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Harold M. Proshansky 1920-1990

By Eric K. Glunt

It strikes me as being a little presumptuous for a graduate student in environmental psychology to be writing a "eulogy" for Harold M. Proshansky. Although I probably knew him as well as any graduate student (with the exception of his student research associates), there are many graduates of our program and faculty in the department who knew and worked with him for 15 to 35 years.

I first met Hal Proshansky my second day at CUNY in a reception welcoming new students to the environmental psychology program. (Hal and Etta Proshansky were never strangers to social functions in the department.) My first experience of him was in the role of "Papa Proshansky" (the legendary father figure that many people in the Graduate Center talk about).

Over the past several years I have had several opportunities for him to directly comment on my work and writing concerning housing issues. Hal Proshansky was a thoughtful scholar and teacher. I was a little surprised, one time, when he sent me a short congratulatory note regarding an article by Greg Herek and myself (concerning AIDS-related stigma) that was published in the *American Psychologist*.

I also had several opportunities to incur his wrath in my personal advocacy for issues such as student housing for the Graduate Center and my criticism of institutional reductions in psychological counseling services for the general student body. Hal Proshansky was sometimes pugnacious.

Intellectually I have found much of Hal Proshansky's thinking to be helpful in my own research. I have consistently used his ideas on place identity in my own work and writing on public attitudes about AIDS, low-income limited-equity co-op housing, and the rehousing of homeless persons. His critique of social science methodology has shaped my own research approaches and methods.

In 1990, Harold M. Proshansky was requested to write an intellectual history of his life and work for an edited volume. With this book chapter at hand, there seems to be little need for anyone to write a "eulogy"... Hal Proshansky speaks very well for himself.

The following paragraphs are excerpts from this recent intellectual history. He dedicated the chapter to his wife, Etta Proshansky stating the "I have had a remarkably rewarding professional career, and if I owe anyone anything, it is my wife. Her good sense, her perception, and her acute intelligence have helped me immeasurably when I have confronted difficult problems as a research psychologist and as an administrator."

Welcome to the Occupation

The essential act of war is destruction, not necessarily of human lives, but of the products of human labor. War is a way of shattering to pieces, or pouring into the stratosphere, or sinking into the sea, materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence, in the long run, too intelligent. Even when weapons of war are not actually destroyed, their manufacture is still a convenient way of expending labor power without producing anything that can be consumed.

--George Orwell, 1984

All CUNY students are victims of the United States led war against Iraq. Many of us must join the armed services in order to afford a college education while federal financial aid requirements stipulate that all male students must register with the Selective Service. One of our number, Ismael Cotto, has already lost his life while others are now in danger. Meanwhile, CUNY students here must

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The Pursuit of Understanding An Intellectual History By Harold M. Proshansky

Environment and Behavior Studies: Emergence of Intellectual Traditions
Edited by Irwin Altman and Kathleen Christensen
New York: Plenum Press, 1990.

My formal training as a psychologist began at the City College of New York, where I did my undergraduate work in the late 1930s. My significant psychology mentors during that time were Gardner Murphy and Max Hertzman. The influence on my thinking exerted by Murphy and Hertzman, and later by Otto Klineberg, can only be understood, however, in the context of my background long before I was a student in their courses. Briefly, I was born into a Jewish family that moved from lower class to lower middle class and then back again during the Great Depression years. It was a family that prided itself on being intellectual, cultured, and above all liberal and humanistic in its views. My mother and father were labor union members with a strong socialistic orientation who voted the Democratic ticket in all elections and openly espoused racial equality, intergroup harmony, compassion for the downtrodden, the essential goodness of all human beings, and the sublimity of American democracy. They strongly identified with their left, liberal working-class roots, but at the same time saw their children doing better by becoming educated and entering a high-status profession, with medicine clearly having the highest priority. It was thus my highest priority when I entered City College in 1937.

That did not last long, though. During my freshman year I began painfully to realize that my career

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More Bad CUNY Budget News

By Thomas Smith

On Wednesday, January 2, 1991, the CUNY Board of Trustees held a public hearing on the new budget in the Blue Room at City Hall. The major issues facing CUNY are the new shortfalls in state and city spending for CUNY—the Board's response is a fresh round of budget cuts and tuition hikes of \$100 per semester per student.

The first round of statements were made by public officials, including Manhattan Boro President Ruth Messinger and CUNY Chancellor Ann Reynolds. In her statement, Messinger decried the need for budget cuts. She declared the importance of non-dispensable programs that serve a growing number of part-time and evening students: students who, more than others at CUNY, hold down full-time jobs to put them through school. Messinger discussed proposals for an expansion of programs for these students, involving placement services, day care, and cooperative programs with potential employers. She especially emphasized that because of a 50% turnover rate among the city's primary and secondary school teachers, many CUNY students would be needed in the next decade to fill the vacancies by pursuing temporary and full time teaching careers. The city's health care services will also be facing critical shortages in personnel which CUNY students, if helped to complete their degrees, would be able to fill. Finally, Messinger called for increased funding of education for literacy teachers, given the alarming increase of this problem in the city.

Chancellor Reynolds spoke next. Recently arrived from her stint as Chancellor of the University of California system, she specialized in resolving fiscal constraints by passing down budget cuts (although she and fellow administrators received substantial salary increases). Reynolds spent about half of her speech praising Messinger. She spent the remainder claiming that tuition hikes would offer a feasible increase in revenue, given the recent increase in CUNY admissions of 200,000 students, 20% more than last year. At the same time, she claimed that these additional students could still be offered a fair education under a reduced budget. As a later speaker revealed, Reynolds avoided discussing the fact that student enrollment has drastically declined since tuition was reinstated in the early seventies.

Stanley Loeb from the CCNY College Fund then declared that the mission of CUNY was "to educate the children of the 'whole people' of New York City." This mission was being betrayed, declared Loeb. He was the first of several speakers that night who said that the City Administration was shifting funds from education to a larger police force amongst other programs, asking for more police was because funding for education, among other things, had steadily declined. Loeb exclaimed a need to convince the Board to shift its priorities by mobilizing "by the thousands," to build a "grass roots, city-wide" movement, hundreds of thousands strong, supporting the fight for higher education. Such a movement could show the Board that funding education could be politically savvy, even in a city where

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Around & About The Center

CUNY Chancellor Reynolds Meets with Students

On Monday, November 26, 1990, CUNY Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds visited the Graduate School, where she met with a group of students. What follows is a transcription of that meeting.

Chancellor Reynolds: I did my doctorate at the University of Iowa, finished it in 1961, went off to teach and was granted the degree in '62, in the department of Zoology in the department of Developmental Biology. I considered those years in graduate school very difficult at the time, like all of you—very short on financial resources. If there had not been a grocery store that charged I don't think I could have made it through. And a couple of professors who used to feed us at the last of the month.

Student: Now we have credit cards.

Reynolds: Graduate students have terrific cash-flow problems, that was the worst part of the problem. But the one thing that I wanted to say, which will be true for all of you as well, is that the friends I made in graduate school are the best friends that I have made in my whole life. I'm still in touch with them on an almost constant basis. There is nothing that cements friendships like being in graduate school with your colleagues. Let me say a couple of things very quickly about the state of the University and then I will respond to questions. Particularly the people in Art History have a concern they want to express. The state of the State, the state of the city, are not good. You've been reading the newspaper about the fiscal problems of the State. I've been here now 11 weeks, and I think I have been spending most of my time on the budget situation more than anything else. To the credit of the City University of New York, it has been recognized that we run a lean, committed organization. The average cost of educating a community college student in the City University of New York is about \$4,700 a year. About a thousand a year more for a senior college student and a lot less than the \$57,000 a year it takes to keep one person at Rikers Island for a year. To that end, even though the budget cuts have been truly monstrous for the city agencies, there has been amelioration of our cuts. That does not mean that it will be smooth and easy. By the end of the year we will have cut about 1500 sections, courses in the senior colleges and the community colleges. That means an affect on graduate students, because graduate students comprise the adjunct faculty that teach many of those courses. So there are impacts there at the

graduate level as well. Although our Enrollment has not been very strong since the late seventies, enrollment surged to 200,000. It's not freshman, we've actually been deflecting freshman. Almost all of the enrollment increase for CUNY is in continuing students, more transfer students coming in and students taking larger numbers of hours. I promise you we will continue the work tirelessly on the budget. The outlook for you has never been brighter. We had an early retirement program that went into effect November 1. A thousand members of the City University of New York, staff and faculty, chose the option. About five hundred of those thousand were faculty. So we are facing at least five hundred vacant positions to fill in the next year or so. You could not be choosing to be graduate school at a better time for the academic opportunities that will be there for you once you finish your degrees. In fact, one of the big challenges we face is to encourage more of our bright, competent undergraduates to go on to graduate school in the months and years ahead, in order to create more faculty for the nineties.

Questions: Art History

Student: I refer to a correspondence that has been exchanged since the beginning of this year between the Chancellor's office and the office of Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs. It concerns first an extreme external pressure which the program is now experiencing to expand into areas of study for which there is no demonstrated student interest or need either here at the Graduate Center or at the senior colleges.

Reynolds: Where is the pressure from?
Student: From faculty members of the senior colleges who teach in specializations that are not offered at the Graduate Center. Even more presently, because of the current hiring freeze CUNY-wide, the Art History program has been placed in a state of crisis which we believe no other program in the Graduate center is experiencing. This is because of the extremely disproportionate number of faculty members centrally appointed in the Art History program as compared to other programs at the Graduate Center.

Reynolds: You mean appointed as
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Graduate School Prepares Anti-Bias Pamphlet

By Andrew Long

At the Fall 1990 Graduate School orientation session the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs distributed a preliminary draft of an anti-bias pamphlet entitled, "Addressing Issues of Pluralism, Diversity, And Community". The pamphlet was also distributed to the Center for the Study of Women and Society as well as all DSC representatives and executive officers.

In an interview about the pamphlet, Dean Floyd Moreland explained that the pamphlet, "grew out of our concerns for a specific kind of harassment, sexual harassment, and the work of an ad-hoc committee that has been functioning here for the last few years." Though this committee preceded him, Moreland emphasized that he has continued to work with it to ensure that the Graduate School community is informed and "open on issues of perceived or real harassment." Moreland stated that when students have been harassed they are unsure of what they should do, what recourse is available to them. Often, he continued, these students fear various forms of recrimination which they may face, "be it immediate or ... down the road, applying for jobs, or things of that nature." When asked if the harasser was usually or necessarily a faculty member Moreland replied that though harassment might involve a faculty member and a student it could also involve two students. "In the broader sense", he said, "it could be faculty-faculty, faculty-staff, or staff-student."

After a meeting with the ad-hoc sexual harassment committee and another meet-

ing with Program Assistants, Moreland continued, "it occurred to me that it would be a good idea to come up with a brief pamphlet that just talked about bias discrimination and harassment in the broadest terms, that would be available to the community and would essentially encourage dialogue. It would just tell people that there are places to go for redress or just to discuss the issue. My belief, certainly, [is] that the way to stop something that is proved and real is to come out into the open and address it."

The publication and distribution of the pamphlet has not, however, occurred without controversy, mediated by recent homophobic incidents at the Graduate School. During the 1989-90 academic year homophobic graffiti appeared on the walls of the men's room near the library, and announcements for gay and lesbian activities and concerns were mutilated or removed from bulletin boards and walls in the West Hall dormitory. In the May, 1990, issue of The Advocate, it was noted that these activities, perpetrated by an entity known as the "Mystery Homophobe", violate Rule I-1 of the 1989-1990 bulletin. Dean Moreland wrote, in a May 15th memorandum (in response to Dr. Jonathan Lang's letter of protest to President Proshansky) that such conduct is "prohibited by the Rules and Regulations on pages 403-406 of the Bulletin." After these homophobic incidents Dean Moreland met with several members of the Organization for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Concerns (OGLBC). Jarrod Hayes, a group member, stated that at the meeting Dean Moreland mentioned that his
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What the Bias Pamphlet Has to Say

The following is the text to be included in the Graduate School anti-bias pamphlet:

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME to read through this brief informational flyer. It has two primary purposes: to make explicit the institutional commitment of The Graduate School and University Center to the principles and ideals of pluralism, diversity, and community; and to identify resources available at the GSUC for addressing issues of pluralism, diversity, and community.

Specific federal, state, and city laws and regulations, as well as City University of New York and GSUC administrative rules and regulations, prohibit actions of discrimination or bias involving sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, political belief, age, or handicap. Anyone who violates the rights of members of the GSUC community to be free of such discriminatory practices, including harassment, will be subject to full disciplinary action in accordance with the applicable laws, rules, and regulations of these bodies.

Students who believe themselves to be victimized in any way are urged to report the incident to the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs, whether formally or infor-

mally. Members of the staff should file reports with the Office of Human Resources. It is important to bear in mind that only by addressing negative situations can they be halted. The Dean's office and the Office of Human Resources can give advice and explain procedures, and in the case of proven unacceptable behaviour, initiate action to correct it.

One resource open to students and staff for obtaining free and confidential practical counseling and advice on discrimination and harassment issues is the Office of Psychological Counseling Services (Room 1516; Telephone: 642-2131). In any event, students and staff are strongly encouraged to discuss with the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs or the Office of Human Resources, as appropriate, the option of filing a formal report.

The Graduate School and University Center affirms that pluralism and diversity strengthen the academic environment. Each member of the community is entitled to perform his or her work in an environment free of discrimination and harassment, and the GSUC will not tolerate any abridgement of this right.

—Issued by the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs.

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