



*Center for Study
of Working Class Life
Department of Economics*

Statement on U.S. Government refusal to admit professor John Milios into the United States to attend the How Class Works – 2006 conference at Stony Brook University

On the afternoon of Thursday June 8, the How Class Works – 2006 conference at the State University of New York at Stony Brook was disrupted by the action of U.S. government officials who refused to allow Professor John Milios of the National Technical University of Athens to enter this country on his arrival at JFK airport from Greece. Professor Milios was detained at the airport and questioned at length by the FBI concerning his political views and affiliations. He was put on a plane back to Athens eight hours after he arrived, on the claim of technical difficulties with his visa.

Professor Milios came to the United States at the invitation of the How Class Works – 2006 conference program committee to present a paper reflecting his recent research exploring ways in which class position in society shapes people's attitudes. His absence was a serious loss to the intellectual life of the conference and the university. Upon hearing the reason for his absence, conference participants were shocked and angered that a colleague in the international community of scholars had been subject to political interrogation when trying to enter the United States, and then refused entry. This is a wholly unacceptable practice. The action of U.S. officials on June 8 isolated American faculty and students from important research results derived overseas and made it impossible for a senior international expert to interact with his colleagues in the United States.

I am embarrassed to have to protest this unacceptable political intrusion into the flow of ideas and intellectual work across borders, a mission at the heart of any university's purpose. Staff members in the offices of Congressman Tim Bishop (who represents the Stony Brook University community) and New York Senators Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton have agreed to investigate and act to set these practices right. Senior Stony Brook University administrators and the leadership of United University Professions, the union representing SUNY faculty and professional staff, share my distress at this development. Working with these offices, the Center for Study of Working Class Life will do whatever we can to right this wrong and prevent such treatment of visitors to the United States in the future. We extend our apologies and regrets to Professor Milios.

Michael Zweig
Director, Center for Study of Working Class Life
How Class Works – 2006 conference coordinator
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