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The City University of New York Graduate School and University Center

Photo: Ersillia Ferron

Special section: CUNY in Crisis p.8

Peace, Safety, Protection, and Doublespeak: Big Brother Comes to the Graduate Center

Come June there will be a subtle change in the Grad Center decor. You may not notice it at first as you pass through the glass doors to the elevators, and you may not notice the quiet alteration in the social climate this change will effect. It won't make much of a noise when it happens, and it will quietly be taken for granted soon enough. And then it will be too late to make noise. Because with the new guard's pretty uniforms will come the not so pretty new guards.

Editorial

They will be trained in crowd control, these "peace officers", and carry pepper gas, a mace-like spray made from Cayenne peppers — all natural ingredients — that can cause severe asthmatic paroxysms as well as sting the eye (a mouthful is not bad if like really spicy food). They also have the power of arrest and license to carry firearms.

According to President Horowitz they are being brought here to protect us. She must know something we don't. We haven't heard any students clamoring for added security. We don't know of any faculty who have complained that the current security team doesn't offer them the safety assurance they need to cross the Mall. We don't know of any complaints about our current security guards.

The President seems to have forgotten the history of this security initiative. The Chancellor suggested introducing special on-campus security teams following the student take-overs in 1991. Later on, the trampling death of a CCNY student provided a convenient cover excuse for what originated as an attempt to quell dissent. Recent events have provided proof in case you had any doubts about what they are here to do.

Or maybe President Horowitz hasn't been keeping up with current events. Forty-three students held a hunger strike in a twenty-four hour access building at City College on April 11 to draw attention to the budget cuts. For this peaceful and imaginative attempt to serve the CUNY cause they were arrested by the special security force. After being held at the police precinct all night they went back up to CCNY not to take over buildings or throw rocks in windows — they went back up and continued their peaceful hunger strike where it had been interrupted.

"President Horowitz may pretend not to know the purpose of these guards, but we do. They are there not to protect us but to protect the administration, particularly the Chancellor, from the voice of free protest. And a wise move it is, from her perspective. Appointed by Albany to oversee the downsizing of the University, the Chancellor has good reason to fear the voices of the students she's cheating out of an education and an opportunity for the future.



Hunter College student being arrested at campus protest.
For whose benefit? Photo: Ersillia Ferron

We also know this: The presence of these deputy cops will have a chilling effect on free speech and freedom of assembly at the university. They are not likely to be tolerant or flexible in the execution of their orders. Like the police they are trained by, they will use force as the easiest means of control. They will not be friendly members of the Graduate Center community on a par with the rest of us. The rest of us don't carry guns to enhance the persuasiveness of our discourse.

The university is one of the few hold-outs of open debate in our society. People outside the university are often isolated in their jobs and in their domestic lives. The university as an intellectual gathering place has traditionally been the hotbed not only of alternative ideas, but of organized dissent. The Chancellor's initiative militates against one of the crucial political functions of the university by which it serves social well-being.

Albany's plans to dismantle the University naturally provoke protest from the students and faculty. 80th Street's response to our protest is force — guns and cuffs. The irony is that beefing up security is an ineffectual and disingenuous response to the policy of austerity. Here the doctor is treating the symptom of a problem she has herself created. The tactic is an old one of the repressive state: to cure the screaming of the victim, you cut out her tongue. Then you can watch the death-throes undisturbed. Here the victim is CUNY.

So the President says they are coming to protect us. Given the thinly disguised threat of the SAFE (Special Assistance for Events) team, it does seem as if we are endangered — by these armed "peace officers." Instead of hiring a SAFE team for our protection, why not just distribute guns and mace to the faculty and students? Let us protect ourselves. What would the President say if we came to school armed with mace and guns for our own protection? "Revolution! Sedition!" Well, the institutionalization of force on the campus does make you angry enough to want to arm yourself against an administration that already at CCNY has shown clearly that it will take up arms against students for the protection of a central administration that is at enmity with the university itself.

How many college/universities in Manhattan have security guards("peace officers") with power of arrest and license to carry firearms?

Manhattan colleges

Arrest power and license to carry firearms

City University
Cooper Union
Columbia
Fordham
FIT
Marymount
New School
NYU
Pace
School of Visual Arts

YES

YES

2 YES

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

NO

8 NO

Letters

No Exit: A Play in the Park

Dear Editor:

I would like to supplement your reportage of the CUNY-wide rally at the park in front of City Hall on the afternoon of May 23. Based on my observations, I can only conclude that the police assigned to the area had an agenda to incite the crowd to riot.

12:00-1:00 A crowd gathered in the park, mostly students and faculty of various CUNY colleges coming together to exercise their constitutional right to peaceful assembly.

1:45 p.m. The speakers had given their various spiels and the rally was officially over.

2:00 p.m. The police announcing "single-person exit" by bullhorn near where I was (somewhat to the left of the stage) began sending people away. The exit was suddenly no longer an exit. There were people who needed to leave for class or work. (Contrary to Giuliani's information, many of us held our classes on the day of the event, myself included). People were mildly frustrated, wandering around the park to seek another exit.

2:15 A parade of about 25 mounted police circled the park in a rather military formation.

2:20 We tried to exit from several places, all of which were closed and guarded by at least 20-30 policemen. All of the policemen were wearing riot helmets and holding their billy clubs in their hands, not wearing them on their person, before anything occurred.

2:30 I politely asked an Officer Burke stationed on the northeast side of the park where my friend and I could exit. He accused me of trying to provoke him and then directed me toward Chambers Street, where I could see that people trying to exit were being turned away. We walked away slowly, realizing that anything we said would be misconstrued.

2:35 We tried to exit on the west side of the park, but police were already beating groups of people who were trying to exit en masse. There was a certain degree of panic as people realized there was nowhere to exit. Clusters of people clashed with the riot police.

2:35-55 Groups of people trying to exit clashed with police, who were using clubs and mace against them. Panicking clusters of people would break into a run when this happened, rushing toward another part of the park only to realize there was no exit.

3:30 We found some other people we knew. With the would-be exits closed off, those of us from the Graduate Center worried how we would get to work, to the classes we teach and attend. We observed police violence, found out that people had been maced, and saw and heard the horses used to frighten the protesters—and those now just trying to exit.

The scene was absolutely military, and designed to confuse, disperse, and terrify. I wonder if we are not ruled by an administration with no concern for the laws which exist on the books of the State of New York. I am very concerned about the handling of this demonstration, which seems paradigmatic of a certain present climate of disregard for peaceful assembly, the needs of the people, the future of education, and of the law.

Elizabeth Pallitto, Comp. Lit.

Opinion Forum: Replies to Steve O'Brien

Domestic Partnership: What's Really at Issue

Dear Editor and Fellow Students:

I would like to respond, albeit indirectly, to Mr. O'Brien's letter from the *Advocate's* last issue, which raised a few eyebrows (and pulse rates) to say the very least. Initially I was struck by the fact that Mr. O'Brien's argument is so heavily weighted with appeals to authority. I, for one, would not presume to take on Plato and the Catholic Church in the space of a letter to the editor. Neither will I address the idea of a 'natural law', which, I think, is so widely misunderstood (often for biologism) that the concept does not provide a good foundation for discussion. Nevertheless, in the interests of respecting opinions and addressing the issue, there is one thread common to Mr. O'Brien's sources which may generate helpful dialogue on a very practical basis, that is, the notion of a "common good."

We all know that social attitudes have changed much over the past couple of decades, and the growing acceptance of domestic partnership reflects this fact. But I think there is a fine line — always hard to draw — between "social acceptance" and "social privilege" as there is between the "common good" and the "personal good." Legislating is a sticky business; we all want to be fair, but we also want to be right.

Personally, But if the first two are guaranteed by the constitution, the third, unfortunately, cannot. "You can't please all of the people all of the time" applies here. What is "justice" or "fairness" anyway? Every decision has its considerations and contexts; and if we don't have some idea of "promoting the general welfare," our society would disintegrate and splinter into a social-Darwinian or Marxist nightmare of competing "self-interests" — and I certainly hope (and believe) that there is more to living together than a power struggle for survival. With concern for our common humanity, governing bodies have a responsibility to provide for the underprivileged.

I have always assumed that insurance policies for married couples reflect other kinds of modest economic privileges granted to those who take on the dreaded task of changing diapers. In some way, bureaucracies acknowledge that married couples are performing a beneficial service to the state not only by giving us more huggable human persons, or future Lincolns, Einsteins, and Martin Luther King Jr.s., but by contributing to the future tax base. And if a married couple does not have children, one could at least account for a percentage who are trying to save money before doing so (or who are recovering from former 'nuclear' disasters). The responsibility of protecting this vulnerable class of citizens is primary, but equally important is the investment in our society's future. For these reasons I have always seen such perks as supporting families rather than policies aimed against other couples or social groupings.

Now it seems to me if others were to argue that they too deserved the same privileges but without the same function or goal,

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Naturalized Sex

To the editor:

In reply to Steve O'Brien's letter to the editor (*March Advocate*):

I take Steve to be arguing from three premises to a conclusion: 1) the state is responsible for the well-being of society, 2) the family is the foundation of social well-being, 3) domestic partners do not qualify as "families," 4) therefore the state should intervene to discourage domestic partnerships.

As stated, the conclusion cannot follow from those premises. Steve provides no argument to the effect that domestic partnerships are detrimental to the family nor demonstration (or an added premise) that families cannot co-exist with domestic partnerships. Neither their alleged sinfulness, nor their violation of 'natural moral law' suffices to establish that such partnerships are a positive and destructive evil for society. That they are not crucial to the promotion of social well-being does not imply that they are harmful.

Steve might have claimed, as some do, that queer relationships' example of sinfulness jeopardizes the family because it encourages sinfulness within the family. I doubt that there is any evidence for this claim. I doubt that there is any evidence that families with queer members are less happy or less successful than families with straight members. The children, by the way, for better or worse, have not turned out to be queer. On the contrary, the example of systematic repression and doctrinaire judgementalism in Steve's attitude towards queer partnerships would be at least as likely to harm the family and its members.

Tolerance and open-minded acceptance of difference are healthy for families. Difference is the rule among family members, not the exception. After all, we don't get to choose our parents or our children or our siblings. Why force physically related but otherwise random house mates to be what we want them to be rather than what they are? Parenting ought to be viewed as a responsibility towards recognition of difference, not the presumptuous enforcement of one rule, as if any one of us could know what is best for us all. Adopting narrow rules is just an easy evasion of the difficult burden of parental responsibility.

It may be that Steve feels he knows what is best for us all because he has scriptural authority. But the evidence of that authority comes solely from that scripture itself. That the bible says it's written by god may be enough for Steve, but is not enough for me. You wouldn't believe me were I to say "Mickey Mouse created the universe," if the sole grounds for the assertion were that I claim to have been told this by Mouse himself. Would you? You'd be a fool to. Yet such is faith. I grant anyone the right to whatever foolishness seems comforting or helpful, I just don't want another person's nonsensical strictures to be applied to me. Life is tough enough not to have to deal with someone else's institutional neurosis.

I must quibble with the third premise as well. It is hard to pro-

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PLACEMENT OFFICE SLATED FOR CLOSURE

WHO WILL HANDLE JOB APPLICATIONS?

by Joanna Sharf

The Graduate Center Placement Office, which handles all job application dossiers for Ph.D. candidates and job-seeking alumni, will be closed down as part of retrenchment plans, reliable sources say.

Located on the 10th floor of the Graduate Center, the Placement Office requires the full time work of three individuals, Director Roberta Thornton, Associate Director Gertrude Schneider, and Judy Koster who is the secretary. The office holds approximately 1,600 files for Graduate Center students and alumni, containing everything necessary for academic job applications, including CVs and confidential letters of recommendation. Acting as a clearinghouse for full and part time academic and non-academic employment, the office processes hundreds of dossiers per month—in March of this year (a "light" month), 250 dossiers were reviewed, copied and sent out on behalf of job-seeking students to designated institutions. In December, 1994, a month of much heavier activity, 689 dossiers were processed. In addition, the office coordinates the receipt and acknowledgment of letters of recommendation, and, among other tasks, handles over 100 drop-in requests per month for placement counseling.

Dr. Thornton has an Ed.D. from Columbia University Teacher's College and 25 years' experience as a placement counselor at the Graduate Center. Schneider has a Ph.D. in history from the Graduate Center, is President of the Ph.D. Alumni Association (an elected, unpaid position) and has worked full-time for the Placement Office for 15 years.

Vice President for Student Affairs Floyd Moreland and a faculty member who is on the Retrenchment Committee would not confirm or deny the closure, saying that retrenchment deliberations are confidential. The Retrenchment Committee's report on how proposed state and city budget cuts will be allocated at the Graduate Center will be made public by the middle of next week (approximately May 17), according to Moreland.

Sources state that both Thornton who is 74 and Schneider who is 66 have been strongly advised to take early retirement and both have completed the necessary paper work. Moreland emphasized that filing for early retirement is a voluntary action. However, in a letter to Vice President Moreland which was copied to the Doctoral Students' Council and made available to the *Advocate* by the DSC, Thornton states that she is "greatly distressed to be forced into early retirement." Her letter goes on to say that "no provisions have been made to serve students seeking part-time work or alumni seeking full time positions" and "the question of what to do with dossiers or placement files remains unresolved." Judy Koster's position will not be cut because she has permanent civil service status as a member of DC-37. It is not clear where she will be placed or if she will still handle the placement files.

"Holy shit!" was Chris Hobson's response to news of the Placement Office's closure. Hobson, who graduated from the English Department in February, says that sometimes his dossier needed to be sent out with less than a day's notice and the Placement Office made that possible. Only by adding to the already bloated workload of two or three faculty members could individual departments handle the job of the Placement Office.

Barbara Comins, a 1994 graduate who is now Assistant Professor of English (a tenure track position) at LaGuardia Community College is very concerned about the closing of the Placement Office. She says that Dr. Thornton was "terrific in steering candidates." Thornton screened students' files and indicated which

letters of recommendation were most useful for particular job applications. Comins concurs that dossiers are sent out promptly. She added that having a Placement Office reflects on the quality of the Graduate Center. "It helps future students." Having individual departments handle these tasks "wouldn't work." A separate secretary would need to be hired, Comins said.

A tight job market

Twelve GSUC English students were interviewed, six of whom were recently, or currently are, on the job market. Five of those said they sent out between 25-35 job applications this year and last year, and one sent out 80 applications. The result of their efforts was that one of the students did not receive any interviews, another only received one, two others obtained two interviews and the final two students received three and four, respectively. Only three of these students succeeded in obtaining tenure track jobs, roughly equivalent to the MLA national statistics on job placement. The remaining three had only their current CUNY adjunct positions for employment. One of those positions was not renewed for the fall semester due to the impending budget cuts. These and other students stated that there were 300 - 400 applicants for a good number of the positions advertised. One student said that there were as many as 600 and 1,000 applicants for some of the positions.

Margaret Connor, a 1995 graduate of the English program...sent out 80 letters in response to job listings and requested that 60 dossiers be sent to universities, several in foreign countries. She wonders, "Who can do that job? Who can take that over?"

Drawing upon an MLA national survey of Ph.D. placement, the *MLA Summer 1994 Newsletter* reported that of 1,082 English Ph.D.s granted in 1991-92, less than half (45.4%) obtained tenure-track appointments (this figure includes 121 graduates whose employment status is unknown). If one considers only the 961 English Ph.D.s whose employment status is known, the placement percentage rate is slightly higher (51.1%). Broadening the category of academic placement to include all full time teaching positions (one year, nonrenewable; non-tenure track, renewable; as well as tenure-track positions) raises the percentage rate for full time placement to 72.5% for known graduates and 64.4% for all (known and unknown employment status) graduates. 6.3% of the known graduates were reported as unemployed, 7.1% found work in other employment areas, and 14% were employed in other postsecondary institutional positions such as part-time instruction, administration and postdoctoral fellowships.

In the same year, 41.6% of all Comparative Literature Ph.D.s, 37.5% of all Linguistics Ph.D.s and 45% of all foreign language Ph.D.s obtained tenure track appointments.

Such general placement percentages are not yet available for 1993-1995. However, the *MLA Summer 1995 Newsletter* paints a grim picture of the sharp decline in the number of academic positions advertised between 1988-89 and 1994-95. The *Newsletter* reports that in 1988-89, the number of positions posted in the *MLA Job Information List* peaked at 2,025 English and 1,824 foreign language job listings. For the 1994-95 academic year, however, only 1,143 English and 1,174 foreign language positions were advertised. While the 1994-95 English job listing tallies are 8% higher than they were in 1993-94, they still "remain below the previous low point (1982-83)." One must also take into account the fact that the number of jobs advertised, which includes all types of positions (tenure and non-tenure track), does not necessarily correspond to the number of jobs that materialize into real positions the following fall. Many institutions find that they have to rescind certain posted positions because of budget cuts imposed in the spring semester of the advertising year.

According to the GSUC English Department's Self Study Report, completed in June 1994, 49 students received Ph.D.s between 1989 and 1993. Of those 49, 23 (or 46.9%) "now have tenure-track jobs in postsecondary institutions." The Self Study Report indicates that it takes GSUC English students an average of 7-8 years to complete the program, which is equivalent to the average number of years it takes Columbia's English students to finish, according to Joy Hayton, the program assistant for their English Department. Hayton expects that rate to drop slightly, due to restructuring in the program which began five years ago. Since 1990, half of all Columbia English Ph.D. candidates are fully funded for six years, and the remaining half are fully funded for five years. This includes a \$19,000 tuition waiver and a \$10,600 stipend which involves a teaching load for some of the years.

The GSUC English department graduates an average of 10-13 students per year, although this year, 29 students were granted Ph.D.s, a figure which English Department Placement Officer Joan Richardson says is due to the department's intensive efforts to get students who have been in the program for years to finish. She does not expect that graduation figure to be repeated in subsequent years. The department enrolls approximately 35 new students each year, according to Executive Officer Joseph Wittreich. Total department enrollment in 1993 was 280.

Reacting to the national statistics on job placement, Daniel Mozes, a GSUC English student who plans to finish his dissertation this fall, says that something drastic must be done to deal with this crisis. He says that programs nationwide can no longer morally justify the number of Ph.D.s they graduate. They must reduce the number of students they enroll. If the GSUC English Department cut its entering class to 20, then, accounting for the usual attrition, the number of graduates would be cut in half, corresponding approximately to the number of GSUC Ph.D.s placed in tenure track positions. But he emphasized that he is not criticizing the enrollment policies of the GSUC English Department in particular. The GSUC English Department acting alone would not do the trick. There "needs to be national change."

As part of the GSUC English Department Self Study project, a "Site Visitors' Report" was prepared by two external observers. Leo Damrosch of Harvard University and Deirdre David of Temple University wrote in their report that, "There is apparently some feeling that the program should become smaller, either because the job market is bad or because admission standards might thereby rise, and also that it should encourage more rapid completion of degrees. We believe strongly that neither of these changes would be wise. So far as size goes, a public university needs to serve a large and diverse clientele, and in any case it is hard to predict which students will excel.... And so far as the time frame goes, we think that progress toward the degree is more important than length of time before the degree, which in any case compares favorably at present to national norms."

Executive Officer Joseph Wittreich and English Placement Officer Joan Richardson concur that CUNY has an civic obligation to keep its doors open to a broader base of students. Professor Robert Hanning, the Placement Officer for the Columbia Univ. English Department, also feels that a "critical mass" of students is necessary to "keep the educational experience rich." He states, in addition, that a drop in program enrollment would "throw undergraduate education into chaos." Graduate students are the main teaching force for teaching Freshman Composition at Columbia. There is an "ongo-

ing debate" in his department about whether to decrease or keep enrollment steady. Columbia English Department enrollment is the same as that at the Graduate Center (30-35 new students per year).

Wittreich and Richardson also say that the GSUC English Department is already looking into ways of preparing students to find work in other employment areas such as university administration and publishing. In addition, with regard to academic placement, Wittreich emphasizes that the GSUC English Department has strong qualities to its advantage over other schools, specifically its interdisciplinary approach and its excellent faculty, which will help its graduates get academic jobs. The GSUC English Department ranked 24 out of the top 25 English Ph.D. programs nationwide, according to U.S. News & World Report. Wittreich's energetic efforts as an executive officer have helped to place the department among the nation's best, and he plans to bring the department to an even higher national ranking in the next few years.

In response to the arguments which favor retaining current class sizes, Daniel Mozes says a balance has to be struck. In spite of all the efforts to give CUNY English Ph.D.s a greater edge on placement, the reality is that students are currently spending 7-10 years of their lives being trained for a profession for which there is a strong likelihood that they may not get a job. The only other way to effect positive change in job prospects would be through union activity. Mozes is currently working on a project with the Doctoral Students' Council to organize CUNY adjuncts. But he strongly doubts that such a sufficient degree to affect the national employment statistics. Faculty are simply not "left wing" enough, he said. He therefore calls for a national organization to regulate the number of Ph.D.s granted.

Faced with the almost insurmountable obstacles of such a discouraging and ever-shrinking job market, the closing of the GSUC Placement Office, according to Tara McGann, a student in Comparative Literature, will be "one more thing to get in the way of our getting jobs. It's outrageous."

Margaret Connor, a 1995 graduate of the English program who will be teaching as Assistant Professor at Fu Jen University in Taipei, Taiwan this fall, sent out 80 letters in response to job listings and requested that 60 dossiers be sent to universities, several in foreign countries. She wonders, "Who can do that job? Who can take that over?"

Estelle Williams, a first year student in the English Department says it would be "entirely foolish" to close the Placement Office. Having the Placement Office on site is "what attracted her" to the Graduate Center. "Professors have so much to do already. What is this? They think of [closing down the Placement Office] and then hire those super-duper security officers. It's a mystery what they are doing. We will lose students. It doesn't make sense." She added, "Maybe I should become a Peace Officer."

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THIS CITY IS OURS

Diana Agosta

—The most violent element in society is ignorance — Emma Goldman

On April 25, CUNY students marched from John Jay College to City Hall Park while 75 students were arrested for nonviolent civil disobedience blocking the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel. These actions were part of a day of actions against the cuts. A broad range of organizations endorsed but did not sponsor the actions; this allowed organizers more flexibility and also recognized what has been learned from years of work on identity politics. One transcendent organization can not incorporate everyone's concerns and identity politics; the approach was rather unity through mutual planning and support. People chose to work on different sites: Health and AIDS services activists blocked the Queens midtown tunnel (75 arrests); activists for jobs, housing and public assistance stopped traffic at the Brooklyn Bridge (25 arrests); Asian, Puerto Rican, African American and other activists against police brutality, many working together for the first time, held up rush hour at the Manhattan Bridge (25 arrests); and education activists, mostly CUNY students but also some high school teachers, blocked the Brooklyn-Battery tunnel (43 arrests). 185 people in all were arrested. Actions flyers stressed unity: "our political leaders want us to turn on each other...we refuse to give divisiveness and cruelty our blessing...THIS CITY IS OURS, and we do not want it left in ruins. We want a city rebuilt."

The reasons are clear: we cannot sit on our hands while our opportunities for education are cut out from under us. But what kinds of actions are effective? What is the value of civil disobedience? Even though the 1980s saw colorful art and actions of the Central American solidarity movements, dedication and militance of the anti-apartheid movement, peace camps and mass actions of the anti-nuke movement, a whole new wave of creative, cleverly targeted media events of ACT-UP, the 80s were considered a quiet time as far as mass activism goes. For most students, especially undergraduates, the current organizing is their first experience.

The following students are among the 185 people arrested. I asked them, what happened? why did they get involved in this action? what did they learn from it? what do they think its impact was? What is their analysis of this kind of action for future resistance?

Getting involved

Orlando Green, one of three students arrested at the action from Baruch College, was brought in to the civil disobedience planning by a friend who knew that he felt frustrated by the impact of the letter writing, lobbying and rallies he had worked on. Green went to Albany twice to lobbying, first for TAP, and then for SEEK. The second time the organizers put a cap on the number of students who could participate - from the 8000 signed up to 3000 - and added entertainment "to water down" the impact, according to Green. Inside, students met with staff, rarely with legislators themselves. The April 4th rally, he felt was completely controlled by police; it was time to take protest to another level.

Sattara Lenz, an activist from Brooklyn College, framed the issue in terms of time; "it's important to do things that will make change for the future," she said, "like education. But we also need to make change now... with this budget, people are not going to be allowed to go to school." Direct actions like civil disobedience send the message that "we're not going to take this anymore" but in an organized way.

Robert Hollander, a graduate student in the linguistics program, one of the co-chairs of the DSC and active participant in the CUNY Coalition against the cuts became involved in this action when a friend invited him to a meeting. At the meeting, there was no political discussion, only a clearly thought-out discussion of plans and what could happen. "They were very well organized and very responsible," Hollander noted, even to the point of asking if anyone had medical problems and explaining how to carry their medicine through the jail system. It was clear that some of the people involved had lots of experience. At the meeting, some people were willing to volunteer to be arrested and others were willing to be part of the support teams; several other planning meetings followed. Green also was impressed by the planning for April 25: the meetings stressed discipline, that being non-violent is not only physical but also means not being verbally abusive to anyone, as well as sticking together in jail so that no one is singled out.

The action

The day of the 25th was like a Hitchcock scenario. They all arrived separately at the park near the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. Hanging out in the park, pretending to ignore each other, not knowing exactly what they would be doing or where, exchanging secret messages by tying a shoe next to someone. Hollander, who had never been arrested before, began the day a little depressed, feeling "like a lamb led to slaughter." "No one wants to be arrested, it's not a pleasant experience and the anxiety is demoralizing," he remembered.

But before he knew it, they were in the entrance to the tunnel, "yelling, chanting, stopping traffic, facing off discontented commuters." The first group out into the traffic had orange construction vests and cones, but the entrance is around a corner where the traffic was still going about 35 miles an hour. Lenz remembers seeing a bus pull around seconds before the demonstrators and just praying no one would get hit. The first group had a banner that said, "Stop for Peaceful Protest." Some cars attempted to drive around them; by the time the whole group of 60 jumped over the wall into the traffic and sat on the pavement, the traffic was halted. Protesters sat, held signs, and chanted, "Education is a right"; "What do we want, education, how are we going to get it, nonviolence." Some motorists were upset, "Why are you doing this to me?" Green heard; others simply watched, getting out of their cars to see. One wanted a sign as a souvenir, Hollander remembers. Everything was going as expected, as planned; lawyers and photographers were on hand, there was no fear, no apathy, people were feeling good.

The arrests

Even though a patrol car was driving through the tunnel within minutes (or seconds) of the group's entrance, the police didn't appear in numbers or begin arrests for some 20 to 40 minutes. At some point the cops ordered them to leave. Participants had been told that police would ask if they would walk or if they wanted to go limp (triggering a charge of "resisting arrest"). Lenz remembers seeing the first person, a student named Mike, suddenly grabbed and thrown into the van. But by the time they got to her, in the 3rd row of protesters, she was given the choice. Despite her small size, the cop who arrested her had trouble dragging her and jammed her shoulder when he tried to put on her plastic handcuffs. Hollander described his ordeal: "three guys push you face down, take both arms behind you... and cart you into the air, it's easier and faster than dragging."

One of the last to be dragged off, Green wasn't given the choice, either. When his handcuffs were initially put on too tightly, he gained the attention of the captain by getting a news camera to photograph what was happening to his wrists and hands; soon looser cuffs replaced the old ones. Also, Green doesn't remember hearing anyone being read their rights. A similar handcuff incident occurred when their van arrived at One Police Plaza: they could see someone in the group of housing activists whose hands were turning a horrible bluish-purple; by chanting to get the attention of the news cameras, the police were forced to replace the cuffs, Green said, though it took 20 minutes.

Name, rank, serial number

As they had been warned, the police did try to get information from them in the van on the way from the CD site to Central Booking. In addition to the name, address, phone, birthdate, that their legal support advised giving, police asked Lenz her "social status" - ie, if she was married, where she went to school, where she worked, where her family was from, "They ask you so many questions!" she recounted, but she didn't answer. Things got sticky for Hollander who doesn't have a driver's license with proof of address and birthdate. He told them his job was working for student government, which may account for his hour in "solitary" a bit later. Police tried a different tactic with those in Green's van, all activists from the front of the CD. They sympathized with the cost of education, saying they couldn't afford it either then went on to tell the students that as people of color they shouldn't be protesting, since they have so many scholarships available.

A night in jail

The experience of the men in jail was somewhat different the women. Green was put in a large stuffy cell holding about 30 people with no benches or bathroom, mixed with all the men arrested that night. They were pulled from this pen for fingerprinting and searching. The room itself was "like being stuck in a subway car, in a tunnel, in the summer, a very crowded subway car, for 27 hours, with nothing to do but reflect," Green remembers. And talk. Green spent some time talking with an 18 year old who been picked up in a drug sweep; among other things, "Robert" said he admired what the students are doing to expand educational opportunity, "making sure that more youth don't turn out like me," he said. An older guy told Green that he was pessimistic about the system, but "if we felt the way we did, then maybe the future has a chance," Green recounts.

Hollander was moved several times; first in a room with 12 other people arrested for various things; then with other demonstrators, without his cuffs, for 4-5 hours, then put by himself for 1-2 hours. At that point, his spirits were raised when some of the women marched past, chanting, asking him what was happening to him; later he was put back in the cell with the other male protesters. He said he worried that the experience was harder for some of the younger students; but the women seemed to have great morale.

Lenz and the other women arrested were searched directly after leaving the van. The women's officer pinched and lifted their breasts and "slid her hand so forcefully into my crotch I had to restrain myself from kicking her; it was horrible," Lenz remembers. Evidently Central Booking doesn't have facilities for women, so around 45 of them were stuffed into a holding pen about the size of a medium sized living room, while 13 women activists were still waiting outside. Fingerprinting took until about midnight; then they were moved by fours into small cells with "a toilet hole, sink and metal bench." It was "filthy" Lenz says, the toilet unflushed, a old bologna sandwich stuffed into a corner, and smelling of urine. Around 3 am, guards started banging on the cells, and about 20 of them were moved to Central Booking; the same thing happened at 6 am, when they also brought breakfast, purportedly a peanut butter and jelly sandwich (but nothing to drink).

At 9 am, the guards took them back to the holding pen where they remained the rest of the day; this room has a concrete-block bench and a front wall of tan-painted metal with a double-plated glass window in front. Lunch was promised at one pm, but nothing arrived; after asking the guard outside the door a number of times, the women banged on the doors. Another guard came in screaming that they were animals, and that someone had gone out to get the food. Warm and sticky bologna sandwiches finally arrived around three. Around 5 pm, about 20 of the women were moved into a van to wherever arraignment was to occur; while they waited in the hot crowded van for an hour and a half, one of the women fainted. "We were trying to tell the police in the front, but they only turned the radio louder." At one point the drivers suggested, "if she needs air, blow on her." "It was a horrible, helpless feeling," says Lenz; the woman was unconscious around 45 minutes.

Even the experience of being in jail was horrible in many ways for Lenz, the support she felt among the women "was amazing. We helped each other a lot...we went through so many different ways of trying to deal with the situation we were in,... laughing and crying and holding each other. I can't imagine going through this by myself."

The hardest part, she reflects, is that "it's such a game, the police know they have power over you. You're not a person in there, you're a 'prisoner.' We're used to speaking up, but in there, you absolutely can't. How can you get what you want [need] and still preserve your dignity?" She added that she was conscious that her experience of the justice system is in a way "a privilege." Hollander also was reluctant to take the "moral high ground" about his experience; "the general restraint of law enforcement in the U.S. compared to so many other countries, especially for white people" made their experience perhaps more inconvenient than dangerous. He'd do it again, but still believes mass rallies are more effective because they show "the tide of public opinion, that there are many people upset who are willing to voice their anger." CD is a "way of letting the authorities know that they don't have free reign"; it also is a way of getting attention from the media, to "let the public know that their side is organized, too; that they're not alone in their anxiety over the future."

Green thought this action "showed weakness [of the police]; the public demonstrations had the attention of the police, but we surprised them. Tactically it suggests new possibilities." It supports other actions; "at first they thought MLK was a crazy radical; when more militant groups came out, they listened to him more. You need a big stick so you can speak softly." Green is concerned about what will happen after the end of the semester without campuses as organizing sites. Are students ready to begin working in their communities, especially in churches and other religious organizations which bring a moral perspective to these issues?

After he finally was arraigned and released, about 27 hours after his arrest, Green was moved to see his mother, family friends, and members of several organizations he is active in — Soul Survivors, Black Panther Collective — waiting for him outside. They gave him the power salute; "they were so welcoming." His mother was even proud, "she was involved in the 1960s, in the Phillipines, she's been in jail, but she doesn't want her son to go through it."

All three, like most of those arrested were charged with disorderly conduct, resisting arrest, and "disrupting the administrative process" a new charge dug out of the legal mothballs for civil disobedience. Trial dates are set for June 13.

THE FEMINIST DIRECTORY

This directory is a guide for women who are interested in work, study, and scholarship. It includes the names, research interests, and scholarship which reflect the incredible breadth and diversity of talent throughout the CUNY community. In addition there is a brief description of the many impressive Women's studies Programs throughout CUNY and a listing of Coordinators for these programs.

Suggested contributions of \$10.00 faculty, \$5.00 students are requested for the development of the Center library.

Please fill out the form at the bottom to reserve your copy and mail along with contribution to:

The Center for the Study of Women and Society
Graduate Center of the City University of New York
33 West 42nd Street, Room N410
New York, NY 10036

If you should have any questions, call the Center (212) 642-2954

Name _____

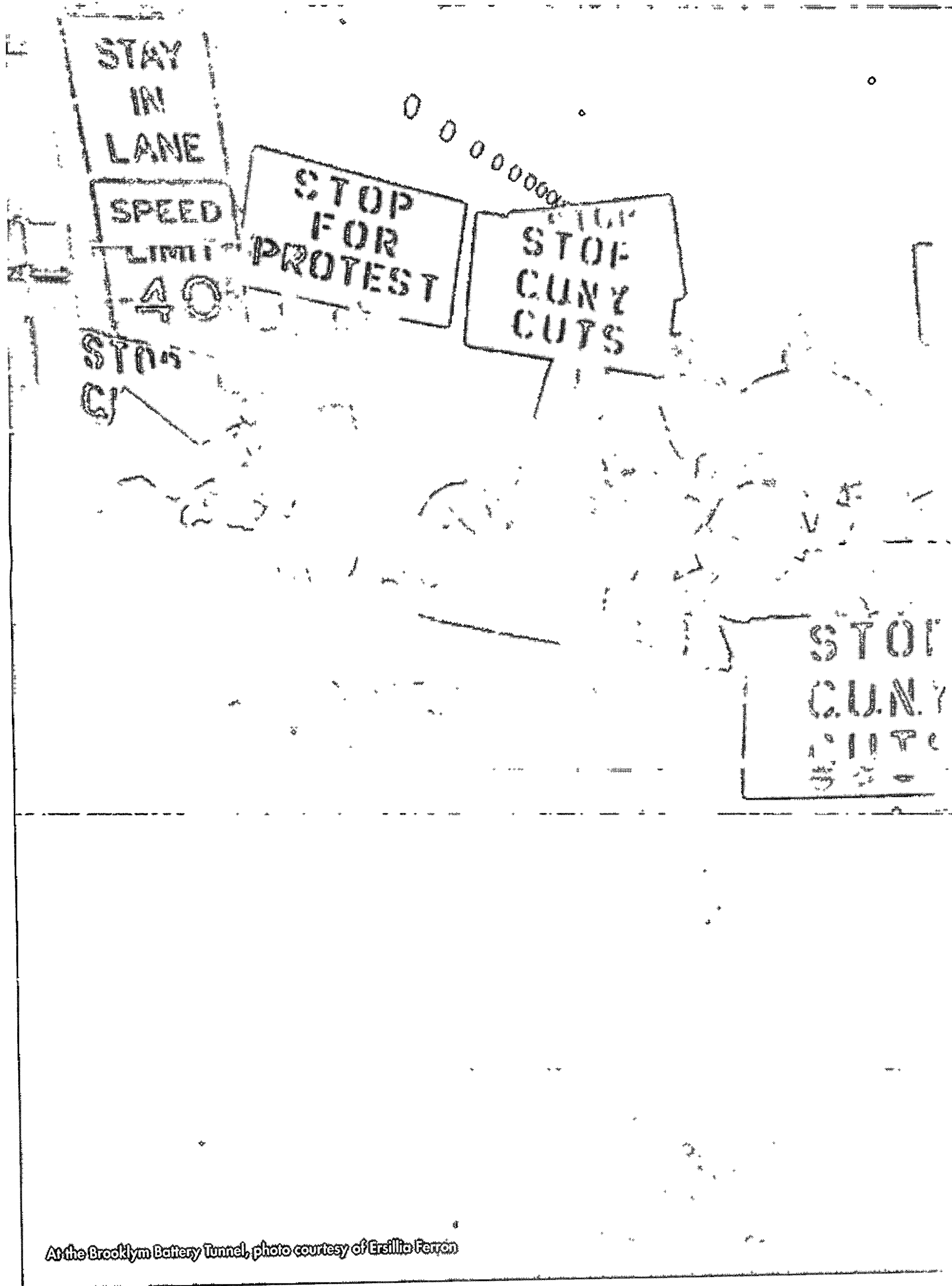
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ORDERS SHOULD BE PRE-PAID



At the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, photo courtesy of Ersilia Ferron

Coalition Press

Photo courtesy of Ersilla Ferron

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in the Streets** page 2

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Budget Cuts** page 8

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Shut the City Down!

43 Hunger Striking Students Arrested by Campus Security Force

RH on the scene

Tuesday, April 11, the City College security "peace" officers arrested forty-three students conducting a peaceful hunger strike to protest the Governor's proposed budget cuts to the CUNY system. The students held their hunger strike in the open rotunda in the North Academic Center (NAC), a large building which is usually open to students round the clock. Yolanda Moses, President of City College, entered the NAC at midnight to announce that the building was closed and to order the arrest of all students choosing to remain there. With media observing, the special campus security team used their power of arrest to cart off the students to the 24th Police Precinct on west 100th Street where the fifteen women and twenty-eight men were held all night until being released at eight o'clock in the morning. All were charged with criminal trespass, a misdemeanor B. Upon being released, the students quietly returned to City College to continue their hunger strike.

NYPD riot police had also been called onto campus but remained outside the building. This was the first time CUNY security has arrested students. The police-trained security team is an innovation of Chancellor Reynolds in response to the 1991 CUNY-wide take-overs.

The following day President Moses explained that she had ordered the arrests to prevent a building take-over. However, it was pointed out to her that the students had made no attempt to close the building or exclude anyone from entering. Nevertheless, she insisted that students would not be allowed to continue their hunger protest over night.

The student government is housed in the NAC building and is given permission to use the building at all times. Among the arrested hunger strikers were two student government officers, Malik Small, President of the Day Student Government (and son of CCNY Professor James Small), and Tyler Hemingway, the President of the Graduate Student Government. In solidarity with the group, they allowed themselves to be arrested as well.

The event was covered by New York 1 and WBAI, and was reported in the *Amsterdam News*, *El Diario*, and *The Village Voice* as well. The mainstream press has so far shown little interest.

18 Thousand Students Protest at City Hall

70 Students Arrested

RH on the scene

In the largest student protest in years, twelve thousand students swarmed over City Hall Park on Thursday, March 23rd to protest Pataki's budget. CUNY students were joined by thousands of high-school students and many students from the private colleges in New York.

Although the organizers of the rally, the CUNY Coalition against the Budget Cuts, had announced its peaceful intentions and had

called upon the police in letters to the Mayor and the Police Commissioner to respect that peaceful intent, the police — in full force of astounding numbers including riot police and police mounted on horses — were given orders to barricade the crowd in order to forcibly prevent a march out of

the City Hall area to Wall Street. Under these orders, the police refused every attempt on the part of groups or individuals to leave the rally area for whatever reason. The police refused even to accommodate children's groups from elementary schools brought by their teachers. All exits were forcibly closed to keep the crowd penned in.

Violence erupted when the police allowed a small group to begin a march north onto Chambers Street, then closed them off from the rest of their fellow protesters, surrounded them, and began to arrest them without warning. Many in the group, among them a faculty Chair from City College in cap and gown, then sat down in sign of passive protest but were arrested anyway.

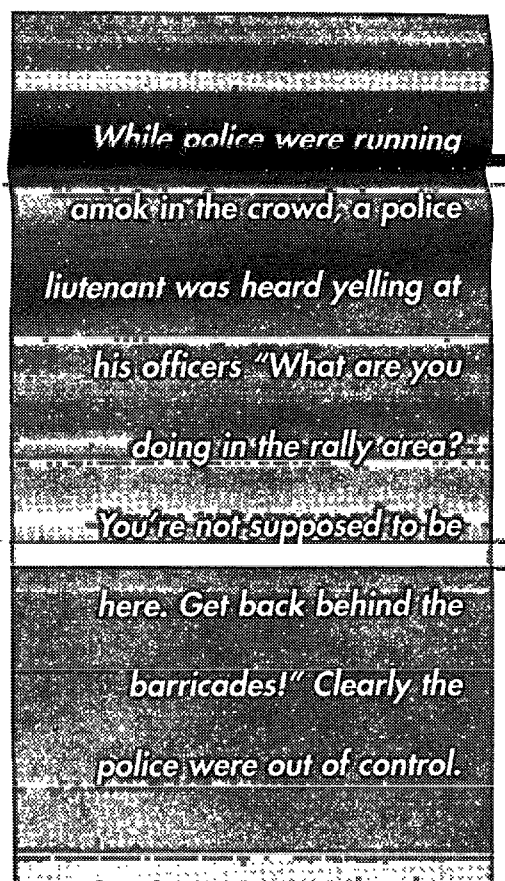
After the initial violence subsided, the police at the corner of Chambers and Broadway indicated that the demonstrators should march to the east around City Hall. As they proceeded to march in this direction they encountered more police who were not informed that the marchers had been told by the westernmost police contingent to proceed. These officers pushed angrily into the crowd instigating further violence and making more arrests. Police hit indiscriminately at women and men, hitting one woman with a billy-club who was loudly screaming that she was pregnant. Several members of the press were beaten and thrown to the ground. A representative from City Council Member Tom Duane's office was hit and shoved to the pavement and then told to get out of the street. One police officer was hit on his helmet with an army helmet wielded by a student in the crowd. The officer was knocked unconscious by this blow and had to be dragged off by his fellows.

When this skirmish calmed and the attacking police were called away, the crowd resumed its peaceful march around City Hall. As the marchers approached full circle at the stage area, some gathered at the barricades

at Broadway and demanded to be allowed to cross the street. The police gathered on the opposite side of the barricade, shoulder to shoulder, about four bodies deep and pushed the barricades against the protesters who, however, refused to give ground. Although rally leaders using bullhorns urged the students to back away from the barricades, students continued to gather to help keep the barricades back. The students and police engaged in a ten minute face off with the barricade between them. The police began to shove the barricades over, entrapping students who were sandwiched between their comrades on their side and the advancing police on the other. The situation nearly resulted in serious injuries ironically prevented only by the escalation of the police assault. They sprayed the crowd with pepper gas causing sudden dispersal and confusion in the crowd during which they made further arrests.

The crowd, which had intended to gather peacefully and was not prepared for these assaults, gradually backed off with the arrival of the mounted police. Several school contingents then left the park and headed to Borough of Manhattan Community College. There they regrouped and headed to 1 Police Plaza where many of the arrested students were being held.

The protest then continued with speakers using a small megaphone. As the speakers walked away from the area they were arrested for using a bullhorn without a permit. Among the speakers arrested was the faculty Chair from City College who had only moments



before been released from jail on his arrest at the City Hall rally site. The by now modest crowd, which contained many high-school students, was almost outnumbered by riot police. Observing these arrests, the group decided that it would leave en masse to prevent anyone from being singled out for arrest. After several more speakers were heard, everyone began to move towards Park Row. As night fell the group left the area without further incident.

Public Outrage

March 29, 1995
Honorable Rudolph Giuliani
Mayor
City Hall
New York, New York 10007
Dear Mayor Giuliani:

I am writing to express my outrage and my extreme concern regarding the New York City Police Department's response to student demonstrators at Thursday, March 23rd's rally opposing cuts to education funding.

It is my understanding, from a number of eyewitness accounts, including a member of my staff who was acting as a legal observer, that it appeared as if the vast majority of the students arrested were randomly picked out of the crowd, and some were then recklessly assaulted by the police. Additionally, numerous incidents of random strangling, macing, choking, grabbing, and dragging of student demonstrators and observers by police officers were witnessed. Finally, excessive police verbal harassment of students included a

hurting the woman, Rev. Mitchell was promptly grabbed by four police officers who then slammed him against the side of a police vehicle. In response to this violence, my aide tried to communicate to the officers that the man they were attacking was a clergy member. A police officer then knocked my aide down with his nightstick. Once on the ground, he was told to move to the sidewalk. Officers then promptly walked over him. For your information, my aide has since filed a complaint with the Civilian Complaint Review Board.

Thomas K. Duane
Council Member, 3rd District, Manhattan

April 4, 1995

St. Mark's
CHURCH IN-THE-BOWERY
Hon. Rudolph Giuliani
Mayor
City of New York
City Hall
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mayor Giuliani:

The members of our congregation were distressed to witness and to hear of the attacks on people of our City March 23, 1995 at a demonstration on behalf of schools of the City University of New York.



enormous amount of profanity and inappropriate anatomical references. Most of these incidents came in response to peaceful behavior by the students. From all accounts, the violence on the parts of the demonstrators appears to have been limited.

Because I had concerns that such incidents might occur, I assigned one of my staff to monitor the rally. While acting as a legal observer with Rev. Timothy Mitchell of the Ebenezer Baptist Church, he saw a young, African American woman being dragged and strangled by several police officers on Chambers Street. When my assistant and the Rev. Mitchell shouted to the police to stop

We realize, of course, that the actions of the police may have been undertaken without your personal knowledge. We do, however, regret that none of your public statements since March 23 seem to recognize the nature of the assault on the Constitutional rights of New Yorkers. We had wished for better from someone with such a long and distinguished legal career.

Rights of New Yorkers were violated. Innocent citizens were beaten, attacked with chemicals, and manhandled. Credentialed members of the press and Legal Observers were attacked by NYPD officers. We are enclosing a resolution requesting what we

consider quite reasonable steps by your Administration.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Canon Lloyd Casson
Priest-in-Charge

A RESOLUTION

Whereas, the Congregation of St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery has a long history of supporting the Constitutional right of citizens to peacefully protest the actions of government with which they disagree; and

Whereas, this Congregation also upholds the well-recognized role of the City University of New York in the education of the people of our City, especially the sons and daughters of poor, working-class, and immigrant families who struggle to improve their economic condition; and

Whereas, by eyewitness reports of people of our congregation, officers of the New York City Police Department attacked many students and other New Yorkers who were present at the otherwise peaceful CUNY demonstration on Thursday, March 23, 1995 in opposition to the unconscionable budget cuts recommended by you and by Governor Pataki; and

Whereas, in addition to witnessing attacks on demonstrators, our people also witnessed unprovoked attacks on credentialed members of the press, credentialed Legal Observers from the CUNY Law School at Queens College, and innocent passersby;

conduct by officers under the authority of the Mayor of the City of New York does a disservice to law and order in this city by reinforcing many negative stereotypes about police officers held by many young people and by teaching young people that their police are free to violate Constitutional rights of freedom of speech, press, and assembly;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Vestry of St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery strongly condemns the unprovoked violence and violations of Constitutional Rights by the police of the City of New York during and following the City Hall budget-cut protest of Thursday, March 23, 1995;

And be it further resolved that the Vestry strongly urges that the Mayor of the City of New York undertake the following steps: (1) investigate the police misconduct and discipline those officers responsible; (2) direct that those citizens who were injured by unprovoked police action be appropriately reimbursed for damages suffered; (3) offer immediate, unambiguous assurances to the people of the City of New York that as they carry out their lawful rights to assemble and protest that there be no repetition of the police actions of Thursday, March 23, 1995.

Adopted unanimously by the Vestry of

St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery,
New York City
April 3, 1995 Brigid Allyson, Clerk of
the Vestry

CUNY Coalition Calls on Mayor and the Police Commissioner to Commit to Non-Violence

Press release prior to March 23rd's rally at City Hall:

The CUNY Coalition will announce the events planned for March 23, 1995. Students from throughout the New York City area will be striking and carrying out peaceful demonstrations to protest a 25% reduction in spending for both the CUNY and SUNY systems, as well as the elimination and reduction of financial aid for all university students. The Coalition wants to avoid a repetition of the events that took place at Hunter College on Wednesday, March 15, in which the police dispersed a peaceful demonstration by means of force, causing one student to be hospitalized. The Coalition will demand that the Mayor and the Police Commissioner make a commitment to denouncing the use of violence against those demonstrating on that day.

In response to the hospitalizing of a Hunter College student participating in a peaceful demonstration against the proposed cuts to higher education, the CUNY Coalition called on Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Police Commissioner Bratton today to make a formal commitment to non-violence in responding to many peaceful demonstrations being organized by students.

Before writing to the Mayor and Bratton, the CUNY Coalition spoke with eye witnesses and reviewed press reports and video footage of the incident. Based upon this review, it determined that the attack was unprovoked and occurred just as the students were leaving the area. "We said our peace and were moving off the street, when they rushed in and started hitting anyone within reach," said Jed Brandt, a Hunter College student. The demonstration organized by the Hunter College students had about 150 participants.

The CUNY Coalition expressed its fear that the Police Department would respond to its March 23 rally at City Hall, which is expected to have more than 7,000 [more than 10,000 actually appeared] participants, similarly. The CUNY Coalition's letter asked the Mayor and the Police Commissioner to "send a clear and unequivocal message to your officers that violence cannot be used to curtail this demonstration." A commitment to non-violence has been the CUNY Coalition's public position, which it reiterated in its letter. The actions of the students, the Coalition argues, is not the question. Commenting on the Mayor's response to dissent within his administration, his attacks on the press, and response to groups opposed to his budget cuts, the CUNY Coalition expressed its deep concern that this Administration will respond to peaceful political dissent with violence. "Look. We're committed to non-violence. We've trained dozens of marshals to ensure that it stays peaceful. But if the Hunter incident is any indication, this Mayor and Police Commissioner have decided to use violence to suppress their political opponents", said Alex Vitale, a Sociology graduate student.

"Did the Mayor or the Police Commissioner respond to the beating of the Hunter student? No. They sent the signal that beating people up who peacefully disagree with the government is OK. The Mayor needs to reverse that message at the March 23 rally," said Yvonne Lassalle, a CUNY Graduate Student.

The CUNY Coalition is using the March 23 rally to focus attention on the State's and City's lack of commitment to providing access to higher education, health care, social services etc. that have traditionally been the cornerstone of a free and democratic society. For the CUNY Coalition, the current round of cuts to higher education are a continuation of a national trend towards social and economic austerity.

CUNY Coalition against the Budget Cuts
212-642-2851
Hotline 212-642-2549

March 20, 1995
Police Commissioner Bratton
One Police Plaza
New York, New York 10038

Dear Commissioner Bratton:

We are writing to express our deep concern over the New York City Police Department's unprovoked attack against several Hunter College students on Wednesday March 15, 1995. These students were participating in a peaceful, non-violent demonstration to bring attention to the proposed cuts to higher education. Based upon our conversations with eye-witnesses and our review of news reports and video footage of the event, there can be no doubt that the Police Officers in question

What the Press

attacked the students without cause as they were in the process of leaving the area. Such behavior is unacceptable.

As you are well aware, the CUNY Coalition will be holding a peaceful rally and march on March 23, 1995 at 12:00 P.M., which will convene at City Hall. The march will proceed from City Hall to Lower Manhattan. We expect over 7,000 students, faculty, parents, union members and their leadership and elected officials to participate in this peaceful demonstration. Over 1,000 faculty and administrators will march separately to this demonstration via the Brooklyn Bridge walkway. Like demonstrations organized by the CUNY Coalition in the past, this demonstration will be conducted peacefully.

The CUNY Coalition has made a strong and public commitment to non-violent political expression and has organized a large number of well trained marshals and legal observers to ensure that the March 23 demonstration runs efficiently. Like the Hunter College students, the CUNY Coalition is exercising its right to peacefully make its concerns and positions known.

We urge you, in the strongest terms possible, to make a public commitment to not use violence to suppress the peaceful actions that will occur on March 23. You must send a clear and unequivocal message to your officers that violence cannot be used to curtail this demonstration. It is imperative that the Police Department not repeat the Hunter College incident. Acts of intimidation and violence will only heighten the tension that has already been created by the Police Department's previous acts of unprovoked violence.

Sincerely,

The CUNY Coalition

A copy of this letter was also addressed to the Mayor.

**The following is a statement given to the press
on March 28, 1995**

Today, March 28, students from the CUNY Coalition against the Cuts joined other CUNY student groups, Public Advocate Mark Green and representatives of several elected officials to hold a press conference at the steps of City Hall. The press conference was called to respond to Mayor Giuliani and Governor Pataki's statements and to media coverage of the events that took place in March 23.

The media's coverage of our rally, with a few notable exceptions, seriously misrepresented the event. The media have chosen to insist upon the isolated incidents of violence that took place. Furthermore, the media have exaggerated and belabored the role of the students in them. Finally, in spite of the fact that both the Mayor and the Governor's opinions on these issues have already received detailed treatment in the media, the media have continued to highlight them, while consistently downplaying the demands of the demonstrators. Just as the Mayor attempted to silence us by force, the media has attempted to silence us in print.

First and foremost, the students demand an end to the trend of disinvestment from CUNY, which has been intensified since 1989. The yearly rounds of cuts CUNY put through since 1989 has meant the budget will have been cut close to 40% in 6 years. These cuts

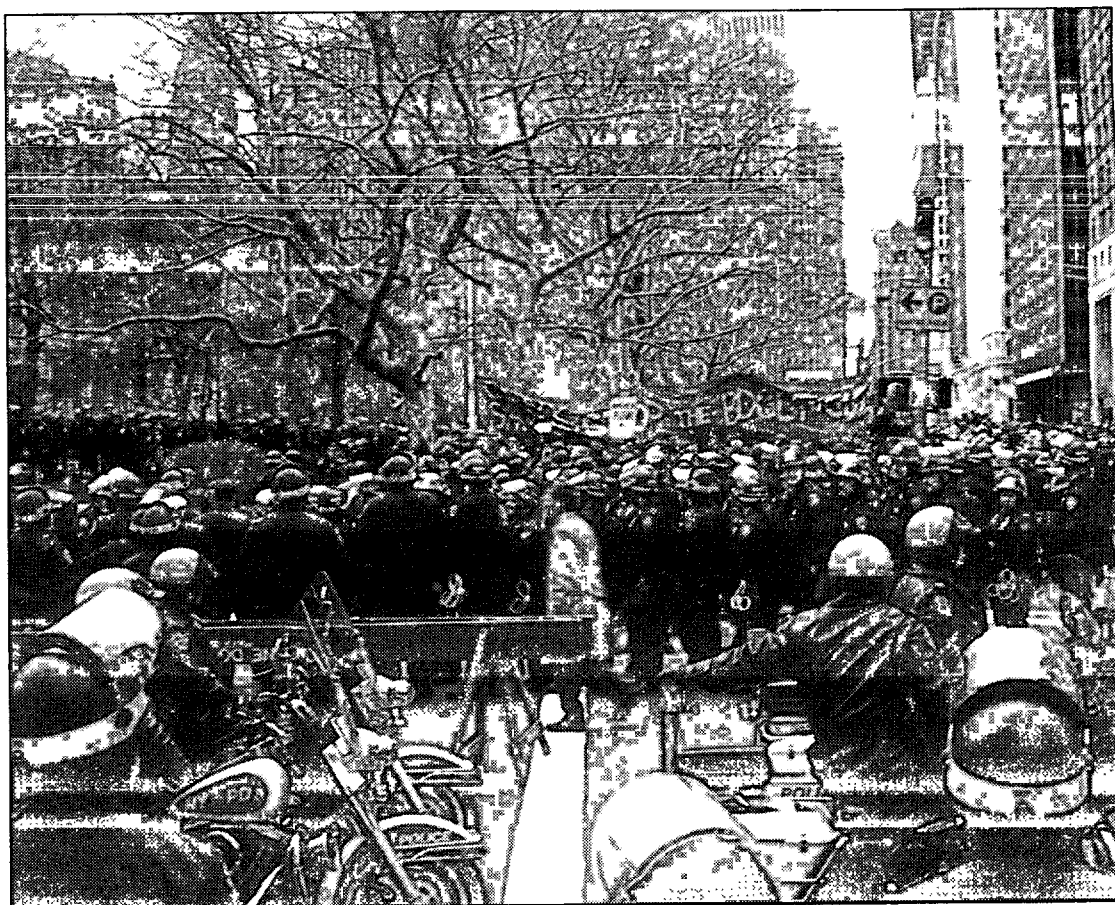
Students assert that the budget crisis is largely created by State policies that cut taxes for corporations and the most wealthy. The Governor's tax cut will amount to about a \$20 tax savings for the average New Yorker, while dramatically increasing the cost of higher education and reducing other vital public services. Students argued that these cuts represent a continuation of the State's attempt to renege on its responsibility to provide public goods - education, health care, social services etc. Already New York State ranks 47th in the nation the percentage of state taxes spending on higher education. Students insist that the State is using public spending as a straw man to divert attention from the current revenue shortfalls created in large part due to the absence of a progressive tax program. Since close to two thirds of CUNY students work over 30 hours a week, their demand for progressive taxation is made as workers and tax payers. Students are adamant: the City and State must put an end to corporate welfare, and stop renegeing on their responsibilities to guarantee minimal standards of living for New Yorkers.

(Yvonne Lasalle, CUNY Coalition against the Budget Cuts Media Committee)

Won't Print

undermine CUNY's ability to fulfill its historic role of integrating minorities and recent immigrants into the economic, cultural, and political life of the city. They also threaten CUNY's long-standing record of academic excellence, which has produced more top corporate executives and Nobel laureates than any other educational institution in the country. Students want to be heard loud and clear: full funding to meet enrollment must be provided. They will not stand by and watch their University turned into a trade-school system.

The students' insistence on reinstating free and open admissions in CUNY comes from a deep-seated conviction that the state's responsibility to guarantee equal educational access can only be properly fulfilled through funding of public higher education. Students believe that proposals that attempt to solve fiscal problems through the centralization of programs at specific CUNY campuses do not address the devastating implications this will have on students' educational opportunities. These proposals also fail to take into account the positive role that many campuses play in otherwise seriously economically depressed areas. Just as deplorable is the attack on remediation programs, for it is the City and State's own failure to educate at elementary and secondary levels that creates these needs. Why should those hurt by the government's incompetence be punished twice?



Our Untrustworthy CUNY Board of Trustees: At the Source of CUNY's Troubles

Andrew Long

What many people have to understand, especially liberals, is that any discussion of the CUNY Board of Trustees and the policies they implement is also, necessarily, a discussion of finance capital and the privatization of public debt and assets, notably our col-

leges, from 1989 to 1993, CUNY lost \$200 million in funding. We can't get rid of this board, whom one state Senate aide likened to Giuliani in the way the way they lose state funding.

Still, the stench gets stronger. With regard to the information above consider that James Murphy, the chairman of the board, is also a vice president for the Fleet Financial Group. This bank is one of the largest in the region, and has supported many upstate

WHERE WE STAND:

leges and our educations. The New York City and state budgets (and this goes for the Federal budget too) are finally determined around the question of public debt service, incurred through the issuance of municipal and state bonds. The School Construction Authority, the Urban Development Corporation, the Port Authority, and the NYS Dormitory Authority are a few examples. Much of this money goes toward the construction of large buildings or public works, such as the Javits Center. When CUNY builds a new building, for example, the debt is financed by the Dormitory Authority.

What we must understand about this debt is that the authorities which are responsible for it, that is, for its incurrence and for its repayment are not elected, but are appointed by the New York State Governor and the Mayor of New York. In fact, the State of New York and the City cannot incur debt without a referendum. In the early 1960s a New York lawyer, John Mitchell (yes, of Watergate infamy) worked out this plan to sidestep these public debt laws by setting up these authorities which are not bound by the law, and yet, can act in the name of the state. This "right" was affirmed when the UDC went bust and a court of appeal decided that the state had a "moral" obligation to pay off the UDC debt. So, working class and middle class tax payers (clearly the same thing) pay debt service for a debt they did not vote for and cannot control. Remember, New York State does not have a progressive tax, but rather one which favors corporations, which pay less and less these days, as well as the wealthiest residents of the state. Consider also that the wealthy individuals who buy this debt from the financial houses which sell it, Lazard Freres and Fleet Financial Group, for example, receive interest payments which are exempt from city, state, and federal taxes. They get you coming and going.

And so with the CUNY Board of Trustees. There are 13 trustees appointed by the Governor and the Mayor to terms of varying lengths. There is also an ex-officio trustee for the faculty, Sandi Cooper, who does not have a vote, and one for CUNY students. The student trustee is the chair of the University Student Senate, Anthony Giordano, and he does have a vote. Of the 13 current trustees most were appointed by Cuomo, Koch, and Dinkins, and that's where liberals get a lump in their throats. Consider that this group of trustees selected Ann Reynolds as the CUNY Chancellor, raised tuition, and has now declared fiscal exigency. Moreover, while this group of trustees was in power, again, appointed by our liberal Governor and

Republicans, and in 1993 supported Liz Holtzman's candidacy for the U.S. Senate with a \$450,000 donation. This is notable because Holtzman was then the City Comptroller and chose Fleet as the underwriter for, yes, municipal bonds. The scandal forced the otherwise quiet and stately Murphy into the limelight, and showed what kind of financial rodent he really is. How can a man whose job is about private profit from public debt sit on our Board. What about a conflict of interest?

The next suspect is Michael Del Giudice, who worked for State Assemblyman Stanley Steingut and is now a general partner with Lazard Freres. Lazard Freres also traffics in public debt, particularly through Felix Rohatyn, the chairman of the Municipal Assistance Corporation. Del Giudice also emerged to the light of day for his role on the quasi-public body known as the Hudson River Park Conservancy. This group wants to take the Westway land and do the usual (private) development. Lazard Freres owns several large plots of land in the 30s. Tanning on the piers at Christopher Street or taking a stroll by the Hudson, has assumed an immense, and expensive, political significance. Their plan includes private residential units and commercial spaces which will block public access to the waterfront. Michael Del Giudice should not be on our board, again, due to a conflict of interest.

Finally, we get to William Howard. Although he is African American, he has always acceded to the racist caricatures of CUNY students, and never spoken out against the press and his fellow trustees when they have gone "wilding". Howard is currently employed by the New York State Banking Department, though his past includes stints with various banks and insurance companies, notably with the New York branch of the Bank of Credit and Commerce (BCCI) the bank that was manipulated by the CIA to fund various dictators around the world including the Saudi regime. They finally fleeced their smaller and poorer investors in the Middle East when they bellied up and were eventually closed.

The point is that the CUNY Board of Trustees is about big money, as we know from the budget debate. CUNY is a significant portion of the budget, and if your professional obligations lead you to argue for a good credit rating with Standard and Poor's as well as debt service, then you will not support increases for public institutions like CUNY, unless there is some profit to be made. What we need is an accountable board with some conflict of interest guidelines.

The Historical Mission of CUNY

Michael Roberts

The CUNY Coalition against the Budget Cuts supports both the original mission behind the establishment of City College in 1847 and the Open Admission Policy established in 1969.

The establishment of City College in 1847 as a free tuition academy reflected a **democratic vision** that viewed the university as the **foundation** for a democratic polity. Our goal at the CUNY Coalition is to restore that vision. A democratic polity requires both educated citizens and visionary leaders. The City University of New York was established to serve these functions. In the original vision of the establishment of CUNY, the University was to be the measure of the degree to which culture is democratically disseminated throughout the City. A progressive, dynamic culture depends upon the University as the site of new forms of knowledge production and cultural resources that foster the development of the free individual and a critical citizenry. The CUNY Coalition supports this democratic vision and will fight to uphold it. We see the attack on CUNY as an attack on democracy.

The democratic promise of a University cannot be fulfilled unless we have a way of ensuring that the University students reflect the qualities of the citizens of the City as a whole.

CUNY has been an effective force in ensuring that the working poor, women and so-called "minorities" are able to participate in the democratic polity of New York. The **Open Admissions Policy** established in 1969 upholds the conviction that elitism has no place in a democratic polity nor in a public university. African American and Puerto Rican students who organized the student strikes of 1969 that were instrumental in the establishment of the Open Admissions Policy, realized that they represented the changing face of New York. The CUNY Coalition supports their historic victory and the results of that victory. By 1971, enrollment of students of color increased by 24% at the senior colleges and 36% at the community colleges. The CUNY Coalition would not be here today if it were not for the visionary foresight of those students from 1969. We define our struggle in part as a continuation of their fight for democracy.

The City University of New York is the only guarantee we have of maintaining a democratic polity in New York. CUNY is a precious cultural resource. The citizens of New York cannot afford to place their future in the hand of reactionary forces that threaten democracy. CUNY is the best mechanism we have, as citizens in a free society, of overcoming the serious class, race and gender divisions that have plagued the history of our country. To uphold CUNY and to foster the growth of CUNY is to further the development of democracy. **words:505**

The Virtue of Remedial Programs at CUNY

Rob Hollander

CUNY is regularly attacked for offering remedial courses in English language skills and mathematics. Remedial offerings, it is claimed, compromise CUNY's reputation by lowering academic standards in the curriculum. A level of proficiency should be a prerequisite of admission to an institution of higher learning, say such critics as our own Board of Trustees member Hermann Badillo. Those without required skills should not be admitted.

The attack on remediation is, in other words, an attack on open admissions.

The argument against remediation contains a simple fallacy and is further confused by the irresponsibility of CUNY's critics and the subterfuge of their political ends. That a university can only be judged by the lowest end of its curriculum is simply false. Offering remediation at CUNY in no way compromises its higher level offerings. The mere presence of remediation cannot prevent dedicated students from obtaining the high quality education CUNY has provided for decades. On the contrary, remediation brings that opportunity to many dedicated but underprivileged students who otherwise would be unable to take advantage of it.

By offering remedial courses, CUNY broadens its curriculum to provide a service unavailable in our failed public high-school system. If New Yorkers cannot learn to read and write in the distracting drug- and weapons-filled public high-school environment, why shouldn't they be taught in an environment conducive to learning? The high-schools are filled with very young kids struggling to grow-up under our society's most adverse conditions. It's no wonder so little actual learning happens there. The CUNY colleges, however, are filled with serious working adults (75% of CUNY students work, 33% full-time) who have chosen to put some direction in their lives. College is about learning, thinking, questioning, sharing knowledge, expanding horizons, and working hard—very hard—to keep up and to get ahead. Drugs and violence are not a part of the scene. The role models are professors, not drug dealers. The college environment is exactly where we want our kids to be, even if it's just to learn to multiply fractions and read a newspaper.

Those who wish to eliminate remedial courses offer no responsible alternative to them. If our young people are not to learn basic skills in college, and cannot learn them in high-school, what third alternative is there? Are we to consign an entire segment of our society to illiteracy? Is it to the benefit of this city that many of its citizens cannot read a newspaper to inform themselves of what is happening around them and to them? Does anyone really think that the answer to our urban woes is educational ghettoization? Not having an informed and critical citizenry may be in the interest of those who wish to maintain a stranglehold on political power, but it is not to the advantage of society at large. The members of civil society must be educated and informed or they will not have the wherewithal to bring themselves successfully into the future. Self-determination cannot be replaced by paternalism, as our current administration well proves.

The City University is and should be unlike any other university: New York is unlike any other town. New Yorkers must understand that remediation is not a danger to CUNY. They must recognize the crucial need among the young of the inner city for remedial offerings, and they must recognize that the integrated college environment is the best place for a remedial program.

The Governor's proposed budget will do more harm to CUNY's reputation, standing, and standards than the presence of remedial programs ever could. Tenured faculty will be fired, making it increasingly difficult to attract high-quality teachers to come here in the future, knowing that tenure means nothing at CUNY. Professors' burdens will also increase.

Downsizing will force professors to travel from campus to campus, making the job even less attractive.

Let's stop worrying about how the fulfillment of CUNY's mission will affect the maintenance of its academic standards. CUNY has proven time and again that an institution of higher learning need not be elite and exclusionary to offer the highest possible quality of education. It cannot continue to do that without reasonable funding. The down-sizing of CUNY is not the solution to the problem of declining standards, it is the sole cause of the problem.

dents have family incomes below \$22,000. Over 80% of all senior college students come from families earning less than \$50,000; nearly 90% of community college students come from families earning less than \$50,000.

In short, if there is anyone who understands the realities as well as the importance of work, it is the CUNY student and her/his family who comprise the working poor and lower middle class of New York City.

In addition, CUNY is one of the most ethnically diversified colleges in the world. 32% of CUNY students are African American; 30% are White; 26% are Latino; and about 11% are Asian. 60% of senior college students are female, while 65% of community colleges are female.

If our Mayor cannot quite understand who we are at CUNY, then perhaps he might understand what we mean to the New York economy.

The tax revenues: CUNY graduates pay \$414 million more in State and City taxes each year than they would pay had they not gone to college. In addition, CUNY employees pay another \$63 million per year in State and City sales and income tax.

The expenditures: The direct economic impact of CUNY on New York, adding up all the direct expenditures attributable to the system, totals nearly \$6 billion. This includes: about \$1 billion a year spent by students while in college; \$3.9 billion spent by the graduates from the years 1970-1993 that they would not have spent had they not gone to college; \$1.7 billion in university expenditures; \$170 million in construction; \$521 million in employee expenditures.

Now, take this expenditure figure and multiply it by 2.1 - the factor provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce which is used to account for additional economic impact that results from re-spending after original expenditures - and you get a total economic impact of CUNY on New York of \$12.1 billion, 9 times the annual CUNY budget.

If 40 jobs are created for each million dollars pumped into the New York economy (Department of Commerce estimates), this means that CUNY necessarily leads to the creation of 484,000 New York jobs. Combine this with the 25,000 CUNY employees, and that is over a half-million jobs generated by CUNY.

Pataki and Giuliani want to cut back on funding for education. Apparently they need a little educating themselves. If they do not want a lesson in either the social demographics of CUNY students or the financial impact of the CUNY system, then perhaps finally they might prefer the humanities. I have in mind a quote from a German poet, Goethe, they might consider as they go about their mindless business: "There is nothing more frightful than to see ignorance in action."

CUNY COALITION AGAINST THE BUDGET CUTS

DEMANDS

NO BUDGET CUTS

NO TUITION HIKES

SAVE TAP AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS (SEEK HEOP)

RESTORE LITERACY PROGRAMS

RESTORE OPEN ADMISSIONS

FULL FUNDING TO MEET ENROLLMENT

TAX WALL STREET TO FUND OUR SCHOOLS

CANCEL THE DEBT

NO DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS TAKEN IN ANY MANNER AGAINST STUDENTS, FACULTY, OR

STAFF ORGANIZING AGAINST THE CUTS

COMPLETE IMMUNITY FOR ALL

Who We are and Why We are Important to New York

Christopher J. Malone

"Maybe instead of protesting...go and find a job for a day so you'd make a little extra money so you could pay for your education."

- Mayor Rudy Giuliani, on the March 23rd Protest

Once again, Giuliani has erred. This time it is especially egregious, since his petulant comments made in the wake of the March 23rd student protest were so far off the mark that the mind boggles to think they came from the lips of a politician who claims to understand New York. Well, in this mean season of debate over education, we might stop to do some educating ourselves - please, pay attention Rudy.

First of all, CUNY students work. Period. In larger numbers than most higher education school systems. 31.7% of students at senior colleges work full time; 32.4% of community college students work full time. Two thirds of all CUNY students work over 20 hours per week. And over 75% of all students in the CUNY system hold down some kind of job outside of school.

Why do we work? Quite simply, because we have to. Consider this: 91% of the students at Hostos College, for instance, live below the poverty line. Half of all CUNY stu-

NOAM CHOMSKY: AN INTERVIEW

*Noam Chomsky, one of the most respected voices on the left today, an early outspoken critic of the war in Vietnam, was blacklisted throughout New York media for his sharp criticism of U.S. support of the State of Israel. He currently holds a Distinguished Chair at MIT where he teaches linguistics, a field he revolutionized in 1957 with his book *Syntactic Structures*. His recent political publications include *Manufacturing Consent*, a critique of corporate control of U.S. media. He is interviewed by Bryan Lesseraux, one of the eight Hunter students arrested for peaceful protest on March 18th, and also one of the hunger strikers arrested at CCNY.*

L: To begin with, do you consider the US to be a democratic society? If not, what is not democratic about it?

C: Well, democracy isn't a matter of yes or no, it's a matter of many dimensions. Countries can vary on those dimensions in a whole bunch of different ways. In some respects the US is a very free society and a very democratic society. People are free from state control and violence here to an unusual degree. There's freedom of speech here to a unique degree. You have the formal right to participate in elections. All of these things are things which have been fought for and are worth achieving and maintaining. And they're steps towards a democratic society.

On the other hand it's a society with a deeply totalitarian character in many respects. It's a business-run society. Since early in this century, private corporate powers — which are really just tyranny — have gained enormous privilege and power over the society, the economy and, by now, the international economy. It's not just here, but it's strikingly here. These are powers which are not in the constitution. They were never given by legislation. They were fixed by courts and lawyers primarily. It's just a form of tyranny. It was strongly opposed in its very early days by American libertarians, people like Thomas Jefferson, as it was even opposed by Adam Smith, who barely could see it in his day. It very much narrows the actual functioning of democracy.

Furthermore, there's the matter of propaganda. The leading scholar of corporate propaganda — there are a few, not many people study it, but it's a crucially important topic — the leading scholar, Alex Carey pointed out in one of his essays that there are three major developments in the 20th century: one is the growth of democracy, two is the growth of corporations, three is the growth of corporate propaganda in order to prevent democracy from functioning. This is very conscious. It's particularly true in the United States where there is a very class-conscious business class and, for all kinds of historical reasons, this is a uniquely business-run society.

The public relations industry is a US invention and it is designed, as its leaders say, to control the public mind; to win "the everlasting battle for the minds of men." And it puts huge resources into this for obvious reasons — it wants to protect privilege and power. The corporate media are just one part of it. Our educational institutions are another. The scale of these efforts is really staggering. It ranges from everything from television and cinema to books, articles, media, classes — it goes right across the spectrum — sports events, recreation, churches. There is no institution in the US that hasn't been under corporate attack as an effort to win the everlasting battle for the minds of men. They've spent a huge amount of money and it has changed the country. It's one reason, I think, why this country is so far off the spectrum on issue after issue. I mean, we're the only industrial country that doesn't have a health care system. We're the only industrial country where the working class is so weak and beaten down. It's the only country in the industrial world where there's such a level of religious fanaticism. It's extraordinary, the US is off the spectrum in this respect; there are cults all over the place. It's just a very strange society. I think in large measure, not totally, but in large measure, it is attributable to this [corporate propaganda].

Also, the intellectual culture is extremely narrow and very conformist. I don't want to exaggerate, it's not all that different in other countries, but it's unique here. It's particularly dramatic because it's such a free society. So it's a kind of voluntary totalitarianism. People aren't doing it because they're afraid they're going to be sent to the gulags.

So you've got a very complicated situation with many positive things and many very negative things. And there have been struggles over this for two hundred years. It doesn't just take shape. This is the outcome of many struggles, some of which have been won, some of which have been lost by the general population. And you end up with the thing that you see when you look out the window; New York is an extremely rich city, probably the richest in the world, and it's a third world city. Large parts of the population are living in third world levels of misery.

L: Since this interview will be published in student newspapers, let me ask you a question about academia. I think that, ideally, the role of the academic should be about giving to society an original, forward-looking and transformative vision of the world. Is that even possible in the US considering the conditions you've just mentioned?

C: Well, there are people who try to do that but they're weeded out. In fact, they're weeded out from kindergarten. The educational system has institutional prop-

erties and one of them is to try to instill obedience and conformism. Now, this is never one hundred percent successful. There are all kinds of people who escape it and go on to do remarkable things, but it's never easy. The general pattern of privilege and punishment is such that the outcome, to a very large extent, is conformism, obedience and so on.

Now, there are differences. For example, the natural sciences are different. If you instill conformism and obedience in the natural sciences or mathematics, they just die. In the fields that are not so closely connected to ideological control and domination there is a much greater tendency to support and stimulate creativity and independence of thought. But not in fields that matter for ideological management and control. Now again, this is not a hundred percent. But the tendencies are, I think, fairly clear. I see it very clearly from right where I'm sitting [Chomsky is speaking from his home in Massachusetts near MIT.] I'll compare two of the world's leading universities which are within a mile or two of each other where I've lived all of my adult life. One is Harvard, the other is MIT. MIT is a science-based university. Harvard is a sort of humanities-based university. Each has the other, of course, but those are the centers. MIT is politically, I suppose, much more conservative. But for someone like me, MIT is a far more hospitable environment than Harvard. I get along fine at MIT. People are often very reactionary [at MIT], but at Harvard I couldn't survive for a minute. [Chomsky is interrupted momentarily by a phone call.]

L: Before getting off the topic we were discussing, let me read you a question that was prepared by a friend of mine which ties right in with this discussion. Real democracy requires substantial preparation on the part of large sectors of the population — people must be able to take over the management of public affairs and make decisions about production, distribution, investment, etc. However, the educational system, primary and secondary school, are designed to instill subservience, apathy, and obedience to authority; to impose regimentation and control; and to snuff out creativity and curiosity which are necessary for participation in public life. How badly does this affect the process of democratization? Is it even possible in this context?

C: Sure, it's possible. We're the richest country in the world. Let's take the poorest country in the hemisphere, one of the poorest countries in the world, Haiti. People in Haiti live under conditions which we can't even imagine. I'm talking about ninety percent of Haitians, not the few who live up in the hills and have super wealth. The peasants of Haiti and people living in Haitian slums succeeded a couple of years ago in creating the basis for a democratic society. They created grassroots movements, unions, associations and so on. They had no resources; they were living in real misery. Yet, they created a lively, vibrant, civil society which swept their own President into office to everyone's amazement and shock. Then they had to be crushed by force, in which we helped. You read in the newspapers that we have to go to Haiti and teach them about democracy. You can only collapse in ridicule when you read that. We need to go to Haiti to learn something about democracy. Again, it's a sign of the totalitarian streak in the intellectual culture that people can't see that. Many educated people could hardly understand what I just said, although, if you look at it, it's quite obvious. [The Haitian people] didn't have a great educational system, you can be sure of that. If they can [create a democratic society], we can do it.

In fact, this has happened all through history. Take a look at the formation of unions. They're one of the major democratizing forces in modern industrial society. They support the creation of rights and so on. Take a county right next door, one that is very much like us, Canada. One of the reasons why they have a functioning health care system and other social programs is because they had a strong labor movement. That's where it comes from. Well, who formed the labor movement? People who went to Harvard? No, it was the workers struggling on the steel strike lines creating democracy.

So sure, we have to understand what the institutions [which prevent democracy] are, although most of us are very privileged people; we have all kinds of opportunities that most people don't have. If we decide to use those privileges, fine. If not, too bad for the world.

L: What are the possibilities for achieving non-violent social change which might lead to meaningful democracy? Developments which threaten to change the way power is distributed might be expected to provoke resistance from the "ruling class". Is it therefore even possible to achieve change within a non-violent framework?

C: Nobody knows the answer to that. Look, you can't predict tomorrow's weather. To try to predict the result of social struggles is completely hopeless. A rational person will try to push non-violent methods to their limits. Nobody wants violence if they're sane. So you try to achieve what you can by organizing people to create more democratic and just forms. If those efforts are resisted by violence, well, then you have to ask yourself the question, "Do we undertake self-defense through violence or no?" That's basically the question.

L: This may be a bit out of theme, but what you are saying makes me think of the situation in Chiappas. Any violence on the part of the Zapatistas was used as a last resort.

C: Incidentally, it was not a violent movement. They happen to hold guns, but they're not particularly violent. In fact, they're mostly resisting violence. Now you can ask whether that's right or wrong, I happen to think it's right, but that's another question.

L: Right, here's a situation where armed struggle was turned to as a last resort. It seems to be a very just movement. The organization is very democratic. They have a kind of bottom-up way of organizing. They seem to be abiding by the rules of the Geneva convention: They're not killing enemy prisoners or running around slaughtering innocent people. There's a lot less violence there than in Peru.

C: There's no question. If you're thinking of Shining Path it's not even close.

L: You would think that this would be something that could really inspire people. You have a lot of Mexican immigrants living in very poor conditions here in the US. Those whom I've spoken to are very much in support of the Zapatistas. Plus you have a lot of groups on the Left who have been waiting for a revolution close to home. Human Rights groups and foreign journalists are saying that whatever atrocities there were in Chiappas were committed by the government and not the EZLN. I wonder why this isn't galvanizing large groups of people in this time of crisis. It would seem to be an excellent model for people to follow.

C: Well, it did. The way the government reacted to the Zapatista movement when it finally broke—they knew it was there before-hand but I'm talking about once it became public—they reacted very violently and then they backed off. And the reason they backed off is because they were afraid that Mexico was going to blow up. They had too much support. Maybe people didn't support everything they were doing but they were in sympathy with a good bit of what they were up to. So you had huge demonstrations in Mexico City, and it just happened again May 1. One respect in which the United States is off the map is that nobody knows what May 1 is. Everywhere else in the world people know what it is. It's a labor holiday in solidarity with the struggles of American workers.

You have to look very far to find somebody who knows this. One of the enormous propaganda successes in the United States is that even that has been driven out of people's heads. But elsewhere they know it and on May Day in Mexico there were big anti-government demonstrations, which is kind of unusual. They have a kind of Stalinist-style union which usually controls the thing, but not this time. ...So, why didn't it galvanize people? It did galvanize a lot of people.

L: It was referring to here in the US, specifically.

C: It did here too. There's a lot of interest

BY BRYAN LESSERAUX

in it on the Left. A lot of people went down to the convention [in Mexico City]. It doesn't get around here, partly because the Left has no resources. If you want to get information around you have to be part of some network. But if you read the Left journals like *Z Magazine* or *In These Times*, it was there.

People were interested, but in order to "galvanize" the Left there has to be a Left. And while there are plenty of people, and a lot of them are doing very important things, they're very scattered and very isolated. That's the effect of atomizing people. The major effort of the whole advertising, propaganda system has been to separate people from one another, to turn them into atoms of consumption—just you and the tube, that's the perfect arrangement. And when you get to that stage, people aren't in contact, they don't know what it means to work together and so on.

L: Let me ask you a question about the cuts to education and also to social services, here in New York and throughout the country. Who, generally, do you think is going to benefit from these cuts? In whose interests are they?

C: (He laughs) Well, I share everyone else's opinion. It's not even an opinion. The New York Times pointed out a few days ago in an article about the Giuliani budget, and if you look you'll find, buried in the article somewhere, this sentence, "all tax cuts benefit businesses." The cuts that are made in things like education and transport and health and so on, those are taxes. They don't call them taxes. But if you cut down public support for transportation, you're increasing the cost of transportation. Now that's a tax. You may not call it a tax but that's exactly what it is. It's a transfer of public funds to the state, to government authorities. That's what a tax is. But it's a very regressive tax. It's a tax paid by the poor for the benefit of the rich. The rich benefit when poor people take subways. If poor people didn't take subways they wouldn't be able to drive their limousines or take taxi cabs. I don't know if you were around for the last subway strike—well, you're too young—but you couldn't live in New York. So the rich gain by having people take subways, but they

don't want to pay for it. They want poor people to pay for it and pay through the nose. Rich people do what I did when I went down to NYU the other day [to give a lecture entitled, "Bringing the Third World Home"]. They come by airplane and spend three hundred dollars to get from Boston to New York and back. Now that's not for the folks downtown. Well who pays for the airplane? The public pays. They pay for the cost of building them, they pay for the maintenance of the airport and so on. So those things stay up. A good part of the Pentagon budget is for that, plus other things.

The same is true of tuition at CUNY. It's a tax! It's a civic institution, you're putting funds, in this case, into the city government, and the idea is to make the poor people pay for it. They call this "cutting taxes". It's not, it's just redistributing taxes. It's redistributing them and making them even more regressive than they are.

And it's nice of Giuliani to say publicly what everybody knew all along—that he's trying to drive

poor people out of the city. New York is supposed to be a city for rich folk, not for ordinary people. It used to be a working class city. The manufacturing base was destroyed. It didn't just disappear. It was destroyed by social planning and investment and destroying factories and building high-rises and so on. This is all social planning designed to turn it into a city for investment, bankers, corporate lawyers and so on and so forth, and Giuliani is just pursuing it a step further. There's a good book on this by Robert Fitch called, *The Assassination of New York* that gives you some of the background. It's all just continuing right now in front of our eyes. And the whole budget is just an illustration of this, down to the tiny details.

In this respect it's like the Gingrich Contract, which is just a way of redistributing power, even more, towards the rich and away from the poor. Poor means here most of the population, mind you. I'm not talking about slum dwellers, I'm talking about eighty percent of the population.

L: Yet, we're being told, and most people seem to believe, that these cuts are inevitable, that there simply isn't enough money available for social spending, that we have to cut back now in order not to get our economy into further trouble.

C: Why are they inevitable? New York has got money coming out of its ears. Pick up the May 15 issue of *Fortune* magazine. I haven't seen it yet but I'm willing to guess that, in their article on the Fortune 500, they're going to be euphoric about the rate of profits. That money is there. Look at the financial institutions, take a walk down Madison Avenue. Does it look poor? There's plenty of money around. The idea is to just put it into the pockets of rich people even more and to make poor people, the general population, suffer even more. There's nothing inevitable about budget cuts. It's a decision to tax the general population for the benefit of the rich.

L: I think that people are beginning to realize that, in fighting against these cuts, it

is futile to fight only for a particular group, such as students. I think people now see that these cuts hit us all in many different areas and that it is necessary to start uniting with other groups out there.

C: Now that's interesting. I noticed a sort of striking asymmetry about that when I was down at NYU. I was in contact with the Clerical and Technical Workers Union. They gave me some of their literature and, in fact, I talked about it at the conference. They are calling for working together with students. But I didn't here students talking about working together with them. This is just an example. The idea of reaching out is not hard. There are plenty of people that want to reach out.

L: Well, at Hunter, and at some of the other CUNY schools, we've reached out in the sense that we've had demonstrations alongside 1199, the Health and Hospitals Workers Union; and also the Transit Workers Union. Reverend Al Sharpton was also involved in the April 4 demonstration. We've gotten together for the purpose of a demonstration, but not in terms of something long term.

C: Well, that's what has to be developed. What we're missing in the country, in fact, what's been shattered is cooperative work among community groups and labor groups and student interest groups and so on, who basically all have the same interests. That has got to be rebuilt. It was shattered by plan.

Let's take, say, the unions. They didn't just disappear, they were killed: During the Reagan years, for example. *Business Week* had a very good article about a year ago in which they described the way the Reagan administration, cooperating with owners and investors, simply carried out completely criminal actions—*Business Week* described them that way—to destroy the unions. For example, there are laws about firing labor organizers. But the Reagan administration told business enterprises that they would not apply the laws, that it was fine to fire labor organizers. As a result the unions declined severely. They stopped enforcing the OSHA regulations—the safety and health regulations. So, industrial accidents shot up. The social policy was designed to drive down wages. That drives two members of the family into working with low wages, with much higher hours and no benefits. And an awful lot of them, about twenty five percent, are part-time. This is all social policy and it has had its effects alongside all the other stuff. And it's got to be reversed, there's nothing automatic about it.

L: Do you think what we're facing here, with the city and state budget cuts to CUNY and other programs and institutions, are a local version of what's going on with third world countries forced to undergo austerity measures?

C: Sure, it's exactly that.

L: I know that some of the same institutions are profiting from both situations. Chase Manhattan bank, for example, has interests in both CUNY and the Mexican economy. Is this indicative of what's going on? Are the same institutions profiting from both situations?

C: Sure. I've been writing about this for a long time. Look, there's been about a century and a half of struggle in which people tried to gain some kind of decent social contract. There was a time, not very long ago in fact, where the great mass of working people simply wanted to take over industry. They didn't see any reason why they should be subor-

minated to orders from authorities. This wasn't very far back, incidentally. But by about the 1920's that was declining. In recent years, and also in Europe and elsewhere, there has been a kind of a social contract established in which privilege and power is maintained, but with certain conditions—adequate standards of living, health care, workers rights and so on. Some kind of contract like that was established differently in different countries. And it didn't just come, there was a lot of struggle involved. In the United States, in particular, it was very violent. The United States had a much more violent labor history than any other industrialized country, and it was last to get these rights. [These rights] have been on hold since about the 1950's and, in the United States, actually reversed. Starting from about the 1970's there has been what you can only call a "rollback" going on. The effort has been to rollback the whole thing and drive the society back to what the dream always was; namely, that (the US) would be a much more violent society at home just as it is abroad. And that's exactly what's been happening very dramatically in the last fifteen years. The current goings-on in Washington and in City Hall and Albany in New York are just a part of it. They're an acceleration of it. It's very much like structural adjustment. All of these programs have very standard features: market discipline for poor people, plenty of privilege and power and state subsidies for rich people—of course, nobody believes in the market for themselves.

B: I want to ask you about a response you gave to one of the questions I asked you after your lecture at NYU. You said that pressuring legislators through letter-writing and whatnot does help, that it does make some changes.

C: It can often make a lot of changes.

B: OK, but the democrats have been cutting social services for a long time also. You see that with Mario Cuomo, he cut everything with the exception of the cops. And they aren't proposing any real alternatives.

C: Well, make them do it. Either make them do it or throw them out. That's the way democracy works, you make them do it or you throw them out.

L: But in our two-party system both parties are beholden to the same interests.

C: Yes, they are, but that's because we don't do anything about it. Remember, there's one group that's fighting a bitter, unending, self-conscious, class war. And if they're the only ones fighting it they're going to run the whole political system. It's pretty simple.

L: So, what are the best steps to take, voter registration drives, trying to get people to write letters, protesting in the streets?

C: Everything. Everything is a step to take. You organize people; you get them to go on demonstrations; you get them to form political clubs; you then get them to beat on the doors of their legislators and the editorial offices; to set up their own newspapers; to make a third party if that's necessary, actually, a second party would be more honest; you form unions. It's all the right thing to do. All of it is right. There are questions of tactics, where you put your efforts. That you just decide. That I can't tell you. But all of these efforts are the right ones.

Look, if you were on the other side of the barricades, sitting in some corporate board room, and the question came up, "Where should we put our efforts, controlling the media, creating artificial wants through adver-

tising so people get hooked, cutting down the mass transport system?"—the answer would be everywhere.

L: Historically, or at least within the last century or so, what do you see as having been the most successful student movement in terms of affecting long-term change, in helping to create more lasting, democratic institutions. What student movement could serve as a model for students now?

C: There are no models, you have to make up your own models. First of all, students are a transitory group. They're not a fixed social group. You go through your student years. Furthermore, students are young, so they're kind of marginal within the social system. And they're under a lot of pressure; you've got to shape up or you might get kicked out—like everybody else. Although students happen to be a lot freer than everybody else, freer than they'll ever be the rest of their lives. There have been times when students have done something with these privileges. For example, during the 60's. Now, I thought a lot of things that the student movement did were completely crazy and destructive, including things like the Columbia strike—and I got into a big argument with them about that. But a lot of the things they did were very important, and not just to young people. They changed the country very dramatically. It's just a very different country from what it was, say, in the 1960's—and a much more civilized one. And the same thing happened right through the 80's, like with the anti-apartheid campaign, a lot of them were students. And, to a lesser extent, in the solidarity movements with Central America there were some students involved. And it's the same on issue after issue. [Students] just have to decide where they want to put their energies and efforts. You can put them into getting ahead and becoming a corporate lawyer or you can put them into trying to do something decent about the world. Make your choice, the same way you do in later life.

L: I think that's the shift that has to take place, a shift away from seeing our school years simply as a launching pad for a career in big business or whatever. We spend four, five, sometimes six years in college. That's a long time for something that many of us view simply as a transitory phase. Maybe if these cuts go through and begin to really affect us, students will begin to make the shift towards building up our strength here at school in order to have something in place that can affect change.

C: I would agree with that, but I would also think that taking a walk through the streets of New York would make you think, even without the cuts. I mean, New York is just obscene. The contrast of super wealth and misery is so sharp in New York; you just can't walk through the place without feeling disgusted, cuts or no cuts.

The question people have to ask themselves is, Who am I? What kind of a person am I? What kind of a world do I want to live in?

L: But, realistically, if you look around, students and the general population don't seem to be tremendously affected by it.

C: That's because they don't see it. You can walk around and not see it. The first thing you have to learn to do is look. Look at what's in front of your eyes and ask yourself, "Is that the kind of world I want to live in?" "Is that the kind of person I want to be?" I think very few people would say yes.

L: I agree. I think that we allow our-

"Remember, there's one group that's fighting a bitter, unending, self-conscious, class war. And if they're the only ones fighting it they're going to run the whole political system. It's pretty simple."

selves to be brainwashed into believing that the people out there who don't have jobs, who aren't cleaning themselves and who are living on the street, are at fault for their own circumstances; that they have the same chance as everyone else in society but they can't cut it.

C: That's what's drilled into your head. And it's not just about the people out on the streets, it's also about the guys working. They don't live like the people in the high-rises, although they're working twice as hard. That's what's drilled into your head, but people should have enough independence of mind to be able to resist that kind of nonsense. I mean, look, if you went back to the Soviet Union, people had a lot of communist propaganda drilled into their heads and a lot of people were affected, but you didn't have to be.

L: I think we undergo a kind of anti-communist propaganda which is very similar. Taxes being used for government programs that help people are seen as a move towards socialism, communism and all the things those systems are associated with.

C: Put yourself back in that corporate board room and ask what you want people to see and what you want people to believe. What you want them not to see is private tyranny. What you want them to see is big government. And if they're unhappy about things they should be unhappy about government. Now, from the point of view of the guy in the corporate board room, government is a good thing because it funnels money to them. But it's also a dangerous thing because, theoretically, the public could get involved. Government is potentially democratic; corporations are not, they're only tyrannical. So, naturally, they don't want you to see corporations and private power. They want you to see government.

And on this, there is no difference between the two parties. If you read Bill Clinton's campaign literature, it's a joke. They started off with their little book called, Mandate For Change, which they were selling in drug stores and what not. The first chapter of it is called 'Entrepreneurial Economics' or something like that. It's about how "we" (Clinton, Gore, etc.) are "new" democrats, not the old-fashioned democrats, and how "we" are going to help "workers and their firms." If you take a look through that chapter, nothing about bosses, investors, owners, managers, profits—that's not there, just "workers and their firms". They do mention entrepreneurs, which are the nice guys who come around everyone once and a while to help the "workers and their firms." This is just childish propaganda Stalinist-style. But it's for democrats. And nobody even pointed it out. That's the level of brain washing in the educated population. Just try to find the word "profits" in the mainstream press. When they want to say "profits" what they say is "jobs". So, Clinton goes to Indonesia and gets "jobs" for Americans; namely, a thirty-five billion dollar Exxon contract to develop an oil field. (Sarcastically) This is going to create a lot of jobs for Americans. It will create profits for a few Americans but you're not allowed to say that.

From Prison

The following letters are two of a pack-

from a prison in New Jersey. The CUNY Coalition encourages its readership to reply. If you want to reply, or need more information, contact the Coalition Press care of The Advocate, CUNY Graduate Center, 33 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036 or call 212-642-2852. We are printing the letter anonymously for the author's protection.

New Afrikan Solidarity:

4-1-30 ADM

Sistahs, Brothas; I apologize for the delay in getting this here out to you, but I ran across a few problems that needed my full attention.

I hope that this will get to you in time before the next demo. [I think] this would be of some encouragement, and spiritually sound...

Let me know when and if you receive this because it is important that you let me know these people here sometime mess with my outgoing mail!

Also, let the brothas, and sistahs in prison or jail who was arrested that they are not alone and that we in here have them in mind as well!

I would have sent you other things but I am was/is pressed for time and I need to get this out to you now. But when I'm sure that you got this I will send perhaps some of my poems and other writings ... Looking to hear from you soon and hopefully we can work together in the future on more political issues, politics, and struggle

Long live the Resistance!

With Love...

Revolutionary Solidarity:

Sistahs, Brothas, Faculty Memebas, & Everyday People

March '95

On behalf of Andrew Long of the students government, I am able to forward you this letter of solidarity, on behalf of my comrades and many other New Afrikan prisoners in and outside of the state of New York...

First of all, "we love you!" We in here not only praise your efforts but we wholeheartedly and uncompromisingly support you as well. There is no power on earth that is more greater than the absolute power of the people; the people will soon feel their own power only if we/you keep the pressure on and never letting up until the demands of the people has been met... "we will win!"...

Sistahs & brothas, anytime a government put more prisons before education is a gov't that is unjust and is a gov't that cares nothing about the of children and their families... And, it is a gov't that is taking a backwards road to internal death, and a people's revolution will ultimately sweep across this sick and fascist government!

Sistahs & brothas, please, don't

Solidarity

mis-understand what is already going on people are already in Amerikkka's prisons because of no education or the lack of education; because of the impossibilities of not finding jobs. Perhaps, if I had had a full and proper education, and perhaps, if I had had a chance to work [probably] I wouldn't be here to-day in prison... So, don't play into the head games in thinking that this is something new that just started when certain assholes got into power there in New York! The students in N.Y. are just now getting to feel the effects of what so many others have and/or are suffering from. Do not let the nonsense by a few assholes in government, as well as, some of these leadership figures disengage you the students from the overall struggles of oppressed people all over this society. We can only rock and change this system as one united voice whether we are in prison or outside of prisons. But the struggles must be join on all fronts (especially) if we/you want to be effective in the fight back against these racist cuts!

In conclusion, I was listening to (WBAI) the whole time of the demonstration and I can come up with only one analysis; one conclusion—and, that is, (the demonstrations wasn't about education - it was about "life!")...

Sistahs & brothas, you have all intered into a stage where your lives are at stake; the moment the pigs vamped down upon you their wicked intentions proved to inflict such an injury upon you that you'd think twice before you come back out there, en mass... But you must keep the pressures on and let them know that you will not submit peacefully to their terroristic and fascist tactics because the people's spirits are greater than any racist governmental forces!

Sistahs & brothas, education is a basic human right, therefore, any government that take the people's right to education and to, too, a future have simply kalled into question, "A People's right to a Revolution..."

Power to the people

N.A.P.

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From Faculty

April 12, 1995

Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds
City University of New York
535 East 80th Street
New York, NY 10021

Dear Chancellor Reynolds,

What initially began as an impressive and exciting unity of college administrators, faculty, staff, and students in our struggle against Governor Pataki's proposed budget, may be in jeopardy. Events over the past several weeks have exposed a University policy which is creating an increased climate of repression and divisiveness. This is occurring at the very moment when we need to expand the activities of faculty, staff and students to fight together against the impending budget cuts.

With the budget cuts at hand, we believe that every effort should be made to support and exercise democratic rights to protest and express the varied views of the CUNY community. The rights to speak publicly, to assembly, and to communicate without impediments are inherent in the democratic process and must not be abridged in this moment of intense need for political response.

Reports from campuses include:

excess police force in the arrests of Hunter demonstrators at the moment of their disbanding (including threats of college disciplinary charges);

arrests of peaceful demonstrators from City College who were not, in fact, disrupting any college activities;

use of video cameras by university security to record demonstrators, protesters, and observers;

interference with university e-mail of activists in the movement to fight the cuts;

unusual presence of security personnel around the offices of faculty activists.

We are concerned that these incidents reflect the lock-step guidelines that were issued by you to the college presidents, requiring specific security measures in responding to campus protest. We urge the CUNY community to end this atmosphere of intimidation and to encourage rather than dissuade peaceful democratic protest in behalf of the survival of the institution.

Sincerely,

CUNY Coalition of Concerned Faculty and Staff on behalf of all campuses

STOP
C.U.N.Y
CUTS

The Dismantling of CUNY and the Pillaging of New York City by the Rich

by Barry Lituchy

(Barry Lituchy is an adjunct instructor of history at Brooklyn College)

A review of Robert Fitch's *The Assassination of New York*. (Verso, 1993).

On March 1st at a Brooklyn College rally, several speakers, including Brooklyn College President Vernon Lattin, referred to the proposed Pataki-Giuliani budget cuts of CUNY as "insane." Indeed, when one considers the political agenda of the ruling elites of this country, there does seem to be a very fine line between the rationality of their policies, and the irrationality of the human pain and injustice those policies produce. It raises an old question about the rationality of modern capitalism that goes back to the early days of the industrial revolution: is capitalism a rational economic system?

While there may have been many miscalculations involved in their implementation, there is no doubt that two world wars, fascism, environmental destruction, racial oppression, imperialism, the C.I.A., and the undermining of personal freedoms and privacy by the FBI, all were necessary at one point or another for the preservation of the capitalist system in the twentieth century. All of these were "rational" decisions made by "our leaders" that, while we may rightly refer to them as barbarism, nevertheless expressed a certain necessary logic for the system that produced them. Thus, while we may agree with those who shout that the Pataki budget proposal for cutting \$162 million dollars out of the CUNY budget is "insane," we should not make the mistake of blaming this criminal action on a bout of temporary insanity, or on incompetent policy makers.

Of course, Pataki's plan is insane in terms of our interests. But from the standpoint of the ruling rich in this country, the dismantling of CUNY is a perfectly sane, rational, and even necessary policy. And as we mobilize thousands of students and workers to join us in our efforts to reverse this brutal assault on the CUNY and SUNY system, we do our cause well to set some time aside at some point to study the historical, political and economic origins of this ongoing campaign by the ruling class to undermine the social programs and living standards of working people in this country. The destruction of CUNY and SUNY needs to be understood as part of a larger ongoing effort by governments in the post-Cold War era to do away with all social programs and institutions that do not directly profit the banks and the richest elements of the capitalist class.

One of the first books we should put on our reading list for this purpose is Robert Fitch's *The Assassination of New York* (Verso, 1993). While Fitch's book has many serious limitations for those of us who would prefer a systematic approach to understanding the connections between the destruction of CUNY and contemporary capitalism, his book does offer a brilliant contribution in regard to one particular historical aspect of the current fiscal "crisis" of New York City and State. Fitch's book focuses on how New York's fiscal policies and political system have been dominated by this city's financial, insurance and real estate capitalist elites for the past century, and how, in the process, they have pillaged the city's resources and driven the local economy into ruin. Fitch shows us that the history of city government in the twentieth century can be told as the story of how these financial, insurance and real estate moguls (whom he calls the "FIRE" elites) have used the city and state government parasitically to exploit the people and resources of New York for enormous profits.

One way in which Fitch's book is important reading for those of us involved in working out an overall strategy for fighting Pataki's budget cuts, is that it shows how the two-party system serves the financial and real estate interests in the City, and how they work together to plunder the social services, economy and living standards of working-class New Yorkers. The decapitalization and deindustrialization of the city's social services and economy, as well as its increasing impoverishment are, according to Fitch, the consequences of the government's turning over of New York's entire economy to the city's financial and real estate bosses.

Fitch details how the pillaging of New York by these financial and real estate interests has created a multi-dimensional urban pathology, extreme even by U.S. standards. Since 1989 the city has lost over 400,000 manufacturing jobs and the labor participation rate in New York has become the lowest of any of the top 286 cities in the country. Even young white people here are in the labor force at a rate lower than super-exploited black youth are nationally. Industrial wages also are now lower in New York than in any major U.S. city while the cost of living is the highest. Not surprisingly, one out of every four New Yorkers is now dependent on some form of welfare. Affordable housing is not being built — despite the claims of the Koch and Dinkins administrations — while 60 million square feet of office space (the size of 26 Empire State buildings) lies vacant. The city government borrows on Wall Street, offers tax abatements to the same financial and real estate speculators who buy its bonds, and then cuts city services because of the resulting budget deficit. Meanwhile, Wall Street bond traders like billionaire George Soros, who earned \$850 million in 1993, pay virtually no taxes to the city. David Dinkins balanced the city budget deficit by laying off 12,000 city workers and slashing every city agency except the police (who are needed to enforce this New World Order on the city's population). But the lay-offs, like the deficit itself, are artificially created by a government that is obliged to subsidize the building projects of the city's financial and real estate elites.

Another contribution of the book is its serious attitude toward political organizing against this assault on living conditions and social services. Fitch correctly emphasizes the complete absence of any real democracy in New York City's and State's political system. Indeed, Fitch rightly compares it to a Stalinist dictatorship. Power is over-centralized in the City in the

Mayor's office, and an extraordinary number of highly important fiscal and economic political positions such as economic planning boards and development authorities are all appointed and have no binding authorities. The legislature and virtually every other city and state elected body have no real proportional representation. The media are a vast propaganda machine-owned by corporate giants. And politicians of both parties are owned by their main contributors — most of them of the FIRE elite. Fitch is clear about the essentially identical functions of the two capitalist parties. At a forum in

Brooklyn last year, Fitch characterized the Democratic Party as being "coterminous with the Mafia." Clearly, the City (like the country as a whole) is crying out for an independent third party that could represent the interests of working people in their fight-back against budget cuts.

Fitch doesn't begin and end with analysis; he also puts forth some concrete proposals: a campaign for the creation of one million jobs, heavy taxation on the rich, the construction of 50,000 units of low income housing per year, organizing the unorganized, including welfare recipients. He calls for ending the billions in tax abatements given to real estate speculators and reimposing the stock

exchange tax (either one would end the CUNY budget crisis overnight). He proposes a business service tax, a tax on foreign banks, and most importantly he calls for taxing the elite non-profit corporations in the city. Fitch tears off the mask of benign social altruism behind which so many of these "non-profit" or "non-governmental" organizations and foundations articulate the interests of the ruling class, control and subvert government policy and academia, block progressive policies and work closely with US foreign policy and the CIA to impose the "New World Order" around the world (e.g.: the sinister Soros Foundation). Meanwhile, as these non-profit foundations pay no taxes, they have an annual aggregate budget of \$32 billion (larger than New York City's), own 6% of the city's taxable property and pay their directors an average salary in excess of \$175,000 per year. According to Pataki they should pay no taxes, but CUNY students should pay an extra \$1000 a year tuition. Uh, huh.

Fitch's book reveals the rotten truth behind the much discussed budget crisis that Pataki, like Cuomo before him, insists must be balanced on the backs of working people: it is nothing less than a deliberate fraud, an extortionary scheme designed for taxing the poor to give to the rich. Essentially, the city and state budgets of New York are an extraordinary scam devised by the financial elite of this city to sustain a system of socialism for the rich. As Fitch shows, the budget crisis was not caused by spending on social programs, like education, welfare or Medicaid, but rather by the city's subordination to finan-

BOOKS IN REVIEW

cial and real estate interests for whom city officials arranged generous, long term mortgages by borrowing short term, high interest loans on Wall Street. As incredible as this may seem, it is nevertheless the real reason for the so-called budget crisis. Each year the city must pay banks and bond holders approximately \$2.6 billion in interest alone! This shows what capitalist government in New York City is all about — theft. Every penny in interest increases goes directly to service those big fat interest payments paid to the banks. Every penny in tax revenues taken out of city and state aid to CUNY and SUNY goes directly into the hands of the coupon clippers and bond traders on Wall Street.

It has been argued (even by Fitch himself) that "Cancel the Debt" is not the best demand for saving CUNY. This is true in one sense because canceling the debt would not necessarily save our educational institutions from attack by the ruling elites who want to destroy them more for political reasons than budgetary ones (after all, they serve working people, not the rich). Nevertheless, the demand is still appropriate. This is because it draws attention to the fact that the whole rationale for slashing the CUNY and SUNY budgets is based on the very real financial power that Wall Street and its friends have over the city's and state's finances, and the fact that CUNY and SUNY are being scapegoated for a debt crisis that was made on Wall Street and should be returned there! We need to be clear that the current debt arrangement between the city and the banking and Wall Street establishment is incompatible with the well being of CUNY, public education, and just about every other social program that benefits the people and not the capitalists.

One weakness to Fitch's approach that needs mention is his failure to place the story of New York's budget crisis into a larger context that relates the decisions made by New York's ruling rich to other objective economic factors external to the city's economy, such as the decline of the global capitalist economy since the early 1970's and its growing dependency on certain types of financial exchanges. The current debt crisis of governments like New York cannot be explained fully outside of the larger forces shaping global capitalist trends. Beginning with the overproduction crisis and the downward trend in the rate of profit in the 1970's, industrial economies entered into a long and ever deepening period of economic stagnation which led to deindustrialization, the shift of finance capital away from economic development to financial speculation in bonds and currency markets, and, of course, the spiraling downward pressure on wages, which has been intensified by a number of other international economic and political factors including the dismantling of the planned economies in the former Communist countries. Indeed, New York City's problems — both its decapitalization and the wholesale plunder of its resources — are really part of a global problem: the decline of the world capitalist system. Fitch's weakness is not that he fails to recognize these connections, but rather that he adamantly and perversely denies that there is such a connection. The way Fitch likes to put it is that "the loss of economic diversity" as a result of a "FIRE monoculture" is the principal cause of New York's economic problems. This is an overly one-sided definition of tendencies that have occurred elsewhere and even in other historical periods (e.g.: one could draw parallels with the industrial decline of Britain as it grew dependent on empire and the exporting of capital).

On the other hand, Fitch's achievement is important and worthy of our careful study. His work refocuses attention on class imperatives and the importance of understanding specific ruling class decisions and interests in shaping the institutions we live under. As one speaker put it after hearing Fitch speak at a forum in Brooklyn, "According to what you just said...capitalism isn't broken; it's working just the way it's supposed to work." And that is the point: the system isn't irrational, just unacceptable.

Benedetto Fontana, Hegemony and Power: On the Relation Between Gramsci and Machiavelli

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993

Tom Smith

"Material force can only be overthrown by material force, but theory itself becomes a material force when it has seized the masses. Theory is capable of seizing the masses when it demonstrates ad hominem, and it demonstrates ad hominem as soon as it becomes radical. To be radical is to grasp things by the root. But for man the root is man himself. . . . the categorical imperative [is] to overthrow all those conditions in which man is an abased, enslaved, contemptible being. . . ."

Karl Marx

"Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State," 1843

I finally finished reading a book I promised the author I'd read years ago when it was his dissertation: an old friend of mine from the CUNY Graduate School, Dr. Benedetto Fontana. The book, entitled, *Hegemony and Power: On the Relationship Between Gramsci and Machiavelli*, is absolutely brilliant as a piece of scholarly work. For those who have not tasted of the fruits of these two historical thinkers, the topic, however, may seem somewhat arcane. But the themes of the book have a great deal to offer to active, democratic-thinking radicals. It will appeal to those vitally interested in the question of how "theory" might "grip the masses," to become a force for change within the rapidly decaying society in which we live today.

Antonio Gramsci was the leading intellectual light of the Italian Communist Party from its inception after the Bolshevik Revolution to Gramsci's arrest by Il Duce's fascists in 1926. Gramsci is most famous for his singular contributions to Marxist political theory. His most important concept was *hegemonia*: how ruling classes utilize politics and ideology to forge cooptative alliances with elements of the lower, "subaltern" classes, in order to provide the stability necessary for rule, to form a "historical bloc." Gramsci was concerned with how the working class could develop and use their own political, ideological, and cultural institutions to forge a new, *counterhegemony*, allied with the middle and peasant classes of Italy, in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie.

Fontana's work sheds light on a much-neglected source of Gramsci's thought. Most thinkers view Gramsci merely as a clever adaptor of Lenin's work to Italian conditions. Fontana shows how little justice this approach does to the profundity of the work of Gramsci, who after all was a highly creative Italian writer, not just another Leninist. Fontana shows how Gramsci was profoundly influenced by his intellectual ancestor, Niccolò Machiavelli. Machiavelli was the Renaissance thinker who sought to revitalize, from the ancient Roman Republic, ideals of an active political life, and concepts of a politically effective morality. His aim was always to empower the Italian people, with a "Prince" at their head, to clean out the corruptions of the papacy and the aristocracy, and to drive out the armies of other European powers, the "barbarians," from Italian soil. Fontana shows how Machiavelli, far from playing second fiddle to Lenin in Gramsci's hagiography, even enabled Gramsci to transcend the paternalist elements in Lenin's thought.

As context for his analysis, Fontana presents an intellectual conflict running throughout the modern age. The central question: "Since, in the modern era, the masses have entered the stage of history, what role should they play? Can they have the knowledge to lead, are they properly doomed to the role of stage hands? Is history a play to the glory of elites, or of everyone?" On one side of this historical debate are thinkers such as Machiavelli, Marx, and Gramsci; thinkers who posit, in Machiavelli's words, a "new science" for conscience political action and self-empowerment by the mass. These thinkers tended toward materialism, democracy, and praxis, or political activism. These intellectual Prometheans aimed to bring Truth, heretofore studied only in the scholar's chamber, and pursued for the sake of the aristocrats' pleasure and self-glorification, down to the level of the mass, where it could be used by the mass to radically transform society. On the other side, against these thinkers, Fontana pairs Machiavelli off against Guicciardini, Marx against Hegel, Gramsci against Croce (who attempted sleight-of-handedly, it would seem from Fontana's account to transform Machiavelli into his elitist rival, Guicciardini, and thus ignore Machiavelli's decidedly populist, activist stance).

These latter antagonists were idealist and elitist. They posited Knowledge Entities, independent from and above ordinary mortals and their sordid everyday lives: Truth or the Absolute Idea, or Spirit. Thought thought itself, using these Great Thinkers to think its Great Thoughts. Throughout the whole process, the Thinker need never leave His armchair: why would he have cause to thus sully himself out in the dirty street? Knowledge not only absolved elites from responsibility for the masses' welfare, it also mystically imparted to them a superior morality, which made their rule always and everywhere benevolent.

Many students of Gramsci, especially the Althusserians and the post-structuralists like Laclau and Mouffe, have, ironically enough, attempted to read Gramsci as a "pure scholar" of the State and of Ideology, as if Gramsci numbered himself among these idealists, in quest of essentialist Truths. Though they do accept that Gramsci understood the State and Ideology as the products of "social practices," the Althusserians reify these institutions and practices, so as to become removed from any capability of ordinary human beings to revolutionize them. Thankfully, Fontana refocuses Gramsci scholarship on Gramsci's real goal, to which his study of the State and of ideology was com-

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Benedetto Fontana, Hegemony and Power

Continued
from 11

pletely subordinate. Gramsci's goal was to theorize about popular education for empowerment. Hegemony, therefore, is not just the science of how the ruling class rules, but how the masses can attain for themselves the science of rule and thus overthrow the bourgeoisie. For this process to occur, however, our very concept of knowledge itself must change. Heretofore, it has been delusional, and private. To become revolutionary, it must become public, and realistic.

The knowledge of rule is inextricably involved in social relationships. As Marx understood, the proletariat must understand these relationships in order to rule. The social "conditions" of modern impoverishment and misery must be "made to dance to their own tune." Once in possession of the knowledge of social conditions, the proletariat will understand not only the fact that we are being exploited, but also our real power to control our labor and thus the economy and society itself.

According to Fontana's Gramsci, elite knowledge is preconditioned upon a denial of these social relationships. In the first place, elites must convince themselves, for the sake of their own morale, of a fundamentally narcissistic fantasy: that they exist alone at the center of the universe. They must deny to themselves the essential fact of their existence: that their very existence is predicated upon the exploitation of the "dangerous" classes. In addition, they must hide from themselves, as well as from the subalterns, the fact that their class rule is crisis-bound, and will lead to barbarism if it is not overthrown. For both these reasons, then, elite knowledge is delusional.

In the second place, elites use their knowledge to awe the subalterns into submission. *Subordination and exclusion* are not just the side effects of elite knowledge, as elites would have us believe —when, for example, thinkers from Plato down to T.S. Eliot assure us of the necessity of a leisured class and a class of pure manual laborers for the sake of the "disinterested" pursuit of knowledge. For the goal of idealists is not really knowledge; instead, it is to make the subaltern classes feel inferior, because they are "ignorant." Elite knowledge must therefore be both private, and fundamentally of the nature of a collective delusion. It must therefore, ultimately, take on all the characteristics of a dogma, which must be constantly defended against the "corruptions" of the barbarians waiting at the gates.

Contemporary examples from the ruling class abound. The Social Darwinism of *The Bell Curve*, Chancellor Ann Reynolds, Mario Cuomo, Newt Gingrich, Giuliani, et alii, all pronounce that lack of economic opportunity does not mean that "we" cannot conclude from poor IQ scores (from tests which "we" devise) that education is wasted on the poor. But Fontana finds another example of this elitist view of knowledge solidly within the Left itself. Instead of placing Lenin solidly in the camp of Machiavelli, Marx, and Gramsci, Fontana places him, along with both his teacher and his adversary, Kautsky, in between the two camps. While Lenin and Kautsky were both committed emotionally to the

proletariat, the theory of knowledge which they shared, the theory that socialist consciousness must be brought to the proletariat "from outside," by intellectuals always lent to their thought an undialectical and elitist direction. As with Guicciardini, Hegel, and Croce, knowledge becomes the *res privata* of the party, deliberately segregated from the experience of the proletariat, experience which can lead only to "trade-union" consciousness. I have always thought this about Lenin and Kautsky, and though I'm not sure that any direct textual evidence can be found, I was delighted to see Fontana discussing it as perhaps a covert subtext of Gramsci's work. There was always a tension between Gramsci's stress on a dialectical interaction between leaders and the mass, and Lenin's and Kautsky's fetishism of the Party. And there is much food for thought here about how the doctrinaire Left over the last seven decades have accomplished a self-fulfilling prophecy, by first accepting elitist concepts of knowledge, and then wondering why their doctrinaire educational methods, which were never designed to really educate anyone anyway, never worked!

To overthrow the ruling class, the knowledge of rule must be known to all: it must be public. It must also not delude, but enlighten: therefore, it must be realistic. It must concern the possibilities for people to rule their own, everyday, dirty-street-and-factory lives in order to improve them. And it must be transmitted to all. Proletarian hegemony consists of this realistic knowledge of rule, knowledge known by the masses. How can intellectuals guide the process of hegemony, to ensure that it comes about?

It is to answer this question that Gramsci, according to Fontana, turns to Machiavelli. Machiavelli provides two very special keys. The first was his rebellion against the moralism and otherworldliness of Christianity, which he knew kept men docile, and accepting toward the real and immoral treacheries of the Vatican. Machiavelli's "new science" measured political action practically, by its effects, not by what was desired by the Vatican's fiction, "God," or sanctioned by outworn traditions. While Gramsci did not accept Machiavelli's implication that the ends justify the means, he did accept that "he who wills the ends wills the means," that to do good in this world, the prophet must be "armed" against the hypocrites who would manipulate and destroy us. Machiavelli's distinction between the old moralism and the new science of politics is the source of Gramsci's distinction between "traditional" intellectuals, with their private, elitist, esoteric, traditional knowledge, and "organic" intellectuals, who act as the bearers of a new and practical hegemony.

The second contribution Machiavelli makes to a theory of revolutionary popular education is found in his dialogue, "The Art of War." It is not so much the content, as the dialogical form itself, that Gramsci finds valuable in this work: the attitude of the participants that they will find the Truth, not in some dogma they have hatched out in private, but "through" each other. In the dialogue "I find the truth through you; you through me." This, for Gramsci, contains in embryo a dialectical theory of knowledge and of education. For Gramsci, proletarian hegemony is built, not through purity of theory and indoctrination, but through dialogue.

Remember the old saying, "You can't fight fire with fire?" Machiavelli saw, all around him, relations of tyranny and corruption, as if society had been transformed into one giant *paterfamilias*: a family in which one person, the patriarch, speaks authoritatively, and cruelly, while the rest serve him and are silent. Such relations were completely antithetical to the republican society Machiavelli wished to see once again take root

on Italian soil. But by merely preaching against this society, one simply reproduced its paternalistic, dominative pattern. The method of education had to contain within its very structure the egalitarian relations it sought to inspire. Thus only dialogue contained the antidote necessary to dissolve away the corruptions of Italian society.

According to Fontana, Gramsci applies Machiavelli's theory of republican dialogue to his own conception of socialist education. To pit one's own dogma, and dogmatic teaching methods, against that of the far better financially heeled and stronger bourgeoisie, was, in Gramsci's opinion, foolhardy. The new knowledge the proletariat would need to involve the proletariat in the process of his own education. Mere attention to teaching was not enough: *learning, as a process*, was far more important. In addition, the task of the teacher was not to invest knowledge into student as one makes a (private) deposit in a bank, knowledge already and exclusively acquired by the teacher in school. The task instead to raise the consciousness of the worker-student, who already knew, in the concrete, what he needed to know about capitalism, production, society, and life, to the level of generalizable propositions, to the level of knowledge. As Marx said, what is needed is to "make the conditions dance to their own tune." Thus, to ensure that learning, rather than simply the teacher's own ego, grew, teachers and students in the process of proletarian education must approach each other as equals. Political education must be itself political, involving the conflict and freedom of debate, not just absorption.

One criticism must be noted of Fontana's book and that is that he only focuses upon Gramsci's implicit criticisms of the Leninist and Stalinist views on the party, without examining the ways in which Gramsci publically and ultimately adhered to the Leninist model. While Gramsci always pushed against its limitations, he did not only accept it, I would say positive, concern with building a party of leadership. He also, unlike Luxemburg, quite explicitly accepted the Leninist-Stalinist ideal of a totalitarian one-party state. After the failure of the strike movement at Turin and the rise of fascism, Gramsci's explicit conception of the party itself was hierarchical, *a la*, not only Lenin, but Sorel. In Gramsci's party a small, permanent, cooptative and self-selecting group would lead, a lower belt of middle intellectuals would transmit this elite's ideas, and the rank and file would receive them. Of course, Gramsci, against Bordiga, urged upon the leadership of the Italian Communist Party the will to learn from the masses (as Lenin did with the Bolsheviks). But Gramsci never seemed to understand, any more than did Lenin, how the formal political relations of hierarchy within the Party would tend to defeat any such will-to-equality. It would seem that here, too, inside the Party, the superior knowledge of elites imparts to them a will-to-benevolence which makes a reevaluation of political relations unnecessary. We the living certainly ought to point up the contradictions herein, and champion the liberatory Gramsci against the totalitarian one. But it does us no good to ignore this totalitarian side.

Fontana's work really highlights the role of Gramsci in the long tradition of dialogical education, beginning with Machiavelli, and continuing on, in our own day, in the work of Reich and Freire. He also makes Gramsci a potent critic of current fallacies of the Left, most of which is now enmeshed in the quest for pure politically correct thoughts and thrilled by every latest trend in the solipsistic and invidious politics of identity. Fontana's Gramsci shows the necessity and the strategy for integration of our forces, through talking and working together. All in all, an excellent work for both scholars and activists, worth checking out.

GSUC Hires New Computer Director

R. Hollander

After twelve months of interim stewardship, and six years of absentee leadership, the Graduate Center finally has a new computer director. James Haggard is coming to us from the Columbia Business School where he was the director of their computer facilities.

The Computer Center he's coming to is in the midst of reorganization. Until this year, computer facilities at the GSUC were divided between the Computer Center in the purview of the chief academic officer, Provost Marshall, and Educational Resources and Telecommunications which are the purview of the chief administrative officer, Vice President Kohan. According to our departing acting interim computer director, Joan Sheridan, the academic and administrative sides conducted a political battle over control of computer services until a compromise was reached last semester. It was then decided that telecommunications (phones) could not be kept separate from datacommunications (computers) and should be subordinated to it.

This is the trend both in other universities and in the private sector. Unfortunately, it means that the telecommunications director, who used to report directly to the VP and will now be reporting to the Computer Director at one further remove from the Provost, will not be implementing the upgrade the phone system so desperately needs (anyone who has tried to call the GSUC and had to wait a minute or more for a connection knows just how desperately it is needed).

The division of telecommunications and datacommunications has left a legacy of inequities both in personnel and in hardware. The people in Ed Resources, for example, are relatively low in the hierarchy although they are high in both skills and service. They are a preferred source of computer support among the administrative staff, yet they have the least voice in policy. Since they are in charge of the MACs in the Computer Center, and the Computer Center's orientation has historically favored IBM support, it is not surprising that the MAC system is outmoded. Both the MACs and the personnel that service them have yet to be given the respect they need and deserve.

Things will be improving with our new director. Already he has pried \$25,000.00 from 80th Street for new training labs for Windows applications. His immediate focus will be on trying to enhance communications and integration between the GSUC and other campuses as well as within the Grad Center. He is also working with Susan Newman, Chief Librarian, on a plan to bring computer hardware down into the Mina Rees Library to turn the carrels into work stations, expanding the library as a study facility. They are considering having a 'brown-bag lunch' to discuss these plans with the student population.

Students should be aware that as an administrator, the computer director will have input from the administration on a daily basis. Input from students is much harder to come by — it must be solicited, and the task of soliciting input can be daunting. Haggard has made clear to the Advocate that his "door is open to students." At Columbia, he says, students felt free to approach him with their questions and needs. Here he finds students surprisingly reticent. The only other structural input from students comes through the Graduate Council's Computer Committee, with three students (and four faculty members), and the Technology Task Force with just one student member. It may be time for the Doctoral Students' Council to develop a computer committee of its own. In any case, these committees are usually stacked with the computer-initiated. The common user's is a voice not often heard through these channels. If you don't go and speak your mind to our new director, it is unlikely that anyone else will speak it for you. He's there, he's accessible, and he needs to hear from you.

University Faculty Senate Holds Hearing on Research Foundation

R. Hollander

On March 28th the University Faculty Senate, the CUNY-wide faculty representative body, held an open hearing on the Research Foundation, the CUNY organization which directs most of the special funding for research at CUNY, including major funding for the sciences and social sciences. Written statements were read by faculty primarily from Hunter and Brooklyn Colleges. Faculty statements from Queens, City and Bronx Community Colleges were also read.

The sharpest criticism focussed on difficulties in dealing with the RF's central office. Every campus has a research office — the office of Sponsored Research at the Graduate Center is our local arm of the Research Foundation, for example. These local offices were acknowledged to be helpful and efficient. The central office, however, seems to be the source of frustrating delays and obfuscating confusions in transactions. Crucial people in the central office are hard to reach, do not return calls, lose

important documents, and are generally discourteous, unresponsive, or incompetent. In addition, the central office is housed in an expensive midtown locale, making its existence an added burden to the research funding structure.

Frustrating, undue delays seem to be the cause of greatest concern. Outside contractors have abandoned CUNY because of these bureaucratic delays. Students have all manner of horror stories to tell about delays in paychecks or benefit payments. Blame is consistently placed on the central office.

Interestingly, none of the research offices here at the Graduate Center seemed to know that the hearing was taking place. The Advocate was informed of the hearing by an off-campus source in time to attend.

The Computer Center's Workshop schedule for June

Introduction to VAX Electronic Mail
Monday, June 5, 12:00 noon, Room 301

Advanced VAX Electronic Mail
Monday, June 5, 1:00 p.m., Room 301

Buying a PC
Monday, June 5, 3:00 p.m., Room 301

CUNYVM Internet Workshop (all-day)
Wednesday, June 8, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Room 301

Introduction to VM Electronic Mail
Monday, June 12, 12:00 noon, Room 301

VAX Internet Workshop (all-day)
Thursday, June 14, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Room 301

PC: Dialing In and Transferring Files
Monday, June 12, 1:00 p.m., Room 301

A \$5.00 registration fee is required for all workshops or seminars offered by the Computer Center. The fee will be refunded to all who attend at the end of the workshop or if the workshop is cancelled. No telephone, mail, or e-mail will be accepted. Five registrants are required to hold a workshop. You may call 642-2711 the day before the workshop to see if it will be held. Please bring your valid Graduate Center ID when you register and at the workshop.

\$5.00 deposit	Registration Hours	Room
check or cash	9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (M-F)	308
check only	10:00 a.m. - 9:45 p.m. (M-F)	300
	10:00 a.m. - 5:45 p.m. (Sat.)	300

Please make check payable to "CUNY Graduate School".

Workshop descriptions may be picked up in the Mail User Area (Room 300).

The April Plenary of the DSC

Held on Thursday, April 27 at 5:30pm in room BM10.

The minutes from this meeting follow:

21 in attendance (quorum=19)

1. Andrew Long reported on the President's decision to accept the SUNY School of Optometry at the Graduate Center in exchange for a speedy move into the Altmans building. A committee was formed (Alan Moore Art Hist., Chris McCarthy Math, G. Ganter Engl., Jenny Rich Engl., volunteers) to consider the proposed move to the Altmans building and the issues of space involved. Council also approved by acclaim the following resolution:

Whereas the decision to bring the SUNY School of Optometry to the Graduate Center was made without the consultation or approval of the Graduate Center community and

Whereas neither the student body at large nor its representatives on the Doctoral Students' Council have been consulted on the advisability of sharing the Graduate Center's limited space with the SUNY School of Optometry and

Whereas the DSC requested in September of 1994 that the President consult with students regarding the impending move of the Graduate Center out of its present location and we have not yet been consulted and

Whereas previous recommendations to house programs from other schools have been submitted for approval by the Graduate Council,

Be it hereby resolved that the Doctoral Students' Council protests the President's unilateral decision to house the SUNY School of Optometry at the Graduate Center.

This resolution will be presented to the Executive Committee of the Graduate Council for the purpose of placing the matter on the Graduate Council's agenda for May.

2. Wayne VanSertima reported that the College Work Study Task Force's recommendation to shift from hourly wages to salaries was intended to allow EOs to assign work at the rate of \$25/hr without having to mention figures which might be subject to Federal audit. He noted the lack of any mention of the \$25/hr motivation in the CWS Task Force's recommendation to Moreland. Robert Hollander reported on the compromise made between local and central Financial Aid offices. The compromise proposal allows salaries for positions which had been offered at \$25/hr prior to Moreland's recommendation to reduce them all to \$12/hr. Those which had been previously been offered at \$12/hr will remain at that rate. The compromise proposal returns the Graduate Center to the previous situation of a double pay scale. Council passed by acclamation the following motion:

Whereas the compromise proposal accepted by the Graduate Center regarding College Work Study does not fully reflect the recommendation of the Task Force and

Whereas the compromise proposal was negotiated between two offices hostile to the recommendation

Be it hereby resolved that the Doctoral Students' Council deplores the process and the outcome of the College Work Study negotiations between our office of Financial Aid and the Central Office of Financial Aid.

3. Council discussed the formation of the retrenchment committee and passed by acclamation the motion to recommend to the President and to the Committee that

a) no academic programs or faculty be moved, compromised, or touched in any way by retrenchment

b) retrenchment affect only administrators and their HEO assistants and buildings and grounds.

4. Andrew reported the news of the impending arrival of campus NYPD trained "peace officers" to replace our current security team. The Orwellianly named "SAFE" team (the same folks who arrested the 43 hunger strikers peacefully protesting the budget cuts at City College) will arrive in June. These are "peace officers" who carry pepper gas and are trained by the NYPD in "crowd control." From our perspective it is not only unnecessary but a waste of money in a time of financial crisis. Their presence will also be intimidating to students who might want to assemble peaceably and exercise their first amendment rights on campus. Most of all it is a gross injustice to our current team of guards who have served the GSUC admirably and well for years

and who will all eventually be replaced by these outsiders. The following resolution was passed 12 yea, 1 nea, 1 abstaining;

Whereas the University is being forced to accept a restructuring harmful to it and to its integrity and, under these justly provoking circumstances, faculty and students cannot be expected to accede without protest to the dismantling of the University by its enemies and

Whereas the introduction of a police-trained security team will have a chilling effect on the exercise of first amendment rights especially in light of the recent arrests and surveillances of faculty and students including the photographing of student and faculty activists and

Whereas the Graduate Center in particular has benefited by the service of its current security team and also benefited by having local control over hiring for that team and the local accountability of that team and greatly benefited by the amicable relations and open communications with that team and

Whereas social relations will be coarsened by interaction with officers carrying weapons over and above intelligence and the ability to communicate and reason

Be it hereby resolved that the Doctoral Students' Council protests the introduction of "peace officers" on our campus and

Be it further resolved that the Doctoral Students' Council recommends that the additional money that is to be spent on these "peace officers" for the purpose of protecting the administration at 80th Street, City Hall, and Albany from our resistance to their efforts to undermine our education be rather spent on extending hours of the current security team for the purpose of keeping the Graduate Center open longer hours, which will genuinely benefit the legitimate users of the Graduate Center.

5. Robert Hollander presented a request from the CUNY Coalition against the Budget Cuts for \$2,200.00 (\$1,000 for the stage and sound system for March 23rd at City Hall; \$1,000 for a Coalition Press; \$200 for bullhorns for Graduate Center use). Request approved unanimously.

6. Michael Goldfarb requested \$1,000.00 for the journal Conference. Request approved unanimously.

7. Elliot Weininger presented a request for \$1,000.00 for Found-Object. Request approved unanimously.

8. Robert Hollander presented the information requested by the February plenary regarding the projected cost of subsidizing testing through the Nurse Practitioner. The DSC will negotiate a 90% subsidy of tests with the provision that the NP may refuse to administer tests she may deem unnecessary. The DSC will allocate \$6,000.00 dollars for subsidized testing. The program will be subject to ongoing regular review. Subsidies will be effective immediately pending negotiations. Passed 9 yea, 1 nea, 1 abstaining.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

DOCTORAL STUDENTS COUNCIL REPORT

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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through May 23
SEMBLANCES (prints from the '70s to the present)
through May 9
AMERICAN SCULPTORS: THE 1960s (selected drawings from the collection)
through June 13

How come you didn't know about free access to MoMA? You didn't ask at the DSC office, that's how come. The DSC: information, services, advocacy.

The Real Issue
Continued from 3,
column 2

we would have to ask on what basis. One thing, I think, we have to be careful not to presuppose is that the very idea of "inclusivity" constitutes a legal right. If it were, privileges could be claimed for all kinds of insidious groups, whether racist, sexist, fascist, anarchist, supremacist — the list of dangers is too long to recount. Of course I

don't envy those who have to make the tough decisions about whom to "include" or "exclude" when it comes to privileges or programs, but the lines have to be drawn somewhere — hopefully with sensitivity and discretion.

I hope I speak for everyone when I say we are all deeply concerned about the lives of AIDS victims and we all want to see them get the kind of loving care they deserve. However, in matters of public policy, the hard cases, the exceptions, do not make the best precedents. With concern for our students, CUNY justly mandated coverage for pre-existing conditions; but it was the plight of one and only one graduate student's domestic partner which precipitated the re-negotiation of a much-fought-for GHI contract. [NB — *The push to consider domestic partnerships came from a concerted effort on the part of QUNY, the Graduate Center's queer student organization. It did not come from any specific case or personal interest.* —Ed.] It is unlikely that GHI will grant coverage for both pre-existing care and domestic partners — and certainly not at the current rates. We just can't afford to put the vast majority of students on edge about health care. Neither do I think this is the appropriate opportunity to make a political statement about our private lives.

This does not mean that someone's needs will be ignored. According to federal and state law, no one will suffer from AIDS without some kind of health care, even if Medicaid is obtained as a last resort. May I add to this depressing subject a positive suggestion? I would propose the creation of a new student fund for AIDS patients, based on voluntary contributions and advertised on our student bill in a manner resembling the way in which the IRS promotes the Presidential Election Campaign. A student committee, elected by the body, would be responsible for allocating the funds for critical primary care and/or boosting morale among those suffering.

The subject of domestic partnership also calls to mind the truism that for every gain there is a corresponding loss. With a rather dismal economic future on our horizon, and at a time when our tax base can barely sustain our welfare programs and retired citizens, taking incentives away from marriage is, I think, a dangerous move. The percentage of children born to uncommitted couples in social welfare recipients is already astonishing, and, with the inhumane reduction in social services, conditions will only get worse. Financial impoverishment will be the catalyst for increased abortions and familial abandonment. This will, in the long run, not only cost us more but it will cause a great tide of resentment against a government which did not make it any easier for committed couples to form stable family units and stay together.

There are other considerations. Although I don't have the stats on hand, I do know that domestic partners are in a substantially higher income bracket (unfortunately, graduate students excepted!). Then there are all those knotty problems which will inevitably arise from the large numbers of those who will jump on the bandwagon for "self-interest," falsely documenting themselves as domestic partners for the economic advantages (Isn't it hard enough to keep up with the fraudulently married?).

I find an interesting, topical parallel with the "common good" - "self-interest" conflict in the Republican Contract with (on?) America and the recent Personal Responsibility Act (HR 1214). So many people have been sold on a platform of tax cuts — a benefit which seems "inclusive" of practically everyone; right? But the fact is, after we count the great cost to our educational institutions and vital social programs, we find the greatest benefit given to a very small margin — a 50% cut in the capital gains tax rate and indexation of capital gains to inflation. This means an after-tax profit of as much as 180 - 200 billion for less than 1% of the population, two-thirds of which represent wage earners over \$200,000.

This brings me to the subject of representation. If we want to call ourselves democratic, we must (after we listen attentively to the concerns of special interest groups) consider the "general will" of our bodies politic and inquire how to incorporate that "will" into our honest assessment of what constitutes the "common good." I, for one, am not convinced that the representative bodies have digested the variety of opinions or the will of a large number of constituents, whether we're talking about CUNY students or the democratic party. Had we listened more attentively to the softer voices, I think we would have been able to avoid the reactionary impetus which put the power of reform into a few "self-interested" hands, hands which are clearly opposed to the "general welfare."

[This letter was submitted anonymously.—Ed.]

Naturalized Sex
Continued from 3,
column 3

duce evidence for the benefits of having a hetero couple for parents. To the contrary, just ask Freud and the patients of his many schools of followers. On the other hand, evidence that hetero couples are statistically more likely to be bad or abusive parents is easy to come by. A homo pair, after all, must endure a careful screening process or a custody procedure before becoming homo parents. Hetero parents are subjected either to little

screening, or, if they breed their own brood, none at all. So it is not surprising that the percentage of hetero abusers among hetero parents is higher than that of homo among homo. In any case, there are many ways to bring up children — extended families, grandparents, older siblings, kibutz-style, wolves — and who is to say which is best? I'd choose grandparents (wolves might have been fun too), and think mother/father-parents a disaster. But in the absence of reliable study, all such claims are mere nostalgia — hardly evidence for a claim to scientific knowledge.

It should also be pointed out that queer couples do not violate the natural moral law. According to that law, if I understand this strange concept at all, we must value some heterosexual conduct in the past (the future no longer requires this, since we can accomplish the task artificially) if we value our lives. (Note though that species extinction is also a natural process — unless Steve thinks that the dinosaurs died out because they were too *fem*.)

That our species interest requires heterosex in no way entails that homosex should be condemned. The 'natural' law requires only that not all sex be homosex. Besides, a determinist would claim that homosex in the past played as crucial a role for our presence.

Suppose we valued all sexual behavior. Heterosex would be included and the natural law fulfilled. So the natural law demands that we countenance sexual behavior, specifically heterosex, but it does not remotely suggest that other forms of sex are wrong. For the natural moral law, other forms of sex are simply superfluous fun. Something wrong with fun, Steve?

I think fun should be part of family life. Also information, tolerance, and fairness. I think it not very fair that only some children should be encouraged to have their fun and others, simply because they aren't necessary to the propagation of the race, denied fun. What kind of god would dispense fun on such practical

grounds, while denying to homosexuals the practical ability to propagate their own? Not a very clear-thinking god. Not a god who knew how to plan things out right or made the effort to plan carefully. Those who believe that the argument from design is a good one surely should advocate for gay rights. Or they should condemn homosexuals as outright

demons militating against and not belonging to god's plan. That's where Steve should take his stand. But Steven calls only for the condemnation of the acts, not the actors. He claims the Church requires compassion for homosexuals, so I assume he, and the Church, if he is right about Church doctrine, must abandon or deny the argument from design.

Two final points: queer activists do not, of course, agitate for universal homosexuality. Nor do they argue for the elimination of all heterosex or heterosexuals. They do advocate the elimination of intolerance towards fags. Hetero activists, on the other hand, demand the condemnation of all homos and/or all homosex. It's tolerance versus intolerance, not homosex versus heterosex. Since homosex does not encroach on heterosex, why persecute us?

Lastly, the 'natural' moral law seems to me to obscure what is really at stake in the natural. The folk biological argument from propagation of the race is a rational-empirical one based on observation of nature and the assumption that life is a good. What about the truly (and more purely) natural argument based on natural feelings and not on rationality? Why should it be that I, as a child, felt public hetero behavior (like kissing) to be unnatural and shocking? Note that our society fosters a sense of the naturalness of same-sex nudity — in the lockerroom, for example — and discourages public cross-sex nudity. The very natural and thoroughly irrational feeling of shame or modesty seems to me, at least, to encourage the notion that homosex is the more natural of the two types of sexual relation. Homosex does not require the overstepping of social and personal feelings of discomfort before the opposite sex. I think I'd feel embarrassed naked in a women's lockerroom, though I can't speak for all of what a straight male would feel. On the other hand, having sex with the naked men in the lockerroom seems to me most perfectly natural, as natural as their nakedness (if nakedness is natural). It's surprising to me that not every male feels that way. It makes me wonder what their problem is. (It's their heterosexuality, of course.)

That's not the only reason I think homosex more natural than heterosex. It seems to me that men know better how to please each other since they know best how to please themselves; and the same must be true of women. My experience with oral sex tells me that the opposite gender can only approximate through skill what for the like-gendered is direct intellectual intuition regarding method. Consider a fact that my straight-friends have informed me of in describing their self-stimulating experiments and preferences: the prostate gland, which controls male orgasm, is placed such that it can be directly stimulated only through anal penetration. There's a piece of anatomy that makes you wonder!

The argument from nature Steve presents accords with the biological story of how we got here. It doesn't accord with how we got to feel the way we do about each other and ourselves,

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Letters

Letters

Continued from 15,
column 3

including not only the feelings of homodesire that some of us have by nature but also the wide-spread (among heteros too) feelings of shame or modesty before the opposite sex.

And these are just as much a part of nature — so much a part that they form the moral of the bible's central genesis myth, a story which takes on the task of rationalizing sentiments the *natural* roots of which are too deep for explanation.

Before I buy the "unnaturalness of homosex" line, someone will have to explain to me why heterosex seems both perverted (to me) and a disturbing transgression of social norms, and why those feelings of shock I have don't count as natural while any heterosexual's feelings of shock do. The answer "You're perverted, that's why" can't be expected to hold any weight with me, since I think heteros are perverted (as well as being intolerant). Who's to judge? Not nature. Nature seems to me to be on my side, since biology — even on Steve's outdated-by-half-a-millennium teleological view of biology — doesn't forbid homosexuality while the feeling of shame does forbid free cross-gender contact. The answer I offer to the "naturalness" argument is that some unnatural acts of disgusting inter-gender perversion from the natural sentiments of delicacy and respect for gender difference seem to have allowed for the propagation of our species (for better or worse).

Learning is about transcending nature. Without the capacity to learn we'd all be brutes. Homos are initially shocked by heterosex as much and as naturally as heteros are shocked by homosex. Unlike some heteros, we homos *learn* to get over it. Both shock reactions should be accepted as natural. Social policy, however, should be based on neither. It should be based not on feelings, nor on faith, but on principles of *rational moral discourse*. But that's another story.

—Robert Hollander, Linguistics

Mary Clancy, Nurse Practitioner is available Monday 10-6, Wednesday 9-6 and Thursday 9-5. **Karen Faber, Medical Assistant/Immunization Coordinator**, is available Monday through Friday 9-5 on a schedule appointment and answer general questions. Appointments can be made in person or by telephone — walk-in appointments are available on a limited basis.

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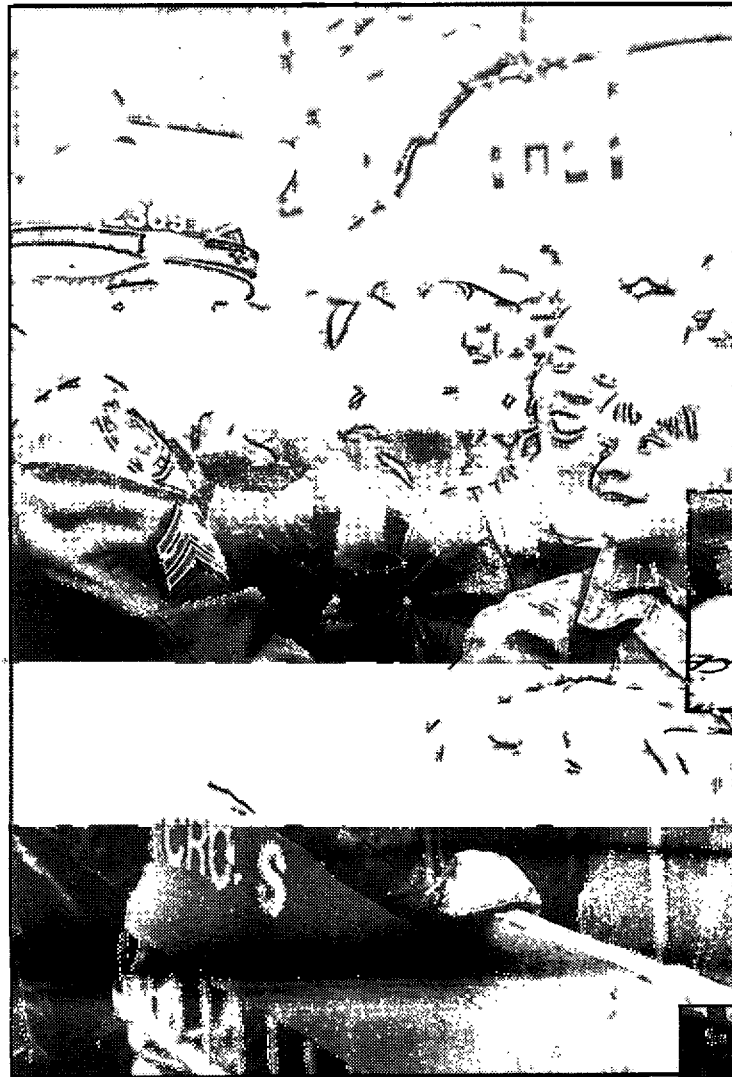
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