

September 30, 2004

Resolution to Support the Colombia Teachers' Strike October 12th

Whereas the PSC has already adopted Resolutions, and brought them to the NYSUT and AFT conventions, in solidarity with the struggle against death squad assassinations of teachers and other unionists in Colombia; and the Colombia national teacher strike is an occasion for us to move beyond Resolutions and offer practical strike support;

And Whereas as we know, Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world to be a unionist: three-quarters of all murders of trade unionists occur in Colombia, and already this year alone 23 teachers, 60% of them women, have been killed by right-wing paramilitaries;

And Whereas according to Amnesty International, "Colombia is the third largest recipient of US military aid in the world. Despite compelling evidence that the Colombian military are violating human rights, either directly or in collusion with paramilitary groups, the US government has agreed to allow its military assistance to be used for counter-insurgency activities, with one clear and tragic result - a greater targeting of the civilian population" (*The Wire*, 4/23/04);

And Whereas FECODE, the Federación Colombiana de Educadores (Colombian Teachers Union), is launching on October 12 an indefinite national strike against the death squads and the Uribe government, which allows these killings to go on with impunity; and CUT, the federation of all Colombian unions, is also calling a one-day general strike against the government on October 12; and FECODE has asked US teachers and students to support the strike and oppose the US military aid that is killing them;

And Whereas the strike is endorsed by the AFT (American Federation of Teachers), the NEA (National Education Association), and EI (Education International), and Latin American and European unions are joining in support;

And Whereas other demands of the strike are for health care, pensions, and retirement benefits, all threatened with deep cuts by government legislation, and for an end to the freeze on salaries and promotions;

And Whereas by supporting their strike locally, we join forces against a common enemy, those who would destroy public education, through more privatization, punitive union contracts, tuition hikes, budget cuts, over-use of standardized tests, and the infiltration of corporations and the military into education;

Resolved: That the PSC endorse the Colombian national teachers' strike October 12, and will, through the International and Solidarity Committees,

conduct strike support in the form of a rally at the Colombian Consulate on October 12; a letter-writing campaign, through the PSC website, to the Uribe government and the US Congress; and do targeted leafleting and petitioning on CUNY campuses.