

Demonstrators denounce Bush and Democrats over Iraq war

A reporting team
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At the October 27 demonstrations organized by United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) in New York, Chicago and a number of other cities, members and supporters of the Socialist Equality Party intervened, distributing material from the *World Socialist Web Site* and a statement appealing for students to join and build the International Students for Social Equality.

Many of those interviewed by WSWS reporters expressed anger at both the Bush administration and the Democratic Party for its complicity in the war.

In New York City, the WSWS spoke to Fernando Braga, one of a number of veterans of the Iraq war who joined in the protests across the country. He left the Army last month, having been deployed for nearly a year in Iraq.

A working class youth from a Brazilian immigrant family in the Bronx, Fernando, said that he joined the Army to get money for college. "That's the main draw," he said. "It sounds good. They gave me an \$8,000 signing bonus, which was more money than I'd ever made in my life. But I wouldn't do it again. I was against the war since before I joined."

"This war is over oil," he said. "They are sending the troops to fight there for years to come. Every politician out there who is running for president, both Democrats and Republicans, is talking about sending our troops around the world and fighting even bigger wars. It's not just about Bush; it's about imperialism. Congress has supported this war, and I don't expect it to stop it now."

"It's not like Vietnam, when they could cut their losses and get out. Instead, this time they are getting ready to go somewhere else, like Iran, to escalate it."

Fernando said that he was still in touch with fellow soldiers in Iraq. "A lot of people have stopped fighting the war on the ground," he said. "They go out and do

what they call 'search and avoid' missions. They're convinced that we're not going to win this war, so why risk their lives."

Rick, a computer worker at the Chicago demonstration, said, "I just missed being called up for Vietnam. Iraq is like Vietnam when I was growing up. My dad didn't want me to go to Vietnam and I don't want my kids to have to go to Iraq or Iran in a war."

"When I go to work I see young men from the Great Lakes Naval Station and some of them are gung-ho about going to Iraq. But there are kids dying in this war and they don't understand what it is really about."

"The main purpose is to control and manipulate the scarce resource of oil. People are dying and billions are being spent basically for imperialism."

"Bush is also building fences on the Mexican border to keep immigrants out of the country. It's absurd to think you can keep the problems of the world economy out by building a fence. Instead, the living standards of workers in Mexico and the Middle East should be raised."

"They're taking our kids and our resources for a war when so much needs to be done here."

"It's ironic. In 1976 the Army boot camp I was in was training Iranian soldiers before the Shah was overthrown. Now the US wants a war with Iran."

"The Democrats said they were going to end the war and they have not lived up to their promise. We need to get past the two-party system. There really isn't much difference between the Democrats and Republicans. The Democrats' claim that they speak for the working man is not true. They answer to the lobbyists and corporate interests, the same way as the Republicans."



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