

Advocate

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BMCC Puts "Homeland Security" Program on Hold

JAMES HOFF

When recently asked about the proposed Security Management Certificate Program and the "Homeland Security" course originally slated to appear at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC)

this Fall, BMCC president and member of the American Association of Community College's "Task Force on Homeland Security" Antonio Perez said simply "the college is no longer moving forward with the proposed certificate program." This surprising announcement comes just weeks after a slew of student and faculty protests to prevent the proposed certificate program and the infamous "Homeland Security" course from being offered at BMCC this semester.

When asked why the program was cancelled and whether or not the college was responding to pressure from student and faculty activists, the administration was less than forthcoming. BMCC officials including President Perez, Vice President of Academic Affairs Sadie Bragg, and the Public Relations Department, despite numerous attempts to reach them refused to comment. Student and faculty activists, while relieved that the

program is no longer being considered, remain wary in the absence of a public statement from the college. They will continue to pursue the issue with the administration and to actively work next semester to assure that the program is indeed not offered and that it does not manifest itself later in some other form.

Since September 11, community colleges have increasingly taken a shine to the prospect of homeland security training and education, including Monroe Community College in Rochester, NY and Iowa Central Community College, which offers courses in, among other things, preventing agro-terrorism. Not to be outdone by a Iowa, BMCC proposed its own Security Management Certificate Program last year. The program, which was sponsored by the Business Management Program, was originally intended to be offered as a ten-course certificate program with required courses in "Security Management Techniques," and "Homeland Security." Sample syllabi, which were included in the proposal, con-

see *BMCC Cancels Program*, page 9



Students demonstrate against the proposed BMCC Homeland Security program.

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Power in Afghanistan**

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Changing Coalitions**

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Theater Reviews**

Chance to Improve GC Email System After Outage

JAMES TRIMARCO

As students who use their Graduate Center email accounts undoubtedly know, GC email went down on Saturday January 15 and stayed out of service until January 20. The incident inspired eye-rolling and sighing among students who want decent computing resources at their school—especially now that the usual scapegoat, former Vice President for Information Resources James Haggard, has departed. But the Administration and the Doctoral Students Council had another reason to find the outage frustrating—for the past several years, both groups have been strongly urging GC students to use their school email accounts because, if they do not, it is nearly impossible to contact the whole Graduate Center Community with important information.

One week after the email outage, Associate Provost Stephen Brier sent out a message to the GC Community explaining the conditions that led to the problem and what the Administration is doing to correct them. The Graduate Center's email uses Microsoft Exchange 5.5, a sys-

see *Email Outage*, page 7

State Assembly Member Ron Canestrari Visits GC

PAUL MCBREEN

The Chair of the Higher Education Committee of the New York State Assembly, Ron Canestrari, paid a visit to the Graduate Center on Friday, January 14. This was Canestrari's second visit to the GC as head of the Higher Education Committee. His hosts were GC administrators Frances Horowitz, Bill Kelly, Steve Gorelick and students Moira Egan, David Golland, Stephanie Domenici Cabonargi, and Paul McBreen.

During Mr. Canestrari's introduction to 365 Fifth Avenue last year, a student representative presented him with a stack of hundreds of letters signed by students, faculty, and staff regarding the lack of tuition remission for GC students. At that meeting, Mr. Canestrari was relatively new to the unique set of problems that we at CUNY face. This time, however, his answers showed familiarity with the plight of CUNY—especially the funding inequity between CUNY and the State University of New York (SUNY).

Mr. Canestrari fielded extremely specific questions about how funding of CUNY graduate students can be improved. For instance, he was asked how the budgeting processes might be altered so that CUNY's annual allocation from Albany would include an amount specifically earmarked for graduate student support. He did not have an answer to that question, but did turn our attention to the Assembly's Ways and Means Committee. According to Canestrari, the Ways and Means Committee has the power to effect an annual allocation specifically for graduate student support. He offered to arrange meetings with members of this committee in Albany; we need to take advantage of this offer.

We now have the benefit of name-recognition with the chair of an important committee. The Graduate Center, CUNY is a presti-

gious institution of higher learning located in midtown Manhattan. People are familiar with us and we need to shed our insecurity regarding our supposed obscurity. We must stop chasing our fair share of the state budget after the fact, looking for handouts from CUNY's Board of Trustees and the PSC. Canestrari appears impressed with our institution, and expressed understanding of our situation as it was explained to him. He understands that we are not looking for handouts but for simple funding parity with SUNY.

The GC community must organize now to keep alive the issue of the lack of tuition remission for our students who teach at CUNY campuses. We must make visits to local offices of state legislators and follow up with visits to those same legislators in Albany. The DSC has met with GC administrator Steve Gorelick making preliminary plans for these activities, and will keep students informed on how they can be an active part of this lobbying effort. Visit the valuable website of NYPIRG (www.nypirg.org) to see exactly which legislators represent you. Becoming informed is the first step to making a change.



NY State Assembly member Ron Canestrari

Editorial

Defend Ward Churchill and Academic Freedom

On February 3, the University of Colorado placed tenured Ethnic Studies professor Ward Churchill, a radical scholar affiliated with the American Indian Movement, under 30-day review – the first legal step towards firing him. This move is the result of organizing by a group of conservative students at Hamilton College in upstate New York who objected to some of his views in his essay on 9/11 called "Some People Push Back: On the Justice of Roosting Chickens." In that piece Churchill compares the "technocrats" of the finance and banking industry who were killed in the World Trade Center to Adolf Eichmann, a Nazi bureaucrat who helped organize the concentration camp system.

The essay, which can be found at the link below, has been widely quoted out of context by the media. In particular, it is claimed that Churchill included janitors, firefighters, medics and other in his metaphor about Eichmann, which is not true. As the story spread, he was forced to cancel a lecture – ironically at a forum called "The Limits of Dissent" – after receiving death threats. Although he has stepped down as co-chair of his department, he has refused to resign.

Churchill's comments on 9/11 were meant to be inflammatory and to encourage discussion about why the massacre occurred and to suggest possible interpretations beyond the Bush Administration's "attack on freedom" model. To focus on the specifics of what he said or wrote misses the point. The possibility of his removal should concern all those involved in academic work for multiple reasons:

1. Freedom of Speech: This is a basic First Amendment freedom of speech issue. To lose one's job over the use of metaphors and hyperbole, especially in relation to discussion of an important political issue, is state censorship.

2. Tenure and Academic Freedom: Churchill is a tenured professor, and for him to be fired over such comments would be just the sort of intellectual censorship the tenure system was designed to stop. Many departments have written eloquent statements in support of Churchill, such as this one from the Philosophy Department at his own University of Colorado at Boulder:

"The recent controversy over Ward Churchill's essay should not obscure the fact that the precise purpose of the tenure system is to secure the ability of university professors to argue the most unpopular of cases, in the face of the most heated public sentiment. We urge the Regents to honor that system in its consideration of this case, and not to take any action that would threaten Professor Churchill's jobs or chill the free expression of thought that is so vital within a university community."

3. The Suppression of Dissent: This is a clear attempt to repress voices critical of the current US mindset and policy. The Bush Administration has cast 9/11 in black-and-white moral terms as a justification for global war. If Churchill is removed because he offered an opposing viewpoint – in the face of ironclad Constitutional and tenure protections – it will set a terrible precedent, possibly harboring the dawn of a new McCarthy era and the criminalization of dissent.

The governors of both Colorado and New York have publicly slandered Churchill as being a supporter of terrorism. The Colorado governor has called on him to resign, and the State House and Senate passed a joint resolution condemning him. These actions are obviously intended to put pressure on CU to remove Churchill, and the Board of Regents has forced CU Interim Chancellor Phil DiStefano to initiate the 30-day review period. He will be assisted by two CU Deans, Todd Gleeson and David Getches. When the 30 days are up, DiStefano will determine whether to issue a notice of intent to dismiss for cause, other action as appropriate, or no action, to the Regents. If a notice to dismiss for cause or some other action is issued then the subsequent process will be governed by the Regents.

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Letters

First World Oafs?

Although I too share the negative opinion held by many people throughout the world of George Bush (and indeed among many millions here in these United States), I should like to comment on Mr. Kennis's article which appeared in the December, 2004 issue of *The Advocate*.

As a Mexican and American dual national, I welcome sincere interest in Mexico and Latin America and genuine dialogue. But I fear that many a time the American Political Scientist's desire to "save" Mexico covers up an innate lack of genuine commitment to pursuing discussions in a spirit of real understanding and respect.

Mr. Kennis "set out to interview dozens of Mexicans, mostly from Mexico City, but also from different regions of our neighbour country to the south." Did Mr. Kennis actually visit my country and conduct his survey? Who translated into such idiomatic English the comments of these various and sundry Mexicans? While I do not disagree in substance with the appraisal of the current US Administration, the fact remains that the article seems to reflect more the tone and tenor of Mr. Kennis's views and perhaps even justifies a shrill and overly-generalized view of the world's view of Bush and the US.

One last note—although many Mexicans many not like Mr. Fox, comparing President Fox to John Waters, although amusing to some, is not particularly diplomatic. Left or Right—Americans tend to be First World Oafs. Mexicans can be very sensitive on these points, even Mexicans who may laugh and cajole at the comment. Underneath, it's irritating. Once again, the "gringos" have all the answers—even the coy, cynical ones.

Lo ido a Europa no quita lo pendejo.

Regards,
Roberto Barnard

Andrew Kennis Responds –

My article did not imply any desire to "save" Mexico. Instead, I admitted from the get-go its modest intentions by pointing out that the article was based on "dozens of interviews," hardly an all-encompassing survey. Sometimes a-bit can be learned, however, from well-reported and well-written articles based on such surveys.

In response to whether or not "Mr. Kennis actually visit[ed] my country and conduct[ed] his survey [there]?" the answer is an unequivocal "yes." I take pride in the fact that all the articles I have written for The Advocate have been done on the scene (including protests covered from Cancun to Canada and interviews and articles conducted from the occupied lands of Palestine and Chiapas).

Who translated? I did all the translations, though some of those interviewed opted to speak in English when they learned I was reporting for a States-bound publication. Most, however, spoke in Spanish. I am definitely not a professional translator and am just a journalist who learned Spanish the hard way: by immersing myself in the "cultura chilanga," living in a "barrio popular" for three years, taking the time and effort to learn not just Spanish but also the colloquial phrases that distinguish Mexican Spanish-speakers from other Latinos.

The article had nothing to do with "Mr. Kennis' views," and instead was my attempt to reflect as best as possible the interviews I conducted. I am at a loss to find where the article even hinted at my own viewpoints. I wonder for whom Mr. Barnard assumed I even voted for—or whether or not I voted at all. Did the article state or even imply such positions?

If the respondent was seemingly upset about a writer's humble attempt to get a grip on Mexican public opinion towards President Bush, why would he stoop so low as to generalize Americans as being "First World Oafs"? Americans shouldn't be considered "First World Oafs" on the basis of these election results in light of the fact that 70% of Americans did not even vote for President Bush. Nor should "gringos" be considered to have all the answers just because they seek to give Mexicans the voice they deserve by living in and visiting their country and subsequently writing articles that seek to highlight the viewpoints of several dozen people.

I cannot speak to the John Waters caption as that was the layout editor's creation.

Sincerely,
Andrew Kennis

The Layout Editor Also Responds –

Actually, I think John Waters is kinda cute. In any event, I personally would rather be compared to a whitty filmmaker like Waters than referred to as an "idiot boy child," which is how I describe our own home grow oaf, El Jefe Bush. And as someone influenced by anti-hierarchical progressive political movements (which have a long history in Mexico, btw), I consider ALL national leaders to be fair targets. Your equation of the people of Mexico with the leader of the Mexican state apparatus is bizarre at best and self-deprecating at worst.

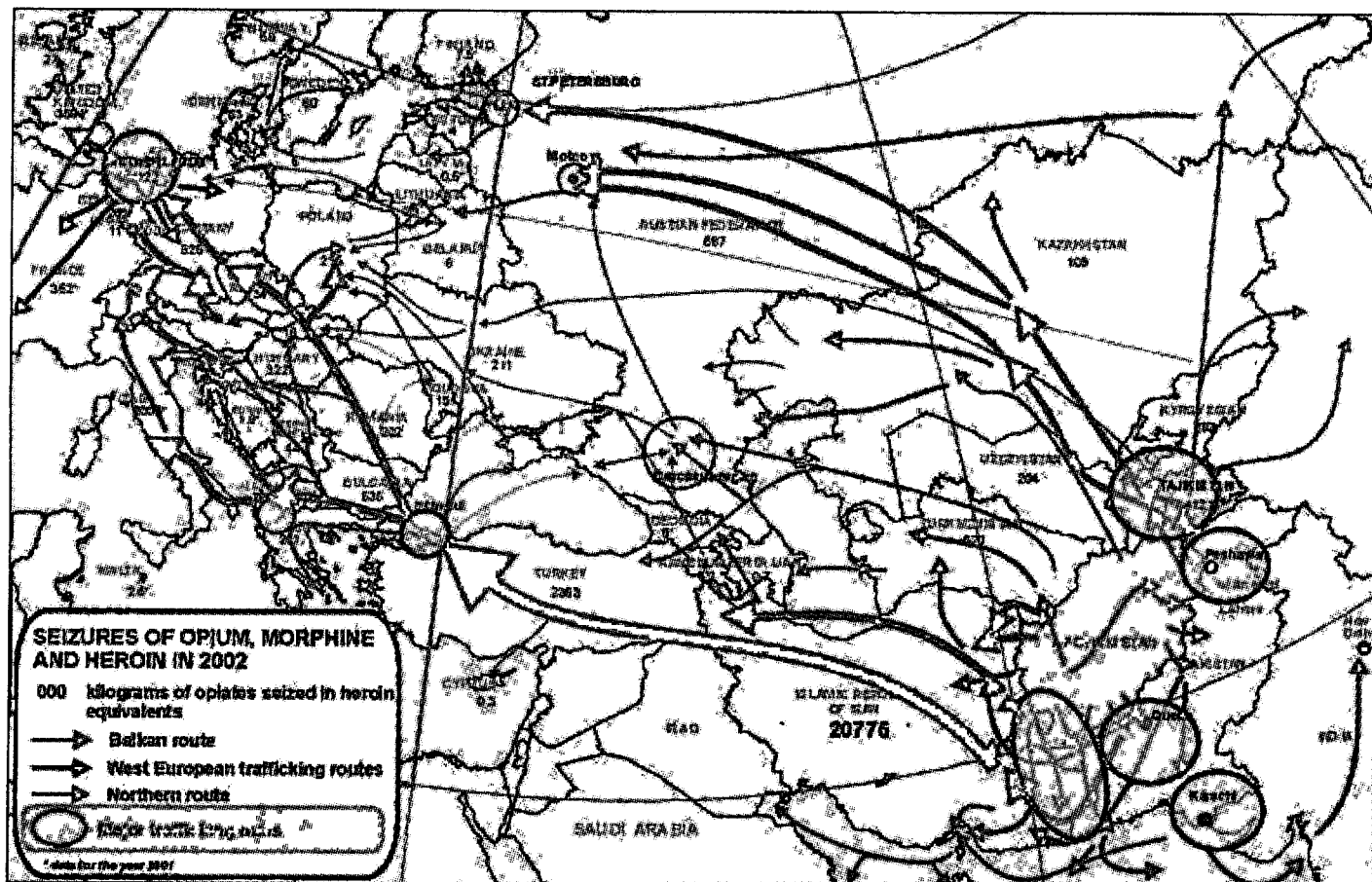
Spencer Sunshine,
Coy and Cynical First World Oaf

Besides increases in output, the past few years have also seen a disconcerting increase in the number of addicts among Afghan nationals. Until recently, opium production did not scandalize the heavily religious consciences of Afghan farmers because the detrimental effects of heroin

Meanwhile, a consensus has been reached among these allies with regards to what is required to combat the opium trade in Afghanistan. According to statements made by the US Assistant Secretary of State Robert B. Charles, President Karzai's government, and Antonio Maria Costa of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the strategy agreed upon by has three basic parameters. For one, efforts must be made to eradicate the poppy fields and interdict traffickers, so that the resources funding the illicit activities of terrorist-linked local warlords will cease to exist. Secondly, through the provision of funds and technical knowledge, Afghan farmers must be equipped with the resources required to grow alternative crops; this way—it is hoped—the cessation of poppy cultivation will not generate a class of unemployed, destitute

* Now consider the politics. When the statements and initiatives of the aforementioned actors are taken at face value, it would seem that the actors aspire to eliminate the production of poppy for the sake of concentrating political power in the hands of the official Afghan state. This would benefit both the Karzai government and Empire. From the perspective of the Karzai government, only if these warlords were eliminated could the official state

The Afghan farmers who cultivate
see ***Drugs and Power in Aghanistan***,
page 8



Inauguration Protest Small on Numbers But Big on Enthusiasm

MATT LAU

Protesters braved the elements, the security, and the jubilation of their political opponents at the second inauguration of President George W. Bush on January 20 in downtown Washington, DC. At an early-morning rally organized by the DC Anti-War Network (DAWN) in Meridian Square Park, former Green Party presidential candidate David Cobb told supporters, "I've been in their jails and it's not so bad." By the end of the day more than a dozen people would be able to judge that for themselves, as they were arrested along the presidential parade route. Meanwhile, many others were brutalized with pepper spray volleys as the president's motorcade sped past.

The crowd that gathered at Meridian (unofficially known as Malcolm X Park) consisted mostly of the usual suspects. There were socialists with their newspapers, hippy drum corps, and gray-haired direct-action veterans. There were unassuming volunteers who carried faux-coffins draped in American flags, an image familiar to many from the RNC march this summer. There were hip-hop communists, like Son-of-Nun, who summed up the order of the day, yelling "Fuck Bush!" from the stage. There was also an unofficial contest for the most incendiary remark one could fit onto a sign or placard. Some of the highlights included the spoonerism "Buck Fush," "Worst President Ever," and what appeared to be the title of a forthcoming dissertation: "Bush: A Motherfucker."

The signs were pithy and "on-message," while the complaints from the demonstrators and the rally's speakers varied widely. Protesters spoke out against nearly every policy from the first four years of the Bush presidency. Ending the war in Iraq was central among their complaints, but speakers also demanded more robust social programs — "Money for schools, not bombs" — socialized health services, real reductions in poverty, and the end of racism, sexism and US imperialism in Iraq and beyond.

At around 11:30, shortly before the President took his oath, the rally at Meridian terminated in a counter-inaugural march. The police appeared at every intersection along the march route and in helicopters overhead, passively foreshadowing their actions to follow at 4th and Pennsylvania Avenue. Supposedly, "thousands of groups from forty-one states were converging on the inauguration," but judging from the fact that the march had to wait at stoplights for cross-town traffic to pass, that claim seemed hyperbolic.

What the DAWN march lacked in numbers, however, it made up for with enthusiasm. Indeed, protesters were in high spirits as the march headed south on 16th Street to I Street (just a block away from the White House). "The Rhythm Workers Union" provided a raucous backbeat at the front of the march that sounded like a drum circle with a sense of direction and a purpose. No less enthused were the occasional onlookers who encouraged the marchers from opened apartment windows or honked horns as they waited at intersections.

By 1 pm, the march had veered east on I to 15th and come to its official conclusion to the accompaniment of a small, marching band playing jazz: five horn players and a drummer doing their best to make patriotic songs into protest fare and wailing in a way reminiscent of a New Orleans Cajun-style funeral march.

From there, the protesters seemed to lose direction. Fortunately, the march was one of many counter-inaugural events organized for the day. Many people headed to 4th and Penn, where the ANSWER coalition was staging a rally of its own adjacent to the parade route. Most of the arrests and police brutality took place at this corner as the inaugural parade was getting under way. Other marchers took positions at different points of access to the parade route and then waited for the parade itself to begin.

Watching how things proceeded, one could see the genius of the President's parade organizers. They put the official protest zone near the beginning of the route, allowed free public access up to about the middle of the route, but permitted only admit ticketed visitors at the end, where the President was to get out of his limo and walk. By keeping the protesters away from the end of the route when it counted, that is, when the major media and the President were there, the organizers manufactured an image of unanimous celebration, while the President avoided being hit by snowballs (or eggs, as were launched at his limo in 2001).

The most interesting moment of the day was not when the protesters provoked police attacks near 4th and Penn, but when, at 14th and Penn, the opposite ends of the American political continuum waited together for the parade to begin. This was the westernmost spot where protesters could get onto the parade route and their numbers were approximately equal to those of the Bush supporters. Snipers and spotters prominently positioned on every visible building ledge only heightened the tension between the fur coats and cowboy hats and their hecklers.

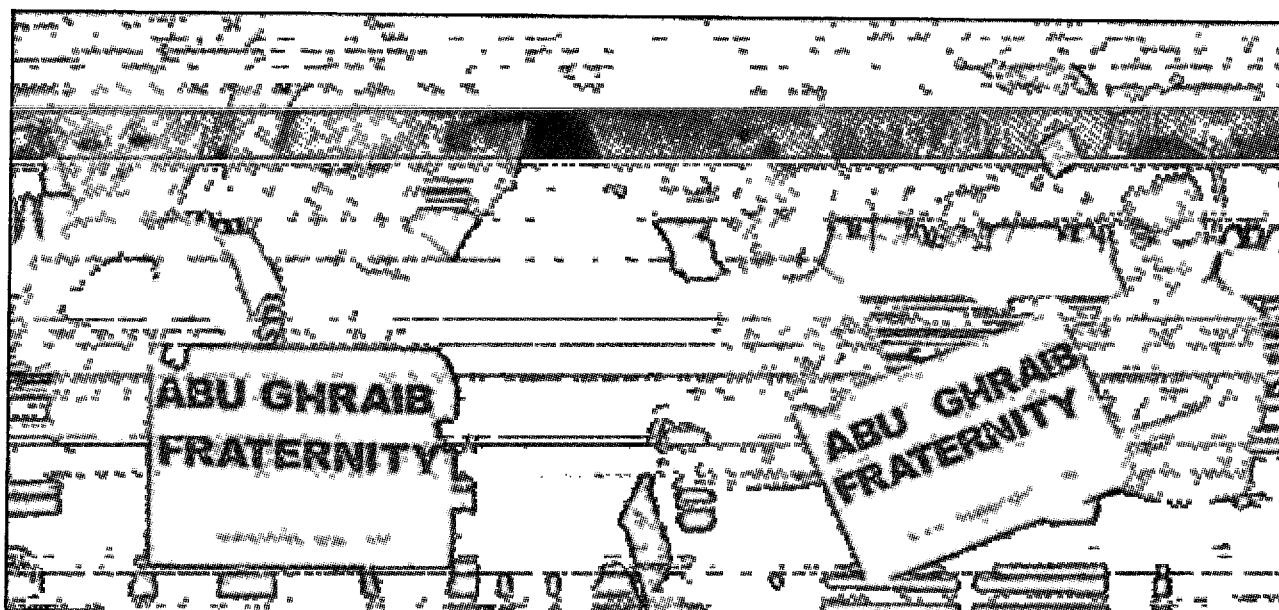
The PA announcer for this part of the route was caught off guard by the number of protesters who had shown up

this far along the parade route. He was there simply to entertain the crowd with harmless presidential trivia while visitors waited for the President to finish eating lunch at the Capital. The first question he asked was fittingly interrupted: "Who was the first president not to be elected to...."

"Buuuuuuuuuu!!!" The burgeoning opposition responded. After a few more rudely answered questions about Teddy Roosevelt and Nancy and Ronnie the PA announcer quit his game for about thirty minutes. The protesters seemed satisfied until the announcer started in again, "Sorry folks, we've had some difficulties with our generator but now we'd like to get back to our trivia."

This time the protesters chanted, "No more trivia! No more trivia!" which even had the DC storm troopers standing guard laughing. The joke hid a kernel of truth: these are anything but trivial times.

Matt Lau is a student in the PhD program in English.



The Case for Socialism in the Twenty-First Century

JASON SCHULMAN

We live in an insane world. Today we see, more than ever, incalculable wealth standing opposed to unspeakable misery. Millions die of curable or preventable diseases while the United States government wastes hundreds of billions of dollars on arms production. Half the world's working population makes \$2 a day or less. In the US there has been a 20 percent fall in living standards for 80 percent of the population since 1973, with one third of the work force stuck in temp and part-time jobs as the eight-hour workday becomes a thing of the past, and a predominantly Black and Latino prison population which may hit 5 million by the year 2010. The gap between what could be accomplished with the talents of the world's population and what actually happens is wider than ever.

Our world is one where people exist for the sake of the economy and not, as it should be, the other way around. This insane world is, above all, a capitalist world.

Capitalism doesn't simply mean the private ownership of corporate property — "the means of production," as socialists often say. Capitalism is an economic system based on the dominance of production-for-profit. In such a system the individual, privately owned enterprise represents nothing other than a particular inter-

est. It acts as if it were the center of the universe. It lays hold of as much means of production and raw materials as it can, and employs as many workers as its resources and its sales prospects enable it to, without asking itself if these resources and this labor power might not be more useful in another field of activity. It produces as much of its particular commodity as it can dispose of on the market, without asking itself if other goods might not be more useful for society. And it is even prepared to attempt to wage a "psychological war" against the whole population through advertising, in order to convince people that they have a need for a particular commodity. The logic of capitalism is to turn everything into a commodity, into something that exists only to make a profit.

The capitalist class, which consists of the primary owners, executives and financiers of capitalist firms, appropriates the surplus of the value created by those who have to sell their labor power in order to survive — that is, the majority of the population, which is what socialists are talking about when we use the term "working class." (If you have to work for a boss, and you have no decision-making power over others, then you're in the working class.) This asymmetry of power means that even if capitalists paid workers a "living wage," the value of that wage will always be less than the value of the commodities pro-

duced by the workers' labor, since if capital can't make a profit it won't employ workers. Under capitalism, the only "needs" recognized as legitimate are those that appear through market exchange and the ability to pay ("effective demand," as economists revealingly call it). This is so even if food is exported from famine-stricken areas or houses stand empty because they can't be sold while thousands of people are homeless. By contrast, a rational need from a socialist standpoint is one related to guaranteeing provision of food, shelter, clothing, and access to recreation and education for all.

The capitalist class is the ruling class, the class with the greatest amount of power, because it's the class that controls employment and monopolizes economic decision-making. Even when politicians that represent capital aren't directly controlling the government, all state officials under capitalism are always constrained by the need for business confidence and continued private investment. Hence, reforming capitalism is difficult and it often can't be done at all without mass political mobilization and social unrest. This structural inequality erodes the promise of political democracy, perhaps nowhere more obviously so than in the United States. Voting under capitalism doesn't include the right to decide on what corporations should do, whom they employ or who gets the profits.

The inherent irrationality of capitalism, of the dictatorship of market forces, is that the object of economic growth is economic growth itself, not the satisfaction of human needs. Capitalism treats human life itself as a "production cost." Work, the activity through which humanity appropriates its environment, is a compulsion, opposed to relaxation, to leisure, to "real" life. Production is ruler of the world; when one produces, one sacrifices one's time during work in order to enjoy life afterwards, in a way usually disconnected from the nature of the work, which is just a means of survival. And even when the whip of the capitalist market is somewhat softened by state regulation, the system remains ruled by impersonal laws that inevitably impose themselves on the will of every individual.

The Socialist Ideal and the Capitalist World

The values of socialism are the exact opposite of those of capitalism: the principle of cooperation replaces that of acquisitive competition. The socialist vision is of a world without social classes, in which all people's material needs are met and everyone is able to fully develop his or her creative potential. In such a world, the dichotomy between "work" and "leisure" is overcome. People are no longer forced to do the same thing their entire lives. Production is no longer the ruler of society but instead is subservient to society; when all economic and political institutions are democratically controlled, the economy is no longer a separate and privileged field upon which everything else

depends. This doesn't mean that work would become perpetually enjoyable under socialism, or that human beings would become angels, but humanity would finally be able to consciously control its own destiny and the arbitrary use of power would no longer be possible.

Democratic socialism is therefore the heir of the best aspects of classical liberalism. There is nothing wrong with the freedoms that classical liberalism holds dear: the freedoms of association, speech, press, assembly, and so on. The problem is that under capitalism these freedoms are greatly restricted and hollowed out. Liberal freedoms can only be fully secured in a socialist society, where property rights no longer take precedence over political, civil, and social rights.

Socialism is, therefore, not about authoritarian central planning or mere state ownership as existed in Russia, Eastern Europe, or China. It is not about replacing the rule of capitalists with the rule of state bureaucrats. But it does involve replacing the dictatorship of market forces with deliberate, democratic economic coordination. Defenders of capitalism — professional economists, above all — claim that this is technically infeasible, and many people accept their arguments. But there are real precursors and aspects of socialism that exist today, under capitalism.

In Argentina, workers from Buenos Aires have formed worker-managed cooperatives by taking over factories abandoned by their former owners. Their success proves that workers don't need bosses — arbitrary, authoritarian work relations are not necessary.

There are also international "direct trading" networks that develop fair trade links between European consumers and cooperatives of small-scale growers of coffee and cocoa in Africa and Latin America. In such a "socialized market" prices are determined by social objectives instead of commercial ones and non-economic values are prioritized.

Much of the internet now runs on open-source software, written not for profit but for the pure satisfaction of creating a useful product. This anticipates a future in which productive social labor becomes an end in itself. It shows that private corporate property has become a constraint in the development of technology.

A current capitalist goal is an automated shop floor, with functions such as purchasing, stock, and sales in the retail outlets linked electronically to the factory floor. The real problem is its complexity, which is a result of rivalry in profit making and the business secrecy that this requires. If sales could be predicted and planned in advance, then this would be workable — but it requires the end of the business cycle of "booms" and "busts," which is impossible under capitalism. Despite the fact that companies spend millions in marketing efforts to discover consumer wants and to improve the usability of their products, the

see *The Continuing Appeal of Socialism*, page 8

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Reflections on the Revolution in... Israel?

WILLIAM ADLER

During the winter break, I traveled with my family to Israel, spending most of my time in Jerusalem. I thought it would be interesting to convey the current political and social situation I found there to the Graduate Center community, much of which may not follow the rapidly moving events and byzantine political alliances. Please note that this article reflects my own biases on politics and events.

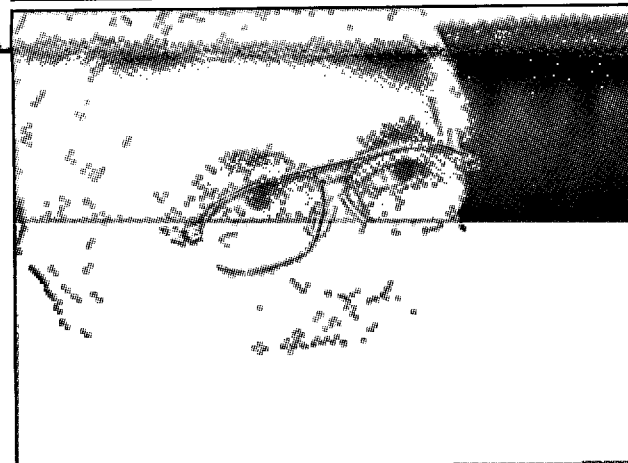
The outstanding issue confronting Israeli politics right now is Prime Minister Sharon's disengagement plan that would remove all Jewish settlements from Gaza and a few from the northern West Bank. Settlements on territory captured during the 1967 war have long been condemned by the international community for violating the terms of the Geneva Convention, but Israel pressed ahead nonetheless. Sharon was at the forefront, pushing settlement expansion during the 1980s when he was Housing Minister. For that reason he was beloved by nationalist Likud supporters, as well as religious Zionists who believe the land was promised to them by God. Sharon himself never made a religious case for settlements, but rather a military one: they gave Israel a foothold on key areas, especially the Jordan Valley, which would be important to repelling a sudden invasion. When the Labor Party regained power in the 1992 elections, its leaders negotiated a peace plan with the PLO based on the concept of land-for-peace, a move which not only inflamed the settlers but created deep divisions within Israeli society. Yitzhak Rabin's assassination by a right-wing extremist cooled the internal debate somewhat, as many realized that the violence pushed too far. But many still believed that the PLO was not serious about making peace, continuing to support (or at least not preventing) terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians.

Later in the 1990s, Ehud Barak became Prime Minister, promising to negotiate a final settlement with the Palestinians. President Clinton brought Barak and Yasser Arafat together for a summit meeting at Camp David in 2000, with every issue on the table: settlements, the right of return, Jerusalem, borders, military capabilities. Barak made what most Israelis considered a very generous, if not outright dangerous, offer: the entire Gaza strip and 97% of the West Bank would become a mostly demilitarized Palestinian state, with control over East Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, perhaps the single most contested real estate on the planet. Arafat rejected the offer due to lingering disagreements over the right of return and several settlements that would remain outside Jerusalem. Barak's government collapsed, as the Israeli Left struggled to reconcile its support for peace with Arafat's rejection of the best offer any Israeli Prime Minister had ever made (and ever could make, politically speaking). In the wake of the terrible intifada that followed, Ariel Sharon has since won two overwhelming electoral victories, giving his Likud Party a dominant 38 seats in the 120-member Knesset, compared to 19 for Labor.

Sharon's first coalition government in 2001 was a national unity government of Likud, Labor and a religious party for Sephardic Jews, Shas. Pressure from both the right and left wings led to the collapse of that coalition, with new elections in 2003 leading to the above results. Significantly, a new political party based on opposition to the special privileges afforded the ultra-Orthodox, called Shinui (the Hebrew word for change) won 15 seats, stunning everyone, including Shinui's leaders. Sharon proceeded to form a coalition of Likud, Shinui, the National Union (a hard-right party), and the National Religious Party, which represents religious Zionists and settlers. The Religious Affairs Ministry, a stronghold of the ultra-Orthodox, was dismantled, and funding for religious programs and institutions was sharply cut. But the government as a whole continued with right-wing policies regarding Palestinian relations, with the continuing occu-

pation of many West Bank cities, the building of the security fence, and refusal to negotiate with Arafat. This coalition collapsed late last year, leading to a new national unity government of Likud, Labor (with Shimon Peres as Foreign Minister) and United Torah Judaism, the main ultra-Orthodox party.

So the big question, of course, is how Sharon could go from anti-ultra-Orthodox policies to including their party in his government, in such a short span of time? The answer leads back to the Gaza disengagement plan, which Sharon proposed in early 2003 and has been pushing for since. The right-wing parties in his previous coalition refused to support it, but the ultra-Orthodox don't particularly care if the disengagement happens or not. They'll support it in exchange for increased funding to their institutions (no separation of church and state here; in fact, no real constitution at all). President Bush has endorsed the



Sharon (above) and Abbas (below).

plan as a step in the "road map" to peace. To all appearances, Sharon can now carry out his plans...right?

Well, perhaps not. The right wing of his own Likud Party is in open rebellion against his plans, threatening to torpedo his coalition yet again. Massive protests have continually rocked the country, with over 100,000 people showing up to the latest protest (in a country of only six million people, not an insignificant amount). Protestors have even been living on the Knesset lawn to fight the planned withdrawal (though they've now decided to do traveling protests instead). The tense divisions within society are rivaling those during Rabin's early negotiations with Arafat during the mid-1990s. A clear majority support Sharon's disengagement plan, but a defeat in a Likud Party referendum last year placed Sharon in a difficult position, taking a stand against many from his own party. The Knesset is set to approve payments to settlers who agree to leave those areas peacefully, but many are going to fight to the end to stay. Opponents of the plan claim to have the signatures of 20,000 soldiers who would disobey an order to evacuate the settlement. That number is probably an exaggeration, but it is still a cause for concern. Many settlers believe that God promised them that land, and they're not going to willingly leave. The possibility of bloodshed seems real.

The recent meeting between Sharon and the new

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas seems a hopeful step in stopping the violence, but how long will that truce hold? Already there are signs that Hamas will refuse to participate in the cease-fire, and Israel is not releasing nearly as many prisoners as Abbas demands. Israelis in general are skeptical of peace promises from the other side. Arafat constantly talked a good game, and many wanted to believe him, but he then turned around and incited his followers to be "martyrs" for the cause. Even then, Barak made him a generous offer to create a Palestinian state, and Arafat walked away. As the Israeli author Amos Oz has remarked, "The Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity." The fact that Abbas seems willing to end violence against Israeli civilians gives hope to some that peace could really be at hand this time – but Sharon will never make as good an offer as Barak did. An Israeli taxi driver I spoke to believed that everyone was tired of fighting, that even Hamas might cool things down and stop its attacks. He was even convinced that peace with Syria was just around the corner, an unlikely prospect to say the least. But when even the Israeli Left urges caution, you know there will be a rough road ahead. "Trust, but verify," Ronald Reagan once said; the Israelis have learned that the hard way.

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

Email Outage (con't from 1)

tem that is about seven years old and is not capable of handling a workload that increases exponentially: as Brier points out, the email database grew from 16 gigabytes in June 2002 to 45 gigabytes in January 2005. This point was echoed by Gloria Barlow, the executive director for Information Resources, in a recent address to a Plenary of the Doctoral Students Council. There, Barlow said that the administration had known that something might go wrong with the email system, but hoped that it would not happen before their planned upgrading of the email system in Spring 2005.

Got features you'd like to see in the new version of GC email? Send them to The Advocate!

All administration officials who have spoken about the outage have expressed appropriate regret and concern, and Associate Provost Brier's message details a number of steps the Information Resources department is taking in order to improve the reliability and quality of email service. Because they are currently researching possible upgrades from the current Exchange program, this is the ideal time for students to suggest improvements or specific services they would like to see implemented. At the DSC Plenary mentioned above, Gloria Barlow said that input about email features students would like to see would be very useful to her, but that this input must be received as soon as possible in order to be taken into account.

Please send all suggestions on email service to advocate@gc.cuny.edu and they will be forwarded to the appropriate administrators. We encourage students to view the outage as an opportunity to improve computing at the Graduate Center, and not as a reason to abandon the system.

The Continuing Appeal of Socialism (con't from 6)

real problem is not what consumers want, but what they can afford to buy, and it is this element that is the most unpredictable of all and lies behind the operation of the business cycle. Fixing this problem requires the overcoming of the contradiction between private consumption and collective production.

Evolution and Revolution

A hundred years ago, when socialist parties were becoming enormous and socialism really did seem to be on the historical agenda, there were famous debates about whether it could be accomplished peacefully through the election of socialists to office or if the working class would have to forcibly overthrow the existing capitalist state. The crux of the issue was whether or not the capitalist class would respect its own legal order if the socialist movement became popular enough to actually try to legislate capitalism out of existence. Given capitalist support for Hitler in Germany in the 1930s and Pinochet in Chile in the 1970s, we can be certain of the answer to this question: if capitalists feel sufficiently threatened by the socialist movement, they will throw their support to the fascists and accept limits on their own civil and political rights, if that's what it takes to save their system.

At the same time, there's no getting around the fact that the majority of workers in the advanced capitalist countries have simply not been interested in revolutionary socialist politics. Part of this is due to authoritarian Communists calling their states "socialist." Part of it is due to the predominance of market values in popular culture, especially in the US. Another part is that what socialists call "the working class" is in fact very heterogeneous, not just in sex, race, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, etc., but also in skill and income level (blue collar, white collar, etc.). But it's also true that in liberal-democratic countries, workers have been able to meet at least some of their needs via the welfare state, thereby creating a situation in which they no longer have, to quote Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*, "nothing to lose but their chains."

The truth is there is no certain road from existing society to the classless society. But in the past, both moderate socialists (known as social democrats) and revolutionary socialists (who usually called themselves Leninists and Communists, inspired by the Russian Revolution of 1917 led by V.I. Lenin's Bolshevik Party) were both very optimistic. Social democrats believed in the electoral road to socialism, and most of them came to believe that a reformed, regulated capitalism was the only "socialism" that was both necessary and possible. The economic achievements of social democracy are undeniable. Germany and the Scandinavian nations, in particular, are probably the most democratic, humane countries in the world, without any real poverty to speak of, with strict health and safety regulations, progressive taxation, and

guaranteed health care, child care and housing — all things for which Americans are still fighting. At the same time, social democracy both naively equated electoral victory with radical change and fell into a pragmatism that was overwhelmed by the economic power of capital, particularly the mobility of capital. Social democratic parties have usually been technocratic and purely electoral in their approach to politics, and have had little need for, or interest in (if not active fear of), the development of a militantly class-conscious activist movement. In our age of global capitalist domination, the role of social democracy has been, at best, to blunt the sharpest edges of corporate power.

Leninists argued that there was no road to socialism except through the insurrectionary overthrow of the capitalist state. Lenin shared this conviction with socialists who were consistently both democratic and revolutionary, such as the German socialist leader Rosa Luxemburg. But Lenin took 20th century socialism into an authoritarian



US democratic socialist Irving Howe.

direction. Although he vaguely described the replacement of the capitalist state with self-governing workers' councils in his pamphlet *The State and Revolution*, in practice, Lenin's Bolshevik Party rapidly supplanted the councils as the main governing institution in the Soviet Union. Despite his claim to Marxist orthodoxy, Lenin's belief in the "privilege" of the "vanguard party" — which can do whatever it wants once it takes power because it represents the "true" interests of the working class — contradicts Marx's belief in the self-emancipation of the working class. Leninism has generally been very unpopular in democratic capitalist societies, perhaps because self-described Leninist parties are usually thoroughly authoritarian.

Socialist Politics Here and Now

The struggle for the free, classless society is going to take much longer than we would like and that there's no guarantee that we'll ever be fully successful in reaching it. Fundamentally changing human consciousness and building alternative institutions takes a great deal of time. The fight against capitalism — and the fight to limit the likeli-

hood of violence in defense of capitalism — will have to take place both inside and outside existing states. The effectiveness of elected socialist politicians ultimately depends on the strength and size of the socialist movement outside the halls of government. Our job right now is work to for reforms of every kind — social, economic, and political — that will exist within capitalism but will work against capitalism and for the majority of people. We can't expect the tiny US socialist movement to jump from minority to majority status any time soon, and we have to work with people more politically moderate than ourselves to achieve even partial goals. But as radicals we must embrace not only electoral politics but also industrial struggles, strikes, civil disobedience, and direct action.

Given that many workers, particularly in the US, don't even think of themselves as "working class," socialists insist on the ideal of class unity in order to distinguish the common interests of people who are otherwise divided into separate interest groups. Sexism, for example, affects women of all classes, but what they can do about it is very much class-related. Similarly, all of humanity currently stands on the precipice of ecological disaster, and if the blind pursuit of economic growth is to be rejected, all classes, including the consumerist working classes of the North, will need to engage in a massive project of income and wealth redistribution to the working classes of the South.

Some may say that socialists should hold on to our ideal and our approach to politics but drop the word "socialism" because of its lingering association with unaccountable state bureaucrats. But the truth is that if you believe in democracy and recognize that wealth is a social creation and therefore should be controlled by all of society, you can use other labels but you are going to get called a socialist anyway. And in the US those who defend capitalism invariably demonize proposals for such reforms as a national health care system or public investment in child-care as "socialist." Since we are stuck with the S-word, we ought to wear it proudly.

The days in which socialism seemed inevitable are long since gone, and socialism's appeal has been tarnished by the authoritarian regimes that falsely ruled in its name. For the foreseeable future, socialism may be only an ideal, as we can't promise that the emancipated society will ever arrive. But the socialist ideal informs our day-to-day politics, our opposition to class domination and the dictatorship of market forces. As the socialist writer Leo Panitch puts it, "as long as we can muster the strategic creativity and imagination to develop alternative political institutions that will in fact be developmental, we are contributing to making socialism possible."

Jason Schulman is a PhD student in political science and is the contact for CUNY Democratic Socialists of America.

Drugs and Power in Afghanistan (con't from 4)

poppy grant their loyalty to whomever offers to support and to protect poppy cultivation. These farmers know that they could not profit as handsomely from the production of any alternative crop, especially since the recent persecution of poppy farmers in Pakistan and Iran has given Afghan farmers a comparative advantage on the "good." Presently, therefore, the farmers give their support to the warlords, because it is they who provide them with access to markets and protection from the state's crackdowns.

As a result, a grave dilemma arises for the allies. If they do not destroy the poppy fields, the warlords inadvertently retain their political power. But if they do succeed in eradicating the fields while failing to assist the farmers in generating satisfactory revenues from the cultivation of substitute crops, then they — especially the Karzai government — would have to contend with a multitude of dismayed agricultural workers: a population that could quickly turn disloyal to the regime and support the rise of new regional strongmen. And the alternative production strategy developed by the allies is precarious, not only because the soil and weather conditions in Afghanistan are better suited for the production of opium than they are

for other agricultural goods, but also because the Afghan farmers are aware of the comparative advantage they enjoy in the opium market.

Thus, if the allies were to follow the optimal course of action, they would seek not to destroy the poppy fields, but rather to seize them. They would allow the farmers to continue cultivating poppy, permit the supply of raw materials to the opium producers, and allow for the continuation of drug trafficking while arranging to profit from it. In the short run at least, this course of action would permit for stability in the country. It would mean that the Afghan nation is not deprived of its major source of revenue, and allow the Afghan state to eliminate its internal enemies while growing richer. It would also provide Empire with a much-desired bulwark in a strategically important location, and — since Afghan-based opium products are sold almost entirely in black markets east of the Atlantic — the Bush administration could not be accused of profiting from drugs sold to its own people.

Gerasimos Karavitis is a student in the M.A. program in Political Science.

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Red Blooded Male Theater Review: Cookin' and Bombay Dreams

TONY MONCHINSKI

New York City is the cultural capital of the world. There are literally thousands of renowned sights and sounds to enjoy within walking distance of the Graduate Center. Two blocks down Fifth Avenue, in the shadow of the Empire State Building, you're in the heart of the City's Koreatown, where you'll find kimchi, gayageum music, and happy endings (which, for those who don't know, are more likely to be found on the menu of a massage parlor than a take-out joint). For *Cookin'* however, you'll have to travel downtown to the West Village's Minetta Lane Theatre.

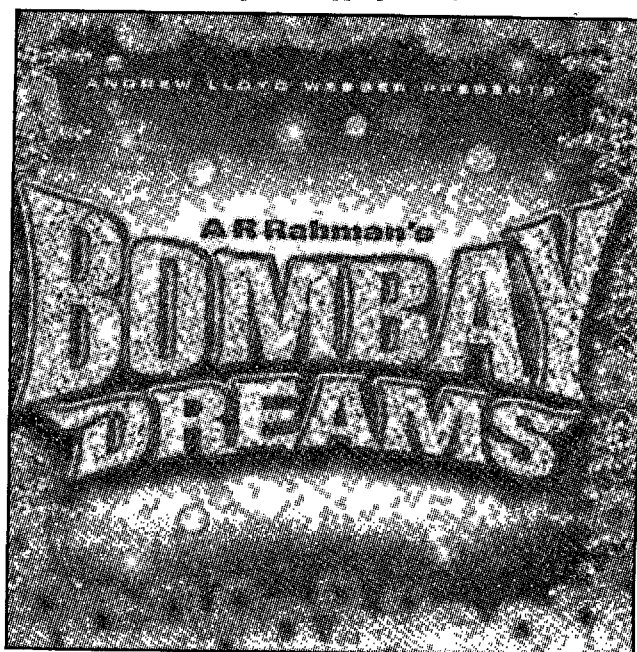
First developed in Seoul in 1997, this Korean import made its way from the land of morning calm to the belly of the beast in 2004. Originally slated to open in America in 2001, the September 11 terrorist attacks effectively put the kibosh on its North American premiere, but Korea's longest-running show has proven irrepressible – at least for now. Conceiver/Director/Producer Seung-Whan Song has concocted a mixture equal parts *Stomp*, *Blue Man Group* and (fill in the blank with any cooking show of your choice, dear reader).

The cast – billed as “Sexy Food Dude,” “Hot Sauce,” and “Master Chef” (not to be confused with Halo II’s “Master Chief”) – cook and dance their way through a story involving the catering of an imminent wedding, an officious manager, and a budding romance. The rhythms of traditional Korean nong-ak music are achieved with common kitchen utensils, from cutting boards to chopsticks, and a piped-in musical score. As in *Stomp* or *Blue Man*, the story isn't the important element of *Cookin'*: nearly all of the performance is non-verbal.

Unfortunately, after about twenty minutes I found myself stealing glances at my watch, trying to figure out how much of the show was left, worried that the actors might catch me in the act. I was especially nervous that the cute “Hot Sauce” – actress Che Ja Seo – might see me doing so. Decked out in a belly shirt to add some sort of sex appeal factor to the otherwise all-male proceedings, Che had me enraptured with her near-orgasmic cucumber-swinging solo, which would not be out of place in the pink light district of Korea's American G.I.-teeming It'aewon. Was this part thrown in to appease American audiences weaned on Janet Jackson's breast and

Desperate Housewives? Or, was it a transplant from Korean shores? Having lived in Korea, and remembering it as a somewhat conservative culture, I suspect the former. But I might be wrong.

Four boxes of cabbage are chopped up and discarded every week on the *Cookin'* stage floor, but I'm glad to say that in the production of *Bombay Dreams* I attended, no *hijras* were harmed. This is quite an accomplishment considering we live in the land of Mathew Shepherd and virulent opposition to gay marriage. A *hijra*, as I learned



along with a tourist family in the row behind me from parts unknown but, sadly, very much part of the contiguous United States, is a eunuch trained as an entertainer in India. It was funny to listen in on the family's conversation during the intermission.

Mother: I don't get it? Do they know he's a girl?

Father: He ain't a girl. He's a man minus his you-know-what.

Son: No, pa, I think he's one of those trans-sex-ya-call-its that we seen on 11th Avenue the other day.

Daughter: I bet they teach evolution up in the schools here too!

Bombay Dreams, Andrew Lloyd Webber's UK transplant, is currently playing at the Broadway Theatre, one-time home to *Les Miserables*. Like *Cookin'*, *Dreams* is derivative – the junk pile slum that descends from the ceiling bears a resemblance to the junk pile barricade of *Les Mis*. But the majority of *Dreams*' derivation draws from Bollywood, the film capital of the world, where three new films are produced and distributed every day.

Jobs aren't the only things being outsourced to India. It looks like our ideology has caught on too: *Dreams* is an American rags to riches story set in India. Akaash, the talented Manu Narayan, is a child of the Bombay slums who dreams of making it big so he can purchase Paradise, the slum he inhabits with his grandmother and friends, including Sweetie the *hijra* (crowd pleaser Sriram Ganesan). Through a series of events, Akaash finds fame and fortune as a leading man in Bollywood cinema. But once he's made it, our protagonist promptly forgets about his family and friends and focuses on the ample assets of the Bollywood sexpot, Rani (Anjali Bhimani).

Dreams delivers. Its song and dance numbers are entertaining and over-the-top. For instance, the British version's 13-hose fountain number now features 32 hoses. Bollywood films may lack sex scenes or even kissing, but there's nothing like a wet-sari number for the uninitiated. The *hijra* song and dance numbers left the aforementioned tourist family behind me scratching their heads, but they seemed to have no problems grasping the concept of the show's villain, a millionaire land developer who seeks to raze Paradise and build a multiplex. America is, after all, inhospitable to Darwin, but quite at home with eminent domain.

Perhaps not as potently as Byron's opium, *Dreams* inspired dreams of its own, at least in this writer. Couldn't someone lure Aishwarya Rai, the reigning queen of the real Bollywood and arguably the most beautiful woman alive, to New York for a special performance of this show? Then couldn't Billy Crystal be imposed upon to spring and buy a block of tickets for the whole *Advocate* staff to attend said performance? Perchance, to dream. In the meantime, I remain, in more ways than one, a blue man.

Tony Monchinski is a student in the PhD program in political science.

BMCC Cancels Program (con't from 1)

tained classes and lectures on such alarming topics as “Interview and Interrogation Techniques,” “Terrorism and Counter-terrorism,” “Intelligence Gathering,” and “Technology for Surveillance.” The proposal was met with a number of organized and sometimes militant protests by student groups and faculty members at BMCC who are opposed to the program and argue that the presence of these courses and students enrolled in these courses would create an atmosphere of repression and fear on a campus whose minority population includes a large number of Arabs and Muslims, targets in the so-called war on terror.

Opposition began to ferment almost as soon as the course was proposed. Abram Negrete, adjunct lecturer at CUNY and president of the Hunter Internationalist Club, was one of the first to discover links between many of the program's advisory board members and reviled international intelligence agencies, including the CIA, the Israeli Mossad, and Britain's Special Air Services. Notable board members included Col. John J. Perrone Jr., who served as commander of the Joint Detainee Operations Group in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and Leo Gleser, president of the Israeli firm International Security and Defense Systems, who according to Negrete has been associated with,

among others, the Israeli Mossad, and South American death squads in Honduras and Chile.

Negrete argues that the student protests against the program aren't only about the courses to be offered, but are directly related to larger concerns about the war in Iraq, US imperialism at home and abroad, and the growing threat to civil liberties. “It is only because of the protests that the program has been given pause,” said Negrete, adding that, “In order to definitely squash the program protests have to continue.”

In the aftermath of the Business Management Program proposal, BMCC students and the student government, including representative Rodney Davis and President Jason Negron, took a number of steps opposing the program. In a formal statement, the student government denounced the proposal and “any and all homeland security programs on campus.” Shortly thereafter, the student government made presentations to the New York City Council's “Higher Education Committee,” and on December 9, students held a vocal and well-attended protest on campus against the program.

On December 22, before the January recess, the issue was again brought before the Faculty Council, which must approve all new programs at BMCC. Students who were

present described response to the program as “a firestorm of opposition.” One member of the Faculty Council, Bill Friedheim, Historian and Professor in Social Sciences at BMCC, said that most member of the council vehemently opposed the program and that it had little chance of ever being approved. When asked why he was opposed to the program, Friedheim said he was worried about the growing trend of government privatization of counter-terrorism and argued that the program was a threat to the largely minority student population, especially the Muslim and Arab populations on campus. “I don't mean to trivialize what happened on 9-11,” said Friedheim, “but what it comes down to is that the war on terror seems to have morphed into a war on civil liberties.”

At the moment it remains to be seen whether the administration is sincere about dropping the proposal. One thing that is clear, however, is that the students and faculty at BMCC and the university will continue to protest and agitate against any proposed university involvement with the Department of Homeland Security now and in the future.

James Hoff is a student in the PhD program in English

Immigrant Driver's Permits: A Perilous Two-Tier System

VALERIA TREVES

"I think I am going to ask Mr. Mateo a favor. Maybe he can send me a sign spelling: I-L-L-E-G-A-L. That way I can just put it on my back!," exclaimed a NYC taxi driver as a group of workers, community members and activists discussed the perils of "Immigrant Driver's Permits" or IDPs. IDPs, which would literally tag the licenses of undocumented immigrants, creating a two-tier system, are an inadequate solution for the thousand of New York State immigrant drivers now facing the threat of license revocation.

Citing the enforcement of a 1995 law designed to find "deadbeat dads," the DMV began a massive effort in late 2003 to cross-reference data with the Social Security Administration. As a result, hundreds of thousands of "warning of suspension" letters have been issued to individuals who allegedly provided inaccurate social security numbers when they obtained their drivers licenses. According to *The New York Times*, this could lead to the revocation of nearly a quarter of a million licenses, most of which are held by immigrants, who have not yet been issued a social security number. While there is nothing in the New York state legislature that actually disallows undocumented immigrants from getting a driver's license, DMV restrictions create *de facto* legal immigration status requirements. Not surprisingly, the Bloomberg administration and the DMV are citing security concerns for the crackdown, explaining that many of the 9/11 hijackers held valid driver's licenses. However, holding an immigrant driver's license does not necessarily make one a terrorist. Eugenio, a NYC taxi driver, says: "They are sup-

posedly looking for terrorists, but we are not terrorists."

"I don't doubt the intelligence capabilities of this country," he continues, "so if they really wanted to weed out the terrorists, this would not be the way to do it." Further, the revocation of licenses are bound to make the streets more unsafe as thousands of immigrants, from taxi drivers, to truck drivers to many others who must continue to work to earn their livelihood are potentially forced to drive without a license and thus without insurance.

While the DMV crackdown has become a major problem, the proposed Immigrant Drivers Permit solution gives immigrants and their advocates even more cause for worry. The proposal comes from Fernando Mateo, a self-described "rags-to-riches" Republican entrepreneur that leads an organization called "Hispanics Across America." Mateo, an enthusiastic speaker at August's Republican National Convention, is well positioned to convince Republican Governor Pataki and the legislature that IDPs are a good idea. In Tennessee, where a similar proposal led to state-issued "certificates of driving," (purple cards which look nothing like regular licenses, and marked "For Driving Purposes Only, Not Valid for Identification" across the top) the results have been less than favorable. According to Amy Sugimori of the National Employment Law Project, "Early findings have identified problems with the use of immigrant drivers' permits including: insurance companies not willing to cover people with permits; concern that police who stop drivers with a permit will not accept it as valid identification and will arrest them; and the denial of Equal Protection by creating a different system for immigrants." The same problems that are arising in Tennessee are likely to arise in New York as well.

To issue Immigrant Driver's Permits separately from regular driver's licenses would mean the creation of a two-class system for city residents, leading to likely discrimination by police officers, insurance companies and the general public. Furthermore, since the proposed IDP could not be used for identification purposes, thousands of immigrants would be left without a means to identify themselves to state and local officials. The lack of proper ID could also impair immigrant's abilities to do things such as open a bank account or even enter a secure building. Lastly, Fernando Mateo's IDP proposal covers only those who already have a license, meaning that people who do not fulfill the *de facto* immigration requirements to get a license would not even be eligible for an IDP. For a city with large documented and undocumented immigrant populations, these consequences could prove disastrous.

While the IDPs and similar programs have been touted as a way to "balance" security needs with the needs of immigrant drivers, the denial of proper identification offers security for no one. Instead of equating undocumented immigrants with possible security threats, state legislatures should remove lawful presence restrictions, expand the list of documents that prove one's identity, and thus provide equal access to driver's licenses for all.

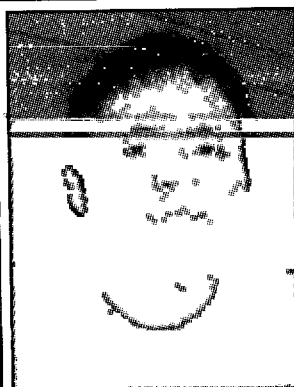
Valeria Treves is a graduate student in Geography at Hunter College of the City University of New York. All translations from the Spanish in this article are the work of the author.

How do you feel to be back at the Graduate Center and starting a new semester?



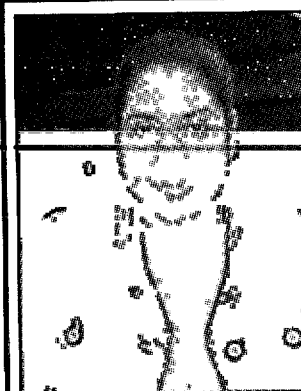
Leah Anderst,
Comparative
Literature

I feel better
this semester
since I'm level 2
and my tuition
dropped.



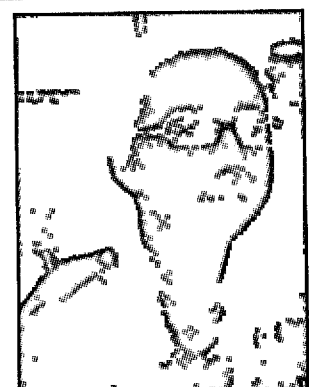
Henry Park,
Developmental
Psychology

I don't know - I
never left! I
work down-
stairs in CASE
(Center for the
Advancement
of Education).
I'm just trying
to hurry up and
graduate.



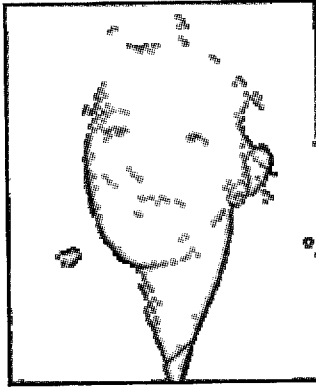
Upali Aparajita,
Physics

It's just another
semester. I'll
probably be
hanging out
here less than
last semester
since I'm almost
done with
coursework.



Alessia Frassani,
Art History

It's good
because I was
away for a
while doing
fieldwork in
Mexico -
archival
research on
colonial art.
Now I need to
put my data
together and
do my
dissertation.



Abby Schoneboom,
Sociology

It feels great
to be institu-
tionalized
again. The
void has
receded.



Luka Lucic,
Developmental
Psychology

I'm glad to be
back but not
glad to be
poor. They
need to give
us more
money.

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Spring News from the Doctoral Students' Council

Welcome back, and welcome to The Graduate Center, CUNY to any incoming new students! This page of *The Advocate* is reserved for news on the activities and ideas of the Doctoral Students' Council—the representative body for all GC students. Read on to see what's on the DSC menu right now.

Funding problems for Mid-Level Students

The DSC is reminding administrators at every chance possible about the unfair situation mid-level students are encountering. These students are no longer able to apply for financial assistance since the current GTFs are being repackaged for incoming students only. Meanwhile, the Writing Fellowship program is returning to its original mission of funding Level III students and by next year will likely be open to them alone. Provost Bill Kelly has assured us in meetings that he is aware of the lack of funding available for mid-level students and is sympathetic to their plight. However, no concrete solutions have been discussed.

Tuition Remission

The GC seems to be edging closer to its long-sought holy grail of tuition remission. The budget request submitted by CUNY to the governor and the legislature in Albany includes a request for \$7.5 million specifically earmarked for graduate student support and tuition remission for students who offer service on CUNY campuses. The DSC will be working with administrators on a spring campaign to inform the GC community about who our elected representatives are and which ones we need to target with focused lobbying efforts. The long-term goal is institutional budgeting parity with SUNY in funding graduate student support. Part of SUNY's annual allocation includes a set amount earmarked specifically for graduate support; CUNY deserves the same annual allocation mechanism!

Reaching Off-Campus Students

Steering committee member Tomo Imamichi will be spearheading our visits to various campuses to mingle with fellow graduate students who do not frequent 365 Fifth Avenue often. We are concerned that all registered GC students benefit from the student activity fee, even if this means that smiling DSC members deliver a pizza party this semester.

Cultural Affairs Grant Money

The DSC offers grants up to \$600 for student-led conferences, activities, and publications. This is an under-utilized resource which we want to advertise and encourage students to pursue. The specifications and application process are described on the DSC website.

Reminder about Graduate Council

The first meeting of the Graduate Council will be Thursday March 3rd at 3 PM in room 9206/7. Student attendance has been improving and we support this movement.

DSC plenary

The next DSC plenary is March 11th. DSC representatives must attend!

The Adjunct Project of the DSC Presents: Adjunct Night

Adjuncts & GTFs are invited to an evening of food, drink, and discussion of the history of academic unions within CUNY and current contract negotiations between the PSC and CUNY management.

Wednesday, February 23rd, Room 5414 @ 6PM.

The Mediocrity of the World:

A Homage to the Thought of Theodor Adorno

JOSEPH KAMINSKI

We live in bizarre times. We have the most up-to-date scientific programs, the fastest computers ever, and all kinds of other amazing gizmos and gadgets. Why is it then, that we are forced into such a mediocre existential state of being? What is it that has drained our time of the creativity and originality of prior centuries? Why are there no more Bach cantatas being composed or Kandinsky canvases being painted? I'm quite sure numerous examples of such exist, but they are hidden away in the university or some overpriced concert hall, inaccessible to those without a lot of money. Instead, those outside the ranks of the elite are told to accept mediocrity. People find entertainment in shows that are supposed to be "reality TV," but in reality, they are just a mockery of what the human condition is able to achieve. People are put on the stage (and here I'm thinking of American Idol) in the most crass manner, with no regard for human emotion, and told to perform tricks like a circus animal. Innocent and unsuspecting singers belt out what the feel is their deepest artistic expression, only to be laughed at by the oh-so-suave television audience. What merit as a judge does this audience possess? I see none. They are even less talented and less ambitious than the pitiful beings that showcase their talent—or lack thereof—on the stage.

Indeed, capitalism once again has presented the con-

sumer with the most vulgar expression of art in a commodified form that reaches out to a lowest-common-denominator audience. Talent and genius are not valued. Creativity and change are not on the horizon; rather the capitalist model seeks only to further placate itself with that which can most easily be reproduced. Walter Benjamin wrote some of his most famous words on the nature of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. However, I doubt even Benjamin could have imagined how commodified "art" and "entertainment" has become. For now we have entered an age where exploitation is the selling product. The name of the game is, "Who can make the biggest fool out of person x for the most bucks?" Reification in our time has reached previously unimaginable levels. We have reached a stage in which not only is the most crass show the best because it can reach the lowest common denominator, but furthermore the most crass show is the best simply for the sake of its crassness. Shows like "Eleme-Date" and "The 5th Wheel" exemplify this idea. Things that truly are great are now branded as "not reaching out to the largest audience," whereas the things that are truly menial and mediocre are glorified in an almost religious manner...until the beginning of the next season, when all is washed away and forgotten and things begin anew.

What a waste the mainstream American cultural landscape has become. The artist can no longer express herself

in a "free domain."

Rather, she must always account for the caustic and callow judgment of the under-educated and uninterested philistine masses. The talent no longer lies in the action performed by the artist; rather, the real talent lies only within the ability of the artist to further expand and propagate his or her product. In the end this amounts to who can get the most bang for their buck, with the least effort. Here we can readily see that the authenticity of the work of art is completely destroyed. Any attempt to forge some significance of the contemporary "mass media" work of art is a wholly fruitless venture.



Theodor Adorno

Joe Kaminski is a student in the PhD program in Political Science.

The Hysteria of the Obvious:

Why Ward Churchill is Getting Under Everybody's Skin

SPENCER SUNSHINE

There are a variety of disturbing elements in the recent attempt to remove controversial Ethnic Studies professor Ward Churchill from his tenured position at the University of Colorado-Boulder. The foremost of these is that his comments, which ignited the current backlash, regard the September 11th massacre.

September 11th has been made into the ideological lynchpin for the new series of global wars which the Bush administration has instigated in an attempt to retain the US's position as global alpha dog – the vaunted Lone Superpower. According to our recently re-elected demagogue, September 11th was an "attack on freedom" by "evil-doers," a result of a "clash of civilizations" which requires a "new crusade." To refute this reading, as is now becoming apparent, is to be labeled a terrorist.



Ward Churchill

Churchill has simply pointed out the obvious, indeed what every educated person knows: that the suicide-hijackings of 9/11 were the work of college-educated men angered at the continuing US military and economic domi-

nation of the Middle East. Sure, there were also religious and cultural elements at play. But there is a reason the attacks were on the US, and not at a much easier target in Europe, the traditional home of Christendom. Indeed, the two targets were specifically symbols of military (Pentagon) and economic (World Trade Center) power – not religious or cultural icons. If they "hated freedom," why did they attack a financial center and not, say, the Statue of Liberty? Or attack Holland for that matter, a country whose social freedoms far outstrip our own?

The September 11th massacre is not defensible, and no one should attempt to act as an apologist for it; but that it is inexcusable does not make it unintelligible. The Right has done everything in its power to obscure the understanding of the attacks as a political phenomena. For example, immediately after the attack, Osama bin Laden issued a statement announcing that Al Qaeda would cease attacks if three conditions were met: that the US withdraw its military from Saudi Arabia, that the embargo on Iraq be lifted, and that the US cease its support for the occupation of Palestine. Bush, in reply, pressured domestic news agencies to blackout bin Laden's communiqués.

For pointing out the obvious about the nature of the attacks, the governors of two states, New York and Colorado, have taken Churchill's words out of context and slandered him as a "bigoted terrorist supporter" (Pataki) who is "pro-terrorist" (Owens). The University of Colorado board of regents wants to negate both his Constitutional and academic rights in order to remove him. Near-hysteria over Churchill's existence reigns in the Right-wing media – but also in the center, and even on part of the Left.

The reason for this reaction is actually quite clear, if not immediately apparent – Americans are incapable of admitting that we ourselves may have been the catalyst for 9/11. Not just by the actions of our "leaders," but by the everyday life of those of us who live in the "West" – Ward Churchill included (as he admits). From cheap gas

to new clothes every season, SUV and Hummers in every garage to bananas in the winter, it is not just the question of a corrupt US economic and military elite, as vulgar Leftists sometimes argue. It is a system of hyper-consumption and wealth that is ultimately based on the domination of the global North – but particularly the US over the Middle East, Latin America, Asia and Africa.

We cannot admit that it is the material American "way of life" itself that is ultimately culpable for this massacre. (This is not to be confused with the wonderful cultural, intellectual and religious freedoms which we usually enjoy despite the Right's continual attempts to abolish them, as we are witnessing at this moment).

Americans are incapable of accepting the possibility that the blood may be on our own hands – not just that, we are incapable of even considering the possibility of it. If Churchill's comments were so outrageous, so ridiculous, why the hysterical reaction? Why don't people merely say, "Oh, he's just a bitter man who hates America"? Why do people threaten his life instead of calmly replying that, 'No, here are 1-2-3-4 reasons that US finance bankers are nothing like Eichmann.' It's obvious that something else is at play here.

Were Churchill's remarks inflammatory? Yes. Is he an insensitive jerk? Sure. Does he overgeneralize? Probably. Is his metaphor sloppy and inexact? Absolutely. Is he essentially correct? Yes. No "war on terrorism" will ever make Americans safe; only lifting the boot from the face of the Middle East can do that. But – despite a rare moment of lucidity after 9/11 when some Americans uncharacteristically asked 'Why do they hate us?' – the possibility of dismantling the global empire is far more distant now than ever before.

It is not the inflammatory remarks of a little-known radical scholar which are causing this controversy. Rather, it is the pain of a truth we cannot bear to admit that has driven America into its current hysteria.