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JANUARY 1996 VOL. 7 NO.6

ADVOCATE

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK GRADUATE SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY CENTER

THIS PAST CHRISTMAS THE GOVERNOR DELIVERED A 1996-7 BUDGET THAT PROPOSES *$93,300,000* IN NEW CUTS TO CUNY. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO STOP IT ? (PAGE 3)

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EDITORIALS

LA MEME CHOSE

MAUREEN OWENS

IT'S HARD NOT TO BE impressed by the news from France these days. Students, teachers and workers have virtually shut down Paris and other major cities in a general strike that has daily brought millions of protesters into the streets. Demonstrators and striking workers are demanding that the French government save the country's social programs from the European Community's axe of austerity. It looks like the axe might just fall on government leaders instead.

It's also tempting to say that such exciting events don't happen on this side of the Atlantic. Yet the dissidence fowarded by the French people is not so very different from the anger many people feel today at any number policies–at the dismantling of the New Deal programs, the attacks on immigrants and on abortion rights, like the U.S. Senate's December 7 vote to outlaw so-called "partial-birth abortions"

And there may not be millions of New Yorkers marching on City Hall at the moment, but rumblings in New York and around the country bear at least a vague resemblance to scenes from Paris. At the end of November Giuliani was able to convince AFSCME DC 37 President Stanley Hill to sign on to a sell-out contract covering over 200 000 city workers Volcanic protest erupted at the delegates meeting when Hill tried to pass off the deal as some kind of victory. About this time, members of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) voted down their contract. If hospital workers and teachers; faced with lay-offs, increased workloads and privatization, are declaring enough is enough, things in New York are looking up.

Here at CUNY, there have been glimmers of this kind of resistance. CUNY professors launched the New Caucus at their founding convention December 2, unanimously voting in a platform committed to an activist union that organizes adjuncts and fights for affirmative action. CCNY students won a campaign for more library hours and BMCC faculty are organizing against threatened departmental closures (see Andrea Zimmerman's Clipboard item on page 10). Meanwhile, GSUC student Ron Hayduk, coordinator of the city's Voter Assistance Commission, showed admirable backbone in taking a principled stand against the Giuliani administration–and getting fired for it (see page 4).

These are all signs that people are organizing now...and just in time too because Pataki's mid-year budget cuts have arrived. And if we remember what CUNY looked like last spring, perhaps France doesn't seem so very different from us after all.–**LEE WENGRAF**

AN APPEAL TO THE GSUC COMMUNITY

TRAGEDY HAS BEFALLEN a member of our GSUC community. The wife of Mr. Jimmy Lu, a member of the doctoral program in Biology, was murdered on November 30. Mrs. Lu's body still lies in the hospital mortuary due to Mr. Lu's lack of financial resources. Mr. Lu is appealing to all members of the GSUC community for their assistance in order that his wife might be afforded a proper burial.

Students and members of faculty interested in supporting this endeavor are asked to send their donations to the Doctoral Students Council or to contact Mr. Lu at (212)772-5226. *The Advocate* strongly urges that all students reach out to Mr. Lu in his time of need.–**TERRENCE BLACKMAN**

MISTAKES WERE MADE

- Title 1 clearance for Lincoln Center occurred in 1955, not 1945.
- More *Advocate* surveys gave us middling to good marks. One person wants color on the cover. Sure, just give us the money. This same person wrote in: "So depressing. It's a downer read I'd like some room made for the joy of what we are doing–if there's any to be found... Advocate is like the Village Voice on Darvon." The Unaeditor? Sodomizing Hegel? By Eye of Newt and Hairpiece of Rudy? This isn't funny? What, does someone have to tickle your genitals with a feather?

ADVOCATE

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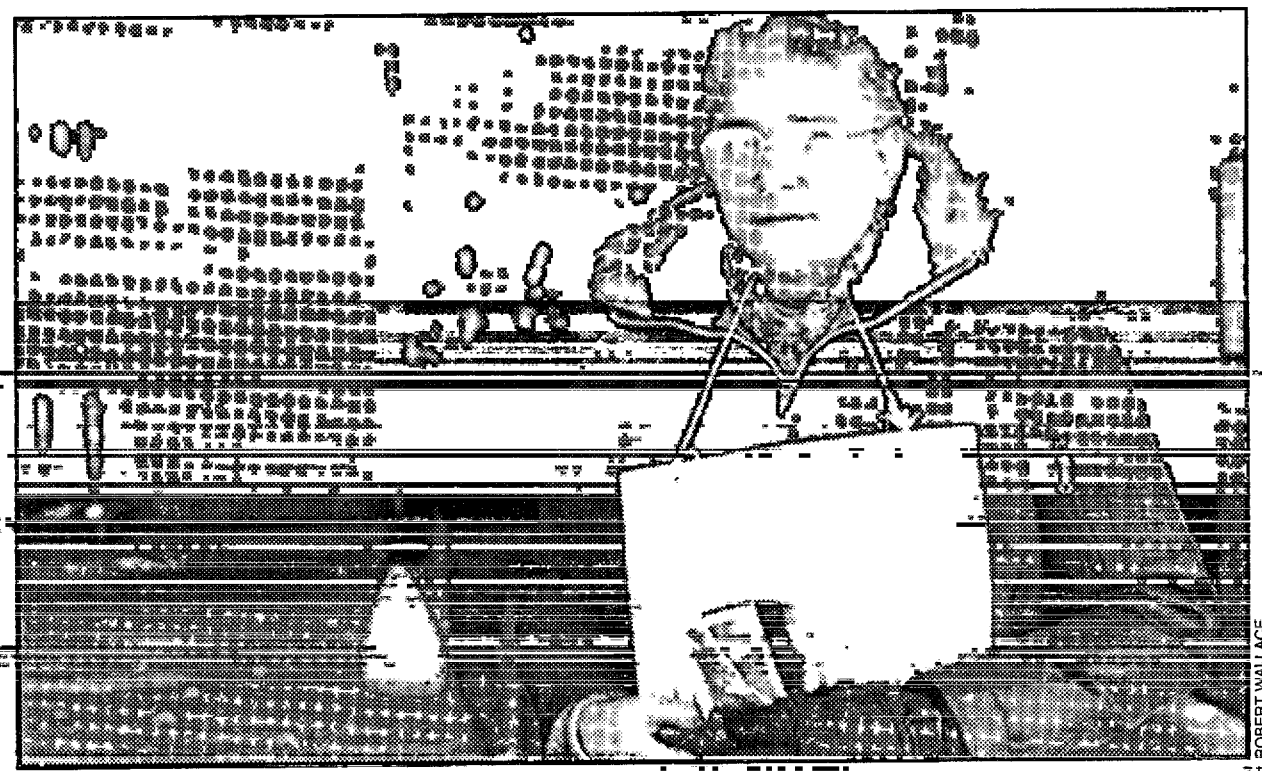

ROBERT WALLACE

As of Thursday, January 3, approximately 35,000 members of Local 32B-32J of Service Employees International Union struck their jobs at about 1000 office buildings around New York City including the World Trade Center, the Empire State Building, and the Graduate Center.

These maintenance, cleaning, porter and concierage workers walked out in response to demands by the Realty Advisory Board on Labor Relations, an overarching management corporation. The Board wants employees to pay more into their health care plan and new workers to take nearly a 50% pay cut. Currently, workers earn $573 a week. The new starting salary would be $300 a week. Workers already employed fear that the reduced wages for new workers would create a two-tier wage system that could threaten their job security. Higher-paid workers may be fired on any pretext and replaced by lower paid workers. It would be a repudiation of decades of hard fought union victories. The Board spokesman declared to The New York Times, "The industry is looking for some economic relief."

One woman on the picket line who works at the Grad Center and has been a member of the union for 30 years doesn't see this contract as "economic relief". She stated, "We're saying we're hard working, but how are we supposed to survive? Who's going to pay my doctor bills now? They're trying to divide us." There are about 20 members of Local 32B-32J at the Grad Center.

There are numerous picket lines scattered throughout New York City, particularly in midtown, and on 42nd and 43rd Streets near the Grad Center. At 20 W. 43rd, approximately 20 workers maintained a picket line. With the strike only a day old, things turned ugly there. A scuffle broke out between a scab, office security guards and the strikers. According to Izet Radoncic, a picketliner, a scab, brandishing a stick, attempted to provoke the strikers into a throwdown. He then pushed an elderly employee to the ground and started beating other workers. Building security guards entered the fray. The scab dropped his stick and ran away. When police arrived, they arrested two strikers who, according to the workers, were not involved in the scuffle. Strikers estimated 10-15 scabs currently are working in 20 West.

Many strikers were outraged at the police's action as well as the proposed givebacks. "With all these cuts nobody can survive," said Radoncic, "They're only trying to take away."

Maria Silva, member of the cleaning staff for eighteen years, stated, "We're fighting because we don't want our children to starve. We're trying to protect our jobs."

Yet despite the acrimony, workers remain upbeat about their strike's chances. Leo Pieter (above), a 13-year maintenance worker just recently fired from the Grad Center, stated, "We've had a pretty good response. We're optimistic." Several workers seemed pleased that other unions like the Teamsters at UPS and Federal Express workers are honoring the strike.

Strikers want to build upon this unity by connecting their strike with other struggles. Stated Pieter, "The country and the city are in crisis, but they don't need to take our wages. The struggle involves everybody."Asked about possible student protests against budget cuts, Pieter declared, "When students go out, we'll be there."–ROBERT WALLACE & LEE WENGRAF

STRIKE!

The Advocate is supporting Local 32B-32J's strike. We are respecting the picketline by refusing deliveries. This issue was mailed from a staff member's home. We encourage the GSUC community to bolster the strike by refusing any and all deliveries and by not carrying out the work normally done by the strikers. The only power the strikers have is stopping business as usual at the Grad Center. Scab labor *in any form* breaks the back of the strike.

The Advocate is producing a special 4-page edition on the strike. It will *not* be mailed out. It will be available beginning February 6 at the Grad Center and on the picketline.■

LETTERS

AD HOMINEM HOOEY

I AM PLEASED that Jacques Saleh ("No Such Thing as a Free Lunch", *Advocate* Letters, November) is open about his disagreements with *The Advocate*, and I hope that others have the "courage of their convictions" to write signed letters to the editor.

Unfortunately, Mr. Saleh's letter is on the one hand insubstantial in its criticism, and, on the other hand, highly rhetorical, or, in his words, polemical. With regard to the latter criticism, I can only point out that leftist political analysis is often given an anti-intellectual dismissal as "polemical", without a rigorous response to the issues and arguments in question. Social movements such as the civil rights movement of the 50s and 60s, and poor people nowadays are often referred to as "whiners," "complainers", or "moaners", and, to quote NYS Senator Joseph Bruno, "those people with their hands out." This kind of rhetoric is not only racist, mean spirited, and ad hominem but also demonstrates a refusal to argue one's underlying politics. After all, capitalism and its attendant social policies are not a matter of "lazy people", the "deserving poor" (a more famous formula), and "whiners", and you don't have to be an economist to know that.

As for the criticism of the paper's content, I still don't know which articles he has in mind other than the editorial, and isn't that supposed to be opinionated? Maybe, he simply doesn't like my opinions, but, again, he should offer a substantial critique. As for the articles, I firmly believe that they are not only factual and informative, but located in a national and even international analysis of late capitalism.

Andrew Long
Former Editor of *The Advocate*
Comparative Literature

NOMADIC ECONOMY

THE BIG BUSINESS bugaboo you're trying to slay, guys, is on its way to extinction, if not already extinct. So it'll be more useful to pick a fight with a less moribund beast than waste your energy charging against quixotic mills.

The days are gone when General Motors sneezed and the economy caught a cold. The economy is too diversified and de-centralized for one company or a group of big companies to call the shots.

It is mainly tiny companies and entrepreneurs who are creating most jobs nowadays, thanks to affordable technological power which allows them to be self-reliantly productive and innovative in various domains: graphic design, desktop publishing, computer, legal, financial, marketing consulting, freelance writing, translating, editing, so on. Ours has become the age of market niches and nimble nomads, not prehistoric, arthritic brontosaurs.

BULLETIN BOARD

THIS SPACE will be available for 1) classifieds ($1 per word), and 2) *free* announcements from students and student groups about meetings, forums, bike to sell, apartment to rent, etc. Send in your announcement as soon as possible.

Wanted!!!
Individuals, Student Organizations and Small Groups to Promote SPRING BREAK '96. Earn MONEY and FREE TRIPS. CALL THE NATION'S LEADER, INTER-CAMPUS PROGRAMS
http://www.icpt.com 1-800-327-6013

- The Campaign to End the Death Penalty is building a nationwide fight to overturn new laws putting the Death Penalty back on the books in many states. Pick up petitions and flyers in the International Socialists Organization office in the Student Center at the Grad Center.
- The National Association of Graduate and Professional Students has received an inquiry from a major newspaper doing a story on financing graduate school. Anyone interested in describing their own situation, please write 3 or 4 sentences along with contact information (name, school, phone number–required–and email address) to NAGPS@NETCOM.COM. NAGPS will foward the information to the reporter.
- *Advocate* Feed Media columnist Robert Wallace is launching *Leftward Ho!*, a tiny anti-corporate spewzine. Anyone interested in receiving a free copy write *The Advocate*.

What is the upshot of all that? Freedom, flexibility, nomadic work habits if one is so inclined. you're not tied down by geography, to one company that'll boss you around, you telecommute, you take some time off whenever you like, perhaps to immerse yourself in Proust (if that's your cup of tea-soaked madeleines), or re-live your rebellious youth with Rimbaud or start on your great un-American novel or essay, whatever.

And lest you think that this so-called knowledge economy (where one must constantly update one's skills) is not at the reach of the poor, I can tell you a personal story if you will: throughout my academic years, till I got my master's, I provided my own financing by holding 9 to 5 lowly desk jobs to pay for evening school; besides, I had to struggle with a language that was at first foreign to me. Certainly the odds were not in my favor, and such efforts did indeed take their toll in psychological fatigue if not breakdowns, but I reached my educational goal. If a one-time pauper like myself could pay his way through school, why can't or shouldn't others?

As for the "flat wages" you speak of Lee, these hide the fact that for some, those in the knowledge economy, wages, adjusted for inflation, have zoomed, while for those who are too laid-back to bother with learning new competitive skills, wages indeed have shrunk.

Finally, on the subject of eating, which Rob Wallace seems to have some beef against, I can say the following. As far as tax deductions are concerned, it is not only the fatcats who can deduct their meal expenses. Any qualifying self-employed person can. While there may be abuses in such a gastronomically inclined tax system which believes, as I do, that deals are best made over meals, and bonding happens best on a full or filling stomach while sipping a good glass of wine (it's a backslapping hedonistic world out there, Rob), I do also believe the following: if such practices help the economy grow and create jobs, then I can only say, "Bon Appetit".

Jacques Saleh
Philosophy

ROB WALLACE RESPONDS: *Conservatives are so stupid. Each month we lead this one out on his doggy chain to show grad students the spectacle of a grotesque–a CUNY student begging for more budget cuts.*

This month, knuckles dragging, Saleh grunts that the economy is a pastiche of autonomous small entrepreneurs. Not true. These "entrepreneurs" are for the greater part service firms for or subsidiaries of an increasingly smaller number of multinationals. Sire Records? Owned by Time-Warner. That "microbrewery" making Red Dog beer? Miller Brewing Company. Moonlight Tobacco Co.? Really R.J. Reynolds. It's the mirage of competition and the proletaritizing of white collars.

The merger mania of the 1980s has returned with a vengeance Much attention has been focused on the communications industries, but the frenzy grips all tentacles of the corporacy. Just in the bank world, Chemical and Chase's $11 billion combination is expected to gut 12,000 jobs, a third of those in New York City. Fleet Bank, which holds the AMS tuition differal account CUNY students are cushioning, just acquired National Westminster and will cut 1,800 jobs in New York City alone. American-based corporations are doing all this, not to just stay in the black, but to drive down "labor costs" and maintain profit margins at an obscene 20%. (In Europe the margin is 10%, in Japan 3%.) Thousands of jobs with tolerable wages are also destroyed by accelerating automation and by enacting "productivity gains," effectively destroying the 8-hour day. The salad bowl-bellied executives are drunk on pureeing the social fabric to sate their greed. For Saleh, literally fattening a small number of executives is more important than the very existence of millions of Proustless plebians.

Unlike present-day corporations, wandering among maquiladora zones, workers aren't nomadic. They're weighted down by those 2nd Wave artifacts called family, friends, and community. It was this arrangement, with its attendant depressed wages, that incited supposed capitalist demi-god Adam Smith to rail against the rich and their "vile maxim of the masters of mankind": "All for ourselves, and nothing for other people." To Smith it's "codified international piracy". Similarly, capitalism's poisonous side-effects are, unlike in most mainstream media, openly discussed in the business press: the Times' *business section,* The Wall Street Journal, Fortune, Business Week...

In his best Madison Avenue hack prose, Saleh views the world through what he thinks *are the eyes of the business class he so desperately wishes to join, but apparently can't. (Corporate America, hire this not-so-self-employed brownnoser already. Without healthcare or benefits, of course.) If I was as utilitarian as Saleh pretends to be, I could, as a Biology student, demand that he consign himself to the ashheap of the economy. You have no competitive skills, therefore you are not, Philosophy Boy.*

For more on the surreal homilies of "free market" fundamentalism, enter "The Twilight Zone" on page 8.

IN SEARCH OF WRITERS

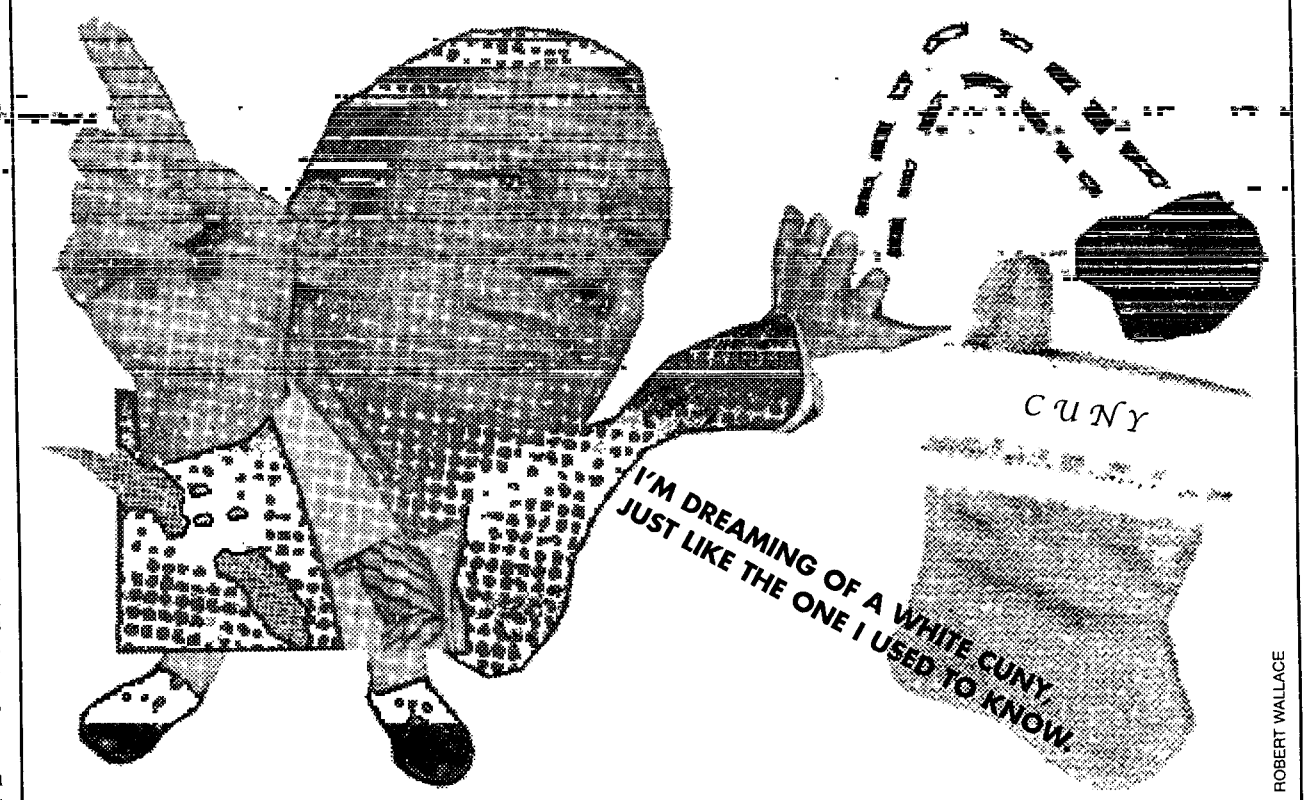
The Advocate *needs writers to cover stories of concern to graduate students. Are you interested in working too hard for a lousy 50 bucks? Do you have a burning desire to investigate, scoop out, and expose? Are you overwhelmed with creative urges that can't find an outlet?*

The Advocate *is interested in pursuing stories on the impact of budget cuts , city politics and corporate welfare, workfare for CUNY students, hot debates, Grad School departmental news, and book reviews.*

Interested? Any suggestions? Call us: 212-642-2852.

Pataki's lump of coal

Governor Grinch's budget steals CUNY student dreams of diplomas



ROBERT WALLACE

BY LEE WENGRAF

GOVERNOR PATAKI released his executive budget on December 15. Pataki states that tuition will not increase by more than $250 and has promised a $10 million block grant to both CUNY and SUNY. Despite these claims, state aid has been drastically reduced for the senior colleges as well as the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), and new requirements for financial aid and scholarships will create major obstacles for students. Cuts to the University are joined by a $3 billion cut in Medicaid, a $242 million cut in welfare and projected firing of 7,400 state workers.

In total, the budget for CUNY from the federal and state governments will increase by 0.4%, the smallest increase since 1982. Expenditures for the colleges will be cut by $57.6 million (6.1% compared to last year's budget); state aid for the community colleges is tied to enrollment and it is unclear what it will be. The University administration estimates a $96.3 million total shortfall.

The biggest hit from Pataki's budget is the cut in TAP reductions that total $120 million, according to the CUNY administration. Students are expected to make up the difference by paying more of their federal grant money towards tuition. Currently 90% of students' tuition is covered by TAP, and students can use federal money like Pell grants to cover living expenses and books. With the new proposal, about half of the federal aid would now go to tuition. The state administrator who runs the TAP program, Robert Maurer, admitted in The *New York Times* that "students end up short," yet he tried to downplay the severity of the situation by reminding students that there are always loans, but these have to be paid back with interest.

In addition to the TAP cuts, Pataki is attaching several new restrictions. He plans to require students to maintain a C average or better after their fifth semester to receive the award or else they will be dumped from the program. He also has proposed that students have their income from public assistance counted as income when determining TAP aid. These students will almost certainly see their TAP cut. TAP awards will also be recalculated so that grants are made on students' gross income, not their net income as is currently the case.

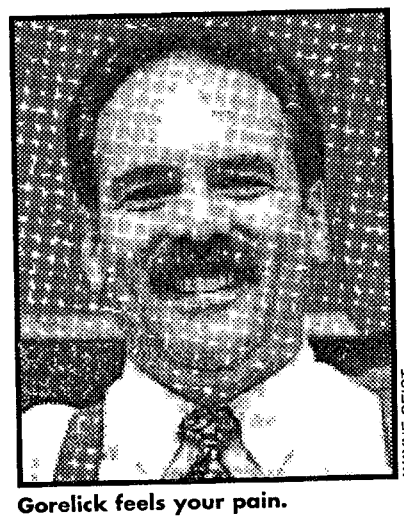
GSUC Administrators are not offering any predictions for how these cuts are going to impact the Graduate Center. Steve Gorelick, assistant to Grad Center President Frances Horowitz, offered a general statement to *The Advocate* : "At first glance, in addition to the lump sum cut to the University, our greatest concern is the impact on poor and working under-grad students... We are concerned that a possible $250 tuition increase coming after last year's increase would present serious problems for our neediest grad students....We would like to find a common ground with all groups that want to seek restorations."

He was less able to comment on the specific nature of the cuts at the GSUC because, he said, Horowitz was compelled to hold off proposing changes until she had a better sense of how the lump sum to CUNY will be apportioned around the campuses by the Chancellor. Her hesitation contradicts to some extent her response last year, when she moved to form retrenchment committees and offer up budget sacrifices to the Chancellor before the state had even passed their budget in May. Contingency plans at the Grad Center could very well be on their way.

The situation is grim for CUNY at the moment. Bill Negron, the president of University Student Senate, was quoted in the *Times* expressing his concern about the ability of CUNY students to handle this latest round of the budget axe. He can't "believe students in the City University can manage these cuts."

LEARNING LAST YEAR'S LESSONS

As the first semester of post-exigency at CUNY winds down, a picture of austerity on the campuses is beginning to emerge. Faced with the increasingly difficult proposition of juggling many demands, students are pushing their abilities to the limit. Given last year's tuition hike and the impending cuts, many students are taking advantage of their option to take as many courses as possible under the same tuition rate to try and finish up as quickly as possible. Piling up the courses takes its toll in other areas. Students can't usually cut back on their jobs, and so they are forced to work much harder and for longer hours. Professor Bill Crain, chair of the Department of Psychology at City College, told The Advocate that at least one third of his students were taking on more than they could handle and were less able to study and concentrate. He denounced the new round of cuts, saying that it creates an impossible burden for students. "It will rob students of their right to an education," he said, "It's just disgraceful."



WAYNE GEIST

Gorelick feels your pain.

Many students learned last spring that to win they must fight back against the austerity handed down by politicians and the administration. Some students and faculty, getting a head start on the budget battle, have taken up campaigns on their campuses to win back some of the services whittled away by retrenchment. City College students fought for several months to have their library hours restored from a dismal 8 hours a day. Several rallies called by a coalition of studen groups drew about 30-50 people and was successful in adding 3 hours a day to the library hours. Keeanga Taylor, one of the an activists involved and a junior at CCNY, said, "Everyone has their eye on this spring and saw this issue with the library as a step towards getting students more involved, just knowing that something larger is going to happen in the spring."

Some of the City students are members of Students Taking Action for Nondiscriminatory Education (STANDE), a University-wide group that has emerged from the ashes of the CUNY Coalition Against the Cuts. STANDE and the Concerned Faculty at CCNY planned a Christmas Eve vigil at Rockefeller Center to send a message that, as Crain puts it, amidst the Christmas shoppers there needs to be a "reminder of the suffering the state is imposing on the people not well-off, the poor, the working-class."

Robert Hollander, a Graduate Center student and member of the Doctoral Students' Council, participated in the last action called by STANDE; guerrilla theatre at Rockefeller Center. He's also heading up a new project called "CUNY Media Watch" which will target the *Daily News* and the *New York Times*, with students writing op-ed pieces to improve CUNY's image. He also plans to set up a "CUNY Media Source," saying "we want to compete with the Board of Trustees about information on CUNY as theirs is politically-motivated, because it is their intention to do harm to students, to get rid of students and save money." Students have also been gearing up for protests next semester and an adjunct organizing drive.

Students have had some success on the legal front as well. Ron Maguire, a lawyer and former CCNY student, won a lawsuit on behalf of five community college students. The suit claimed last year's $400 tuition hike was illegal. Mayor Giuliani 's administration tried to siphon off $5.1 million in interest from the Construction Fund where, strangely, all CUNY funding is pooled, including millions in student tuition. By diverting the

funding, with CUNY Central's cooperation, the Giuliani administration hoped to reduce the city's fiscal obligations to CUNY. State law dictates that tuition must make up no more than one third of the community colleges' budget. The rest of the funding must be equally provided for by the State and the City. Diverting the money meant the city's obligation was unmet.

On December 19 Justice Carol Arber of the State Supreme Court ruled that the City had to pay up the $1.5 million still owed CUNY. The tuition hike would be forestalled until the City paid up the funding.

A WORD FROM OUR CHANCELLOR

In the words of Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds, "the budget necessitates a continuation of financial austerity measures while recognizing the success of University planning efforts and advancing certain University priorities of vital importance to our students and faculty." The Chancellor has little intention of challenging the role CUNY plays for the Governor as a budget-balancer. The "University planning efforts" and "priorities" in reality entail the University's ability to retrench departments and force through budget-cutting priorities.

And what kind of solution is she offering? Cooperation and reconciliation with Albany are the main themes, despite the havoc politicians have wreaked on CUNY; "we will work with the Governor and the State Legislature," she says, hoping her Democratic allies will come through. Yet Democrats hardly have been the answer for CUNY students, today or in the past. Cuomo's 1991 budget proposed a $51.5 million cut to CUNY. His 1993 budget called for $50.4 million in cuts. Assemblyman Sheldon Silver, a supposed CUNY supporter in Albany, has expressed his support for welfare cuts, hardly an advantage for the 2,000 students at CUNY on public assistance. Despite what administrators, including those here at the Grad Center, say, the only successful strategy for stopping the cuts is building on last year's lessons: fighting back. ◻

ANNALS OF ADMINISTRATION

THE GLACIER MOVES

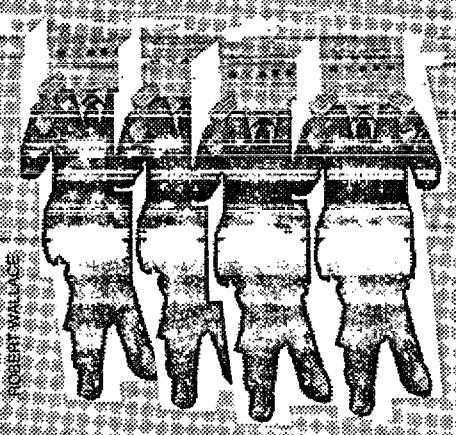
LAST YEAR THE GRADUATE COUNCIL, CUNY Central approved, revised sets of bylaws for the Graduate Center and the Graduate Council. The revised documents contained some changes, and among them some improvements. One change that caught my attention as a student advocate was the alteration in academic appeals–what happens to students when they appeal grades, exam failures, and forced withdrawals.

Previous to the new bylaws, if the executive committee of your program upheld the bad grade, failure, or withdrawal, you went to the Provost's office. There, the Associate Provost would draw together a hearing committee of two faculty members from your program and one executive officer from some program other than yours. To some this seemed like the obverse of double jeopardy–similar, in a smaller way, to Mumia abu Jamal appealing the irregularities of his trial to the same judge who presided over his conviction. With such incestuous procedures, it is no surprise that politics, not justice, prevails.

The new bylaws have it that every appeal goes before a standing committee of nine faculty. The same nine (or a sub-group of their members) would hear all cases regardless of the program involved. This means that in most instances no one from the program involved would be hearing the appeal. The intended virtue of this standing committee was to be that its membership could develop expertise in the hearing process. Disengaging the programs from their students' appeals was an incidental and perhaps even unintended consequence of the new bylaws.

There was a problem in the new bylaws, however. They spoke only to the process of choosing the membership and to the constituency of the nine. They were silent on the process of appeal itself. I pointed this out last spring to both the chair of the Structure Committee, Stefan Baumrin–the person most responsible for the wording of the bylaws–and to Associate Provost Pamela Reid. It seemed to me that process had to be codified and that students should have something to say about that process. Neither Reid nor Baumrin seemed concerned. Nor were they receptive to the idea of forming a committee to come up with a new process of appeals that would suit the new bylaws.

Eight months later, their story has changed. The committee responsible for appointing the nine faculty to the new appeals panel is the comically named Committee on Committees, of which I was at the time the chair. The committee found, in trying to determine what criteria were appropriate for such appointment, that the bylaws were just too nebulous to work with, and we said so. In a memo to the Executive Committee of the Graduate Council, I recommended the request for an ad hoc committee to examine the process of student appeals. In reply, we were presented with a hearing procedure essentially made up out of whole cloth at the spur of the moment by Dr. Reid in consultation with Dr. Floyd Moreland, then Vice President for Student Affairs. It was not a proposal for a procedure, mind you, but a document purporting to be the procedure. This struck me as a rather embarrassing display of heavy-handed authoritarianism. For starters, the appeal committee was not constituted by the administration. It was constituted by the Graduate Council, body in which administrators do not vote, much less determine policy. It was most especially embarrassing because I had been taken to task several times by administrative operatives for suggesting that Graduate Council should make policy for the appeals committee. "All the other Graduate Council committees are allowed to make up their own policy, why should the appeals committee be subject to the Council's micro management?" they objected.



Committee on the committee on the committee on committees.

Yet they expected to set committee policy themselves, it seems. Evidently they just wanted me to keep my mouth shut and quit making trouble.

After dropping hints of criticism of the new bylaws and the current mode of appeals, and months of delays, the major players involved slowly started thinking and talking. Soon there was general discontent with the new bylaw, suggestions that it be overhauled, and a recognition that a committee must be formed to get it right. Eight long months after I had made that very suggestion!

"Why so long?" you ask. Because faculty too often don't take student views quite as seriously as they should. Some, of course do. But there are those who are inclined not to take anyone's opinion seriously, and wouldn't, but for the sake of diplomacy. Diplomacy applies when dealing with one's peers, and students are not peers of faculty. There is nothing politically at stake for faculty when listening to students, and that takes all the urgency out of treating their ideas with respect.

As for the administrators, they are all too often uncomfortable with change. Change must be justified–to one's boss, to one's underlings. Someone must take responsibility for a change. Such considerations make change unwelcome. The status quo requires little justification and no responsibility since the people originally responsible for the status quo are usually long dead or gone.

The upshot of all this is the formation of a committee of eight: three students, three faculty, Associate Provost Reid and the Vice President for Student Affairs Sue Zalk. This will be the first time that students have ever been involved at any stage of the appeals process outside their own programs' executive committee. It's an opportunity to get students involved at every stage. It will be an uphill battle. –ROBERT HOLLANDER

Fire dat Hayduk!

GSUC student and VAC coordinator fired by Mayor Giuliani for doing his job

BY PAM DONOVAN

IN 1989, THE VOTER ASSISTANCE COMMISSION was created to identify and address the participation problems of those groups "historically underrepresented on the voter rolls." A 1988 voter referendum created the agency to work with voter advocacy groups registering eligible voters. The VAC was given a budget of $750,000 and nine full-time staff. By 1993, VAC helped to bring in 75,000 registrations per year. But last year, registrations fell to less than 10,000. Since the Giuliani Administration took office in the winter of 1994, VAC's budget dropped to $140,000 and the staff was reduced to three part-timers. Three, if you include VAC's recently--fired coordinator, Ron Hayduk, a Ph.D. student in Political Science at the CUNY Graduate Center and Adjunct Lecturer at the Center for Worker Education at City College. Hired as VAC's Coordinator in February 1993, Hayduk says he will return to working on his dissertation–on voter participation in New York.

Hayduk was fired after numerous confrontations with the Mayor's office. Russell Harding, coordinator of the Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, gleefully told reporters from the *Daily News* and the *New York Observer* that with Hayduk's removal the city's voter registration efforts would be redirected. The Mayor's Office could not be reached for comment. Harding, although in support of the franchise, told the *Observer's* Glenn Thrush that voter registration compared favorably with "motherhood and apple pie." The problem was "how you do it."

Hayduk and representatives of the Giuliani Administration did not see eye-to-eye on the purview of the VAC Coordinator. Early in the administration's history, then-Deputy Mayor Fran Reiter inquired about whether it was possible to fire Hayduk, but found that only the Board of Directors of VAC could remove a coordinator. Hayduk said he understood his responsibility as assessing the effectiveness of city agencies and developing strategies for increased voter participation in New York City. Although there were numerous policy matters upon which VAC and the Mayor's office disagreed, it was clear to most voter advocacy organizations and reporters assigned to the story that both the decimation of the VAC and Hayduk's firing are chiefly due to the mayor's displeasure with encouraging 2 million eligible, unregistered voters in the city to exercise their franchise.

Voter advocacy groups have charged the Giuliani Administration with sending a clear message to city agencies that voter registration was a low priority and not in the Mayor's best interest, since his defeat of David Dinkins was by a narrow 53,581 votes. Enrolling new voters through city agencies tends to attract poorer voters, who are more likely to vote Democratic. Human SERVE, along with two other voter advocacy groups, Disabled in Action and Coalition for the Homeless, filed suit against the Giuliani Administration, charging it with failure to comply with VAC's mandate. When Hayduk refused to sign an affidavit that claimed the Mayor's office was doing its best to fulfill the letter of the charter, tension between Hayduk and the Giuliani Administration liaisons intensified. Hayduk refused to falsely testify as well as risk perjury; Harding regarded his refusal as an act of disloyalty that would aid the case's plaintiffs. Consequently, administration efforts to remove Hayduk accelerated, finally forcing him out in early December. Harding claims that with Hayduk's removal the city will be moving in a "new direction."

"I'd be curious to know just what that new direction might be," Hayduk told The *Advocate*. He points out the dismal efforts by New York City to enroll its eligible but non–registered voters. Sources close to the Commission described the current situation as an opportunistic attempt by the Giuliani administration to impede registration of constitutents typically opposed to him, namely poor people and people of color. One advocate said, "The mission of the VAC is opposed to Giuliani's interests. It's no coincidence that registration now has practically ground to a halt." The City Council has also been sluggish in voter registration efforts. It failed to fill its vacancies on VAC's commission by approving severe cuts to VAC's budget.

A survey conducted by the office of Public Advocate Mark Green in October estimated that less than half of those who had contact with the Human Resources Administration were offered voter registration forms. The HRA oversees public assistance and serves over one million New Yorkers each year. In the last year of the Dinkins Administration, HRA alone registered 30,000 people. Voter advocacy groups regard the HRA as a potentially fruitful site for reaching the eligible and unregistered, and Federal law requires such agencies to offer registration opportunities to its clients, under the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), or "motor voter" bill, signed into law last January.

Despite this victory for franchise activists at the national level, local setbacks have emerged. In the last round of budget negotiations in Albany, Governor George Pataki, who had previously campaigned against the motor voter idea, specifically eliminated New York State Board of Elections budget funds for the implementation of the Federal law, and the lame-duck Democratic legislature failed to provide a bulwark against the move. By contrast, Florida and Georgia have responded to the motor voter law by registering new voters in record numbers.

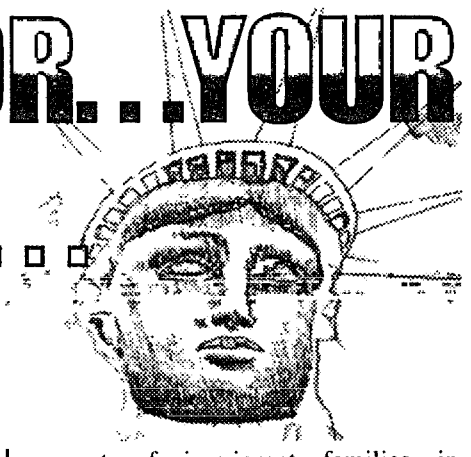
In New York City, "motor voter" is a bit of a misnomer. Only half of city residents have drivers' licenses, so the Department of Motor Vehicles' new, streamlined, computer-aided voter registration process isn't a reliable means to reach new voters, particularly those that VAC's charter is supposed to seek out–poor and minority voters. In NYC there is also a significant gender gap in drivers' license applications; men apply 15 to 21 percent more than women. Thus, VAC relies on other

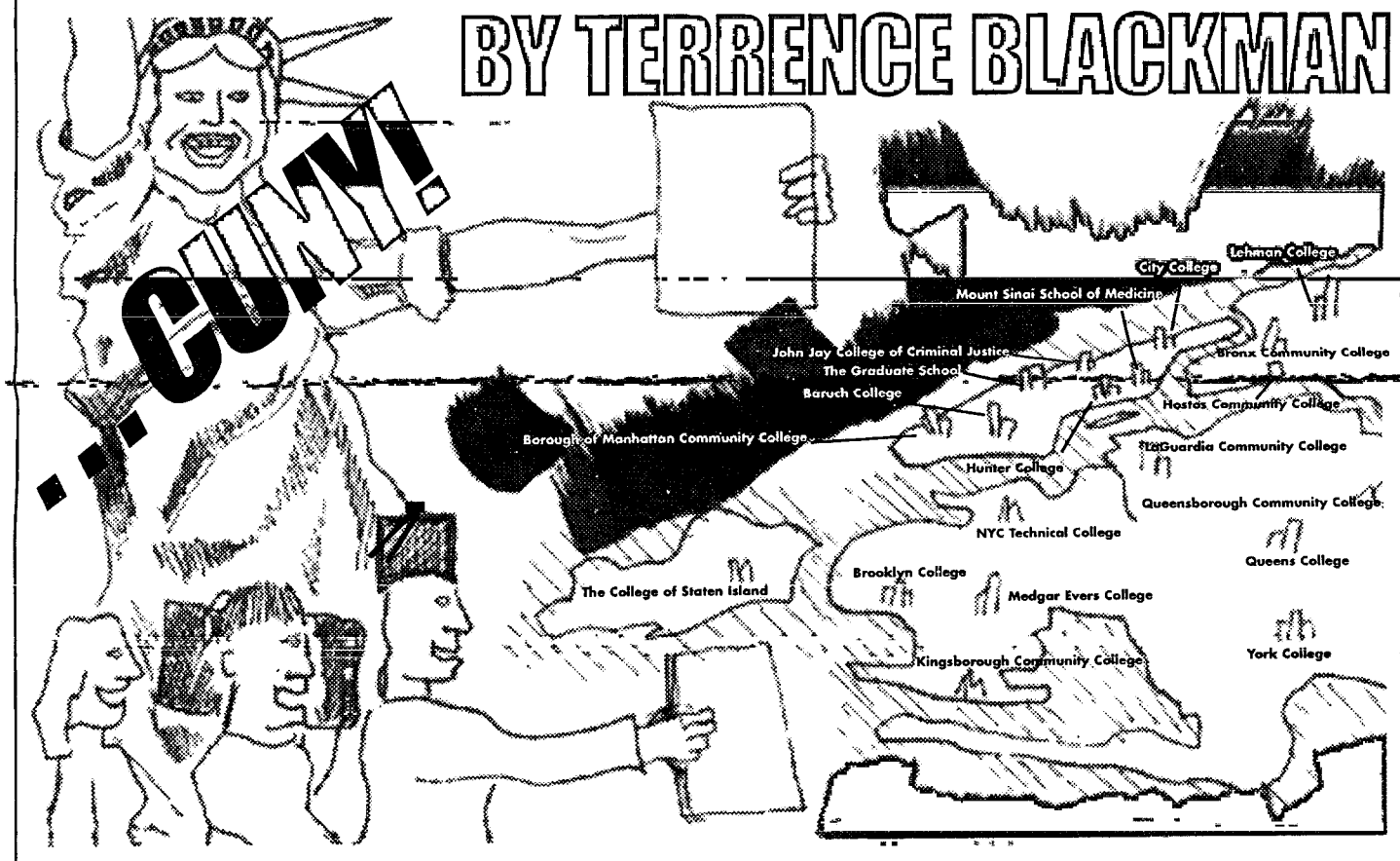
LEE WENGRAF

Former Rudy employee Ron Hayduk gets reacquainted with his old boss.

HAYDUK CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

GIVE ME YOUR POOR...YOUR HUDDLED MASSES...YEARNING FOR...





BY TERRENCE BLACKMAN

CUNY IS AN IMMIGRANT institution. More than 40 percent of its students were born in another country. More than 70 percent of its students come from families where at least one parent was not born in America. It is not unreasonable to assert that almost all CUNY students, staff, and faculty have, going back to their grand-parents, some roots in a foreign country. For this reason, the silence of CUNY officials in this era of immigrant bashing is especially disheartening.

The recent ill-fated attempt by the "Republic-rats" in Washington to eliminate aid to immigrant students and naturalized citizens as part of the welfare destruction bill is continuing evidence of the severe consequences of the now–pervasive immigrant bashing in our society. Although this attempt was stymied, this was not a clear victory for immigrants. Immigrant students will now be required to have an American citizen co-sign when applying for educational loans. This not only constitutes an undue economic burden for students but it contributes to the perception that immigrants are undeserving of full participation in American life.

The recent report by the US Commission on Immigration to Congress asserts that it is in the national interest to eliminate illegal immigration and reduce legal immigration admissions over the next decade from the current level of 675,000 per year to 500,000 per annum. To this end the commission proposes to eliminate certain family categories, and impose severe reductions in the number of visas available for skilled migrants. One of the family categories slated for elimination is that for children over the age of twenty one. Thus, in an era when politicians tout "family values," some families will not be afforded the honor of having their grandchildren with them in the US. These policies are motivated by the claim that America is about to be overrun by immigrants. This assertion has no basis in fact.

Immigration is economically, socially, politically, scientifically, and culturally beneficial to America.

According to the INS, between 1984 and 1993, about 9.3 million immigrants were allowed permanent residence in the US. This results in a ratio of about one immigrant to 250 US citizens. From a historical perspective this should be compared with the one in 100 figure during the decade 1905 to 1914. One should note that this figure is almost three times the current number. The Census Bureau estimates that 7.3 percent of the US population is "foreign-born". This should be compared with the 13.2 percent of "foreign-born" residents in 1920. Evidently, America is not being overrun by immigrants.

At the core of the national hysteria over immigrants is the perception that immigrants come to the US to take advantage of its generous social welfare and educational provisions. Some politicians claim that they "steal" jobs from US citizens, attempting to generate public fear of immigrants that is further heightened by the implicit racist message in media characterizations of undocumented immigrants. They are invariably the brown shadows on the US-Mexico border. This perception is not the reality.

According to the INS, at least 52 percent of the undocumented immigrants enter the US legally. They come as tourists, business persons, and students. They exceed their allotted time in the country, and then settle down. In New York State, for example, the three largest groups of undocumented immigrants are from Italy, Poland, and Ecuador. In New Jersey, the three largest groups are from Portugal, Poland, and Italy.

The very nature of immigrant life acts as a deterrent to immigrant contact with government agencies. If one is an undocumented immigrant, the possibility of deportation insures that one's contact with government agencies is kept to a minimum. No tax refunds are collected. Hospital visits are avoided even in the face of dire emergencies. If one is victimized the police are rarely called. Abuses on the job often go unreported. Current law prohibits undocumented immigrants from most public assistance programs. Thus far from using America, this group is one of the most abused of our society. The INS estimates that undocumented immigrants constitute about 1.25 percent of the population. The suggestion that this small group is responsible for the problems of America reveals the bankrupt nature of the thinking of "Republic-rats" in Washington.

In 1992, *Business Week* reported that immigrants pay $90 billion in taxes, and collect $5 billion in welfare. A Los Angeles County report in 1991 pointed out that undocumented immigrants paid $4.3 billion in taxes but used only $2.5 billion in services. Julian Simon, in his article "The Economic Consequences of Immigration", points out that during their first three decades in the US immigrant families on average pay more in taxes than US citizens; moreover, they pay on average $2500 more in taxes than they receive in government services. A 1994 study, carried out by the Tomas Rivera Center in California established that 20.2 percent of immigrant families in California live below the poverty line as compared to 11.2 percent of native Californians. Yet only about 20 percent of this group received welfare benefits, as compared to 26 percent of native Californians.

The report "Immigration and Unemployment" a 1994 study by the Alex de Tocqueville Institute, a pro-business think tank, points out that unemployment was lower in the ten states with the highest percentage of immigrants when compared with the ten states with the lowest percentage of immigrants. Thus, contrary to popular belief, immigration actually *increases* job opportunity. Immigrants buy food and clothing. They open businesses that employ people and they pay taxes. They revitalize dead neighborhoods creating jobs for realtors and construction workers. Their children provide work for teachers and other educational professionals.

In the current debate on social security spending the role that immigrants play in supporting the social security system is never mentioned. Since benefits are paid to pensioners from taxes on current workers, it is absolutely necessary that there be a large worker to retiree ratio. Since immigrants are invariably part of the workforce, their contributions should not go unnoticed. Continued immigration at current levels is in the national interest.

I have not addressed the arguments for the cultural, political, and scientific enrichment of our culture as a result of immigration. This, it seems to me, is quite evident in our daily lives. The evolution of our music, art, dance, and food stand as a testimony to this. The life of a democracy is dependent upon fresh ideas. By definition immigrants are new ideas. The dominance of America in the technology industries is in large part due to the continuing influx of scientists from every part of the globe.

In closing let me offer the following thoughts: as we move towards a world without borders, the increased interaction of individuals from different cultures offers tremendous possibilities. This situation is also fraught with danger. Our daily news stories are replete with the fatal consequences of this interaction. The key for the effective management of this inevitable transition is the publication of factual information. It is incumbent upon us to demand this from our educators, our leaders, and our information providers. Without fact, myth is reality. Public policy and individual actions based on myth is certain to cause our demise. ■

KEN SARO-WIWA 1941-1995

ON NOVEMBER 10, poet and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa was executed by hanging along with eight others by the Nigerian military government. They were condemned by a military tribunal with no appearance of a fair trial and no right of appeal. Human rights groups all over the world have denounced their deaths.

Saro-Wiwa and the others who died with him were activists fighting the exploitation by oil companies of the Ogoni region in the Niger River Delta of south-eastern Nigeria, exploitation that has wrought environmental

destruction and posed serious threats to peoples' lives. He helped found the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) that has challenged Anglo-Dutch Shell's policies in the area, namely its failure to compensate peasants for the use of their land and its disregard for the devastation inflicted upon Ogoni crops and water supply. Evidence reveals strong ties between Shell and the Nigerian military government, and Shell officials were angry at the threat posed by MOSOP. Saro-Wiwa and the others were arrested and framed in 1994 for the deaths of four other Ogonis, and Ogoni activists believe they were implicated because of MOSOP's ability to mobilize opposition to oil interests.

Shell has been operating in Ogoniland since 1958, and their Nigerian operations account for 13 percent of the company's profits. Shell made $1.6 billion in Nigeria the last quarter of 1995 alone. Virtually none of those profits has returned to the Ogoni community, and hatred of Shell is so strong that MOSOP drew 300,000 Ogoni to a demonstration on January 3, 1993. The Nigerian government, fearing instability in the region and the threat to oil revenues, eagerly responded to Shell's request for military back-up to maintain order. Since the 1993 demonstration, 1800 Ogonis have died, almost certainly at the hands of the vicious Mobile Police Force.

In response to the public outcry over Saro-Wiwa's death, the US government and other world leaders have condemned the Nigerian government and imposed some penalties, but none have called for a boycott of Nigerian oil. The US buys about 50% of Nigeria's oil. Nelson Mandela has also steadfastly refused to impose economic sanctions, despite his call for sanctions against South Africa during the struggle to overthrow apartheid.

Shell also refused to appeal for clemency on Saro-Wiwa's behalf, and Saro-Wiwa condemned them at the close of this trial: "I and my colleagues are not the only ones on trial ... The company has, indeed, ducked this particular trial, but its day will surely come and the lessons learned here may prove useful to it, or there is not doubt in my mind that the ecological war that the company has waged in the Delta will be called into question sooner than later, and the crimes of that war duly punished."

Last year a strike by 3 million workers closed down the majority of the nation's oil production for several weeks, and students, taking over television and radio stations, joined them in denouncing the military government. A fitting legacy for Saro-Wiwa and the others murdered would be a resurgence of the protests that shook Nigeria last year. But this time the protests shouldn't stop short of getting rid of the military government for once and for all. -LEE WENGRAF

RAIMON, MODERN TROUBADOUR

QUOTING FREUD AND FROST, Pete Seeger introduced the internationally renown singer/poet Raimon to a near full audience at the Graduate Center's Proshansky Auditorium on October 24. Seeger spoke of music and poetry's power to address social injustice, and of society's subsequent attempts to silence this power. He then performed a song from the Spanish Civil War titled "Ay Manuela" that commended audience participation at every refrain.

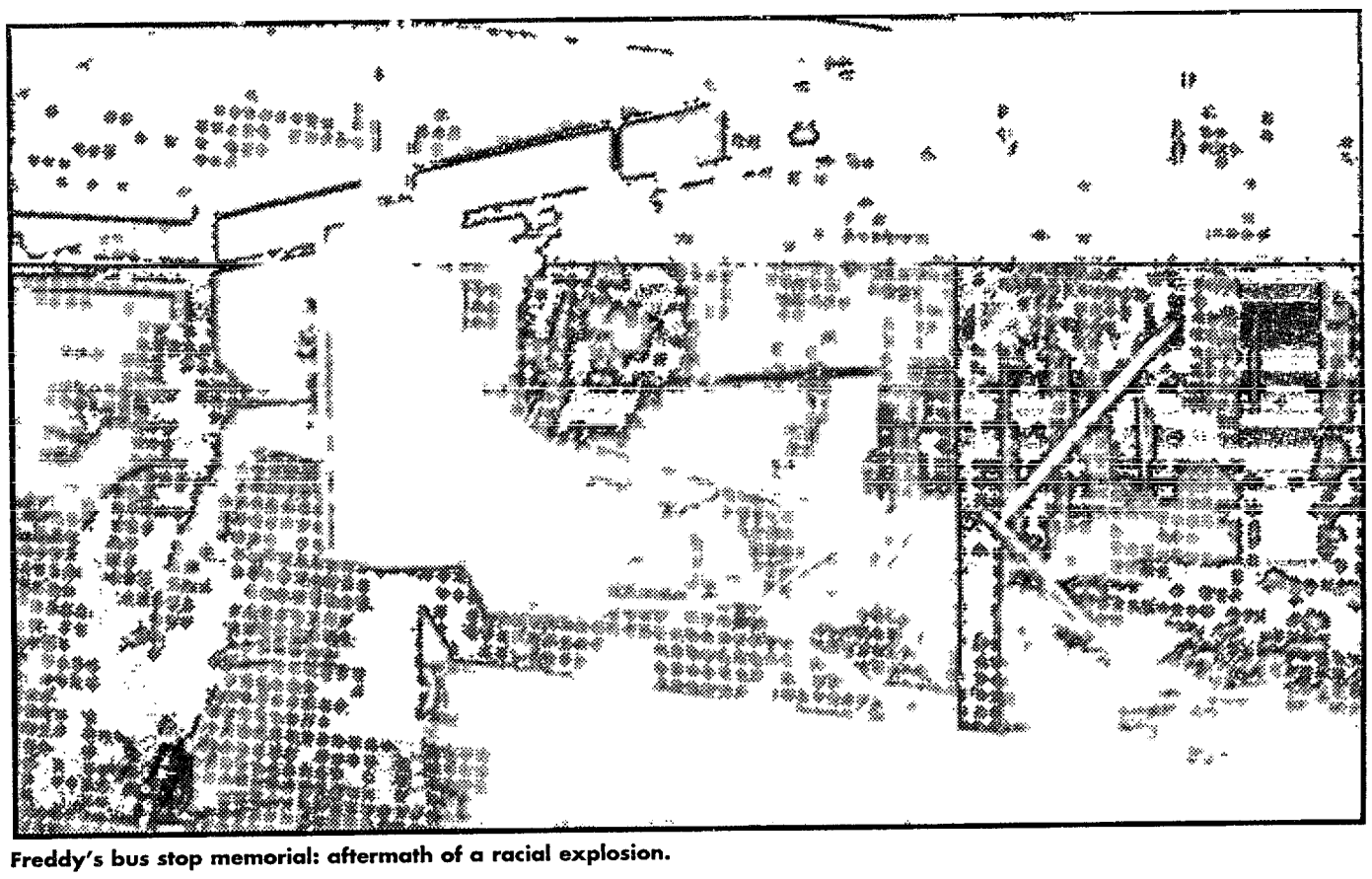
Raimon, a Spaniard who sings and writes lyrics in Catalan, performed a concert of 20 of his folk songs whose content spanned the themes of political protest, unrequited love, and the creative process. Sponsored by the Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures Department of the Graduate Center and the Cervantes Institute, this concert was offered free to the public. It was a tri-lingual event: Seeger singing in Spanish and Raimon in Catalan with introductions given in English. The audience was mostly Hispanic, with a large Catalan presence.

Raimon writes most of his lyrics, but he also sets medieval Catalan poetry to music, connecting his artistry with that of the medieval troubadours. The Proshansky concert offered a selection of both the "old" and the "new." He sang and accompanied himself by guitar along with the cello, accordion and mandolin, played by Joan Figueres, and the double bass played by Rafael Esteve. The strength and clarity of Raimon's voice reverberates with the experiences of melancholy, despair, hope and affirmation. His lyrics speak to all humanity and some seemed particularly germane to CUNY's current circumstances (below). -LAUREN SHAW

Raimon: germane reverberations in Proshansky Auditorium.

DO YOU REALIZE, FRIEND

Do you realize, companion,
that little by little they are putting the
future behind us,
do you realize, friend.
Do you realize, companion,
that they are stealing from us each day
that passes;
do you realize, friend.
Do you realize, companion,
that for many years
they have hidden history from us
and they tell us we don't have any;
that ours is theirs,
do you realize, friend.
Do you realize, companion,
that now they want the future,
little by little, day by day, night by
night,
do you realize, friend.
Do you realize, companion,
that they don't want arguments,
they use force, do you realize, friend.
Do you realize, companion,
that we have to go out into the street
together, many, the more the better,
if we don't want to lose everything,
do you realize, friend.
Do you realize, companion,
do you realize, friend.



ROBERT WALLACE

Freddy's bus stop memorial: aftermath of a racial explosion.

125th Street's tragedy

Giuliani shops while Harlem mourns

BY JOAN PARKIN & JOHANNA FERNANDEZ

In an attempt to advance their own political agendas, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Police Commissioner William Bratton have declared that the Harlem fire that claimed eight victims in early December was caused by anti-semitism against Jews. But, after two years of ignoring racism and driving through budget cuts that disproportionately affect poor and working class blacks, Giuliani and Bratton's newly found concerns reek of hypocrisy.

Ana Ford, a Harlem resident, told the *Socialist Worker* that she was "shocked and infuriated" at the mayor's visit after "he took away all those jobs." In what was considered a shameless P.R. stunt, Giuliani went Christmas shopping on 125th Street the week after the fire, even as many booed and hissed. One woman said, "He has no right to be here, he doesn't care about us,"

The incident was sparked by a dispute over a next door expansion by Freddy's that would displace the small black owned Record Shack business which had been in Harlem for nearly two decades. It escalated into a deadly attack when on December 8 Roland Smith ran into Freddy's screaming, "It's on now! All blacks out!" Smith fired a gun and set fire to the store killing himself and seven others.

The politicians have painted this as a black and white issue. But, it was the mayor's "Quality of Life" program which forcibly removed 600 mostly black vendors from 125th Street in October 1994 that exacerbated racial tensions in Harlem and set the stage for this tragedy. Smith was one the vendors.

A further complication is that Freddy's was subleasing to the record shop and leasing its own space from the United House of Prayer for All People, a predominantly black church. The landlord, in this case the church, agreed to evict Sikhulu Shange, the black record store owner because it was bidding for the tenant who would pay the highest rent.

According to the *New York Times* the church has "grown into an unusually prosperous religious organization with extensive and growing real estate holdings in cities across the country." The church owns a $25 million estate, among other assets, and has launched a $178 million project to renovate and expand its holdings.

Throughout the negotiations, between Shange and Fred Harari, the owner of the clothing store, the church remained in the background while Freddy's became the target of angry and at times race-baiting "Buy Black" protests organized by Rev. Al Sharpton and Morris Powell, leader of the 125th Street Vendors' Association.

Even though the Rev. Al Sharpton and Morris Powell, of the 125th Stret Vendors Association, were aware of the pivotal role of the church in the eviction process, They rallied people around anti-semetic slogans. In a radio program, Sharpton said that "we will not stand by and allow them to move this brother so that some white interloper can expand his business on 125th Street." Powell said "we are not going to stand idly by and let a Jewish person come into Black Harlem and methodically drive people out of business..."

Sharpton is assuming that all blacks have the same economic interests, when in fact they do not. While a small group of frustrated vendors rallied along with Powell and Sharpton to save the Record Shack, Shange earlier had lined up against the vendors, along with the other shop owners who believed their clientele were being taken away by the vendors.

A year after the vendors were gotten rid of small black owned businesses on Harlem's shopping strip like the Record Shack, La Famile, Lucky Spot and Oasis are in financial trouble because of escalating rents. What the "Buy Black" campaign ignores is that the removal of street vendors and rent hikes on 125th Street are part of the Federal Empowerment Zone project.

Spearheaded by Black Rep Charles Rangel and supported by the Black political establishment in New York the Northern Empowerment Zone project seeks to upgrade the property values in Harlem by providing $300 million in incentives, mainly in tax breaks, to corporations that set up shop in Harlem. For example, as a major property owner in Harlem, the United People's Church has benefited tremendously from the Empowerment Zone initiative, especially as Duane Reade has become its most recent tenant.

Neither the empowerment zone nor the vendors "Buy Black" campaign will solve Harlems major problems: a poverty rate of 42% and unemployment at 60% for black youth. That will require a struggle for jobs, social services and investment in the community, not tax breaks for big business. ◻

Johanna Fernandez is a student at Columbia University.

HAYDUK CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

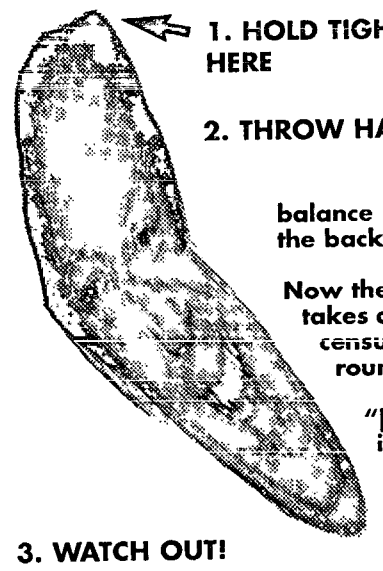
city agencies to develop strategies to register those that pass through their offices.

Hayduk had gained a reputation as a very aggressive overseer of city agency compliance with the program. In a previous dispute with the Mayor's office, Hayduk insisted that agencies file monthly reports on their efforts to enroll voters. Many agencies failed to file any reports, even on a yearly basis. In October, New York State Supreme Court Judge Lewis Friedman ordered yearly reports to be submitted. Voter advocacy organizations claimed this judgment as a partial victory, and Hayduk's resignation was solicited even more vigorously. He hopes, cautiously, that the success of NVRA will eventually force city officials to restore needed resources and support to VAC. One advocate, fearful of the direction the Giuliani administration will take the agency, commented that he could very well turn VAC into his own re-election committee. "The big tragedy of it all," he said, "is that this agency provides the opportunity for voting at a time when people are coming under attack from the Republicans at the national, state and city level."

For Hayduk, there is a connection between increased voter registartion and the activity of social movements. "If progressive forces mobilize," he told *The Advocate*, "the power of new registrants could be felt at the polls. It depends on what happens on the ground. Groups are getting politicized by the budget cuts and this could lead to a politicization about voting as well." ◻

Pam Donovan is a Sociology student.

INSIDE GEORGE'S BRAIN!



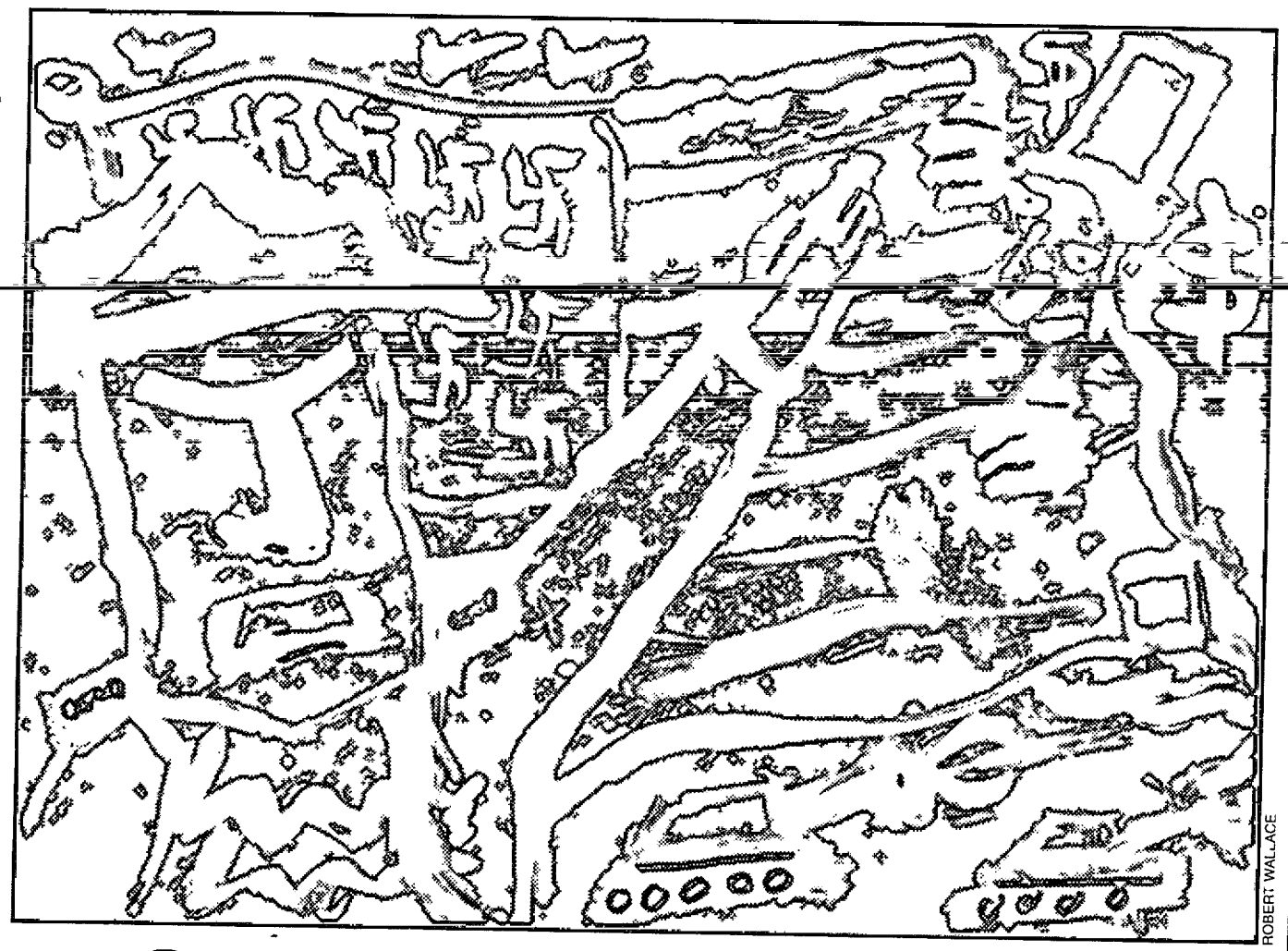
WATCH OUT! It's the Boomerang Brain from Peekskill!

In running for Gov'nor, Pataki promised to reinstate the death penalty in New York, state murder well known to be racist in application. He has issued two budgets that balance tax cuts and subsidies for the wealthy on the backs of the poor, particularly minorities.

Now the Pataki Steamroller, blood on its mud flats, takes a detour from squishing the downtrodden to censure racist and anti-Semetic statements surrounding the massacre at Freddy's:

"[There are] consequences to speech that inflames passions or frightens people...I just think that any sort of rhetorical, inflammatory comments that pit people against each other, whether it's on race or religion or politics, is unfortunate." WATCH OUT!

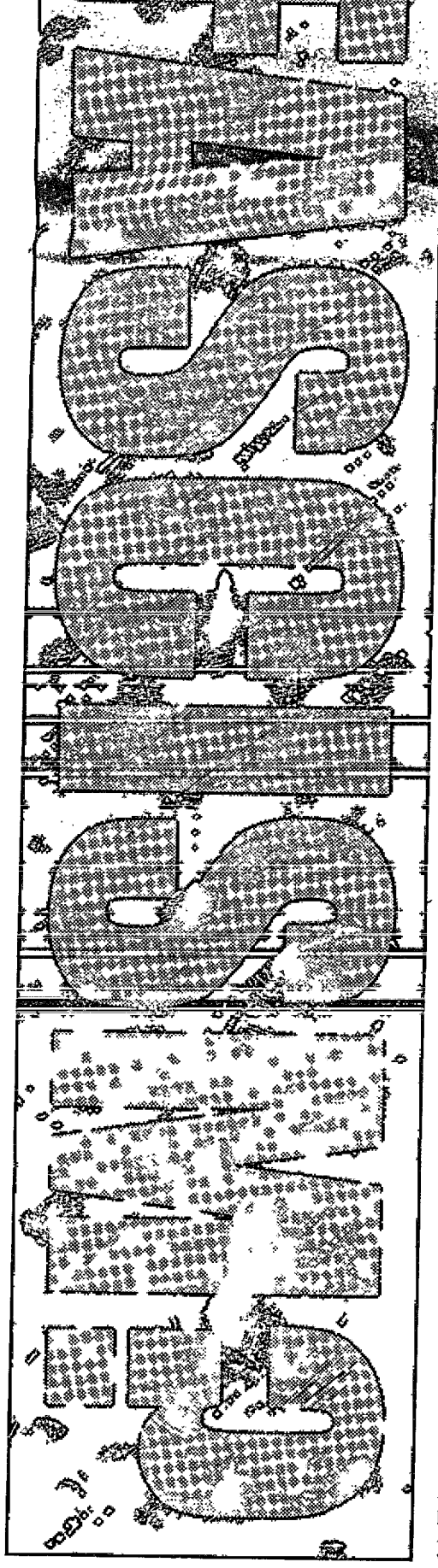
IS THERE A



ROBERT WALLACE

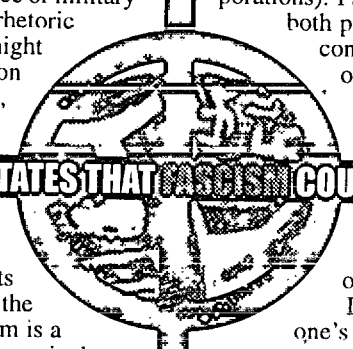
CAN IT BE AMERICAN?

DWGEWARLES PRICE BEARS



Few people in America have a well-informed idea of what fascism is, the dimensions that comprise it, and the kinds of conditions that are conducive to its growth. I want to discuss some of these concerns, referring mainly to the United States, as the U.S. provides fertile ground for the development of fascism. Yet, this does not mean that it has to happen, that the process will "complete" itself, or that it be similar to the classical cases of fascism seen during the first half of the 20th century in Germany, Italy, Spain, Austria and Japan. Those whose views of fascism are totally informed by the classical cases are particularly problematic. For example some conservatives view socialism and communism as fascism, based on associations such as the German National Socialist Party, the Austrian National Socialists, and Mussolini's early association with Italian socialists. The most infantile view states that fascism could never happen in the U.S.

Often, during periods of social crisis and tension, the word fascism is used by many who attempt to critique some aspect(s) of the behavior of a given dominant political, economic, and military-police regime. Invariably, especially in the U.S., the term fascism is often used in such a way that it not only obscures a very real phenomena that requires a clear assessment regarding its character, form, and networks, but that it also focuses on the improper units of analysis. For too many people, fascism refers to unacceptable police or military tactics. Or the term is used to describe the fiery rhetoric of populists and other charismatic types who might have access to industrial machines of production and war. Other cases equate fascism with racism, oppression, and other forms of discrimination and inequality.



THE MOST INFANTILE VIEW STATES THAT FASCISM COULD NEVER HAPPEN IN THE U.S.

While the above characterizations of fascism are not at all "wrong," taken alone such accounts are misleading. They do not help to explain the dynamics of contemporary fascism. First, fascism is a product of periods of crisis and transition, in particular, those crises associated with capitalist development. Second, fascism is politically complicated because it opposes established conservatism, liberalism, and those left of "center." Yet, fascists will build alliances with any who are sympathetic to their causes, but are basically "radical rightists." In the U.S., and to some extent in Europe, we must make a distinction between "paleo-conservatives" and neo conservatives. Although the two use similar discourses, the latter's actions often contradict their rhetoric For example, while traditional notions of the family and community are bread and butter issues for conservatives, neo-conservatives often support policies and groups that detrimentally affect the community and family. Third, fascism requires a tight linkage between the industrial bourgeoisie (big business), the military, and the state (and government, for those who see the two as playing different roles in society). For America, social crisis and tension are an ingrained part of society. For example, the period preceding and including the Civil War, the mid 1870s and late 1890s, the 20th century inter–war period, and the early 1970s to the present, all characterize historically specific accumulation and transformative crises. I will not delve into the roots of these crises, but there are similarities in the structure, process, content and social reactions across the different periods.

Links between the military and big business are not new in America; for example, the long-standing Pentagon-state support of corporate weapons-technology firms like McDonnell Douglas, Lockheed, Martin-Marietta and General Dynamics, with their publicly-funded cost overruns and merger-acquisition operations. Yet, America has experienced only limited manifestations of fascism, as Father Coughlin and Mr. McCarthy and his associates attest; the potential for fascism always exists here in the U.S. However, these characterizations of fascism I have given are still inadequate for today's world. But before going on, we must interrogate two more dimensions that fascism is expected to express.

There is the view that fascism is led by a fraction of the petit-bourgeoisie that popularizes its narrow ideology, and that fascism seeks to divide and destroy the working classes. These last two propositions are argued by some socialists, along with the view that crisis ridden capitalism is the other factor. These views although not incorrect, cannot be treated independently of other factors and concerns. In all fairness, it is some of those same socialists and communists who have been the most ardent enemies of fascism, where so-called liberals and other self-proclaimed progressives have withered in the face of fascist power and ideology.

We must first recognize that fascism, on the eve of the 21st century, will not replicate its classical forms in the United States, or anywhere else. The concern that fascism could develop in the U.S. seems to have more credence today, if the titles of recent publications that address this issue mean anything. Fascism, like capitalism, is a bundle of social relations that operate through certain institutions (government-military corporations). Fascism is driven by certain ideologies and goals, both pragmatic and mystically irrational ones. The best conditions for the consolidation of fascism are periods of social turmoil and transformation. Often during such periods people are uncertain and anxious, and because the dominant ideologies have lost some of their appeal for a growing number of people, a space for competing ideologies and hegemonies opens.

It is true that characterizing crisis is tricky since one's class position always effects the way in which one experiences the crisis. For some in America today, these are the most profitable times, especially for those in the lucrative "FIRE" industries; for others, whose incomes are dependent on wages, anxiety and uncertainty are now an integral part of daily experience. In addition, there is a growing lumpen class, disproportionately composed of minorities, but also a growing number of new whites, who are poorly educated, whose lives are linked to crime, informal and illegal sources of income, and other marginalized activities.

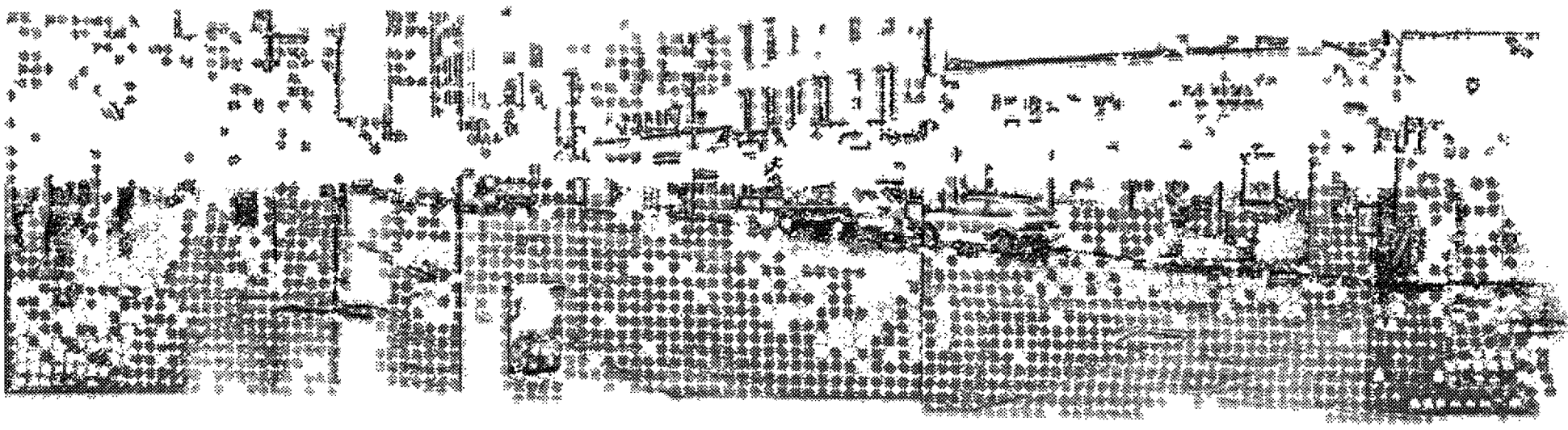
Bertram Gross (1980), for example, shows how today fascism could appear friendly. In Gross' view, recent popular political slogans such as "power to the people," and "states rights," or, the policy of using block grants to decentralize government, may well be smoke screens to obfuscate what these policies and slogans really mean–less power for the people The important point is that such distortions can garner popular support. Also, there are often squabbles among elites over things like the interpretation of morality and the past. One outcome of these struggles can be censorship (e.g., Senators Dole and Nunn in their "critiques" of the film industry, family values, and Gingrich's "renewal" of American Civilization). If there is a lack of citizen control over the production and dissemination of information, it might be exemplified by the always-merging corporate media giants such as Paramount, or by the narrow-vision of a baron like Rupert Murdoch, whose media empire is certainly both global and local.

Murdoch, formerly an Australian national, received U.S cit-

FASCISM CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

THE TWILI

BROOME COUNTY, N.Y.—ITS GOVERNMENTS, F
LATE CAPITALISM'S HOUSE OF MIRRORS BY



Court Street, downtown Binghamton, N.Y., early 1990s, during prime Saturday afternoon shopping hours: The series of stores toward which the man on the left is walking are The toxic remnents of a fire kept the building closed for 16 years. The Woolworth's and its neighbor "Bourbon Street," a danceclub, are now closed. To the right of Hardee's–no of Binghamton loan it has yet to repay. The modernist building down the street, right, through the branches of the small tree is the Binghamton Savings Bank, Broome County's a 15-year 15% tax break. Notice the only newspaper bins are for USA Today and the Press and Sun-Bulletin, both owned by media conglomerate Gannett, another Partnership

ABOUT 150 MILES northwest of New York City, in Broome County, one of the Southern Tier counties that line the New York-Pennsylvania border, stands Binghamton, New York. A dying industrial city of 150,000, Binghamton is clustered along the Susquehanna River with the factory towns of Endicott and Johnson City, named for the long departed Endicott-Johnson shoe company.

Some notable factoids: Early in the century Binghamton was the New York state headquarters of the Ku Klux Klan. Clinton Street once boasted the world's record for the most number of bars on a street. Billy Martin, the former Yankee and a native of the area, died drunk at the wheel on the highway near Johnson City. A plaque outside Binghamton High School shows Rod Serling, the creator of *The Twilight Zone*, graduated the school at the age of 19.

Serling wasn't a fiction writer, an oft-told joke runs, he was a journalist. And given the eerie, off-kilter nature of the town, it's hard to argue. Pilfered of local young people who leave for more prosperous places, the Triple Cities area plays host to seasonal swarms of binge-drinking SUNY Binghamton students and older folk who never left. The bitter-enders include Jerry the Racist Barber and Pumpkin Guard, an old man in uniform with a white eye patch who guards the plants and pumpkins a flower shop leaves outside for the night. On Friday and Saturday nights, George mans his Casio at the now not-so-regal Royal Lounge cranking out musak Sinatra (Frank and Nancy) for sloven bohemian students and waltzing senior couples dressed to the nines. Sad, enthralling, disorienting place Binghamton.

Perhaps partially explanatory for its ablating nature, Broome County has suffered an exodus of employment. A cursory view of the U.S. Census shows the county gained 10,334 jobs during 1980-1990 (77,753 to 88,087). But over 10,000 high paying manufacturing jobs have been lost within the last eight years. Particularly devastating were 2000 jobs lost at IBM. A sharper look at the Census shows most of the jobs gained were for low-paying retail (15,411 to 19,011). And most of these were at eating and drinking places (4,183 to 6,200). McDonald's-type jobs have invaded Broome County with a vengeance, dovetailing with households' budgetary demands.

Even as the economic health of the county deteriorates, *The Press and Sun-Bulletin*, a Gannett-owned Frankenstein stitched together from three formally independent newspapers, cranks out ass-kissing psalms to Broome County's plutocracy to the bank th rea estate slumlords, the industrial corporations still left, and the corporate go-fors in the county executive's office, the county legislature and the local mayoral offices.

And to Partnership 2000, a consortium of the county's feudal elite providing members public relations cover. The Partnership formed out of the ashes of the Valley Development Foundation (VDF). VDF was founded in 1959 by, among others, the Binghamton Savings Bank, Security Mutual Life Insurance, IBM, Endicott-Johnson Shoes, Marine Midland Bank, and *The Press and Sun-Bulletin*. Many of these companies now make up the Partnership.

With its control of media outlets and the Binghamton mayor's office, VDF

McDonald's-type jobs have invaded Broome County with a vengeance, dovetailing with households' budgetary demands.

was able to drive out undesirables from Binghamton's bustling downtown. With public funding, VDF forced out long time residents and hundreds of small businesses in order to "develop" the area. Today, downtown is pocked with empty stores, a desolate row that on weekend nights serves as a drag strip for suped-up cars.

Reanimating VDF's goals, somehow the *Sun-Bulletin* always editorially concludes that the Partnership's already flushed members "must" receive more public subsidies and tax abatements for their private projects. (The *Sun-Bulletin* indulges in its advocacy of local corporate welfare without informing its readership that the newspaper itself is a member of the Partnership.) Recent boondoggles championed include the City of Binghamton's guarantee to pay the $900,000 interest on a bank loan for the building of the stadium for the Mets' minor league baseball team. In return the City doesn't get a dime back. Boscov's, the Metro Center Mall, Security Mutual, among a host of other companies, have fifteen year, 15% tax breaks.

On top of these abatements, frequently city assessors assess property way under market value, allowing companies to pay as low as only 30% of their taxes due. GAF, a photochemical manufacturer on Binghamton's North Side, claimed its equipment was so high-tech no city assessor could be allowed on the premises. GAF would assess itself, thank you. The sham worked for many years until Japanese investors interested in purchasing the company declined because, in their pronounced estimation, the vaunted equipment was too old and decrepit by industry standards.

Land at the industrial parks in near-by Conklin and Kirkwood, which cost the county $42,000 an acre to develop is sold to corporations for only $20,000 an acre and is supplemented with 10-year 50% tax breaks. The cascading series of deals means that someone else has to pick up the tab for highways, schools, sewage treatment and the like; the underemployed citizens of Broome County pay more taxes to line the pockets of the rich for fewer services.

THE PARTNERSHIP BRINGS TO MIND the sick, and false I'll add, quip that Binghamton lays claim to the highest rate of incest in the state. The vicious "townie" joke, retold annually to unsuspecting freshmen by SUNY Binghamton returnees is, however, a painfully brilliant observation of Broome County elite politics and economics.

Cached with Partnership 2000 in the MacGuire Building on the SUNY campus is the Center for Commercial Competitiveness (C3), a Partnership economic renewal cosmetologist. C3 was developed by the Tioga County Economic Development Council and midwifed by the Private Industries Council, the SUNY Binghamton-based New York State Trade Adjustment Assistance Center and University-Industry-Public Partnership for Economic Growth, the Binghamton Local Development Corporation, and various unnamed Southern Tier corporations to, as one C3 pamphlet put it, "help industry become globally competitive."

This virtual orgy of incestuous relations is exemplary of America's loose network of county elites whose members–how gracious of you to offer–serve on each other's boards, committees, partnerships, centers, councils, and corporations Jack Rappaport, a Vice President at CAE-Link, the defense builder, serves as C3's executive director. Lois DeFleur, *while SUNY Binghamton president and* Partnership 2000 member, serves on C3 board of directors. Thomas Kelly, SUNY Binghamton's Vice President for External Affairs, acts as C3's Project Director at the SUNY Binghamton Foundation and teaches some of the C3 workshops. (These workshops are the most publicized component of the Center, teaching management skills to laid-off "workers".)

SUNY Binghamton provides C3 with space on its campus, representative of the shield of academic legitimacy the school attempts to confer to the project, and, more intrinsically, the umbrella of the University's foundation through which C3 can shuttle in public and corporate funding. As the school's foundation is a private entity, SUNY Binghamton Records Officer Margie Heffron falsely claimed, it is off limits to public scrutiny and Freedom of Information requests.

SUNY Binghamton's tryst with the locale's plutocrats is solidly backed, if not instigated, by SUNY Central in Albany. In 1992, SUNY Central provided a more defined, itemized rhetoric for cooperating with the agendas of the local riche by issuing *SUNY 2000: A Vision for the New Century*. Prepared by SUNY's Board of Trustees and the Office of the Chancellor, the slickly produced 90-odd page document is littered with psalmatic elocutions of a pro-corporate philosophy of education for the entire SUNY system.

SUNY Board of Trustees Chairman Federic Salerno, who is simultaneously president of New York Telephone, declares in *SUNY 2000*'s introduction, "Throughout the second half of the 20th

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ALL IS NOT LOST in Broome County. *The Labor/Community Reporter*, a newspap Opportunities for Broome (OFB), a legal-se upoverty agency, has printed monthly for 16 years, counters the incessant propaganda generated by the Partnership 2000 nabobs that presided over the county's economic dis-integration. This past issue of the *Reporter* included coverage of a vigil by activist Grace Lee Boggs of Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice, of a demonstration by Oneida Nation members for women's rights and democracy up in Syracuse, and of city and state laws protecting renters' rights to

GHT ZONE

TS MEDIA, ITS UNIVERSITIES—ENTERS

ROBERT WALLACE

ROBERT WALLACE

empty. Down the street between the Chemical Bank and the Woolworth's, past a row of sleazy student bars, is the state office building that was closed even before it opened. w closed–behind the little busstand and down the street is the Royale Lounge. Walk across the nearby parking lot and there's the Regency Hotel which sports a $11 million City biggest slum lord. Across the street is Boscov's, far right, and its 15-year 15% tax abartement. Behind the photographer is the often deserted Metro City Mall, also an owner of 2000 member. You get the picture? Now multiply that by thousands of counties and you've got a place called the United States of America.

century, the emergence of the research university has played an increasingly important part in the mission and organization of American higher education. As research-based, high-technology industries become the focus of extraordinary economic growth, California's Silicon Valley and North Carolina's Research Triangle are two striking examples, the contributions of university research to regional economic development become clear." No mention of the University of Minnesota's North Star Research Institute which, much like C3, was to generate ideas to invigorate the area's economy. The project did little but become a repository for classified information with which the university had no wish to be involved. Nor mention of Purdue's own industrial park–a total flop.

In *SUNY 2000* itself: "The state university must be able to develop young minds, forge the linkages between laboratory and market place, and serve as the focus of the generation of new knowledge...

"The university will provide technical assistance to business and industry in the form of management assistance, assistance in export and participation in global economic structures, econometric assessments, and technology-based innovation."

Later in the document: "SUNY also contributes to economic development through technology transfer, including creation of incubator facilities to foster high-tech industries and efforts to maximize the rate at which university research and inventions can be transferred to industry for further development or commercialization. Today, SUNY ranks in the top twenty universities nationwide in technology transfer." Tax-payer financed technology is handed over to private corporations; the costs are socialized, the profits privatized–an American tradition.

Why would the individual SUNY schools agree to this sell-out? Alongside bureaucratic obedience, the acceptance of a collegiate brand of free market fundamentalism corresponds to a decrease in state funding. In 1988-89, New York provided 72% of SUNY Binghamton's total operating expendictures. By 1991-92 it was down to 52%. In a new annual ritual, the school is forced to give back parts of its budget: $1.4 million here, $2.3 million there. Last year's tuition hike of $750 put tuition at $3,400 a semester and Pataki's budget proposal looks to force another $250 increase. Financial aid has correspondingly stagnated and even decreased. The poorer students are taking out more loans or are just dropping out.

In 1992 the administration changed the school's name to "Binghamton University" and a serious campaign was launched to attract private funding. Accompanying this de facto privatization is a further realignment of the school's raison d'etre; its intellectual capital and initiative would be used to advance the aims of the corporate class which could fund or defund the school.

In a telephone interview, Vice President Kelly implicitly confirmed that SUNY Central's philosophy was now operational procedure at the campus level. Kelly called SUNY Binghamton's participation in C3 integral to its mission as a public institution. "And given the state of affairs of the economy of our region, with all the layoffs," Kelly explained, "there were movements afoot in the community for us to be involved in economic development activities." The only member of the "community" Kelly named was the State's pro-business Department of Economic Development.

AT A 1993 PRESS CONFERENCE announcing a $452,269 U.S. Department of Labor grant to C3, both SUNY Binghamton president DeFleur and State Assemblyman James Tallon waxed poetic about C3's intended job creation. The U.S. Department of Labor grant, the first in a series of taxpayer-supplied subsidies, was issued, according to the SUNY Binghamton administration's newspaper *Inside*, "for the training and utilization of defense-displaced workers." Other 1993 subsidies included a $100,000 "training grant" from the New York State Department of Labor, and a $61,000 grant from the New York State Urban Development Corporation.

Ah, jobs. The 1990s political salve. The problem is C3 has little to do with job creation and more to do with trying to "help industry become globally competitive," not mutually inclusive things. Only forty "workers" were in the C3 workshops when last checked, incommensurable with the 10,000 manufacturing jobs lost. The job schtick is a red herring–the only positions created were management ones. Becoming "globally competitive" is in all likelihood too: As long as the public subsidies keep rolling in, a goal in itself, why worry? (This sounds cynical beyond belief, but given the county's history, it's a hypothesis to consider.)

"I guess you can say there are less jobs because you eliminate redundancy," Jack Rappaport, C3 executive director, explained, "you eliminate several people capable of doing the same job."

In the Spring 1993 issue of *Tier Focus*, the Broome County Chamber of Commerce's newspaper pulpit, C3 executive director Jack Rappaport made little of the job creation angle, "Conceived as an innovative partnership between industry, academia, and government, the Center for Commercial Competitiveness is intended to be a significant resource in the mitigation of the Southern Tier's heavily defense oriented economy to one which is commercial and aggressively competitive. C3 will play a major role in helping our region's industries make the transition into global product areas."

What the project boils down to is customizing a corporate fad–virtual corporations–for Southern Tier industry. In a *Business Week* article Rappaport cites in his own article, the virtual corporation is described as "a temporary network of independent companies...linked by information technology to share skills, costs, and access to one another's markets...a group of collaborators that quickly unite to exploit a specific opportunity."

Continuing along the virtual corporations' logic loop: By forging these so-called alliances, by eliminating redundancy, companies no longer have to create their products from top to bottom, and so less workers are needed and fewer jobs are created, right?

"No," Rappaport at first disagreed in a phone interview, "The jobs are just done more efficiently. I guess you can say there are less jobs because you eliminate redundancy, you eliminate several people capable of doing the same job, but maybe not all doing the job. In other words, if you get efficient, I guess by definition, you do eliminate jobs. That's the nature of competition. It eliminates jobs because it keeps people from sitting around and waiting for something to happen."

Later, when reminded that the project, according to several of its sponsors' rhetoric, was to be geared toward job creation, Rappaport responded, "That's not quite accurate. Industries in the area aren't relying on C3 as a means of creating jobs. C3 is an economic development activity which is something you undergo when you have some kind of mission. In this case, the mission of the economic development activity, that is, most economic development activity, is to create jobs. Not to create jobs for the sake of jobs.

"If you want to create jobs," Rappaport continued, "you take a whole lot of government money and you put it down and you pay people to do all kinds of useless, dumb work. That's one way of creating jobs. That's not what we're trying to do, obviously. We're trying to create jobs by creating products that people want to buy."

That corporations do not necessarily make jobs by creating popular products, that over the last several decades automation has eliminated millions of stable jobs, reducing the euphemistically named "labor costs," and creating, as President Flip Flop called it, a "global crisis" of unemployment didn't appear to play a part in Rappaport's Lewis Carrollesque absurdisms. Certainly most Broome County residents, promised the world, delivered only pain, wouldn't mind some "useless, dumb work" like nursing, firefighting, and teaching, honorable professions that would improve their communities underseiged.

But, you see, the reality is that "global crisis" is really only a socio-psychological "funk". Right? Right? ■

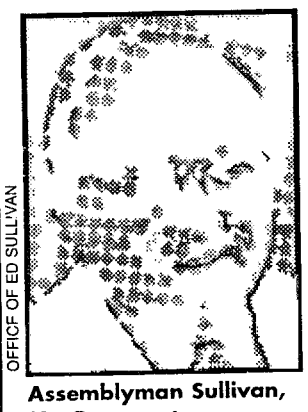
D FAST!

heat from their landlords. It also includes the indefatigable David Duncan, OFB's executive director, on corporate welfare: "The root of the economic problems we face is not due to a shrinking economic pie, but a massive redistribution of wealth from the middle and working class to the rich."

I've renewed my subscription. You can start yours by sending a check of what you can afford to: The Labor/Community Reporter, Box 1492, Binghamton, NY, 13902. If against such odds OFB can resist in Broome County, we certainly can do so here.–R.W.

THE FIREBRAND?

ED SULLIVAN, Democratic Chair of the Assembly Committee on Higher Education, spoke on Tuesday, November 21 before an audience of a dozen or so faculty, administrators, and students, all hastily notified only the day before. In the course of answering questions, he applauded the student demonstration at City Hall last March, blaming the violence on police and their tactics (or the lack thereof). He affirmed the effectiveness of demonstrations and recommended further direct action targeting Republicans. He made no mention of letter-writing as a lobbying strategy and had nothing to say regarding last year's letter-writing campaign.



OFFICF OF ED SULLIVAN

Assemblyman Sullivan, Mr. Democrat.

As usual Assemblyman Sullivan, a constant friend of CUNY's, presented to us his rhetorical ammunition for the fight against budget cuts to CUNY. Again, as usual, he did not fail to include his version of Democratic party-politicking demonstrate against the Republicans, they don't have New York's interests at heart, they are the bad guys -make a pub'ic poin' of that -the Democrats are on CUNY's side. Sullivan did not mention that the Democrats began the attack on CUNY under Cuomo and failed to resist the rhetoric of austerity handed them by Pataki last spring.

Among the arguments he presented for CUNY were:

• The report that recently appeared in The Chronicle of Higher Education proves unequivocally that CUNY is an institution of academic excellence.

• Such academic excellence is because of--not despite--openness and access. The more students allowed into CUNY, the greater the likelihood that talent and genius will be discovered among this wealth of New York's human resource.

• Liberal Arts education is not obsolete but rather always necessary for an economy and technology that is ever changing. It is specialization that courts obsolescence. Liberal arts education provides the best foundation for later diversification of skills, something that vocational training cannot provide.

• Taking longer to graduate is not a drawback. Most students today are "non-traditional [sic]." Maturity enhances the value derived from education.

• A tuition increase at CUNY is a tax increase. The funds from a public school's tuition increase do not revert to the school for its benefit; they go directly t› the State Treasury.

• CUNY makes money for New York, Research grants garnered by CUNY, most specifically by the graduate faculty, bring money into the State.

Sullivan then discussed tactics. Demonstrations, he asserted, are useful, but only if large. like last years protest at City Hall He thought that particular demonstration had made a bit of a difference. despite the violence which he attributed to police provocation. Where large numbers cannot be brought out, as few as one hundred can make an effective disruption by going together to lobby at district offices of Republican State Senators, picketing or obstructing traffic His recommended tactics seemed to emphasize public visibility. He did not mention letter-writing campaigns to legislators, but he did clearly indicate that the power of the vote is crucial.

He encouraged the faculty and administration to stand in solidarity with students on the issue of tuition. The goal should be to ensure access to quality education. The State as a whole will benefit from it. The State, says Sullivan, should pay for it. **–ROBERT HOLLANDER**

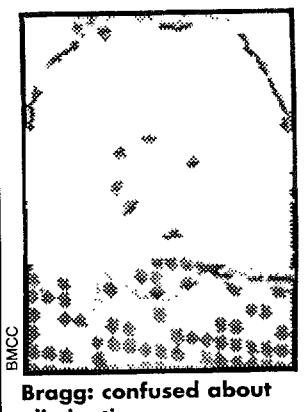
BMCC FACULTY REJECT RESTRUCTURING

ON WEDNESDAY, December 6, Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) faculty convened an open meeting at which faculty unanimously passed several important resolutions in opposition to President Antonio Perez's proposal to abolish the Departments of Cooperative Education and Physical and Health Education At issue is tne possible erosion, even elimina tion, of the tenure process for professors and their job security. At the end of November. faculty petitioned the president for a college-wide faculty meeting to voice their discontent with administrative policies on: 1) the college's mission statement; 2) administrative restructuring proposals; 3) faculty teaching loads; and 4) changes in class size.

The Advocate obtained a copy of the resolutions adopted by the BMCC faculty. The resolutions reasserted the vital role for students played by the two departments and rejected the plan to shift the departments' functions to Higher Education Office personnel (which carry no tenure status) under a Vice President for a new division of student affairs. They went on to state that, "the President's proposal has devastating implications for the entire City University of New York in that the destruction of departments sets precedents and creates the basis for dismantling tenure, breaking faculty service, circumventing seniority, and replacing senior and tenured faculty with lower-paid personnel who will have minimal job security and fewer rights." The faculty concluded with their sharp opposition to "all assaults on tenure, seniority and re appointment under the cover of 'institutional reorganization.'" They intend to enlist the support of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), the professors' union, and the University Faculty Senate to publicize the impact of President Perez's proposals on tenure and faculty rights and to defend the two departments slated for closure.

The administration justifies eliminating the two departments by claiming that it would save BMCC $600,000 which could be used to hire twenty new faculty members for the technical programs. According to state documents, CUNY colleges receive more funding from the state for technical departments than traditional liberal arts programs. The historically acceptable full time to part time faculty ratio in community colleges is 50/50. But currently at BMCC the ratio is 35 F/T faculty and 65 P/T, an imbalance faculty believe the CUNY administration tacitly approves. However, to retain the MiddleStates Association's (MSA) accreditation status the college must move to the 50/50 ratio.

Moreover, faculty are particularly worried about the current and future enrollments of students at BMCC as well as the administration's attempts to divide the faculty into liberal arts and technical career track departments (i.e. allied health, business and secretarial). BMCC faculty say that the problem with dividing the faculty into these two educational categories is that professors would lose seniority and tenure if departments close because faculty are tenured in departments and not by the college. At CUNY it takes five years for a professor to achieve tenure.



BMCC

Bragg: confused about eliminations.

BMCC Dean Sadie Bragg refuted the faculty's claims She stated in an *Advocate* interview that the programs aren't being eliminated, they're being "restructured". She detailed that 1) Physical Education would now entail unsupervised intramurals and 2) Health Education would be "consolidated" with the Health Alliance Sciences department. Sounds like elimination. Bragg then claimed the 50/50 faculty ratio was only a MSA target toward which to aim. Furthermore, Bragg bragged, BMCC's ratio is nationally comparable. This claim seems a bit spurious given that, according to Bragg herself, the point of "restructuring" is to free up enough money to hire more needed full-time faculty.**–ANDREA ZIMMERMAN & ROBERT WALLACE**

YORK COLLEGE STRIP MALL

A CONTROVERSY over the proposed development by

THE DSC SECRETS TO INFORM THE STUDENT BODY THAT DUE TO A SHORTFALL IN REVENUE FROM THE STUDENT ACTIVITY FEE

WE MUST DISCONTINUE FREE PHOTOCOPYING AT THE DSC OFFICE

IF INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH THE DSC TO LOOK FOR ALTERNATIVE FUNDING PLEASE CALL 642-2851

DSC NOTES

NEW CHAIR, MOTION TABLED

THE DSC PLENARY meeting was held on December 9. It last reported an unconfirmed rumor concerning the [illegible] of DSC Co[illegible] Tar McGann. McGann has indeed resigned her position. This position will now be filled by Robert Hollander. Hollander was elected by the plenary at the December 9 [illegible] Nominations were opened for the position of the steering committee vacated by Mr. Hollander.

Two reports featured prominently at this gathering, a report from the Graduate Council, and a report on diversity in the Music Ph.D. programs.

The essence of the report from the Graduate Council is the President's direction to the EOs to restrict requirements for candidacy to those explicitly laid out in the bulletin. The bulletin requires the completion of the second exam as part of the criteria for candidacy. The Student Services Committee then tabled a motion to suspend the level change criteria pending an investigation by the Committee. Also, a motion was passed to express the dissatisfaction of the plenary with the limited scale of the President's direction to the Executive Officers.

Hollander as fearless leader

The report on diversity in the Music Program was presented by Elliott Hurwitt. Hurwitt reported that there had been some improvement in the Department's efforts to improve minority recruitment. As of 1995-96, four more students of color have joined the department. Elliott also spoke to the department's efforts and he presented a copy of the EO's follow-up letter to a recruitment reception. He also addressed the difficulty of minority recruitment given limited financial resources and diminishing career prospects. The Plenary thus voted to draft a letter to the President to strongly urge continued support of these endeavors. This will be done in collaboration with the Committee on Diversity and Equal Opportunity.

The DSC also voted to set up a network to monitor the press. Established to counter the negative portrayals of CUNY in the media, this group should respond to such portrayals in a timely manner, and present an alternative media image of CUNY.

On budget matters, there was consensus to table a referendum for the raising of student activity fee. A motion was passed to compel [illegible] to submit information regarding usage, prior to January 1, 1996.

Finally, a motion was passed to investigate the needs of students and chartered organizations. Requests by the ISO and ABLLA for computers should be reconsidered in the light of this investigation.**–TERRENCE BLACKMAN**

LEVEL STRUCTURE CHANGES

AS WE ALL KNOW, this past summer the CUNY Board of Trustees agreed to change the structure of Levels and raise tuition as a way of dealing with significant budget cuts by the Governor. As some may not know, the level change was agreed to as an alternative to an across the board tuition increase of $1,750 for graduate students. According to Steve Gorlick in the President's Office, Chancellor Reynolds initiated the idea and President Horowitz signed off on it, believing that the adjustment in Level criteria would be less burdensome than the full tuition increase.

Since the decision was made over the summer, there was little or no consultation with faculty or students on this change. The timing pressures did not allow for a full consideration of either the political or academic impact on this change. It is now clear that some students are choosing to take unanticipated leaves of absence after completing course work because they cannot afford to pay Level II tuition while studying for their second exam or preparing their dissertation proposals. And the Governor has proposed yet another tuition increase.

The most important academic consequence has been the effect that departmental exam procedures have had on student's tuition levels. Under the old system tuition levels were not based on exam completion but only on course completion. As a result, some departments only offered first exams on a yearly basis, and the [illegible] dissertation proposal and [illegible] completion of the dissertation itself. These procedures now have dire financial implications for students.

In the last two months there have been several initiatives addressing these problems. The Student Services Committee of the Graduate Council has begun an investigation of department exam procedures to determine if there are ways in which they could be adjusted to help students move more efficiently through exams without reducing the academic standards of the program.

In November the DSC asked that a motion be brought to the Graduate Council suspending the level change pending an investigation of its academic impact. The Graduate Council is charged with the responsibility to approve any academic changes at the Graduate Center. Since the Board of Trustees considered the Level change decision a tuition issue, it did not seek the Council's approval. Members of the DSC, however, argue that the proposal does have academic implication and thus comes under the purview of the Council. They also want to send a strong message to 80th Street and the Trustees that the tuition increase and Level change is a significant hardship for students.

At the December 7th meeting of the Graduate Council the motion was made and a debate commenced. President Horowitz stated that she felt the council did not have the authority to suspend the Level changes. She did, however, voice her support for efforts to streamline departmental exam procedures. At a recent meeting of Executive Officers she pointed out that the Graduate Center's own bylaws do not require an approved dissertation proposal for advancement to candidacy (and thus Level III). After a brief debate the motion was referred back to the Student Services and Degree and Curriculum Committees for further consideration.

At the December 15th meeting of the Student Services Committee, members voted to request that the Provost's Office send a letter to programs pointing out the implications of the Level change and encouraging departments to consider ways in which their exam procedures might unnecessarily delay students moving from one Level to the next. The

CUNY CLIPBOARD

ROBERT WALLACE

York College's Starbucks Cafe?

CUNY of a strip mall on vacant property adjacent to York College has angered faculty and students. The empty lot, located along Guy Brewer Boulevard between Jamaica Avenue and Linden Boulevard, was supposed to be set aside for the construction of a day care facility and student center. But that may not happen if a deal goes forward between CUNY and The New York City Partnership, which is a consortium of business organizations specializing in the construction of federally funded housing units and retail malls. The York College master plan, drawn up in the 1970s when the college was still under construction, designates the empty lot for a student center and day care facility. Instead, CUNY and The Partnership want to develop the property for commercial use to include a Barnes and Noble Bookstore with a Starbucks Cafe, and other small shops.

The New York Times reported that the New York City Partnership is also building 30 two-family housing units south of York College which are partially federally subsidized. This development, along with the York land, is one of five designated shopping districts to be funded by $4.8 million in grants and $15 million in guaranteed loans through Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Giuliani administration participates in the selection of sites for federally subsidized residential and commercial zones.

Besides these retail stores, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) plans to use the campus as the site for its largest laboratory outside its national headquarters in Maryland. They plan to use the new facility to test cosmetics, food, drugs and pharmaceutical products. College administrators claim the presence of the FDA facility would strengthen York's health and sciences department. However, some faculty and students have voiced opposition to the administration's plans, viewing them as a turn towards technical programs at York through the implementation of applied course offerings, potentially jeopardizing the viability of liberal arts programs

The college is among the newest schools in the CUNY system. With the forced restructuring of its education, remedial and activities programs, the college has witnessed its once $24 million operating budget dwindle by $2.1 million. The recent budget cutbacks eliminated secondary education programs and consolidated a state-mandated remedial program into the liberal arts curricula. Faculty and students have maintained that the budget cuts are part of the administration's broader plans to eliminate liberal arts programs. What faculty and students fear the most is that, as a result of the administration's austerity measures, the college will be reduced to merely a two year technical college.

York's restructuring plans has brought to the surface tensions surrounding racial representation of faculty as well as questions about the priorities of University administrators in heavily cutting a primarily black school. According to demographic data published in the *Times*, approximately 67% of the faculty is white, while 62% of the student body is black. Twenty-two percent of the professors at the college are black. Seventeen percent of the college's student body is Hispanic. Asian students comprise 12.5% and 7.9% are white. The typical York College student is a 28 year old black female with a child.

College faculty and students oppose the private development of the site because they maintain that the conversion of the empty property would violate the original stipulation of the college's master plan. Nor do they believe CUNY administration's contention that the student center and day care facility projects will be included in the revised construction proposal. CUNY officials did not notify York faculty and students of the commercial development until after CUNY had already begun negotiations with The Partnership. Faculty and students argue that working class families will be priced out of the retail establishments since they can not afford to patronize the proposed shops.

In November, the York Faculty Caucus unanimously voted against the CUNY-New York City Partnership land deal.**–ANDREA ZIMMERMAN**

STANDE AND DELIVER

ON NOVEMBER 11 STANDE (Students Taking Action for Non-Discriminatory Education) held a conference on last spring's student movement and how to move forward. The conference contained a panel and open discussions as well as workshops on organizing skills and informational workshops on issues of concern to a revived student movement.

The conference was well attended–a total of roughly ninety students from CUNY, the New School for Social Research, New York University, and even Rutgers and Vassar College, attended. A plenary meeting on Sunday the 12 resulted in setting a date–December 9–to plan actions.

The conference was organized by activists including some non-students, some students from local private colleges, and some members of last spring's CUNY Coalition, the group which held the March 23 demonstration at City Hall. Their explicit intention was, on the one hand, to jump start the flagging student movement without, on the other hand, appearing to co-opt a leadership role. So even though the group STANDE defined its existence as terminating after this conference, a date for further planning was part of the conference agenda. Because the organizers represented a small group which did not include the most radical among student activists, in contrast to the CUNY Coalition which represented a broad spectrum of views, they were acutely sensitive to issues of openness, democracy, and individual empowerment. Fortunately, they intend to move forward regardless of any questions of legitimacy. How this group will resolve the conflicts between "radicalism" and "reformism" which some claim plagued the CUNY Coalition, remains to be seen.**–ROBERT HOLLANDER**

PRODDING QUEENS'S PANDER BEAR

THE FOLLOWING is an excerpt from an open letter to Queens College president Allen Lee Sessoms from 60 members of the Queens faculty. The letter was printed on the front page of *The Queens College Quad*.

We as members of the College faculty are shocked and angry at the recent proposed policies ostensibly prompted by draconian budgets. Your administration's attempts to increase faculty work-load, replace public funding with private support, and erode the faculty's traditional role in college governance are short-sighted and unworkable. Most alarming is the claim that these cutbacks are for the benefit of students, when in fact they are contemptuous of our students' needs...

As President of the College, it is your responsibility to intervene in public perceptions, not pander to them. We need you to defend our institution rather than contriving ways to make us "look busy" to politicians and a public in sore need of better information...

In sum, we ask: Why is your administration accepting and aggravating the intolerable constraints placed upon this institution? You should be making the case to the government and public that we cannot function in this way. In the context of catastrophic cuts, the pretense that we can become "first class" is a cruel joke. If we continue on the present course, we will sink to a third rate school; our students' prospects will sink with our failure, and the faculty will sink, we fear, into sullen despair...

DSC NOTES

Committee also intends to track which departments have made changes and to solicit input from students who may feel that particular departments could make helpful changes.

The DSC is also soliciting student opinion on this matter and will be holding a forum in February for that purpose. They also intend to offer up a resolution to the Graduate Council criticizing the Trustees decision last summer. And all of this will be occurring in the context of the Governor's proposal to again increase tuition and cut funding for CUNY and SUNY schools.

Students who wish to raise concerns about their department's exam procedures may contact Alex Vitale on the Student Services [illegible] 8-398 7-74 [illegible] DSC Co-Coordinator for Student Affairs. [illegible]

ALEX VITALE

RED LETTER DAY

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES [illegible] planning to [illegible] an additional [illegible] in the form of a CUNY-wide standardized assessment test. They justify this requirement by pointing to the same mandate for certification that forced the colleges to institute the existing placement exams. The Board further claims that the test will enhance the value of a CUNY undergraduate degree.

The new test will be designed to be taken at the end of the second undergraduate year (following 60 credits of course work), and it will prevent those who fail it from continuing on to upper level courses in pursuit of their majors. Those who fail three times will be subject to dismissal.

The preliminary proposal was presented to the University Student Senate on December 10 by George Otte, professor of English at Baruch College and chair of the Assessment Planning Committee. A heated exchange on the floor of the senate resulted in the following letter: [Watch next month's *Advocate* for a full critique of the proposed assessment test.]

December 12, 1995

Dear Dr. Otte,

I write to register my concern over the two issues we discussed on Sunday at the University Student Senate

1) the application of one standard assessment test to a linguistically diverse community;

2) the use of the assessment test as a retention requirement.

If the test is to assess analytical ability, that test should not discriminate between native speakers of Standard English and non-native speakers of Standard English. It seems patently unrealistic to suppose that a test given in English will not be easier for native speakers to pass than for non-native speakers of [illegible]

[illegible] being tied to dismissal. Such a punitive measure [illegible] the [illegible] the test and inimical to the mission of the university itself. Where the goal is education, dismissal [illegible] from the educational [illegible]

My understanding of the justification behind such an exam [illegible] appear at all educational, by the way – is that certification will enhance the CUNY degree in the eyes of those who might doubt the value of a degree from an institution with no entry requirement. The degree is enhanced when it can be shown that it is given only to those who have achieved academic excellence. The degree is diminished when it is given to those who do not deserve it. Students struggling but failing to get that degree do not fall into either category. As long as failing students are not given degrees, there should be no cause for concern about the value of CUNY education. The degree is in no way enhanced by eliminating students from the rolls. There may be financial reasons that the federal and state governments prefer fewer students at CUNY, but that is a separate issue.

In short, if dismissal is to be a possible outcome of failure to pass this assessment test, or if the test is intended to downsize or facilitate government defunding of the university, then the name of the exam should reflect these motives. It should then be promoted as a retention exam, not a mere assessment. The current title is disingenuous and manipulative.**–ROBERT HOLLANDER**

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

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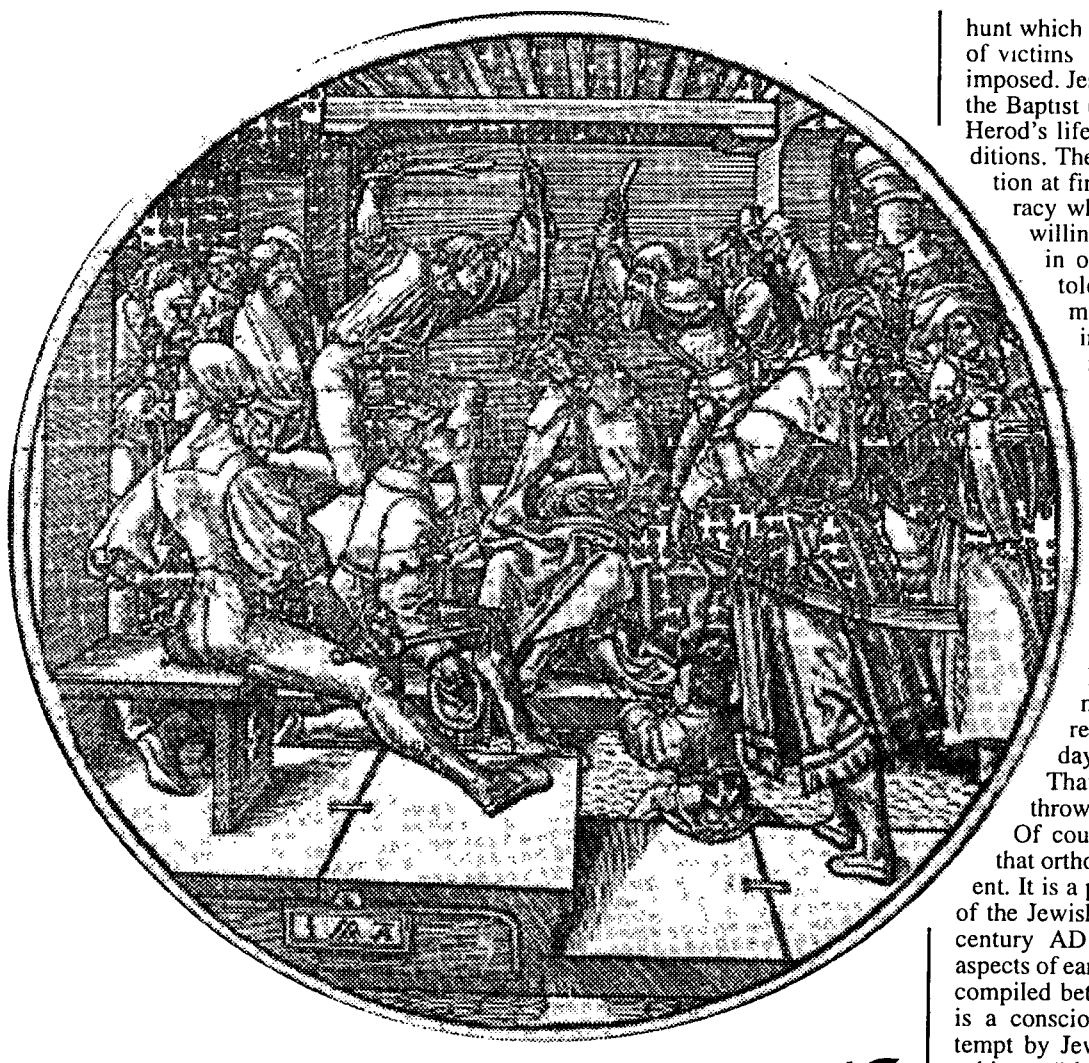
This project will hopefully result in a useful and publishable guide to survival in the Big Apple without becoming sauce. Real-life stories, advice, anecdotes, sketches, drawings, bibliographies, guides, don'ts, i.e., snake & alligator pit listings and more than anything, personal stories of triumph and woe are needed. CUNY doctoral students are unique in the universe, and we might be able to corner a sub-universe of the publishing market to generate funds for ourselves and other starving colleagues.

This community effort is slated to be in part living history, in part universal guide to New York, part dissertation / exam marathon training manual, part guide to living on the edge and loving it with gritted teeth and triumphal entry into the doctoral job market. Please send contributions/ ideas/ comments or questions to Laura Whitaker c/o the DSC office (GC Room BM 001). We need people willing to be a part of an exciting action-packed journey into self-knowledge, improving graduate school quality of experience, sharpening graduate school survival skills and community involvement. E-Mail contributions may be made to Chris McCarthy MCMGC@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU.



WOODCUT BY JACOB CORNELISZ

Jesus Super Red

Was Jesus a radical?
By Duncan Hallas

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Not peace but a sword. This does not accord at all with the picture of "gentle Jesus, meek and mild," but there it is: Jesus addressing the twelve apostles in the *Gospel* according to *St. Matthew* (chapter 11). Later on in the same book, Jesus says: *"Verily, I say onto you, there shall not be left here (in Jerusalem) one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."* And in answer to the disciples' question, *"Tell us when shall these things be?"* he replies:*"Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all things are fulfilled."* Not *"peace and goodwill to all men,"* but the world turned upside down, and not in the distant future either, but*"in this generation."*

This revolutionary message, odd fragments of which survive, embedded in the New Testament is the real starting point of what became of Christianity. It is the reason Jesus was crucufied as a rebel by the Roman rulers of Palestine. *"Art thou the King of the Jews"* asked the Roman governor Pilate, and his prisoner would not deny it. We know very little about Jesus apart from the fact that he was certainly crucified by Pilate. This may seem a surprising thing to say since the four Gospels contain a wealth of stories about his sayings and doings. But they are not real history. They are rewritten, as contemporary Roman pagan critic Celsus said, *"three times, four times and many times,"* in the interests of a church that was trying to make its peace with the Roman Empire.

All those sayings and stories that made this difficult were suppressed so far as was at all possible. The oldest sections incorporated in the Gospels date to around forty or fifty years after the execution of Jesus, which probably took place after AD 30. In the form that we have them now, they are not older than about AD 150-180. None of them is the work of an eyewitness or even a contemporary. The most–certainly genuine sayings of Jesus that the Gospels preserve are exactly those, some of which I have quoted, which contradict the later teachings of the Church. Too well known to too many of the early Christians to be suppressed outright, they were buried amongst masses of pious fables and explained away. But they are there, *"for all those who have eyes to see."*

WE DO KNOW, from Roman writers, something of the circumstances of the time. The Roman slave empire conquered Palestine 63 BC. Thirty thousand Jews were then sold into slavery.

At first Jewish puppet rulers were used to control the provinces. The last of them, King Herod, died in 4 BC, hated by the mass of the Jewish people.

His long, drawn-out death agonies (he was killed by cancer of the bowel) are described with glee by both Jewish and early Christian writers.

A general rebellion of the Jewish peasantry followed and its suppression by the Roman legions led to another vast slave hunt which rounded up tens of thousands of victims. Direct Roman rule was then imposed. Jesus, and his predecessor, John the Baptist (executed towards the end of Herod's lifetime), grew up in these conditions. There was no *religious* persecution at first. The slave-owning plutocracy which ruled the empire was as willing to tolerate the Jewish belief in one God as it was willing to tolerate the British belief in many Gods. What they did insist on was the progressive reduction of the working people to conditions of slavery or near slavery.

But Jewish monotheism, rooted in the more distant past, did provide an ideology of *revolt* superior, more persuasive, than the "old religions" of France (Gaul), Spain or Britain. So, the Jews played a special part in the resistance to Roman imperialism. And so, monotheism came to be regarded by the rulers of the day as equivalent to rebellion. That is why Christians were thrown to the lions.

Of course, we have to undesrtand that orthodox Judaism today is different. It is a product *both* of the rejection of the Jewish revolutionaries of the first century AD and of the revolutionary aspects of early Christianity. The Talmud, compiled between AD 100 and AD 500, is a conscious reaction against the attempt by Jews to change *this* world, to achieve *"the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth."* Modern Judaism, like modern Christianity, is essentially conservative.

But when we say that Jesus was an orthodox Jew *in his time,* we mean that he was a *revolutionary.* A series of revolts broke out in Palestine. The climax was the great rebellion of AD 68-70. The Zealots (the militant Pharisee Jewish party) and the Christians (all of them also Jews at the time) led it and were decisively defeated by the forces of the Roman Empire. Jerusalem was indeed destroyed. Slavery triumphed. The diaspora, the dispersion of the Jewish people, began.

Jesus was the leader of an earlier (about AD 28-30) and less impressive revolt. He did indeed claim to be the King of the Jews, the founder of a Kingdom of social justice in which *"it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God."* The rebellion was quickly crushed with the help of the conservative Saducees and the right wing of the Pharisees. The would-be Messiah (savior) of the Jews was crucified–a barbarous method of capital punishment from which Roman citizens were supposed to be exempt.

WHY THEN, do we know of him rather than of the tens of thousands of other crucified rebels and slaves? Because King Jesus also appealed to the Gentiles, to the great majority of non-Jewish slaves and poor freedmen of the Roman Empire. His message was one of Universal Salvation, he was no Zionist. And, after the catastrophic defeat of AD 68-70, it was amongst pagans, gentiles, that his message took root. True, it took root in a very distorted form. St. Paul, an assimilated Jew and a Roman citizen who has often been called *"the real founder of Christianity,"* preached a mystical *"salvation through Christ Jesus"* which was to take place in the next world rather than this this.

It is a difficult idea for us to understand today but it fitted in well with the widespread pagan belief in the *"dead and risen savior"* who died that *"the people may live."* Pauline Christianity was a retreat from the insurrectionary Christianity of the established churches. Paul and his followers rejected as evil *"the powers and principalities of the World."* They *"would not bow down in the House of Rimmon,"* that is, they would not recognize the empire–its army, its police, its laws, its courts.

Paul, in his turn, was also crucified because he too would not submit to the tyrrany of the great slave empire.*"For there is neither bond nor free, Jew nor Gentile,"* he wrote and he died in that belief.

IDEAS, BELIEFS, aspirations can rise only a little way above material conditions. The defeat of great slave revolts (Spartacus was of the generation immediately before Jesus) and the revolts of previously free peasantries being driven down in slavery (in Palestine, Anatolia, Spain, and Britain) drive the oppressed masses of the Roman world to look for salvation in the world to come. For a time Pauline Christianity fulfilled this need, and in spite of the savage persecution, it grew apace. Its very success produced a "reformist bureaucracy" out of its ranks, a bureaucracy of deacons, prebyteries and oppression. Three centuries after the killing of King Jesus, they achieved their end. Christianity became the state religion of the Empire.

It is a mistake to think that it was to imply, even at this stage, a religion of *"the rich man his castle, the poor man at his gate: God gave to each his station and ordered his estate."* That is a feudal (and later a capitalist) prostitution of Christianity. Rather it was genuinely other worldly and its real context, for the mass of believers, is best conveyed by another hymn:

"There is a green hill far away
Without a city wall
Where our dear Lord was crucified
He died to save us all."

Which is not an establishment view at all.

And later, with the breakdown of feudalism, the radical opponents of the Old Order expressed Their hopes in terms drawn from the half-buried revolutionary ideas of Christianity.*"No King, but Jesus"* was the battle-cry of the extreme left wing of the extreme left wing of the English revolutionaries of the seventeenth.

We put it in different words, but is the ideal so very different?

Duncan Hallas is a leading socialist from Britain.

Kwanzaa

An African American cultural celebration of life
By Terrence Blackman

KWANZAA is way of life. In its popular manifestations it is an African American celebration of the goodness and the connectedness of life. It is not tied to any religious order. It is celebrated from December 26 to December 31.

KWANZAA was first celebrated by African Americans in the 1960s. Its originator is Dr. Maulana Ron Karenga. KWANZAA was born out of a need to counteract the economic exploitation of African Americans during the Christmas Season. Its development was also a response to the absence of officially sanctioned holidays which spoke to the African American experience. Dr. Karenga envisioned creating a framework for African American life which would draw on African American tradition, to provide guide–posts for living. Hence the seven principles of KWANZAA.

1. UMOJA–The striving for and the maintenance of unity in the family, the community, the race, and the nation.
2. KUJICHAGULIA–The pursuit of self determination.
3. UJIMA–Collective work and responsibility: to build and maintain communities.
4. UJAMAA–Cooperative economics: to collectively build and maintain instruments of economic viability.
5. NIA–Purpose
6. KUUMBA–Creativity: To work in such a manner with the resources at our disposal that our communities will inherit things that are beautiful, and beneficial as a result of our work.
7. IMANI–Faith: In our parents, our teachers, our people, and in the righteousness of our struggle.

Preparations for KWANZAA celebrations begin on the 12th of December. A family meeting is held, and family members are assigned various tasks for the celebration. On December 19, the family gathers and arranges the KWANZAA icons. A straw mat called the MKEKA, the KINARA, a candle holder with seven candles, the MUHINDI (ears of corn), the ZAWADI (gifts), the KIKOMBE CHA UMOJA, a unity cup, some water and soil referred to as TAMBIKO, a basket of fruit, and the BENDARA YA TAIFA the flag of the Black Nation.

The family then fasts from sunrise to sunset during the next week. On the 26th of December the KWANZAA celebration begins. Over the next seven days the family reflects on each of the seven principles. They reaffirm their commitment to each other and their community. The focus of the celebration is reflection, gifts ought to be of minimal financial value, and they are directed towards the explication of the seven principles.

On December 31, the KARAMU (feast) is held. This event begins and ends with prayer. Food, music, dance are the highlight of this evening. In some families, all gifts are opened on this day.

Individuals seeking more information can access KWANZAA resources by viewing the Melanet Home Page on the internet.

A happy KWANZAA to all.

A Lesson in Lights

The Meaning of Chanukah

By Susanne Strudler

from THE ART OF JEWISH LIVING

It was the night we lit the fourth light of Chanukah, and in the big silver menorah on the windowsill four small glass cups of oil burned, and to their far left, past the yet unlit four, burned the shamash, from which all others draw their fire. It was blustery outside, but in the warm living room of my parents' house it was cozy–my grandparents were visiting, my sister, parents were there and my great uncle Sam. There is often a time in one's teenage years when one clings to the little family get-togethers–the feeling of being in a warm safe environment becomes more important, as life's steps begin to lead one further and further away from safety nets that are an evening at home with family. I remember that it was the year 1985 because Uncle Sam began in a slow, factual voice, "Forty years since the end of the war." We knew he did not mean the war as seen from the perspective of an American soldier nor a patriot on the home front listening every day for news reports from Europe; rather "The War" meant one thing: four years spent in concentration camps in Poland.

"This Chanukah, forty years ago I felt like a true Macabee," Uncle Sam declared, "because just like the Macabees who had not been able to light their Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash (the Holy Temple in Jerusalem) because of Greek religious repression, I had not seen the lights of my Chanukah menorah for four years while we were in the camps. In forty-five I was in a DP camp, waiting to go to Israel, and there we lit Chanukah candles again for the first time. We didn't have a menorah, we stuck candles in halves of potatoes–but we lit them. Oh, but I felt like a Macabee who returned to the Temple and was reunited with the menorah again. They may have been potatoes, but they seemed to me like the great gold menorah in Jerusalem to me!" I was mesmerized to hear Uncle Sam talk about anything that happened before he moved to Israel; only in recent years had he begun to mention any of his experiences during the war.

Perhaps in an effort to lighten up the conversation my grandfather commented "Those Macabees sure were brave."

"Yes, they were brave," Uncle Sam smiled a little, "but probably not in the way most people think. People think that they were warriors–just like the Assyrian Greeks who they were fighting against, only that luck was with them–and perhaps they were a little smarter or better strategists–so they won their nationalist fight against the Greek Imperialists. They won back the right to their culture, and lit the menorah as a sign of their religious identity and cultural heritage. Most of this is quite untrue. I know you guys learned the whole story in school," Sam nodded at my sister and me, "and I'm sure that they teach the miraculous quality of the victory, but they can't stress enough that these were not 'warriors' who were leading this war–they were students of Talmud and Torah who had not used swords or bows and arrows before. They acted out of dire necessity–if anything they were worse strategists and ignorant of military procedures. These students got up to fight with a belief that God would guide their hand because they realized the danger of the Greeks' friendly platform: the Greeks were not trying to commit genocide the way the Germans were forty years ago–this was not a war for the Jews' bodies but for their hearts. The Greeks were, most simply stated, trying to annihilate Judaism, not Jews. If the Jews were to comply, assimilate, become Hellenized, there would be a most friendly reception for them in Greece. This sounds very neighborly except that of course the Jews did not want to forsake their religion. So the persecutors outlawed the teaching of the Torah and Jewish laws, they outlawed (under penalty of death, of course–those Greeks meant business) many types of religious observance. Jewish culture, such as language, festivals, national dress, was basically permitted–the Greeks forbade no one in their vast Empire his particular culture, but they wanted people to be Hellenized. In the Jews' case this generally meant something much more sinister than wearing Greek dress or learning their language. It meant ascribing to their beliefs in the importance of the physical over the spiritual, athletic and aesthetic beauty over devotion to a God; they wanted the Jews in the gymnasiums and circuses, not in the practice of religion."

"May I ask, professor, what this has to do with a menorah?" asked my grandfather, seemingly disconcerted to have his view of brave Judah Macabee the warrior changed into a Yeshiva boy in defense of spirituality.

"Yes you may ask," Sam returned, "It was not a pretty picture in the great, beautiful Temple during the uprising, as you may know. In vengeance, the Greeks had led a pig into a sanctuary. They had placed their heathen idols in this place of monotheism, broken all they could find, ransacked the place, and sacrificed non-kosher animals on the altars. Apparently what they claimed was a little friendly invitation to partake of their culture ran much deeper in their doctrines. With a passion akin to religion they needed to force people to demonstrate belief that this life is all there is and that there is no God to help you through it. The gods are above nothing–they have the same jealousies and passions as any human, they are arbitrary, they don't seek out justice in any way. Oh–the menorah, you asked. Picture what happened: these battle-weary sons of Matisyahu (Mattathias) have lost a few of their number in battle with well-trained Greek soldiers and their war elephants. Finally the Jews enter their precious holy Temple to find it in ruins. They discover one small vial of oil untouched and unbroken–you know this part, I know–and it lasts for eight days, the time required to produce more oil, instead of only one day. Fine, very good. They get to relight the menorah which was a mitzva (one of God's commandments) to keep burning in the Temple each night till dawn, and they were very happy. Why? Not because they had defeated the great Greek army and were proud of themselves. They knew it was only through a miracle that they had defeated an army much more skilled and numerous than themselves–and believe me because I have seen miracles, that when you see one, you understand that it is not a natural occurrence. That I am here today is a miracle. That people walked out of that fire in Europe to start families, to rebuild worlds–that is a miracle, so don't tell me that maybe there was just more oil in the bottle than they'd thought at first glance."

Uncle Sam cleared his throat, and resumed quietly, "The light of the menorah is the fire that burns inside a person which transcends the 'here and now' and stands up for his beliefs. Unfortunately, those beliefs sometimes include the need to say that mitzvas are worth dying for, as many people were put to death in that era. The belief of those Macabees who relit the Menorah was that all the beauty and culture Greece was known for at the time when it was considered the 'Light of Civilization' is darkness if art and pleasure, and circuses and the glorification of the body are thought of as ends unto themselves. In reaction to this 'darkness' they lit the menorah. So the rabbis of that generation made Chanukah into a holiday not only to commemorate the great miracle that happened over 2100 years ago, they wanted to tell us of the message that is true in every generation–that we don't just light the menorah to remember an historic event. I mean, that would be enough, but there's more..." Uncle Sam paused to take a bite of the latkes my mother had just put in front of him.

"The menorah is to remind us that part of the Jews' bravery in this historic time was not to be afraid to rebuff even an attractive, welcoming prevalent culture if it brought with it a system of beliefs they could not tolerate. They just could not live by the doctrine of 'eat, drink and be merry'...though, speaking of which I must say, Jean, these latkes are very good."

"Picture it," Uncle Sam said, no longer in a factual tone, but dreamy-eyed, envisioning some Macabees of Ancient Israel whose stories he had heard since his early youth, " the whole reason we eat latkes on Chanukah is because they are fried in oil, and the one little vial of oil was the crux of it all to the Macabees.

I heard my mother mumble, "I used Pam."

"They were fighting on hot, bloody battlefields in hand-to-hand combat in hopes of finding a few drops of oil. They were dreaming of it like the soldier dreams of returning home. Why? All for the sake of performing one more of God's commandments which was so important to them–and because if they could reclaim their Temple they would be able to remove all decrees against religious observance from their land. That does indeed embody the ideas they were fighting to uphold."

Susanne Strudler is a History student at the Graduate School.

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Zapatista!

The fire next door

BY COURTNEY E. GUTHREAU

WILL MEXICO BE the next Vietnam? Subcommander Marcos thinks so. In an open letter to the people of the U.S., the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (or EZLN)–a largely indigenous, armed resistance movement in the southeast state of Chiapas–issues a wake-up call for Americans:

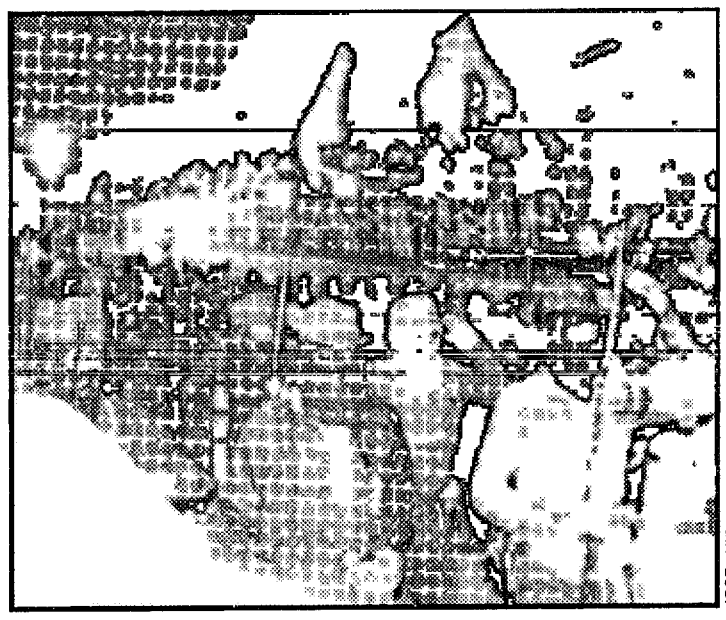
"Today, in 1995, after 20 years and tens of thousands of dead and wounded, the government of the United States acknowledges its mistakes in Vietnam. Today the government of the United States is becoming involved in the dirty war of the Mexican government against the Zapatista people by providing military equipment, advisors, covert actions, electronic spy systems, financing, diplomatic support, and the activities of the Central Intelligence Agency. It is not necessary to wait 20 years before acknowledging the mistakes of continued involvement in this unjust war. It is possible for the people of the United States to stop and not repeat the mistakes of history."

While such a statement may appear unfounded at first glance, recent developments provide alarming evidence of a deepening U.S. commitment to the systematic elimination of the Zapatista movement–and perhaps any resistance movement–on either side of the border.

While the rebels have continuously reported the presence of U.S. military advisors in Chiapas, the U.S. government denies any involvement. However, in a recent visit to Mexico, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry admitted that both countries are not only linked politically and economically, but militarily, as well. Stating, according to *La Jornada*, "When it comes to stability and security, our destinies are also indissolubly linked," Perry added, "If one of our nations sneezes, it gives the other a cold." As the cold winds of neo-liberalism sweep over the continent, both countries aim to be ready to combat any epidemic of resistance by redefining and coordinating their "security relations."

The EZLN rebellion was initiated by some two thousand, largely indigenous, campesinos in the early morning hours New Year's Day 1994 and has since gathered wide-spread support throughout the country. Timed to coincide with the implementation of NAFTA–an agreement the EZLN characterizes as a "death sentence" for their way of life–the Zapatistas' initial military strike was powerful but short-lived. Journalists documented the use of U.S. DEA helicopters in the brutal repression that followed.

Peace negotiations, on-going due to pressure from the Mexican public, were suspended abruptly this past February. Badly shaken by a series of peso devaluations and further spurred by a Chase Emerging Markets memo urging him to seize control or risk further delays in foreign investments, then newly-elected President Zedillo made a desperate attempt to break the country's fascination with then rebels by ceremoniously "unmasking" their military leader Subcommander Marcos (with the help of the CIA) as a middle-class professor (Marcos denies this). Simultaneously, a slew of arrest warrants were issued for alleged Zapatistas throughout the country while the military invaded the conflict zone.



JOSE LUIS

EZLN troops at National Democratic Convention in the Lacandon rain forest, August 1994.

The miscalculation was readily evident in the shows of solidarity that followed. 20,000 peasants fled with the rebels into the Lacandon rain forest, remaining for over one month without supplies. Hundreds of thousands marched in Mexico City demanding the withdrawal of troops from Chiapas and chanting, "Todos somos Marcos" ("We are all Marcos"). International solidarity groups staged demonstrations at Chase banks and Mexican consulates throughout the world.

Since then, overt repression has been replaced with a more covert strategy. For example, when Zapatista supporters returned from the jungle, they found their homes and few worldly possessions destroyed; their water and crops were contaminated. Yet neighbors who did not flee from the troops were not subject to the destruction of their homes, intensifying divisions within towns and greatly destabilizing the region.

Known as "low-intensity warfare," this form of systematic, indirect destabilization was specifically developed to undermine internal grassroots resistance movements. It is no coincidence that the Mexican military, along with the Guatemalan military and others, has opted to pursue low-intensity warfare, as it is a core component of training received by Latin American military personnel at the School for the Americas. Paradoxically, the School of the Americas, now located in Georgia, was founded as a direct result of anti-war protests during the Vietnam era, when the need for more covert forms of military intervention became apparent.

Recently, the doctrine of low intensity warfare and U.S. efforts to promote it were condemned when Cecilia Rodriguez, EZLN representative in the U.S. and head of the U.S. National Commission for Democracy in Mexico (NCDM), was brutally raped. Visiting Chiapas to attend the peace talks, Rodriguez was assaulted in broad daylight by three men whose remarks during the attack made their political motivations clear. Far from a random act of violence, non governmental organizations throughout the state report marked increases of rape–yet another weapon in the arsenal of low-intensity warfare.

The NCDM is spearheading a letter writing campaign to demand a Congressional investigation into U.S. military involvement in Mexico. They seek full disclosure of the plans and activities of the Defense Department, CIA, and military advisors and trainers, as well as full accounting of military sales, leases, and gifts to the Mexican government. In addition, the NCDM urges letter writers to demand the suspension of all U.S. economic and military aid to the Mexican government pending compliance with international human rights accords.

While growing economic interdependence between the U.S. and Mexico is clear with the passage of NAFTA and the controversial $20 billion bailout package, growing military interdependence is less publicized. If you agree that the U.S. government must clearly state its position, sign the petition located in the basement mezzanine. ◘

Courtney E. Guthreau is a Sociology student at the Graduate School.

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FASCISM CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

izenship expedited by President Reagan himself. He could not own more than 25% of U.S. media enterprises unless he was a U.S. citizen. Mr. Murdoch has financed, through his Harper-Collins enterprise (a Basic Books subsidiary), the books of Margaret Thatcher and Newt Gingrich. The FCC, which is supposed to protect the State's interests (and hence its citizen's interests), has given Murdoch exception to numerous federal laws, helping him to consolidate his global corporate empire. The FCC stipulates that no individual (corporations are individuals in American law) can own both a TV station and newspaper in the same city. Supposedly this ensures a diversity of competing views in the market, protects democracy, and ensures that no one individual has too much control over information. Yet, the FCC has made numerous exceptions for Murdoch. Not only is there a tight linkage between state and big business, but some politicians and sectors of the state, in collaboration with big business, violate some of the very principles their platforms are built upon. This is not about conspiracy, but collusion and the linkages generated by it.

Fascism is never monolithic; it is dynamic and multidimensional. Fascism can be singularly or simultaneously a social movement, an ideology and expression of class interests, a political party seeking state power, or even a state, regime, or social order. Fascism still appeals to nationalist sentiments, even if it is not exactly clear what the role of national identity is today in the face of globalization. Yet, the appeal to nationalist sentiments can work in that they define a "true people" in relation to an undeserving and dangerous horde of infidels. Thus immigrants and minorities are particularly susceptible to being portrayed as the cause of the national crisis, even if its actual sources are varied and partially global in nature. In this way xenophobia can become a political platform as well as notions of the "weak" (e.g., the poor, aged, addicted), and portrayed as social problems that must be eliminated.

Another related concern is the emergence of heroic and/or charismatic figures who know what ails the nation and what is best for its "true" citizens. This space is especially convenient for the petit-bourgeoisie to fill. Using a political platform, the "hero" (or maybe today, "heroine") can appeal to the "average" man and woman who might be estranged by some aspect of the general crisis.

Fascism flourishes during periods of rapid social change, especially during crises of accumulation in capitalism, when dislocation and alienation are sufficiently widespread. The perceptions of crises do not have to be "real," but only perceived as real. Populists are especially successful during these phases; we rarely hear of them during prosperity. During these phases of crises, power and control are often gripped more tightly by a cadre of elites, who can exercise power in a context where big business, the military, and the government state are tightly linked. During periods of flux, authority is needed to ensure that the interest of the ruling (and hence deciding classes) are not subverted to those of the majority of a given national population. Extending democracy in such cases is not only anathema to potential fascists, but also to the fractions of the ruling political and bourgeois classes. Thus a "fascist" can threaten and destroy small entrepreneurs, but might actually be protecting "big" interests.

In the U.S. and globally, behind the facade of a globalization of democracy, is a rollback of democracy, and increasing state intervention. But the state is not necessarily intervening into the affairs of the triumvirate, but seeking to control its problematic national populations: issues of crime (prisons and police), reproduction (abortion and support of poor/working mothers), welfare (poverty), and illegitimacy suggest increasing state control, while diminishing control in others. When the interest of big business, government, and the military conflate to the point that politicians tout the interests of big business as the interests of everyone, when in fact they are directly antagonistic, then fascism is a real possibility.

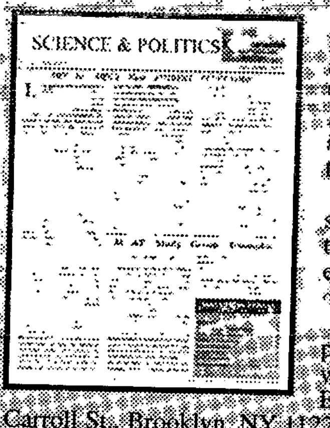
In closing, I wish to make clear that we can never view fascism as an accident of history; it can always develop if the conditions are ripe and the potential is present. Individuals and groups do not have to identify as fascistic, or even be conscious of working towards fascistic ends; we must look at their behaviors, ideas, and networks, as well as the nature of the larger society at a given point in time. I have not intended to suggest that the consolidation of fascism in America is imminent; instead, I have hoped to show how complicated the conditions for fascism's development are, and how these conditions are already in place.

Fighting fascism is not easy. Yet, any attempt to do so must be multi-faceted. An important measure is to extend the scope of democracy, although this may have undesirable side effects in the short run, such as increased inability to reach consensus. However, citizens must exercise increased social control over their communities as an antidote to authoritarianism and the concentrations of power that face citizens today; mainly, in this case, the corporate triumvirate. The fascist potential will still exist, but citizens could have more social control over investment and disinvestment in their communities, which could conceivably alter corporate behavior. The success of this kind of strategy presupposes a broadly educated and well-informed citizenry, who have or can develop some foundation for critical analysis. But I am not sure that the skills to analytically pierce the veils that often disguise naked and callous power are sufficiently widespread in America. So, I suppose, we have a long way to go and a difficult battle to fight. But it must be fought. ■

FEED MEDIA

LAUNCHED!

The Medgar Evers College Student Action Committee (MECsAC) has launched a magazine called *Science & Politics*. This is an endeavor initiated by undergraduates and alumni of Medgar Evers College. The Editor in Chief is Anthony Edwards, a Biology and Math Major. Its mission is to promote the importance of science in the life of minority students. It also seeks to counter the perception that science is an endeavor alien to minority students.



Individuals interested in supporting this effort are asked to write to MECsAC, at Medgar Evers College, CUNY, 1650 Carroll St., Brooklyn, NY 11225. –TERRENCE BLACKMAN

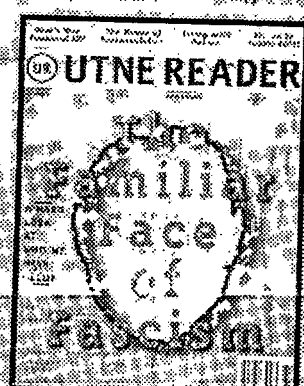
NO NOUVEAUX FASCISMS

"IS THERE FASCISM IN US ALL, in our heads and in our everyday behavior?" intones *Utne Reader's* November/December issue, with a nod to Foucault. Gathering together leftist intellectuals such as Umberto Eco, Theodore Roszak and Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Utne* takes "a hard look at who we have become."

The contributors debate themes on a central question: is fascism amongst us? Eco outlines characteristics of what he calls "Ur-Fascism," characteristics such as traditionalism, irrationalism and the fear of difference. He describes, for example, fascists' "obsession with a plot," and locates this tendency today in right-wing conspiracy theories such as Pat Robertson's *The New World Order*. *Utne* illustrates his pieces with pictures from Our Times: Schwartzenegger as "machismo," a bag lady as the brunt of "contempt for the weak."

"Ur-Fascism is still around us, sometimes in plainclothes," he warns. "It would be so much easier for us if there appeared on the world scene somebody saying 'I want to reopen Auschwitz, I want the Blackshirts to parade again in the Italian squares.' Life is not that simple." (Perhaps it's a question of where you choose to look–last year France's LePen led fascists in French squares, and the fascist Zhirinovsky declares for a Greater Russia.)

Donella Meadows disagrees with Eco's subtle fascism. She thinks fascists are front and center on the political landscape. The new "masters of Congress" are a new kind of conservative, and "the most accurate word" for them is fascist, she declares. As she describes they are hell-bent on ruling, dictating and deregulating. They are gun-totin' tough on defense, tough on crime, eager to execute, tough, tough, tough."



Roszak's "Mea Culpa?" wrings its hands at the New Left's unwitting prop to the forces of fascism of today, the anti-authoritarian 1960s that authenticated current right-wing anti-government sentiment. There is no sadder statement in the whole issue than when Roszak laments, "there was no denying the historical continuity between our Days of Rage and the current war against the government. There is a monster of citizenry discontent running amok in the land, and it is time for each of us to ask what our responsibility may be for the damage it is doing to our country."

He blames the 1960s activists who exaggerated "the evils of our government," while, correctly, challenging a trusted post-New Deal, age-of-prosperity government. Now the war against the government has turned sour, spawning right-wing talk show ravings and intolerance that hovers on the edge of violence; a slap in the face, says Roszak, to the legacy of 1960s nonviolence that always within "even the most militant."

Yet Roszak's *de facto* abandonment of the struggles of groups he cites like the Black Panthers is also "a slap in the face," a virtual refutation of the militancy of the 1960s–the actions of millions of people who marched against racism, oppression and the war in Vietnam, the millions who called themselves revolutionaries and wanted to change the world. They should have, according to Roszak, ignored the rotten things going on around them and just stayed home because, he says, "undeniably" the revolutionaries of the past paved the way for fascism today.

The crucial issue for liberal intellectuals like Roszak is the exaggerated importance that they give to civil society and the state in their analysis of fascism. They see the state and civil society organizations–such as the ACLU–as mediators, providing checks and balances among the warring factions that dominate capitalist society. In periods of reaction, when right-wing forces such as the militias seem on the rise today, the need for the state to rein in these groups becomes even more vital. The state seems to be the only foundation of stability and any challenges from the left or the right are viewed as dangerous to the existing order.

For former New Left intellectuals like Roszak, this glorification of civil society and the belief that protest is dangerous disruption, arise from a pessimism with regards to the possibilities for social change. The failure of the New Left and the social movements of the 1960s to win liberation for the majority of people led many activists-turned-intellectuals to dismiss the possibilities of fighting oppression and exploitation. Out of the collapse of the movement emerged postmodernism which took this position of retreat to the extreme, elaborating an aesthetisization of the system such as Baudrillard's characterization of the Persian Gulf War as a video virtual reality. They assumed no social group could act as the agent of change, and so fell back on the state to play that role instead. Today, they see the state and organizations in the public service as the only hope for stopping fascism.

The view expressed by Roszak is on the opposite side of the coin than that of Meadows and Eco. Whereas Roszak exaggerates the difference between bourgeois democracy and fascism, Meadows and Eco underestimate it. They see evidence of fascism lurking in the government and its institutions. Fascistic elements as they appear today are for them an abrupt departure from the imagined paradise of days gone by, as in the films of Oliver Stone that glorify the fall of JFK. Thus, Gingrich represents the end of American innocence. Roszak's position mirrors the others in that all three portray a false separation of powers between private interests and the state; in fact, they posit this condition as the ideal. When the separation between private and state powers is obviously false, as in today's blatant giveaways to the rich, liberal intellectuals are thrown into a quandary. They conclude that the state has become too powerful and that fascism is eroding government.

The problem with these analyses is that they fail to grasp the fundamental nature of the state, the fact that it is not a neutral entity but is actually an instrument of class rule. The result of this misunderstanding is the mistaken belief that the state can defend society from fascism.

The impulse to describe society as turning towards fascism arises, of course, from the onslaught of the right. Gingrich's cuts have highlighted the coercive aspects of the state and have led many to believe that these traits render it fascist. Yet they fail to realize that Gingrich's Republican Revolution is far from fascism.

Jean Bethke Elshtain makes this point clearly. In critiquing fellow contributor Eco, she argues that with his piece, "the reader loses some of the historical specificity of fascism. I would certainly refrain from using that word to characterize American politics... When fascists take over they immediately suspend elections. They effectively neutralize all opposing parties and movements. Whatever one feels about the outcome of the 1994 elections, they *were* elections." Elshtain is concerned with historical specificity so as retain the discursive "nuances" of political analysis, to be as descriptively accurately as possible. For Elshtain discourse is an end in itself; for activists the question of specificity is crucial because fighting fascism requires particular strategies: direct confrontation to block fascists' ability to mobilize in any way at all.

The extremes to which the ruling class resorts under fascism are the manifestations of capitalism in the throes of crisis. When economic crisis is so deep that the layoffs and scarcity taken to restore productivity at the expense of the working class fail to alleviate the situation, capitalists are forced to fall back upon fascism as a last resort to try and save the system. This "last resort" is exercised through the systematic and total suppression of the working class–the banning of unions, the suspension of democratic rights, the annihilation of minorities and dissidents.

Fascism is not, therefore, "traditionalism" or mere coercion, but a strategy to save capitalism by decimating the working class. The state is central to establishing fascism, which points to the working class as the only means of stopping it. The bourgeois democratic state is not fascist but it will not prevent fascism either. The experience of challenging fascists or the Ku Klux Klan and seeing the far right protected by phalanxes of police shows concretely what side the state is really on. The federal government's multimillion dollar settlement to the family of neo-Nazi Weaver killed by the FBI at Ruby Ridge makes a mockery of the idea that the state has some protective role to play against fascists.

The inability of 1960s activists to tie the struggles to the beginnings of an upturn in working class struggle–to posit the fight against racism, women's oppression and homophobia as a working class fight–led to the defeat of many workers by the mid-1970s. The union busting tactics of the Bush/Reagan years seemed to toll the death knell of the working class. Veterans of the New Left thus have their doubts about the viability of the working class as a force for change, particularly in today's world of transnational corporations.

Yet, emerging from decades of defeat, workers in the US and around the world are showing their willingness to fight once again. Millions of workers in France forced Prime Minister Juppe to back down in his restructuring plans. Here in the US–from the major shakeups in the leadership of AFL/CIO, to the Boeing strike victory, the the militancy in Decatur, IL to the Detroit Newspaper strike, as well as the rejection by the rank and file of Giuliani's budget driven contact with the United Federation of Teachers here in NYC–these are all signs of a renewed militancy in the labor movement. And if fascism is the unbridled onslaught of the capitalist state upon workers, if the lines of class struggle are sharply drawn under these conditions, then the active challenge of the working class is the only solution. –LEE WENGRAF

Sermonizing within the aftershocks

On the black American oral tradition

BY JAMES KING

The Sermon and the African American Literary Imagination. By Dolan Hubbard. University of Missouri Press. 1994.

IN DEFINING A black American Literary imagination, it is necessary to bear in mind the historical context in which the original black Americans became Americans, and analyze the subsequent reactions and actions of a people whose legacy is scarred by corporate and spiritual confinement.

From the earliest history of blacks on this continent, a tradition of spiritual and social leadership has emerged, at once blending the belief systems of Africa with the Christianity of the West in an attempt to offer hope within the confines of slavery and an escape from the persistent "aftershocks" of that "peculiar institution." This originally oral tradition, with all of its intensity and rhythms, quickly permeated the style and consciousness within the African American novel.

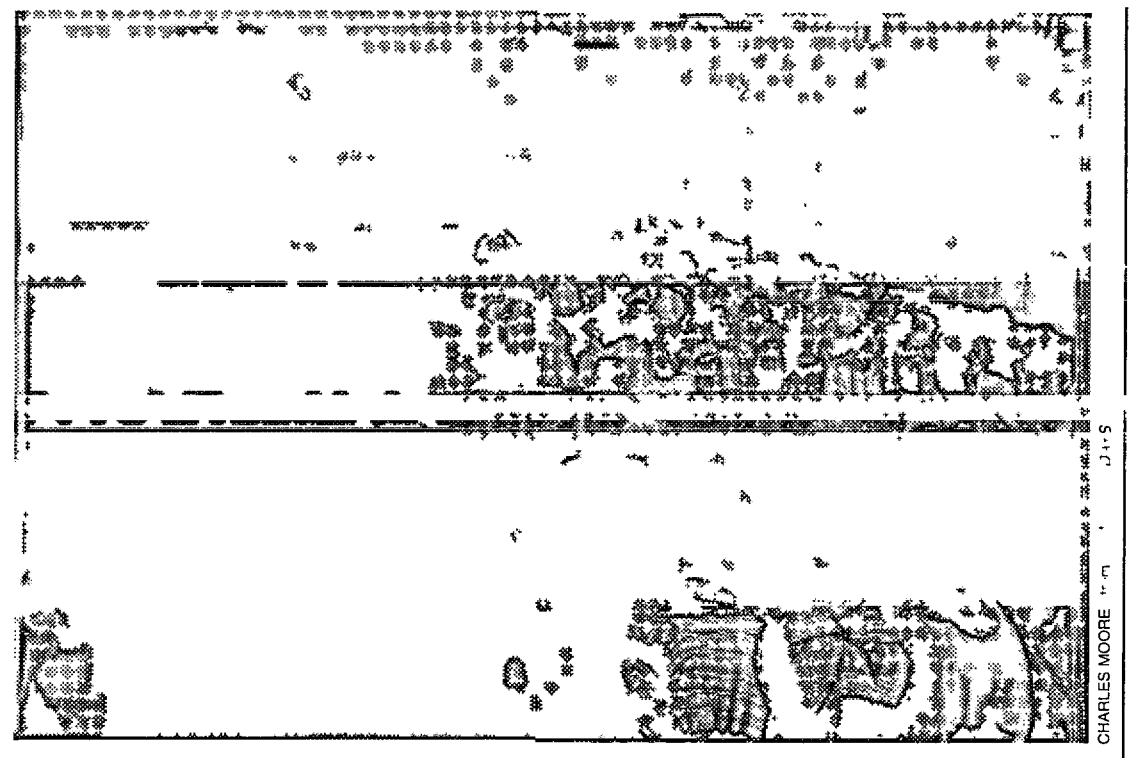
The first two chapters of Hubbard's book, "Toward a Definition of the African American Sermon" and "Sermonic Hermeneutics in Early Black Narratives," lay the groundwork for the literary analysis to follow by describing briefly the context within which the black church and preacher first emerged. Hubbard's treatment of this early history is informative, rather than accusative in its tone, a distinction that serves the text well considering the potentially confrontational nature of the subject matter. The first chapter concerns itself with the task assigned to black spiritual leaders, one of helping their followers find and retain hope in hopeless situations. The second chapter identifies the "sermonizing" rhetoric evident in early slave narratives, such as that of Frederick Douglass, and establishes it as an early written example of the transformation of the black sermon from the oral to written tradition in American history. The next four chapters are devoted to identifying the sermonizing voice or voices within works by James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, Zora Neale Hurston, and Alice Walker.

Of particular interest is Hubbard's analysis of the character Janie in Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God.* Tracing the exploits of this protagonist through what he describes as a three-staged journey toward maturity and self-realization, Hubbard's analysis leads the reader to where the story starts–the beginning of her sermon to Phoebe on the porch. Hubbard cross-references the elements of the black sermon evident in this novel with their scriptural and secular sources, focusing adroitly on the blending of these traditionally opposing forces and their cathartic fruition within the Word, or the sermon itself. In *Their Eyes*, Hubbard identifies the authoritative language of the sermon, as rendered by Janie, whose epic style evokes the desired pathos in her congregation, Phoebe and the reader, necessary for their transformation.

By definition, this book is concerned with the difficulties of black Americans, as reflected in the fictional characters that represent them, in finding freedom and wholeness--in actualizing the self. Indeed, while such a task is and has been a challenge for any American, it has always been a particularly difficult task for black Americans. Hubbard's book looks at the state of "otherness" from the inside, from the very core, the vantage point of the voice crying out in the wilderness, tending his earthly flock, feeding and sustaining them in a hostile land, until the time comes when they are called home. As I read this book, I was reminded of the many sermons I have heard within black churches, the pulpit-slapping, foot-stomping, tongue-talking frenzy that inspired people to hold on and not give up hope. The black church is for its members a "pit stop," a place to reestablish the center and focus necessary to make it through another week. This book, and its thematic analysis of this literary phenomenon, captures the necessity, urgency and mission of the sermon within black culture.

Hubbard's scholarship on the subject is evident; he creates a text that is engaging and thoughtful, made complete by helpful footnotes and an extensive bibliography. *The Sermon* is a gold mine for culture studies and scholars of African American literature. In the following passage from the book, Hubbard captures the significance of the sermon, "...the black sermon is a testament to black people's powers of conception, a suggestion that their abilities to create, grasp and use symbols are just as valid as those who oppress and would deny them their humanity." ◻

James King is a student in the English Department at the Graduate School.



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