

Advocate

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Whither Health Services? Administration reconsiders health services funding in face of dwindling resources

JAMES HOFF

With CUNY budgets still uncertain and state revenue shortfalls projected between six and eight billion dollars for the next fiscal year, the Graduate Center administration is looking at ways to reduce its current expenses. One of the items on its list of considerations is its annual contribution to the Health Services Center.

The Health Services Center, which offers free and low-cost health care at the GC and is widely used by many students on campus, has traditionally been funded by a combination of revenue from various sources, including student activity fees and

annual contributions directly from the Graduate Center administration.

The Doctoral Students Council (DSC), funded entirely by student activity fees, normally contributes on average approximately 50% of the total Health Services budget or about \$62,500 annually. Due to a significant and unexplained bookkeeping error, the DSC was able to pay only \$37,000 this year, or a little less than 30%.

The administration, which usually contributes the other half of the Health Services budget, agreed to cover the remaining amount, paying a total of \$88,000 instead of the usual \$62,500.

Faced with these increasing costs and

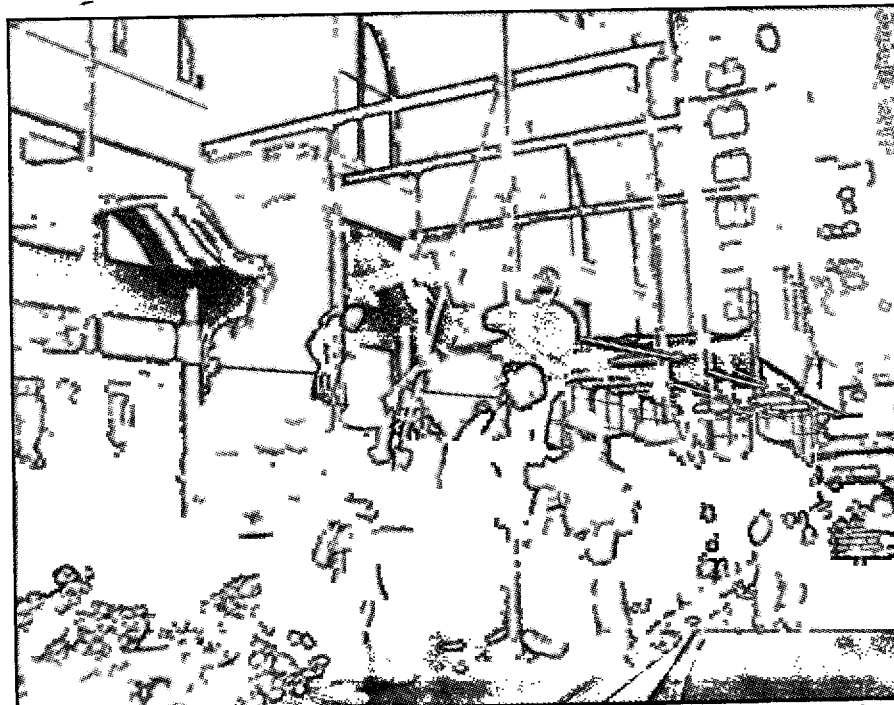
uncertain budgets for the next fiscal year, the administration is now looking for ways to reduce or perhaps eliminate its annual contribution.

Matthew Schoengood, Vice President for Student Affairs, is adamant that "there have not been any decisions made yet" about the Health Services Center, but added that "We are examining our options in the face of dwindling resources, and looking at how other CUNY colleges address this issue."

According to Schoengood, the Graduate Center's Health Services Center is unique among CUNY campuses. Our administration currently contributes one of the high-

est percentages of funding to its Health Services Center compared to the other campuses in the university. Baruch, for instance, funds its health center almost entirely with student activity fees, while the administration at campuses like Lehman and Brooklyn pay only a small portion of the total health-services budget. Many other campuses contribute less than 10 or 20% of the total health-services budgets, while the remaining amount is covered by student activity fees, some of which are often earmarked specifically for health services, meaning they cannot be spent elsewhere.

Schoengood also added that student
see *Health Services*, page 3



NO MORE WHORING FOR HUMMERS FOR NOW: Workers dismantled the scaffolding on the night of December 6.

Prison Tales
from the RNC

Arafat's Legacy

Views from
CUNY Conservatives

Bush's Reelection
Seen from Mexico

Remembering Ol' Dirty

Dispute Brews Over Dining Commons Firing Administration and Restaurant Associates Defend Dismissal as some Students Urge Boycott

ANTONIA LEVY & DAN SKINNER

Food services provider Restaurant Associates (RA) officially characterizes itself as a "New York based restaurant group with more than 130 restaurants and high-profile accounts." One of those accounts is a contract over 20 years old with our very own Graduate Center (GC), which covers the Dining Commons and 365 Express Café.

Recently, concern has been raised over the firing of one of RA's longtime GC employees, Lazeena Gaffoor, known to many students as Liz. Some students, who see her dismissal as emblematic of the firm's questionable labor practices, have gone so far as to call for a boycott of the Dining Commons and 365 Express until Ms. Gaffoor is reinstated. RA and the GC administration, on the other hand, claim that the firing was justified and reasonable.

Perspectives on the Dismissal

On September 15, 2004, Ms. Gaffoor finished her lunch

break and was subsequently fired by local RA manager Charles Hunter. After being asked to collect her belongings, CUNY security personnel were called at the request of RA management to escort her off the premises. She was given notice not to enter the GC for 30 days.

Ms. Gaffoor, a mother of three who is currently going through a divorce, was employed by RA at the GC for about 14 years, most of that time as a register operator. According to Ms. Gaffoor, she had been late a few times, mainly because she had to wait at home until a babysitter arrived to care for her children. Ms. Gaffoor says that she would normally compensate by staying late, an arrangement she had made with her previous manager to accommodate her responsibilities as a mother.

About one year ago, Mr. Hunter arrived at the GC as the new manager, and Ms. Gaffoor reports that her work situation changed abruptly. In June 2004, when she took two of her allotted three weeks of vacation, she was called back to work four days early, a request Ms. Gaffoor

accommodated. In September, however, according to Ms. Gaffoor, Mr. Hunter again called her back early from her vacation, but this time she refused. Ms. Gaffoor says she told Mr. Hunter: "I am not going to work during my vacation anymore."

According to Ms. Gaffoor, her tardiness was met "with one verbal warning," although RA claims that Ms. Gaffoor was warned on several occasions. After returning from her vacation in September, management informed her that she was being demoted, and she was subsequently reassigned from her former position in RA office to the registers in the Dining Commons. According to Ms. Gaffoor, another employee had already been moved into her former position in the office while she was on vacation. The demotion was accompanied by a 30-day probation period, during which she was not allowed to be late or to take days off. Shortly after this warning, Ms. Gaffoor says that she encountered scheduling problems with her

see *Firing*, page 4

Don't Compromise With Imperial Christianity

It's good to appear to be pious, faithful, humane, honest, and religious, and it's good to be all those things; but as long as one keeps in mind that when the need arises you can and will change into the opposite. — Machiavelli

We've all heard more than we ever needed to know about "moral values" and their role in the re-election of George W. Bush. The mainstream media has eaten up the Republican Party line that the "moral values" in question—anti-choice on abortion and a fierce opposition to gay marriage, in particular—are an essential characteristic of "real Americans." *The New York Times*, for instance, opined that

Rural voters [...] stunned Democrats by placing moral values over their own economic interests and even Iraq and terrorism. That suggests the party faces years in the political desert if it doesn't address the basics of rural culture.

ADVOCATE
web.gc.cuny.edu/advocate
CUNY Graduate Center, Rm. 5396
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10016
Tel: 212-847-7882 or 7885
Email: advocate@gc.cuny.edu

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Contributors:
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The essentialist foundations of this type of thinking contribute to its inevitable failure to ask the most basic questions about what these values are and why Americans hold them. While you wouldn't know it from the last election, Christian thought has not always carried the pro-war, right-wing flag it carries today. Many early Christians, for instance, refused to serve in the Roman army even under the threat of death. This refusal was not just about political opposition to Rome—it stemmed from a deep religious respect for the human body as the masterwork of the divine hand, which inspired Tertullian to state in the second century that "Under no circumstances should a true Christian draw the sword."

When Constantine adopted the Christian faith as the official religion of the state, however, the church abandoned its anti-war position. This shift is worth considering. Christianity acting against or outside the power of the state appears to have been a "humanist" doctrine: humans are created in the image of God and must therefore be treated with respect wherever they are found. In league with state power, however, the benefits of violating the human body become too tempting, and the message becomes distorted. Christian beliefs become instruments necessary to bring unfortunate infidels into the fold (of "freedom") by military force. Our sympathies, it follows, are reserved for those with US citizenship.

The majority of American Christianity passed through the Constantinian gate some time ago (the Cold War era, for instance, saw a major increase in the conflation of Church and State) and we may now look upon mainstream religion in the US as a distinctly imperialist form of thought. The basic reason for saying this is the sense of American exceptionalism which has become so fused with the conservative Christian movement, and according to which God is smiling down on the US, "blessing" us and approving of everything we do. If we consume much of the world's resources while constituting just a small fraction of its population, God loves that. Interpreting it as a new rendition of "the white man's burden," with the American economy serving as the locomotive of progress. If we use violence to tilt the balance of global power in our favor, God loves that too, after all, ours is a war of "good" against "evil." And if we want to portray ourselves as kindly dedicated to "freedom" as we do this, all the better to God.

Admittedly, most Christians don't consciously think like this—they really do care about morality and want to see themselves as moral people. Meanwhile, the media and the government play on their desires, petting their egos and telling them that their country is doing the right thing. This was the true core of Bush's "values" appeal—telling Americans that they are

Letters

What's the Matter with Kaminski?

To the Editor,

I had the displeasure of reading an article in *The New York Times* ("A Blue City (Disconsolate, Even) Bewildered by a Red America," Nov. 4,) right before reading Mr. Kaminski's article from *The Advocate* ("Let's Talk About America"). Double whammy.

The Times and *Advocate* articles shared a common theme: how can we bring our enlightened East Coast vision to the yokels in the 'heartland,' er, the Midwest? The *Times* article had gems like...

His friend, Ms. Cohn, a native of Wisconsin who deals in art, contended that New Yorkers were not as fooled by Mr. Bush's statements as other Americans might be. 'New Yorkers are savvy,' she said. 'We have street smarts. Whereas people in the Midwest are more influenced by what their friends say' and 'If the heartland feels so alienated from us, then it behooves us to wrap our arms around the heartland,' she said. 'We need to bring our way of life, which is honoring diversity and having compassion for people with different lifestyles, on a trip around the country.'

The Advocate article echoed this silly theme, though at least Kaminski emphasized to his hippie readership that we need to be patient with these naïve, Midwestern yokels. After all, these poor bastards mean well:

While the activists in these Midwestern communities may have lofty goals for reform, they are not necessarily in accordance with the radical ideals held by the core founders and position holders of many metropolitan activist groups.

Thank God for that. Wait, can I say? (Don't worry: I mean "God" in the ceremonial sense.) At any rate, I learned from Kaminski's article that you East Coast types "must be patient and willing to work with groups that are more moderate in nature, without enforcing ideological orthodoxy." So be patient with me, guys. I'm trying. I'm learning.

To be fair, Mr. Kaminski's message isn't quite like the traveling road show suggested by the *Times* article. Fortunately, I live in Minnesota, part of Mr. K's sweeping "Midwest," and consider myself only a temporary visitor/student in New York, where "subconscious Marxist sentiments" have made this city the great place that it is, or isn't. Depends on where you go, though I'd advise you to avoid all hospitals and public schools, at least when you are showing visiting Minnesotans your version of East Coast utopia.

I would advise Mr. Kaminski (from Indiana, obviously a different Midwest than mine), and the rest of the 51st state of New York City, to consider again the conception of the "Midwest." Or don't. Whatever. We in Minnesota aren't going to lose any sleep over it. We in the land of Wellstone are doing just fine. So you can keep your own brand of activism. Ours is doing just fine. You bet.

At the very least, Mr. Kaminski, quit with the "blanket terms." You are in graduate school now, and need to set a "total agenda of transformation" in your use of facts and language.

Yours in science,

Nate Metzger
Department of Philosophy

Are our readers hippies? Some of us used to be crustie punks... -Eds

essentially good people who believe in marriage and children and "hard work," and that their country's role in the world is a beneficent Christian one. Just how well have they honed this message? Consider that opponents of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s attempted, but never succeeded, in masking their racism as a "value." The homophobic Right is doing this today with unprecedented success.

The state and media charlatany behind these "values" makes it hard to point a condemnatory finger at Christians and hold it there without mercy. American Christians are trying to hew a positive self-image for themselves out of the corporate, pro-state message that they are offered. Jesus casting the money lenders from the temple? Poo! Blessing the peacemakers? Pfaw! And yet, point we must.

Any religion that values the lives of one nationality over those of another has become a nationalist faith. When that country begins to exercise its hegemonic power against others in the name of "preemptive strikes," religion will surely become one of its chief ideological organs, throwing a curtain of righteousness over piles of dead civilians overseas, while conjuring comforting images of families and domesticity to assuage feelings of guilt at home. Such religions are distortions of their own tradition and a disgrace to their prophets and purported tenets. The American Left must not make concessions to imperial Christianity. It's fine to have an open debate with this group, and to listen when they make sense, but we must see the corrupt, non-religious root of their ideology and point it out every time we see it.

Health Services (con't from 1)

activity fees at the Graduate Center are the lowest of any of the CUNY campuses, pointing out that the last increase in student fees actually initiated by the Graduate Center was in 1998, more than six years ago. According to Schoengood's office, this last fee increase, which was raised \$10 from \$19.60 to \$29.60, was in part proposed specifically to increase the health services budget.

The problem with this comparison, admits Schoengood, is that other campuses like Baruch College have much larger student bodies. The GC, with the smallest student body in the CUNY system, would therefore have to increase its student fees significantly more in comparison to other CUNY campuses in order to cover a comparable amount of the health Services

budget. While a \$10 increase in student activity fees at Baruch College, for instance, would yield approximately \$200,000 annually, it would require a whopping \$50 increase in the Graduate Center student fees to acquire the same amount of annual revenue.

Regarding the potential threat to the health services budget, Celia Braxton, chair of the DSC's Standing Committee for Health Issues, said "there is no promise that the 50% will be kicked in for next year and we could be looking right now at the last year of the Wellness Center." But others in the DSC are more optimistic. They remain hopeful that they will be able to reach an acceptable agreement with the administration. "This is a crisis," said David Hamilton Golland, USS representa-

tive and chair of the Wellness Center Issues Subcommittee, "but it is not something that we can't all resolve if we work together."

DSC members insist that they are taking steps to assure continued funding from the administration. Nonetheless, in anticipation of potential cuts in administrative contributions, they have already begun to think of ways to cover the difference.

With recent tuition hikes and the controversy over the technology fee, increasing student activity fees may not be the most popular proposition, but for Golland, it is one of the most obvious and immediate solutions to the problem. According to him, one solution would be an increase of \$12 per semester to the student activity fee. This increase would equal approximately \$48,000 per semester, or \$96,000 annually in increased revenues for the Doctoral Students Council. This would be

enough to cover more than all of the administration's regular contribution to the Wellness Center, without any major cuts to the current DSC budget.

Golland and Braxton said they were still considering whether or not any proposals for increasing the student activity fee would include language that would earmark the money specifically for health services, as some other CUNY campuses do.

In addition to seeking to insure the future of the Wellness Center here at the Graduate Center, Golland said he was concerned about the Graduate Center students whose teaching and research are primarily on other campuses, saying that he was "working to improve the situation of GC students in regards to their access to the wellness centers of other campuses."

James Hoff is a PhD student in the English Department.

Hierarchies in Bike Culture? (Pt. 1)

WILL WEIKART

This is the prequel to Part II which appeared in the last issue of The Advocate.

A conversation I had recently in McCarren Park in Greenpoint set me thinking and I'd like to know what YOU, biker, think about it. These, for me, are not new thoughts, but a resurgence of old ones, and represent my increasing inability to stay quiet and confused.

The issues I bring up here have surely been debated here (in NYC) and other places (probably online) where bike culture(s) seems to be growing. I'm not on any such discussion lists so I am not privy to them, if they have indeed existed. I do bike almost everywhere, everyday, and I do the Critical Mass ride every month, etc. I love biking. I like bikes, but I am ambivalent about the growing bike culture (or at least some practitioners)... Why?

I was recently chided by a couple young, wise-ass dudes who ride track (fixed gear) bikes. (I ride a 12-speed road bike, FYI.) If you don't know what a track bike is, they're the ones with only one gear and no breaks - so, in essence, you have to constantly pedal, and apply reverse pressure on the pedals to slow down. I have been wondering what the growing allure is of these bikes and I have a theory (probably, again, not new), which I will elaborate. So this piece is basically about the pros and cons of both 10/12 speed road bikes versus track or fixed-gear bikes, and why the latter is so popular and increasingly so, it seems. While this may be understood to be a polemic of road vs. track bikes, I also must admit that I have plenty of great friends on both sides of the divide and I have nothing *prima facie* against your choice of bike!

The hierarchies I refer to, if you had not already guessed, are the silent but omnipresent ones (at least here on NYC streets it seems) that basically say: track bikes (/riders) are coolest; road bikes (/riders) are next; and most everything else comes at the end (mountain, hybrid, vintage, BMX or whatever). There does seem to be a hierarchy based not solely on "coolness" but also on real class/race/age/neighborhood distinctions. For instance, many mountain bike riders seem to be Chinese food delivery guys or decidedly "uncool" sporty types or folks

new to NYC biking, whereas most track bike riders are young and/or "hip" and tend to be white, male (I won't say well-off financially, necessarily, but it helps, right? I know a lot of you are as dirt poor as I). Meanwhile, many BMX riders are young Latinos, and so on. The point is that bikes and accessories, and the bike/riders assemblage, are *signifying* (read: they are semiotically significant).

The signifying apparatus also extends into bike accessories, as I find that the "coolest" riders also use the big messenger bags, etc., which I find uncomfortable, bearing down disproportionately on one shoulder. This also, by the way, relates to my theory as you will see.

While I have never been told so explicitly, I suppose that the benefits of the track bike include that fact that there is less there (derailleur, brakes and all that come with them) and, hence, less to go wrong. It is a simpler, more stripped-down machine, and on these grounds, I too appreciate the aesthetics of this kind of bike. You are also essentially stuck in one mid-range "gear," so riding yields more of a workout. Your wheels are not "quick release" so you don't really have to lug around a huge, heavy kryptonite chain, but only a small u-lock. I'd also mention: the ability here to do cool "track stands" - but this does not hold much weight for me. Sorry. I guess the frames are also lighter material and there is less stuff generally, so you have a super-light bike.

Cons? I hear that they are horrible for your knees since you constantly have to apply reverse

pressure. They are generally more dangerous unless you are an experienced rider. I think you actually have to go SLOWER all the time, since you have no breaks - applying reverse pressure is your breaks and so you require stopping distance. Similarly, you can't start out as quickly from a stopped position since you are *de facto* in a higher gear all of the time. I think you may not be able to go around curves as fast, either, or at least as sharply, since you have to keep pedaling and (hence) your pedal may scrape the ground and cause you to wreck.

I am admittedly curious about the track bike. I have only ridden one (like) once and just briefly, not far, but based on what I know/think and have experienced, the 10/12-speed road bike is far more practical - for reasons I won't elaborate since they are implicit in the description above. Basically, NYC is not a TRACK. You typically have to start and stop a lot. So why choose a bike for tracks? That's where the theory comes in.

The Theory

My theory around the increasing popu-

larity of track bikes for city use partly revolves around the simple but vague explanation that track bikes are simply cool(er), and you (the rider) are therefore cool(er) if you ride one. But why should this be so?

There is a mystique here amidst all the automobiles whizzing by. From the perspective of the non bike rider (or non-urban bike rider), we bikers (including especially bike messengers) look "crazy." (As an aside, we can admit that there is a racial component as well: most or many messengers are black or Caribbean/West Indian, which calls to mind a whole other signifying, exoticizing set around primitive/emotional/non-rational etc.) And bikers are conscious of this "crazy"-ness, and eat it up. It looks like what we do is so dangerous, so risky. To some extent, it is, but as I found out, your perspective totally changes once you actually RIDE. Where there seems to be little or no space to an onlooker (pedestrian or auto driver), the biker can see a huge space and imminent potential. I'm really just referring to playing with spaces between cars, momentum

see Bikes, page 16



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Community News

Firing (con't from 1)

babysitter and, after leaving a voicemail message for Mr. Hunter early that morning, arrived to work 45 minutes late.

That day, Ms. Gaffoor was fired, escorted to her locker to retrieve her things and walked out of the building by CUNY security. Ms. Gaffoor says that she was humiliated by the involvement of security in her situation, and claims that she did not argue with her manager that day, as she was "under shock." Some members of the GC community who witnessed the situation, including security personnel, say that they thought Ms. Gaffoor did not pose a threat, but asked that they not be identified in this article.

RA Human Resources Manager, Sherley Montina, on the other hand, claims that CUNY security became involved in the case when, after consultation with RA, "it became apparent that there was a security concern" and that precautionary steps needed to be taken. According to Ms. Montina, in coordination with GC security, "a threat was assessed," although Ms. Montina says that further details cannot be provided due to privacy concerns. According to Vice President for Finance and Administration Sebastian Persico, CUNY personnel is responsible for all security concerns in the building regardless of who they are. However, some students have expressed discomfort with the idea that CUNY security can be used in the service of private corporations.

Although Ms. Gaffoor acknowledges that she was late,

she believes that her firing was a largely personal matter. She claims that she had several confrontations with Mr. Hunter in the weeks leading up to her firing, and that Mr. Hunter had assigned her additional duties that she says she could not handle. Thus, she feels that her tardiness was used as an excuse to terminate her.

RA claims that the facts do not bear out Ms. Gaffoor's claims, however, noting that Ms. Gaffoor was given ample warning and a clearly demarcated period of probation. RA notes additionally that it is not in their interest to fire employees who do good work. Regarding the firing, RA issued the following statement:

"The decision to end someone's employment is never one that we take lightly. There are certain policies which must be followed by all employees, irrespective of their length of service, so that we can provide the high level of service our clients require. When there are violations of such policies, we utilize a policy of progressive corrective communication.

"We believe that the termination of Ms. Gaffoor's employment was just and proper in accordance with the policies set by the company."

Last month, Pellegrino Luciano, a PhD student in anthropology and friend of Liz's, learned of the firing and began to circulate information throughout the building. A few days later, he called for a boycott of the Dining Commons and 365 Express—a call that seems to have generated little response from students. Mr. Luciano sent

around an email to draw attention to the firing, claiming that Ms. Laffoor "was never given any warning" and additionally claiming that "rumor has it that the manager who fired Liz hired his sister to replace her," a suggestion that has since been proven to be false. According to Mr. Luciano, "[Liz] was an excellent employee who always made us smile when we came through the line."

Mr. Luciano brought the issue to President Horowitz's attention at the October GC community meeting. This prompted her to assign Vice President Persico to seek information about the incident from RA. President Horowitz then addressed at the last DSC plenary by indicating that according to her information, Ms. Gaffoor was terminated for "just and proper cause."

Vice President Persico admits that in his investigation, he did not speak to Ms. Gaffoor personally and that his information was solely based on discussions with RA. Ms. Montina responded to an inquiry from *The Advocate* about Ms. Gaffoor's firing but says she cannot release any specific information due to privacy concerns.

According to RA, in cases of dispute the management "tries to work with employees" by developing an "action plan" to help employees correct their behavior to conform to management's objectives. In Ms. Gaffoor's case, Mr. Hunter determined that, according to her behavior, her action plan would not succeed and, after "following proper procedure," she was terminated.

Antonia Levy is a student in the PhD program in Sociology.

A Brief History of Restaurant Associates

DAN SKINNER & ANTONIA LEVY

Founded in the 1950s by Abraham Wechsler, Restaurant Associates (RA) was acquired in 1998 by the British foodservice leviathan, Compass Group. With about 10,000 employees, RA boasted sales of \$465 million last year (according to Hoover's Online) and has collected an impressive array of corporate and cultural accounts—what RA calls a "crème-de-la-crème list" from Goldman Sachs to the Museum of Metropolitan Art. Currently, RA is headed up by CEO Nick Valenti, who also serves on the board of the NYC chapter of the New York State Restaurant Association and is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Culinary Institute of America. In 1997, Valenti was honored by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani for his service with the City's Meals on Wheels program.

Restaurant Associates is a proud company. It thinks its name "synonymous with exciting restaurant concepts and high-quality foodservice" and characterizes its network of delectable outfits as an "empire." However, for many labor unions and activists, the name conjures a history of unfair labor practices: strike-breaking, union-busting and general tactics of intimidation are among the general charges labor unions have made against RA.

Similarly, while RA hails itself as the inventor of the "glamorous but highly competitive theme restaurant" in the 1950s and praises itself for its "commitment to upscale corporate dining," many GC students have come to know RA as yet another unwelcome symbol of the increased corporatization of public education. While the firing of Lazeena Gaffoor (see news article) has become an issue for many students,

others are focused on the broader issue of RA's presence in the school in general. Thus, much like the giant Hummer advertisement donning the façade of the building, the general appropriateness of the GC's contract with RA has been called into question. For years, the all-too-familiar giant inflatable rats used to demarcate sites of unfair and illegal labor practices have frequented RA dining establishments throughout New York City. In 2001, for example, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) Local 37 charged RA with refusing to rehire union employees laid off when the JFK Arrivals Terminal was reopened after construction. Only a handful of employees were invited back to interview for jobs in the new terminal and, HERE reports, views on unionization were a major consideration in RA's hiring practices. Publicly, RA acknowledged as much when, the month before the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the terminal, Ann Silver, Vice President for Human Resources told *Newsday*, "We're committed to being a union-free company" (April 2001).

Similarly, in 2001 workers charged RA with using tactics of "intimidation" when the 95 RA bartenders, cooks, cashiers, dishwashers, and waiters who work at the Metropolitan Opera attempted to unionize. At a protest outside of the Met in 2001, HERE Vice President Ron Richardson framed the issue: "I've been dealing with Restaurant Associates for 25 years, and I've negotiated contracts with them in other parts of the country. It's no different at Lincoln Center than it is anywhere else with them. They want to use \$240 million to renovate this building, but they won't spend even 1% of that to give their workers a decent wage or decent benefits. It's just more for the greedy and less for the needy." Despite Silver's comment, Human Resources Manager Sherley Montina says that RA is in no way opposed to collective bargaining; she pointed out that although RA workers at the GC are not unionized, they do have a "bargaining unit." In addition, RA kitchen staff at the GC currently have contracts, while other employees—such as register operators like Ms. Gaffoor—do not.

RA has been the food service provider at the GC for well over 20 years, having moved with the GC from the former campus on 42nd Street. According to Vice President Persico, the current contract with RA was established in 1999 and expires in 2007. While Vice President Persico arrived at the GC after the current contract was

negotiated, it is his "understanding" that other providers were considered.

According to Vice President of Finance and Administration Persico and RA Regional Manager Mark Romano, the terms of RA's current contract gives RA exclusive catering rights within the building, with the exception of departmental spaces. Thus, all events held in GC common spaces are contractually obligated to use RA services for catering, which includes events such as the Starbucks managerial meeting held last month in the Dining Commons. From events such as these, the GC administration collects rent and/or a commission and negotiates custodial and security arrangements. RA negotiates the terms regarding food service.

The Advocate is currently looking into the terms of the contract the GC has with RA, which will be the focus of follow-up articles in Spring 2005. For students interested in the contract, it is available for perusal at *The Advocate's* offices in room 5396.

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Ernst & Young
Morgan Stanley
Lehman Brothers
Google
Grey Global
Rockefeller University
Harvard Business School
Metropolitan Museum of Art
Carnegie Hall

The American Museum of Natural History
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts
Boston Museum of Fine Arts
The Philadelphia Museum of Art
The National Museum of the American Indian

(Source: www.restaurantassociates.com)

At Pier 57 and Central Booking— an RNC Adventure

MARIA CINCOTTA

I was arrested on A31, the day of direct action during the RNC. The following is an account of my experience in jail. For legal reasons, I haven't included the details of my arrest here.

When we arrived at Pier 57, we were taken off the police bus and placed in a very large co-ed holding cell at the back of the building. Some people really had to pee, and being that we weren't allowed to pee for hours previously, they started a pee corner in one corner of the cell. At this point, we were still cuffed, even though we were confined in a cell. Finally, the police opened up a couple of porta-potties for us, but the lines for the toilets were ridiculously long, as there were hundreds of us and only a couple of toilets. I waited in line, and when I had my turn the police person who was monitoring the toilets took my flexcuffs off so that I could use the toilet. When he put the cuffs back on, he put them on a little looser, fortunately.

We waited in this large cell, still cuffed, for hours, although it's difficult to gauge the time spent in each cell since I didn't have a watch. While waiting here, I bumped into an old high school friend of mine, and seeing her helped me out a little bit. Meanwhile, people were engaged in some kind of wild drum circle thing in the back of the cell, tapping their plastic Dixie cups on the floor to a rhythm and chanting. It looked fun, but a little too hippie for my taste. People started to get tired and lie down on the floor, but I hesitated. I had heard a lot of people who had been previously confined at the pier say they had contracted bad rashes from the toxins on the floor. However, we were not provided with beds, and there were only a couple of benches in each cell. Lying down on this toxic floor was practically inevitable.

I was taken to another room to be searched again and further processed. For some reason, a cop tossed my water bottle in the trash. They confiscated everything else and gave me vouchers for its eventual pick-up. I was then put in a different cell with a few other people and given my first jail meal, a baloney sandwich on stale white bread. I'm vegan, so I think I might have had a bit of the bread, but even that was disgusting. After this, I was relocated to a single-sex cell that was fairly crowded. I was reunited with friends here, which was a good thing. We played hackey-sack with the baloney sandwiches, and also bowled with sandwiches and Dixie cups.

Finally, I was too exhausted to stand up anymore. I tried to sleep on the toxic Pier 57 ground. I was afraid of the repercussions to my skin, but I had to rest. There wasn't much room to lie down on the floor, so we were mostly

resting in the fetal position. That way we had enough floor space for everyone to relax for a while.

After attempting to rest for who knows how many hours, I awoke to a cacophonous noise of people yelling in one of the other cells. The men, confined in a large cell at the back of the pier, were howling for the police to let them go. We had already tried that tactic hours ago. It wasn't working. Regardless of the level of noise we achieved as a collective, there was nothing we could do that would convince the cops that it was in their interest to liberate us at this point. People pounded on their cages, yelled at the top of their lungs, and stomped on the floors, but the cops were unmoved. Which is not to say that the cops were pleased to be there; most of the cops had worked way overtime at this point, and our arresting officers were stuck on duty until the afternoon after our arrest. The cops looked nearly as exhausted and desirous of a warm bed as we were, but they had the added advantage of getting paid. However, the discrepancy between the salaries of the "whiteshirts" (lead officers), and "black-shirts" (underlings), was fairly clear; the whiteshirts were making a ton more money than their underlings. Most of the cops at the pier were new recruits. This was possibly their first big arrest, and their novice-status was fairly evident. The new officers were not paid a very handsome salary, especially considering what they had to endure. They were paid much less than I was paid as a first-year teacher in the NYC public schools. However, if the schools were actually educating kids instead of serving as holding tanks for kids, we might "need" less cops in general.

The morning arrived after a long night, and we found ourselves still stuck in the same place. We had nothing to eat until the people from the cell next door threw their cereal boxes over to us in sympathy. For some reason the cops refused or forgot to feed our cell, so we ultimately had to grab food that was in boxes on the other side of the bars. We procured our breakfast by force. After hours and hours of waiting and being shuffled around, we were switched to another cell, and finally we were put on a bus headed towards central booking. At this point, we were again confined in the flexcuffs. This time, they put them on especially tight. One girl was losing feeling in her hands. When she complained to the officer on the bus about the pain, he just ignored her. The bus waited a long time before it left for central booking.

At this point, my memory gets a little hazier. We were searched again, for the third time, and placed in cells that grew progressively more and more overcrowded. At one point our cell had over a hundred women in it, despite

only enough room to fit around twenty-five "comfortably." We were packed body to body. People started losing it at this point. People were complaining of not having access to their medications, and one woman was hollering for her anti-psychotic medicine. We were all at the breaking point, and our jail experience was only half over. We watched footage of the RNC protests on the TV in this cell; it was the only one that had a television inside. We found the footage heartening. We even saw a clip that showed one of our cellmates getting arrested.

At this point, we started doing things like jail cell yoga, jail cell musicals, and other games to help us keep our sanity. We were stuck in this cell for most of the night. Here, and throughout our time at central booking, we were fed quite frequently, in contrast to our time spent at Pier 57. They gave us disgusting food—stale "peanut butter" (peanut-vomit) sandwiches, rotten fruit, and lunchmeat. None of the frequent meals made up for the time that we were deprived of food at the pier.

One of the saddest things I witnessed in this cell was a woman who broke down and wept on the floor because she wasn't even involved in the RNC protests; she was just caught in a police sweep of a street. None of her friends even knew she was in jail. She felt very lonely and isolated. We all tried to console her, but it didn't do much good. We had very limited access to the phone at this point. There were hundreds of women on line for one phone, so I didn't even bother waiting for it.

After we were removed from the second cell at central booking, we were handcuffed together in mini-chain-gangs of five each, and brought to the fingerprinting station. As I was being fingerprinted, it was evident that the filth from Pier 57—all of the grease and dirt from the floors of that toxic place—was totally imbedded in my pores, impeding the fingerprinting process. The officer who was taking my fingerprints cleaned my fingers with Windex. I realized how dehumanized we were to the officers. Throughout our experience in jail, the cops had referred to us as "bodies," a term that we took as insulting and degrading, but the Windex experience solidified the dehumanization.

After the cops put our fingerprints into the system, we were taken to a cell on one of the higher levels of the building. The cop who brought us there told us that we'd be there for just a couple of hours, but we ended up having to spend the whole night in this cell. Fortunately, there were a few mattresses in the cell. But then again, there were about thirty of us there, so we all had to share them. We found we could all get some comfort if we put only

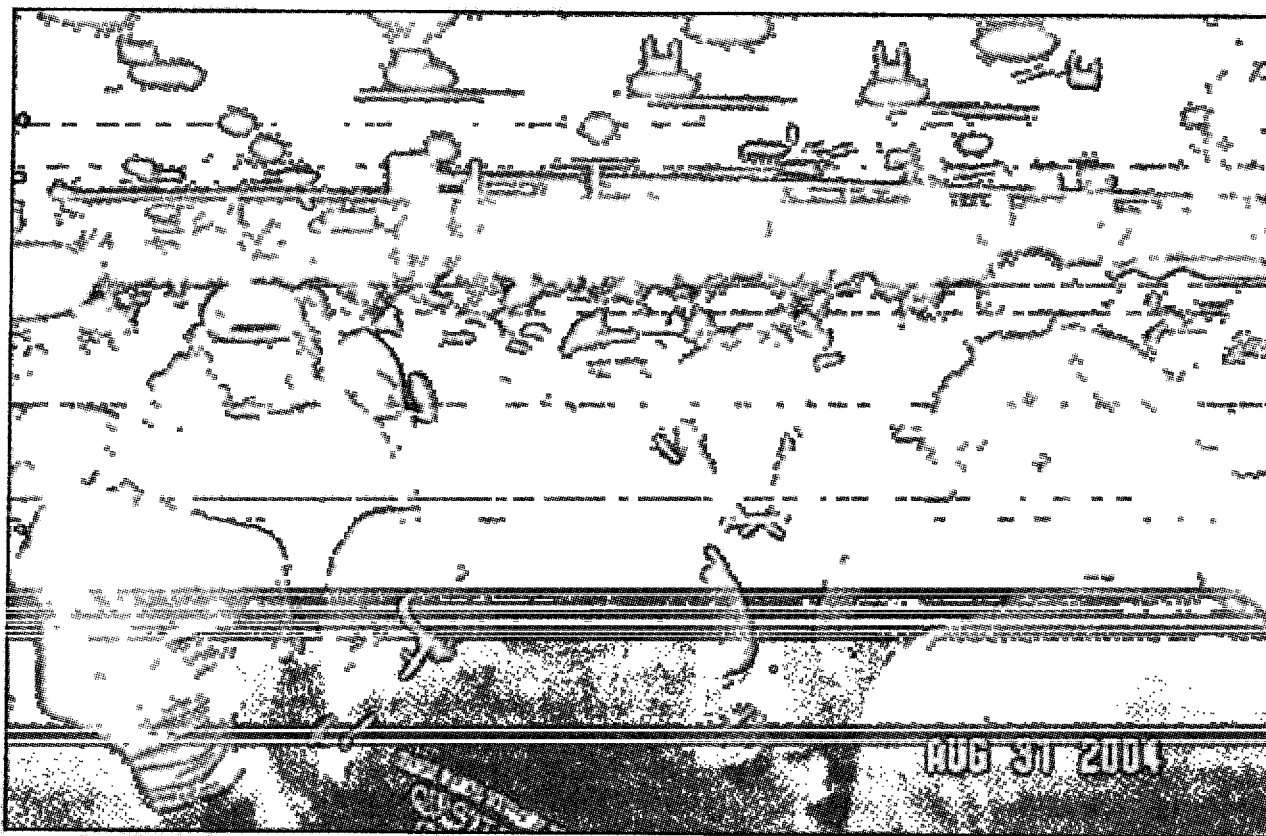
see *Pier 57*, page 11

Talking Points: The following is a collection of "talking points" some jail mates and I composed while we were at Pier 57, in anticipation that we would be able to talk with the press about our conditions after we left jail. We only were able to talk with Dyke TV outside of jail, unfortunately, but through conversations and emails these talking points are heard.

We are New Yorkers, and contrary to Mayor Bloomberg's statements about our right to peacefully protest, we were arrested without warning. Many of us were arrested with excessive violence, including tourists, passers-by, medics, and legal aids. We realize that this experience is common to targeted communities of color, transgender, and queer people, and it is *all* unjust.

As well as being denied access to lawyers and phone calls, medical treatment was withheld for conditions including Crohn's disease, heat disease, epilepsy, broken teeth, and a bloodied face.

In the past 24 hours, we estimate that a minimum of \$100,000 was spent in basic labor costs alone at the detention center, Pier 57. These were our tax dollars, which were wasted detaining peaceful protestors, bystanders, medics, and legal observers. In a city where our schools are underfunded, the gap between the rich and poor is growing exponentially, and racism and segregation are ever-present, this is a travesty.



Handcuffed detainees inside the holding cages at Pier 57; presumably this photo was broadcast from inside via an unconfiscated cell phone.

Jacob Richards & Connie Murrillo; from www.nyc.indymedia.org

Arafat and I

NIRIT BEN-ARI

Tel Aviv, November 4, 1995

This day I will never forget. Neither will most Israelis. I went to *Kikar Malchey Israel* (The Plaza of the Kings of Israel) in Tel Aviv that night to show support for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. A year earlier, Rabin had come back to Israel from the White House, after having done what until then was an illegal activity by Israeli law: on the White House lawn, he shook hands with the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Shaking hands with Arafat was not only illegal, but was largely considered a moral crime. When Uri Avnery, former member of Knesset and life-long peace activist and advocate for Palestinian rights, crossed lines during the battle of Beirut and met Arafat in 1982, several Israeli cabinet ministers called for his indictment for high treason. Later in the 1980s, Abie Natan, an Israeli citizen and the man behind the ship-turned-pirate-radio-station "Voice of Peace," received jail sentences for his regular meetings with the Palestinian leader.

But then came Yitzhak Rabin, the mythical general of the Six Days War, who changed everything by going to the White House and shaking Arafat's hand. Israelis remained resistant, even in the face of the old general's transformation into a peace-dove. For most Israelis, Arafat remained a symbol of the Palestinians' armed struggle, and hence an enemy. A common Israeli phrase was that Arafat had "blood on his hands." That, according to Israeli opinion, disqualified him from representing the Palestinian people, talking with Israelis, and generally being considered to be a human being.

Yet many other Israelis, including myself, saw things differently. Although Arafat was still Arafat, if Rabin was willing to do the unheard-of, something dramatically different might occur. Or, so we wanted to believe.

I was not yet radicalized back then, and like many others in my circles, I thought that exchanging the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for peace with Palestinians was generally a good idea. So I went to the streets to show it.

I lingered in the plaza with my friends after the rally, enjoying the Israeli music pumping out of the speakers and running into friends from high school and military service. The music stopped abruptly, and we soon left. No more than 20 minutes later, back at home, I was told that Rabin had been shot. A short hour passed, and the TV broadcasted the news: Rabin had been killed. The assassin was a religious Jew, a law student from Bar-Ilan University named Yigal Amir. Amir listened very carefully when his Rabbi preached that he who was giving away parts of the Land of Israel deserved death. Amir was a good Jew. That night he waited for Rabin to come off the stage, slipped past security with his innocent looks and shot Rabin three times in the chest.

Rabin was dead. Arafat paid a visit to the mourning Leah Rabin, Rabin's wife. And I, a year later, packed my bags, said my good-byes to friends and family, and came to New York City. I thought I was leaving behind my troubled country, the people who couldn't stop killing each other, to start a life in a place where people drink their lattes without worrying about bombs going off.

In English they call it "wishful thinking." Little did I know that I was about to embark on a journey that would change my values, my beliefs, and my understanding of the world around me. As I learned to speak English, I also learned the phrases *Al Nakba*, *Intifada*, and UN resolution. When I returned to the country I call home, I decided to go where most Israelis go uniformed and armed: the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Ramallah, August 2003

I arrived in the city with two American activists and a Palestinian schoolteacher from the West Bank village of Jayyous after three hours of driving on donkey roads and being stopped at one checkpoint for about 20 minutes. As soon as we arrived, Palestinian friends and journalists with the Palestinian Authority (PA) newspaper, *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, appeared to show us around the city. Our first stop was the *mukata'a* compound, the PA headquarters where Arafat had been imprisoned by the Israeli government since April 2002. This is routine hosting-drill in

Ramallah: all visitors are first taken to see what the Israelis have done to the Palestinian government offices. Our hosts attempted to organize an impromptu visit with the *Ra'is*, who loved to meet international activists, bestowing them with hugs and kisses. Too bad, we were told; the *Ra'is* was busy and couldn't see us. So we stayed in the *mukata'a* for a while, observing the destroyed buildings from which the Palestinian government was supposed to operate.

Destroyed government buildings and an imprisoned president are more than a rubble of stones and an old man kissing visitors. It is, as the Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling described it, a symbol of *politicide*: destroying the Palestinian public sphere, including its leaders, government buildings, schools, universities and hospitals. It is also the destruction of the private sphere, making everyday life unbearable for people in an effort to dissolve the Palestinian society, polity and economy.

I was not sad that I missed my chance to meet Arafat. Almost none of the many Palestinians I met while visiting



Yasser Arafat in his Mukata compound.

the West Bank were raving about the old leader. In fact, most Palestinian activists and community leaders, most of whom were busy organizing peaceful resistance to the West Bank Wall being built on their lands and farms, had only complaints and grievances against the PA's corruption and lack of support for their struggle. In Budrus, I was told that no PA official showed up to support a well-planned protest against the Wall at which a member of the Swedish parliament was arrested. Jayyousians told us that when Israeli authorities instituted draconian requirements blocking access to their land, the PA had lent a hand in facilitating the permit regime. I also was told that the Palestinian cement company owned by the family of Prime Minister Qurei sold cement to Israeli contractors building the Wall and constructing settlements. Arafat knew about it but did nothing to stop it, they said. The incident also appeared in *The Boston Globe*, *Electronic Intifada* and *Al-Jazeera*.

Those reasons were enough to make me critical of Arafat and the PA. But on the other side of the Green Line, people had a totally different set of complaints: Arafat was orchestrating a bombing campaign against Israeli civilians; Arafat was not a "partner for peace"; Arafat rejected the most generous offer ever given by an Israeli government; Arafat proved that all he desired was the destruction of the Jewish state, and not co-existence.

Was this the truth?

Quoting Jeff Halper of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, since the Oslo peace agreement was signed in September, 1993, Israel has committed the following acts:

- *Dismembered the West Bank into "Areas A, B and C," giving the Palestinian Authority full control of only 18 percent of the land and retaining full Israeli control over 61 percent

- *Divided tiny Gaza into "yellow, white, blue and green areas," giving 6,000 settlers control of 40 percent of the territory and confining a million Palestinians to the rest

- *Imposed a permanent "closure" preventing masses of Palestinian workers from seeking employment in Israel and preventing Palestinians in general from entering Jerusalem. The Palestinian workforce has been transformed from one based on agricultural and an incipient industrial and commercial economy to impoverished casual laborers dependent upon an Israeli economy from which they are now largely excluded

- *Expropriated thousands of *dunums* of farm and pasture land from its Palestinian owners for exclusive Israeli settlements and roads

- *Uprooted more than 120,000 olive and fruit trees—for settlement or road construction, for "security" purposes, or for denying ownership rights to their Palestinian owners

- *Established more than 40 new settlements, including whole cities like *Kiryat Sefer*, *Tel Zion* and *Giva'ot*, constructed some 90,000 new housing units in East Jerusalem and the settlements, and doubled its settler population

- *Demolished more than 1,200 Palestinian homes, including some 500 during the last Intifada;

- *Begun construction of a massive 480 km system of highways and "by-pass" roads serving the settlements while dissecting the West Bank and Gaza into dozens of tiny islands

- *Exploited the natural resources of the Occupied Territories, illegally drawing, for example, 25 percent of its water from the West Bank and Gaza while leaving Palestinians with chronic water shortages

- *Vandalized the West Bank, one of the world's most sacred heritage sites, destroying its historical landscape and turning it into a disposal-site for Israel's industrial and urban wastes

- *Virtually completed the incorporation of the West Bank into Israel proper, thereby eliminating any possibility of a viable and truly sovereign Palestinian state alongside Israel, raising the danger of apartheid.

- *Implemented plans for a "unilateral separation" another sign of apartheid—including the construction of a massive system of bunkers, walls, fences, minefields, "security crossings," checkpoints and other fortifications.

A generous offer? Partners for peace?

I never got to meet Arafat, but I did meet many, many Palestinians, who entrusted me with their stories and welcomed me into their homes as a guest of honor, even though they knew I was Israeli. For them, Arafat was a symbol of their national and personal struggle to survive as people and as individuals. When he was brought to Ramallah to be buried, they went by the thousands into the streets to pay him their last respects. It's a shame that the American media covered Arafat's death as it usually covers the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: with utter contempt and an almost total lack of Palestinian voices.

Arafat's death might not change much for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, but it is surely the end of an era. With his death, the only hope remaining is that the older generation of Israeli leaders will also leave the political stage, allowing new blood to come to the fore and reject the conventional wisdom of the elders that Israelis and Palestinians are mortal enemies. Only then there will be new hope that we can resist the fundamentalist forces interpreting the words of what they call God, and make way for the courageous voices of those who are no longer willing to sacrifice human life to achieve political goals, and who are ready to share the land.

Nirit Ben-Ari is a student in the PhD program in Political Science.

An Interview With a Legend: Arafat

JAE M. KIM

Last June, I spent three weeks in Israel, Palestine and Iraq. While I was in the city of Ramallah, in the West Bank, I interviewed the late Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) president Yasser Arafat in his compound, Mukata. This was my second encounter with Arafat since the outbreak of second *intifada* in September 2000. This time, however, he was clearly ailing. Below is my brief report on Mr. Arafat, who died on November 11th.

Posters of Dead Hamas leaders in Ramallah

It takes patience to get to the city of Ramallah, located about 20 miles north of Jerusalem. The heavy traffic jam between Jerusalem and Ramallah never dissipates—not because there are many cars, but because there is a notorious Israeli checkpoint at Qalandiya. Local Palestinians hate the Qalandiya checkpoint, which often forces them to wait on line for hours. Every day, thousands of Palestinians are humiliated while waiting to show their ID cards. Israeli soldiers working there are heavily armed and wear bulletproof jackets, even though the summer temperature exceeds 120 degrees at midday. But the soldiers cannot relax because there is always a possibility of suicide bombings.

After passing the checkpoint at Qalandiya, it took only 15 minutes to get to the center of Ramallah. This geographical proximity means that Ramallah, where Mr. Arafat's Mukata compound is located, would make an easy military target for Israeli forces, if an Israeli commander ever decided to dispatch a military unit with tanks there.

Meanwhile, I found the center of Ramallah plastered with posters showing the faces of 'martyrs' killed during the ongoing *intifada*. Posters also displayed the faces of Hamas leaders, Sheik Ahmed Yassin and Abdul Aziz Rantisi. Both were assassinated in Israeli missile strikes last spring.

Posters of Marwan Barghouti also attracted my attention. In one poster, he was clapping his cuffed hands while sitting in court. The Secretary General of Fatah (the most mainstream group among various Palestinian political factions) in the West Bank, Barghouti was arrested by Israeli soldiers in 2002 and thereafter was punished with four life sentences. In a 2001 interview, he told me that he believed the current *intifada* would last at least three years. As a leader in the post-Arafat era, his popularity remains high—much higher, in fact, than that of Muhammad Abbas, the newly-chosen leader of the PLO. Barghouti believed that international society would intervene in the current bloody conflict if Palestinians could continue to fight against Israeli oppression for another three years. However, the Bush administration's embrace of a US policy of unilateral support for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has hampered any hope of international intervention.

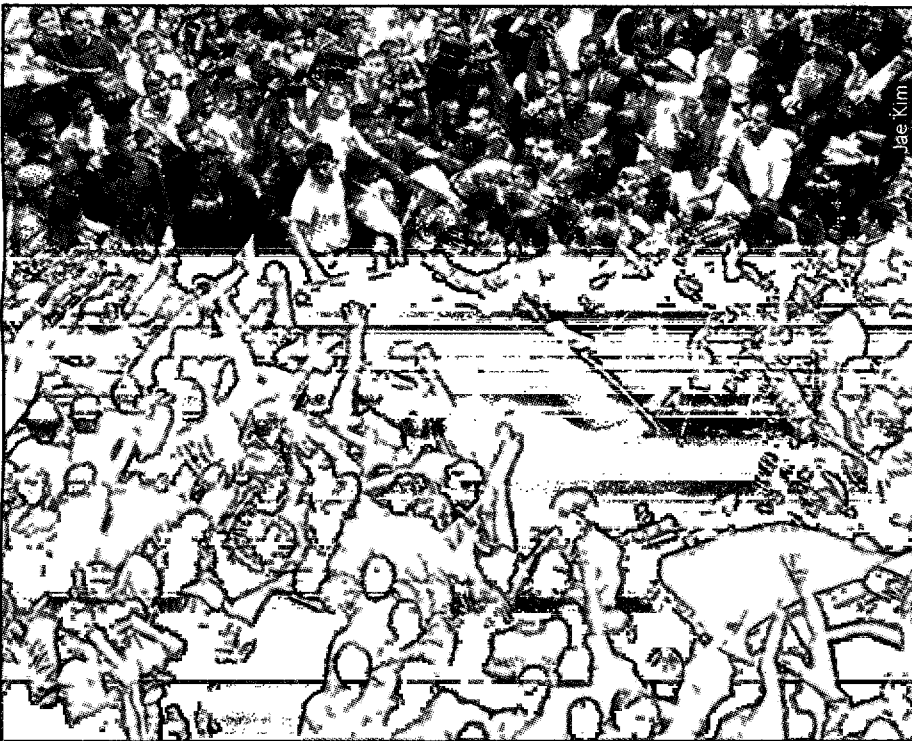
Inside Mukata

While Marwan Barghouti has spent the last two years in an Israeli jail, Yasser Arafat passed the same period in his virtual jail of the Mukata compound. When I stepped inside the compound, I found much of the building destroyed or demolished by repeated Israeli attacks. Since the end of 2001, Sharon has ordered military operations against the compound, including attacks by tank and bulldozer. One security officer argued that the Palestinian people would prevail despite what he saw as Israeli attempts to humiliate and demoralize the PLO. It seemed that the basis of his stubborn belief was his loyalty to Arafat.

Zafir Al-Nobani, a close aide to Arafat and Representative Manager of the International Committee

for Solidarity with Palestinian People, explained, "Whenever any serious attacks against the Israeli occupation forces happen, for example, Hamas suicide bombing breaks out, Sharon orders military retaliation against Mukata." Ghassan Khatib, Minister of Labor in the Palestinian Authority, agreed and went further: "All we Palestinians have been suffering collective punishment due to the Israeli blockade policy." Nabil Aburdeni, an advisor and spokesman for Arafat, argued that Ariel Sharon's aggressive policy against Arafat's PLO was part of a strategy to buy more time in order to further enlarge settlements inside the occupied territory.

Mr. Aburdeni arranged my interview with Arafat. As I understand it, since the outbreak of the second *intifada*, Arafat has not granted foreign journalists the privilege of even a 30-minute interview. The reason was simple; Arafat has been repeatedly disappointed with the foreign and especially the American media. Arafat assumed that western media was biased against him and had little understanding of the Palestinian cause for independence.



Palestinians showed their support for Arafat as he emerged from a mosque in Ramallah.

Therefore, Arafat has usually met with foreign journalists in a collective fashion, or, in the case of an exclusive interview, has spoken very briefly. Even though I interviewed Arafat exclusively, I was no exception. Below is my interview with Arafat, which lasted for less than ten minutes.

"Where is the Berlin Wall Now?"

JK: Since the outbreak of *intifada*, there have been many victims. Before coming here, I was in the Rafa refugee camp in southern Gaza. I met some of your Palestinian people who lost their family members and had their homes destroyed by the Israeli soldiers. What do you think about those facts?

YA: It is definitely a war crime. Big crime! Day and night, the Israeli military forces are killing innocent Palestinian people including children and women, and are destroying our holy land and vulnerable infrastructures, for example, cutting electricity and water service systems. They are now occupying more than 80 percent of Palestinian territory.

JK: Do you think the so-called road map for Palestinian independence in 2005 is now impossible to implement?

YA: Absolutely! Because of Ariel Sharon's aggressive policy, the road map strikes a rock. As you know, the road map was based on the consensus among international society including the United Nations, the European

Union, the United States, and Russia. By attacking and killing our people, Ariel Sharon has escaped peaceful implementation of the road map. Basically, the Israeli government has ignored the Oslo Peace Agreement signed by Mr. Yitzhak Rabin and I, as well as by the international community. The current Israeli government accepted the fanatical groups who assassinated Mr. Rabin in 1995 and now those fanatical groups are in power.

JK: President Bush has a close relationship with Ariel Sharon. He is repeatedly invited to the White House, but you were not. It presents a striking contrast to the former Clinton administration. What is your feeling?

YA: There is no doubt that the Bush administration has unilaterally supported Ariel Sharon's regime. By blocking any UN resolution to criticize Israeli war crimes, the US has covered up the criminal activities perpetrated by Sharon in the West Bank and Gaza.

JK: In East Jerusalem, I could see the eight-meter high wall under construction. I would like to hear your personal opinion about that.

YA: Day and night, they are now constructing the separation wall. This wall will confiscate 58% of our land, and destroy our lives. As you know, even the International Court in Hague is critical of this separation wall. Let me ask one question. Where is the Berlin Wall now? It's completely destroyed! Constructing the separation wall is not only illegal but also a major crime against humanity.

Controversial Hero in His Role

Arafat was one of the most controversial politicians of the 20th century. The Israeli right-wing, whom Arafat labeled as a "fanatical group" in our interview, views him as just another terrorist leader. From the Palestinian side, he has been admired as a national hero and freedom fighter. However, some in Gaza are extremely critical of Arafat. A local leader of Hamas, for example, condemned Arafat for forgetting his revolutionary ideas and compromising since the

Oslo Accords in 1993. A doctor in the Shipa hospital in Gaza argued that, "Mr. Arafat became accustomed to sitting at a plush table, and forgot his past as a guerilla fighter in Lebanon at the beginning of the 1980s."

A Palestinian journalist pointed out Arafat's authoritarian posture, cronyism, and corrupt relations with his close aides. But one of those aides, when asked about corruption, refuted that such allegations stemmed mostly from Israeli propaganda and sought to undermine Arafat's leadership. "Even if these allegations were true," he said, "Arafat might have needed a slush fund diverted from the official account in order to help some Palestinian factions during *intifada*."

There is, however, one decisive fact: even Palestinian critics against Arafat acknowledged him as a legendary national leader. Arafat succeeded in leading the Palestinian people up to the river of independence, but failed to lead them across it. Even though Arafat died on November 11, the cause of national liberation is still alive and being pursued by the next generation. Many people would undoubtedly agree with Nelson Mandela's eulogy for Arafat: "Arafat was one of the outstanding freedom fighters of this generation; one who gave his entire life to the cause of the Palestinian people. We honor his memory."

Jae Kim is a student in the PhD program in Political Science.

I, Conservative

MARK GOLDBLATT

It's rare that a single passage encapsulates an entire benighted mindset, but Michael Kinsley accomplished the trick the Sunday after the November presidential election in his *Washington Post* postmortem on the Bush-Kerry outcome. Declaring that we now live in the "Disunited States," one side conservative and one side liberal, Kinsley writes: "We on my side of the great divide don't, for the most part, believe that our values are direct orders from God. We don't claim that they are immutable and beyond argument. We are, if anything, crippled by reason and open-mindedness, by a desire to persuade rather than insist. Which philosophy is more elitist? Which is more contemptuous of people who disagree?"

For its sheer callow narcissism, Kinsley's passage calls to mind Jesse Ventura's notorious pronouncement in *Playboy* that organized religion is "a crutch for weak-minded people," or perhaps, going further back, Allen Ginsberg's passionate declaration in the opening of "Howl" that he'd seen the "best minds of [his] generation destroyed by madness." Such statements invariably tell you more about the intended audience than about the actual state of things. Just as the typical *Playboy* reader would naturally regard churchgoers as superstitious hayseeds denying themselves pleasures of the flesh out of an irrational attachment to fairy tales, and just as the typical 1950s bohemian would naturally identify doped-up poets bopping around the Village—rather than, say, physics geeks pulverizing atoms at Princeton—as the true geniuses of his era, likewise, the typical liberal nowadays naturally holds an exceedingly warped view of the relative reasonableness of liberals versus conservatives. Indeed, if you travel in left-liberal circles—and I live in Manhattan and teach at a State University college, so I do—you're struck not only by the heartfelt rage towards conservatives but also by a kind of reflexive snobbery. Liberals, in general, see conservatives as brutish God-drunk bigots determined to crush whomever stands in their way in order to preserve the inequities of the status quo; by contrast, liberals see themselves as worldly, open-minded, kind-hearted paragons of social virtue whose guiding principle is their determination to look out for those less fortunate than themselves.

As wrongheaded as such perceptions are, they merit scrutiny—and Kinsley's formulation is especially telling. In supposing that liberals are "crippled by reason and open-mindedness, by a desire to persuade rather than insist," Kinsley slyly suggests that conservatism's ace in the hole is its narrow-mindedness—the fact that it's not responsive to counterarguments. The hidden premise here is that liberals, though not fanatically tied to particular policies, ultimately know what's right—in Kinsley's words, "a society where women are free to choose abortion and where gay relationships have full civil equality with straight ones"—and the only reason they cannot turn conservatives from their errant opinions is conservatives' own prejudice and obstinacy. Kinsley ironically resembles the medieval Iconoclast who thought that the main obstacle to converting Jews and Muslims to Christianity was the offense given by iconic images of Jesus; if only these

were eradicated, Jews and Muslims could be won over. Such thinking rules out the possibility that Jews and Muslims might have coherent belief systems of their own.

Setting aside Kinsley's navel-gazing, it's nevertheless true that a cognitive divide runs through American politics. It's worrisome, but also perhaps inevitable since what's at stake runs deeper than specific courses of action. Indeed, there are *foundational* differences between liberals and conservatives, irreconcilable epistemologies which underlie what each group deems reasonable. On this score, several general observations can be made.

Conservatives, the vast majority of whom come from one or another Judeo-Christian tradition, tend to accept on faith that human nature is unchanging and prone to sin, or at minimum not altogether virtuous. Every just government must acknowledge, as its actuating principle, that people cannot be perfected, and thus, that societies will always be plagued by individual wrongdoing and collective inequities. In short, conservatives are never utopians. They point to the horrific body counts rung up by would-be utopian societies that attempted to alter human nature—Stalin's Russia and Mao's China—as evidence of the dangers of governments refusing to recognize this basic truth.

"... two goods—liberty and equality—are fundamentally incompatible. If people have the liberty to capitalize on their natural abilities, a hierarchy will necessarily emerge that undermines equality."

The vast majority of liberals also come from one or another Judeo-Christian tradition, and many still cling to it, but they are loathe, as Kinsley notes, to claim their values are "direct orders from God." This is a caricature of conservatism of course. Every liberal's dream conservative is a cross between Archie Bunker and Elmer Gantry; their nightmare is a cross between Victor Davis Hanson and Thomas Sowell. But Kinsley is onto something here since liberals, despite their backgrounds, are more likely to imagine themselves as products of Enlightenment secularism. (It's worth noting that the same week as Kinsley's column appeared, Garry Wills used a *New York Times* op-ed to ask whether America, in light of Bush's reelection, could "still be called an Enlightened nation." *Times* regulars Maureen Dowd and Nicholas Kristof echoed the theme.) Kinsley's sense of liberals' openness to persuasion derives, without question, from an Enlightenment sensibility. This matters because one of the hallmarks of the Enlightenment was its rejection of the doctrine of mankind's inherently sinful condition. In contrast with conservatives, liberals tend to regard human nature as essentially malleable—and, thus, to support government policies which propose, directly or indirectly, to tinker with human nature, to make human nature more perfect. Liberals, unsurprisingly, are readily drawn to utopian visions, inspired by collectivist rhetoric wherein everyone pulls together. But of course realizing such a vision requires remaking human nature.

This is where liberals get mugged by reality. For human nature is not malleable, much less perfectible—conservatives have simply got that right. It's also the central insight

of Freud and the central error of Marx. Even worse for the intellectual life of liberals is the fact that their commitment to utopianism engenders a kind of schizophrenia of ideals: on the one hand, a utopian society would have to establish and maintain equality; on the other hand, a utopian society would have to safeguard liberty (or else wind up dystopian, as in *Brave New World*). The trouble is that the two goods—liberty and equality—are fundamentally incompatible. If people have the liberty to capitalize on their natural abilities, a hierarchy will necessarily emerge that undermines equality. The only way to ensure equality, thus, is to prevent people from capitalizing on their natural abilities—in other words, to deny them liberty. Bill Gates' kids and Michael Jordan's kids are born with advantages most other kids will likely never overcome. Do we therefore deny Gates and Jordan the freedom to provide advantages for their families? If we do that, what is their incentive to excel? Would we be a better society if we stifled the excellence of a Gates or a Jordan?

In a nutshell, what makes liberals liberal and conservatives conservative are their different responses to the tension between liberty and equality.

When liberty and equality come into conflict, conservatives pay lip service to equality but tend, in the final analysis, to favor liberty. Conservatives believe they're making the world a better place, but "better," for them, is never a utopian ideal; it just means "more prosperous" and "more free." It's not that conservatives are against improving the lives of the poor—which is, of course, an egalitarian impulse. It's just that they point to the fact that most government efforts to redistribute wealth have resulted in less total wealth, and thus, the poor winding up worse off than before. Favoring liberty over equality is wholly consistent with conservatives' non-utopian aims since they can argue, on a preponderance of evidence, that the liberty to excel, even though it fosters actual inequality, ultimately creates greater wealth to benefit the collective. The shorthand for this comes from the movie *Wall Street*: "Greed works." Wealthy societies are awash with inequities, but even those at the bottom are well off compared with those in poorer societies. As Adam Smith wrote, "In competition, individual ambition serves the common good."

Certainly, the conservative priority of liberty can become dogmatic—which perhaps (to be fair) accounts for Kinsley's perception of conservatives as unreasonable. Indeed, it can even place conservatives on the wrong side of history. This happened during the civil rights movement, a moment in which the equality demands of African Americans *should* have trumped the liberty demands of whites to determine the character of their communities. It's happening again now, as I have argued elsewhere, in the gay marriage movement. The demands for equality by homosexual Americans *should* trump the liberty demands of heterosexuals to define marriage in traditional terms. But there's a logical consistency to conservative positions, even when wrongheaded.

By contrast, liberals tend to favor equality when liberty and equality come into conflict. Though liberals pay lip service to notions of individual liberty, they often seek to curtail liberty when they deem it incompatible with their egalitarian agenda. The phenomenon of political correctness in the workplace and on campus is a manifestation of the liberal commitment to equality at the expense of the liberty to express intellectually incendiary, or emotionally hurtful, ideas.

Unlike conservatives, however, who readily acknowledge the tension between liberty and equality, liberals won't admit such an opposition; if they did, they'd have to abandon their utopian visions. They're determined to make the world a better place, but if you ask them to define "better," they'll reply "fairer" and "freer"—doctrines damned. This is the nature of utopianism; it's why liberals struggle in debates with conservatives. Conservatives accuse them of attempting to stifle liberty, and cite instances where it's plainly the case—for example, utilizing the federal tax code to redistribute wealth, or outlawing election campaign contributions above a cer-

continued on next page

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The /Other/ Partisans

GERASIMOS KARAVITIS

In their recent coverage of the battle in Fallujah, a number of *New York Times* reporters consistently referred to the people who fought against the US-led military coalition as "insurgents." Assuming that it was not ideologically driven, their word choice was suboptimal. There is more reason to refer to those who fought against the US led coalition at Fallujah as "partisans."

According to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, an "insurgent" is "a person who rises in revolt against civil authority or an established government." Thus, we may use the word when we wish to signify a person who satisfies two, specific conditions. For one, he or she must "rise up in revolt," or engage in activities that manifest his or her unwillingness to be the subject of oppression. Secondly, he or she must orient these activities against particular types of political institutions, which are represented through the concepts of "civil authority" and "established government." If we were to use "insurgent" to signify a person who does not fully satisfy both of these conditions, then, strictly speaking, our use of the word would be erroneous. If we were to use the word to signify a person who satisfies these conditions only in part, then our use of the word would be warranted only if the English language lacks a more suitable word for

our purpose.

The use of "insurgents" to define the people who fought against the US led forces in Fallujah succeeds in identifying the acts of these people as acts of revolt, but fails in assuming that these acts were oriented against a "civil authority" or an "established government." While it is difficult to deny that the people who fought against the US led coalition in Fallujah did so in a revolt against what they perceived to be an oppressive other, it is not difficult to deny that this other constitutes a "civil authority" or an "established government." Authority exists in social and political relations when a superordinate commands a subordinate with the consent of the subordinate, while in Iraq today there are no existing channels for the voicing and measuring of such consent. Moreover, no governing ensemble—neither in Iraq, nor anywhere else—can reasonably be viewed as "established" in a country that is ravaged by a precarious foreign occupation and a continually escalating civil war.

Instead of "insurgents," the word we should use to define those who fought against the US led coalition forces in the battle of Fallujah is "partisans." Citing *Webster's* again, a "partisan" is "a member of a body of *detached light* troops engaged in making forays and *harassing* an enemy" [italics added], or "a member of a guerilla band operating within enemy lines and

engaged chiefly in demolition, incendiary, sabotage, and diversionary tactics in advance of regular army formation." According to this definition, the ensemble that the individual partisan belongs to is defined solely on the basis of technical determinations: its numerical size, its military objectives, and its modes of operation. By extension, the individual partisan is defined solely in reference to his or her military project: his or her particular identity in a narrative of war, his or her role in the overall operation of a military system. That is to say, in contrast to "insurgent," "partisan" does not define its target subject in relation to the subject that the partisan combats. And if a definition of the partisan fighter's enemy were to be inferred from the definition of the partisan, then it would have to be limited to a description of the technical potentials and attributes of this enemy (ex. resources available, objectives, mode of operation, etc.).

"Partisans" is more appropriate as a signifier than "insurgents" because the groups of people who fought against the US led coalition forces in Fallujah satisfy the conditions of the former word to a greater extent than they satisfy the conditions of the latter. As military factions, these groups were "detached"—in the sense that they did not constitute the body of a regular army, and "light"—as attested to by the fact that most of the insurgents managed to

escape to neighboring cities at some point before, during, or after the actual battle. Moreover, the militants fighting against the US led coalition at Fallujah could not have intended to prevent the US led forces from taking Fallujah, but only to corrupt the morale of (i.e. "harassing") the coalition's soldiers; one need not be an expert in military affairs in order to know that the mouse is by instinct prevented from fighting a war of position against the cat. Now, it is true that these groups of people did not "make forays" in "advance of a regular army," for no "regular army" of Iraqi resistance fighters exists. In this respect, "partisans" is also an imperfect signifier for

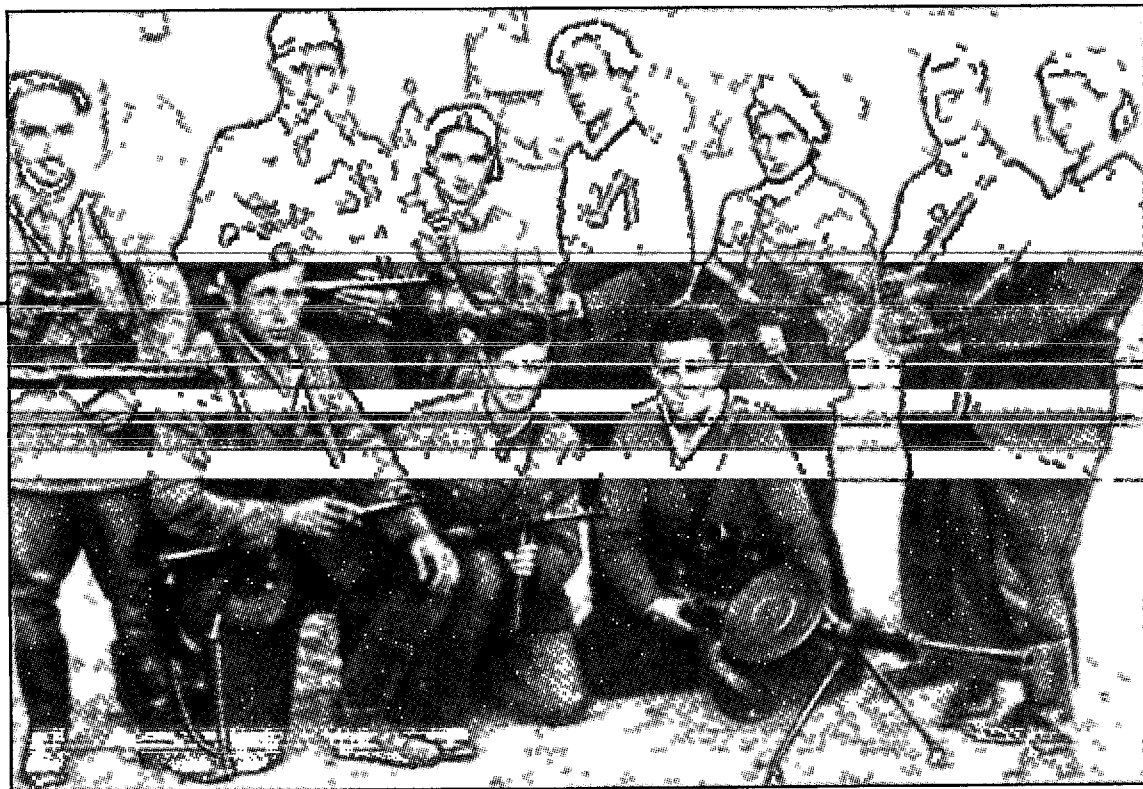
our purposes. Nevertheless, it is superior to "insurgents" because it does not require us to assume the existence of a "civil authority" or an "established government" in Iraq; it does not, in other words, force us to construct an understanding of the militants on the basis of premises that are demonstrably false.

Why then did *The New York Times* reporters choose to use "insurgents?" "Partisans" is usually not used as the dictionary dictates it should be. Rather, it is used to signify groups of people in various European countries (ex. France, Italy, Spain) who engaged in armed struggles against 20th century fascism. Is it possible that *Times* reporters failed to consider the possibility of using "partisans" to define the resistance in Fallujah? It's possible, but it's unlikely given the centrality that the subject has to their news articles. Assuming, therefore, that they did consider the possibility of using "partisans" and consciously chose not to, the reporters must have reckoned that by using "partisans" they would be suggesting a relation between those who signed their names in the most glorious pages of Western democracy's history books and those who today stand as the alleged enemies of all Western political values; they feared that they would be suggesting an association between angels and devils, heroes and villains, and, by extension, a more controversial association between the conquerors of today and the conquerors of yore.

The manner in which we define the people who fought against the US led coalition forces in Fallujah is important to our overall assessment and evaluation of their politics. The *Times* reporters who defined them as "insurgents" did so in error, for, as a signifier, "insurgents" assumes the existence of institutions that do not exist in Iraq. Although it is itself imperfect, "partisan" is a better signifier for the occasion. It is more legitimate to define those who fought against the US led coalition in Fallujah as "partisans," despite the great historical, political, and methodological differences that distinguish them from...the other partisans.

(Thanks to Alejandro Alonso—a friend and Graduate Center colleague—for sharing his views on some of the ideas that appear in this article.)

Gerasimos Karavitis is an MA student in Political Theory.



Polish anti/fascists: insurgents or partisans?

I/Conservative /cont/

tain dollar amount—but liberals won't own up to what's going on. They'll claim that they're fighting corruption, or the *potential* for corruption, or oppression, or greed itself; they won't admit that they're curtailing liberty. Their commitment to utopianism trumps even their commitment to speaking the truth.

Which returns us to Kinsley's observation about liberal "open-mindedness." I suspect what he's actually perceiving in not open-mindedness but logical mushiness. Conservative politics tends to flow in a direct line from conservative premises—and the premises themselves are taken as axiomatic. Hence, to liberals like Kinsley, conservatives seem unreasonable. Liberal politics, on the

other hand, constitutes a theoretical grab bag. Liberals gravitate towards whatever seems likely to make society fairer, but also whatever seems likely to make people freer, except when the two conflict, and then, well, what does it matter if the two conflict? What matters is that liberals' hearts are in the right place.

That, for liberals like Kinsley, is the very definition of being open-minded.

Mark Goldblatt (English 1990) teaches at F.I.T. He is a freelance journalist and the author of Africa Speaks, a satire of black urban culture. His website is MarkGoldblatt.com.

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christian left vs cuny right

Why the Left Still Doesn't Get It: Confessions of a CUNY Conservative

WILLIAM ADLER

The day after the election: gloom and doom, eerie silence, nothing but the sounds of cursing, weeping, and hyperventilating echoing through the halls of the Graduate Center. In the Political Science student lounge, a normally bustling Wednesday afternoon gives way to the aura of a mausoleum. Only one person, apparently, isn't sunk in the general depression affecting everyone else: little old me, a wandering conservative lost in the leftist halls of CUNY. So, speaking to my liberal (progressive? I can't keep track of the terminology) friends, I'd like to offer a little insight into why the Democratic Party, and the Left in general, lost on November 2nd.

By far the overriding issue of this election was not the state of the economy, not Social Security, not Medicare, not health insurance. For some odd reason this tends to amaze the Left, who assume that people should vote their economic interests: i.e., for Democrats and not those oil-loving, tax-cutting, corporate welfare-giving Republicans. But they don't, or at least a significant number of people don't. It's the classic question of the Left: What's the matter with Kansas? Why do middle-class people vote for those who favor the rich? To a conservative, even having to ask this question shows the neo-Marxist time warp in which so much of the Left is stuck, because the answer is blindingly simple: the mythical, unified proletariat doesn't exist. Many well-meaning middle-class folks actually think that their interests are best served by the Republican Party, by giving tax cuts to businesses, and by having a relatively *laissez-faire* government. But even putting aside the fact that average people have legitimate reasons for disagreeing with the Left on economic issues, the big issue of this election was moral values, and that is the main thing the Left does not understand.

It's hard for liberals to accept that the biggest divide in American politics today centers around the so-called "values" issues. The more religious you are, and the more often you attend church, the more likely it is you'll vote Republican; and the more secular you are, the more like-

ly you'll vote Democratic. CNN exit polls yielded the following results: 61% of those who attend a religious service weekly voted for Bush, while only 39% voted for Kerry. Those who said moral values were their most important issue constituted 22% of the electorate. Of these voters 80% voted for Bush while only 18% voted for Kerry.

This year's number one values issue was gay marriage: eleven states voted to define marriage as between a man and a woman. Like it or not, disagree if you like, but this is a real issue, and it can't be dismissed by simply deriding people as idiots for buying a deceptive anti-gay campaign run by evil genius Karl Rove. And there is more going on here than simple homophobia (though it certainly does exist). Most Americans, even those in the so-called "red" states, are relatively liberal when it comes to equal rights for gays and lesbians in the context of adoption, inheritance and visitation rights. In other words, they generally think civil unions are just fine, as do President Bush and Dick Cheney, apparently, both of whom stated during the campaign that they thought unions were a reasonable solution. But marriage is an institution that has been in place for hundreds, if not thousands, of years, and people are not ready to change it overnight. Ironically, the Massachusetts Supreme Court may have handed Bush the election on a platter when it declared that the US Constitution required gay marriage, propelling it onto the national agenda.

Which takes me to another point: the condescension the Left feels for the average American. Liberals talk a good game about caring for people in general, helping them with social programs and redistribution of wealth, but then turn around and disdain actual real-life people. For example, take this quote reported by *The Daily News* from a New Yorker on the Thursday after the election: "Kerry's an obvious choice if you actually have a heart and a brain." I guarantee that one way the Left can permanently consign itself to irrelevance is by telling Bush voters that they are stupid and uncaring. (From my perspective, feel free to continue doing that!) It's not only politically inept,

but false. The Michael Moore mentality of the Left that portrays Republican voters as stupid and hard-hearted doesn't square with the facts: conservatives realize that the vast majority of the country is traditional and religious, while the Left calls these deeply-held beliefs nothing more than fairy tales. In other words, religion is not simply the "opiate of the masses." To put it another way, read David Brooks from a November 6th editorial:

If you want to understand why Democrats keep losing elections, just listen to some coastal and university-town liberals talk about how conformist and intolerant people in Red America are. It makes you wonder: why is it that people who are completely closed-minded talk endlessly about how open-minded they are?

My liberal friends don't seem to get this. I see discussions of a "counter-Enlightenment" or "Jesusland" glibly tossed about by those who rarely leave the confines of Manhattan, yet somehow think they can judge the rest of the country from their comfy ivory towers. Pardon me if this sounds like a typical right-wing rant against the liberal mindset, but it's difficult to explain the middle-American mindset to those who would prefer that middle America simply not exist. To put it: most Americans are religious, so stop whining and deal with it. The Left won't win again until it learns to speak to middle-America without condescension. Kerry didn't strike average people as sincere when he discussed his faith or his values, or when he went goose-hunting in camouflage because it sounded like what it was: a grudging acceptance that, to win their votes, he had to temporarily play at their values. If you don't like religion, feel free to try and change people's minds, but don't dismiss them as stupid simply because they disagree with you.

William Adler is a student in the PhD Program in Political Science.

Arise/ Ye Christian Leftists!

THURMAN HART

For many Americans, the result of the recent Presidential election is, quite literally, an answer to their prayers. For almost as many, that result is a striking example of the dangers of religion and why religion should be banned from politics, if not shunned altogether. For another significant group of Americans, it demonstrates again that they are truly wanted by neither political party nor church.

For the last twenty or thirty years, some conservative political organizations have chosen to organize around a central theme of Christianity. Mostly due to a lack of other voices in the christian community, or of too much tolerance for this intolerant group, these conservative Christians have become the *de facto* face of Christianity for most Americans. This politicization of the church is, I believe, one of the primary reasons why church membership rolls have declined so precipitously. When extreme voices from the religious Right continue to say, "To be a Christian, you must be like me," many moderate and liberal Christians feel they have no place in the church and sink out the door.

Polls tell us that Christians overwhelmingly supported George W. Bush for President. In fact, one of the best predictors of a Bush voter is the frequency with which a person attends church. However, going to church does not make one a christian anymore than going to a dairy barn makes one a cow. In a highly politicized church, it reflects more accurately the level at which a person affiliates with the extreme religious and political message that is given.

Polls also tell us that there are more people who identify themselves as Christians yet never attend church than there are those who do. These are the Christians whose moral values simply do not allow them to tie themselves so strongly to the conservative church. Polls indicate further that this group's lack of community activity will likely extend to voting as well. In short, these non-church-going Christians are likely to stay home on Election Day.

It isn't hard to understand why. In the last few weeks, I've heard the word "christian" used in the same tone that Rush Limbaugh reserves for "liberal." When a person feels unwelcome in their church, they stop going. Is it a stretch to believe that they will not vote if they don't feel welcome in the Democratic Party? Perhaps if some issue touches them personally - say, their son is serving in Iraq - they might vote, but where have we given them a moral argument, a christian argument, for pulling the lever for the Democratic candidate?

More often than not, when I see a Democratic candidate speaking in front of a church, I know he is looking at nothing but black faces. Just as likely, if you see a black face in the crowd, you can be sure that it is at church. Why is it that Democrats feel comfortable professing faith before a black crowd, but not a white one? Doing so reeks of pandering.

Democrats appear to believe it is hopeless to honestly engage Christians. Since the election, pundits in print or broadcast media alike have argued that Democrats simply have no moral ground for their position. This is tantamount to saying that Democrats are morally bankrupt.

This is not only untrue, but offensive to anyone who is proud to be a Democrat. Worse, it only supports the religious Right's argument that a person can simply not be both liberal and christian.

If Democrats want to compete in a national election, they have to break this perception. Christians within the Democratic Party need to find their voice and take back their churches. Secularists within the Party need to give them room to do so. Liberal Christians, by and large, support the idea of separation of church and State - not because they fear the church gaining control of the State, but they fear the effect of the State gaining control of the church. Unlike Nietzsche's Zarathustra, liberal Christians have much to give and little to take away from moral secularists and political liberals.

I categorically reject the idea that Democrats must back away from the liberal agenda to gain Christian voters. Rather, we must be more forceful. We must allow liberal Christians to make their argument based on faith and scripture. We must let those among us who speak the common vernacular to do so, and trust that they are working faithfully toward the same goal. In fact, we must insist that they do so.

At the very least, we need an open and honest dialogue between secular and religious liberals. These two camps will not agree on everything. However, they can join forces in support of those issues on which they do agree.

Thurman Hart is a PhD student in the Political Science Department.

Mexicans Express Surprise and Disappointment with Bush Re/Election

ANDREW KENNIS

What do Mexicans think about the results of the recent presidential election? To find out, I set out to interview dozens of Mexicans, mostly from Mexico City, but also others from different regions of our neighbor country to the south. Given the interdependence of the two country's economies and the large number of Mexican nationals living the US, Mexicans had much at stake on November 2.

Mexico has a long history of distrust and hostility towards its northern neighbor. A famous saying asks, "Why is Mexico so close to the United States and so far away from God?" US armed forces have entered Mexican territory a dozen times, beginning in 1836 when General Gaines occupied Nacogdoches, Texas. In 1847, troops commanded by General Winfield Scott raised the US flag in Mexico City over the famed building, the "Halls of the Montezumas." The US would go on to take over half of Mexico's territory as a result of their invasion of Mexico before the US Civil War.

These images remain etched into the historical memory of Mexicans to this day. As a result, one expects a significant degree of skepticism when it comes to Mexican public opinion about US domestic politics. And yet, many Mexicans agreed with American opinion that this election was a distinctive one.

Surprise and Regret

Surprise and intense disappointment marked the general reaction. Most of the people I spoke with held out a fair



Doesn't Vicente Fox look like John Waters? While Bush/ well/ he always looks the idiot boy/child part/

degree of hope – and even certainty in some cases – that "W" would not win a second term.

"I thought for sure that Kerry was going to win," said Rodrigo Rosas, a 24-year old office worker. "With all of the demonstrations and protests, I just thought Bush wouldn't be able to pull it off."

Susanna Liceahga, who makes her living as a hairdresser and as a result, meets people from a lot of different places, remarked that, "The people I know, from the United States and from abroad, were shocked and surprised. So was I. It just seemed that most of the people didn't like the monster and that he wasn't going to win."

Liceahga also expressed a common sentiment when she said that the result felt like a nightmare. "It's like a bad dream. I feel like I want to pinch myself and wake up and find out that it isn't true." Perseo Medgao, 47, agreed; "To see Bush is like to see a villain in a movie. It doesn't even seem real sometimes."

Medgao, however, was one of the few who expected the result. "It's simple," he reflected, "all of the people from the small towns voted for Bush and all of the people from the big cities voted for Kerry. You can see it clearly on the map as most of the country, that whole middle part especially, went for Bush and the coasts were for Kerry. It just wasn't enough for Kerry in the end."

Alfredo Matao's sentiments reflected the tone of the majority. "Terrible, terrible," he said. "I was surprised to see that the US was so conservative, I thought that with all of the negative impact that the US had internationally, that surely Americans would not give that idiot a second term."

However, when Matao made that comment, he did not know that in reality, the vast majority of America did not vote for Bush. Indeed, no one interviewed for this article seemed to understand the realities of voter turnout in the election.

Voter Turnout

The percentage of voters who made it to the polling booths this election was extraordinarily low in comparison that found in most representative democracies. However, the mainstream corporate media chose to concentrate on the fact that in comparison to past US elections, voter turnout was technically "high." As a result, most people don't realize that over 70 percent of the country did not vote for Bush.

Because of the strong influence that US

media outlets have, including their reach abroad and dependence on them by foreign outlets, it is hardly surprising that many Mexicans were unaware of the turnout, and were in fact quite surprised when informed about as much. Some of them changed their mind in light of the election results and others, quite simply said they had to rethink their viewpoints altogether.

"I didn't know that," said Ismael Lemos when I mentioned 70 percent figure. Lemos, who is a 55-year old taxi driver from the coastal state of Michoacan, then drew a comparison to his own people. "I suppose then that the gringos are also victims of apathy, as that's something that is affecting our country a lot too."

Others changed their minds completely about how they viewed the election, including Liceahga. "I see things differently now and I actually think that's the reason why Bush won. If the people who didn't vote would have voted, I'm sure that Bush would have lost then."

Many Mexicans were stupefied when they heard the statistic, including Joaquin Alonso. "That's incredible, shocking to hear, really shocking," said Alonso in reaction to the turnout numbers, and added a common refrain: "Look at how they elect the President in the first place. It's a very archaic system."

Indeed, a number of people pointed to the Electoral College as evidence of a general flaw in the American electoral system. "I didn't know about the low turnout, but I do know that their election system is just plain weird. Nobody else elects Presidents the way Americans do. Maybe that's why they have such weird results," said Rodolfo Martinez, a janitor from Puebla.

International Verdict: Overwhelmingly Anti-Bush

Mexicans used harsh adjectives to describe Bush, calling him a "monster," a "villain," and a "nightmare." According to a new online global poll, these opinions may hold good across the world.

The web site globalvote2004.org garnered over 100,000 votes for the US president from every continent and country in the world. Over three-fourths of these votes went to Kerry, while the combined votes garnered by Green party candidate David Cobb and Independent Ralph Nader surpassed Bush's puny 9 percent of the total.

We don't know how many people around the world share Mexicans' surprise and disappointment with the results of the US election. However, we can be quite sure that they are not happy with the new reality: George W. Bush will be President for the next four years.

Andrew Kennis is a student in the PhD program in Political Science.

Pier // /cont from //

our heads on the mattresses. People in this cell sang songs together, songs of resistance and songs of nonsense. I went to sleep heartened by the sounds of the people doing jail-support below cheering us on; if we listened very hard, we could just make out the sounds of these people hollering their support.

When I woke up, I found the people in my cell sharing their arrest experiences with one another. They shared their names, how they were arrested, and the things they were learning or getting out of this jail experience. I was pleased to be in a cell with good people who were so self-reflective on the whole experience. Already I had met many amazing and inspiring people in jail, and I felt almost fortunate to be there. If I had to be in jail, at least I was stuck with the best people in New York. Hearing the stories of others inspired me, and reminded me of the reasons why I am involved with political action in the first place. It felt good to be connected with an amazing community of people committed to social change.

Soon after this we were shuffled into a line to get our "mug shots." We waited in line for a really long time. My

picture was awful. It was the first time in two days that I saw myself, and I was totally horrified by my haggard appearance.

As we were getting our

mug shots taken, I saw the woman who was weeping on the floor several cells back because she was not part of the RNC protests. She looked even worse at this point. It turned out that she needed medical attention, and the police were attending to her very slowly. She was worried that her problem would not be attended to. And this woman didn't even do anything to deserve to be in jail. Well, none of us did anything to deserve to be there, but especially not her.

After the mug shots, I was sent to the medical examiner, who asked me a couple of questions and then sent me to another cop who searched me again for the fourth time. At this point, the pen that I had smuggled in and was using to keep notes was confiscated. I was disappointed about this. The cop saw the notes I had taken, and I was worried that she would take them, but she didn't. I was then sent to another cell, one that happened to have really sour people in it. A lot of people in this cell were complaining about the jail experience. Well, of course jail is terrible, but if you spend all of your jail time ruminating about how

much it sucks, that makes it even worse. In this cell, we finally met a couple of people who were in for non-RNC "criminal" situations. We were supposed to be awaiting legal counsel in this cell, but we had no opportunity to talk with lawyers at this point. In fact, I did not once talk with a lawyer at any point during my stay at central booking. We insisted upon seeing lawyers, but our requests were not heeded. I waited in this cell for another endless series of hours. We heard about court orders for the cops to release us, but the court orders were repeatedly ignored.

Finally, I was released at around 7:40 pm. I was so excited to finally be approaching freedom that I acted a bit elated while being led towards the outside. The cop who was taking us downstairs threatened to lock me up again if I didn't act solemn. They took us downstairs, where I received a DAT, or a desk appearance ticket. I would have to return to court on October 13th for my arraignment. I could live with that. I trust that I will be found not guilty. As I exited the jail, the cheers of the jail support folks embraced me. I fell into the arms of all of my friends on the outside, ate some nourishing Food Not Bombs grub, and felt the joyous ecstasy of freedom.

Maria Cincotta can be reached at maria@riseup.net.

Rethinking American History

History Lessons: How Textbooks From Around the World Portray U/S History

by Dana Lindaman and Kyle Ward /The New Press///// and

Founding Myths: Stories That Hide our Patriotic Past

by Ray Raphael /The New Press/////

DAN SKINNER

For thousands of years political thinkers have recognized that myths are essential instruments of political power. Plato's vision of a well-ordered republic famously employed a Myth of Metals to justify inequality. Similarly, Nietzsche argued that myths were necessary in the creation of national identity and, indeed, for human life to propel itself forward.

Two recent books, Dana Lindaman and Kyle Ward's *History Lessons* and Ray Raphael's *Founding Myths* make great strides toward challenging conventional myths and broadening our understanding of American history. Raphael works within the interstices of American mythology to reveal the genealogy of fictional stories central to the American "founding." Lindaman and Ward demythologize US history by compiling textbooks from nations with whom the US has engaged to examine events such as the Monroe Doctrine from a Caribbean perspective or the way the Vietnam War is taught in Vietnam. From their respective vantage points, both reveal the highly myopic and provincial perspective that often shapes the American understanding of American history.

Two central questions underscore both projects: Why is it important to challenge the myths that constitute American folklore and what have been and are likely to be the consequences of these myths? If they are simply benign stories of heroism that make Americans feel proud and forge a national identity, shouldn't we let them persist?

One of the brightest and most illustrative moments of Raphael's book is his short chapter on the famed order given by American generals at the Battle of Bunker Hill to "wait until you see the whites of their eyes," which has taught generations of Americans that the Revolutionary War was an intimate and personal war of brave individuals confronting their British oppressors. As Raphael explains, "In Revolutionary times, we prefer to believe, the glory of war was not diminished by impersonal slaughter." Thus, the war of independence would be seen quite differently if the bloodshed was the result of out and out massacre, as war often is. More importantly, this myth propagates a dangerous view of war, one that World War I diaries have refuted and the poems of Siegfried Sassoon have given voice to as people can often motivate themselves to kill other humans only so long as they can't see the "whites of their eyes." It is for this reason that generations of war psychologists have had to desensitize soldiers in order to kill — victory often depends upon the namelessness and facelessness of one's enemy.

The glorification of war, as Raphael illustrates with his demystification of Paul Revere's ride, the fictitious Molly Pitcher, and Sam Adams as a revolutionary patriot, requires that heroes and their stories be continuously created and fed in order for a nation to build upon the past that it takes for granted. Raphael sees a paradox, arguing that "The image of a perfect American in a mythic past hides our Revolutionary roots, and this we do not need." In reconsidering American history, Raphael contends that Americans will be able to discover the stories of real people who can be the source of a true patriotism. Raphael's

goal is to peel away the layers of fiction that serve only to obscure our own past, and that prevent the actions and sacrifices of real Americans from defining American history.

While Raphael seeks to expose and interrogate assumptions of the past that constitute American identity, Lindaman and Ward prove themselves to be true revisionist historians, in the most literal sense. Revisionist history is inevitably a controversial practice as many Americans—as is true of any people—are uncomfortable questioning the veracity of the stories they were told as

"Neither [Canadian PM] Diefenbaker nor his ministers were consulted—much less informed—about the decision [to ready American military forces and nuclear capabilities for war]. The prime minister was furious that a megalomaniac American president could, in effect, push the button that would destroy Canada."

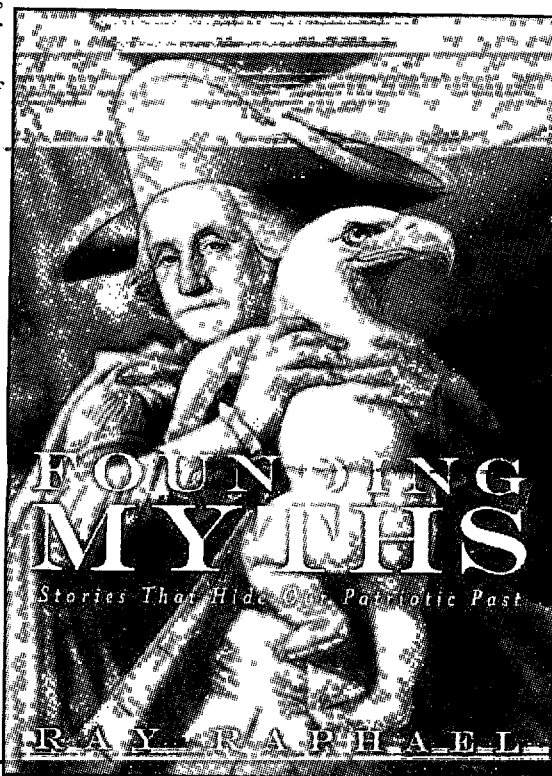
Several of Lindaman and Ward's entries serve to broaden the usual treatment of events offered by American textbooks. A chapter from Nigeria on the Atlantic slave trade, for example, frankly acknowledges the financial benefits Nigeria received from selling off many of its people, while an excerpt from Zimbabwe blasts its colonial master, Great Britain, for forcing it into slavery. The British entry, in turn, praises itself for being among the first nations to ban slavery.

Lindaman and Ward's book is timely and important. At a moment when the credibility and standing of the United States in the world has been called into question, and where political candidates increasingly need to prove their willingness to act unilaterally to be considered "strong" by the American electorate, understanding how the world is taught to see America is in the best interest of the nation, if not to attain respect and trust, then as a matter of long term national security. Whether or not he is right, George W. Bush's claim

that the United States has always been a force for good is not a view shared around the world, and many important clues to the "global test" that John Kerry rightly suggested the United States should be considering can be found in *History Lessons*.

Perhaps more importantly, these books call into question whether a nation so deeply invested in a set of national myths that obscure the diversity of perspectives in our pluralistic society, and increasingly unwilling to put itself in the shoes of others looking at American global behavior, can make decisions that will make it stronger or pursue the equality or justice to which American founding documents lay claim. For example, the contemporary myth of a delimited and productive heterosexual nuclear family, which has never in fact existed, is being used to deny rights to gay and lesbian citizens and roll back a woman's right to choose to have an abortion. Similarly, a decade ago, the legend of the "welfare queen" conditioned a large number of Americans to believe that efforts to combat poverty are nothing more than a waste of their tax dollars. National mythologies that conveniently serve the interests of economic or religious factions, or that can create an "historical" foundation that urges mobilization for war, can have real and serious consequences.

These revisionist historians do not advocate denying America the right to a past. But the spirit that unites both books is the conviction that a nation's guiding assumptions must be continually re-examined before they can serve as a sound basis for future action. *History Lessons* and *Founding Myths* show that looking back and reconsidering history is a prerequisite of the very possibility of moving forward.



children, and no doubt passed along to their children as well. But Lindaman and Ward return "revisionism" to its perspectivist roots to re-vision, or look at a historical moment from a different vantage point.

This is precisely what one truly concerned with understanding history must do. As we have seen from the ancient Greek historians Herodotus and Thucydides to contemporary historians such as Doris Kearns Goodwin and Arthur Schlesinger, all historians take perspectives. Sometimes they even lie for tragic effect or narrative flow. Recognizing this, Lindaman and Ward help us to look at our own history and consider different perspectives that official American doctrine does not often allow. As one might expect, these perspectives are not attempts at rewriting "Truth," but rather making it clear that we Americans are as biased in the writing of our history as are other nations. Just as Raphael shows us how perspective and the national imperatives that shape it effect how we see ourselves, Lindaman and Ward demonstrate how other nations view the history of their involvement with the United States.

One of the most exciting chapters in Lindaman and Ward's book is about what the Cubans simply call "The Missile Crisis." Unlike most American textbooks, which point to an unprovoked act of aggression by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, Cuban textbooks describe the "crisis" as a reaction to continual threats from American "imperialist forces" such as the Bay of Pigs Invasion of 1961, as well as a logical response to assassination attempts on Fidel Castro. An excerpt from a Canadian text reveals yet another perspective, focusing on the Kennedy's unilateralism in dealing with the situation:

The Anti/Chomsky Reader

Peter Collier and David Horowitz/eds/
/Encounter Books/////

TONY MONCHINSKI

Far be it for me to defend MIT distinguished linguist Noam Chomsky. Nevertheless, the man labeled "arguably the most important intellectual alive today" by the *New York Times* doesn't always get a fair hearing—or a hearing at all—in America or the CUNY system.

Let me explain. I was exposed to Chomsky and his political writings for the first time as an undergraduate at Queens College by a professor named John "Tito" Gerassi. Since Tito's classes, I've heard quite a bit of praise for Chomsky from some CUNY students, but when his name is invoked in various political theory classes I have taken at the GC, left-liberal professors dismiss Chomsky with a scoff or flippant remark. What gives?

We might expect Chomsky-bashing from the right, and *Anti-Chomsky Reader* co-editor David Horowitz doesn't let us down. Born to Communist Party schoolteacher parents in Forest Hills, Queens in 1939, Horowitz broke with his Stalinist environment to help form the New Left. Once the editor of *Ramparts* magazine and publisher of books with such titles as *Marx and Modern Economics*, Horowitz pulled a political 180. In his new guise as neoconservative, he hawks his most recent publication, *Unholy Alliance: Radical Islam and the American Left* from his web site frontpagemag.com. Noam Chomsky could have been describing Horowitz himself when, in *Understanding Power*, he discussed the former Leninists who, seeing that "power doesn't lie that way... very easily become ideologist[s] for the right, and devote [their] life to exposing the sins of [their] former comrades, who haven't yet seen the light and shifted to where power really lies."

With Peter Collier, Horowitz edited 2004's *Anti-Chomsky Reader*. In the book, Horowitz, Collier, et. al. take Chomsky to task for his "ferocious anti-Americanism and cavalier relationship with the factual record," his "flat and fatwa-like speeches" received by an audience for whom he is a "cult figure," with "Rock bands such as Rage Against the Machine and Pearl Jam promot[ing] Chomsky at their concerts the way the Beatles once promoted the Guru Maharaji." Chomsky's power comes not from his person, but because he "gives an authentic voice to the hatred of America that has been an enduring fact of our national scene since the mid-1960s." His written works and speaking engagements are marked by an "anti-American obsession that imbues everything he writes and says." Lest we think otherwise, Peter Collier reassures us in the introduction that his book "does not seek to deprogram members of the Chomsky cult."

Just as Horowitz and Collier, based on their title alone, came to this project without any semblance of objectivity, I must admit that as I awaited the arrival of their tome from Amazon.com I mulled over adjectives to use in this review. Words like *drivel* and *palaver* came to mind. I am still

not sure how to spell *farkatke*. But perhaps the best way to review such a book is to focus on a few of the allegations leveled against Chomsky and see what Chomsky himself might say to refute them.

For example, in the *Anti-Chomsky Reader*'s essay by Werner Cohn, Chomsky is hailed as playing "an important role in the neo-Nazi movement," a fact we are assured is well known in France but that "Chomsky and his most determined supporters try to prevent his liberal and left-wing followers from knowing too much about" here in the US. This criticism has been leveled at Chomsky before and it

stems from his defense of free speech. In the early 1980s, Chomsky signed a petition defending French Holocaust-denier Robert Faurisson's right to express his opinions. Chomsky argued that Faurisson should not be jailed by the French government for his views. In the documentary *Manufacturing Consent*, Chomsky

makes the point that free speech prevails only "in so far as it does for those who say things that we disagree with, and that any reasonable person who hears Faurisson is going to write the man and his ideas off."

Horowitz and Ronald Radosh claim that for Chomsky the September 11 attacks were "long overdue and... historically just." Furthermore, "Chomsky seems to believe that America and Europe are still living in the age of colonial expansion—a rhetorical assumption that allows him to ignore the fact that America and its allies do not want to acquire Afghanistan or any other Third World Country, and are even reluctant to be involved to the extent that they should be." This is where I was thinking of inserting the adjective "drivel." Horowitz should know that imperialism itself has evolved along with capitalism. The name of the game is no longer territorial expansion *per se* but access to markets. Hence the US military's presence in 34 countries around the world. Hence the long-anticipated US invasion of Iraq.

The charge that Chomsky greeted 9-11 with hands clasped in glee, or, at the least, "without any particular regret" is another thing. "Listening to Chomsky," writes Horowitz, "you can almost feel the justice of Osama bin Laden's malignant death package." If true, then how does one explain Chomsky's condemnation of the

9-11 attacks as "horrifying atrocities" in the book *Power and Terror*? What gets guys like Horowitz's goat is that Chomsky has the temerity to point out that such terrible crimes are just how "the imperial powers have treated the rest of the world for the last hundred years." As far as charges of being an apologist for terrorists goes, Chomsky explains that "It's not that I'm apologetic. It's just a matter of sanity. If you don't care if there are further terrorist attacks, then fine, let's not pay any attention to the reasons." "Then fine," is exactly what neo-cons like Horowitz seem to be saying, agreeing with President Bush

that our enemies attacked us because they are jealous of our freedom.

One of the other charges Horowitz and crew level is that Chomsky is a self-hating Jew, enmeshed in a "long hate affair" with Israel, a country he regards as playing the role of Little Satan to the American "Great Satan." Chomsky's great sin among the American intelligentsia of all hues is to dare criticize

Israel. But let's look at the reasons why the American Right, which itself has a history of anti-Semitism, loves Israel so much. One, Israel enforces US will in the Middle East, or, as Chomsky himself explains in *Understanding Power*, "...a big part of the way you run the planet is by controlling Middle East oil, and in the late 1950s, the United States began to recognize that Israel would be a very useful ally in this respect." Besides serving as a "mercenary state for the US around the world," right-wingers love Israel because, according to a literalist reading of the Book of Revelations, Israel must have control of the Middle East before the second coming of Christ.

That said, what is it about Chomsky that raises the hackles in certain segments of "the Left"? It's hard to say with certainty, but I'll proffer a possibility: a certain sense of envy is involved. Chomsky is a linguist by training, yet his political writings are far more prolific and widely read than those of most political scientists. Furthermore, his work outside his interviews, albeit dry and academic, is free of jargon and the purposefully obtuse trappings of academia that accompany such left stalwarts as Bernard-Henri Levy or the late Jacques Derrida. In a word, Chomsky is comprehensible. There is no heresthetics, heuristics, habitus or—alliteration be

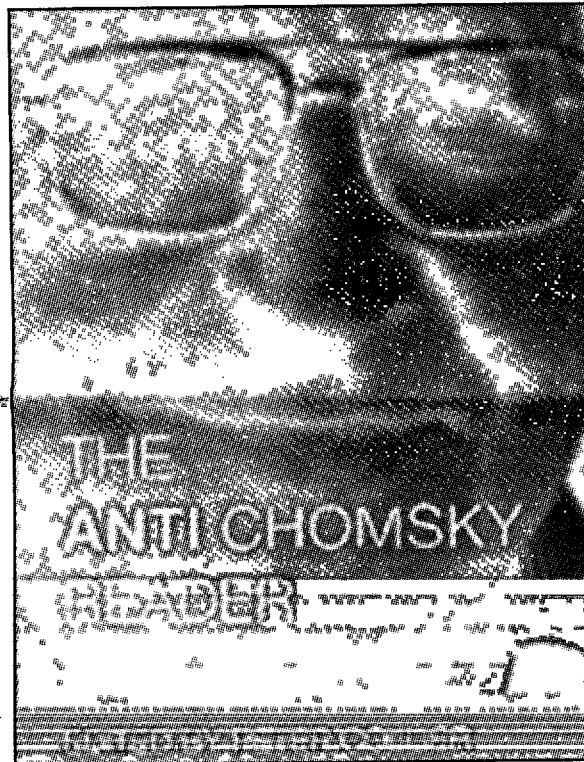
damned—surplus value in his work. "Don't forget," Chomsky reminds us, "part of the whole intellectual vocation is creating a niche for yourself, and if everybody can understand what you're talking about, you've sort of lost, because then what makes you special?" In an age where one can make a living as a dissident academic, Chomsky's example threatens to reveal that the left emperors have no clothes.

The contributors to the *Anti-Chomsky Reader* don't seem to understand their target. For example, throughout the book, Chomsky is dismissed as holding Marxist views. Chomsky is just "parroting his Marxist mentors"; he is just another of the many "analysts influenced by Marxism"; *Manufacturing Consent* is "a vulgar Marxist tract." Despite right-wing protestations to the contrary, Chomsky is quite critical of certain segments of what passes for the Left these days. Admitting that Marx "introduced some interesting concepts at least, which every sensible person ought to have mastered and employed," Chomsky notes that "I'm not a great enthusiast of Marx..." He is especially critical of Marxists, noting that "It's rather striking that you don't find things like 'Marxism' in the sciences," and that "notions like Marxism... belong to the history of organized religion." Chomsky has repeatedly stated that he finds intellectual sustenance and inspiration in the libertarian socialist (i.e., anarchist) traditions.

As for charges that Noam Chomsky is somehow "un-American," one need only recall the *New York Times Magazine* interview last year where Chomsky said he would not want to live in any country other than the US. In *Understanding Power*, Chomsky explains that a term like "anti-American" is "a pretty standard propaganda triumph, actually. Like, go to Italy and try using the word 'anti-Italianism,' call somebody there 'anti-Italian' and just see what happens—they'd crack up in ridicule. But here [in the US] those totalitarian values really do mean something to people...."

Are there people on the Left who fawn over Chomsky? Unfortunately, yes. Are these sycophants less worthy of our contempt because we agree with some of the views they embrace? No. Noam Chomsky is not a god. He is a man fighting, in his own way, what many of us who identify as progressives-leftists-socialists-supporters of democracy, consider the good fight. As the United States government embarks on what they see as a second American century with cheerleaders like Horowitz and Collier, Noam Chomsky and like-minded activists attempt to rally what is really good and worth promoting in Americans and human beings.

Tony Monchinski is a student in the PhD program in Political Science and a special education high school teacher.



R/I/P/OI/DB: An Appreciation

TONY MONCHINSKI

Russell Tyrone Jones is no longer among us. The rapper variously known as the Old Dirty Bastard, Unique, Dirt McGirt and Big Baby Jesus collapsed and died in a recording studio in the middle of November, two days before his 36th birthday. It was the same weekend Dick Cheney was rushed to the hospital citing labored breathing. Old Dirty Bastard came to fame in the world of rap with the debut of the Wu-Tang Clan's *Enter the Wu-Tang Clan (36 Chambers)*. This premier album by a group that reinvigorated the East Coast rap scene introduced the various members of the Clan, giving them each time to shine.

Old Dirty stood out. His style, in music and life, could best be described as funky. Imagine if Chapelle Show's crack addict Tyrell Biggums pursued a singing career: you'd probably get something akin to the trajectory of Old Dirty's rise and fall. That the Ol' DB battled drug addiction and seeming mental illness only enhanced his street creds and lyrical ability. In his debut solo album, the Ol' DB exhibited a style that was equal parts freestyle, free association, and far out. How else to explain his penchant to burst unexpectedly into "Somewhere over the Rainbow" or "Bad, Bad LeRoy Brown" hooks?

"I keep my breath smelling like shit so I can get funky," he rapped. And funky he was, the epitome of Ronald Reagan's much ballyhooed welfare queens, proudly displaying a check from his Wu-Tang earnings on MTV News as a camera followed him in his limo to visit social services and pick up his food stamps. Less royalty than court jester, it was a role Old Dirty seemed to embrace.

Gangster rap used to be about singing about being shot, shooting at people, dealing drugs and the size of your jimmy. One criticism of gangster rap today is that performers really are gangsters, with, for example, Jamaica, Queens phenom Fifty-Cent breaking into the rap game after a life of drug-dealing and catching bullets. Old Dirty



was no exception. He's been embroiled with the law for crimes ranging from failure to pay child support – his wife claims he only fathered their 3 children, whereas Old Dirty is rumored to have fathered a total of 13 – to stealing a fifty-dollar pair of shoes from a store, from possession of marijuana and 20 vials of crack to attempted murder of police after a shootout on the New York City streets. In his defense on the latter charge, the evidence seems to indicate that undercover cops boxed in Old Dirty's car, advanced on him with guns drawn, and failed to identify themselves as peace officers. In such a situation, the Wu-Tanger claimed he was just trying to protect himself. Along the way, he was shot twice, remanded to rehab, and attempted suicide.

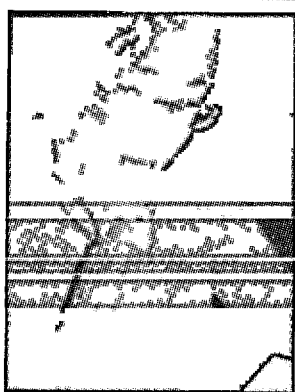
Old Dirty's lyrics were not free of homophobia or misogyny, but his skills, like Eminem's, were undeniable. His star shone brightest early on, with a marked decline in the quality of his second album, *Nigga Please*. He had his share of detractors, and it's safe to say Bill Cosby wouldn't have approved. Newspapers have been chronicling the burgeoning feud over the Russell Jones' "estate," but I somehow don't think Old Dirty managed to hold onto much of his money. He had a reputation for partying and philanthropy, hooking up family members with cars and homes and handing out money to children on the streets of his native Brooklyn.

At the time of this writing, the exact cause of his death is unknown. Old Dirty had recently been released from prison, was living at home with his mom, and had signed with Roc-a-fella Records (Jay-Z's label). Family members believe depression medication may have played a part.

"It just seems like the end of hip hop," lamented one fan. But, although Old Dirty Bastard will be missed, hip hop will live on.

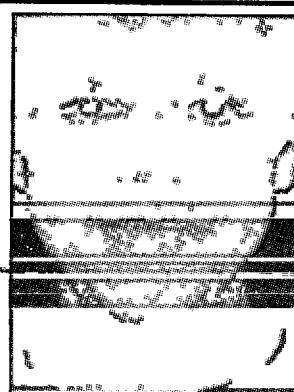
Tony Monchinski is a student in the PhD program in Political Science.

How would you assess the current health of US democracy?



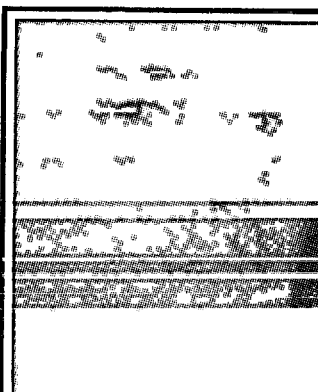
**Liza Bruno,
English**

I suppose it's distressingly healthy/ in that many people voted who didn't think they had a stake in voting before/ Unfortunately I disagree with those who voted for Bush/



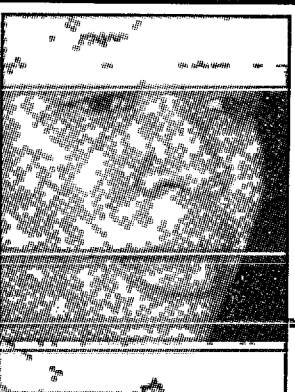
**Jorge Pineiro,
Mathematics**

Holy shit/ I don't know how to answer that.../ I guess the election expressed what the majority wants/ But elections are just a piece of what democracy is/



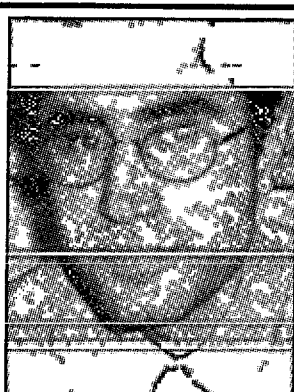
**"Chopper,"
Philosophy
Alum/Faculty**

If by democracy you mean holding elections once every four years/ I guess it's healthy.../



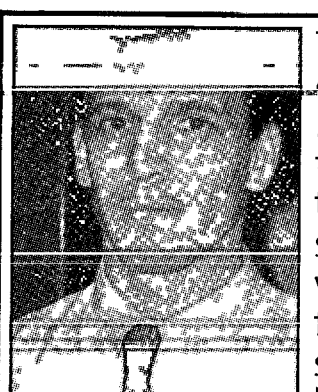
**Carlene
Buchanan,
Sociology**

From an international student's perspective/ the system has to be credited for being one of the most liberal democracies worldwide/ But/ the current trend seems to be the growth of clientelism/ etc/



**Samer Salame,
Computer
Science**

The US had for a long time been a great model of democracy that was an inspiration for many nations.../



**Lawrence Ross,
Ethnomusicology**

The overriding concern for me is the lack of transparency in the voting system/ Until we can have full faith in the system/ the health of US democracy is going to be in question/

News from the DSC

Next Meeting:

Friday, December 10

The next DSC plenary will take place Friday/ December // at // p/m/ in room // // Food will be delivered at // // so representatives have time to eat and socialize before the business gets underway/ Our special guest will be registrar Vincent De Luca/ who will give a demonstration of the new on/line registration/ This will be a good opportunity for any student who has not registered by Friday to witness the electronic environment where one will now and in the future register for GC courses/

At the plenary meeting we will ask for the DSC approval of the proposed /benchmark/ for satisfactory progress which will then be forwarded to the Provost's office/ This new benchmark will require students to have successfully passed their Second Exams within // semesters of their enrollment in a doctoral program/ This business has been previously introduced at a plenary and has been publicized well in both The Advocate and on the DSC web/ site/

Website Poll

The DSC website has been revamped to incorporate suggestions made by students/ We have a /poll/ option where we will pose a question which we hope many GC students will answer/ The first question will be: /Is the Wellness Center valuable to you?/ The responses will aid in planning future of health services/

DSC Outreach

Members of the DSC plan to visit our students in programs located outside of // Fifth/ Instead of having a holiday party this semester we felt it preferable to spread some holiday cheer to students who typically do not frequent the GC/

New Logo Contest

The DSC is sponsoring a logo contest open to GC students/ We want a professional logo to put on future business cards/ the web/ site and general correspondence/ Entries should be sent to the web/ master at spiderbot@gmail.com in electronic format only //jpg /tif or /png formats/ // x // pixels/ no later than March // All submissions become the property of DSC/ A monetary reward of // will compensate the artist of the selected logo/ The steering committee will choose the winner/

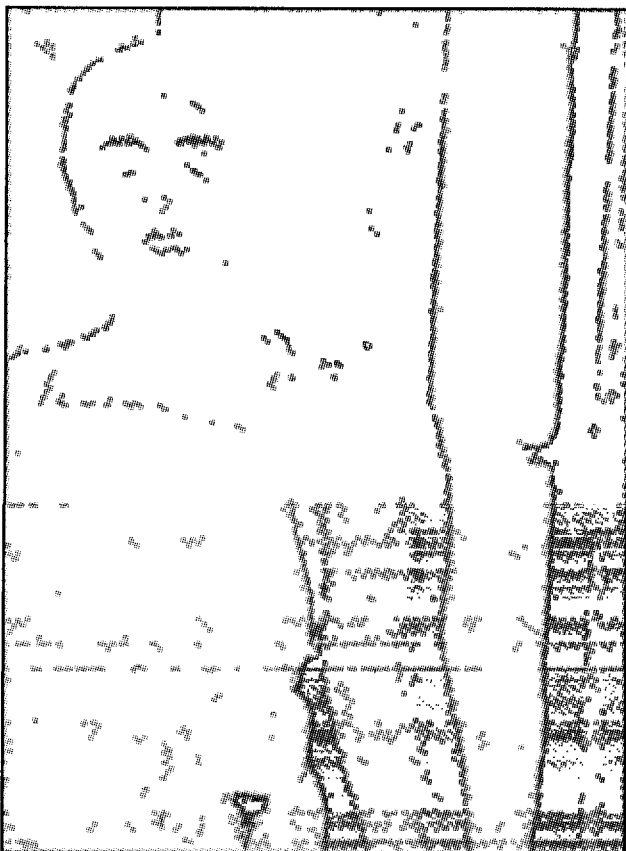
Happy holidays from the whole DSC!

Introducing the new DSC Adjunct Project Coordinator

The DSC is happy to announce the hire of Mariya Gluzman beginning on November 1. This former Hunter College student, who is articulate and knowledgeable about CUNY, intends to be "proactive and aggressive in this position."

She shows awareness of the needs of adjunct instructors on specific campuses employing a realistic yet energetic outlook in addressing these needs. "I believe in public education—not in the ideal but in the flawed, often frustrating, but ultimately socially beneficent institution."

Ms. Gluzman will begin by attending one or more contract negotiating sessions being held now between the PSC (Professional Staff Congress) and the BOT (CUNY Board of Trustees). As a web/graphic designer she will work closely with the DSC webmaster to ensure constant communication through the DSC's website. Her office will be Graduate Center room 5398 (5th floor). We look forward to a close working relationship with Mariya Gluzman.



Mariya Gluzman/ Adjunct Project coordinator

Adjuncts: share your expertise!

- ♦ Do you have a successful course syllabus that may be helpful to new instructors?
- ♦ Can you suggest a good textbook for a particular course you've taught?
- ♦ Would you like to share teaching tips, project samples, or models you have found especially useful in teaching introductory material?

If you answered YES to any of the above questions, you can now allow your fellow adjuncts to benefit from your experience.

In the spirit of camaraderie and collaboration the ADjunct Project and the Doctoral Students Council are in the process of building an online community where people can search or contribute pedagogical resources, exchange ideas, and share expertise.

Send all relevant information to Mariya Gluzman, Adjunct Project Coordinator, at mgluzman@gc.cuny.edu and look for the new features on the DSC website.

Dear colleagues:

I'm pleased to introduce myself as the new Adjunct Project Coordinator—your liaison with the Professional Staff Congress, the union that represents CUNY's teaching, research, and library faculty. If you are an adjunct and/or grad assistant at any CUNY campus, you are covered by the PSC contract being negotiated right now. Some of the issues on the table that concern you directly are: unemployment insurance for part-timers, job security, and tuition assistance. Staying informed and getting involved would ensure that these and other important issues get the attention they deserve.

As a graduate student (MA program in Philosophy) and an Adjunct Lecturer at Brooklyn College for the last three years, I am painfully aware of all the inequities we presently endure as students and instructors. We have laughable wages, no job security, lousy benefits (if we have any at all, that is) and get no appreciation for all the extra hours we put in. It is my sincere hope that the ongoing contract negotiations bring about a better working environment for us all. We need it.

I encourage all of you to contact me with any suggestions on how I can help make all of our jobs easier and our teaching experience less excruciating—whether by answering your questions or referring you to the appropriate resource. In the meantime, look for such community resources as a repository of course syllabi, course textbook suggestions, teaching tips, and others, that are in the process of being created on this website. If you have a syllabus you would like to share or would like to recommend a textbook that you have found especially helpful, please, send that on to me and I will add it to the appropriate section. I am available to answer your questions either in person in room 5498 or by email at mgluzman@gc.cuny.edu. I will always be glad to hear from you.

Mariya Gluzman
Adjunct Project Coordinator

You Can Donate School Supplies For Afghani Children at the GC

THURMAN HART

I sometimes feel very small and insignificant when I watch the evening news. Events in Iraq and Afghanistan, Nigeria and Palestine, Israel and Venezuela are simply beyond my ability to control. Even as I cast my vote in November, I was only one of several million. Policies since that time are evidence that my vote did not change anything. It would be easy to pull back within myself and close my eyes to the suffering I cannot relieve or even fully acknowledge.

One of the quotations I have often used in times of despair has been nagging at me of late. I'm not sure exactly who said it – sometimes I'm told it was Ghandi, sometimes Martin Luther King, Jr., sometimes it is attributed to Saint Augustine. I wrote it down some time ago and keep it on my desk. "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

I believe there are a lot of people like me, who would like to help somehow but simply don't know how or where to turn to make sure our efforts really go to those who need help. I found one way, which I hope will resonate within the Graduate Center. Americares is an international aid agency that has been in operation since 1975. One of their missions is bringing school supplies to schools that are being opened in Afghanistan.

You can send supplies directly to Americares or stop by the Political Science department's student lounge. There is a box there to collect donations for this purpose. Donations will be collected through December twenty-third. I will resist the urge to moralize or preach any sermon concerning why this is a good thing to do. Instead, I will simply pass this information along to you, my colleagues, and allow you to make your own decision.

Feds Want to Track Every Move of College Students

SPENCER SUNSHINE

The federal government wants to create a vast database of all college and university students, with the explicit intention of tracking them closely as they move across educational institutions. Advocates say this information will create more reliable statistics about schools – but opponents are wary of the vast invasion of privacy that will result, allowing federal officials to monitor the movements of private individuals in one of the most traditionally progressive sectors of society.

Supporters of the effort claim that the purpose is to create more reliable statistics on graduation, transfer and retention rates than the current, anonymous system allows for. The proposed system could increase data about recent trends such as increasing time spent in the higher education system and frequent school transfers.

Opponents point to a total lack of privacy protections. Although the Department of Education claims that the information cannot legally leave the National Center for Education Statistics, there is no reason to assume that this will occur in actuality. A similar register, the National Directory for New Hires (which collects information on returning workers to track job trends), has been used to locate parents who are behind in child-support loan payments or in debt to the federal government. State officials have already expressed interest in using the student database in conjunction with prison records. In states where similar databases exist, schools have been pressured to check their data against housing records, driver's licenses and employment records.

For example, similar claims about the maintenance of privacy are frequently made about the US Census. For example, in 2000, Census bureaucrats frequently made public statements that their information was not turned over the US government when the Japanese internment camps were created. What these officials failed to divulge, however, was that the Census did make up a special list telling the U.S. Army how many Japanese-Americans lived in each neighborhood in the U.S. The Army used the Census lists to send out trucks to round up Japanese-Americans for internment camps during World War II.

Further information about the proposed tracking system is available from the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, who are opposing the panoptical educational database (www.naicu.edu).



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Bikes /cont from //

and the time/space nexus at traffic lights, etc. Plus the adrenaline kicks in and we get delusions of grandeur and omnipotence. So to some extent all bikers tend to look "cool" and dangerous to non-bikers (or at least in our fantasies), especially when flying down Fifth Avenue, weaving in and out of cars. So with the general and positive increase of late in bike culture, here and elsewhere in urban areas, there has developed a need for some to distinguish themselves from the others, to make themselves stand out. Hence, the track bike. Track bikers are EVEN MORE CRAZY: these fuckers don't even have breaks! How many do you see wearing helmets? I'm guilty of not doing so, but I think that track bikers on the whole are *least likely* to wear a helmet.

Problems: sure, the casual observer (pedestrian, auto driver) cannot and does not typically see (nor does s/he probably care) that *some* bikers ride track versus *others* who ride road bikes etc. (As you won't probably notice the difference unless you yourself are a biker). So you might argue that without recognition, the hierarchy breaks down. But the argument is more or less based on the perceptions and perspectives of the bikers themselves.

So, what is the allure of the track bike? They seem to me both less practical and even slightly masochistic. I DO still need to try one more substantially – so my experience is limited. But is this just another example of masochism in everyday life? A present-day corset, if you will? The high price the body pays for fashion?

The dudes I mentioned in the opening paragraph were also young and at least one was "straight edge" – so this discredits them, to me, from the start (not the age but the purity-fantasy bullshit). But it makes sense with my theory: that the track bike (rider/signification) is tendentially slightly masochistic, macho, and somewhat impractical, at least for cities. Bike culture here in NYC seems to be fast becoming a subset of "hipster" culture – a whole other, convoluted essay, for sure, as almost no one is a self-described hipster, and there is no clear notion of what constitutes hipsterdom—though we all know it when we see it. I sensed this when a friend of mine, much to his consternation, got on his bike in South Williamsburg and a neighboring non-hip/local/townie-type (I'm imaging a middle-aged or older working-class Puerto Rican guy) accused him and his biking friends of being "hipsters" (which here I am thinking of in a way to signify "gentrifiers," as I like to think he also was). Also I am reminded of another friend who sees biking as a purely cultural/"fun" activity, and who hates people who make it "political"...How is it that issues like public space usage, public health and safety, and oil dependency/pollution/consumption are not immanently political?

Again, no offense to you friends who ride track bikes. This is obviously not intended towards you.

Toward a car-free NYC...

Will Weikart is a student in the PhD program in Sociology at CUNY GC. At the time this essay was written (approx. July 2004), he was anti-hipster.