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THE NORTHEAST EXPLODES!

Students: Battle Cops in New York City

Volume 6, Number 3

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People's Rebellion in Paterson, N.J.

Fascists Unwelcome in Montréal

L-O-V-E

R-A-G-E

A REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHIST NEWSPAPER

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New York Budget Cuts Spark Militant Mass Movement

by Christopher Day

February 27, 8,000 students, mainly from the State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY), attended a rally organized by the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) at the New York state capitol in Albany against dramatic budget cuts in the state budget for higher education. The NYPIRG rally was organized to coincide with a day of student lobbying of state legislators. But many of the students gathered in Albany were in no mood to beg politicians for what they consider a 0

organized an impromptu march that managed to capture the whole crowd. After marching up and down a long mall the students started to march past the state capitol building which was guarded by no more than a dozen cops on horseback. Students waving the flag of the Dominican Republic were the first up the stairs of the capitol building. For a moment the crowd hesitated and then proceeded up the stairs to the doors of the capitol. The NYPIRG organizers panicked and pleaded with the crowd to return to the rally site. It was too late. Several hundred students poured into the lobby of the capitol building chanting, among other things, “Revolution! Revolution!” before the NYPIRG organizers, working with the cops, managed to secure the doors and prevent the rest of the students from getting in. The rest of the crowd then marched several blocks to the administrative headquarters of SUNY where the police were better prepared. After several unsuccessful attempts the crowd managed to push through the police and get into the SUNY building, where they remained for about twenty minutes. The demonstration obtained only local Albany coverage in the capitalist media.

While the students were not prepared to transform these spontaneous actions into effective occupations, their insurgent spirit was an indicator that the movement against the budget cuts was going to be militant. This pattern was to repeat itself several times, with the rank and file of the student movement breaking through the boundaries established by their self-appointed leaders.

OPENING MOVES

Several days later on March 1, 20,000 hospital workers organized by 1199 (eleven-nineteen), the hospital workers union, marched from the Empire State Building to Bellevue Hospital in opposition to proposed cuts in Medicaid and hospital funding. Over the next several weeks the movement began to turn up the heat. When recently-elected Governor George Pataki came to speak in a New York City hotel his path was blocked by AIDS activists and students. On March 15, speak-outs were organized by faculty at many CUNY schools. At Hunter, a CUNY college, a speak-out turned into a confrontation with the police after theater students, mainly of Black youth, were aimed at police throughout the city. The response to these attacks was minimal, in part because the once-militant union movement has accepted the ideology that the workers and the bosses have the same interests. Since the mid-1980s, Quebec militancy has been falling. In Quebec, for example, during the 1970s and 1980s, the average number of strikes each year was 243. But in 1992 there were only 159, and in 1994 only 133.

These years of setbacks have been the prelude to the general attack that we face now, and to the social movement that began a fight against the federal government in October, 1994. My focus in this article will be on Quebec, so we should know something about the left organizations there, especially in Montreal.

THE QUEBEC STUDENT MOVEMENT

From 1975 to the early ’90s, the student left was dominated by one militant organization.

(Continued to page 3)

Québecois Left Fights Class War

by Nick Pharis

January 25 saw one of the biggest student mobilizations in the history of Canada. More than 8,000 students coast to coast have shown, in a militant fashion, their opposition to the Liberal federal government. They want to make deep cuts in welfare, unemployment insurance and post-secondary education. These proposals were the culmination of a decade during which both the Liberal Party, in power most of that time at the federal level, and the Tories, also in power during that time, have adopted a neoliberal approach. Slowly but surely, they have used propaganda to put into the minds of the masses the idea that the people benefitting from social programs are parasites and thieves. They also began to create a general climate of panic about the national debt and used this argument as an excuse to attack the poor, who supposedly cost a lot of money. They slowly dismantled those programs.

For example, since 1992 the amount paid by unemployment insurance has been reduced from 60 to 55 percent of the average paycheck. The number of people eligible has been cut by 102,000, and the duration of benefits has been reduced. The government has also attacked welfare recipients through a law requiring those who are able to work to accept any program the government offers, or have their checks cut. At the same time, the government gave more and more money to the rich through subsidies and tax deductions, not to mention "unlimited" research.

The response to these attacks was minimal, in part because the once-militant union movement has accepted the ideology that the workers and the bosses have the same interests. Since the mid-1980s, Quebec militancy has been falling. In Quebec, for example, during the 1970s and 1980s, the average number of strikes each year was 243. But in 1992 there were only 159, and in 1994 only 133.

These years of setbacks have been the prelude to the general attack that we face now, and to the social movement that began a fight against the federal government in October, 1994. My focus in this article will be on Quebec, so we should know something about the left organizations there, especially in Montreal.

(Continued to page 3)

People’s Rebellion in Paterson, New Jersey

by PAC

Paterson made national news from Wednesday, Feb. 22 until Sunday the 26th. The news began when a rookie narcotics cop, Ronald Cohen, shot 16-year-old Lawrence Meyers in the back of the head on the evening of Monday, Feb. 20. Meyers was under narcotics surveillance when he was approached. He ran, and Cohen, with his gun drawn, chased him to a fence. Eyewitnesses state that when Cohen could not get Meyers off the fence, he shot him in the back of the head. Meyers was unarmored, Lawrence Meyers in the back of the head on the evening of Monday, Feb. 20. Meyers was under narcotics surveillance when he was approached. He ran, and Cohen, with his gun drawn, chased him to a fence. Eyewitnesses state that when Cohen could not get Meyers off the fence, he shot him in the back of the head. Meyers was unarmored.

When the story broke in Tuesday’s paper, Meyers was listed in critical condition and on life support. Officials reported on Wednesday that Meyers had died. This sparked a march to City Hall, almost entirely composed of Black youth.

Several self-proclaimed Black leaders of the city strike, asking city to remain calm and to wait for a police investigation. They were all boxed. The masses were out to get their own justice.

Cops were initially held back, but eventually were let loose upon the crowd of 300-400. Street fighting followed, both cops and demonstrators were knocked to the ground, and the rebellion began. Members of the angry crowd smashed store windows and threw bottles at the police and city hall. After several minutes, people left the City Hall/downtown area and police shut the streets to traffic.

During these events, members of the Paterson Anarchist Collective (PAC) distributed hundreds of “No Police State” leaflets and copies of Plain Words/Copwatch to a crowd in search of direction. Later that night, PAC members monitored police radio to discover that cops around the city were being attacked. Sniper fire, rocks, and bottles were aimed at police throughout the night. In the meantime, on Wednesday, when television news reported the uprising and that Meyers was dead, the Lower East Side Class War Organizer (LESC­­WU) had responded immediately to the crisis situation and remained in Paterson throughout the entire rebellion. PAC began to organize literature to distribute the next day. Late Wednesday night an emergency one-page issue of Copwatch was produced along with a flex urging Paterson to rise up.

(Continued to page 3)
The news blackout on the movement against the budget cuts was finally broken. The March 23 demonstration got front page coverage in every English and Spanish language daily in New York in addition to extensive national and international coverage.

LIBERAL HUCKSTERS STIR BATTLEFAVES

The March 23 demonstration seriously shook the power structure by announcing the existence of an autonomous working-class student movement outside the control of any of the traditional "progressive" forces of New York City politics. The CUNY Coalition refused to let any politicians speak from the stage. Ruth Messinger, the executive director of the liberal Democratic Manhattan Borough President, was told to get off the stage. The response to the March 23 demonstration was immediate. The "left-wing" of the Democratic Party, in the form of the Rev. Al Sharpton and 1,199 President (and vice-president of the New York State Democratic Party) Parnell Davis, called for a march from City Hall to Wall Street on April 4.

CUNY (Continued from page 1)

The April 4 demonstration had many lessons to offer the new student movement. Rivera and Sharpton promised the CUNY Coalition that they would be "equal partners" in organizing the demonstration. They were everything but. About 5,000 people, mainly students, turned out for the demonstration. 1,199 did not mobilize its membership beyond the usual protest list of "solidarity with demonstrators". Along Came the Police

On March 23, 30,000 students turned out for a demonstration organized by the CUNY Coalition Against the Cuts. The explicit aim was "to shut the City down." Only about 20,000 were able to get to the rally area around City Hall. The rest were prevented from getting to the rally by the police and clerged the streets surrounding the rally. The crowd included thousands of the 14,000 High School students who walked out of classes that day. When the students at City Hall attempted to get through the police barricades and into the street in order to march on Wall Street they were met with horses, mace and hot-dog stands. Seventy-five students were arrested and many more were maced or otherwise injured. Reporters and photographers were also caught up in the police riot. Eventually the repeated attacks by the police broke down the determination of the students to continue the protest. Several thousand students regrouped at BMCC nearby and several hundred orga-
nized into a blockade of police headquarters, where the police arrested ear-
ier on being held. Later that evening Police Commissioner Bratton attempted to speak at a previously scheduled event at Hunter College. Students disrupted the event by shouting Bratton down with accusations about police brutality at the demonstration. After one of the students was thrown out of the room a crowd of students gathered outside and chanted loudly throughout the event. As Bratton left he was met by an angry crowd of students chanting "Cops Off Campus! Run Bratton Run!"

In 1968, the demonstrations at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago had a profound effect on the SDS chapter at Kent State, just as they did around the country. Due to its role in political participation in the electoral process, SDS had been enjoying a golden moment at the convention. When Robert Kennedy’s "peace candidate" was killed, SDS was poised to be the "people's candidate," rallying against the Johnson Administration over the war in Southeast Asia. And one was to get RUTC and military recruiters off campus. On May 4, when a crowd of over ten thousand students was turned back by US military snipers waffled with police. The university charged the students with "mob incitement to riot" and the police department charged them with attacking police officers. Eventually, a dozen were booked in jail, along with several student leaders of SDS served time. They each served six months.

In June, 1969, as the early gay and woman's movements were gathering strength, the Stonewall Rebellion erupted in New York City. As the movement grew, the SDS broke up into several competing factions. Half of the group formed the Progressive Labor Party, which argued that the movement should focus on a traditional Marxist analysis and organizing the working class. They ignored the Black Panther Party, which was supporting the Black power movement, and the Black Student Movement, also rallying against the war in Southeast Asia, and one was to get RUTC and military recruiters off campus.

Historian Michael Harrington in his book, The Other America, estimates that over one hundred people were killed and over one hundred people were killed and wounded in US demonstrations protesting the invasion of Cambodia and issues of domestic racism. In other murderous massacres at Kent State University, two students were killed at Jackson State (an all-Black college), also rallying against the war. Nine African-Americans were killed in Augusta, Georgia, and 11 Chicano-Mexican students were attacked with bayonets at the University of New Mexico.

Kent State has gained its legendary importance because the white mass part of the student movement suffered deliberate fatalities at the hands of the white ruling class. It was preceded by years of murderous attacks on both the civil rights movement and the black power movement. Kent State University in Ohio was a large state school with a high percentage of working class students. In 1965, the Kent State Committee to End the War was started. By 1965, Kent had a very militant, anti-imperialist chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). In the fall of 1968, Kent SDS students Blackshocked the fascists and waving the black power flag in the administration building, calling for an end to police recruiting on campus. In the aftermath of that demonstration, when the administration threatened to press charges against the students, the occupation and demonstration of the university's black students walked off campus and the charges were dropped.

One of the astounding things about Pataki’s budget proposal, however, is that it is virtually identical to the proposals made by other organizations that are funded, and because of the relatively privileged position of SUNY and CUNY, many students are able to offset the cuts more easily than CUNY. But the cuts
them with the Black liberation movement and with other movements of oppressed and colonized peoples around the world. RYM was a national movement.

By the Fall of 1969, RYM had further divided into four groups under the leadership of the Weathermen. Student meetings with the Vietnamese and student work with the Black Panthers and the American Indian Movement were already forming in many areas, known as the Days of Rage, to take place at their universities. Though many people were involved, which was a big blow to Weather, the tactics used in Chicago were not repeated by other groups in other activities later that spring. The demonstrations fought the police with helmets and clubs. RSYM was one day of only one actions, which marked a transition from the development of a position on “liberation through participation” regarding women. In the fall, a new and somewhat spontaneous series of organizers and groups followed the move- ment that SDS had designed to generate. At Kent State, ex-SDSers who were first-year and sophomores (among them a student named Allison Krause), organized for the Washington Demonstration to Stop the War in November. Over half-a-million people attended, making it the third largest gathering of the decade. Over four hundred people were arrested. Weathermen helped younger students organize.

On December 4, 1969, Mark Clark and Fred Emmer of the Weathermen and other stu- dents in their twenties—were murdered while they slept by the FBI and the Chicago police. News of the attack sent the Weathermen underground. Their decisions were made to help form a “second front” in support of the Vietnamese and the Black Panther Party. They made their choices and their lives, which comes with clandestinity to pursue armed propaganda actions and radical organization. Their death is mourned and remembered on the streets.

The typical FBI-devised rhetoric helped isolate and criminalize the entire student community, and in their efforts to build a “second front” in support of the Vietnamese and the Black Panther Party. They made their choices and their lives, which comes with clandestinity to pursue armed propaganda actions and radical organization. Their death is mourned and remembered on the streets.

For the majority of CUNY students, going to college is an enormous struggle. Few CUNY students can count on significant financial support from their parents. A vast majority of CUNY students hold down at least one job. Many have children and other family members to take care of. Many are the first in their families to ever attend college. For these students, for their families, and for their communities, a CUNY education represents their deepest hopes and aspirations. The proposed budget cuts are a direct assault on these dreams and the real possibility of a quality education for every one of the hundred thousand students in CUNY there are at least ten more people watching to see what will happen. A student forces out of school by these budget cuts represents younger sisters and brothers or friends on the block who will give up hope and numb their despair with drugs. The budget cuts and their effects are a matter of life and death for the communities affected.

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The NEW WORLD ORDER COMES HOME

One of the main battles within the anti- cut movement has been over the cuts coming from the CUNY Board of Trustees. The CUNYBoard of Trustees has been restructuring the colleges, making cuts to classes, and reducing the quality of education. This has caused many members of the CUNY Coalition to leave the coalition, which was formed to fight for a better education. The coalition has regrouped and is now fighting against the cuts.

The new world order is coming, and it is bringing with it a lot of change. The cuts in education are just the beginning. The political landscape is changing, and the way we live and work is changing as well. The cuts are coming to CUNY, and they are coming to New York City. The cuts are coming to our communities, and they are coming to our schools.

Frequently, activists argue that the budget cuts in higher education will be bad for New York's economy because education is one of the largest industries in the city. They argue that if the cuts are made, it will be just a big blunder in calculating the effects of the budget. In fact the budget cuts are perfectly rational from the point of view of the rich. In the new global economy the high-paying jobs that supported the US's large middle class are disappearing. It has been a difficult time for the nation, but the cuts are needed.

The cuts are coming, and they are coming to CUNY. The cuts are coming to our communities, and they are coming to our schools. The cuts are coming to New York City, and they are coming to our country. The cuts are coming, and they are coming to our future. The cuts are coming, and they are coming to our lives.
The anti-budget cut movement is a very broad one and there are enormous contradictions between the various forces it has brought together. Perhaps the sharpest contradiction has arisen between the ‘left-wing’ of the Democratic Party as represented by 1199 and the more autonomous CUNY Coalition. While 1199 has a membership of tens of thousands of working class people who will be directly affected by the cuts, the leadership of the union is in the hands of people who will be affected in a very different way, the cuts will undermine their claim to institutionalized power. By contrast, the CUNY Coalition, in spite of many failings, is honestly led by students who are not directly concerned with future political careers. The March 23 demonstration was more than an attack on the budget cuts. It was a challenge to the ability of the Democrats to keep opposition to the budget cuts within the bounds of protest-as-usual. While the right has overplayed its hand, the CUNY Coalition meetings have been so orderly that they stand for and wanted the group to feel of unity. When it was suggested that the lines of trust and communication between campuses had not been built up to the point that they could overcome the pre-existing order and a willingness to take to the streets to challenge it. While it is still in its earliest and most vulnerable stages, we are right now witnessing the birth of a new movement. The anti-budget cut movement is not a tired re-run of all the failed last stands of the old left of the ’80s. It has successfully mobilized thousands of people who have never participated in any sort of politics before and their vitality is palpable. This spirit was expressed clearly the day after March 23 when students at Hunter College gathered to sum up the demonstration and to talk about what they wanted to do. While the room was filled with pacificists, militants, democratic socialists, anarchists, communists, nationalists, Christians, Muslims, and independent radicals, there was a profound feeling of unity. It was suggested that everybody take a minute to say what it was that they stood for and wanted the group to stand for that unity was made clear. Although our commitment to defeating the cuts and defending CUNY had brought us together not one person mentioned either. All but two people spoke specifically of revolution. One Palestinian said simply “I believe in love” and was met with loud applause. The right has overplayed its hand. Pataki’s budget has given birth to a movement that will not be going away soon. He has compelled us to speak openly about our desire for a new society and the love of the people that motivates it. Nothing is more dangerous to the powers that be.