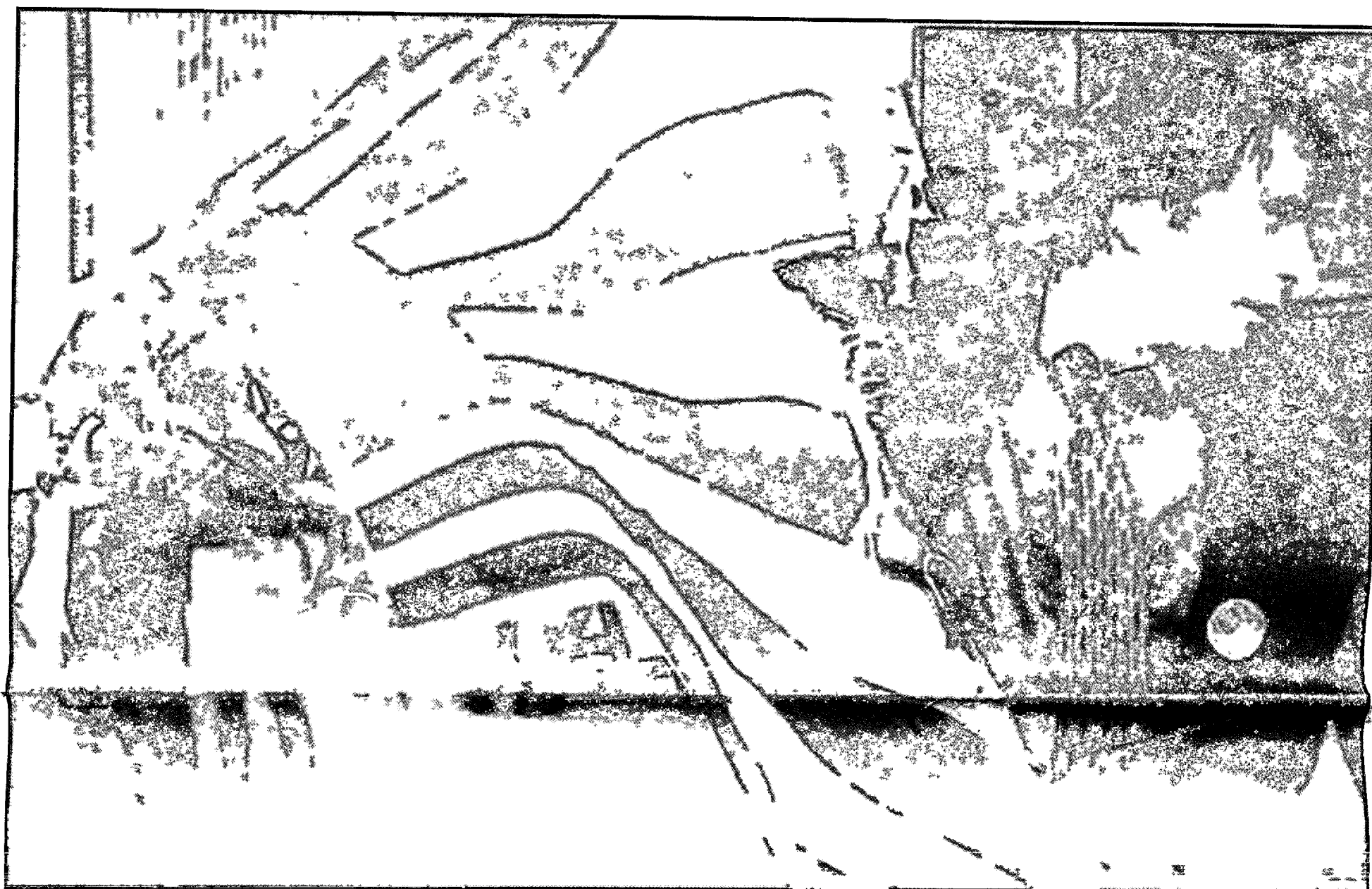


# ADVOCATE

CUNY GRAD CENTER

10/2000

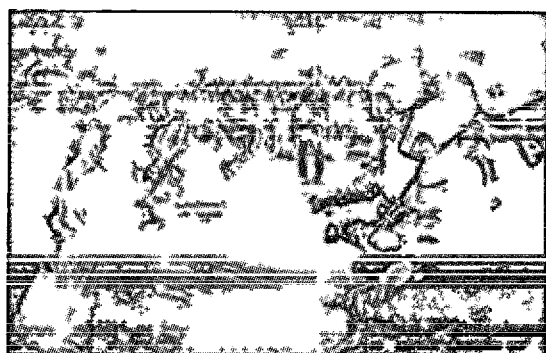


SAMANTA BOX

## Americans Rally Behind Ralph Nader And LaDuke As Election Day Approaches

### Adjunct Organizing

pages 2 and 3



PROTEST IN PRAGUE, page 12

## UNION LAYS OUT BOLD CONTRACT PAY AND BENEFIT PARITY FOR ADJUNCTS

By Kristin Lawler

**A**djuncts, our time has come. We've complained for years about the poverty wages, shoddy benefits, and bleak professional future that we face in our attempt to support ourselves teaching as we complete our Ph.D.s. Some of us have agitated and organized, fighting an uphill battle all the way. Well, the terrain of our struggle has been utterly transformed and we have upon us an historic opportunity to achieve a decent living and a real professional future. If we don't take advantage of it now, we're dead in the water. The desperate situation of grad students teaching college classes for ridiculously low premiums, thereby forming a job market full of sweat-ed adjunct positions rather than good academic jobs, exists because year after year it has been solidified in the contract that determines wages, benefits and working conditions within CUNY. Not this time. The new leadership that recently took the reins of the union has put forth a set of bold, progressive demands for the 2000 contract. Central to the list of demands is an end to the two-tier wage system that gives adjuncts the scraps left over from negotiating pay and benefits for full-timers. I quote: "Adjuncts shall be eligible, on a pro-rated basis, for all the benefits, prerogatives, and opportunities granted in the collective bargaining agreement to full-timer members of the instructional staff." The implications of this are truly staggering, and are by no means limited to CUNY but will reverberate throughout the once-hallowed halls of academia.

This proposal demands that part-timers who teach at CUNY will no longer do the same work as full-time professors for a lower wage will—the rate will be the same and will include teaching hours as well as office hours and departmental assignments. And the demand for parity includes health benefits. Adjuncts who teach at least two courses per semester, regardless of funding source, will receive the same benefits as full-timers, including dental and disability insurance, and Graduate Fellows in all categories will finally be eligible for these benefits as well. If an adjunct who has health insurance sees his or her course load drop to just one class as a result of departmental decisions, he or she will remain covered. Also, the union is demanding that "CUNY Graduate Center doctoral students who perform work covered by this contract shall receive full tuition remission." CUNY will no longer have the dubious distinction of being the only university in the country that requires its teaching grad students to pay tuition.

Other demands address issues of adjunct job insecurity: after ten consecutive semesters of teaching, adjuncts will receive a Certificate of Continuous Employment, awarded retroactively at the inception of the contract; after two consecutive semesters, adjuncts must be offered appointments of at least one year; and after six consecutive semesters, adjuncts who are not reappointed must be given a written explanation of the reason. If, by the end of the semester, an adjunct has not received written confirmation of a position for the next semester, he or she will be eligible to receive unemployment compensation, uncontested by the university. And—get this!—if a scheduled course is canceled within

30 days of the start of classes, the adjunct will be paid anyway, for the whole course! Also, adjuncts will be entitled, after fourteen consecutive semesters of teaching at least two classes, to one semester of paid leave. Time to finish that dissertation! Three months full pay will be granted for parental leave or the adoption of a child. The list goes on and on. Check out the full text of the contract demands at the union's website: [www.psc-cuny.org](http://www.psc-cuny.org).

In the end, it will become just as expensive to hire an adjunct as it is to hire a full-time professor—so the job market we'll face when we complete our doctoral work is looking up as well. And the union is demanding not only that adjuncts be given real consideration for full-time lines when they come up, but also that an Incentive Fund be created to "encourage and aid departments in the hiring of CUNY adjuncts for full-time lines." All in all, what the union is laying down at the outset of these negotiations could dramatically improve the present and future situation for all of us, to say the least. Exciting as the union's new militance may be, however, strong demands from the union side of the table does not a good contract make. Not automatically, anyway. The force of the entire union membership must be behind the negotiators if they are to make these demands into the form of an actual contract—if the administration senses that the membership is not unconditionally committed to the demands, the negotiators won't have the juice they need

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on the Fifth Floor

Articles should be on diskette in MS Word format

Call 212-817 7882 with any questions  
Or e-mail [cunyadvocate@hotmail.com](mailto:cunyadvocate@hotmail.com)

### WRITE FOR THE ADVOCATE

## PROPOSAL: DEMANDED

to push them through. Part-timers must become an active, committed part of this membership base of support. In contract talks, there is certain give-and-take on both sides in the forging of the actual document. Inevitably, the union concedes some demands and stands firm on others. Whether or not the demands relating to adjuncts fall into the former category or the latter depends heavily on the extent to which adjuncts are an organized, powerful force within the union. This is not the case at the moment. As it stands now, most CUNY adjuncts are not even union members, which means they have no vote on the contract.

Negotiations will probably take about six months to a year, so we have a window of opportunity to organize all adjuncts and Graduate Fellows into the union. When we're all in the union, and stay close to developments in the talks, the negotiators will bring our power to the table and it will become impossible for the contract not to include the language that the proposal does. When the union negotiators can say to the administration, "Look, we know you'd like us to sell out the adjuncts again in this contract, but we simply can't do it—they form a numerical majority in the union and will vote down any contract that doesn't include complete parity with full-timers," then and only then can we be assured of a victory. With the new union leadership in charge, this scenario is no longer an impossible dream. Our newly democratic union is actively working to bring us in—they need our support if they are to achieve the lofty goals they've set before them. The New Caucus ran for and won union leadership on a platform that included a pledge to negotiate an end to the super-exploitation of adjunct faculty. And it wasn't primarily adjuncts that voted them in—full-timers have come to understand that when a workforce is divided between haves and have-nots, the haves eventually suffer as their bargaining position is eroded by the existence of lower-paid workers doing their job. Still, the union cannot advocate for adjuncts in mass absentia. Simply put, all the good intentions of the new leadership notwithstanding, we'll get sold out yet again if we don't do our part—join the union en masse and make it very clear to the administration that anything less than complete parity will just not fly.

But it's not just narrow self-interest that should motivate graduate student adjuncts to organize around this contract. It's actually a very broad self-interest. Because the two-tier wage system that's suffocating us is by no means limited to CUNY. It's a national trend in academia that can only be reversed by the kind of militance that the union is finally showing. And the union needs us—all of us who teach at CUNY—to get behind it if the move from university as center of higher learning to university as trade school slash

sweatshop is to be arrested. Restoring decent professional conditions to the faculty and staff is the first step in this process. The contract demands cover a whole range of conditions that affect full-timers: a restoration of shared governance whereby the union negotiates all changes in the university that affect faculty; substantial raises for all members of the bargaining unit; a reduction in teaching loads across the board; and increases in the "requisites of professional life [to] a level that makes contribution to scholarship possible," such as research funding, sabbatical leave, junior faculty leave, and health and safety protections. Just as it is in the interest of full-timers to support the contract demands that affect adjuncts, it's in our own interest to support the demands of full-timers for a quality of

academic life that makes real intellectual work possible. Our future depends on it.

Rich Moser, an organizer for the American Association of University Professors, led an organizing workshop for adjuncts at the union recently. He made it very clear that all over the U.S.A., faculty are watching what we do in the wake of the truly astounding New Caucus victory and the possibilities for transformation that it has opened up. The Cold Warriors were right about one thing: movements spread like wildfire, and victories do tend to have a domino effect. If we can win at CUNY, we can galvanize all those around the country who see their professional life going down the drain and wonder what they can do about it. A crucial moment is upon us. And I think we're up to it.

## ATTENTION GRAD STUDENT ADJUNCTS AND GTFS: DO YOU WISH YOU HAD:

BETTER PAY  
GOOD HEALTH BENEFITS  
DENTAL COVERAGE  
A NICER OFFICE  
A VOICE IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL LIFE?

OF COURSE YOU DO! YOU'RE NO MASOCHIST.

SO COME TO A MEETING THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE.  
AND HAVE A LITTLE FUN TO BOOT.

HEAR FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNION THAT IS  
NEGOTIATING ALL THIS FOR YOU AS WE SPEAK.  
TALK TO OTHER GRAD STUDENTS WHO TEACH  
AND GET A CHANCE TO MAKE YOUR OWN CONCERNS HEARD.  
PLENTY OF FREE FOOD AND DRINKIN' TOO!!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26

3PM

DSC SOCIAL LOUNGE

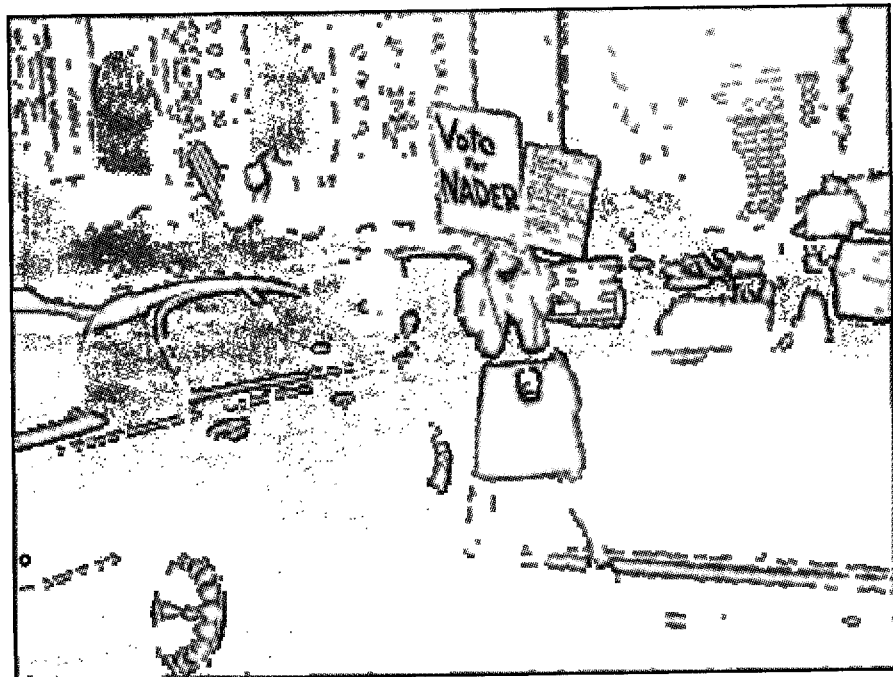
BE THERE OR BE SQUARE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL THE ADJUNCT PROJECT  
(212) 817-7890



## UNFIT TO PRINT

By Dave Gerardi and Mark Petras



SAMANTHA BOX

*Nader Supporter Displays Her Message To The Passing Traffic*

**Writers' note:** After covering the event, we submitted the following article (with minor changes) to various news agencies including the Associated Press, New York Daily News, and Washington Post. Their responses varied from disinterest to dismissal. A woman at Reuters told us that, unless the story discussed the Democrat or Republican candidates, Reuters would not be interested. Other than ourselves, only a Columbia student writing a story for a class covered the event. No major media outlets were present.

Activists crowded around Anheuser-Busch's New York headquarters last month to protest Ralph Nader's exclusion from this year's presidential debates.

Approximately seventy to eighty Nader supporters gathered in front of the Anheuser-Busch building at 350 Park Avenue holding signs and distributing fliers to the rush-hour crowd. The rally, held from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. on September 14th, featured a street-theater parody of the Budweiser frog mascots and an impromptu speech from documentary filmmaker Michael Moore.

Anheuser-Busch has paid \$550,000 to be a national sponsor of the debates organized by the non-partisan Commission on Presidential Debates. "Anheuser-Busch had no role in determining any aspect of how the debates will take place," said Stephen Lambright, the company's group vice president and general counsel.

New York State coordinator for Nader 2000, Masada Disenhouse, held up a sign asking to boycott the beer company until either it withdrew its sponsorship of the CPD debates or Ralph Nader was allowed to participate. At one point she led the crowd in chanting, "Two, four, six, eight, we want Nader to debate."

To be included in the debates, a candidate, according to CPD criteria, must have 15 percent support in five national polls. Under that standard, said labor activist and NYU law student Jonathan Rosen, Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura would not have been elected. "Saying a candidate needs 15 percent is like saying you need 15 percent market share to put your product on the supermarket shelves," he said.

Michael Moore, host of Bravo's *The Awful Truth* and director of the documentary *Roger and Me*, made an unscheduled appearance to speak to the protesters. When asked if he thought if a vote for Nader was equivalent to a vote for Governor Bush, he responded, "a vote for Gore is equivalent to a vote for Bush." Rosen agreed, saying both the Democratic and Republican parties have similar policies

regarding labor, gay rights and the death penalty. Although Rosen interned at the Clinton/Gore White House in 1996 and was a student coordinator for that year's presidential campaign, he believes the Democratic party has drifted away

from many of the issues Nader and the Green party have embraced. "I didn't leave the Democratic party; the Democratic party left me," he said.

In recent months, Ralph Nader has garnered at least five percent in several national polls. Five percent of the popular vote in November's election would qualify the Green party for several million dollars of federal matching funds for the 2004 election. Five percent support in polls, said Moore, means about 14 million people nationwide plan to vote for Nader. "That's a lot of people," Moore said.

According to Nielsen television ratings, the 1992 debates, which included third-party candidate Ross Perot, attracted 90 million viewers. The 1996 debates, limited to President Clinton and Senator Dole, averaged only 41 million viewers.

At the rally, 73-year-old activist John Miller said he will vote for Nader in the upcoming election. "All my life I voted for the two parties," he said. "It never changed anything. I'm voting with my conscience this year."

## MICHAEL MOORE INVIGORATES NADER CROWD

By Dave Gerardi and Mark Petras

Michael Moore, host of Bravo's *The Awful Truth* and a member of the Nader campaign committee, made an unscheduled appearance at the September Anheuser-Busch rally to speak to the protesters.

Moore pointed out that Nader consistently has been get-

ting 5 percent in the polls, which means about 14 million people nationwide plan to vote for Nader. Moore said he finds it reprehensible that the debates ignore these Nader supporters. "Anheuser-Busch is sponsoring the debates because after an hour-and-a-half of listening to Bush and Gore, people will want to drink," Moore said. "We don't need their beer-sponsored debates."

Moore concluded by urging the crowd to continue supporting Nader and to vote with their conscience. One percent of the American population controls 90 percent of the country's wealth, Moore said. "Bush and Gore do their bidding; what about the other 99 percent?" he asked the crowd. Before returning to their leafletting and chanting, the engaged protesters took in Moore's final words: "Don't despair. Ralph's been getting incredible crowds."

A week later, at a Nader rally in Minneapolis on September 23, Moore said, "a vote for Bush is a vote for Bush. A vote for Gore is a vote for Bush. A vote for Nader is a political molotov."

## ELECTING TO DISSENT

By Dave Gerardi

The ones who filed out of the building in suits and into waiting limousines paid no attention. Their drivers honked wildly.

A BMW passed without a sound. A beat-up 10-wheeler beeped in a rapid staccato.

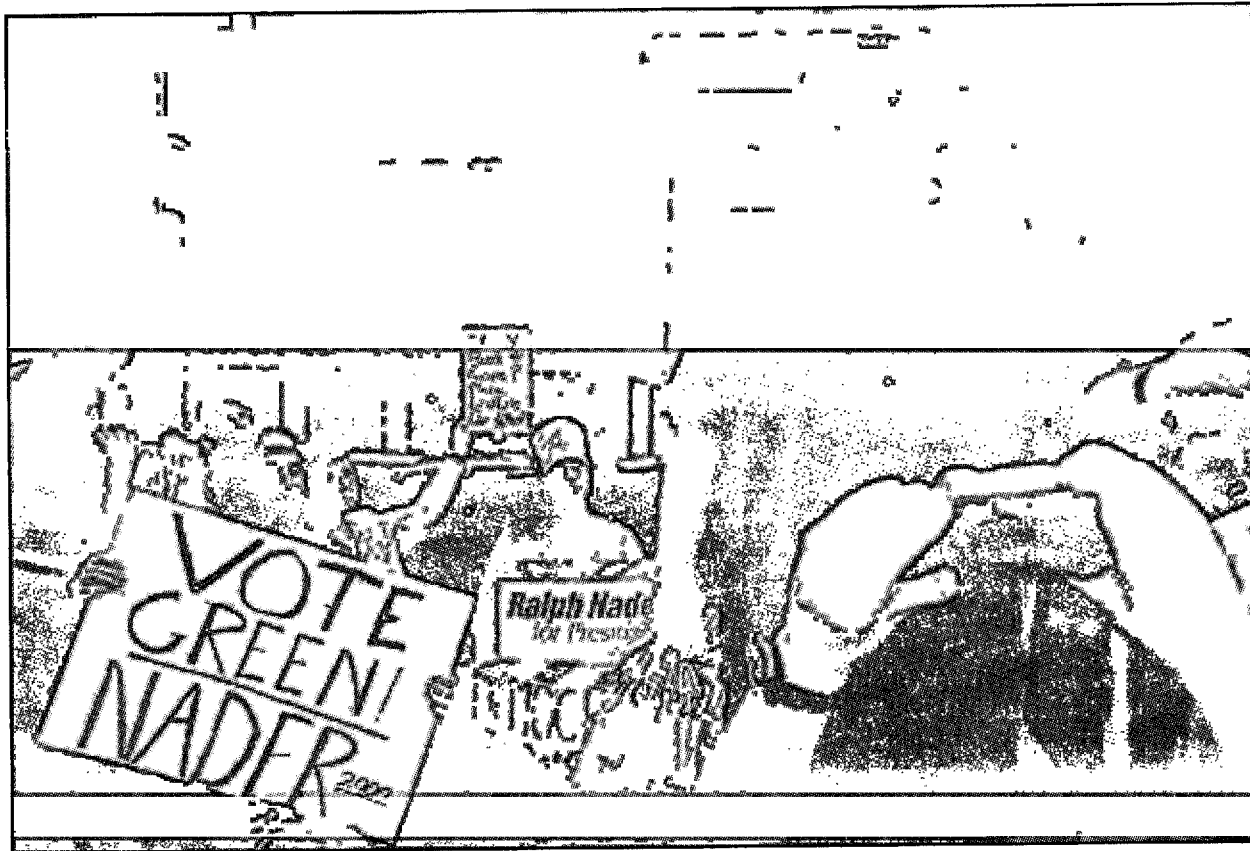
You can learn the cause of a protest by the people who honk for it. Drivers. Students. Deliverymen.

One activist, already battle-weary from the Screen Actors Guild strike, stomped some pavement outside Anheuser-Busch's New York headquarters in an effort to get Green Party candidate Ralph Nader into the presidential debates.

He is a former Democrat.

"I could no longer respect myself if I voted for Gore," said Carmi Turchick, now a bike messenger while his acting career awaits labor negotiations. "It's business as usual with Gore and Bush and we don't have the luxury of not voting for Nader."

Jonathan Rosen studies law at New York University. "I didn't leave the Democratic Party; the Democratic Party left me. They sold us out on the



SAMANTHA BOX

*Michael Moore Addresses Nader Supporters Outside Anheuser-Busch Headquarters*

death penalty, gay rights, and labor." The DNC, which stands for Democratic National Committee, should instead, Rosen said referring to the party's recent flip-flopping, stand for "Donations Not Convictions."

Michael Kellner, a senior at NYU, stressed the importance of looking towards the 2004 election. "I realize [Nader's] not going to be elected, but if we can get five percent of the vote, then we'll get the \$12

vote for in the upcoming election.

When I informed her that the Commission on Presidential Debates' 15-percent rule would prevent her, and the rest of the country, from seeing Ralph Nader in the debates, she said 15 percent was too high. The top three candidates in the polls should be in the debates, she said.

Before returning to work, Kathy said she believed Americans simply roll their eyes when it comes to politics and fail to educate themselves about their voting options.

and the obligatory "Honk if you're for Nader." The most popular chant was "Two, four, six, eight, we want Nader to debate."

By far the best placard was Chris Cortier's giant novelty check. Signed 'We the People' and paid to the order of the CPD, question marks littered the amount box. In the middle read "How much does democracy cost?"

## LETTER TO THE MEDIA

By D. Gerardi and Elizabeth Sagarin

We drafted this letter (with information culled from F.A.I.R., the Green Party, and various news sources) to send to media outlets. The *Advocate* encourages its readers to mail, email, or phone the media encouraging them to provide fair and unbiased election coverage. Addresses and phone numbers of some of the bigger news organizations can be found at [www.fair.org](http://www.fair.org).

To whom it may concern:

I am dissatisfied with your presidential election coverage. Thanks to the exclusionary policies of the Commission on Presidential Debates and your lack of consideration for the sizable percentage of Americans that have shown interest in third-party candidates, the first presidential debate has locked out Green Party nominee Ralph Nader and other candidates. This is undemocratic.

The CPD has vowed to exclude third-party candidates from the nationally televised debates if they lack fifteen percent support in the polls. Such an unreasonable barrier would have closed off the 1998 Minnesota debates to Governor Jesse Ventura.

Without any ancillary coverage offered from your organization the public is not able to make a sound decision in the voting booth. This is an unacceptable practice. It is your responsibility to inform the public of all choices, taking seriously the less popular candidates that have garnered enough support to warrant participation in said debates.

I urge you to take the following actions:

1. Stop ignoring and/or marginalizing third-party candidates in campaign coverage.
2. Expose the exclusionary policies of the CPD.
3. Set up your own debates with more inclusive criteria for participation—leaving empty seats for any major-party candidate who fails to appear.
4. Provide fair coverage of protests if and when the CPD locks out third-party candidates from debates.

Third-party candidates bring fresh issues, more viewers and new voters to the debates. In 1992, when third-party candidate Ross Perot was included in the debates, 90 million



Todd Lester (Far Right) Announces a Budweiser Frog Street Theatre Parody Outside Anheuser-Busch Headquarters

million matching fund for the next election." Rosen added, "if he's good enough to get matching funds, why is he not good enough to debate?"

Columbia student David Schlitt, dressed in a chicken suit, said Bush and Gore are too chicken to let Nader debate. If nothing else, he said, Nader should be permitted to debate in order to engage more people. "There's going to be a record low in viewership this year."

Todd Lester became involved in the Green Party specifically because of Nader's exclusion from the debates. Because Nader has not been given sufficient television coverage, Lester said, only voters with internet access can learn about his campaign. "He got five minutes on Leno, but that's not enough time to get into the issues."

## BYSTANDER SHOWS INTEREST IN NADER

By Mark Petras

While pausing to review my notes during my coverage of the September 14th rally outside of Anheuser-Busch headquarters, I encountered an inquisitive woman who questioned me about who Ralph Nader is and what party he represents.

Kathy, a registered Republican from Staten Island who works in the Anheuser-Busch building, was taking a cigarette break during the Nader rally. She said both Bush and Gore do not appeal to her and that she supported Senator John McCain during the Republican primaries. Since McCain is no longer an option, Kathy said she did not know who she would

She concluded that she would like to see more Americans participate in the political process. "It's a privilege to have this kind of society," she said.

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

By Dave Gerardi

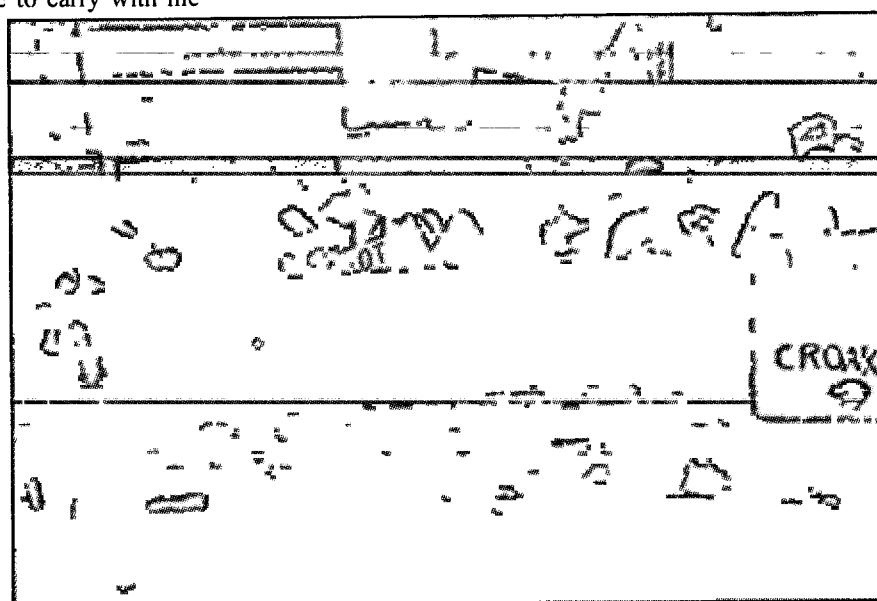
When I was younger, I would scan picket lines for clever signs and catchy slogans. I didn't care about the cause. Just a phrase to carry with me and tell a friend for a laugh.

That's the attitude of most passers-by. It's a sound-bite culture this America, and sloganeering had damn well better be up to snuff with the Madison Avenue boys.

"Take off your beergoggles," was an obvious but smart critique of the problem: beer sponsorship of an overly restrictive debate. Since 'beergoggles' is generally used in a sexual context, all the better for the sign to attract viewers. "Don't let democracy croak," played on the familiar Budweiser frog ad campaign.

One familiar placard strategy is taking a relevant acronym and inventing a new one using the same letters. CPD stands for the Commission on Presidential Debates and was the object of much of the protesters' scorn. One sign read, appropriately, "CPD = Commission to Prevent real Debates."

Others were plain, but straightforward: "Vote for Democracy; Vote for Ralph Nader," "Open Debates; Open Democracy," "Democracy is worth more than \$550,000,"



SAMANTHA BOX

viewers tuned in. The 1996 debates, limited to President Clinton and Senator Dole, averaged only 41 million viewers.

A more informed public ensures a more democratic Republic.

## I'D VOTE FOR NADER BUT. . .

By Ronni Michelle Greenwood

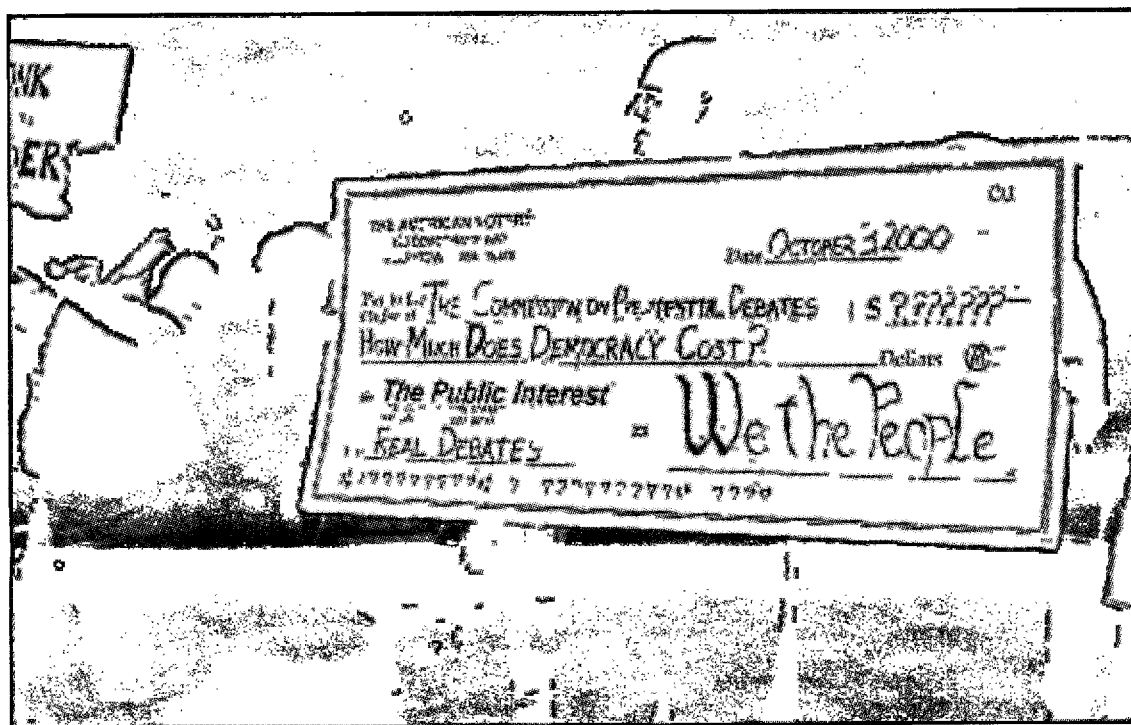
I've heard so many people say "I'd voter for Nader but . . ." that I've threatened to Ralph onto the next person who says it to me. Don't get me wrong, four years ago, I would have said the same thing. The thought of Bob Dole in office literally left me quaking in my boots. I'd pretty much been a one-issue voter ever since I was able to vote for the first time, in 1988. Abortion rights drove my decision-making. I was also anti-death penalty and pro-gay rights. Of course, the Democratic Party didn't do very much for me on those issues (remember Clinton strategically signing the death warrant for the mentally retarded man on death row during his first campaign?). And Clinton sure dangled a carrot in front of us in terms of gay rights, didn't he? Said he was all for it, then gave us the ol' bait and switch with that whole "don't ask, don't tell" crap.

Oh, but abortion rights. As a woman and a feminist I will fight tooth and nail to protect the rights won through Roe V. Wade. When it comes to voting, four years ago I would never have voted for a third party candidate because I perceived any vote other than for Clinton as a vote for Bob Dole, and thus, as a vote against abortion rights (and for the fanatical fringe religious right). But let's just take a look for a minute at what exactly has been done to abortion rights over the last several years. On the federal level, we stayed off attack on the so-called partial-birth abortion, but Medicaid still won't pay for an abortion if you are poor and you need one. On state, county, and local levels, not chips, but rather great big boulders have been taken out of women's access to safe and legal abortion. State legislation that requires parental notification has further reduced young women's access to abortion. The religious right's terrorist attacks have the result of not only murdering physicians and clinic workers, but also murdering prospective physicians' commitment to providing abortion services. One would seemingly have to be some kind of martyr to make the decision to put one's life and one's family's lives on the line to perform abortion services. Furthermore, some large rural areas of the country don't even have a single abortion provider. In these areas, physicians are flown in on a handful of days a month in order to perform abortions. This is what our Democratic leadership has gotten us. Yes, we still have the legal right to abortion, but women under age 18, poor women, rural women, women of color, hardly have any access at all.

In addition to my dedication to maintaining women's legal access to abortion, I'm also strongly anti-death penalty, pro-gay rights, and pro-labor rights. The labor conditions, specifically sweatshop conditions in this and other third world countries are absolutely abominable. And conditions have only worsened during the Clinton years post-NAFTA. Free trade? Hah! What about a little fair trade? And every time I turn around, I'm learning that there is another clothing product that I can't buy if I don't want to be a hypocrite and I don't want to support exploited labor. Banana Republic, Gap, and Old Navy I hear are all owned by the same corporation, which I hear, is guilty of specious, exploitative labor practices. It's only gotten worse under Clinton. You cannot be sure that the clothes you are wearing were not made by the hands of a little girl or boy making less money in a month than you, poor grad student, see in an hour. Pretty soon I'm going to have to be coming to the GC naked, as there won't be anything left to buy, and let me

assure you, you don't want that to happen! (If for no other reason, there's a reason to vote for Ralph Nader! "Keep Ronni Clothed, Vote for Ralph Nader!")

Sometime during the last 12 months, I started to reflect on how I made my voting decisions. I was a dedicated Democrat, as I believed they were the only ones who would save you and me from the Religious Right. (And I grew up in Oklahoma. I KNOW what the religious right is capable of. Ask me sometime.) I realized that I was voting out of fear and I was voting with a bitter taste in my mouth. Yes, I voted a second time for Clinton, but what with "welfare reform" and "don't ask, don't tell" and parental notification for permission for abortion, and NAFTA, and on and on and on, I was increasingly uneasy and ashamed and dissatisfied



Protester Outside Anheuser-Busch Headquarters on September 14, 2000. The Protesters Demanded the Inclusion of Ralph Nader in the Presidential Debates

with my choice. I don't want to NOT vote, because NOT voting is really pissing your vote away. But I want to vote for someone that I trust that has been true to her or his values always, without waffling, without bowing to moneyed interests. So I looked up the Green Party on the Internet. I found the Green Party's 10 Key Values on the [www.green-party.org](http://www.green-party.org) website, and I fell in love. Here are the 10 Key Values. See if you don't fall in love, too:

**Grassroots Democracy:** Every human being deserves a say in the decisions that affect his or her life; no one should be subject to the will of another. Therefore we will work to increase public participation at every level of government and to ensure that our public representatives are fully accountable to the people who elect them. We will also work to create new types of political organizations that expand the process of participatory democracy by directly including citizens in the decision-making process.

**Ecological Wisdom:** Human societies must operate with the understanding that we are part of nature, not separate from nature. We must maintain an ecological balance and live within the ecological and resource limits of our communities and our planet. We support a sustainable society that utilizes resources in such a way that future generations will benefit and not suffer from the practices of our generation. To this end we must have agricultural practices that replenish the soil; move to an energy efficient economy; and live in ways that respect the integrity of natural systems.

**Social Justice and Equal Opportunity:** All persons should have the rights and opportunity to benefit equally from the resources afforded us by society and the environ-

ment. We must consciously confront in ourselves, our organizations, and society at large, barriers such as racism and class oppression, sexism and heterosexism, ageism and disability, which act to deny fair treatment and equal justice under the law.

**Nonviolence:** It is essential that we develop effective alternatives to our current patterns of violence at all levels, from the family and the streets, to nations and the world. We will work to demilitarize our society and eliminate weapons of mass destruction, without being naive about the intentions of other governments. We recognize the need for self-defense and the defense of others who are in helpless situations. We promote nonviolent methods to

oppose practices and policies with which we disagree, and will guide our actions toward lasting personal, community and global peace.

**Decentralization:** Centralization of wealth and power contributes to social and economic injustice, environmental destruction, and miniaturization. Therefore, we support a restructuring of social, political and economic institutions away from a system that is controlled by and mostly benefits the powerful few, to a democratic, less bureaucratic system. Decision-making should, as much as possible, remain at the individual and local level, while assuring that civil rights are protected for all citizens.

**Community Based Economics:** We recognize it is essential to create a vibrant and sustainable economic system, one that can create jobs and provide a decent standard of living, for all people, while maintaining a healthy ecological balance. A successful economic system will offer meaningful work with dignity, while paying a "living wage" which reflects the real value of a person's work. Local communities must look to economic development that assures protection of the environment and workers' rights, broad citizen participation in planning, and enhancement of our "quality of life." We support independently owned and operated companies which are socially responsible, as well as co-operatives and public enterprises that spread out resources and control to more people through democratic participation.

**Feminism:** We have inherited a social system based on male domination of politics and economics. We call for the replacement of the cultural ethics of domination and control, with more cooperative ways of interacting which respect differences of opinion and gender. Human values such as equity between the sexes, interpersonal responsibility, and honesty must be developed with moral conscience. We should remember that the process that determines our decisions and actions is just as important as achieving the outcome we want.

**Respect for Diversity:** We believe it is important to value cultural, ethnic, racial, sexual, religious and spiritual diversity, and to promote the development of respectful relationships across these lines. We



believe the many diverse elements of society should be reflected in our organizations and decision-making bodies, and we support the leadership of people who have been traditionally closed out of leadership roles. We acknowledge and encourage respect for other life forms and the preservation of biodiversity.

**Personal and Global responsibility:** We encourage individuals to act to improve their personal well being and, at the same time, to enhance ecological balance and social harmony. We seek to join with people and organizations around the world to foster peace, economic justice, and the health of the planet.

**Future Focus and Sustainability:** Our actions and policies should be motivated by long-term goals. We seek to protect valuable natural resources, safely disposing of or "unmaking" all waste we create, while developing a sustainable economics that does not depend on continual expansion for survival. We must counter-balance the drive for short-term profits by assuring that economic development, new technologies, and fiscal policies are responsible to future generations that will inherit the results of our actions. Our overall goal is not merely to survive, but to share lives that are truly worth living. We believe the quality of our individual lives is enriched by the quality of all of our lives. We encourage everyone to see the dignity and intrinsic worth in all of life, and to take the time to understand and appreciate themselves, their community and the magnificent beauty of this world.

Now that I know about the Green Party, I cannot vote any other way. I can vote my conscience, I don't have to vote out of fear, but instead, I can vote out of pride in a set of principles that I believe in. There is nothing in the Green Party platform or in the Green Party principles that I disagree with. On November 3, 2000, I will vote my conscience. I will vote Green.

Why should you vote Green by voting for Ralph Nader? Well, number one, he's the only candidate who actually addresses issues that concern CUNY students. Why should you vote for someone who is "most definitely going to lose, anyway?" Well, if you are even the least bit interested in breaking up the two-party system of political domination in this country, then your vote screams to those in power that you have had it. It maintains Green Party ballot status. How are we ever going to change the system if we don't even have a line on the ballot? And to maintain that ballot status, you have to continue to bring in a certain percentage of the vote, or else you LOSE your line on the ballot. Furthermore, if the Green Party gets five percent of the presidential vote, we get federal campaign funds. Federal campaign funds are absolutely critical and necessary for ANY new party to grow in this country. The Green Party is very grassroots, very citizen-oriented, and very ANTI-corporation. Therefore, not only do we refuse large corporate donations; the corporations hate us anyway, and therefore aren't offer-

ing us anything. We don't have billionaires like Ross Perot in our party, either, so federal funds are disproportionately important to progressive anti-corporate parties like us.

The Green Party is in its infancy, and like an infant, it will be many years before it reaches maturity. To reach maturity, it will need stimulation, nourishment, long-term investments of time, energy and money. A Green vote today

you turn the lever that is associated with Nader's name. A vote for Nader is a vote for Nader. Pure, simple, and sweet.

If I still haven't convinced you, let me try one last time. This time, I'll appeal to your pragmatic side. If you say you'd vote for Ralph Nader but you are afraid of George Bush, think about this. Remember that we operate under the electoral college system. That means that whoever gets the



DAVE GERARDI

## Nader Supporters Outside Anheuser-Busch Headquarters In Midtown Manhattan

may not result in a 2001 Nader presidency, but it is unquestionably a vote for a better political system tomorrow. Now is the time to "grow the Greens." The bottom line is this: If you are the tiniest bit concerned about changing our corrupt one-party political system masquerading as a two-party system, you have NO CHOICE but to vote for Nader.

How about the argument that voting for Al Gore is voting for the lesser of two evils? Who wants to say, "Hey! I voted today! I voted for the lesser of two evils!" That, my friend, is voting out of fear. Why should you have to vote out of fear? We have the right to vote our consciences. If voting for the Democrats makes you proud, makes you feel like you have done the right thing, that your voice will be heard and that social policy will swing your way, then go right ahead. Vote for the Democrats. But if you are voting out of fear, re-imagine your vote. Imagine voting your beliefs, your convictions. Then vote for the Green Party. Voting for the lesser of two evils is still voting for evil.

"A vote for Nader is a vote for Bush." Um, no, last time I checked, a vote for Nader will be a vote for Nader. A vote for Bush will occur if you go to the voting booth and you turn the lever that is associated with Bush's name. NOT if

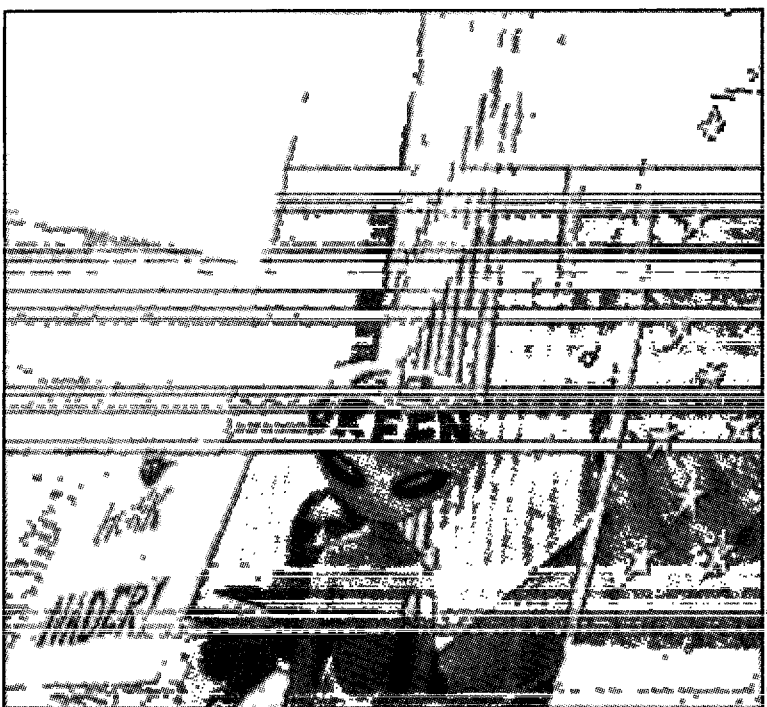
most popular votes gets all the electoral votes and thus wins the election based on electoral college votes, not popular votes. Gore is plenty safe in New York State. Gore is running ahead of Bush in some New York State polls by as much as 20 percent. Voting for Nader cannot, I repeat, CANNOT make Gore lose New York State's electoral college votes. But, it will earn something for the Green Party through the popular vote. It will earn us federal campaign funds. Remember, Nader must get at least 5 percent of the vote to get federal campaign funds. If Nader took only 5 percent of voters who would have otherwise voted for Bush (not counting, then, those who will vote for Nader but otherwise would not have voted at all), then Gore still beats Bush by 15 percent of the New York popular vote and still wins the electoral college. A New York vote for Nader is therefore unquestionably a "safe" vote. You ain't votin' for Bush, sweetie.

The Green Party is the only progressive party available to us anymore. The Democrats have moved so far to the center, they may as well be on the right. You can hardly tell them from the Republicans anymore. Send a message to the Democrats that we are pissed off and we won't take it any more!

Now, I have not relinquished my passionate commitment to a woman's right to choose. But I no longer see it as the single issue that drives my voting choice anymore. To do so made me vote out of fear and it made me make compromises on other values that I'm no longer willing to make. I'm ready now to make a long-term commitment to progressive social change in this country by taking risks, starting with voting for Ralph Nader in 2000. Why? Because Bush and Gore make me want to Ralph.

Find out more about the Green Party at [www.greenparty.org](http://www.greenparty.org), and find out more about Ralph Nader's position at [www.votenader.org](http://www.votenader.org). Also, learn more about local and state green candidates. We have someone running against Hillary Clinton and Rick Lazio. His name is Mark Dunau. Go to [www.greenparty.org/ny](http://www.greenparty.org/ny) to learn more about Green happenings in New York State and how to get involved in your local affiliate.

Register to vote. Register Green. Because you can. And it feels good. It ain't easy bein' Green, but let me tell you what: You sure sleep better at night.



DAVE GERARDI

## Naderites Displayed Inflatable Green Aliens To Urge Support For The Green Party

the Democrats. But if you are voting out of fear, re-imagine your vote. Imagine voting your beliefs, your convictions. Then vote for the Green Party. Voting for the lesser of two evils is still voting for evil.

By Gina Neff

“Who started this rumor that Ralph can't win?” boomed Michael Moore, the curmudgeonly lefty filmmaker, to an audience of over 12,000 at the October 1st “Super Rally” for Nader in Boston. “Was it these guys down here with the mics and cameras?” Moore, who saw his progressive show TV Nation booted from network television, certainly has his own reasons for mistrust of the media. But in this election season, supporters of Green Party candidates Ralph Nader and Winona LaDuke have been asking a few questions of their own about the guys with the mics and cameras.

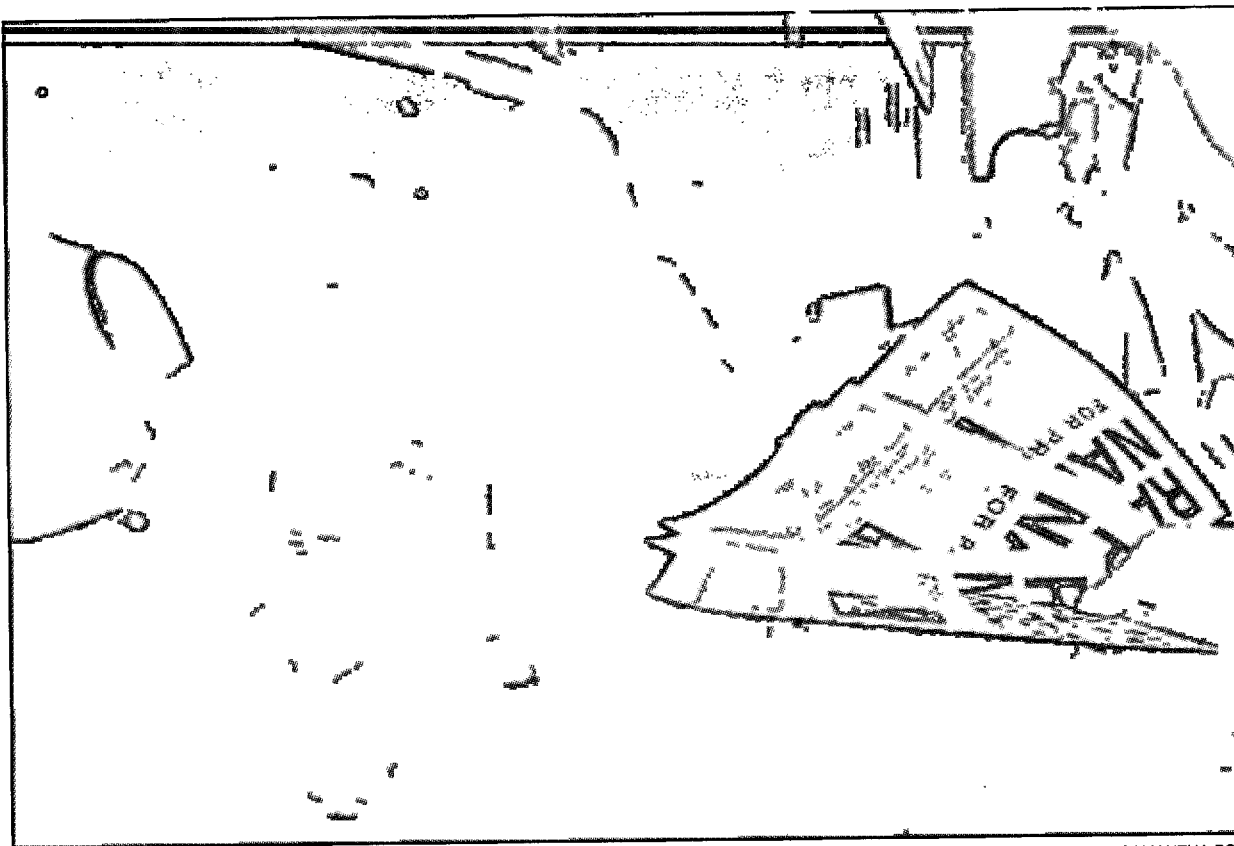
It doesn't help their skepticism that the first major *New York Times* editorial about Nader's run called it a “misguided campaign” that “will distract voters from the clear-cut choice represented by the major-party candidates,” who should be allowed to “compete on an uncluttered playing field.” (“Mr. Nader's Misguided Crusade” *New York Times*, June 30, 2000.) Not only did somebody start the rumor that Ralph can't win, but they immediately crowned him as Democratic spoiler as well.

It's not only the mainstream media that have backed away from one of the strongest progressive Presidential campaigns in decades. *In These Times*, a liberal bi-weekly news and opinion magazine, has published separate signed editorials from both its editor and publisher on why they're not voting for Nader, arguing that a vote for Nader was more like “lifestyle choice” in which one votes “to avoid tainting principles with the give-and-take of real politics,” (Joel Bleifuss, “Face Reality,” *In These Times*, June 12,

July 24, 2000) echoing other attacks on Nader for saying there is no real difference between Bush and Gore. But the campaign may prove yet to be the “revenge of the non-voters,” as Michael Moore has predicted.

eyebrows, tongues, lips and sometimes even ears.” (Barstow, “Nader Assails his Exclusion from Debates,” *New York Times*, October 2, 2000)

The same media outlets that were involved in the



SAMANTHA BOX

Passing Out Pro-Nader Literature To The After-Work Crowd  
In Front Of Anheuser-Busch Headquarters

# THE MATURE THING TO DO

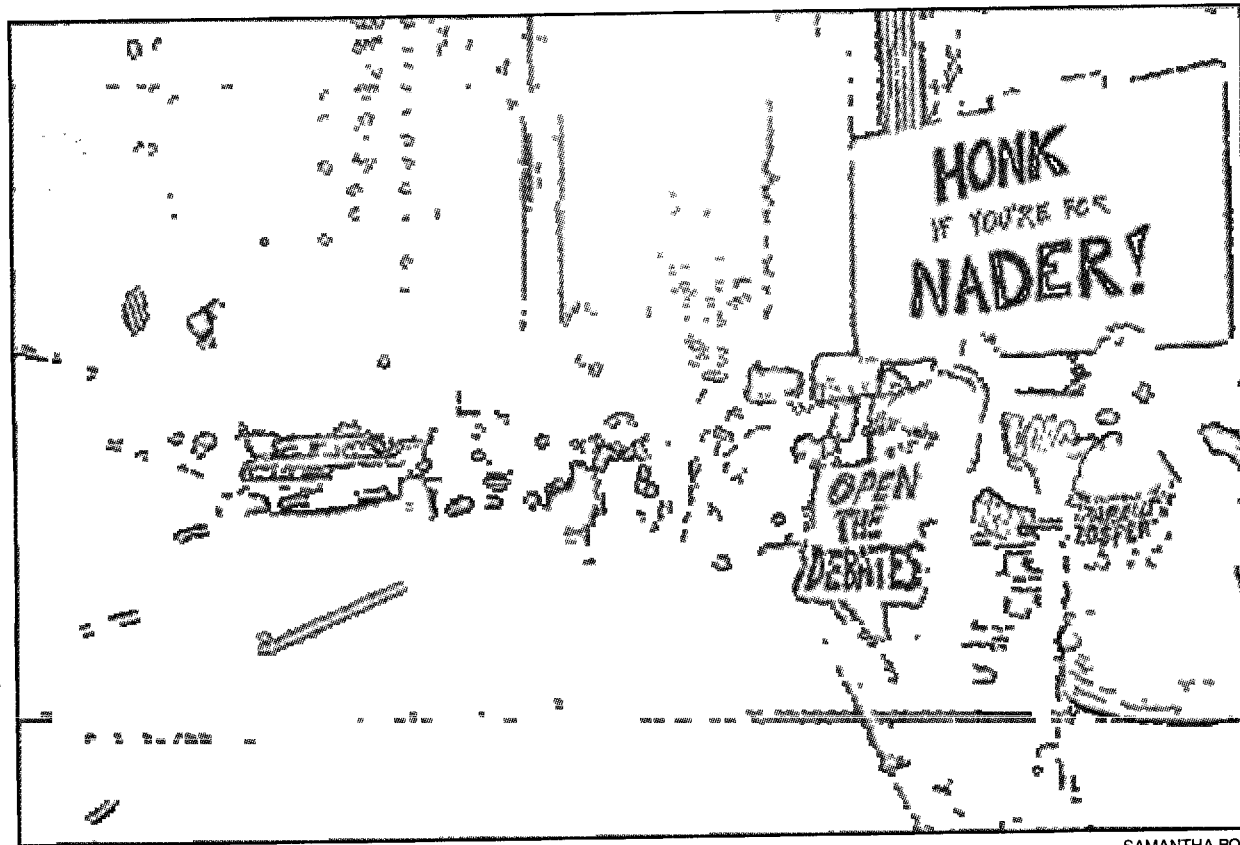
2000) and urging Naderites “to grow up politically.” (James Weinstein, “...And Why I'm Not,” *In These Times*, August 21, 2000) Katha Pollitt criticized Nader for being “factually and tactically wrong to respond to

The largely young crowd in Boston's Fleet Center cheered loudly when Moore, introducing Nader, jokingly said, “Slackers can change this country.” The *New York Times*, though, was less generous when, with

collective hand-wringing over plummeting voter participation rates in the 1990s now don't seem to know what to make of a core of excited, energized voters. Over half of the eligible voters in the United States -- particularly young people -- do not vote. Now, a grassroots, shoe-string campaign has come along that is trying to build a coalition of social movements- and is cashing in on the energy of those activists rather than soft-money and corporate donations. I mean, when was the last time busloads of college students actually shelled out \$10 a pop for a political rally for a Presidential candidate like they're doing for Nader? And considering the deafening silence of enthusiasm for (and utter lack of viewership of!) this summer's Democratic and Republican conventions, is it any wonder why the two main parties and the mainstream press don't “get” how to reach these supposedly scruffy, dreadlocked, pierced Rage Against the Machine fans? Or even why they might yet constitute an important, if overlooked, voting block? Certainly, by barring Nader, the bipartisan Commission on Presidential Debates has just told the young angry vote they don't even count.

Of course, these whippersnappers aren't going to be the only ones voting Green on November 7. But you'd think that anybody who isn't voting for either George Bush or Al Gore is a political naif to hear the older voices of reason in the media, whose lectures on politics-as-Democratic-Party-loyalty sounds about as patronizing to voting-age adults as “Now, eat your vegetables.” If being politically mature means throwing my vote away on a candidate with whom I disagree on major issues like universal health care, reduced military spending, a living wage, and labor laws, then I don't want to grow up.

Gina Neff is a student in the sociology program.



SAMANTHA BOX

such concerns [as to what Bush might do if elected] with tired quips about Tweedledum and Tweedledee,” (Katha Pollitt, “Reasonable Questions” *The Nation*,

its branded condescension, it described the rally as, at times “less a political happening than a body piercing convention with earrings sprouting from the noses,



# LOCAL ELECTIONS AND THE BATTLE OF DEMOCRACY

By Louise Ammentorp

The first election in the United States allowed only 4 percent of the population to vote. Ninety-six percent of the population did not qualify: women, Afro-Americans, Native Americans, and white men without property. America was hailed as a democracy because it had thrown off British colonialism yet the majority of people in the country were not allowed to vote. To this very day the remnants of British colonialism persist as evidenced in American University's "English" departments and the extensive information about the British royal family in supermarket tabloids.

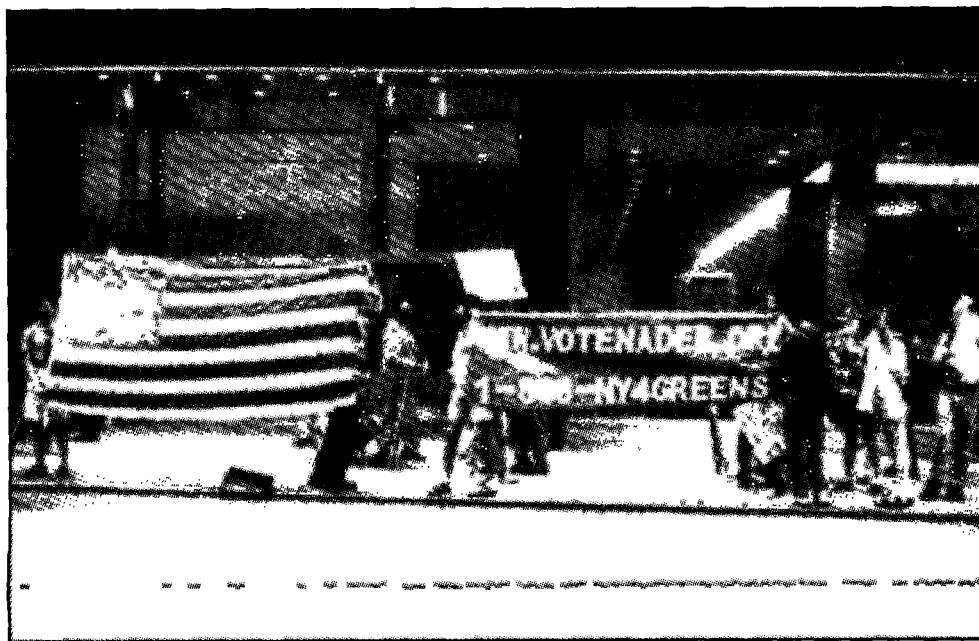
In the "The Federalist Papers," a foundational document for government in the U.S., these "founding fathers" actually change the definition of democracy making it into its opposite. They argue that democracy is protection from "tyranny of the masses"—protection of the minority against the interests of the majority. The only minority ever to be protected by this version of "democracy" is the large property holder. It is obvious that oppressed nationalities or any other minority has never enjoyed any protection. Most of us think of democracy as majority rule yet what we have is the exact opposite; we have tyranny of the minority. The multi-national working class is the true majority in the U.S. yet effective power rests with 6/10ths of 1 percent of the population. And now even this "absolute" rule is compromised.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, a class of international finance capitalists rules the world, wielding power through their institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), NATO and even the United Nations. The cold war was largely a way for this class to consolidate power and get super-rich by embezzling the national treasury, lending money and selling weapons to both sides.

A new phenomenon is developing in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Like most cities in the U.S., working people are being driven out to make way for the upper classes, however there is a mounting organized resistance. New Brunswick is dominated by the multi-national corporation Johnson & Johnson. J&J maintains two Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as front groups (Development Corporation (DevCo) and New Brunswick Tomorrow), in addition to their control of the local government bodies through the local Democratic Party machine.

These NGOs were established in 1975, in response to revolutions worldwide and the sponta-

neous urban rebellions that took place throughout the U.S. and the economic recession. New Brunswick Tomorrow, founded by J&J executive John J. Heldrich, concerns itself with the "civic society;" they employ the professional cooler outers to diffuse and confuse the people's revolutionary aspirations and impulses and make the city a pleasant place for the rich to visit on the weekends.



DAVE GERARDI

*Unlike Nader's symbolic campaign, we must run real campaigns that can really win throughout the country, beginning at the local level.*

Recently New Brunswick Tomorrow held a meeting in the public housing project to teach tenants scheduled for eviction how to pack!

DevCo took hold of "redevelopment." Glen Patterson, a city employed "city planner," has stated that the city has no redevelopment plan. This government function has been handed over to a private multi-national corporation. Such usurpation of any pretense of democracy is taking place in most American cities. At the national level, even the U.S.-nation-based bourgeoisie is now being put under the heel of international finance capital.

"Redevelopment" is a "politically correct" code word for ethnic cleansing: the re-whitization of U.S. cities. As U.S. cities are being transformed from manufacturing centers into bookkeeping, management, and technology centers for world capital, the working class—particularly the oppressed nationalities—is being driven out, allowed to return only as a service class which must be out of town

when the sun goes down. The working class centered in the cities also provided a market for "mom and pop" stores, bodegas, and a section of the professional class. This urban petty-bourgeoisie, whose market is primarily the proletariat, is also under attack in the "re-development" process since they are losing their market and being driven out of business by "mega" corporate chain stores owned primarily by the international bourgeoisie. The urban petty-bourgeoisie must be organized as a strategic ally of the proletariat, despite its vacillating character.

In New Brunswick an ideological spectrum of revolutionaries including Communists initiated the formation of a tactical united front with the objective of winning a local city council election. Workers, students, and various segments of the urban middle class have united around a platform that was created by surveying New Brunswick residents door to door and ratified at a mass convention. The campaign organization operates under the principles of democracy.

From a revolutionary standpoint the campaign has numerous objectives: raising the level of political consciousness, building a local revolutionary working class organization as well as a mass organization and establishing connections and contacts amongst the masses of people in the city. We are also learning to put into effect the Left-Bloc tactic developed by Lenin in Russia after the revolutionary upsurge of 1905 was suppressed and the revolutionary movement had to be re-built. At the same time the central objective of the campaign is actually winning in November and gaining a degree of political power. In the context of the current state of the revolutionary movement this

small victory would be a giant step forward. Revolutionaries must begin to organize in places where we can actually win some political power.

Mao taught that we should fight when we can win and retreat when we can't. Unlike Nader's symbolic campaign, we must run real campaigns that can really win throughout the country, beginning at the local level. We need to organize a nationwide Left electoral bloc to cripple the right wing by voting them out of office (Jesse Helms, Guiliani, Bush, etc. must all be gotten rid of) and organizing electoral Left-blocs where we can actually put our hands on some political power. Along the way, we must develop all the aspects of organization, consciousness, and training needed to make revolution on a national and international level

Anyone interested in participating in this grassroots effort (we especially need people on Election Day) please contact Louise Ammentorp at 732-890-0995.

## HAMLET GETS INTERVIEWED FOR A WRITING FELLOW GIG

As overheard by Mark Noonan

**INTERVIEWING COMMITTEE:** So, Hamlet, aside from the fact that you have the ability to speak in heroic couplets, live in a cool castle, and promise to fund our program for the next five years if all goes as planned back home, what qualifies you to be a CUNY certified writing fellow?

**HAMLET:** Aye, that question strikes to the heart, but I shall answer true. More than even my mother, that vile worm, I seem to have a thing for words, words, words times two.

**COMMITTEE:** That is all well and good, Mr. Hamlet, but what distinctly separates you from the vast stream of impecunious, ultra-exploited graduate students desperately clawing at the chance to be finally paid their worth? What, specifically, is your philosophy in regards to writing?

**HAMLET:**  
To write, or not to write—that is the question,  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune  
Brought about by poor composition skills  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles  
And by utilizing WAC strategies  
Oppose them.  
I choose to write, to be, to live forever  
And to get paid in the process.

**COMMITTEE:** I see your point, Hamlet, but please narrow your thesis. What, for example, do you think of the work of I.A. Richards?

**HAMLET:** Ah, Richard, I knew him well. Damn shame he had to wipe out his family in such a bloody way.

**COMMITTEE:** No not Richard III, you dope, I.A. Richards the practical literary theorist!

**HAMLET:** Oh yes, of course. I knew him well too. I particularly liked his belief that bad writing is like bad families, you must diagnose the problems, and then put a sullen end to them.

**COMMITTEE:** Metaphorically speaking, of course.

**HAMLET:** If you like. But, again, Richards is great because he delivered the goods. He did away with "gangster theories" and replaced them with a practical theory that was intelligible and usable. He hit the knob on the head.

**COMMITTEE:** And what knob was that precisely?

**HAMLET:** Why the knob of literacy. He understood that making meaning was a matter of social contexts and cultural frameworks. Take my uncle Polonius. He, not knowing what had been ailing me of late and what my future goals were, read only my actions. To him I seemed mad, but was in fact sane as any Danish cucumber. Polonius, you see, failed to "entail the development of critical consciousness," that is, his realized capacity to construct and construe a reasonably accurate representation of his recognitions was sorely lacking.

**COMMITTEE:** And how did you solve the problem of his alleged illiteracy?

**HAMLET:** I killed him, the boob.

**COMMITTEE:** Well, Mr. Hamlet, one can't

kill our students here. It's strictly against the rules.

**HAMLET:** Well, I guess as a somewhat reasonable alternative, I could implement some writing strategies I've been thinking about.

**COMMITTEE:** Such as?

**HAMLET:** I happen to be a huge fan of composing out loud and acting out scenes before jotting them down. Abstract theorizing is for the Hapsburgs. Direct student engagement in material, such as double-entry journal note-taking, informal free-writing exercises, and varying genre forms works for me. I also like to invoke the visceral when it comes to taking up the featherpen. By this I mean treating words as palpable things. Letting students feel sounds and hear images.

**COMMITTEE:** Anything else?

**HAMLET:** Being a thespian, I also strongly believe that a college curriculum should not be structured just for knowledge distribution and consumption, but for knowledge production. Teachers have been taught to teach, that is to tell students how it is, and have forgotten in the process the basic notion that imparting knowledge is at the minimum a two-way street. Ideas and learning are not things in themselves, but what happens when there is the engagement of two or more minds. I should know, have you ever listened to one of my dramatic monologues?

**COMMITTEE:** Should we have?

**HAMLET:** For thy insolence, get thee to a nunnery!

## HORRORSCOPES

*My research has turned up valuable insights this month. From a brittle, unpublished, esoteric text, The Journal of Wall Street, and a rare 1957 skin-bound Standard and Poor's Index typeset in bone chips, I have uncovered eldritch financial spells and industrial magiks. Delving into the frenetic, hallowed scrolls of those mad alchemists, Morgan and Carnegie, testing formulae and the most trivial of mystical minutiae, my conclusions are beyond the most skeptical reproach. Heed lucky Libra. Your success is contingent on his; your wealth on hers. The answers follow.*

By Dave Gerardi



**ARIES**  
(March 21-April 19) You should gamble. Often. Split a pair of aces or eights. Hit on a soft 16.



**LEO**  
(July 23-Aug. 22) Charge Cancer \$100 to spurn him to pick up.



**SAGITTARIUS**  
(Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Duck.



**TAURUS**  
(April 20-May 20) Odd. 17. Red.



**VIRGO**  
(Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Debit \$50 each from Cancer and Leo for dinners. Let them dangle. Tell them they just missed your birthday.



**CAPRICORN**  
(Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Bathe every ten minutes.



**GEMINI**  
(May 21-June 21) The stars of the twins have rarely been brighter. Big money can be had. Frequent the club scene and charge for three-somes.



**LIBRA**  
(Sept. 23-Oct. 23) The stars are clear. The next ten days are optimal for time travel. Bring cash. And a toothbrush. 1932: Buy automobile stock and leave instructions for a relative to sell in the late sixties. Mid-80s: buy Microsoft.



**AQUARIUS**  
(Jan. 20-Feb. 18) A great opportunity to change your television viewing habits: less SNL, more Spice Channel.



**CANCER**  
(June 22-July 22) Virgo is on the hunt for a new lover. Beware envious Leo. Charge him \$100 to lead Virgo's lustful eye.



**SCORPIO**  
(Oct. 24-Nov. 21) Counterfeit Monopoly money. You will finally break Aries' string of 52 consecutive victories.



**PISCES**  
(Feb. 19-March 20) Alchemical tables are tied to the stars this month. Turn lead into pewter.

## HYBRIDO: A MULTICULTURAL MAGAZINE

By the Hybrido editors

HYBRIDO is a multicultural magazine whose primary objective is the study of Hispanic culture in all of its manifestations, but primarily concerned with literary studies. As its title suggests, HYBRIDO reflects the very essence of the Hispanic culture: not one but several cultural heritages merging into one!

The HYBRIDO project is made possible by a handful of graduate students who act both as editors and contributors to the magazine. As editors of HYBRIDO, we would like to take this opportunity through The Advocate to invite graduate students from any programs who would like to contribute with either photography, short stories, poems, critical essays and book reviews, dealing with Hispanic issues. Written material may be submitted in English, Spanish or Portuguese, in a diskette format (preferably in Microsoft Word)

HYBRIDO has been published for the last three consecutive years. It is our custom to invite the participant authors of every new edition and to perform readings at different places. The last issue was presented at Lectorum Book Store; the second at El Sur Book Store and the first at the former Graduate Center facilities.

Thanks to the diligence of its editors, the magazine is now on the Web. You may now be our virtual reader at [WWW.hybridomagazine.com](http://WWW.hybridomagazine.com). We keep working on this page to bring our readers unabridged versions online. If you want to contact us via E-mail, please do so at [Hybridomagazine@hotmail.com](mailto:Hybridomagazine@hotmail.com).

The Executive Board of HYBRIDO thanks the Cultural Affairs Committee and the Doctoral Students' Council, whose support is vital to the existence of our magazine!

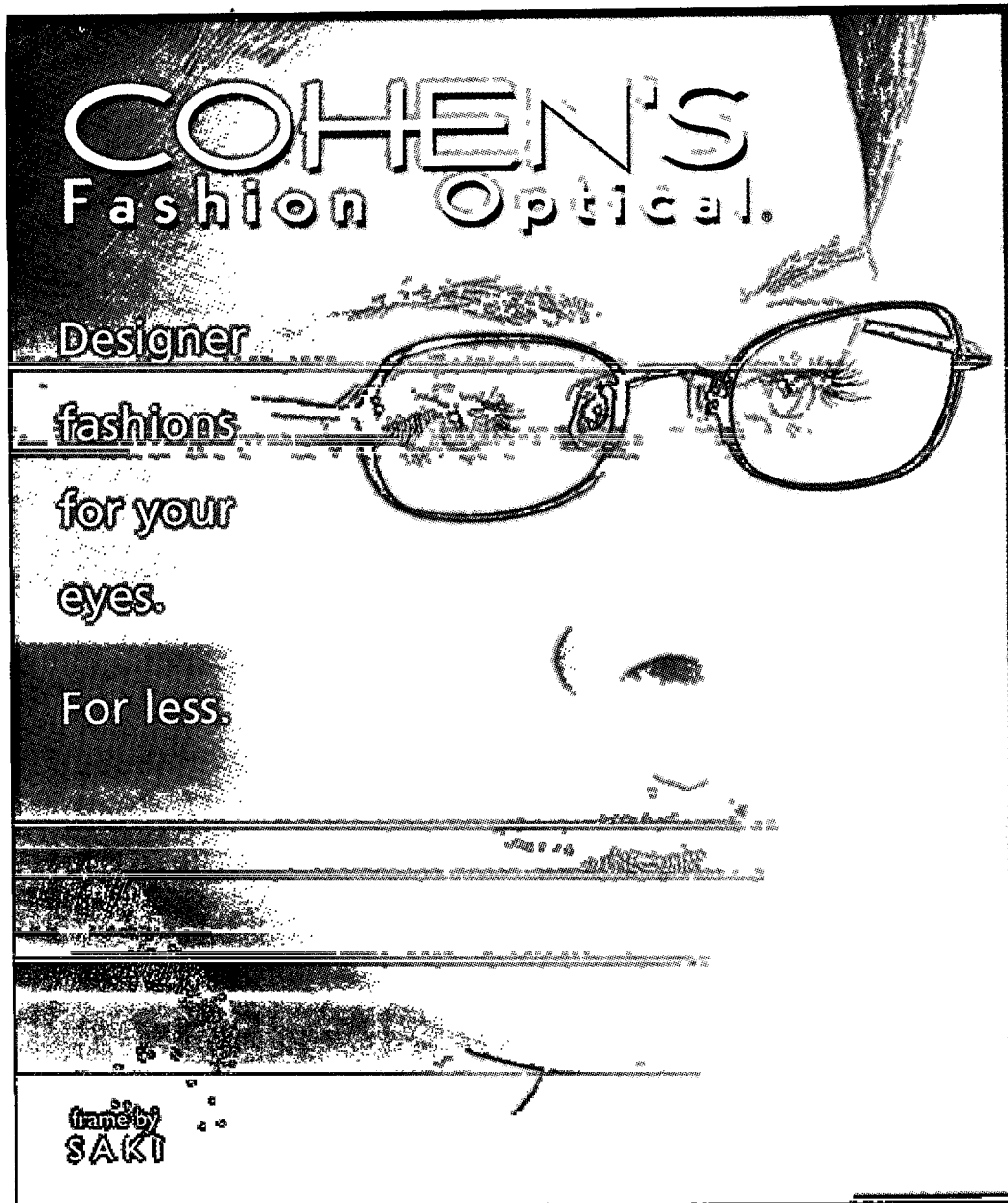
## THE OMBUDS OFFICE

By Rolf Meyersohn, Ombuds Officer

My office offers a safe and neutral place for students (along with faculty and staff) to voice concerns, evaluate situations, organize their thoughts, access feelings, and to explore options for handling problems - all in strictest confidence. Such options can range from informally talking about a concern to requesting a formal grievance - at their discretion. As Ombuds Officer I can gather information, serve as a shuttle diplomat or mediate, as well as provide referrals to relevant offices. This office has been established outside the existing administrative and academic structures and is completely independent. I was appointed by President Horowitz and have no other boss. My most important job is to LISTEN. Whatever goes on in my office is conducted under the guiding principle of strict confidentiality.

Concerns that people bring to the Ombuds Office include: disagreements about grades, problems with tuition charges, interpersonal conflicts, professional misconduct, academic dishonesty, safety concerns, sexual harassment, racism or other kinds of discrimination, ethics and whistle-blowing, working conditions, intellectual property issues, feelings of stress, disagreements about grades.

Students are invited to call me at 817-7191 to make an appointment or to e-mail me at [rmeyersohn@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:rmeyersohn@gc.cuny.edu). My office is in Room 7313.



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## PROTEST IN PRAGUE

### DEMONSTRATORS FORCE THIRD-DAY SHUTDOWN OF IMF AND WORLD BANK SUMMIT MEETINGS

By Andrew Kennis

At the 54th Annual Summit of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group, business was conducted with little fanfare and/or attention from the mainstream media or even protestors. That Summit, however, occurred last year while this year's 55th Annual Summit was a far different story, as anywhere between 10,000 and 20,000 demonstrators greeted the scores of world bankers, economists and financiers that came to Prague for the three day event. In addition to the protests delaying the first day of the Summit, demonstrators also shut down the meetings one day earlier than expected, according to a World Bank official interviewed by Prague's Independent Media Center (for interview, see [http://prague.indymedia.org/display.php3?article\\_id=1758](http://prague.indymedia.org/display.php3?article_id=1758)).

Similar to the North American based Intercontinental Direct Action Network and its affiliated local branches that organized mass protests that shut down the opening day of Seattle's World Trade Organization Ministerial meetings and delayed the annual D.C. IMF/World Bank meetings, the Initiative Against Economic Globalization (INPEG, see <http://www.inpeg.org/homepage.htm>) was the main sponsoring umbrella organization that brought together numerous groups from over 50 different countries. Several preliminary events organized by INPEG took place before the protests, which started on September 26th (often referred to by activists as "S26"). One such event was a four-day training camp before the protests (9/14-9/18, see [http://x21.org/s26/prague/action\\_camp.htm](http://x21.org/s26/prague/action_camp.htm)). Another preliminary event was a three-day Counter Summit, which was held in Prague just a few days before the Annual Meetings (9/22-9/24). According to INPEG's website, the Counter Summit featured "prominent experts and activists from around the globe, and offer[ed] lectures and discussions exploring the devastating impact of World Bank and IMF policies." (see <http://www.inpeg.org/sumschd.htm>) Finally, INPEG also organized the main convergence center for the myriad of groups that came to Prague to protest the meetings (see <http://x21.org/s26/prague/convergence.htm>).

The mass protests against the Summit peaked in numbers the first day of the meetings, which resulted in numerous delays for a number of delegates, particularly at the conclusion of the first day.

The protests began at 9 a.m. at Namesti Miru square. Street theater and artistic events were the focal point of the morning protests while the afternoon featured peaceful street protests. The latter demonstrations comprised three different groups – yellow, blue and pink – which all attempted to descend upon the conference center where the IMF/World Bank meeting was taking place. The "yellow" group, led mostly by Italian and Spanish groups within the "Ya Basta!" movement, apparently were met with the most police resistance and decided in an on-the-spot democratic street assembly to join the two other contingents. The "blue" march, meanwhile, was a bit more successful in coming close to the conference center but paid a heavy price with some severe police repression. The "pink" group, managed to get around the conference complex to approach from the other side. Through such spontaneous street maneuvering, a large group of demonstrators took the police by surprise several times, at some instances, even getting very close to the center resulting in some occupations of the plaza around the conference center. Thereafter, the police responded to the peaceful demonstrations, according to one eye witness, with "heavy charges, using concussion grenades, tear gas and serious physical violence. However, peaceful blockades remained around the centre until the early evening, locking the delegates in for several hours." (Testimony and most street protest information taken from Prague IMC, <[http://prague.indymedia.org/display.php3?article\\_id=1331](http://prague.indymedia.org/display.php3?article_id=1331)>).

### A FAMILIAR PATTERN

To be sure, the pattern of non-violent demonstrations being followed by severe police repression is a familiar one, as was evidenced in the WTO protests in Seattle, the IMF/World Bank protests in D.C., the protests in Philadelphia against the Republican National Convention, and finally in the protests in Melbourne, Australia, where an activist was literally run over by an unmarked police car (see [http://prague.indymedia.org/display.php3?article\\_id=2401](http://prague.indymedia.org/display.php3?article_id=2401), for pictures). Numerous human rights organizations have issued condemnations of such past police abuse. The American Civil Liberties Union, for instance, issued a scathing report on police misconduct in Seattle, (*Out of Control: Seattle's Flawed Response to Protests Against the World Trade Organization* <http://www.aclu-wa.org/ISSUES/police/WTO-Report.html>) which was coupled by a similar report released by the National Lawyers Guild, titled *Bringing in an Undemocratic Institution Brings an Undemocratic Response* (<http://www.infosubway.org/infosubway/wto-report/>). Finally, the ACLU also filed a class-action lawsuit which, among other things, charged that police "used excessive force against non-violent demonstrators" (see the press release about the lawsuit at <http://www.aclu.org/news/2000/n072700b.html>). As far as Prague was concerned, eye-witness accounts echoing much of the same abuses contained in the reports noted above.

were also found, as the Prague IMC reported that police "unleashed a combination of concussion grenades and tear gas." Similar to the protests at the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia, however, most of the worst police abuses apparently took place in prison.

### CRITIQUES OF IMF/WORLD BANK

Before moving on to detailing such police abuses in prison, however, it is useful to reflect on why the demonstrators showed up en masse to protest the IMF/World Bank meetings, especially in light of the media blackout of such important issues. One prominent example is Joseph Kahn's story on the protests in the *New York Times* on September 27th, which is indicative of most corporate media coverage in that it completely ignores the motivations of protestors (also see <http://www.fair.org/imf-world-bank.html> for some great media criticism of past coverage of IMF/World Bank protests, especially Rachel Coen's article, "For Press, Magenta Hair and Nose Rings Defined Protests" <http://www.fair.org/extra/0007/imf-magenta.html>). As a result of such poor coverage for critical approaches to the IMF/World Bank – and similarly, to find out why the protestors are on the streets in the first place – one has to go to critical scholarly sources, which are unfortunately marginalized in the all too often elitist leanings of academia. Exceptions include, however, Martin Khor of the Third World Network, who with his most recent book, *Globalization and the South: Some Critical Issues*, castigates the IMF/World Bank as being responsible for "depressing [the] economies [of the Southern underdeveloped countries] through high interest rates and large budgetary cuts." Such cuts occur, as Michael Albert of Z Magazine explains, through IMF/World Bank imposed loan conditions, otherwise known as "structural adjustment policies" that have had "predictable consequences that have always been disastrous," including a staying of "productive investment." Another major component of structural adjustment policies is "Fiscal austerity," which rests on "raising taxes and reducing government spending" producing more "disastrous" consequences, including a depression to "aggregate demand, also leading to reductions in output and increases in unemployment." Perhaps the most scathing critique of the IMF/World Bank policies can be found in an anthology edited by Kevin Danaher of Global Exchange, which is entitled *50 Years is Enough: The Case Against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund*. In Danaher's introduction, one can find a quote that echoes many of the sentiments of the articles in the anthology, as Leonor Briones of the Freedom from Debt Coalition in the Philippines explained: "The very logic and framework of structural adjustment policies require the repression of democratic rights. This is because these policies demand drastic fiscal, monetary and economic measures that cannot help but raise very strong reactions from the public. And such reactions have to be repressed. It is not surprising that many structural adjustment programs are successfully implemented in countries like my own, under a dictatorship."

Others have gone farther in their criticisms of the IMF and World Bank, such as Juliette Majot and Noam Chomsky, who have cited the international legal doctrine of "odious debt" in their argument that the third world debt that the IMF and World Bank preside over, does not even exist. Majot defines "odious debt" as "any debt that has been incurred by a government without the informed consent of its people, and one that is not used in the legitimate interest of the State is theoretically an odious debt." Majot cites historical precedents, such as Cuba, which was freed from the shackles of its debt from its colonizer, Spain, under this doctrine.

### PRISON ABUSES

Demonstrators in prison were not able to choose much of anything – such as whether to hunger strike or not much less what kind of society people of the world should live in – as food was denied to many prisoners, according to a press release from INPEG (<http://www.inpeg.org/s26press.htm>). More than 850 people were arrested, including prisoners from all over the world (see international breakdown [http://prague.indymedia.org/display.php3?article\\_id=1835](http://prague.indymedia.org/display.php3?article_id=1835)). Paul Rosenthal, a prisoner from who was released from the Olsanska jail in Prague and an U.S. citizen from Seattle, Washington described some of the atrocious abuses that were happening "inside": "What is happening inside the Czech jails is more than frightening. People have no rights, they are being beaten severely, they are disappearing. Women are being forced to strip in front of male guards and perform exercises. People with serious medical problems have been denied help."

During the S26 actions, solidarity actions all over the world took place, such as an occupation in Switzerland, where the Czech Embassy was occupied by an anti-WTO coalition and an anarcho-syndicalist group (see [http://prague.indymedia.org/display.php3?article\\_id=2018](http://prague.indymedia.org/display.php3?article_id=2018)). Other solidarity actions took place in over 50 cities all over the world, including rail shutdowns and embassy protests and occupations.