

## Democrats & CUNY Trustees Vow: Tuition Increases Forever!

By Aubeen Lopez

In late July, the New York State Commission on Higher Education (CHE), established last year by former Democratic Governor Eliot Spitzer, released its final report. The purpose was to present “a strategy for making New York competitive in the 21st century global economy,” said CHE chairman Hunter Rawlings. And what might that strategy be? Complaining of “too little revenue, too little investment, and too much regulation,” the commission put forward “a new financing approach”: *make the working class pay!* Not so new, actually.

The CHE’s approach, titled the New York State Compact for Public Higher Education, calls for raising tuition by 2.5 percent to 4 percent a year. This will hit community colleges, which enroll mainly working-class students, particularly hard. The CHE report admits that New York “community college average tuition and fees are well above the national average” – in fact it was the highest of the states they compared, with students at New York’s community colleges paying more than *four times* as much as California students, \$3,074 compared to \$721. So, since it’s already the highest, the Commission’s answer is to raise it again, and again, and again.

A few days later Governor David Paterson, while lounging around in the Hamptons, announced an austerity program of a whopping \$1 billion in budget cuts, of which \$51



Internationalist photo

CUNY Contingents Unite called Sept. 22 march on Gov. Paterson’s NYC office to protest budget cuts and tuition hikes.

million will be slashed from the City University of New York (and another \$94 million from the State University budget). This will include cuts to library services, student services, maintenance and other basic operating expenses. No cuts, however, for CUNY

chancellor Matthew Goldstein, who rakes in a cool half million bucks a year for his services, such as raising tuition. (But then he can barely keep up with the SUNY administrators and elite faculty, who make up 96 out of the 100 top-paid state employees!)

In response to Paterson’s announcement of billion-dollar budget cuts, SUNY Board of Trustees chairman Carl Hayden, who was appointed by Democrat Spitzer, mused that the fiscal nightmare could be an

*continued on page 2*

## Fight for Open Admissions, No Tuition!

## Elections 2008: War, Racism and Economic Crisis Democrat Obama No Answer To Republicans Bush/McCain

### We Need A Revolution

We print below an edited version of a talk by Abram Negrete, speaking for the CUNY Internationalist Clubs, at a September 16 forum of the Revolution Film Club at Hunter College.

Over the past days, students have looked at the news and seen that the Wall Street investment banks Lehman Brothers, which has been around for 168 years, and Merrill Lynch, which has existed for 94 years, just failed. A lot were saying, “Wow, what does that mean for us?”

So imagine that you would take all of your food for the next three years, all your money and all your medicine, or medical care, and put them all of it in a small pile. Put your grandma there too. If you have any kids, put them on the pile. And turn all of that over to a couple of

irresponsible gamblers who are on the street corner playing craps, so these guys can bet with all the stuff that you need to live. Well that’s the society that you’re living in. Billions and billions of dollars are being bet by gamblers on the stock market, and the fate of society depends on those bets.

Over the past few days, the gambling class as a whole – the capitalist class, the people that own what we all depend on for life – has seen a catastrophic crash. We’ve got headlines like “Dow Crashes 504 Points: Wall Street Crisis” in the *New York Post*, which has little editorials castigating the Wall Street speculators for being bad, as if the *Post* wasn’t a mouthpiece of the Wall Street speculators themselves. Then we have that highly objective, truth-telling newspaper, our lovely *Daily News*. I’m being ironic, of course, as it serves up a daily diet of lies, racism, war-mongering and overall nastiness. So the *Daily News* has: “Wall of Fear: Markets Brace for Morning After Massive Bank

Shake-Up.” This comes after the \$200 billion bailout given to the mortgage companies called Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae.

Now we all know that welfare is supposed to be an evil, terrible thing. Except if you’re talking about 200 billion dollars to people who are speculating with mortgages.

Here at CUNY we just had \$51 million of the CUNY budget slashed, not by Republicans, but by the Democratic governor Paterson, with the conniving assistance of the CUNY administration itself. They slashed \$51 million, and they’re talking about permanent annual tuition hikes, because supposedly there’s no money out there. They tell the adjuncts and other part-time teach-

ers here that they supposedly can’t afford to give a lot of them health care, can’t afford job security, can’t afford to give even half-way decent wages, because supposedly there’s no money out there. Meanwhile the feds turn around and give 200 billion dollars to these private companies.

Here in New York, Democratic Party governor Paterson just gave what amounts to a \$20 billion bailout ... to who? Students? No, that would be bad, you can’t do that. Teachers? No, you have to keep those teachers poor. No, it’s to American International Group (AIG). AIG is an insurance company. A \$20 billion break for a company making

*continued on page 8*

Obama Wants You to “Serve” Imperialism!  
ROTC Get Out, Stay Out . . . . . 8  
Democrats, Republicans Unite for War and Union-Busting

## Tuition Increases...

continued from page 1

“unprecedented opportunity to secure a rational tuition policy” (Albany Times Union, 30 July). “Small, predictable increases permit parents and students to plan,” he added. So, don’t worry, they’re saying to students and families, by making the tuition increases yearly and predictable, this will let you prepare in advance! It’s all for your own benefit, of course. In other words, *you’re screwed, deal with it!* Students, faculty and working people need to fight *now* to stop this “soak the poor” plan.

In fighting the tuition hikes and budget cuts, CUNY students should make common cause with faculty, campus workers and working and poor people also affected by liberal Democrat Paterson’s draconian austerity measures. In addition to slashing higher education, he got the state legislature to cut \$77 million in social and outreach programs, \$141 million from healthcare, \$506 million in Medicaid, and so on. These budget ax murders are a result of the capitalist economic crisis which has sharply reduced real estate profits, Wall Street bonuses and other mainstays of the state budget. And since Democrats and Republicans are united in saying there must be no tax increases for the billionaires, they’re gutting programs and services for the working class and the poor generally.

So what needs to be done? The predictable response of organizations like New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) will be to go to Albany to lobby Democratic legislators. But let’s look at the big picture. In the past, Republican governors like Pataki would regularly propose tuition increases and the Democratic state assembly would sometimes vote them down. (Except when they didn’t, like in 2003, when they approved a huge 25 percent hike!) So now with the Democrats poised to take the state Senate, in addition to the Assembly and the governorship, for the first time since 1965, they’ll be in total control in Albany. And what do we get? *Perpetual tuition increases!* Thanks a bunch.

Not surprisingly, CUNY/SUNY brass and the legislators are keeping silent about this during the election campaign. (As the *Times Union* reporter wrote: “Not much of a re-election platform for lawmakers: ‘Vote for me! I raised your kid’s tuition!’”) But it’s coming, you can bet on it. And sweet-talking the Democrats may not have the desired effect. What’s really needed is a *working-class offensive against the capitalist onslaught.*

### Public Higher Education Under Attack

SUNY Board of Trustees head Hayden calls for “small, predictable increases” in tuition. The Commission on Higher Education Report spells this out. It proposes to allow the schools themselves to make “modest and predictable annual tuition increases,” *deregulating* the process by allowing CUNY and SUNY to increase tuition on their own. The new system would also let individual schools “charge differential tuition rates by program and by campus, with the revenues generated returned to the campuses for investment.” Why “deregulation”? Because up until now, CUNY and SUNY administrators had to get approval from the state legislature to raise tuition and

fees. From now on, the Trustees could do this on their own.

Democrats see the present “fiscal crisis” as an opportunity to do what the Republicans couldn’t, namely cut millions of dollars in spending on social programs. And the attack on CUNY and SUNY is not an isolated incident. It is part of a nationwide capitalist attack on public education. They want to use “charter schools” (where tax dollars are used to fund privately managed, overwhelmingly non-unionized schools) as an opening wedge. Democrat Obama supports this stealth privatization, calling to double the amount of federal money to charter schools. Across the country tuition costs are skyrocketing like never before. They just had a U.S. Senate hearing in which a Republican, Charles Grassley, said of the richest universities that they “could educate all of [their] undergraduate students, regardless of need, free of charge” with just 1 percent of their assets! In contrast to such wealthy private campuses, of course, CUNY and SUNY have no multibillion endowments.

Tuition nationally has risen twice as much as family incomes since 1980. What options do students and their families have? Student loans, of course. But nationwide there is a student loan crisis, as bank after bank has stopped lending to students in need of financial support, leaving thousands to drop a semester or abandon hopes of a higher education altogether. This is just one part of the whole credit crisis that is shaking the capitalist financial system to its core, beginning with “subprime” mortgages but extending to credit card debt, auto loans, commercial real estate, you name it. Community colleges are particularly hard hit because the cutthroat banks and loan sharks consider working-class families to be less “creditworthy.”

In light of the crisis in student loans, the CHE report cynically calls for a new “low-cost student loan program” — meaning low-cost to the state, since this entire program will be paid for by students and their families. What they’re saying is “if you can’t afford the raised tuition, get a loan, and then I own you” — because you will spend a decade, or more likely *decades*, paying off the tens of thousands of dollars, including interest, that you will owe.

The Democrats are just as bad as the Republicans. Barack Obama’s running mate, Joe Biden, was directly responsible for pushing through a change in the personal bankruptcy laws that makes it almost impossible to wipe out debt for student loans. Biden is known as “the senator from MBNA,” a huge credit card company based in Wilmington, Delaware, until it was bought three years ago by Bank of America. Biden’s son worked as a consultant in MBNA and the senator got just enough Democratic support to pass the company’s top legislative goal, the 2005 Bankruptcy Reform Act, which makes it harder for working-class borrowers to escape credit card debt by filing for bankruptcy protection. It’s also making it easier for landlords to evict a bankrupt tenant. How convenient for these fat cats that this “reform” was passed right before the housing and credit crisis blew up!

In the struggle against the bipartisan *capitalist* war on public education, the Internationalist Group and CUNY Internationalist Clubs call for *open admissions and no tuition*, as well as a *state-paid living stipend for all students*. We call for *special*



1971 demonstration for free tuition and open admissions at CCNY.

programs to overcome the effects of years of educational deprivation suffered by students in run-down, understaffed, underfunded inner-city schools. At CUNY we also call to restore so-called “remediation” programs whose elimination in 1999-2000 led to a sharp drop in the number of black men admitted to the senior colleges. Standing on the program of Marx and Engels, we fight for freely available public education at all levels as a gain for the working class, even though the content of that education under capitalism inevitably reflects the dominant bourgeois ideology. Marxism is based on the highest scientific achievements of capitalist society, and we demand that the exploited and oppressed have access to those achievements as necessary tools in their fight for emancipation.

### The Fight for Open Admissions

The state tries to justify its “new financing approach” by the fact that it faces a \$6.4 billion deficit. This is not the first time they’ve used an economic crisis to attack public education. In 1975-76, following the defeat of the U.S. imperialists at the hands of the Vietnamese workers and peasants, New York City banks declared a fiscal crisis and demanded that public spending on everything from bridge maintenance and subway cleaning to the City University be slashed. The “crisis” affected the entire country, as a result of the government using huge deficits to finance the Vietnam war. Democrat Lyndon Johnson and Republican Richard Nixon tried to have “guns and butter” at the same time and the result was runaway inflation. When the government started paying off the accumulated debt, public colleges and universities across the country had their budgets cut. But at CUNY there was an additional element: city rulers and university administrators used the crisis to strangle open admissions, won after a 1969 student strike that shook the entire city. Now that large numbers of black and Latino students were attending the City University, tuition was introduced in 1976 for the first time in CUNY’s history.

City College (which later gave rise to CUNY) was founded in 1847 to provide an education to the children of the working class. Known as the “Free Academy,” by the turn of the 20th century the majority of the students there were of Jewish and Catholic immigrant origin, groups that were excluded from the universities of the Protestant “establishment.” By the 1930s, during the Great Depression, CCNY became a hotbed of leftist radicalism. Yet in the ’60s, white students made up 96 percent of the overall student population at City College. In 1968, students at Columbia University allied with residents of the largely black surrounding community, and CCNY became known derisively as “white Rhodesia in Harlem” (Ron McGuire, *The Struggle at CUNY: Open Ad-*

*missions and Civil Rights*, 1992).

As a result, in 1969 around 250 black and Puerto Rican students went on strike and took over the buildings of City College. The student strikers’ demands were focused on raising black and Puerto Rican enrollment and instituting black and Puerto Rican studies programs. But the powerful city unions pushed for opening admissions to all high school graduates, and this was eventually adopted. The next freshman class grew by 75 percent, with significantly more white students as well as *seven times* more minorities than the previous year. In 1971, after witnessing the explosive hunger for education embodied in mass black and Hispanic enrollment, Nixon’s vice president Spiro Agnew (who was no mental giant) said that CUNY would give away “100,000 devalued diplomas.” Ever since, this has been the complaint of elitist and outright racist reactionaries at CUNY and in the city’s ruling class.

Although the strike for “Open Admissions” won historic gains, this was still not full open admissions, for the university was stratified into community colleges and “senior” colleges, with placement decided by rather arbitrary exams. By 1976, the first full-out attack on open admissions was made with the introduction of tuition, ending the 130-year tradition of free public higher education at CUNY. At that time, during the crisis provoked by Wall Street bankers with Democratic mayor Abe Beame acting as hatchet man, as many as 50,000 CUNY students were forced out of school.

Since the very beginning of open admissions, the government was already on the move to take back with the right hand what it was forced to give with its left. Earlier in 1976, CUNY instituted a new policy of skills assessment testing. Incoming freshmen were required to take tests in reading, writing and mathematics. That same year CUNY, responding to pressure from the city government and the Municipal Assistance Corporation (an unelected body run by the bankers which took over financial control of NYC), announced plans to shut down Hostos Community College, the first bilingual college in U.S. history, won as a result of a building takeover by Puerto Rican students in the South Bronx. But a massive mobilization of students and Bronx working people managed to defeat this attack (see “The Fight to Keep Hostos Open,” *Revolution* No. 3, November 2005).

What followed was a quarter-century-long war of attrition by city rulers and their followers in academia against open admissions. In 1977 CUNY implemented a retention policy where students were required to earn credits at a specific rate and with a gradually increasing grade point average. In 1979 tuition was hiked yet again, this time by a staggering \$900 per year. In 1982 liberal Democratic governor Mario Cuomo proposed another hike of \$200 more per year. In

Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University, Charles Rivers Photograph Collection. Photograph by Charles Rivers

## Revolution

Newspaper of CUNY students from the Internationalist Clubs, for the program of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, published in accord with the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International



Revolution is published by Mundial Publications, P.O. Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A. Telephone: (212) 460-0983 Fax: (212) 614-8711 E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

No. 5



September 2008

1985 another attack was launched, this time a tuition hike of \$750 a year, leading 8,000 more students to drop out of school. In 1989 there was yet another increase which led to campus takeovers.

In 1990-91 tens of thousands of CUNY students occupied campus buildings and marched in the streets with striking Local 1199 hospital workers as a result of a tuition increase of \$500 a year by Cuomo and black Democratic mayor David Dinkins. (While slashing the CUNY budget, Dinkins – a member of Democratic Socialists of America – went on a hiring spree to employ thousands more cops.)

In March 1995, when Republican governor George Pataki issued a budget cutting 25 percent of state revenues to CUNY and raising tuition by 41 percent (\$1,000 more), some 15,000 students protested, marching on City Hall and Wall Street. The protesters called for a “Student Strike Against the Cuts, Shut the City Down” and took down American flags on City Hall (“Remembering the March 23, 1995 CUNY Student Strike,” March 2005). In 1999 the CUNY Board of Trustees voted to eliminate remedial classes at CUNY’s senior colleges. Again there were protests by students and faculty, but much smaller than in the past, and so this last vestige of open admissions was knifed.

### A Communist Fight for Public Education

The original battle for open admissions was won through struggle. As the students’ popular chant in 1995 went, “Education is a right – fight, fight, fight.” But what kind of fight? The whole history of the struggle to win and defend even an approximation of open admissions demonstrates that it is crucial that *students must ally with the working class*. This is part of a broader struggle against the cutbacks and takebacks that affect all poor, minority and working people. Capitalism in its period of decay is systematically tearing down and eliminating past gains. Not only are union contracts, pensions and benefits being slashed, so is the democratic right to education. The “market-oriented” reform proposed by the state Commission on Higher Education is intended to further the corporatization of “public” universities, making post-secondary education a *privilege* for which students will have to pay increasingly impossible rates.

Student strikes can be instrumental in sparking a struggle against the bosses’ government, but only the working class can carry it to victory. To fight for the democratic right to education today requires a struggle not merely against a board of trustees or a state legislature, but against the Wall Street bankers, every level of bourgeois government, and the capitalist system itself. To lead that fight, what’s needed is a revolutionary workers party that acts as a “tribune of the people,” defending all the oppressed. The struggle to build such a workers party must be waged against all capitalist politicians and parties, not only against the Republicans but also and particularly against the Democrats whose votes in Congress keep the Pentagon war machine rolling, and who in New York are *spearheading* the attack on public education.

Over a century and a half ago, in the 1848 *Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels called for “free education for all children in public schools.” After the October Revolution of 1917, which overthrew capitalist rule in Russia, the Bolshevik party headed by Lenin and Trotsky translated these words into reality. It will take socialist revolution to abolish capitalism and bring about a society based on a planned economy, where human needs and not profit determine what is produced. Only then will it be truly possible to have free quality education for all and unlock the tremendous creative capabilities of humanity. ■

## Venegas Brothers Face Prison for Speaking Out Against Police Brutality Defend Rebel Diaz, Drop the Charges!

By Fred Bergen

On September 3, the brothers Gonzalo and Rodrigo Venegas, better known as “G1” and “Rodstarz” of the radical hip-hop trio Rebel Diaz, were hauled into Bronx Criminal court to face charges of resisting arrest and obstructing justice. Dozens of supporters gathered outside were barred from the courtroom by the judge. In fact, the Venegas brothers were thrown in jail and now face up to a year in prison for daring to speak up as they witnessed a blatant case of police brutality. We urge everyone to turn out on December 16 to protest this racist frame-up and pack the court, where you can witness the capitalist injustice system in action.

Last June 18, the Venegas brothers were showing a friend around the Bronx when they saw police officers harassing street vendors and dumping their fruit at the corner of Westchester Avenue and Southern Boulevard in the Bronx near Hunts Point. The brothers offered to translate for the Spanish-speaking vendors and asked the police to identify themselves. The cops refused, and when Gonzalo began to write down the badge numbers the police charged. You can see what happened next as a dramatic cell-phone video shows the NYPD thugs piling on the Venegas brothers, kicking, clubbing and handcuffing them, and hauling them off to the 41st Precinct, where they were held for ten hours.

They were released the next day, but their ordeal had only begun. On June 20, as scores of youth protested outside the court, they were charged with the two counts each of resisting and obstructing. While these are misdemeanor charges, they can carry sentences of up to a year behind bars.

Then, three days later, at around 1 a.m. on June 24, four police officers burst into the Harlem apartment of Gonzalo Venegas, guns drawn, ordering him and his two guests to lie face down on the floor while taunting



Gonzalo and Rodrigo Venegas being arrested by the NYPD, June 18.

and harassing the three terrified youths. The cops did not knock to announce the raid, nor did they identify themselves or present a warrant, claiming they were in pursuit of an unnamed “fugitive.” Shortly thereafter, not even bothering to search, they stormed out of the apartment. The NYPD denies that there was any police activity in the area that night. This was a clear act of retaliation, and a threat of further violence.

What’s going on here is that the New York Police Department treats the South Bronx and many other minority neighborhoods as if they were under military occupation. They rule over the heavily immigrant, black and Latino residents as if they were Palestinians in the Occupied Territories or Iraqis in Baghdad. The notorious 1999 cop assassination of African immigrant Amadou Diallo, cut down by 41 police bullets on the doorstep of his home, took place less than a

mile away. The following year black youth Malcolm Ferguson was executed by the police after being chased into an apartment building. When his mother, Juanita Young, dared to protest, they tried to throw her in a dungeon as well.

An expressive mural by artist Hulbert Waldroup on the corner of Wheeler and Westchester, on the very block where Diallo was killed, shows the police in KKK hoods (see page 7). This is the everyday reality that the Venegas brothers witnessed and dared to question.

Rebel Diaz is a radical Latino hip-hop group that has made powerful rap music dvds. One of their most famous pieces (which is played during the video of their arrest) is set to the music of the old Harlan County miners’ union song, “Which Side Are You On.” Their parents are Chilean ex-  
*continued on page 7*

## NYC Picket Protests Persecution of Haitian Workers in the Dominican Republic “Haitian and Dominican Workers Unite!”

By Clara Barnes

AUGUST 7 – “Dominican government, hands off Haitian workers,” “Stop the racist deportations” and “*La lucha obrera no tiene frontera!*” (Workers’ struggle has no borders). These were some of the chants heard during an emergency picket held outside the Dominican Consulate in New York City to denounce the atrocities inflicted on Haitian workers living in the Dominican Republic. More than 75 people attended this important event, a united front with Haitians and Dominicans protesting side by side, holding up posters and handing out leaflets to passers-by in busy Times Square.

This event took place just a week before the August 16 inauguration of Dominican president Leonel Fernández’ third term in office. Xenophobic appeals (against foreigners) by top government officials sparked concerns that massive deportations of Haitian workers would be high on the president’s agenda. Mass expulsions are nothing new for the up to one million immigrant workers living in horrendous conditions without access to education or healthcare. A wave of mass deportations took place in 2005-06 where tens of thousands of Haitian workers and their families were rounded up at random and thrown across the border that Haiti shares with the Dominican Republic (D.R.).

Dominican officials whip up racism by blaming Haitian immigrants for the poverty endured by Dominican workers, just as immigrants in the U.S. are accused of “stealing American jobs.” This political hysteria turned words into action and set off violent lynch mobs in 2005 that burned down hundreds of shacks and killed dozens



Demonstrators outside Dominican consulate in Times Square, August 7.

Internationalist photo

# Adjunct Rebellion at CUNY

By Abram Negrete

If you are a student at the City University of New York, chances are most of your teachers are adjuncts or other “contingent” faculty. Does the prof in your survey class make enough to pay the rent? Does he or she have health insurance? The answer may well be “no.” And, if they’re what CUNY calls “part-time” faculty, they have *zero* job security. This is one of the dirty little (actually huge) secrets of the CUNY system. In fact, it’s increasingly common throughout the country.

Now CUNY adjuncts, graduate student/teachers, Continuing Ed instructors and other “part-time” teaching staff have launched a rebellion against intolerable conditions. Their fight is part of the struggle of students, faculty and staff at the nation’s largest urban public university, against deepening inequality, budget cuts, tuition and fee hikes – and for defending our right to public higher education.

It began with a roiling fight this summer over the latest contract signed by the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), the union representing CUNY faculty and staff. To understand the heat, you have to go back a couple of years.

## “Deepening inequality”

The contract the PSC settled with CUNY in June 2006 left the abysmal conditions of contingent faculty in place. An adjunct activist who is a CUNY Internationalist Clubs member spoke at the union’s Delegate Assembly calling for a “no” vote on the contract. However, while many “part-timers” were deeply dissatisfied, by and large they tended to buy the promises of the union leadership (organized in the social-democratic “New Caucus” of union president Barbara Bowen) that “adjunct issues” would be a priority in future rounds. Some also wanted to avoid criticizing the union officers at a time when the New Caucus was running for reelection, facing a right-wing opposition called CUNY Alliance.

That contract expired in September 2007. The next month, the union launched its new contract campaign at a mass meeting in Cooper Union, where hundreds chanted “Fight, fight, fight!” and cheered adjunct activists’ calls for a militant mobilization. At the rally, Bowen put forward key priorities for this “phase” of the union’s “multi-contract strategy.” Prominent among these, in the words of the PSC newspaper *Clarion* (November-December 2007) was to “address two major aspects of the adjunct system – lack of stable health insurance (including for graduate employees) and lack of job security for long-time adjuncts.” When adjunct activists asked the union’s negotiating committee to make a commitment to not sign a contract that would *increase* the gap between full- and part-time faculty, they were told that “the strategy” had already been decided...by the negotiating committee and Executive Council. In other words: forget it.

The events that followed marked a new stage in labor struggle at CUNY, bringing ample coverage in the *Advocate*, *Inside Higher Ed*, *The Chief* (civil employees’ weekly), WBAI radio and elsewhere. On June 20, the PSC leaders and CUNY management reached a “settlement” that did *nothing* to move towards job security for adjuncts and other contingent faculty, left their wages at poverty levels (providing below-inflation raises for full-time faculty, while widening the gap with part-timers’ pay), and left the issue of health insurance for grad students to future negotiations with the city and state.

CUNY contingent activists reacted with



Internationalist photo

## CUNY Contingents Unite was formed out of bitter struggle over union contract that widened yawning gap in two-tier academic labor system.

outrage. Adjuncts long active in the union joined with grad students from the Adjunct Project to launch an unprecedented campaign for a “no” vote. The ad hoc group mobilized over 50 people to attend the union’s July 1 Delegate Assembly (DA), where the leadership unveiled the proposed contract, seeking approval to send it out to the membership for ratification.

The group came with signs calling for a “no” vote, and a statement emphasizing: “We demand that the bargaining team go back to the table. The contract must include:

1. Real progress on job security. Three-year teaching contracts for adjuncts, at a minimum.
2. Health coverage for all...
3. Real progress against the gross inequality we face. For starters, an additional \$1,000 per course. A salary step schedule and substantial raise for CLIP, Continuing Ed and others at the bottom of the CUNY system.”

They also called for postponing the vote to a subsequent DA meeting “so there can be a fuller and better-prepared discussion on the basis of all the relevant information.” Instead, the union leadership put its steamroller into high gear to shove through a vote then and there.

Stormy controversy ensued, with adjuncts and a number of sympathetic full-timers lining up at the microphones to answer union leaders’ paeans of praise to the rotten contract. Repeatedly, they had to fight to get time extended as leadership loyalists moved to shut down debate. “Non-delegates” who had stood waiting to speak – mainly graduate students active in the union – covered their mouths with “Guest” stickers until a motion from the floor opened discussion to half a dozen of them.

Meanwhile, even some delegates who argued that the contract was “the best we can get now” admitted that the union leadership had failed to mobilize any real struggle by the membership against the two-tier system. The enthusiasm expressed at the October 2007 Cooper Union mass meeting was allowed to dissipate, and “lobbying Albany” was the order of the day.

Many grad students reacted with in-

dignation when Stanley Aronowitz – a widely-read Sociology professor who is a leading light in the union’s Executive Council – lectured them to “read the *New York Times*” to see how city unions are forced to abide by “pattern bargaining.” For several, it came as a shock that Aronowitz, who has written extensively against the drive to “corporatize” universities, was calling on them to knuckle under and vote for another two-tier contract. “It’s as an object lesson in what social-democrats are all about,” an Internationalist supporter commented after the meeting.

## Censorship, Anyone?

With many reeling from the high-pressure, starkly curtailed discussion, a lopsided “yes” vote by the majority of delegates gave the leadership the rubber stamp it wanted to move on with its steamroller job. The “progressive” leadership’s pretenses to union democracy were flattened like a tin can. As a special issue of the union’s *Clarion* was being prepared, the part-timers’ group asked that a short statement be included explaining its opposition to the contract. The answer: “no,” no time, not enough space. The group then asked that the statement be printed separately and included with the mailing. Again: “no,” too expensive. Yet the union leadership repeatedly sent special mailings to the membership urging a “yes” vote.

After the second or third time around on this “no, no, no” carousel, Stanley Aronowitz suggested that the union produce a special contract discussion bulletin for the membership to present its views, both for and against the contract. The part-timers’ group vigorously took up this proposal, winning support for it from more than forty delegates and alternates. To no avail. Once again, the union tops’ answer was “no.” They claimed that “union resources” could not be expended to air views on the contract that were not the “union’s position.” They might as well have stamped “CANCELLED” across the elementary idea that the union consists of its *members* – who had not yet taken a position, as the ratification process was only beginning.

Faced with widespread dismay at this bureaucratic high-handedness, union presi-

dent Bowen declared that the PSC would establish a page on its website (<http://www.psc-cuny.org/delegatevotes.htm>) where delegates and alternates who had been present and voted at the July 1 DA meeting could explain their votes in 500 words. The page would be closed to everyone else – even delegates who had been unable to attend, not to mention the rest of the union membership. Union leaders then inserted “editorial notes” arguing against the points made by most of those who wrote in favor of a “no” vote. The exercise wound up underlining the union tops’ fear of genuine union democracy and determination to clamp down hard on debate.

The rebellion drew attention from publications devoted to crucial campus issues. “Revolt in the Adjunct Ranks,” headlined *Inside Higher Ed* (30 July). When the New Caucus won leadership in the PSC, the journal noted, it promised to “deliver more for faculty members, including part timers.” Now, it was “facing intense criticism from those whom it pledged to help: the part timers who lack the pay or job security of those on the tenure track.” The article continued:

“The dissident part timers charge that the contract – by failing to achieve anything in the way of job security for most part timers and by calling for the same percentage increase wages for most full-time and part-time professors, even though the former enjoy much higher salaries – effectively adds to the inequality between those on and off the tenure track. Adding to the controversy is anger from part timers who say that the union’s leaders are blocking them from communicating their concerns to the union’s full membership.”

The article quoted a posting by “one critic of the union leaders,” who had written: “Were we told that the declared priority of job security would be dropped? Were we told that increased inequity would be accepted? Were we informed during the months of negotiations that a sudden settlement would be presented and it was unalterably the ‘best’ that could be gotten – the ‘best’ meaning things getting worse for most of us?”

The dispute spilled onto the campuses, as “vote no” activists took the floor to answer union officials in meetings on the contract that the PSC called at several CUNY colleges. As the union leaders continued to send special mailings calling for a “yes” vote, they even scheduled phone-banking by leadership loyalists for this purpose but had to cancel it when virtually nobody showed up. Contract opponents asked for access to the same phone lists, but were met with stony silence.

## This Is What Bureaucracy Looks Like

Trampling on elementary union democracy is a hallmark of what militant unionists the world over call the *union bureaucracy*. Activists are accustomed to leftists saying that union bureaucrats “sell out.” This comes not from the personal characteristics of one or another union leader, but from the *function* of this layer as an intermediary between capital and labor. Specifically, this comes from the bureaucracy’s role as a medium to transmit the policies of the ruling class into the workers movement, turning the unions into what Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky called a “secondary mechanism” for the “subordination and disciplining of workers” (“Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay,” 1940).

What we have here is a textbook example. Expressing the program of the ruling class, CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein and Board of Trustees Chairman Benno

# WHAT'S WHAT AT WAL\*MART U

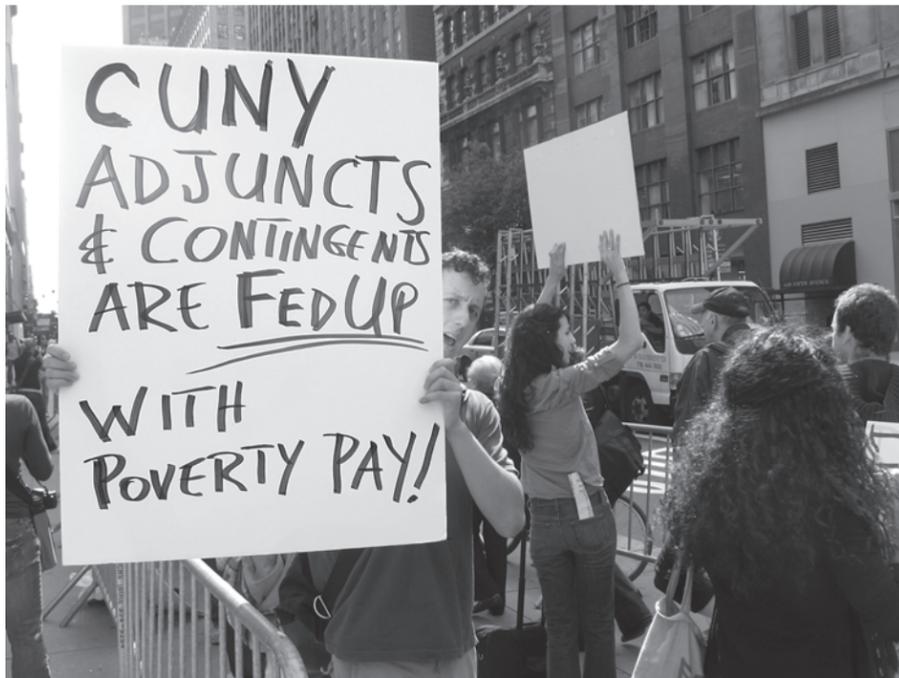
**What is an “adjunct”?** It’s not surprising that many CUNY students don’t know what adjuncts are. They certainly don’t appear on those fancy “Look Who’s Teaching at CUNY” subway ads. Adjunct instructors are hired by the semester and paid by the hour. They teach the majority of classes at CUNY, but are only paid for classroom time plus one office hour per week (total, not per course). This means they’re not paid for the many hours they spend preparing classes, grading papers and exams, etc. While classed as “part-time” employees, they often put in as many (or more) hours as “full-time faculty.” The category also includes “non-teaching adjuncts,” adjunct lab techs and others.

Many adjuncts travel from campus to campus teaching different courses. With no job security, they can be told at any time that they will not be hired the next semester; no reason has to be given. Absurdly low wages mean adjuncts can’t make enough to pay for basic necessities. Even one with a Ph.D. and several years of continuous teaching at CUNY typically makes less than \$3,500 per course (before taxes). That’s less than \$100 per student per course in a typical class of 35 students. Compare that to what CUNY charges per course!

If that same adjunct managed to teach seven courses in a school year, he or she would make less than \$25,000 a year before taxes. In New York City, one of the most expensive places in the country. Average rents here are \$1,600 a month, \$2,400 a month in Manhattan. Do the math. You can’t live on that. That’s poverty wages. And in fact, thousands of adjuncts make considerably less than that.

Ironically, as a former CUNY adjunct wrote, “once you adjust for inflation, the pay can actually decrease as the adjunct gains more experience.” Comparing what she made in 1986 with rates twenty years later, she observed: “if I were still an adjunct, my pay rate after 20 years of teaching experience would be 8 percent less in real dollars than it was in my first year at CUNY, when I was a complete novice who was still in school” (Ellen Balleisen, “Adjunct Pay: More Experience Means Less Money,” CUNY Grad Center *Advocate*, April 2007).

**Adjuncts are only one segment of the “contingent” workforce at CUNY.** There are also graduate students who have fellowships who teach, help with student writing, etc.



Internationalist photo

And then there are Continuing Education and CLIP (CUNY Language Immersion Program) teachers – whose wages and conditions are even worse.

Together, these groups are called “contingent” employees because their hiring is dependent (contingent) on what the given department and campus needs at the particular moment. Then they can be tossed aside. Denied respect as well as a living wage, they face another ugly fact: “academic freedom” is a hollow phrase for teachers who can be “not reappointed” if they teach truths that trustees can’t tolerate, or hold opinions that rabid right-wingers at the *New York Post* and *New York Sun* want to silence.

**“Wal-Mart U” labor abuse.** In key ways, CUNY treats its contingent labor force worse than the well-hated Wal-Mart company treats its employees. CUNY adjuncts get no health insurance at all for the first year they teach. If they teach three continuous semesters they start to get health insurance (if they teach at least six hours a week), but lose it if they miss a semester or take a fellowship. Continuing Ed and CLIP instructors are eligible for health insurance only if they teach 20 or more hours a week. Graduate assistants and fellows, scandalously denied health insurance by the university, have been fighting to get it. As for paid vacation or parental leave or anything like that: no, no and again no.

**How many adjuncts and other contingent faculty are there?** You’d think this was top-secret information, given how hard it is to get exact figures. No wonder: CUNY doesn’t want people to know how badly it treats so many of its teachers. An analysis of the American Association of University Professors’ “Contingent Faculty Index 2006” (based on a U.S. Department of Education database) shows that at 18 campuses of CUNY there were 6,182 full-time faculty (615 of whom were not tenure-track), and 8,356 part-time faculty, plus 658 grad student employees. This means that as of the last time figures were available, “part-timers” made up 57 percent of the teaching personnel.

The percentage of “part-time” faculty is significantly higher in New York State than elsewhere in the country. In line with the drive to make the City University “Wal-Mart U,” CUNY has one of the very highest percentages of contingent faculty anywhere. And it’s gotten significantly worse in recent years. In 1975 there were 11,268 full-time faculty for approximately 450,000 students (including both full- and part-time). Today there are about half that number of full-time faculty for roughly the same number of students. By working part-time profs to the bone for lousy pay, CUNY bosses save big bucks. They also do this because the **two-tier labor system** is a divide-and-conquer weapon that bosses find simply irresistible,

Schmidt want an increasingly elitist university. They set up a special “honors college” while Wal-Martizing conditions for the “riff-raff,” using rising tuition and fees to drive out many minority and working-class students. Launching big PR campaigns featuring star professors, they don’t mind paying high salaries for a few so long as they can keep pushing the lower tiers further down. Echoing the elitism of the university brass, a vocal minority of right-wing full-timers cries bloody murder if the union does anything at all for adjuncts (like when it got them a single miserly office hour).

The response of the PSC leadership? To ram through yet another contract that actually *increases* inequality, while boasting that it secured extra raises for those on the *top steps* of the pay scale. Actions speak louder than words. While rhetorically bemoaning the continuation of the two-tier labor system, the union leaders entrench it still further. To add insult to injury, they label the contract “principled” and “creative.”

With the union leadership refusing to distribute statements from the “vote no” cam-

paign, while pumping out a barrage of “vote yes” propaganda, a large proportion of union members remained in the dark about the issues involved. When the ballots were counted, only 7 percent wound up voting “no.” Many held their noses and voted “yes” because the union leaders played on fears that the current financial crisis could make matters even worse if the contract was not accepted. Contract opponents pointed out that this only meant that it was doubly wrong for the union tops to have sold out part-timers even *before* economic “hard times” hit.

America’s rulers always claim that economic crisis means those on the bottom must be hardest hit. Meanwhile, they give themselves billion-dollar bailouts while claiming “there’s just no money available.”

## The Democratic Party Connection

In an opinion piece called “Class Struggle and the PSC” (*Advocate*, September 2008), long-time adjunct activist Tom Smith wrote:

“The basic problem at CUNY is a uni-

versity administration that responds to budget cuts by repeatedly raising tuition for students and hiring a temporary teaching workforce. This austerity program, which they have pursued for decades, may help their bottom line. It will not, however, provide quality higher education for working people.

“The New Caucus won the leadership of the union after kicking out the old-line business unionists who went along with this austerity program. The old [leadership] didn’t give a damn for those of us who work for poverty wages, with no job security and in many cases without any health insurance. Once in office, however, the New Caucus has not defended the interests of those denied full-time employment. The New Caucus follows a liberal/social-democratic program of pressuring the state, via the Democratic Party, whose candidates it regularly endorses (including ex-governor Spitzer). It actually hopes to ‘unite’ with the university administration in pushing for more funding for CUNY....

“It emphasizes its ties to the Democratic

wherever they can get away with it. It’s a classic management tool to weaken unions and undermine labor solidarity.

**CUNY students have a direct interest here.** No matter how dedicated your professors are, if they’re getting chicken-feed to teach you, it’s not rocket science to figure that’s a bad thing. If they have to be afraid of maybe losing their job if they criticize the government, the war, or how Wall Street speculators get billions in bailouts while education gets budget-cut to death, that’s bad for us all.

More broadly, CUNY’s drive for ever-deeper inequality hits students, faculty and staff. The administration, trustees and their masters in the corporate elite would like us *not* to see that we have to unite against them to defend the basic right to education. A real struggle against the education system’s deepening inequality is urgently necessary for us all.

**The Taylor Law.** The CUNY administration thinks it can dictate terms to teachers and all its employees, not only because it’s backed by the billionaire mayor and the rest of the ruling class, but because of New York State’s infamous Taylor Law. Unionists call this a “slave labor” law, because it makes it *illegal* for public employees to exercise workers’ most basic right: to withhold their labor. The Taylor Law is what Republican Bloomberg and Democrat Spitzer (then attorney general) used against the transit workers when they went on strike three years ago. During Giuliani Time, Rabid Rudy threatened to lock up any transit worker (or supporter) who even *said* the s-word (strike). This is what city bosses call “democracy.”

The Professional Staff Congress (PSC) is the union representing 22,000 faculty and staff members at CUNY. In September 2005, when the PSC was in the midst of a more than three-year battle to get a new union contract, CUNY’s General Counsel Frederick P. Shaffer sent out an email message stressing: “The Taylor Law provides sanctions against public employees who engage in a strike and against employee organizations that cause, instigate, encourage and/or condone a strike against a public employer.” In case anyone didn’t get the message, he added: “The public employer [CUNY] may take disciplinary action, including termination of employment, against striking employees.”

—A.N.

Party, and its lobbying efforts, at the expense of our interests, particularly the interests of adjuncts, but also of full-time faculty (although this leadership does favor the latter as its most supportive stratum within the union).”

This means chaining the union to capitalist politicians who *enforce the Taylor Law*, who appointed a Commission on Higher Education to give the green light to trustees’ demand for ever-higher tuition, and who just cut \$51 million (for starters) from the CUNY budget.

Now the same PSC leaders who claimed scarce “resources,” and piously promised to make adjunct organizing an immediate priority “as soon as the contract is ratified,” are going all-out to line members up to campaign for Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, who wants to bring the Reserve Officer Training Corps back to college campuses, supports the death penalty, praises Bush’s “surge,” vows to escalate the Afghanistan war and threatens war against Iran and Pakistan.

*continued on page 10*

# CUNY Actions Back Dock Strike Against the War

David Pavlosky



CUNY students and faculty show support for ILWU port strike against the war.

The following article, reprinted from *The Internationalist* No. 27 (May-June 2008), is based on a report by a PSC delegate and supporter of the Internationalist Group.

The May 1 West Coast port shutdown against the war by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) had an impact in New York City. The dock workers' defiant action demanding immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Near East was an inspiration to workers, students and all opponents of imperialist war – as well as an example to emulate.

May Day events in solidarity with the ILWU action were held on eleven campuses of the City University of New York (CUNY) by chapters of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), the union representing CUNY faculty and staff. These included rallies and teach-ins at Hunter College, Hostos Community College and Bronx Community College, a speak-out against military recruiters at Queens College, a march into Manhattan from NY City Tech, and tabling at several other units of the largest urban public university in the United States.

At Hunter College, preparations had been underway for weeks, with beautiful posters, signs and more than 1,500 leaflets distributed by faculty and students as well as immigrant-rights activists and cab drivers who came to help out. The Hunter student newspaper, *The Envoy*, ran an extensive article, "PSC Supports Dock Workers' Strike on May Day to End War," quoting history professor Sándor John, who noted that the working class has "a power that can shut down the whole country," which is "much stronger than 10,000 marches or rallies."

John pointed out that the PSC's support for the dock workers' historic action against the war on Iraq and Afghanistan is "very strongly connected to building a strong union and our ability to fight for anything." Film professor Tami Gold, a noted documentary filmmaker and incoming chair of the Hunter PSC chapter, pointed out that faculty pay at CUNY had fallen by 27 to 51 percent in recent years as salaries failed to keep up with inflation. The PSC has been working without a contract since last September, while adjuncts continue to get poverty-level pay.

The Hunter rally drew support from labor and immigrant groups that sought a concrete way to express solidarity with the longshore workers' port shutdown. In addition to the New York Taxi Workers Alliance (a largely immigrant group that carried out an important strike last fall), the event was endorsed by NYC Labor Against the War, UFTers Against the War, New Immigrant Community Empowerment and others.

Organizers at Hunter had to contend with vindictive campus administrators who told police to deny a sound permit for the outdoor rally/teach-in. They even sent cops to prevent use of a bullhorn. Police barricades deterred some from joining in, although scores crowded into the plaza to hear and participate. Altogether about 120 people attended. Students responded with vigor to joining with the power of labor on the international workers day, particularly this May Day as the first labor strike against war in U.S. history was being carried out.

"Workers strikes against the war!" the crowd chanted. Several reports were relayed during the three-hour event from the West

Coast dock workers' port shutdown and march in San Francisco. Outgoing Hunter PSC chapter chair Mike Perna read a lyrical description of the different West Coast ports that had been closed by union action. PSC vice president Marcia Newfeld read a letter from Iraqi dock workers announcing their shutdown of two ports in solidarity with the ILWU action and against colonial occupation.

Participants got a history lesson on the 1934 San Francisco general strike that established the ILWU, about the police murder of three unionists in their attempt to break the longshore strike, on the union hiring hall that has enabled the West Coast dock union to stand strong against racism, xenophobia and McCarthyite witchhunting against "reds on the docks." The ILWU's refusal to load ships for the Chilean dictatorship, the Salvadoran junta and South African apartheid butchers was cited.

The history of May Day was recalled going back to the judicial frame-up and execution of the Haymarket martyrs, in an attempt to break the 1886 strike by tens of thousands of immigrant and U.S.-born workers fighting for the eight-hour day. This was linked to recent events, particularly the acquittal of the NYPD killer cops who gunned down Sean Bell in a hail of 50 bullets on his wedding day in Queens.

There were faculty speakers from the Anthropology, English, History, Media Studies, Philosophy, Sociology, Romance Languages, Urban Planning, Women's Studies and other departments at Hunter. Speakers told of the role students played in the 1968 Columbia University revolt and in the May-June '68 worker/student revolt in France on the 40th anniversary of those events. A professor from Brooklyn College gave some history of the Iraq war, and drew lessons from the workers' revolt against World War I in Germany.

Carl Lindskoog, an organizer of the Adjunct Project, received loud applause when he said we don't oppose this war because it "costs too much" to kill Iraqis and Afghanis, but because it is a war of conquest, pillage and plunder. He gave a rousing appeal to learn from the dock workers not to be intimidated by anti-labor legislation like New York's Taylor Law, which bans strikes by public employees. "The dock workers shut it down, and we need to do that, too," he said to chants of "Shut it down, shut it down."

A representative of the New York Metro Area Postal Union told of the solidarity with the ILWU antiwar port shutdown by postal unions here and in other cities. A speaker from the Welfare Rights Initiative linked organizing among welfare recipients to the struggle for women's rights, to defend public education and against the war.

A central theme was the fight for immigrants' rights, particularly as immigrants mobilized around the country on May Day. Antonio, a rank-and-file member of the Taxi Workers Alliance and supporter of the Internationalist Group, told the Hunter rally: "The attack on immigrants also means attacks on workers born here. Look at what they're doing with driver's licenses and the push for a national ID card. As an immigrant worker, I

link the struggle for full citizenship rights for all immigrants to the fight for labor rights and to the fight to defeat imperialist war. I link it to the fight against the oppression of black people in this country, which is key to the class struggle. We see it in the Sean Bell case, and in the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal," the radical black journalist and former Black Panther on Pennsylvania's death row.

There was controversy as well. One professor said speakers were too hard on the Democratic Party, while another urged rally participants not to engage in "sectarian radical approaches." The rally chairman responded with examples of how both Republicans and Democrats had used the anti-labor Taft-Hartley and Taylor laws against labor, speaking of the 2005 NYC transit strike, about Democratic president Bill Clinton's ending of "welfare as we know it," as well as his attacks on the right of habeas corpus, of the votes for the war budget of candidates Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. A philosophy adjunct professor spoke about how imperialism works.

A speaker from the Internationalist Group talked of how the "official antiwar movement" had been powerless to stop the war, since marches and protests "don't stop the tanks



David Pavlosky

Nick Cruz



Internationalist contingent in immigrants' rights rally at Union Square, May 1.

from rolling, or war materiel from being shipped." "Wars are not started or stopped by public demand," he said, "despite the strategy of endlessly pressuring Democrats and Republicans who already know – and don't care – that the public hates the war. Instead what's needed is to mobilize real power, that of the working class."

A speaker from the Campus Antiwar Network talked about the effects of the war on CUNY, and the activities of her group on different campuses. This led to a discussion about the protests that halted the "anti-immigrant war purge" that CUNY launched in the fall of 2001, about the struggle that spiked a "Homeland Security" certificate program at BMCC, and the campaign by the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at Bronx

**Order Now!**

**\$1 per button**  
plus \$1 postage per order

Order from/make checks payable to: Mundial Publications, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, New York 10008, U.S.A.

## Haitian-Dominican Solidarity...

*continued from page 3*

of Haitians, including several youths near Santo Domingo who were beaten, doused with a flammable liquid and set ablaze. More recently, at the end of June, the Dominican director of immigration, Carlos Amarante Baret, declared the presence of Haitian immigrants to be “unbearable.” This sets the stage for more killings and deportations of the super-exploited Haitian workers.

What Dominican officials don’t say to Dominican workers, much as U.S. officials will not say here about Mexican immigrant workers, is that the Dominican economy is deeply dependent on Haitian labor. The labor force in whole industries, particularly sugar cane and construction, is heavily Haitian. Both Haitian and Dominican authorities are complicit in the human trafficking across the border that replenishes the cheap labor supply in the D.R. Historically, the Dominican capitalists and government make huge profits on the backs of these Haitian workers. In addition, they make hundreds of millions of dollars annually from the lucrative trade in goods with Haiti.

Death and the threat of deportation are not the only oppressive realities besetting Haitian workers; they are also denied basic rights such as education and healthcare. Under the Dominican Immigration Law of 2004, children born in the country are denied citizenship and refused the right to attend school if their parents lack legal papers. The lack of “papers” is a strategic tool used by both the U.S. government and in the Dominican Republic to keep super-exploiting and scapegoating the immigrant population. Denying them legal rights makes undocumented immigrants doubly vulnerable to the exploitation all workers face under capitalism. Haitian



At August 7 NYC emergency picket, Internationalist Group called to drive U.S. imperialists out of Afghanistan, Iraq, the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

workers toil in the cane fields, where they perform backbreaking labor with the most primitive tools dating back to colonial times before harvesting machinery was invented.

Far from “stealing” Dominican jobs, Haitian workers are escaping desperate poverty on the other side of the border only to earn less than US\$2 a day and live in shacks with dirt floors and no indoor plumbing in the D.R. The media like to pretend that poverty in Haiti is the fault of the Haitian masses (saying the peasants cut down too many trees). But as the recent food crisis has demonstrated, this is due to the workings of global capitalism and in many cases is the direct result of U.S. policies. Haiti once exported rice, but with the elimination of protective tariffs in the name of “free trade,” the Haitian rice industry has been

destroyed by cheap (and heavily subsidized) rice imported from Louisiana. As a sign at the New York demonstration read, “Hunger in Haiti Made in U.S.A.”

The united-front emergency picket called on the Dominican government to stop the deportation and official persecution of Haitian workers. The groups participating agreed that everyone in the Dominican Republic, or in the United States for that matter, should have the same rights. But it is necessary to dispel illusions that by putting pressure on the bourgeois government it will somehow be possible to reform the basic nature of capitalism, which produces racism, poverty and war. No Dominican or U.S. capitalist government can or will provide justice and equality for the working class.

Speakers from the Internationalist Group emphasized that to eliminate the desperate poverty that in different degrees affects the working people on both sides of this luxurious island, an *international* socialist revolution is required, extending to the imperialist United States. That is why the slogan chanted at the end, “Dominican and Haitian workers unite,” is so important. For the working people united in struggle can overcome the hatreds instilled by their capitalist exploiters who seek to “divide and rule” over the exploited.

The Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York seek to inform and educate students about the need to build a working-class revolutionary party that champions the cause of all the oppressed. ■

Community College that managed to successfully drive Air Force, Navy and Army recruiters off campus by mobilizing student and worker protest. There were chants of “Military recruiters out of CUNY!”

Mid-way through the Hunter rally, protesters were joined by a group that had come from the solidarity rally at Hostos Community College in the Bronx. There, the speaker from the Hostos Internationalist Club spoke of the USA PATRIOT Act, of the police murder of Sean Bell, and of the “*migra*” persecution of hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers and their families, carrying out raids in their homes and workplaces with semi-automatic weapons, sniffing dogs, helicopters and an arsenal that would make Rambo blush.” The speaker noted that the wave of anti-immigrant laws began under Clinton, calling to break with the Democrats and form a revolutionary workers party.

At the end of the event, a contingent from the Hunter rally proceeded to Union Square where immigrants’ rights demonstrators were gathering for a march of 1,000-plus protesters to the Federal Building in Lower Manhattan. Among the speakers was Victor Toro, the Chilean leftist émigré who is facing deportation. The Internationalist Group and CUNY Internationalist Clubs carried banners calling in Spanish and English for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, and to smash the racist Minuteman vigilantes. The contingent chanted “¡Arriba, abajo, la *migra* pa’l carajo!” “1-2-3-4, for workers strikes against the war,” “50 shots equals murder” and “We are all Sean Bell, NYPD go to hell.” And finally, “Asian, Latin, black and white, Workers of the world, unite!”

With the mobilization of immigrant workers and the powerful action of the West Coast longshore workers, May Day is being reclaimed for the U.S. working class. Now we must carry out the promise of international class struggle for which it stands. ■



Mural by artist Hulbert Waldroup on the block where Amadou Diallo was killed in a hail of 41 bullets in 1999 shows police in the hoods of Ku Klux Klan lynchers.

## Defend Rebel Diaz...

*continued from page 3*

iles who fled the bloody Pinochet dictatorship. They have performed at a number of benefits for Víctor Toro, a founder of the Chilean MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement), who was arrested last year by the ICE immigration police and faces deportation. (The verdict in his case will be read out next February 19.) In the Bronx, Toro founded the political-cultural center Vamos a la Peña which was relentlessly harassed and repeatedly shut down by the police, particularly in the wake of 11 September 2001.

The attacks on the Venegas brothers also recall the beating and prosecution of Michael Tariff and Evelyn Warren, prominent black civil rights lawyers who were attacked by police and brought up on similar retaliatory charges when they intervened in the police beating of a Latino youth in Brooklyn in June 2007. At the Democratic Party convention in Denver, Colorado and the Republican convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, riot cops carried out the kind of mass

arrests and pre-emptive roundups that have become standard police procedure against leftist protests nationwide. As the 2008 election campaign reaches its climax and the farce of capitalist “democracy” amps up to a deafening pitch, the persecution of Rebel Diaz should drive home that McCain and Obama are competing to be commander-in-chief of U.S. imperialism, and whoever the victor is, they will continue to wage a war on immigrants, minorities, poor and working people here as well as in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In the aftermath of “9/11,” all sectors of the U.S. ruling class have joined in enacting a series of police-state measures that take aim at fundamental democratic rights. The latest gambit by the NYPD, “Operation Sentinel,” is designed to photograph every vehicle that enters Manhattan, and every person who enters the Wall Street area. Already they have issued a regulation outlawing any gathering of more than 100 people unless it receives a police permit, a frontal assault on the right of association supposedly guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. In reality, the po-

lice are the guard dogs of capital, whose job is to keep the wage slaves in line. No liberal and reformist scheme to “watch” the cops or toothless “civilian review board” can restrain this jack-booted army of oppression. Against the police’s daily racist attacks and the massive round-ups of immigrant workers, it is necessary to mobilize labor/black/immigrant defense backed by the unions that have the power to bring cities like New York to a halt.

The Internationalist Group vehemently condemns the frame-up of Gonzalo and Rodrigo Venegas. We call on all supporters of democratic rights to protest the cop vendetta against Rebel Diaz. The racist regime that ensnares a third of black youth in its “justice” system and kidnaps immigrant workers by the busload can be stopped, but not by supporting the capitalist Democrats or mere protests appealing for “peace.” What’s needed is a break with *all* the capitalist parties, to build a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the oppressed against imperialism’s wars abroad and “at home.” ■

## Obama Wants You to “Serve” Imperialism

# ROTC Get Out, Stay Out!

### Democrats, Republicans Unite for Racist War and Union Busting

Barack Obama dropped a bomb on his young enthusiasts at Columbia University on September 11. The heavily Democratic crowd booed McCain when he called for the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) to be brought back to campus (it was driven out in 1969 by protests against the Vietnam war). Liberal students expected a different answer from Columbia alum Obama. “Almost everyone’s expecting him to say no [to the ROTC], because he’s on our side, right? So then you heard him say ‘yes’ and everyone’s mouths opened in stunned silence,” a student told the *New York Sun* (15 September). That should have been the tip-off for anyone who hadn’t figured it out by then: Obama is no “peace candidate” but like McCain he is a certified imperialist war candidate.

In fact the forum was a symphony of agreement between the two candidates. Seven years ago, Republicans and Democrats used “9/11” to fan a nationalist hysteria for a new imperialist war in Afghanistan, to alibi the mass imprisonment, deportation and torture of immigrants and foreign nationals, to authorize the effective suspension of basic democratic rights like the freedom from arbitrary search and seizure supposedly guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment, and to prepare the way for another Desert Slaughter in Iraq. On this September 11, the candidates agreed – that this nationalist, militarist mobilization was not enough! Both Obama



McCain and Obama embrace at Columbia University, September 11.

and McCain criticized Bush for not launching massive national “service” programs in the wake of September 11, and both called for enlarging the military. (How? Does anyone feel a draft?)

Behind all this bipartisan talk of “service,” military or civilian, is a drive to militarize and regiment the next generation of workers. The mouthpieces of the wealthy shamelessly call on the poor to “serve” because they want to create a new standard of indentured “serve-itude” as a condition of education. Obama proposed tying college

aid to “national service,” meaning that in addition to spending years to work off your college debt, you would have to spend even more time laboring for free. This is a giant swindle to brainwash youth and provide low-wage (or no-wage) labor to undercut the unions. Class-conscious working-class youth are guided instead by the spirit of *internationalism* to rebel against the war-making imperialist rulers, their patriotic loyalty oaths, and their capitalist system that oppresses poor and working people the world over.

Obama’s speech upset the liberal Ivy League Leaguers who timidly oppose ROTC because the Army discriminates against gays (don’t worry, Obama says he wants to reform that). We oppose all forms of discrimination, including the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy against gays in the military decreed by Democrat Bill Clinton. But our goal is not equal opportunity in mass murder for gays and lesbians. Revolutionary Marxists say “not a penny, not a person for the Pentagon war machine,” and call for the defeat of the U.S. imperialism and its predatory wars.

Supporters of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs mobilized student protests that repeatedly drove military recruiters off the campus at Bronx Community College in 2005. We initiated a campaign that spiked homeland security programs at Borough of Manhattan Community College. We are doubly opposed to the ROTC, an incubator for the officer caste and its reactionary anti-democratic cult of blind discipline, arbitrary authority and super-patriotism. Student-worker struggle can and should be mobilized to defeat the Obama/McCain proposal to reintroduce ROTC at Columbia. We call for militant student-worker protests to drive all military and police, including the ROTC and CIA recruiters, off all the campuses.

And no vote for Obama, McCain or any capitalist candidate. They get elected and you get more war – endless war. Guaranteed. ■

## Democrat Obama...

*continued from page 1*

money off of the insurance business.

And what happens to the CEO (chief executive officer) of Lehman Brothers, Richard Fuld? Lehman Brothers just had its meltdown, thousands of people are being laid off and there will be a big ripple effect throughout the economy. Certainly this man, Mr. Fuld, the CEO, will be put in jail, right? No, he’s going to get – if he loses his job, that is – an estimated \$63 million. In the past three years the major executives at the seven biggest U.S. banks reportedly got \$95 billion personally. One more of these figures: last spring the Federal Reserve gave JPMorgan Chase & Co., the progeny of the archetypical robber baron J.P. Morgan, \$29 billion to take over Bear Stearns.

So all of the business about not enough money here, not enough money there, is all a class question. It all has to do with the state, it all has to do with power, it has to do with what class rules in society. Let me point out that JPMorgan Chase is one of the banks that just said that they can’t afford to give loans to community college students. It’s not profitable to them to give loans to community college students because these poor banks are just too poor.

Now the first point about the elections is that the companies we’re talking about hedge their bets. So both candidates, the Democrat Barack Obama and the Republican John McCain, are financed to the tune of millions of dollars in organized corporate contributions. We have called this the latest version of “The Buying of the President” (see *The Internationalist* No. 27). Both Barack Obama and John McCain now get up and make speeches castigating the bad bankers for their bad irrespon-

sible behavior. They’re both on TV doing this while both of them are financed by the top capitalist firms.

### From JFK to Obama, Democrats for U.S. Empire in Latin America

The next thing that I wanted to mention has not been in the English-language news very much, a current crisis in Latin America. The United States ambassadors were expelled from Bolivia and Venezuela because the U.S. ambassador in Bolivia had been meeting with racist businessmen in the eastern part of that country who are carrying out a campaign to seize an ever-larger part of the money from natural gas and oil there. These businessmen just organized a bloody massacre of Indian demonstrators in the Bolivian state of Pando – indigenous people who were protesting there were machine-gunned and murdered by the racist followers of one of the governors who have been encouraged by the U.S. ambassador.

Now while Evo Morales, the president of Bolivia, has been capitulating to pressure from the right wing, at the same time he took the symbolic step of expelling the U.S. ambassador. The response of the two candidates, John McCain and Barack Obama, was to fully support the U.S. government attacks against both Bolivia and Venezuela. To rattle the sabers and to call for clamping down harder on anything in Latin America that even symbolically talks about challenging the untrammelled sway of the U.S. empire.

What this means is that you can not be in favor of the working people of Latin America and simultaneously be for the Democratic Party – or Republican Party. The Democrats are the same party that atom-bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the same party that invaded Cuba to try to destroy the Cuban Revolution. This is the same

party that brought the globe to the brink of nuclear war under John F. Kennedy, with the Cuban missile crisis.

It’s the same party which helped to organize the military coup in Brazil in 1964, and the military coup in Bolivia that same year, that organized the killing of the leaders of many leftist movements throughout Latin America; the same party that invaded and occupied the Dominican Republic in 1965 under President Lyndon Baines Johnson. With this aggressive imperialist saber-rattling at Latin America, Barack Obama is simply continuing the tradition of his political forebears in the Democratic Party.

### Obama and McCain Pledge Allegiance to U.S. Militarism

Over the past few days, both Obama and McCain have made a number of gestures to demonstrate to the ruling class their fundamental agreement. First, we had the September 11 joint appearance between Obama and McCain, in which they used the occasion to pledge allegiance to militarism and war. After this the two candidates went over to Columbia University, and there both made speeches about the necessity for a strong military.

Obama went out of his way to say that the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) – the campus representatives of the U.S. generals and admirals, the war criminals who butchered millions of people in Vietnam, Korea and elsewhere – should be brought back on the campuses. There are many young people who think they are somehow helping the cause of being against the war by promoting Obama’s candidacy. So he went out of his way to say that he knows that some young people disagree with this, but that he is very strongly in favor of bringing ROTC back to the campuses, where they were driven out by student protesters in-

dignant against the crimes of the American government in Vietnam, almost 40 years ago.

Obama said at Columbia that he is for “ensuring that we’ve got the best military on Earth.” In other words, the best equipped, the most able to respond to the needs of the American imperialist system. He said “I want to encourage military service,” and he hinted at restoring the draft, saying “the fact the burden has been shouldered by such a narrow group is a problem.” In other words, he wants more people in the military.

Obama has been falsely pushed as some kind of anti-war candidate by various sorts of groups, tendencies, newspapers and radio shows that call themselves progressives. But here we have Obama going out of his way to ensure that everybody understands that he is putting himself forward as the strongest war candidate, the guy who will be able to push forward a strengthening of the U.S. military.

Some of the reasons why some people are drawn to the Obama campaign is that Obama is young, Obama is smart, Obama is well-informed, Obama is a new face, Obama is a black man in a country built on slavery, he’s the first black candidate of one of the major parties, which is certainly historically significant. In some ways the Obama candidacy can be compared to another candidate who ran as a young, new face trying to replace the old, worn-out, discredited Republican establishment, which was John F. Kennedy running for president in 1960.

John F. Kennedy was the first Catholic candidate for some time, he was somebody who was intelligent, who was well-informed, and he ran on a program of strengthening American militarism, saying the Republican Party was too old and discredited to defend the interests of the American empire, and that he could.

Kennedy got into office on the basis of a lie, that the United States had fewer missiles of a certain type than the Soviets did. He ran as a Cold Warrior obsessed with stopping the spread of the Cuban Revolution. Once in power, he sought to do exactly what he said: strengthen U.S. militarism, tighten the hold of the U.S. over Latin America. And it was he and Lyndon Johnson who pushed the United States into an ever-deeper genocidal war in Vietnam.

Now Obama has said various things about Iraq. He says he wants to reduce the number of troops in Iraq, but he blames the Republicans for not having what he considers to be enough troops in Afghanistan. He has said that he wants *more* troops in Afghanistan, and has talked about spreading the war in Afghanistan to Pakistan. On September 3, the U.S. already attacked inside Pakistan, killing Pakistani civilians. Obama has repeatedly called for spreading the war into Pakistan, and has said that he will not rule out any option, including nuclear war, against Iran.

Obama has also echoed the lies of the right wing about protests against the war in Vietnam. He repeats the lies of right-wing propagandists who claim that anti-war protesters did things like spitting on veterans when they were coming back from Vietnam, which is a total fabrication. He is working the themes of militarism, not because the people who are already committed to voting for him want that, but because he wants to make it absolutely clear to the ruling class that he will be a more efficient commander in chief for American imperialism.

Another thing Obama recently did, after saying he was opposed to the illegal surveillance of people's phone conversations – which was carried out by the National Security Agency, a spy agency, with the help of the big phone companies – he reversed himself and essentially voted in favor of tapping your phone. So if your phones are being tapped, if your e-mails are being read, you can also thank the Democratic Party and its candidate.

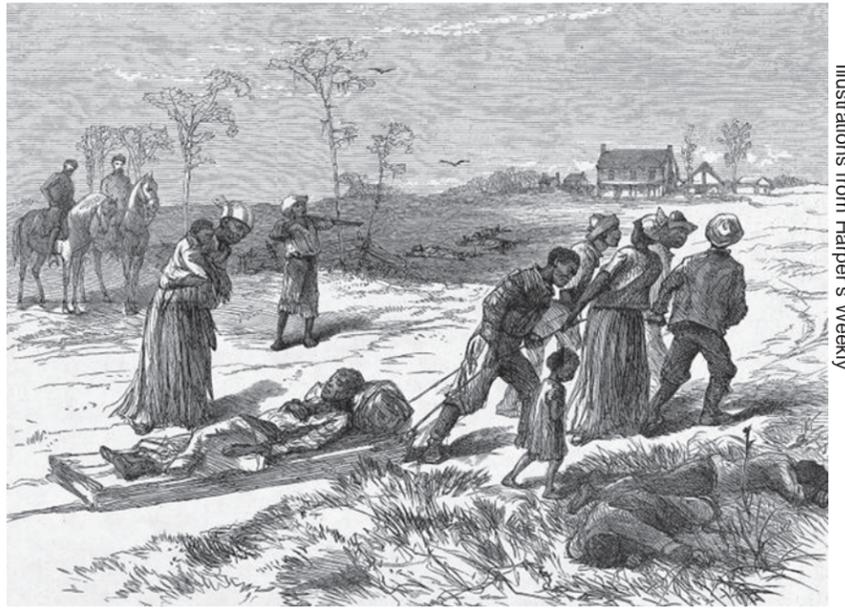
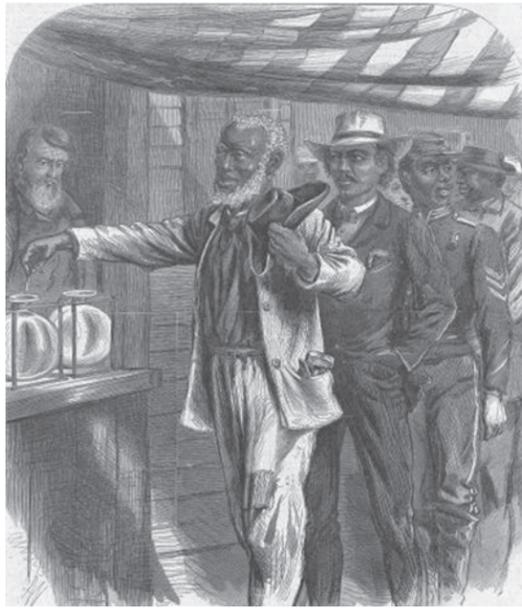
### Barack Obama Opposes Struggle Against Racism

Now, one of the themes in this election is that for the first time in a deeply racist country a black man has been nominated by a major party, and his main rival for that nomination was a woman. As I said, these are not insignificant facts, but we have to look at them in the framework of the realities of American society.

One of the things that Obama has pitched from the beginning of his campaign is the claim that the United States is somehow “beyond race.” Some people have interpreted this as solely an attempt by Obama to reassure racist whites, of whom unfortunately there are plenty, that he's not “too black,” so he can get their votes. We saw Hillary Clinton use the race card against Obama. But it goes beyond that.

Obama has continually pounded on a number of themes which are favorites of that small section of the black population in the U.S. which has achieved some degree of upward mobility, and which looks down on and seeks to blame the poor and working-class majority of the black population for the realities of racial oppression in the U.S. Obama has adopted a lot of the themes that Bill Cosby has become notorious for, the call for more “personal responsibility” in the African American community, that blacks have to have less reliance on “government handouts.”

All this stuff in which white right-wingers and Democratic Party liberals, black and white, join together to blame the majority of the African American population for the realities of racism and to claim that somehow, the reason why racial oppression continues to exist in the United States is not because racism is basic to this society. Ac-



Illustrations from Harper's Weekly

**Civil War became a social revolution, leading to the brief period of Radical Reconstruction when for the first time black people began to get political power. This was cut short by Ku Klux Klan terror and the “Compromise of 1877” between Northern capital and ex-slaveowners of the South to destroy Reconstruction and reinstate white political control in the former Confederacy. Above, left: “The First Vote,” from *Harper's Weekly*, 16 November 1867. Above, right: “The Louisiana Murders – Gathering the Dead and Wounded,” from *Harper's Weekly*, 10 May 1873. After black-led Republicans won 1872 Louisiana elections, white racists established a shadow government, using night-riders of the White League to intimidate freed blacks. In the April 1873 Colfax Massacre, 70 blacks were slaughtered, half of them after they surrendered.**

ording to them it's not, according to them we're beyond that, but it's supposedly because of some cultural or other problem within the black population.

This is one of the ways that Obama is carrying forward themes that come from the Clinton presidency, when the last Democratic president, Bill Clinton, did things like “end welfare as we know it.” Blaming people who were on welfare for the situation of poverty in this country. The Clinton administration gutted the right of *habeas corpus*, which is one of the reasons why Mumia Abu-Jamal, the most important class-war prisoner in the U.S., has seen appeals against his frame-up conviction curtailed.

These themes coming from Barack Obama don't just represent an attempt to get himself elected, but to put forward a political position in accord with the class interests of the people at the top of this society. Those class interests are being echoed by the very small percentage of the African American population which achieved some tenuous positions within corporate America.

The claim that the U.S. is “beyond race” can be refuted with three words. As they say on TV, let me just say three words to you: Katrina and Sean Bell. On Sean Bell, by the way, Obama came out against the protests over the acquittal of the NYPD killer cops who gunned him down with 50 bullets on his wedding day. As hundreds were in the streets chanting “50 shots equals murder” and “We are all Sean Bell, NYPD go to hell,” Obama said, “The judge has made his ruling, and we're a nation of laws, so we respect the verdict that came down.”

### Racism Woven Into Fabric of American Capitalism

Racial oppression in the U.S. is interwoven into the fabric of this society, and has been since before the foundation of the U.S., when chattel slavery became a key part of the economy, not just of the South but of the North. The mass imprisonment and disenfranchisement of black men in this society – not just men, black women too, but predominantly of black men in this society – is a continuation of the racial oppression whose roots lie in slavery and which once again comes from the legacy of the vicious, racist crime laws passed by the Democratic Clinton administration.

So when we talk about Democratic Party candidates blaming poor and working-class black people for the effects of racism, we're not just talking about an ideological position, we're talking about putting people in prison. We're also talking about the fact that Barack Obama actively supports the death penalty, which is a direct legacy of slavery, and which

today hangs over the head of one of our greatest heroes, Mumia Abu-Jamal.

After the huge ghetto explosions of the 1960s, the U.S. ruling class made a decision, which black radicals called “putting black faces in high places.” To attempt to stave off and defuse the anger of black and working-class people against this society's racism, and the poverty and wars which this capitalist system continually breeds, they would cynically allow some black politicians to become the enforcers of the rules of this society.

So you began to see a number of black mayors, particularly in cities where these ghetto rebellions had given an idea of the depth and intensity of black people's anger at racial oppression. We saw it in Newark, Los Angeles and Chicago. We also saw it in Philadelphia. In Philadelphia, a liberal black Democratic mayor, named Wilson Goode, worked directly with Reagan and the FBI to drop a firebomb on a house full of black people, the MOVE commune, incinerating, murdering in cold blood eleven black people, including many children.

Some not-very-left-wing, but nonetheless perceptive black commentators have recently made a point, which I think is an interesting one, that for sections of the ruling class it is useful to confuse people by seeking to replace the struggle against inequality with something they call “diversity.” All wings of the political establishment now talk about diversity, without talking about a struggle to uproot and destroy racial, gender and class inequality. Their symbolic diversity is to put various different ethnicities in places where you can see them, without changing the situation for the overwhelming majority of the population.

What we counterpose to that is a struggle for real power for black people and for all working people in the United States, which is inseparable from a struggle to uproot the fundamental realities of class society. In the history of the U.S. we have seen a situation where black people did begin to get power. That was during Radical Reconstruction, after the Civil War. The Civil War carried out a social revolution, eventually mobilizing almost 200,000 black soldiers to fight a revolutionary struggle against slavery.

There was a brief period after the slave masters were crushed and defeated, when, with arms in hand, former slaves began to get the beginnings of some real power in this society. But that was cut short in 1877 by an agreement between the Republican and Democratic parties to force the African American population of the South back into a situation that was as close as they could get to slavery; to subject the black popula-

tion to the dictatorship of the owners of the land, the owners of capital, and soon enough the owners of the big industries.

The lesson has to do with the intimate connection between a revolutionary struggle in which the black working class unites with the working class as a whole in challenging the owners and rulers of the society – the intimate and indissoluble connection between that and any real fight for the African American population in this country to uproot and destroy the legacy of slavery.

### Break with All Capitalist Parties

Now look, if you watch McCain and Sarah Palin on TV, they are scary. McCain is a war-mongering war criminal. He's referred to as a war hero, but he is a war criminal. He was sent to bomb civilian targets in Vietnam. I've seen some of the places that those bombers hit, like the Bach Mai hospital outside of Hanoi, which was deliberately flattened by American bombing raids. They were sent in there to bomb and murder Vietnamese working people.

The point is that the people who sent John McCain over there to carpet-bomb Vietnam were the Democratic Party *and* the Republican Party. The people who have voted to keep the war in Iraq going over and over again are the Democratic Party. You can't fight against Republicans like Bush and McCain by supporting the Democratic Party. All of the lessons of American history, since way back when the Democratic Party was invented as the party of slavery and of the slavocracy, show this over and over again.

Meanwhile, Palin is doing her own version of identity politics: “Hi, my name is Sarah Palin, I'm a woman.” Of course, I'm totally against women's rights, I'm against the right to abortion, I'm a creationist lunatic. Some of the Hillaryites who are very upset that their candidate didn't get in, are going along with that, others not.

I want to say one thing about the whole attack, first on Obama and then on Palin, for not being experienced enough. Of course there's plenty of hypocrisy there, first McCain was saying Obama's not “experienced” enough, now it's reversed and the Democrats are attacking Palin for her lack of experience as commander-in-chief. But experience doing what? “Experience,” in this context for these bourgeois politicians, means experience in commanding American troops in murdering people in other countries, experience subjecting people to the dictates of the American ruling class. We're talking about experience in mass murder.

Politics in American society is cast in the patterns of advertising. You hear people

saying things like, “I really like Barack Obama,” or “I really like Palin.” “I really think so-and-so has style. I really like the way they speak.” Politics is seen as a kind of ad campaign. Who has the better PR agency; who can afford the best advertisements.

Marxists like us have a different way of looking at politics. For us the fundamental criterion in politics is the class interests that are served by one or another politician. We don’t analyze politics as a spectrum that goes from greater to lesser evil, so let’s vote for the one who is slightly less horrible. We look at politics as the interests of class against class, from the standpoint of the struggle against racial oppression, from the standpoint of the struggle to defeat imperialism and its wars.

From the standpoint of the interests of Wall Street, and from the standpoint of the interests of the working class, both the Democratic and Republican candidates represent the interests of the ruling class. And so do the tag-alongs from the Green Party and other lesser bourgeois candidates who try to pressure the Democratic Party.

### No to Lesser Evilism – For a Revolutionary Workers Party

What is the lesser evil here? We’re told every four years that the Republican candidate is so scary that you have to vote for the Democrat as the lesser evil. I’m old enough that I remember this argument from 1964 when a truly crazy and scary Republican candidate named Barry Goldwater ran, saying that he was going to massively bomb Vietnam. I was just a little kid, but I remember thinking that was a terrible thing, and hoping that the Democrat Johnson would win. The Democrat Johnson won, and mass-bombed Vietnam, in a war that dropped more tonnage of bombs on that small country than the bombs dropped by all sides through all of World War II.

Along comes Reagan, years later, and we’re told he’s so horrible and scary we have to vote for the Democrat. Along comes the Democrat and we get the destruction of welfare as we know it, we get the war against Yugoslavia, we get the gutting of *habeas*

*corpus*, we get the Reagan-Clinton-Bush years. Then we get these freaky, bizarre and more than slightly psychotic representatives of the Bush years, and we’re told once again that we have to vote for the lesser evil.

Marxists say that the elections do not decide the policies of the government. The ruling class decides the policies of the government. In these and any other elections what we fight for is to unchain the power which really *can* fight against the war, fight against poverty, fight against racism, and transform this into a society where people playing craps games with our lives down on Wall Street will not determine what happens with us and our kids and the entire world.

That requires a fight for the political independence of the working class and oppressed minorities. The political independence of the working class from what really is an eternal shell game between two sides of a single property party. This criterion is not based on how well-informed, how charismatic, how young or old the particular representative of the ruling class is.

The *greater* evil by far is to continue to be trapped and deluded by the two-party system of American capitalism. The greater evil is for people to be tricked again and again into subordinating themselves to a political system which represents the opposite of everything that the overwhelming majority of people in the U.S., those who have to work for a living and those who have lived for generations with the legacy of slavery and racism, require.

The only alternative from our standpoint as Marxists, is to fight against both parties of capital and for a party that represents the interests of all of the working people. A party that will carry out a revolutionary struggle against racism and to defeat imperialist war, and that is a *revolutionary workers party*, in which the working class of the U.S. can take its revenge against those Wall Street gamblers and take all of this wealth away from them, put an end to their imperialist wars and overthrow the ruling class which has dominated the world for all too long. That’s what we hope that you will join us in doing. ■

## CUNY Adjunct Rebellion...

*continued from page 5*

A real challenge to CUNY’s increasing inequality will require a convulsive struggle in which contingent academic workers join with students, staff, full-time colleagues and key sectors of labor to take on the arrogant CUNY bosses. Building for such a struggle requires a clear understanding of who our friends and enemies are. Illusions in the Democratic Party would prove fatal for such a struggle; working to dispel them is a crucial part of our task today.

### CUNY Contingents Unite

On August 26, the “part-timer dissidents” (as *Inside Higher Ed* called them) held a well-attended forum at the CUNY Grad Center to wrap up the “vote no” campaign and discuss next steps in the fight against CUNY’s two-tier labor system. After presentations by several activists and lively debate and discussion from the floor, a motion was presented to found a new organization “as a body to include adjunct faculty, graduate student employees, Continuing Education and other ‘part-time’ academic staff at the City University of New York and as a ‘functional entity’ within the PSC but not limited by present organizational structures.” After the majority voted to call the new body “CUNY Contingents Unite” (CCU), the motion to found the body was unanimously approved.

Building on the momentum of the struggle over the contract, CCU brings together activists who have participated in the PSC Part-Time Instructional Staff Commit-

tee, the Adjunct Project, and other efforts, uniting grad student activists with long-time adjuncts. The new group is off to a running start in the new semester, laying plans for intensive organizing while initiating a September 22 protest against budget cuts, tuition hikes and CUNY’s two-tier labor system.

The group’s statement of purpose stresses: “we have the potential to mobilize real power if we unite with the organized workers movement and all working people, immigrants and minorities who together make up the vast majority in this city.” CUNY Internationalist Clubs supporters have played a prominent role in helping build the new group. At the same time, we have stressed that as a “functional entity” to represent *all* contingent academic workers at CUNY, the CCU must continue to include people of many different political persuasions. In contrast to PSC leaders’ bureaucratic practices, it must be a model of genuine workers democracy. For our part, as a militant Marxist minority within the broad struggle of contingent employees, we have much to contribute to a fight to “*mobilize real power*.” Thus, the formation of a programmatically defined class-struggle tendency for education workers from pre-K through Ph.D. is a task we are addressing.

To arrogant CUNY bosses and union leaders who wish “part-time dissidents” would just fade away, we have this to say: **This struggle has only begun.** Students, part- and full-time faculty, staff and campus workers: **unite** to defend public education, a crucial and basic right for all the working people! ■

## CUNY Trustees...

*continued from page 12*

Accessories Exchange. Dutton is Vice President of TEACH NYS, which the *New York Sun* (1 February 2007) describes as “a coalition of faith-based groups” pushing for tax deductions for families who send children to private and religious schools, an endeavor backed by ex-governor Spitzer. Michael Tobman, a former aide to Democratic Senator Charles Schumer who now heads TEACH NYS, calls Spitzer’s replacement, Governor David Paterson, “a friend to efforts to secure help for tuition-paying families” (*Jewish Week*, 26 March 2008).

TEACH NYS is also boosted by the State Policy Network, a self-described “network of free-market think tanks” including the notorious Manhattan Institute, which came up with many of the attacks on CUNY launched under former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. In 1998, the Manhattan Institute published an “agenda” for Giuliani, featuring a diatribe against “remediation and race politics” at CUNY, ending with the call: “CUNY can cut its size by half.” Giuliani proclaimed of CUNY: “That’s a system we would blow up,” moving promptly to destroy the remains of open admissions and eliminate remediation at senior colleges. He set up a Task Force on CUNY headed by **Benno Schmidt**, infamous for his high-handed arrogance and threats to dissolve entire departments during his six-year reign as president of Yale University. Schmidt left Yale to head up the Edison Project, which aimed to establish a national network of hundreds of private schools. For him, education was to become a new “profit platform.” (See “Right Wing Yale Cabal Targets CUNY,” in the Internationalist pamphlet, *Marxism and the Battle Over Education*).

After pushing through the “agenda” of racist, anti-working-class attacks on CUNY, Benno Schmidt got his reward when then-governor Pataki made him Chairman of the Board of Trustees in 1999. He was reappointed in 2006. Yes, an outright enemy of public education is top dog at the country’s largest urban public university! This symbolizes much of what’s wrong with CUNY today. More precisely, the career of Benno Schmidt tells us plenty about the whole system of capitalism and how it’s gutting public education. When Schmidt and his friends in City Hall tried to foist Edison Schools on the city, the privatization project blew up in their face. From 1997 until last year Benno was chairman of Edison, now he’s vice-chairman. Meanwhile, he and his partner Chris Whittle have launched Nations Academy, “an international chain of for-profit elite private schools” (*New York* magazine, 20 July 2008). Enterprising researchers would do well to look closely at this latest venture.

Under Schmidt, a special Honors College has been set up at seven four-year campuses, named after investment manager William E. Macaulay, who gave \$30 million for the project. The Honors College is “a flagship program...designed to raise educational standards” and “showcase the University’s return to excellence,” burred CUNY Newswire (13 September 2006), adding in tones of hushed reverence that benefactor Macaulay is CEO of First Reserve Corporation, “one of the ten largest private equity firms in the world with \$12.5 billion under management.” Schmidt chimed in that Macaulay’s “pioneering gift sends a signal of support all across America that CUNY is the place for the best and brightest.”

And get this: students in the Honors College get **free tuition**, plus “\$7,500 each year to study abroad or to defray living expenses during an unpaid internship,” plus a free Apple laptop computer (well, actually, they have to pay \$1 for it on graduation),

plus a free pass to “dozens” of top cultural locales like the Metropolitan Opera and the Museum of Modern Art (*New York Times*, 8 September). Plus there are no doubt some more pluses we don’t know about. Not bad, if you can get it. Students and faculty should demand the same for all CUNY students, not just the hand-picked elite.

You couldn’t ask for a clearer signal that the idea is to embed the elitist agenda of Schmidt & Co. into the very structure of campuses around the CUNY system, the better to lop off those deemed not “the best.” In the past this has meant attempts to close down “ghetto and barrio campuses” like Hostos and Medgar Evers entirely.

### Robber Barons and the “Business” of Education

What name pops into your head when you hear “robber baron”? J.P. Morgan is a good bet. Old J.P. got his start selling antiquated rifles to the Army during the Civil War, then built an empire from WWI bonds, U.S. Steel stocks and multifarious financial shenanigans. In 2000, J.P. Morgan & Co. merged with Chase Manhattan to form JPMorgan Chase, which now has \$1.8 trillion in assets. JPMorgan Chase was one of the megabanks that recently decided to “phase out” loans to students at community colleges. “*What a great place to get trustees!*” you can almost hear today’s robber barons exclaim.

With strong backing from Giuliani, then-governor Pataki tried to appoint **former JPMorgan Vice President Kathleen M. Pesile** to the CUNY Board in 1998 to replace a trustee who opposed the abolition of remedial classes at CUNY’s four-year colleges (“Pataki Rushes to Replace CUNY Trustee for Vote on Remedial Classes,” *New York Times*, 13 May 1998). Her appointment eventually went through, and she helped Pataki win the vote against remediation the following year. Lynne Cheney’s hard-right American Council of Trustees and Alumni made Pesile a member, and Pesile was also part of “the short-lived ‘decency panel’ that Mayor Giuliani appointed in the wake of his attempt to censor the Brooklyn Museum” (PSC *Clarion*, October 2002).

With eight years at the infamous House of Morgan, and five at Capital Cities/ABC, she has run her own Pesile Financial Group since 1995. Getting the picture? Giuliani says “blow up” public education, appoints Schmidt to figure out how, they bring in bankers like Pesile to ram it through, Benno gets to be chairman of the board, speculators laugh all the way to the bank, and everyone goes home happy. Everyone, that is, except CUNY’s 450,000 students, tens of thousands of faculty and campus workers, and the millions of New York City working people getting ripped off every day.

Continuing the roll call of trustees from the corporate heights, we have Bloomberg appointee **Rita DiMartino**. A former lobbyist for Ma Bell may not know much about education, but can be expected to know the ways and means of government in the service of business: she is a former AT&T Vice President for Congressional Relations. Being a long-time Republican operative definitely has its perks: Presidents Reagan and Bush Sr. appointed DiMartino to various prestige positions. Today, the BoT website proclaims, “Ms. DiMartino is Vice Chair of the Board’s Standing Committee on Faculty, Staff, and Administration, and holds membership on the Standing Committee on Academic Policy, Program, and Research, the Standing Committee on Facilities, Planning, and Management, and the Standing Committee on Student Affairs and Special Programs.”

Next up: appointed to the Board by Pataki, **Valerie Lancaster Beal** is Senior Vice President of M.R. Beal & Company, “one of the top investment banks trading in...municipal

## Rogues' Gallery of Privatizers, Union-Busters and Witch-Hunters



Photos: from left, CUNY, CUNY, DLA Piper and Lehman College

**From left: CUNY chancellor Matthew Goldstein, trustees Benno Schmidt, Peter Pantaleo and Jeffrey Wiesenfeld. These fat cats want to raise your tuition. How much do they make? Goldstein's salary is \$483,000 a year, plus perks.**

bonds," according to its website. Profiting from city finance deals is evidently just the ticket for the business of running CUNY. Last year, "M.R. Beal & Co. agreed to settle allegations that it conspired to bribe an official with a California water agency in exchange for helping a New York dealer land a lucrative derivative contract" (Bloomberg News Service, 20 September 2007).

**Philip Alfonso Berry** was a VP at Colgate-Palmolive, which the CUNY Board's website breathlessly describes as "a \$12 billion global consumer products company" as if that were just the dandiest recommendation ever. Mr. Berry is now Managing Principal of the global management consulting firm Berry Block & Bernstein. Another Pataki appointment, Berry is now Vice Chairman of CUNY's BoT.

### Musical Chairs: City Hall, Big Business and the Board

Trustee **Marc V. Shaw** was appointed to CUNY's BoT by Mayor Bloomberg, after becoming City Hall's highest-paid official (almost \$200,000 a year) as Billionaire Mike's Deputy Mayor (2002-06). When Bloomberg moved to close firehouses around the city, Shaw enraged the Fire Fighters' union by claiming its members were "hanging around doing nothing ... 95 percent of the time" (*New York Times*, 12 December 2002). Prior to that, Shaw was Rudolph Giuliani's budget chief: "under Mr. Shaw's watch," in fact, "the city continued to withhold subsidies to the [Metropolitan] Transit Authority for free student passes, a cut that helped place the M.T.A. in its current financial predicament," wrote the *Times* (28 October 1995).

Yet in late 1995 Governor George Pataki appointed Shaw to the MTA, where as Executive Director he helped push through refinancing of the agency's \$12 billion debt under the auspices of Wall Street investment firm Bear Stearns, which received "a large share of the underwriting duties worth tens of millions of dollars," notes the *Times* (26 July 2008), adding: "Critics said the plan was unsound, and unduly influenced by Bear Stearns." (By the bye, JPMorgan Chase acquired Bear Stearns last May for \$236 million.)

The golden rule of city finance was applied – those with the gold make the rules – so financial speculators had their debt-service mega-profits guaranteed. The city's working people were expected to foot the bill. In 2003, not long after Shaw moved into the deputy mayor slot, the MTA raised fares by 33 percent, from \$1.50 to \$2. As top deputy to the billionaire mayor, Shaw was neck-deep in attempts to break the 2005 strike of the Transit Workers Union, when Republican Bloomberg called strikers "thugs" while Democrat Eliot Spitzer, then the state's attorney general, used the infamous Taylor Law to jail the TWU Local 100 president.

Those who think Marx and Lenin are old hat should take a look at Mr. Shaw in the light of Lenin's *Imperialism* (1917), where

the Russian revolutionary noted that in this "highest stage of capitalism," government agencies typically have a "personal link-up" with high finance, with "seats on Supervisory Boards" handed back and forth between them. Shaw's case is classic, as he jumped straight from the union-busting, fare-hiking world of city and state politics to the rent-gouging, gentrifying world of high-end real-estate speculation.

In 2006, Shaw joined the Extell Development Company as Executive VP for strategic planning. Extell is a high-end real estate firm which foresees \$1 billion in sales this year (*Broker's Weekly*, 30 July 2008), largely at luxury buildings like The Rushmore. A recent ad offers a penthouse at another Extell building for a trifling \$45.5 million. The new Extell Towers at 100th Street and Broadway is often cited as a prime example of Harlem's gentrification, while Extell's The Lucida inspired an article titled "Gentrification Arrives at a Crossroads in Yorkville" (*New York Times*, 2 January 2006). Shaw's Extell featured in an article titled "NYC: Out with the Poor, In with the Rich" (*Independent*, 25 November 2007).

**Charles A. Shorter**, another Bloomberg-appointed trustee, also comes from the realm of real estate, having held high positions with Ernst & Young LLP's Real Estate Transaction Advisory Services Group as well as Arthur Andersen LLP, the accounting firm infamous for its involvement in the Enron scandal.

Deputy mayorship is clearly a great way to land a seat on the CUNY Board of Trustees. Bloomberg's pattern of "administrative nepotism," in the words of the *CUNY Advocate* (September 2006), continued when he named **Carol A. Robles-Román** as a trustee only six months after she became Deputy Mayor for legal affairs in early 2002. Counseling the mayor on legal affairs, as well as collective bargaining issues, her office shared responsibility for strike-breaking measures during the historic 2005 transit strike. Then there is **Joseph J. Lhota**, Executive VP of Cablevision, a former PaineWebber investment banker who served as Deputy Mayor (1998-2001) in the depths of "Giuliani Time," was appointed to the CUNY Board by the notorious Rudolph G., then reappointed by Bloomberg. Lhota's wife was a fund-raiser for Giuliani, and was part of a group in the mayor's office that raised money for projects like the Giuliani-appointed commission on "the future of CUNY" that was headed by Benno Schmidt.

The remaining trustees are **Wellington Z. Chen** (Pataki appointee), Executive Director of the Chinatown Partnership Development Corporation; Frieda Foster-Tolbert, a former Pataki Community Affairs director appointed to the Board by the ex-governor; Dr. Hugo M. Morales, a mental health specialist appointed by Pataki and reappointed by Spitzer; and one ex officio member each from the University Faculty Senate and University Student Senate.

### Witch-Hunting at CUNY

But wait – there's one more, last but not definitely not least on the rogue's gallery of trustees: the outlandish, sinister and bizarre **Jeffrey Wiesenfeld**, who seems to channel the spirit of the Cold War redbaiter, Senator Joseph McCarthy. After four years in the FBI's foreign counterintelligence division, he became the head of the First New York Conservative Democratic Club in Queens, working for the egregious Ed Koch before going Republican and serving the notorious Senator Al D'Amato, then Pataki (PSC *Clarion*, October 2002). Today he is a principal with Bernstein Global Wealth Management.

When City College faculty members participated in an antiwar teach-in shortly after September 11, 2001, the *New York Post* launched a smear campaign. "Several faculty members named in the article subsequently received hate mail, including death threats," reported the American Association of University Professors' *Academe* (January-February 2002). The event was sponsored by the campus chapter of the CUNY Professional Staff Congress (PSC), whose CCNY chair told *Academe*: "We felt strong pressure not to continue to hold teach-ins.... The atmosphere can only be described as chilling to academic freedom and free speech." Chancellor Goldstein hastened to denounce the participants, and Wiesenfeld said "I would consider [their] behavior seditious at this time," raving that the event "enticed radicals to come and spew their venom toward the United States." The following month, after a right-wing Queens politician said "illegal aliens" at CUNY were a "security" threat, the university launched its anti-immigrant war purge, more than doubling tuition for "undocumented" students. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs initiated the campaign of protest that eventually pushed this back.

Wiesenfeld has made the faculty and staff union a key target of his McCarthyite diatribes. A newsletter published by the rightist "CUNY Alliance" in 2004 said "we commend Trustee Wiesenfeld" for "express[ing] concern that PSC management may be abusing its discretion by spending union dues on superfluous political activities. The Chair of the Board indicated that he would ask the University's General Counsel and Vice Chancellor Brenda Malone to investigate the Board's responsibility in this matter." In June 2005, Wiesenfeld told a Board of Trustees meeting that the PSC "acts to defend the academic freedom of those who engage in terrorist and criminal acts."

Wiesenfeld is a Zionist (pro-Israel, anti-Arab) witch-hunter in particular. He was New York chair of the "Stop the Madrassa Coalition," a major player in the vicious crusade against Debbie Almontaser, the former principal of the Khalil Gibran Academy in Brooklyn who was forced out when the *Post* whipped up a frenzy because she was part of a group that shared office space with an organization that sold t-shirts reading

"Intifada NYC" (a reference to the Palestinian revolt that began in 1987 against the brutal Israeli occupation). "Virtually all terrorists today are Muslim," ranted Wiesenfeld (*Daily News*, 4 September 2007). He joined attempts to silence Columbia professor Joseph Massad for the "crime" of speaking out in defense of Palestinians. Wiesenfeld declaimed: "Every public and private campus has its share of 'revolutionaries' who think proselytization is synonymous with education. I've made it my business not to be silent when this phenomenon raises its ugly head at a CUNY campus" (*New York Sun*, 13 February 2005).

Wiesenfeld was a featured speaker at a January 2008 Queens Village Republican Club dinner in honor of the publisher of the red-baiting *Patriot Returns* newsletter. His announced topic: "The poisoning of our next generation by our academics throughout our nation." The keynote speaker was George J. Marlin, former mayoral candidate of the ultra-rightist anti-abortion Conservative Party and member of Pataki's 1994 transition team. The ultra-right *FrontPage Magazine* (online edition, 23 May 2008), a mouthpiece David Horowitz's McCarthyite campaign to identify and purge the universities of perceived leftists, fulsomely defends Wiesenfeld's red-baiting attacks on PSC members while lauding him as "a hero to many New Yorkers for his efforts in bringing higher academic standards to CUNY," which it claims is now "experiencing a wonderful renaissance" as a "result of abolishing the failed policies of open admissions and remedial education."

**What needs to be abolished is the Board of Trustees itself!** It is no accident that the Board is made up of patronage appointees, profiteers, union-busters and witch-hunters. But the BoT is more than just a patronage mill. Its composition corresponds to its function: to run CUNY in the interests, not of the people who work and study here, but of the parasitic elite of money-men, speculators, real-estate moguls and ruling-class politicians. Thus, the burning questions of CUNY's fate are in the clearest sense *class* questions, bound up with the broader issues of who rules society, by what means, and for which purposes.

Who is in charge of the nation's largest public urban university is not just a local matter. A few years ago, the Rand Corporation, the premier think tank on strategic issues for the Pentagon, did a study on "The Governance of the City University of New York: A System at Odds with Itself" (2000), paid for by the Mayor's Advisory Task Force on CUNY set up by Rudolph Giuliani. The problem, it seems, was that there was resistance even at top levels to the wholesale elimination of every last vestige of open admissions:

"In particular, some members of the Board of Trustees and some of the political leaders responsible for CUNY believe that, at the senior colleges, open admissions has failed and requirements must be raised. Many of CUNY's stakeholders, however, remain strongly committed to open access at the senior colleges as well as the community colleges."

This problem was resolved by the removal by one means or another of all those who resisted the corporatization and elitist "reform" of City University.

Instead of the Board of Trustees and CUNY administration, **the university should be democratically controlled by students, teachers and workers.** But no university can be an island of emancipation if society at large is enslaved to capital. In the 1960s, New Leftists dreamed of "red universities," an impossibility under the rule of capital. The task of freeing CUNY from the profiteers' dictatorship is part of the fight to sweep away that rule and establish a socialist society, making education genuinely a right for all. ■

## Privatizers, Union-Busters, Witch-Hunters...

# Look Who's Trusteeing at CUNY

Lynn Mayekawa/The Envoy



Internationalist photo

**Left: Board of Trustees of the City University of New York (CUNY) votes in January 1999 to abolish the last vestiges of "open admissions." Right: CUNY Internationalist Clubs call for open admissions, no tuition and abolish the Board of Trustees – For student-teacher-worker control of the university!**

We've all seen those "Look Who's Teaching at CUNY" ads on the subway. You know, the ones with distinguished professors grinning like all get-out straight into the camera.

The PR campaign puts your teeth on edge if you're part of the "invisible" 57% of CUNY teaching staff with no job security, getting poverty pay for the same work. Adjuncts, teaching grad students, Continuing Ed and other "contingent" faculty are treated like disposable non-persons by the arrogant CUNY tops.

For CUNY's 450,000 students, there's not much to grin about either: against the background of war and economic crisis, budget cuts, tuition hikes, fee boosts and obscene textbook prices make education increasingly precarious. Now big banks like JPMorgan Chase and Citibank say community college students will be denied loans – while the feds bail out the private Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac companies to the tune of \$200 billion.

Who is it that's pushing to turn CUNY into "Walmart U"? Who keeps hiking tuition and fees? Who says most faculty just "can't" be allowed a living wage, job security or, in many cases, health care? Who keeps shoving more and more working-class and minority students out of school, and launched an "anti-immigrant war purge" against "undocumented students" in Fall 2001 (which was pushed back by protest and exposure)?

To begin answering this, let's take a good look at *Who's Trusteeing at CUNY*. Though school administrators (like the ruling-class politicians who appoint them) talk a lot about democracy, the people who work and study here don't run the place. Nor do New York's millions of working people have a say in the city's public university. Instead, CUNY's ruling body is a veritable rogue's gallery hand-picked from the business elite.

### Union-Busters R Us

Exactly who and what is the Board of Trustees? Our attention was drawn to this question last summer, after newly sworn-in Democratic Governor David Paterson appointed *Peter S. Pantaleo, a top professional in the lucrative field of anti-unionism*. The Board of Trustees (BoT) website identifies Pantaleo as a "Partner at DLA

PIPER," adding: "Mr. Pantaleo represents both domestic and international employers in labor, employment, and civil rights matters. While he has substantial experience litigating cases before courts, administrative agencies, and arbitration panels, the principal focus of Mr. Pantaleo's practice is advising employers in complex, politically sensitive labor and employment matters."

DLA PIPER is the largest law firm in the U.S. by attorney headcount, reportedly representing half the Fortune 500. Its website includes a "Labor and Employment Alert" giving employers step-by-step instructions on how to use a recent decision of the anti-labor NLRB to "prohibit use of email for union organizing purposes." This is remarkably similar to what happened at CUNY's LaGuardia Community College, which banned faculty from using email to discuss union business until this gag rule was defeated through a campaign sparked by campus union activists.

One of Pantaleo's favorite tunes must be "Viva Las Vegas," given his cushy relationship with the casino bosses. Google "Peter S. Pantaleo" and "anti-union" and you'll find a *New York Times* (10 March 1997) article on Pantaleo lawyering for the Las Vegas MGM Grand hotel during its campaign to stop a unionization drive. All the way up to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), his old firm Pantaleo, Lipkin & Moss represented Las Vegas bosses who banned three workers from handing out pro-union leaflets at the entrance to a casino/hotel complex.

And who knew there was such a thing as the *Gaming Law Review*? Turns out there is: its 1 May 1998 edition features Peter S. Pantaleo as co-author of an article on "lessening the power" of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees in the city where slot machines never sleep. Another Pantaleo piece, from 2004, tells employers in non-union workplaces how to use an NLRB ruling to prevent employees from having a co-worker present during "investigatory interviews" (*Mondaq Business Briefing*, 5 July 2004).

The Democratic governor's appointment of Pantaleo may be related to the fact that Dick Gephardt, for years the Democrats' leader in the House of Representatives, is Senior Counsel at DLA Piper. The firm was

among the top business contributors to the Hillary Clinton campaign. Add it all up and a key point comes through: the Democrats, like the Republicans, represent big business *against* the working class.

### Education as a "Profit Platform"

Last spring, a scandal erupted at Hunter College over a "Special Public Relations" course offered the previous year, bought and paid for by a \$10,000 grant from the Coach handbag company. Run by a public relations firm hired by the apparel industry, the class made up a bogus story about a student named Heidi Cee (who did not exist) being ripped off for \$500 in reward money she put

up for the return of a Coach handbag. According to the fake story (which included a phony YouTube video, blog, MySpace and Facebook profiles), someone had given her a counterfeit Coach bag instead. The Coach company turned Hunter into a cog in its corporate campaign against the allegedly dire menace of handbag counterfeiting. A few months later, Coach's CEO donated a million dollars to Hunter.

The Hunter/Coach escapade is just a small example of the push to *corporatize education*. Ironically, CUNY's Board of Trustees includes the CEO of a *different* handbag company: *Sam A. Dutton*, head of

*continued on page 10*

# Look Who's TEACHING At CUNY!

City University highlights top-level professors in ubiquitous subway ads, but 57 percent of CUNY faculty are part-time instructors, who have no job stability (they can be fired at any time, without cause), earn poverty wages (mostly under \$25,000 a year) and in the case of graduate student adjuncts have no health care "benefits." See "Adjunct Rebellion at CUNY" on page 4.



Adjunct Rebellion at CUNY . . . . . 4

What's What at Wal\*Mart U . . . . . 5