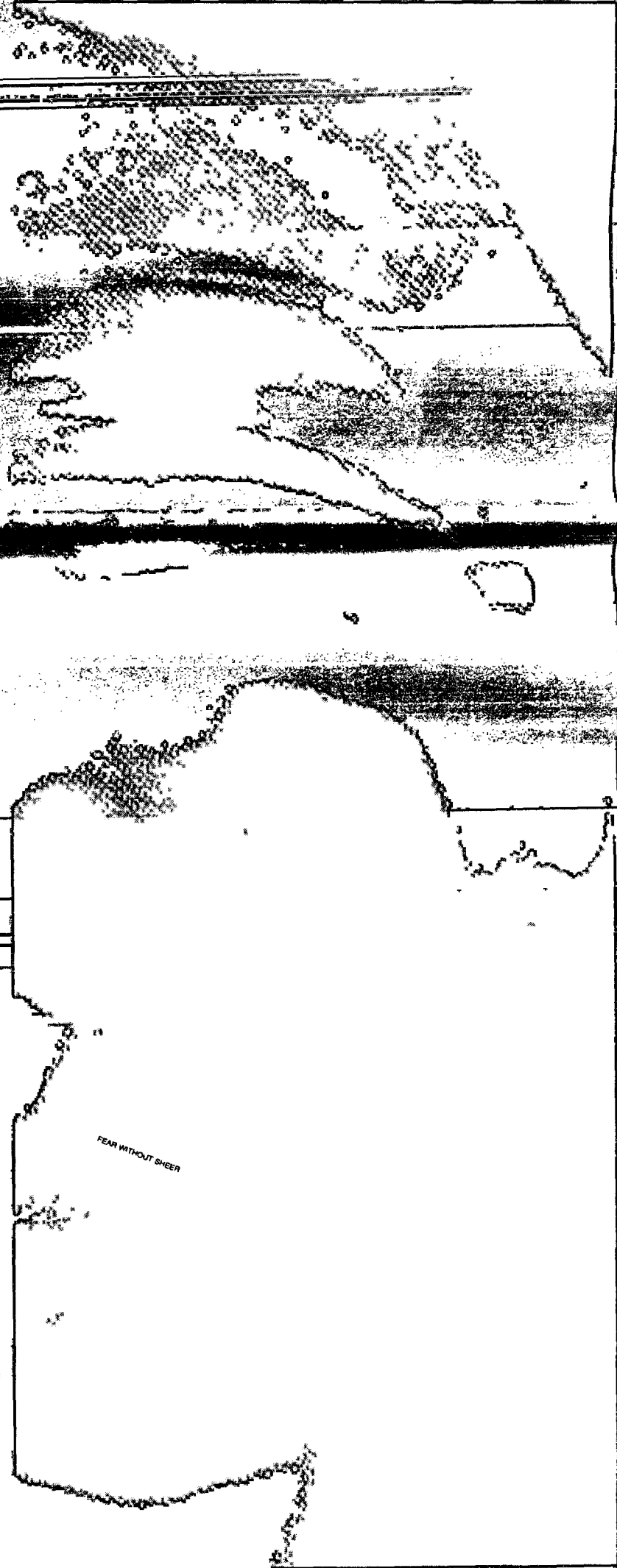


THE ADVOCATE

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK GRADUATE SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY CENTER

YOUR SAFETY IS MY COMMAND



With discontent at budget cuts intensifying, CUNY Central deploys its new \$22 million a year political police (page 3).

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New York, N.Y.
Permit No. 2057

CUNY COALITION: WHAT WENT AWRY (PAGE 12)

EDITORIALS

PUNITIVE DAMAGES

FROM ALBANY TO CUNY to the University of California, in recent months politicians and administrators have leveled a barrage of attacks on students and working people. On September 1, Pataki brought the death penalty back to New York State and CUNY has introduced "peace officers" onto the campuses this fall. Meanwhile, the University of California voted to dismantle its affirmative action policy.

These new policies all have the same message. They imply that the biggest concerns people face are crime on campus, violent offenders on the street and minorities taking jobs or getting university places they do not deserve. Yet this is only a finger-pointing tactic on the part of politicians and administrators, an attempt to convince people that the real problems people face are not really that important, problems such as retrenchment in universities, pervasive racism, and a shrinking job market.

Here at CUNY Grad, has the administration's smoke and mirrors game worked? Retrenchment has hit home at the Grad Center and a pallor seems to have settled over the school. Students returning this fall were handed bigger tuition bills and adjuncts received pink slips. Yet administrators' botched attempt to improve the NYPD's standing on campus this September was transparent to many students. For too many students, the hard-hitting realities of retrenchment are undeniable, despite all the talk about the need for peace officers and so on.

Yet the death penalty, cops on campus, and the attacks on affirmative action are more than just clever diversions to persuade people that the economic crisis isn't so bad. Just as retrenchment has reached its hands into the lives of CUNY students, these new policies have already had an impact on people. A Justice Department survey released August 10, for example, said that if current incarceration trends continue, by the year 2000, the majority of black men between the ages of 18 and 40 would be in jail. As opportunities and living conditions continue to decline, politicians will try very hard to remake students and workers into a lower-paid workforce with more police and punitive legal measures to deter people from challenging the situation. Yet as living conditions drop for most people, the richest people in society are greedier than ever, including CUNY's very own Trustee Rothbard, accused of taking bribes from NYNEX.

Students can't win the fight to save CUNY alone. The generalized nature of these cuts opens up the opportunity for students to join with people who hate the death penalty or who think affirmative action is a necessity to challenge the politicians launching all of the attacks. In the spirit of the CUNY Coalition of last spring, students should make connections with other groups to build a movement. It's the only way to turn back the tide against CUNY. —LEE WENGRAF

FAREWELL TO A RADICAL

THE RENOWNED CIVIL RIGHTS lawyer and public advocate William Kunstler died of heart failure on Labor Day, September 4, here in New York City, at the age of 76. In a time of austerity, 'Contracts on America', and right-wing backlash, it is important to take the time to reflect on the lives and contributions of those like Mr. Kunstler who embodied an ethic of public service, radical legal populism, and solidarity with the poor and marginalized in American society.

Mr. Kunstler had a long, and sometimes controversial,

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The Graduate Student Advocate
The Graduate School and University Center
of the City University of New York
33 West 42nd, St.
New York, N.Y. 10036
tel. 212-642-2852

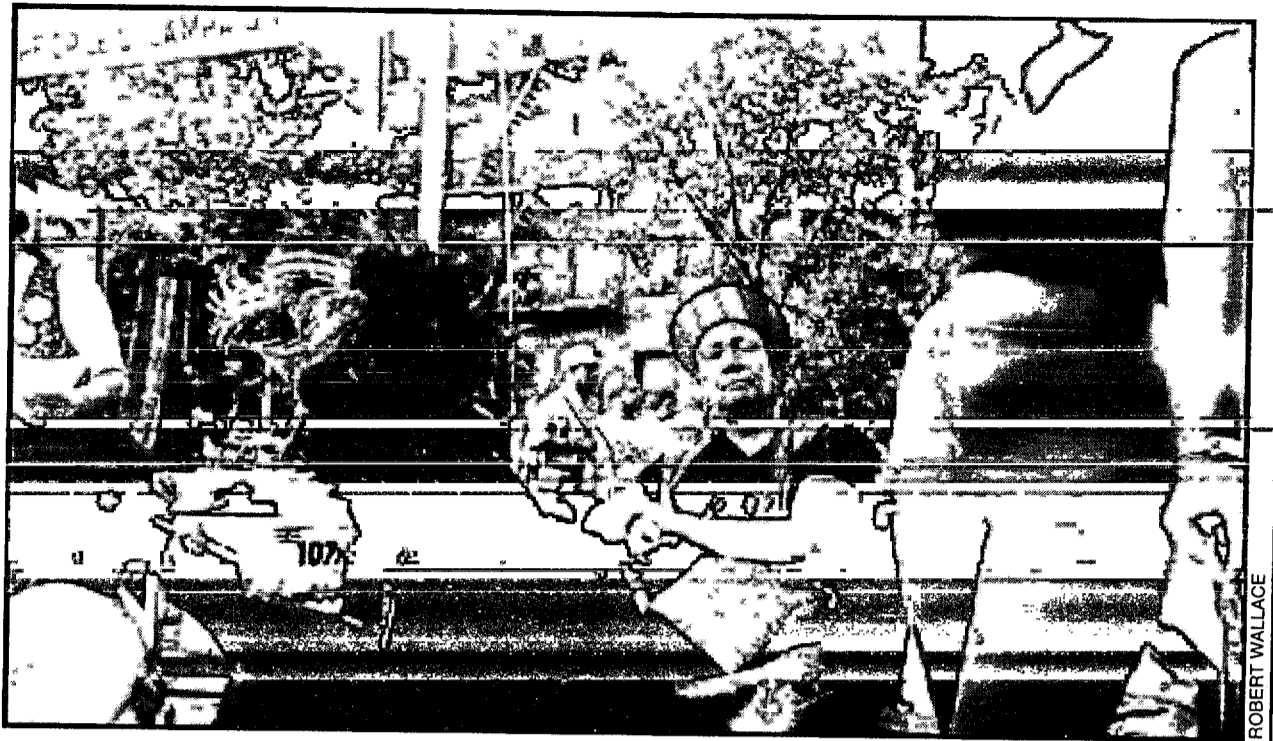
The Graduate Student *Advocate* is published monthly at least 7 times annually and is subsidized by The Doctoral Students' Council.

Joan Parkin, Lee Wengraf, Editors
Terrence R. Blackman, Assistant Editor
Robert Wallace, Assistant Editor for Production
Andrea Zimmerman, Assistant Editor

Thanks also to the workers at the printers.

Letters to the Editor: *The Advocate* will publish all letters, but they must be 500 words or less and they must be signed. We will withhold a writer's name upon request, but, again, they must be signed.

The opinions expressed in *The Graduate Student Advocate* are those of the individual writers and in no way reflect the opinions of The Doctoral Students' Council or its officers. □



ROBERT WALLACE

legal career which spanned four decades of advocacy for civil and educational rights, the famous Chicago Seven trial in 1969, and more recent high-profile cases like assisting in the defense of the suspects in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. His clients also included Martin Luther King, Jr., Jack Ruby, Daniel Berrigan, and John Gotti. Mr. Kunstler had said that the case which gave him the most satisfaction was the 1967 *Hobson v. Hansen* decision to desegregate Washington D.C.'s public schools, because he hoped this decision would spur desegregation in other school systems.

William Kunstler's life and work expressed a commitment to social justice, yet also a set of political tensions in 20th-century America. He embodied the belief, associated with groups like the NAACP, the ACLU, and the Center for Constitutional Rights—with which he had a long and productive association—that the legal system can be used in the long struggle for greater equality and social justice. Yet in America, there are significant limits to legalism as a strategy for positive social change. *Brown vs. Board of Education* and *Hobson vs. Hansen* did not bring desegregation, and like the Rodney King verdict in Los Angeles point up serious defects of the legal system.

I believe Mr. Kunstler recognized this contradiction between legalism and other strategies for social justice. He supported the role of grassroots activism and social movements in achieving social change, yet maintained that legalism and legal representation were indispensable to those efforts.



Almost invariably, social activism incurs legal, as well as other forms of, sanction or repression, and, therefore, bold legal defense must 'use the system to change the system.' In fact, Mr. Kunstler had said that his mission was "to keep the state from becoming all-dominating."

I heard William Kunstler speak publically a few years ago and was impressed by his presence, his passion for his commitments and his life-long dedication to a vision of a more just society. He has sometimes been accused of chasing the media limelight, of taking high-profile clients for the sake of visibility. Maybe, but there is another compelling interpretation. This charge evokes the memory of another media icon of the 1960s, one of the co-defendants represented by Mr. Kunstler in the Chicago Seven trial, the late Abbie Hoffman. The activists of the New Left, of which Hoffman and the Yippies were perhaps the most skilled and outrageous practitioners, used the media to raise consciousness and challenge 'the establishment.'

Mr. Kunstler was perhaps a more restrained proponent of this same strategy. Through his practice of law, and many high-profile cases, he sought not only to defend particular people on important issues, but also to educate, and to challenge us to think about the underlying issues of social and political justice.

Those of us coming to political activism in more recent years, and still maintaining a commitment to some vision of social justice in the dire climate of the mid-1990s, should pause to reflect about, and honor, the lives of our comrades like William Kunstler. —KEN CUNNINGHAM

MISTAKES WERE MADE

- Though his photos are divine, Wayne's last name is Geist, not Creist as mistakenly credited in the September issue. *The Advocate* repents.
- The Nurse Practitioner is sponsored by the DSC in conjunction with the Graduate Center.

LETTERS

FRIENDLY AMMENDMENTS

I FULLY AGREE with the general conclusion of Robert Hollander's reply (*May Advocate*) to Steve O'Brien's letter (*March Advocate*) concerning domestic partnership. Indeed, I believe that gay and lesbian domestic partners should be not merely tolerated but encouraged, despite the charge of "assimilationism" that sometimes accompanies this idea. The sanctioning of gay marriage by the state and the publication of such engagements and weddings by newspapers would be the right step toward not merely familial stability but the numerous economic benefits presently reaped only by heterosexual unions. However, Mr. Hollander makes some other statements that I find questionable.

First, Mr. Hollander says "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 all." However, teaching tolerance of differences is Mr. Hollander's very enforcement of one rule for all—a rule with which I strongly agree. Indeed, he later mentions three other rules for all those in families to be taught: fun, information, and fairness (although he doesn't use the word *rule*). Moreover, I suspect Mr. Hollander would agree with the enforcement for all of even more rules, such as the rule against incest.

Second, Mr. Hollander labels those who condemn homosexuality as "hetero activists." However, putting a negative spin on the word *hetero* doesn't contribute to the discourse. Those who condemn homosexual activity are ignorant and often dangerous, homophobic bigots who sometimes are gay themselves. These self-hating gays exist, for example, in religious institutions.

Third, Mr. Hollander suggests that feelings of shame and modesty among heterosexuals "encourage the notion that homosex is the more natural of the two types of sexual relation." However, he seems to forget here his rule of tolerance (among others) to be taught by all parents. Ironically, he engages in the same strategy as Mr. O'Brien: creating a hierarchy of elements when those elements are merely different. He curiously creates a similar hierarchy when he declares the mother / father nuclear family "a disaster" in comparison to other types of families.

Mr. Hollander wrote a superb letter a few months ago to *The New York Times* concerning the CUNY budget cuts. I look forward to reading more of his insights on issues in the manner in which he advocates at the end of his letter: rational moral discourse.

Robert J. Wilson
English
Suffern, NY

BULLETIN BOARD

THIS SPACE will be available to students and student groups for announcements: meetings, forums, bike to sell, apartment to rent, etc. Send it on in. Please be brief.

- Black Student Alliance (BSA) Elections. The following students have been elected as co-chairs: Terrence Blackman, Charles Price-Reavis, and Belkis Necos.
- A global studies collective is being organized. There are no disciplinary or ideological requirements—only sharp minds. Contact Charles Price-Reavis: 212-382-1492.
- International Socialist Organization (ISO) presents a forum on "Austerity at CUNY." Nov. 8 at 6:30 pm, rm. 800. There will be a discussion afterwards on organizing against retrenchment and tuition increases. 212-642-2842.