

Student antiwar protests in Reno, Nevada

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On Wednesday, March 5, students throughout Reno, Nevada joined students across the nation in a one-day student strike to protest the Bush administration's war plans against Iraq, and to call attention to the neglected educational needs of American youth.

Under the slogan "Books Not Bombs!" demonstrations were scheduled at the University of Nevada Reno (UNR), Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), and several local high schools. Alongside news of this event, the Reno area's daily, the *Reno Gazette-Journal*, reported that next year's budget for the Washoe County School District is expected to be trimmed by between 6 million and 23 million dollars.

At UNR, about a dozen students, along with organizers from the Reno Anti-War Coalition, set-up a small tent and several tables of leaflets on the lawn of the Student Union. The leaflets were from groups such as the Campus Greens and ANSWER. Lining this so-called "Peace Camp" were signs reading, "No War In Iraq," "Bush's Policies Endangering America, Enraging the World," and "Libertarians for Peace." A sign placed directly in front of the tent read "Not In Our Name!"

By noon, the demonstration had attracted about three dozen protesters, media reporters from the local NBC network affiliate and local papers, and many student passers-by. At noon, speakers were invited to address the group. One of the speakers, Patricia Axelrod, director of the Desert Storm Think Tank and Veterans' Advocate, discussed an antiwar resolution she has been attempting to get the Reno City Council to pass. Similar resolutions, she indicated, have already passed in 124 cities across the US—including Los Alamos, birthplace of the atom bomb.

Ms. Axelrod indicated that the city of Reno's chief of staff saw fit to unilaterally bar discussion of the resolution and banish it from the city agenda.

After the speeches, demonstrators planned to march to the Clark administration building to demand that ROTC and JROTC be replaced with financial aid and college preparatory programs. Around 4 p.m., demonstrators at the various schools planned to converge and end their march at the Federal Building.

A *World Socialist Web Site* reporter distributed leaflets and spoke to demonstrators. Jennifer, a journalism major, spoke of the financial strain on a growing number of college students. "I know a lot of people who are in debt," she said, "because of college, like thousands and thousands of dollars. And, they have no idea how they're going to pay it off. They can barely make ends meet—even working fulltime.

And it's really hard to find a job, particularly since the university cut two-thirds of the student jobs. A lot of places are just not hiring right now. I mean, a friend of mine was just saying the other

day that he has \$27 left for the rest of the semester. I have no idea how he's going to do it."

Danielle, an Environmental Studies student, spoke of the direction in which American society is headed. "I feel that right now what's happening is we're kind of having a revolution." When asked to clarify, she responded, "One in which people are going to gain consciousness and gain the capacity to care. They're going to become more aware of what society wants and really become one people, really accepting."

Jeff, one of the more politically active students, said of the coming war, "This war is total bull. It's about oil. It's about domination over the rival world powers, which include Russia, Germany, Japan, and France, because they, unlike us, are totally dependent on Middle Eastern oil.

"And, if we control that source of oil, we have control over them. You see, we could've solved alternative sources of energy 30 years ago." Though not a socialist, Jeff was open to what he called

“libertarian socialism.”

He went on: “They are trying to erode civil liberties. There’s a dialectical process we’ve seen throughout history that is going on, that has always been going on, that they like to think isn’t going on. And the future of America is largely going to be decided by how much we allow them to control us, which is why I think it’s important for us to be here to show our solidarity and share the fact that we can think for ourselves and not just eat what we’ve been given by Fox news.”

Hostility towards the Bush administration by the demonstrators ran high. Not a single person disagreed that G. W. Bush’s presidency was initiated through criminal and anti-democratic means. Many students characterized the Bush administration in terms of expletives. Many condemned Bush’s personal character and beliefs, seeing him as a fascist ruler.



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