

Enemies List?

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Newsday File Photo

CUNY students launch hunger strike in April, 1995, to protest budget cuts.

CUNY kept files on students charged in budget protests

By Graham Rayman

STAFF WRITER

During the highly charged budget protests of 1995, City University of New York officials compiled detailed lists of student protesters who had been arrested, internal documents show.

Copies of the lists obtained by Newsday contain racial and ethnic information, birth dates, home addresses, Social Security numbers and enrollment statuses of dozens of men and women charged during the often contentious protests in March, April and May, 1995.

Memos show that CUNY officials also made efforts to determine the academic statuses of students on the lists, which

CUNY critics called "enemies lists."

Last spring, CUNY campuses were roiling with concern over proposed cutbacks in teachers, classes and educational programs. More than 150 arrests were made in connection with the protests, mostly for acts of civil disobedience. Most were misdemeanor charges such as disorderly conduct, and most did not result in conviction.

This year, another round of protests is expected in reaction to proposed reductions in state financial aid and ethnic studies departments.

In at least one instance last year, CUNY security officers tried to use the lists to ban a student leader from a campus function. That student, David Suker of Long Island, is now appealing a one-year suspension from CUNY campuses.

"Under the First Amendment students have the right to organize and the right to free speech, and for a university to come back with a tactic like this is questionable," said Jeannette Jananis, president of the United States Student Association, a 50-year-old Washington, D.C.-based organization that focuses on access to education and financial-aid issues.

CUNY spokeswoman Rita Rodin denies there is a sinister motive to the lists. "It was an informational list" to tell concerned parents in case their children were arrested.

"We were getting calls from parents and spouses and other family members over whether their family member was arrested," she said.

But Jananis said, "The administration had no right to have these lists. A university is there as an educational entity, not as a parent."

CUNY officials tracked student arrests for on-campus and off-campus protests on March 15, March 23, April 11 and 12, and April 25. The lists also contained information on students enrolled at Columbia and Barnard. At least one youth was still in high school.

CUNY memos show that officials learned the names of the arrested students through the Police Department and the Manhattan district attorney's office.

Files show that other names were found by reading newspaper articles, and identifying students who appeared in published photos, even if they were not named in the captions. The officials examined students' personal files for other information.

A list dated April 13 has 44 names, and shows whether a student is black, Asian, white, Hispanic or American Indian. Another 13-page list separates the names of 91 arrested students by each of 13 CUNY colleges, and indicates the date a student was arrested, and whether that student was arrested at more than one protest.

"You're not supposed to discriminate based on race, and here they're listing each student's ethnic and racial background. For what purpose?" said Mitchell Grotch, an attorney who has repre-

Student on List Later Suspended

By Graham Rayman

STAFF WRITER

An elected graduate student leader at City College, David Suker appeared in the CUNY arrest lists several times, and was later suspended from the college for one year.

Though a CUNY spokeswoman denies it, Suker believes that there's a connection.

Suker, who was born in Jamaica, Queens, and grew up in Uniondale, was arrested on misdemeanor charges four times in 1995 during protests. None of the charges resulted in a conviction.

But he had no clue about the lists until April 25, 1995, when a security guard used a list to try to bar him from an all-night vigil at Hunter College.

"I was just like, this is ridiculous that they are collecting names from the police and circulating this list," said Suker, 28, who wants to be a high school teacher.

No shrinking violet — his own lawyer has described him as a "pain in the —," Suker protested the ban on the spot, and eventually was allowed to go inside.

"It just goes to show that the administration is afraid of the political climate that is on campuses right now," Suker said.

But Rita Rodin, a CUNY spokeswoman, said that on that day, the Hunter campus was closed to students without Hunter ID cards. Suker was barred because he was not a Hunter College student, she said.

Suker continued to speak out against the budget cuts, and clash with the administration.

On June 27, in a letter to Suker, Frederick Kogut, a City College official, charged that he defaced a banner on May 30, and that he disrupted the City College president's office on April 14.

The letter also referred to a May 23 incident in which Suker was arrested for blocking a bus on its way to Albany to protest CUNY cuts.

Kogut closed by asking Suker to meet with him and "explain why disciplinary charges should not be brought against you."

In January, just after he was elected president of the City College Graduate Students Council, Suker was charged with violations of school regulations. A fourth charge — that Suker disrupted a budget presentation by state Comptroller H. Carl McCall on Dec. 14 — was added to the complaint.

Suker said that accounts of his behavior were exaggerated and that nothing he did should have resulted in disciplinary charges.

After a disciplinary hearing was held, on March 22,



Newsday / Ari Mintz

David Suker, in front of the West 138th Street gate at City College.

CUNY suspended Suker for one year. He is not allowed to set foot on campus unless he first makes a written request.

"In five years, I've represented about 200 CUNY students in disciplinary proceedings, many involved in activities that shut down class for up to three weeks, and Suker has not disrupted a single class," said Ron McGuire, Suker's attorney. "The punishment is totally disproportionate."

CUNY spokeswoman Rodin said, "There was a committee made up of students, faculty and administrators, and that was the decision that they came to."

Charles DeCicco, a City College spokesman, said he could not comment because of privacy requirements.

"He's a real fighter for CUNY and against the budget cuts," said psychology Professor Bill Crain, a member of the CUNY Coalition of Concerned Faculty and Staff who has protested the budget cuts. "He should be an inspiration. They really should give him an award."

Kennedy Airport Project OK'd

By Otto Strong

STAFF WRITER

The Port Authority yesterday approved an agreement with a private-sector consortium to develop and manage a new \$1.1 billion International Arrivals Building at Kennedy Airport.

"It was generally viewed as not being user-friendly," said Dan Andrews, a spokesman for Queens Borough President Claire Shulman, of the current building. The arrivals building, which has stood since 1958, has received low ratings from air travelers in passenger surveys. Last year, Kennedy Airport handled 17 million international passengers, more than any other airport in the U.S.

Construction on the 1.4 million-square-foot terminal is expected to begin early next year and go beyond 2000, said Port Authority Aviation Director Jerry

Fitzgerald. "This design calls for the total demolition of the [current] structure," he said.

The new facility will have enhanced security areas, more gates, shorter walks to customs and immigration areas and a new baggage system.

"This project will be the cornerstone of a \$3.4 billion program that will rebuild much of Kennedy Airport over the next five years," said Gov. George Pataki. "It's time to restore this gateway to America to its past glory."

The terminal will have a spacious design that can accommodate a proposed light-rail link that would run through the facility, Fitzgerald said. And, like other newer international airports in the U.S., the facility will offer extensive retail opportunities, including top-name clothing stores, food courts and duty-free shops.

CUNY Kept Lists of '95 Protesters

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sented protesters. The lists were compiled by CUNY's security force, head of security Jose Elique, and top administrators Elsa Nunez-Wormack, vice chancellor for student affairs, and Sheila Thomas, an assistant dean of student affairs, the memos show.

In several cases, memos show, Wormack forwarded the information to CUNY Chancellor Ann Reynolds, and asked CUNY presidents to check the students' grades.

In a memo dated April 27, Wormack asked Kingsborough Community College President Leon Goldstein to "determine if these students are in good academic standing and advise me of your findings."

Another memo on the same day to Reynolds reads, "We expect to complete the university-wide match of

names with campuses this morning and will notify the other presidents forthwith."

"We needed to get the list from police to see if they were arrested," Rodin said. "We needed to see check the colleges to see whether they were students in good academic standing, to see if they were still enrolled."

Grotch and other critics say the memos prove that CUNY was maintaining an "enemies list" of student troublemakers.

But Rodin says that no action was taken against students on the list. "If that were the case, then something would've happened in the last year against these students, and nothing did."

It's unclear whether CUNY will continue to keep the lists for protests that occur this year, Rodin said. "There has not been any directive one way or the other," she said.

QUEENS MOM CHARGED WITH BASHING BABY GIRL

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A Queens mother was arrested yesterday after allegedly smashing her baby girl in the head with a 5-pound dumbbell, police said.

The 9-month-old victim, whose name was withheld, was in critical but stable condition at Mary Immaculate Hospital with a skull fracture, said Officer Robert Samuel, a police spokesman.

The attack occurred at about noon while the in-

fant's uncle was changing her diapers in a Queens Village home, Samuel said. The suspect, Nadege Armand, 27, who was exercising with dumbbells, used one to hit the child, Samuel said. She tried to hit the child a second time but was stopped by the uncle, police said. Police were uncertain of the motive.

Armand was arrested on charges of attempted murder, assault and endangering the welfare of a child.