ve had an experience with police brutality, if you’ve been stopped and frisked or witnessed stop-and-frisk, if you’ve seen the police beat up someone or murder someone. We need to talk about this and what needs to be done.

**Hunter student:** I’m sick of it. I’ve been stopped and frisked, I’ve been pushed down, I’ve been beaten up by cops. We shouldn’t take it. I’ve seen too many people arrested on the street for bullshit. I’m sick of it, this systematic oppression of people in this country. It’s not going to end until we do something about it.

“How old was Michael Brown when he was shot down?” another speaker asked.











liberation. They also discussed the successful union organizing drive at the Hot and Crusty bakery near the Hunter campus, which the Internationalist Club mobilized students and adjuncts to support. The crowd chanted: “Asian, Latin, Black and White: Workers of the World, Unite!” and “Stop Racist Police Terror!”

**Christina, CSEW:** I’m a student here at Hunter in the Education program. Those of us who are doing student teaching working with ESL students work with children from immigrant homes or who grew up speaking a different language. One of the big issues that’s faced is police brutality in their communities. But the kind of curriculum that’s being imposed on us stands in the way of discussing the kind of issues we are talking about here today, and stands in the way of the critical thinking that we’re supposed to be encouraging. In fact, the lesson plans are being censored. Education is under attack. From pre-school all the way to graduate school, education is being more and more censored all the time. What we are doing here today – and actually thinking critically about all of this – is very important. We need to continue organizing.

**Hunter student:** When I was 17, I was arrested; I fell in with the wrong crowd of guys one night, and I got off with a slap on the wrist, even though I resisted arrest because they were undercover officers. The same police department gunned down an unarmed black teenager named **Denzel Curnell**; that was earlier this year [in Charleston, South Carolina].<sup>4</sup> The same police department that laughed and said “boys will be boys,” because I’m white, and it was in the South, later gunned down a boy who was about the same age as myself. Why does “boys will be boys” only apply to white boys such as myself, and how long does police violence have to go on until things change?

**Gordon, CUNY Graduate Center student:** Hello, everyone – I’ll just tell you a little anecdote about my life. My parents are from Jamaica; my father is Afro-Jamaican, my mother is mixed. As I was growing up here in the U.S., my father would always tell me that every time I interacted with the police I would have to be respectful, do what they say, really toe the line, because otherwise I would run the risk of suffering severe bodily harm. I don’t imagine that many white folks – and I grew up in a mostly white neighbor-

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.charlestoncitypaper.com/charleston/gaps-remain-in-the-denzel-curnell-suicide-narrative/Content?oid=4957874> and <http://www.charlestoncitypaper.com/TheBattery/archives/2014/06/24/police-denzel-curnell-was-armed-officer-did-not-fire-shot>

hood – got that kind of talk from their parents.

So if we fast-forward a few years, I was living in Philadelphia. Similarly to something mentioned earlier today, there was a police unit which came to my apartment at 4 in the morning; they didn’t use a flash-bang grenade, thankfully, but they broke down the door. They didn’t have a warrant. They put me under arrest, and I was handcuffed. I asked what I was under arrest for and they said I “knew” what I did. They showed me a picture of a black man – clearly not me, with a different complexion, he was older, he was bald, he had a different weight. They looked at his picture, they looked at me, then they uncuffed me and said “Well, it’s all the same to us.” And then they left.

A year before that I was also arrested, for what one of my friends called “being black in public.” This was also in Philadelphia. I was just walking to meet a friend from work, and I saw, incidentally, a black man being brutalized by the police. So I stopped and I was watching it. They were accusing him of resisting arrest. From my perception he was not resisting arrest: the arresting officer was a white man, he had called him a “nigger.” The fellow that was being placed under arrest said, “OK, I don’t want to be arrested by you, have someone else arrest me.” Then they tased him three times, and he was charged with “terroristic threats,” which in Pennsylvania means up to three years in prison,<sup>5</sup> because he supposedly threatened to fight the police officer. A 16-year-old girl filmed the tas-

<sup>5</sup> See <http://law.onecle.com/pennsylvania/crimes-and-offenses/00.027.006.000.html>



ing and was punched in the face and her phone destroyed (smashed on the ground). I and the arrested man’s brother were arrested for supposedly “inserting ourselves” into a police investigation. The judge pressured us to plead guilty or no contest, but we pleaded not guilty. When the trial date came around we were told the charges had been dropped for lack of evidence. We both testified for the arrested man, and he got off, thankfully, because it was a bogus charge. He

was lucky that he survived being tased three times in the space of about two minutes.

To sum up: police brutality, particularly against blacks and Latinos, is not something that’s unique to New York or is an anomaly in Ferguson. It is something that is part and parcel to the social system which we currently inhabit. So – it needs to go.

**Will, Hunter student:** I haven’t experienced police brutality against myself, but I can say something about the capitalist system that we live in. I’m sick and tired of living in a society where I have to go into debt in order to get an education. And then lots of us will be forced to do something we don’t like as a job, in order to get out of debt. We’re being forced by these corporations, and have to continue paying them our wages – and student debt is the only kind of debt that you can’t get out of, ever. If you declare bankruptcy, you still have to pay your student debt back. If you die, it goes to your spouse or your children. It’s not right.

We need to make huge changes in this capitalist society in order to get ourselves free. The police brutality that happens against people of color in this country is the same kind of brutality that this country is perpetrating on other people of color overseas. It’s just oppression so that the people in power can make more money. It’s the same kind of oppression that’s been going on since the founding [of the U.S.]. First it was slavery, then slavery was overthrown and it became Jim Crow; then that was overturned and now it’s just locking people up or killing people on the street. Things are not changing, and they won’t change unless

people stand up and have their voices heard.

**Sándor, CSEW:** Amadou Diallo became a symbol of the system of racist police terror. So perhaps after you’re murdered you have a street named after you, like Amadou Diallo Place. They even put Malcolm X on a postage stamp decades after he was killed. Decades after they went after Paul Robeson, they put him on a postage stamp, too, and a high school was named after him (which was shut down in the recent wave of racist school closings). In his book *State and Revolution*, V.I. Lenin – together with Leon Trotsky, he was the leader of the Russian Revolution – said that when revolutionaries are alive, the ruling class demonizes them and says you should hate and despise them. But after they’re dead, you can make them into a safe icon.<sup>6</sup>

On August 23 a march for Eric Garner’s family was held in Staten Island, which we went to. The United Federation of Teachers did a good thing – union leaderships often don’t do what they should, but in this case they supported that march to stand in solidarity with the family of Eric Garner. The faculty/staff union from CUNY also marched. And then the Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association launched a campaign against the teachers union, saying how dare they take an “anti-police” stand by marching that day.

What a lot of teachers say is: How could we *not* stand with our students? Who is being targeted by stop-and-frisk? At CUNY too – you can see it at the subway exit at Hostos Community College in the South Bronx, and lots of other places. For unions to take a stand against racist police brutality is an important beginning, but it’s only a beginning. How many petitions have there been about these issues – and what have they accomplished? Nothing! What were you told when Obama was running for election? “Yes We Can – Hope and Change.” To have an African American president was a social change in a society founded on slavery – but did it bring a political change? [*Voices from the crowd: “Not at all!”*] The deporter-in-chief is President Barack Obama of the Democratic Party. He has escalated deportations to 400,000 a year, a new record.

Every time you turn on the television there’s a new war. The U.S. has been at war virtually all the time through the lives of most of the people I see here. The governor of Missouri who sent in the National

<sup>6</sup> Writing about attempts by reformist “socialists” to water down and distort the ideas of Karl Marx in order to justify alliances with their “own” capitalist rulers, Lenin wrote that “in the course of history, [this] has happened repeatedly to the theories of revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes fighting for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their theories with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonize them, so to say, and to hallow their names to a certain extent for the ‘consolation’ of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time robbing the revolutionary theory of its substance, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarizing it.” As part of the preparation of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, Lenin wrote *State and Revolution* to educate workers and youth in the Marxist understanding that “special bodies of armed men” such as the police and armed forces are the core of the capitalist state; that the purpose and function of this armed fist of the ruling class is to subjugate the workers and oppressed; and that the bourgeois state cannot be reformed or “taken over” – it must be smashed and replaced with a workers state.



Guard is a Democrat too. And it's Obama's Department of "Defense" that's given all that military equipment to the police. But what if the unions didn't just go to a march but actually used their power against racist terror? For example, the people who drive the subway right here and the buses – their sons and daughters are being slammed up against the wall, locked up, locked down and targeted by the police under Mayor de Blasio and his appointee Bill Bratton today. As we have said time and again, the next time the NYPD carries out one of these racist murders, the transit workers and other unions should shut the city down. Wall Street can't get its workers if there's no subway. We're talking about the power of the working class. We won't get anywhere with illusions in the Democratic or Republican parties – only by exercising that power.

Where "race" and racism and racial oppression come from is the capitalist system. This isn't just "a theory" (we're told evolution is "just a theory" too) – it's what you find out when you look at history.

**Hunter student:** I'm studying a lot about poverty right now. I read statistics from a study that showed that people living in Harlem had a shorter life expectancy than people living in Bangladesh.<sup>7</sup> How is this possible in one of the richest countries in the world? How is it possible that the lowest 60% of the U.S. population has just [2.3%] of the wealth? How is it possible that we can't feed our kids nutritious meals? Because bad food is cheaper. How is it possible that we're living in a city that is so divided, where people are sleeping on the ground because they can't find anywhere to live, while people are living in \$4,000 apartments on the park?

I would also like to make a comment about the Michael Brown shooting and the killing of so many young black men. It is a crisis for our generation, whether you're white, black, Latina, anything – you should be concerned about this attack on people of our age group. You can pretend that you're ignorant, that you don't want to look up anything about it or get involved, that it's "too political" – but it's a crisis. When someone your age has a likelihood of being shot down for no reason, you should be afraid and you should be angry. We should all be angry.

**Hunter student:** It's called police brutality, but what it really is, is a war being waged against people of the cities by the police. That warfare is waged not only through physical violence but economic violence, like gentrification, running people out of their homes, out of their neighborhoods. It's a systematic approach of oppression. And that war won't end until people do something about it.

**Hunter student:** It's no coincidence that at the same time the military or National Guard were called in to occupy Ferguson, the occupation of Gaza turned extremely violent. Because working people have to be walled off by the state, and when those walls don't work effectively the state will use violence with no conscience to keep those working people down. And you can see that clearly when the military National Guard was called into Ferguson to restore "order" and when the IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] were sent into Gaza to bomb indiscriminately and kill Palestinians. The state will always use violence to defend profit, from this part of the world all the way to other parts of the

world. The struggles of minorities in this country are intimately linked to Palestinian struggle and to struggles all across the world for people who are oppressed.

**Amy, Hunter student:** As a Hispanic woman, I've been living in the Bronx the majority of my life. I'm 20 years old and a Sociology major. I want to say that all too many of us are more comfortable leading our own individual lives than caring about what is going on. Yet we are witnessing systematic violence against the very people who have been here since slavery. And then there is the social question of how people treat each other and are divided up, like on social media: light-skinned against dark, I have money and you don't – these are all derived from capitalist ideas. You are idolizing the very thing that's oppressing you!

So they want it to be Hispanic versus black, one skin color against another. The people who have been the most oppressed historically are the minorities, and need to be one of the main voices speaking out against this. We're here now in student debt like my fellow student said today; in poverty. I had to work over 40 hours a week while maintaining my GPA, and I'm still waiting for my overtime pay from my job. Don't let your mind get murdered, 'cause that's how the capitalist system works in intricate, quiet ways.

**Rally organizer:** How do you get more people to come out to protests and to speak out? By organizing. And it's not always easy. Who spends their time organizing against racist police terror, or against the oppression of women, or against wage theft and other things discussed here today? The type of people that do that are usually radicals. Being radical means getting to the root of things. It means digging under the surface. And that's what we have to do if we want to get to the bottom of racist police brutality. We've been talking about the idea that racial oppression and police violence are related to capitalism. So we'd like people to think about that, and to think about connections between racist repression here and imperialist war abroad, between racial oppression and the oppression of women, what we mean by class struggle and socialist revolution.

*[There was discussion about the struggle against the militarization of CUNY, the Board of Trustees' appointment of David Petraeus, how ROTC and military recruiters target poor and working-class students to be cannon fodder to kill and be killed for imperialist war.]*

**B., Hunter student:** That's how they got me – ROTC. I bumped into a recruiter outside of my house, a mile away from my school. He was doing all this convincing, to get me straight from high school. And I actually did it, but thank God I got out of it, because honestly I don't think you should be fighting for something when you don't understand what it's about. When I signed up, it was right around the time the war started. We were being sent to Iraq. I found out that 250 people from my unit ended up passing away. I feel like you should be informed, rather than letting these people brainwash you with all these promises that aren't really going to happen. We could make a difference if we stand together and fight together.

**E., Hunter student:** I've done some writing about racial oppression, and some studying on racial stereotypes. People may have seen material about the "doll tests" [on concepts about skin color among young children]. Anderson Cooper went into schools

and asked a series of questions to children from very diverse backgrounds – black, white, Asian, Latino – about a white doll and a black doll. They'd ask which is the pretty doll, and which doll is the nice doll, and many children, whether white or people of color, would choose the white doll; they'd ask which is the ugly doll or the bad doll and they'd choose the black doll. So even within children, stereotypes get developed at a very young age... You can trace some of it back to Linnaeus,<sup>8</sup> who labeled different "races" as "subspecies," *Homo Europaeus*, *Homo Asiaticus*, *Homo Africanus*, etc. A lot of these kinds of ideas continue to exist even though it has all been proven to be wrong.

**Allison, Internationalist Clubs:** What I wanted to talk about is that this isn't just some issue of police "reform." We don't need "nicer" police, we don't need "better training" for police. The police are trained. And we're not only talking about situations like Ferguson and the situation with the killing of Eric Garner. We're not talking about a few renegade cops being "more aggressive than necessary." We're talking about police officials traveling to Israel to learn occupation tactics. We're talking about police being supplied with military equipment and armored cars, even in places in rural Maine.

And that brings up another point: that this isn't just about "excessive militarization" of the police force. This is the nature of the police, the armed force of the state. And we don't need to make sure that the police "Serve and Protect," because they already do. The police do not serve and protect "the people," not black, Latino, immigrant workers. The police serve and protect exactly what they were created to serve and protect: the capitalist system. And capitalism thrives on racism. Just as the U.S. imperialist operations in other countries serve the interests of capital abroad, the police serve to repress the people within this country who pose a threat to the existence and stability of capitalism.

But I also wanted to say that this system is not eternal. It's actually very sick, and we need to do more than try to patch it up and treat the symptoms. We need to put forward a revolutionary program that can challenge and overthrow the existing system itself, because that is when we will begin to see the end of tragedies like this, and the end of racism.

*A rally organizer spoke about how the origins of the police in the United States lie in the "slave patrols," established by the slave owners to hunt down and capture runaway slaves. On the basis of these patrols, Charleston, South Carolina created a uniformed, armed paramilitary force in 1783 to control the city's large slave population, with other Southern cities following suit. It was half a century before Boston established the first Northern paid police force, followed by New York City.*

*The speaker also pointed out that the system of armories, like the one on 67th Street across from Hunter College, was set up in the wake of the Great Labor Uprising of 1877. In St. Louis, Missouri, one of the*



**Slave patrols: the origin of modern police in U.S.**

*hubs of that mass labor revolt, black and white workers united in militant struggle that led the capitalist class to build up its repressive forces against the threat of social revolution. This is vividly depicted in the documentary "1877: The Grand Army of Starvation," produced by CUNY's American Social History Project and narrated by James Earl Jones (see <http://ashp.cuny.edu/ashp-documentaries/eighteen-seventy-seven/>).*

*After the rally, many students stayed to discuss the issues raised and plans for further organizing. ■*

## Mexico...

*continued from page 12*

nalista literature), at rallies, mass meetings and sessions of the Inter-University Assembly we have been fighting for the organization of a *national strike against the government of murder*. We want to see this strike succeed in spreading from the education sector to important sectors of the working class.

The current struggle began abruptly in late September, when we began to mobilize in support of the strike at the National Polytechnic Institute [sparked by a government-ordered "restructuring" plan]. We organized ourselves into teams of students from our CCH and other schools in the UNAM system to visit the Polytechnic campuses and participate in the strike pickets. We also took the opportunity to invite the Polytechnic strikers to visit our school. In the midst of these activities we heard about the horrible crimes committed in Iguala against the *normalistas* of Ayotzinapa. It was obvious to us that we had to do something, quickly.

The first result of this work of agitation took place on September 30, when we organized a rally inside CCH Sur where the attack on the *normalistas* was discussed for the first time. We emphasized that it can only be understood in the context of the assault against public education, which the striking Polytechnic students are also facing.

There were 150 participants in that first rally. Although this was not a large number, we considered it an important beginning.

Over the following weeks, we participated in ever larger marches and walkouts. On October 15 a very impressive march set out from our campus towards the huge interior plaza on the main UNAM campus. As we marched to join the activities on that first day of university walkouts in defense of Ayotzinapa, at least a thousand of us CCH students poured down to Insurgentes Avenue on our way to University City. As we arrived at the nerve center of the UNAM system, our slogans expressed the solidarity that unites us with our comrades the *normalistas*, with those who were first to be murdered on the night of September 26, with the 43 who were disappeared, and with all their comrades who continue the fight. There in front of the massive administration building, among the thousands of demonstrators we linked up

**Revolution**

<sup>7</sup> See <http://lifeabundantly-alim.blogspot.com/2010/09/people-die-younger-in-harlem-than-in.html>; [http://articles.latimes.com/1990-01-18/news/mn-336\\_1\\_death-rate](http://articles.latimes.com/1990-01-18/news/mn-336_1_death-rate); <http://tcf.org/blog/detail/a-tale-of-two-recoveries>

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with comrades of the Mexico City local of the Grupo Internacionalista who are active in the schools of Philosophy and Letters, Economics, and the National School of Anthropology and History.

During that first walkout, more than 80 schools were brought to a halt. During the walkout of October 22, the figure rose to more than 120 schools in the Mexico City region alone, and many others in the rest of the country. Newspaper accounts estimated that more than 350,000 students did not have classes that day.

Since then, almost every day has been filled not only with activities, but with debates and discussions too. What are the most effective ways to defend the *normalistas*? How can we build solidarity with the Polytechnic strike? Many of our fellow students have a typical “studentist” perspective, that what needs to be done is just intensify the students’ own marches and mobilizations in order to stop the government’s attacks. That is a false perspective, we maintain: there have been plenty of student walkouts, but the bloody *system* keeps on going. We

understand that capitalism will not even concede democratic rights to the workers and their families unless they fight to take them for themselves. Even then, any such gains would be short-lived unless there is a workers revolution establishing a workers and peasants government, which would fight to extend socialist revolution internationally.

For these reasons, we also insist that the current struggle be understood as a *class struggle*. And as Marx said, every class struggle is a political struggle. That is why young people and students who really want to fight for free, high-quality public education, who want real justice for the kidnapped *normalistas* and their families, should take a stand for a working-class, revolutionary program.

These are not pretty words out of some romantic past. Quite the contrary. The workers, as we explain to our classmates, as we emphasize in rallies and class announcements, are the only ones with the social power to sweep away this horrible system, whose bloody face we have seen so bitterly in the kidnapping of our *normalista* comrades, many of whom are just a couple of years older than us.

The power of the working class comes from the fact that it is proletarians who make production, transportation and marketing of goods possible in a capitalist society. Without their labor, everything would come to a halt: what would the stock market yuppies do, with all their speculation moves, if the workers stopped production? How could the mass media blast their poisonous propaganda without the electrical power generated by the workers? How would police vans and armored vehicles function without the fuel extracted from the subterranean depths by the labor of the operators of the drilling platforms and refineries?

We also explain that the much-needed workers mobilization will not fall from the sky. A crucial task of revolutionaries is to bring to workers the consciousness that they need to fight against the whole capitalist class, its governments and its parties, not just the PRI and the PAN, but also the PRD of Iguala mayor José Luis Abarca and his godfathers like the (now former) governor of Guerrero, Ángel Aguirre. As for the National Regeneration Movement (Morena) of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, known by his initials AMLO: with all its talk of a “loving republic,” this is one more bourgeois party. And AMLO himself is linked to Lázaro Mazón, the main political godfather of the murderous mayor Abarca. In a word, it is necessary to carry out the struggle on the basis of *class independence*, completely breaking all the chains that keep binding the working class to one or another sector of the bourgeois class. And to accomplish this, it is necessary to build a revolutionary workers party.

Our participation in these days of struggle has given us important experiences. From the first rally that we organized on September 30, to the mass assemblies in CCH Sur that approved the walkouts of October 22 and 23 and November 5, 6 and 7 with more than 1,000 votes in favor, we have had to learn quickly, from how to organize the assemblies to how to explain to other students the need to extend the struggle to the working class in the form of a real national strike (not just days of marches and processions) aimed against the government of murder.

In this process, with speeches and one-on-one discussions we have succeeded in

spreading to other students our enthusiasm for carrying the struggle beyond the schools and universities, to make it possible to carry out a national strike. We have also had to debate about different “forms of struggle” such as direct action, cultural activities, and also proposals for what is sometimes called an “active stoppage” [in which work doesn’t stop] that turn out to be a way to demobilize people and not do anything at all.

We know that a lot still needs to be done. Recently, we have had to face a “moderate” wing of the Inter-University Assembly, which in an increasingly organized way has been fighting against the perspective that it is necessary to begin an all-out walkout (rather than time-limited ones) that can help pave the way for a national strike.

We understand that it is crucial to

insist on the need for such a strike if we want something so basic as justice for the Ayotzinapa *normalistas*; we know that this will not be achieved from the bourgeois courts, but only by mobilizing the powerful Mexican proletariat.

In the course of this work we have won over young people who have actively participated with us in mass meetings and mobilizations, and we have succeeded in forming the nuclei for new Comités Internacionalistas in schools that are part of the Polytechnic Institute, for example. These committees, together with the one we have at CCH Sur, will bring together young people who want to fight for education, health care, against machismo, homophobia and all forms of oppression, and thus grasp the urgency of fighting for international socialist revolution. ■

## Mumia Abu-Jamal on the Upheaval in Mexico

*The following is a transcription of excerpts from a recorded commentary by former Black Panther, radical journalist and celebrated author Mumia Abu-Jamal. The most prominent class-war prisoner in the United States, Mumia has spent 33 years behind bars in Pennsylvania, most of it on death row, targeted for his politics in a blatant frame-up for a crime he never committed.*



*This piece on Mexico was posted November 20 on the Prison Radio site (prisonradio.org), which contains Mumia’s commentaries on a wide range of current, historical, political, social and cultural issues. A vital resource for students and teachers at CUNY and throughout the world, Mumia’s commentaries are even more important today in light of the latest efforts to silence the “Voice of the Voiceless,” as he is frequently described.*

*In response to a broadcast commencement address by Mumia, speaking from prison to graduating students at his alma mater, Goddard College, in October 2014, a bill was fast-tracked through the Pennsylvania legislature imposing a gag rule on prisoners. Known as the Mumia Law, this blatantly unconstitutional assault on basic democratic rights goes under the Orwellian name of “revictimization relief.” The measure makes it possible to sue prisoners for exercising basic rights of free speech.*

*This is the latest episode in a vendetta pushed by the Fraternal Order of Police and capitalist politicians both Democrat and Republican. Frustrated in their attempt to kill Mumia outright through the legal lynching of the death penalty, enraged that three decades on death row (commuted to life without parole in 2011) did not break him, they are intent on stopping people throughout the world from hearing Mumia tell it like it is.*

*Why are they so afraid of what he has to say? Precisely because so many are inspired by Mumia’s words, his courage and insight in defense of the oppressed. In helping to spread his call for solidarity with the struggle in Mexico, we seek as well to enlist new layers of activists in the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal.*

### Mexico: State of Corruption, State of Terror

The disappearance of 43 students in Mexico, made possible by the deep corruption of politicians and police, has rocked the nation in ways not seen since 1968. Then, as now, students protesting the failures and corruption of the state became breaking points, the sparks of rebellion and social rejection of the rotten status quo.

With the news that local police in Iguala, Guerrero state, under orders of the corrupt mayor, kidnapped 43 students and delivered them to hit men for a drug gang, the gates have burst open to national protest and widespread contempt for the government. For it reveals in stark clarity that the state is so corrupt that there is no difference between politicians, cops and drug-dealing gangsters. They’re all in on the same game of money, violence and crime; they are brothers.

They show that under neoliberalism, the state itself is for sale to the highest bidder, and so are gangsters – for capitalism buys all, and therefore it corrupts all. But if you think a mere mayor ordered the liquidation of dozens of students on his own say-so, well, I’ve got a bridge to sell you in Brooklyn. This points to a system of corruption that ripples throughout the entire government. American journalist John Gibler, in his 2011 book *To Die in Mexico*...explains the dimensions of the so-called “drug war” in Mexico and its resultant pervasiveness of fear.

This explains and makes possible the attack, arrest and massacre of college students from Ayotzinapa who came to Iguala to protest: 43 young men. What we’re looking at is simple: state terrorism.

From *Imprisoned Nation*, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal. ■

### A Timeline of Mexico Upheaval

**1910:** Mexican Revolution breaks out against crony capitalist dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. Victory of bourgeois Constitutionalists in 1917 frustrates revolutionary aspirations of poor peasants and workers.

**1919:** Government forces murder Emiliano Zapata, symbol of peasant revolt.

**1929:** Official government party formed, predecessor of Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which ruled Mexico for 71 years, until 2000.

**1938:** Nationalist/populist regime of Lázaro Cárdenas nationalizes oil industry.

**1940:** Bolshevik revolutionary Leon Trotsky murdered in Coyoacán by Stalinist assassin.

**1958:** PRI government represses railway workers and teachers strikes, jails activists.

**1968:** Mass student upsurge demands freedom for political prisoners, protests PRI regime. On October 2, government massacres hundreds in Tlatelolco Plaza.

**1985-88:** Mass discontent at government response to Mexico City earthquake; huge strikes and protests by electrical workers, university students. PRI dissidents form PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution), supported by “popular front” of class-collaborationist groups.

**1994:** Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) launches Maya-based insurgency in southern state of Chiapas, on first day of North American Free Trade Agreement.

**1999-2000:** Ten-month strike at National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) stops imposition of tuition ordered by World Bank. Workers defense guard sparked by Grupo Internacionalista important for strike’s victory.

**2012:** PRI’s Enrique Peña Nieto begins six-year presidential term, forms Pact for Mexico with PRD and rightist PAN; continues “drug war,” escalates privatization of oil industry.

**26-27 September 2014:** Mayor of Iguala, Guerrero orders police attack on students from the Ayotzinapa teachers college. Six killed on site, 43 students are “disappeared” (abducted).

**October-December 2014:** Mass protests spread throughout Mexico. Grupo Internacionalista fights for “national strike against the government of murder” as part of struggle for workers and peasants government and international socialist revolution.



## Internationalists Fight to Bring Out Workers' Power Upheaval Over Massacre of Students in Mexico

The following message from some of our young comrades in Mexico was sent to Revolution on the eve of the November 20 paro nacional (one-day national stoppage), part of the nationwide upheaval sparked by the massacre of students from the teachers college of Ayotzinapa in the southern state of Guerrero. The massacre occurred on September 26 as the normalistas (as teachers college students are called in Mexico) were preparing to return to their school from the city of Iguala. They had gone there to raise funds for a trip to Mexico City, where they planned to participate in the annual commemoration of the 1968 massacre of students in the capital city's Tlatelolco Plaza. Instead they were massacred themselves.

In Iguala, police killed six people on the spot, and kidnapped ("disappeared") 43 Ayotzinapa students. The killers tore the skin off the face of one of the murdered students and dumped his body in the town square the next day. The mayor of Iguala who ordered the police assault is a member of the PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution), which is part of the Pact for Mexico alliance formed by President Enrique Peña Nieto's PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) and the conservative National Action Party.

The massacre of the Ayotzinapa students has led to an explosion of social struggle the likes of which Mexico has not seen in decades. After 100,000 Mexicans were killed over the last eight years in the drug wars ordered by the U.S., this hideous crime by a criminal government was the spark that lit the tinder box. Since the beginning of October, the country has been convulsed by massive marches of tens of thousands, an ongoing strike by teachers in Guerrero, the torching of state government offices and takeovers of two dozen city halls there, as well as student walkouts at

universities in Mexico City and elsewhere in the country. The political crisis has led to the resignation of the governor of Guerrero and protesters demand that President Peña Nieto resign as well.

Across the globe, actions have multiplied to protest the massacre in Mexico. Building militant solidarity with the struggle has been a focus of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs, which helped initiate emergency protests at the Mexican consulate, together with mass leafleting, tabling, film showings and participation in weekly protests for Ayotzinapa in NYC's Union Square.

Below we print the message from young comrades of the Internationalist Committee at a junior college for sciences and humanities (CCH) in the south of Mexico City. These schools are part of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) system. UNAM is Latin America's largest university, with 337,000 students.

From the Comité Internacionalista at CCH Sur:

With this brief account of our activities, we send our warmest internationalist greetings to our comrades of the Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York.

### For a National Strike Against the Government of Murder



Internacionalista contingent in October 22 march to the Zócalo in Mexico City.

Your mobilizations at the Mexican consulate in New York on October 5 and 8 were among the first examples of international outrage against the crimes of the Mexican bourgeoisie. They drew considerable attention here, and contributed to raising the spirit of struggle.

The bloody attack against the Ayotzinapa *normalistas* – ordered by the mayor of Iguala, a member of the PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution), on September 26 – has turned life here in Mexico City upside down. This has been the case for young people above all.

Since the massacre occurred, we have participated in mass marches which have drawn from 15,000 to 150,000 participants, and walkouts lasting 24 hours, 48 hours and even 72 hours in our school and dozens of others throughout the country. Teachers and other education workers from the CNTE (National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers) have built major mobilizations in the states of Guerrero and Michoacán, where they have attacked government buildings and occupied city halls. In Oaxaca they have carried out large-scale work stoppages and road blockades that paralyzed the entire state.

Daily life is also filled with examples of how much the events have affected life here. On city buses, music students recite poems expressing how angry and fed up they are with this murderous government. Then, on the same buses and in Mexico City metro (subway) cars, spontaneous discussions break out between strangers, who applaud the students.

In school courtyards, 43 empty chairs remind people every day that 43 *normalistas* have been "disappeared." Photos of the 43 Ayotzinapa comrades are displayed on cords strung across city plazas or laid out on the ground for all to see.

Candles are kept burning in public spaces everywhere, to express – independently of the religious connotations – that indignation continues to burn not only among young people but among their families as well. On any given day, in front of the Palace of Fine Arts in downtown Mexico City, the plaza of Coyoacán and the entrance to the Iztapalapa *delegación* (borough hall) in the south, or in the center of Azcapotzalco to the north, young people stage dances, play drums, recite the satirical poems called *calaveras* and discuss the next walkouts they are organizing in their schools. Older people participate too.

Sometimes these activities are so moving – for example, when the names of the disappeared are read out, one by one – that tears run down the faces of many a participant. You can feel anger everywhere.

In the midst of all these events, the past weeks have been a period of accelerated learning for those of us who belong to the Comité Internacionalista at CCH Sur. As the old motto declares, we have dedicated ourselves to the struggle to "educate, agitate and organize" around a working-class and revolutionary program among students and youth who are mobilizing for the *normalistas* of Ayotzinapa. With "brigades" (teams that give speeches and distribute our Internacio-

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Internationalist Group and CUNY Internationalist Clubs at November 16 demonstration for Ayotzinapa students in New York's Union Square.