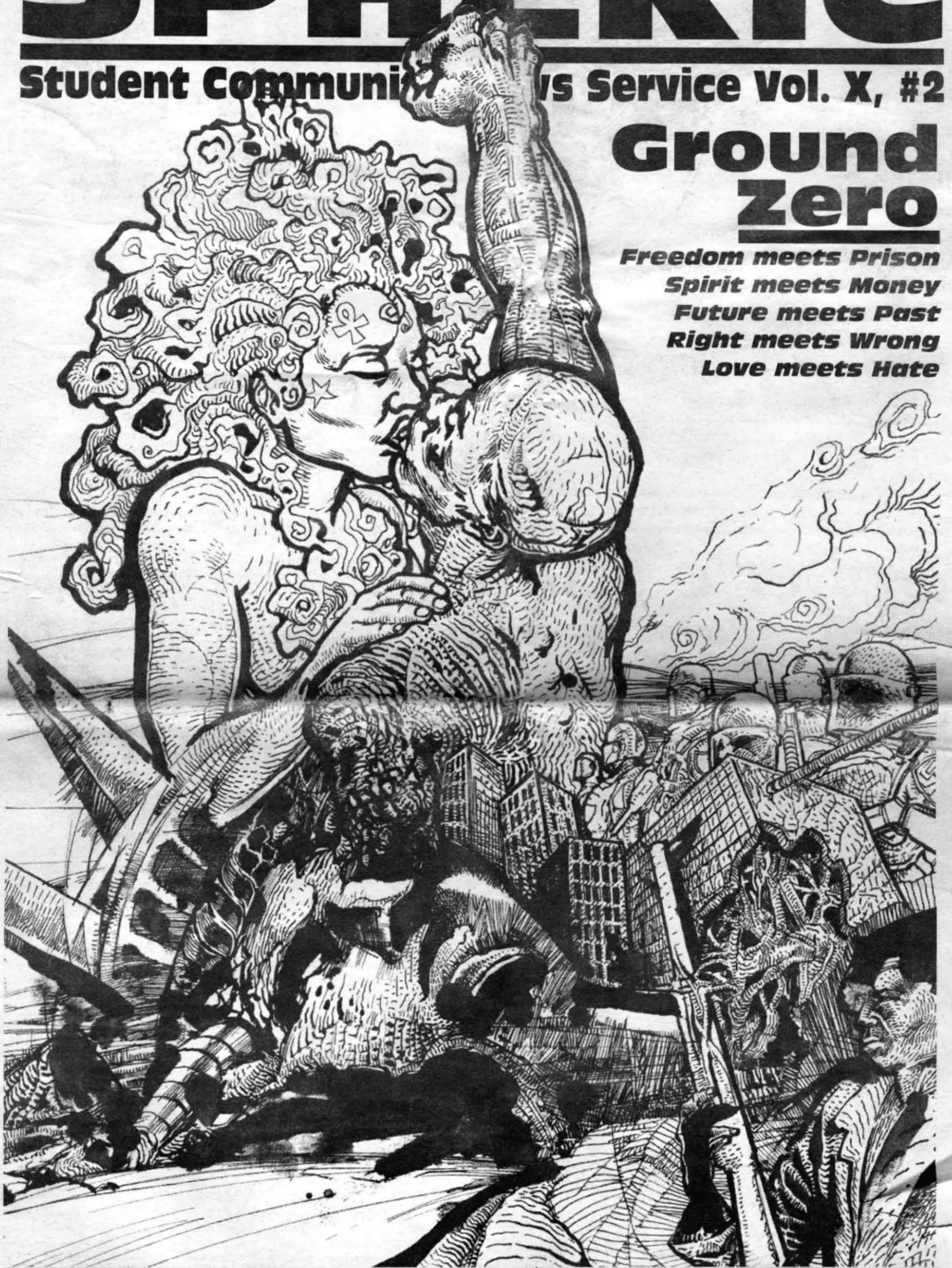


SPHERIC

Student Community vs Service Vol. X, #2

Ground Zero

*Freedom meets Prison
Spirit meets Money
Future meets Past
Right meets Wrong
Love meets Hate*



**Ethnic Studies
Slashed at CCNY**

4

UnS.A.F.E.

**In a Climate of Uncertainty, CUNY
Administration Brings Cops on Campus**

12

The Spheric Interview: Governor Pataki, p. 7 • Report on the Palestinian "Peace" Accords, p.6 • Student Suspended for Defending CUNY, p. 5 • Students Protest the Budget Cuts, p. 3 • Battle for the PSC, p. 17 • State, Revolution and You, p. 8 • Theater: Greensboro Remembered, p. 16 • What the Budget Battle Really Means p. 14



SPHERIC



Volume X, Number 2: Ground Zero

695 Park Avenue,
Room 207TH
New York City 10021

(212)
772-4279

Letters

Spheric is all things except square.

Spheric is an autonomous organic entity birthed in CUNY and devoured the world over. *Spheric* is a weapon, a decoy, a bastion of foresight for those with eyes in the backs of their heads, a many splendor'd thing, an anti-bible for some, the god-given scripture for others, and for your convenience, FREE. *Spheric's* pages are open to all who are open. *Spheric* joins in the world-wide movement to make all which we make ours, all that we use ours and all we can dream of real. *Spheric* loves you.

Spheric Family



Hunter College:

Mad Cracker: Jed Brandt, Editor
SubComandante: Ramiro Campos
Princess Jasmine: Nilda Laguar
La Sad Girl: Sandra Barros
Trip Delicious: Lenina Nadal
Chicken Wing: Claudia Zequeira
Original Man: Adam Peres
Chief: Asif Ullah

Brooklyn College Hit Squad

Baby Blue: William Kopp
Mama Cool: Sattara Lenz
"Francesca": Carolyn

CCNY/Harlem University

Mystic Ballistic: David Suker in exile

The Graduate Center Intellectual Mafia

Good Student: Alex Vitale
Bad Student: Rob Hollander

NYU Errant Hipsters

The One: Oona Chatterjee
The All: Ersellia Ferron

New School for Anti-Social Researchers

T.S.F.K.A.: Jessica Klonsky

CUNY Law Pod/Queens College

Illegal Eagle: Sue Bartone

SUNY No Pulse:

Luck O' the Haitians: Malcom Gaff

Folks About Town

El Fé: Fred Zabinski, designer
Grasshopper: John Kim, illustrations
Bronx Rumbler: Susan Rothman, prfreading

San Francisco Tentacle

Adam Bomb: Jeffrey

Vermont Tentacle:

Luna Fringe: Victoria Kravitz

Colorado Tentacle

Big Gumbah: Robbie Ronzoni

And:

Your Name Here: _____

ALUMNI SHOUTOUT

Dear *Spheric* and the CUNY Community(ies):

Your *Birth of An Internation* issue is great. CUNY has needed a CUNY-wide paper for a long time. I've sent issues to various student groups around the country. Is *Spheric* on the internet/WWW?

As part of the struggle against budget cuts and tuition increases in 1989-91, I keenly keep in touch with the struggles at CUNY. I'm sure I'm not alone in this.

I suggest that those of us who have graduated, or are about to graduate, form a CUNY Progressive Alumni Network to offer support to present day CUNY student activists and to take action ourselves.

We could also network with similar progressive alumni networks at the other colleges to change policy nationally for what the struggle is about: EDUCATION IS A RIGHT! (Free tuition, open admissions, multi-cultural studies, full support services)

A long-term struggle requires our own long-term alternative institutions; SPHERIC, the CUNY Coalition (SLAM!), and a CUNY Progressive Alumni Network are important parts of our struggle(s) for liberation.

Jesse Heiwa
GPO Box 7045
NY, NY 10116
hapanes@blythe.org

Editor's response:

Interwhat? Hey, 25 years ago, all the people like you were talking about acid. Yeah, "Acid's going to change the world... If Nixon dropped acid, the war would be over, man." Now you're saying, "The Internet's like Jacob's ladder, God is a goo-goo-byte, man." But, you know, acid is groovy, and the Internet will look real good on our resumes. So hang tight; we'll be the Web this semester; the address will be in the next issue.

RACIST ILLITERATE WRITES

RE: "This is Not a Love Song"

Your mad dog deatribe [sic] reflects what is wrong with your race. No wonder people deagrate [sic] you by calling you a nigger. How do you expect to graduate and cope with society? Wake up! --

signed,
Hate Breeds Hate
(postmarked from Westchester County)

Editor's response:

It's exciting to know that *Spheric* has spread far enough to have entered the consciousness of Mr. or Ms. Hate. We were afraid it was only read by our cronies. But now we see Mr. and Ms.

America reads *Spheric*, too.

Special thanks to all the upstate distributors.

WHITE FIGHT

Dear *Spheric*,

I liked your article in the last *Spheric*, "What's Wrong With White People," but I did want to raise a point or two.

You conclude your article by calling for white people to "try and deal with the basic realities of black America and aid in the struggle for black self-determination. It is only in the freedom of all people on their own terms that we can even begin to speak of love."

I don't disagree with this. I think one of the problems for far too many white people, including many white activists, is an unwillingness to really understand, politically and personally, this concept. Concretely, at its root, this means supporting the right to — and the reality of — all-African-American, or all-Latino, or all people of color organizations, even as we as white people work to break down the racism which prevents, or at least frustrates, the building of multi-cultural unity.

This is the flip side, the very related flip side, of your conclusion. Strategically, we have no hope of winning either our short-term struggles against budget cuts or our long-term struggle for a non-capitalist, liberating society unless we can build relationships of equality between people of color and white people.

We can only do this if those of us who are white take seriously the task of un-learning racism, and people of color deal with the internalized oppression which comes from institutionalized racism. The primary responsibility is on those of us who have benefited from white privilege.

To unlearn racism we need to undertake serious study of the history of racism in the U.S. beginning 504 years ago with Christopher Columbus. We need to consciously develop genuine, honest friendships with individual people of color so that both sides can grow beyond the anxiety, fear, anger and/or guilt that prevent relationships of equality. And we need to find ways to interact on a daily basis with people of color so that those of us who don't experience racism can be constantly reminded, criticized, confronted and/or exposed to these realities as often as possible. If we do these things, then there is hope that we can become reliable allies.

In the struggle,
Ted Glick, National Independent
Politics Summit

SLAM!

Students SLAM Governor



Or, CUNY Rights of Spring

One thousand students take to the streets in defense of public education

¡el pueblo unido jamás será vencido!

by R. W. Guerra

The first day of spring in New York City was brought in with a powerful and determined demonstration against Governor Pataki's budget cuts by 1,000 high school and college students. The action on March 21 launched a new season of struggle against the government's war on the poor. The students marched through midtown Manhattan to make it known that they will not stand by while Pataki and Giuliani bring down yet another round of budget cuts that will destroy the lives of tens of thousands of people.

The march was led by a huge 30-foot-wide banner that read: "Defend Our Education—SLAM the Cuts!" As the march made its way through the streets, there was sympathy and support from many office workers as well as people driving by in trucks and cars.

The march and rally were called by SLAM! (Student Liberation Action Movement). SLAM! is a multinational group of students that came together out of last year's struggle against the budget cuts. The crowd was very multinational and ranged in age from kids about 12 years old to college students in their mid-20s and came from many high schools and CUNY campuses.

This demonstration was the

first major action against the latest round of budget cuts. Because of tax cuts in the state budget last year, the state budget has a \$2 billion deficit. 40% of these tax cuts go to people earning more than \$100,000 a year, who only make up 5% of the population. To eliminate the deficit he created, Gov. Pataki has proposed a whole new series of cuts that will hit poor people the hardest. These include massive cuts in public education.

Pataki wants to cut state funding of CUNY by \$57.6 million dollars when last year's cuts caused a tuition increase of \$750 to \$3,200 a year. The new cuts would raise it another \$250. Programs like SEEK that help students improve their academic skills were cut by 25%. The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for the poorest students will be cut by \$119 million and students will not be able to use their TAP funds until they've wavered half their tuition with federal Pell grants.

A recent *New York Times* editorial said "at some community colleges, low-income students would lose roughly 60% of their state aid." Thousands of students have already been forced out of school by last year's cuts. Speakers told the crowd that at Brooklyn College alone, 1,500 students could not come back to school because they couldn't afford it.

Many academic programs have already been eliminated and more are on the chopping block—especially programs in Black and Latino Studies. Just two days before, CCNY announced it was abolishing programs in Black Studies, Puerto Rican Studies and Jewish Studies. Dozens of faculty members have been laid off. At most schools, 40% of classes are already taught by graduate students.

There are fewer classes and they are more crowded. At Baruch College, the new cuts would result in elimination of 11% of the faculty. The number of adjunct professors would also be cut back. At Brooklyn College, 12% of the staff would be cut. Hunter College will lose 17% of the class offerings—which means their students will not be able to get into courses that they need to graduate.

A woman from the Urban Justice Center summed up the situation this way: "The powers-that-be want to take our education away from us.

The action on March 21 launched a new season of struggle against the government's war on the poor

They want to make it a privilege and not a right. They want to make it inaccessible to people of color and poor people.... They have already taken affordable housing and decent jobs from us. Now they want to take our education. What's next? Our minds? The air we breathe? Our very existence? They want us off public assistance but have no jobs for us. They want us off welfare but continue to place obstacles in our way so that we can't receive a quality education. Over 20,000 CUNY students are on public assistance. Over 7,000 students this school year have been forced to drop out to work performing menial tasks for a welfare check. A lot of these students have

one or two classes left for their degree, but our 'industrious' mayor and governor would rather have them do this than get an education. What's wrong with this system? Look around you, brothers and sisters. The same classmate sitting next to you today could be that homeless person on the street asking you for change tomorrow. No education equals no jobs, no jobs equals no money, no money equals no housing, no housing equals homelessness, homelessness equals despair. Power to the people!"

LeDon James, a member of the Welfare Rights Initiative at Hunter College, spoke about how the cuts are affecting mothers who need child care: "At CUNY, the child care centers are being threatened to have our funding cut. They have been cut 25%. That means that less parents will be able to take their children into a place that is warm, that is caring, that is nurturing, that is convenient because it's right on campus. And they're going to have to drop out of school, not only because tuition is going up and grants are being cut, but because the child care is being threatened."

Deteriorating High Schools

About half the students who came were high school students from around the city. In most cases, school authorities threatened students who wanted to come to the demonstration. Police tried to stop some from leaving their schools. There was a big contingent from LaGuardia, an arts high school in midtown Manhattan. Students from nearby Martin Luther King High School were detained by the police

go to page 11

¡arriba, pa' bajo, pataki pa'l carajo!

the rich must pay!

who's got the money? the rich got the money! who must pay?

Turning Back the Clock On Ethnic Studies

Confessions of an Ice Person

by Christopher Day

Recent events at City College and Columbia University have put Ethnic Studies on the agenda of politically conscious students. At City College, President Yolanda Moses announced that the Departments of Black, Asian, Jewish, and Hispanic and Caribbean Studies were being reduced to the status of a combined ethnic studies program. At Columbia University a coalition composed mainly of students of color waged a militant struggle for the establishment of a Department of Ethnic Studies. Having been rebuffed by the administration, a coalition of mainly Black, Latino, Native and Asian students initiated a four person hunger strike on April 1. After several demonstrations the coalition seized a section of the administration building on April 9. 22 students, including the hunger strikers, were arrested for the occupation. After several more building occupations the Columbia students negotiated an agreement with the administration to hire several new faculty of color and to develop new ethnic studies programs. The demand for a department, however, went unmet.

At City College, the Sons of Afrika, an organization of students in the Black Studies Department, protested outside the Upper West Side home of Yolanda Moses on April 6.

On April 18 students from across CUNY gathered at City College and marched off campus and into the community in defense of Ethnic studies. Returning to campus the demonstration poured into the administration building. Blocked from entrance to Moses' office the crowd gathered briefly on the roof of the building where the US flag was turned upside down before occupying the lobby for the afternoon demanding to speak with Moses.

These two struggles reflect the strange state of what is broadly called Ethnic Studies these days. The fight for Ethnic Studies began in the late 1960s when considerably fewer students of color were to be found on most college campuses. Small groups of students of color were engaged in intensive study of the respective histories and cultures of the non-white peoples largely ignored by the educational system in this country. But these efforts at study took place outside of any official departmental structure within the universities. The broad and militant student movement of the late 60s began to demand the creation of departments of Black Studies.

These demands were initially rejected, but one by one Black Studies Departments were created when students took direct action: seizing buildings, organizing student strikes, and otherwise showing their willingness to disrupt the normal functioning of their schools until their demands were met. Two struggles were particularly key in the creation



Student at one of the first protests for Black Studies over 25 years ago.

of Black Studies as a recognized academic discipline: the Third World Student Strike at San Francisco State and the struggle for open admissions at City College. Both of these struggles lead to the eventual creation of Black Studies departments on those campuses and inspired struggles across the country.

The initial victories of Black students also inspired other groups to demand the creation of new departments. Over the course of the 70s and 80s student struggles lead to the establishment of Chicano, Asian, Native, Women's, and Gay and Lesbian Studies Programs and Departments on campuses across the country. On some campuses Departments of Ethnic Studies, which encompassed a broad range of peoples histories and cultures, were established.

What is Ethnic Studies?

It has always been a little difficult to define ethnic studies. The first problem is, of course, that the pantheon of "great white men" who dominate what we study at college have ethnicity. One of the worst aspects of Eurocentrism in the college curriculum is the view that the teachings and experiences of a tiny minority of humanity (white men) are treated as uniquely universal in their appeal. Just as important as studying the full diversity

of human experience is breaking down the idea that only Western European civilization has produced works of universal importance.

American Universities have always had Ethnic Studies. Our Literature Departments are largely White Literature Departments. Our History Departments are largely White History Departments. Art History classes are usually really White Art History classes.

The administration at Columbia University has rejected the creation of an Ethnic Studies Department in part on the grounds that the concerns of such a department should be the concerns of all the respective disciplines. Initially this might sound like a more expansive and open-minded vision. But in practice it would mean that the Black literature classes would be under the supervision of a largely white English Department faculty. The Puerto Rican History classes would be designed by a largely white History Department. And so on.

Does this mean that white people are automatically disqualified from teaching such subjects? Of course not. But these white people are the very white people who have demonstrably failed to develop an inclusive curriculum already. To put them in charge of the various pieces of a dismembered ethnic studies program is to sabotage what is most

important about ethnic studies — that it enables the voiceless at last to be heard.

The struggle over Ethnic Studies is a struggle for power. Increasingly, corporate America has adopted the ideology of multiculturalism for its own purposes. In an increasingly global market, in an increasingly diverse United States, a basic awareness of the diversity of human cultures has become a matter of basic business sense. The question is no longer whether we will study African history or Latin American poetry or Chinese art. The question is whether that study will be in the service of the needs of those peoples or whether it will be controlled by the existing power structure.

This is made all the clearer by looking at the struggles taking place at City College and Columbia. Even though on one campus they are trying to dismantle Ethnic Studies and on the other it doesn't yet exist, and even though one school is overwhelmingly working class and the other is an elite university, the terms of the struggle are remarkably similar. At both City and Columbia the struggle has been not over whether the experiences of people should be included in the curriculum but over how that inclusion will be controlled.

City College Attacks

The attempt to dismantle the various Ethnic Studies Departments at City College come after a prolonged battle between the City College administration and the former chair of Black Studies, Dr. Leonard Jeffries. A number of Jeffries teachings made him vulnerable to attack. In various contexts he made remarks about Jewish involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and in Hollywood's perpetuation of racist portrayals of Black people that were widely regarded as anti-Semitic. He has also been a proponent of theories that some sort of "melanin deficiency" is responsible for the aggressiveness of white people whom he describes as "ice people" (in contrast with the "sun people" as he describes people of color). The City College administration in a blatant violation of the most basic principles of academic freedom dismissed Jeffries, who in turn sued the university.

While Jeffries conducted a back and forth battle in the courts the City College administration took advantage of the disarray in the Black Studies Department to in effect create its own Black studies curriculum in the form of courses scattered through other Departments. These classes drew students away from the official Black Studies Department courses and in effect eroded the substantial student base of support for the Department. In this way the administration prepared the ground for its most recent action: the dismantling of all the various ethnic studies departments at City College.

The attack on the Departments of Ethnic Studies at City College must be understood for what they really are: an attack on the right of oppressed communities to develop their own understanding of their own histories. The reasons for such an attack are straightforward enough: history is a weapon. Black history in the hands of Black people becomes a weapon for Black liberation. Although small numbers of students major in Black Studies or any other ethnic studies major, large numbers of students take classes in those departments and bring the knowledge that they acquire in those classes into the rest of their lives as students. Ethnic Studies Departments become in this way base areas for students of color (mainly) to fight white supremacy as it expresses itself elsewhere in the university. To say the least, this is a monumental hassle for the powers that be.

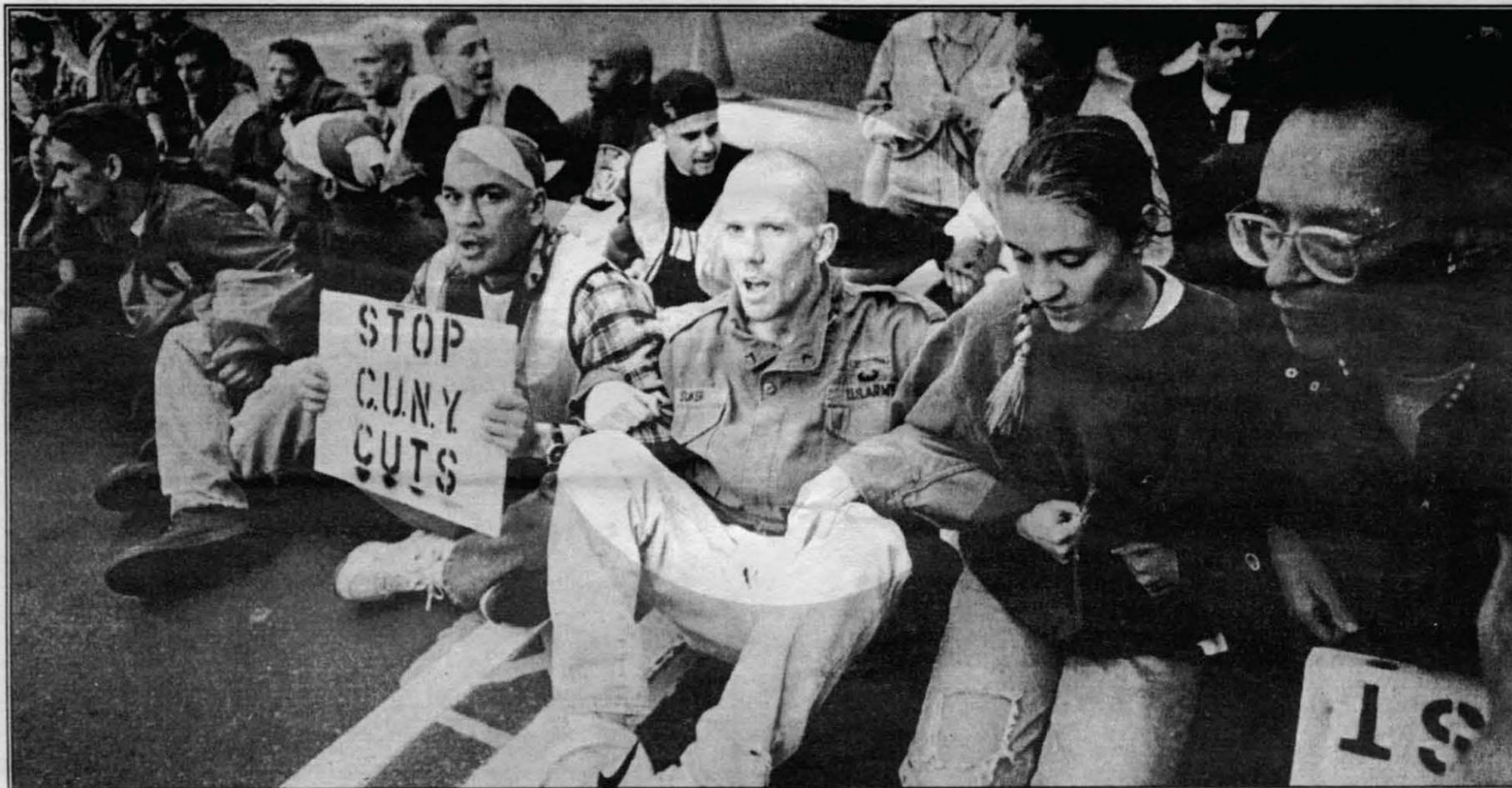
White professors are more likely to be challenged in classes, administrators are less likely to find students compliant with their outrageous demands. And in a larger sense the University is turning out educated people committed to fighting for liberation — which from the point of view of the truly powerful is not what a university should be doing.

Confessions of an Ice Person

I am a senior majoring in Black and Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College and concentrating on the Africana sequence of courses the Department offers. I am also, for lack of a better term, "white." For better

CUNY

Outrage Over CCNY Student's Suspension



David Suker (highlighted) blocking the Holland Tunnel for CUNY

David Suker Suspended for Defending CUNY

by Rob Hollander, Grad Center, Kate McCarthy & Jed, Hunter College

A disciplinary panel at City College has given a one year suspension to the president of CCNY's graduate student government (Graduate Student Council) for leading protests on campus against last year's budget cuts to higher education.

The student, Dave Suker, was subject to surveillance and harassment from campus police last spring when his name appeared on a university administration 'black list' of student activists who had been arrested at various protest events.

Suker's activism was directed towards saving the university from crippling budget cuts. Harassment included verbal threats from campus police; an on-campus arrest by CUNY 'Peace Officers' for attempting to board a bus to Albany for student lobbying; and attempts to bar his entry to events on other CUNY campuses.

Suker's activism was directed towards saving the university from crippling budget cuts. He became a special target after embarrassing the university and college administration with accusations that CCNY President Yolanda Moses, and CUNY Chancellor W. Anne Reynolds had invited cuts in CCNY's budget by setting up retrenchment committees to recommend firing faculty and eliminating programs.

"The university wants to make an example of the most prominent student leaders so the Chancellor can avoid the embarrassment of unruly student protests that expose the pub-

lic to what's really happening here at City College," said Steve Gottlieb, a recent CCNY mathematics graduate.

Dave's suspension takes place in a time when CCNY's Nursing School, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Theatre and Dance, Classical Languages and Hebrew Department, the School of Education, and the SEEK program were all retrenched last year.

This year the Black Studies Department was demoted, along with all ethnic studies, to a 'program', losing seniority for faculty.

mind. He is quoted as having said, "she would pay for what she has done in the last three days."

Dave was actually referring to President Moses' political negligence in the efforts to reduce the state budget cuts. This was intentionally misconstrued as a possible threat.

On May 23, 1995 he was arrested for obstruction of two busses transporting City College faculty, and students bound for Albany to lobby against New York State budget cuts.

Dave was then charged on May 30, 1995 in the NAC Rotunda for a verbal confrontation with Security Sergeant Lawrence, who told Mr. Suker to stop marking up a banner which had been taped to the floor.

The final charge occurred on December 14, 1995 in Shepard Hall. He is charged with disruption of a presentation regarding the state budget by New York State Comptroller H. Carl McCall.

Dave questioned the purpose of the panel, the alleged absence of students, and asserted that he would seat himself on the panel to represent CCNY students.

An administration memo in regarding this incident was written from Dean Jeffrey Rosen to Vice President Morales stating, "Were this an isolated incident and given the fact that Dave was able to offer a public apology it would seem to me that an official warning would be both appropriate and sufficient. If on the other hand this is part of a repeated pattern of disrup-

tive behavior on Mr. Suker's part, sterner action should be considered."

When *Spheric* questioned members of the administration at CCNY I was told, "We cannot release any information to a third party about another student. This violates CUNY regulations of student privacy".

The question is, why is anyone being silenced for speaking out against budget cuts? Common sense tells us the more money cut, the less of an education we get.

While the attacks on our education have escalated, Administration seems more concerned with stopping the defenders than mounting a defense.

If we voice our opinions and fight to preserve our education, will we also be expelled in order to silence our efforts?

When *Spheric* spoke to Dave, he said, "So much money is spent on student disciplinary action, student surveillance, and security - this must mean we are doing something right."

The question is, why is anyone being silenced for speaking out against budget cuts?

Suker is highly regarded among students and faculty as a tireless student advocate and organizer in the defense of the City University system.

While some people have merely attended marches, Dave Suker has put his body and educational future on the line to defend our schools.

Dave helped organize the hunger strike "Starving for Education", is a member of CitySLAM! (Student Liberation Action Movement), and has helped organize in many protests. Such efforts do not go unnoticed at CUNY.

The Charges

As a central activist both at CCNY and in the city-wide movement, Dave has repeatedly incurred the wrath of the administration and police.

According to CUNY Administration, his dedication is nothing more than a violation of Article 129A of the Education Law, also known as the "Henderson Rules".

These rules exist solely for the purpose of limiting student expression and have now been put to use.

His four charges began on April 14, 1995 for entering the President's office at CCNY and speaking his

responsibility for obtaining the busses, or how he was refused explanation as to why he was not allowed to go.

Who is David Suker?

"In the CUNY-wide student movement, he's the best organizer we've got. This is a calculated move on the part of the administration to undermine the voice of student dissent."

--Rob Hollander, Co-chair of the Doctoral Students' Council at the Graduate Center

"It's not only because they want to make an

example out of him. They're flexing their muscles, administration is demonstrating the power they wield when we challenge them."

--Grasshopper, a member of the Student Power Movement

"I don't mean to be rude, but if a puke like Yolanda Moses can cast out an angel like Dave Suker, then the whole idea of

Freedom of Speech in america is as much bullshit as I thought."

--anonymous student
"We will not let this go unopposed. The attack on David Suker is an attack on CUNY. He represents the passion of this city and shows in his actions the value of education. This will not slow us down or divert our energies."

-- Spheric

WORLD

Palestine, Piece by "Peace"

The Oslo Peace Accords bite

by Carolyn

Brooklyn College

The Oslo I and II Accords begin with two fundamental assumptions. One, that the partition of Palestine into two states in 1948 by Western imperialism was just. Two, that subsequent Israeli expansionism, the occupation of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1967, and Israeli settlements in those territories is just.

Oslo breaks UN security resolution 242, which called for Israel to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, the

West Bank, including the occupied city of East Jerusalem, to the pre-'67 borders.

Oslo II, signed on September 28, 1995, divides the West Bank into four separate zones of control.

Zone A consists of two percent of Palestinian urban concentrations under Palestinian authority. Zone C, consisting of over 70% of the West Bank is under Israel's authority. Zone B consists of scattered towns and villages inside of Zone C and is considered autonomous, meaning the Palestinians would be administering what is actually Israeli controlled.

For instance, in Hebron, part of Zone C cite of the massacre of 29 Palestinians by settler Baruch Goldstein, Israeli troops guard fewer than 450 settlers from the over 100,000 Palestinians.

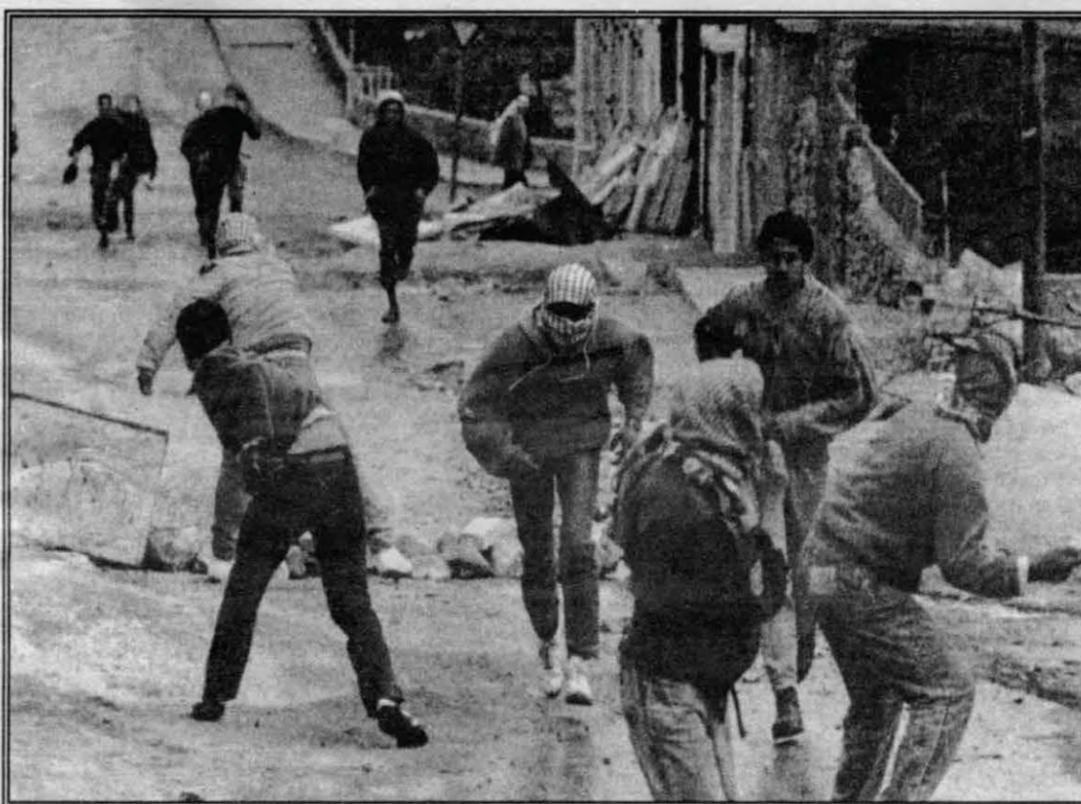
Palestinians are still subject to arbitrary curfews and house arrest invading every aspect of their lives and delegitimizing their national sovereignty.

Zone D East Jerusalem an area technically to be decided at a later date, is a dead issue. Acting Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, considered politically left of slain Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, has made it clear that East Jerusalem will never be returned to the Palestinians.

Oslo also ensures that the Palestinian authorities cannot "deal with a security issue" or "threaten other Israeli interests."

Israeli courts will have broad powers to interpret Palestinian law and have "veto power over all legislation." In the Gaza Strip, a parallel program exists whereby Israel will maintain authority of the 30% of the land considered most valuable and de facto control over the rest.

The PLO has recognized Israeli plans to expand their state further. In signing Oslo, the PLO has accepted



Palestinian youths fight occupying Israeli soldiers during the Intifada. This prolonged uprising in the occupied territories forced Israel to the bargaining table.

the legality of "existing and future settlement in the West Bank." [emphasis mine]

The Israeli Labor Party's proposed budget for 1996, supported by Likud, provides \$40 million for new settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Settlers are even given subsidies for segregated fish ponds in the Gaza Strip.

Water, a scarce resource for Palestinians, is used by settlers generously for lawns, swimming pools, and artificial lakes for resort hotels.

Labor's budget also includes funding for specially constructed security roads, so settlers and tourists alike can by-pass Palestinian homelands.

The mass uprising of the Palestinian people, the Intifada, forced the PLO and the Labor Party of Israel to make peace or risk the fire of the Palestinian liberation movement.

The Intifada was moving beyond the pre-'67 borders, into the shantytowns and refugee camps of dispossessed Palestinians, and across the land now called Israel.

Had this continued, the Israelis and Arafat would have been left as minor players. Together in Oslo they built a peace based on their own self interest and survival.

The PLO has committed to disciplining the people's aspirations. As Rabin said, the Palestinian authorities will handle their people without the interference of the "bleeding hearts" that for so long undermined Israel during 46 years of "benign" occupation.

The Palestinian Elections

During the months of December and January, under a hail of stones and molotovs, Israeli troops withdrew from six West Bank cities: Nablus, Bethlehem Ramallah, Jenin, Qalkilya and Tulkarm. In Ramallah, Palestinians smashed symbols of the occupation and raised their flag over the police station where many of them had been tortured. Yet Palestine is not free.

Israeli troops have only partially or temporarily re deployed; since their "withdrawal" they have repeatedly declared curfews, crippling the nascent Palestinian economy. On January 5 Shin Bet [Israeli secret service] agents assassinated Yahaya Ayyash of Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

On January 20, the Palestinians again declared their liberation, voting in their first-ever national elections. The elections are a direct response to the Israeli troop redeployments, and a desire to express Palestinian national identity. Even with Yassar Arafat's manipulation of the Fatah electoral slate, the elections give political independents in the Palestinian Authority (PA) some room to breathe.

Before the elections took place, two decisions shaped their outcome. One, the electoral system was to be based on majority vote and multi-constituencies, rather than a proportional representation and single constituency.

The former favored Fatah, which has dominated the occupied territories since the Intifada, and its social bases: the petit-bourgeois mercantile class and tribal social structures. Arafat's authoritarian hand in shaping the PA lead directly to opposition forces within the PLO boycotting the elections.

The oppositional forces are the PLO's Marxist-Leninist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the Islamist Hamas, and Islamic Jihad.

The opposition wrongly assumed the elections would be a referendum on Oslo only. In response, the people ignored their calls for a boycott.

The results of the elections seem to give Arafat and Fatah a clear majority on the PA. However, what is not clear is how much control Arafat has over the 88 newly elected members of the Palestinian Council, including the members of his own party.

The new PA is filled with the street fighters, community activists, students, and former prison leaders of the Intifada generation, a generation that rose directly contesting the PLO.

The elections have deeply fractured all of the political parties representing a revolt from below. The PLO and Arafat have been given an order: represent the people or else.

The PA was elected on a platform expressing the kind of Palestine the people desire: one where East Jerusalem is the capital, all settlements are removed, and all refugees returned. These demands go beyond Oslo and Israel's agenda. But the elections have also legitimated Oslo. The PA will have to struggle for their autonomy and for a just peace under immense pressure from U.S. imperialism and Israel to accept Oslo.

Whether or not the PA struggles for Palestinian liberation, the opening of the political landscape due to the fractures of the PLO parties offer the people a new opportunity to spark the Intifada one again. The liberation of Palestine is not finished, and the signing of Oslo will bring no just peace.

In Brief

L.A. Cops Make News The Only Way They Know How

Once again, videotaped police brutality in Los Angeles makes nationwide headlines. On April 1st, two Mexican migrant workers were beaten by sheriff's deputies. The two deputies, Donald Franklin and Tracy Watson were suspended with pay.

Roberto Lovato, director of the Central American refugee center in Los Angeles stated "This is something that we know goes on every day in the lives of immigrants, African-Americans and poor people generally."

As usual, media coverage only arrived when the incident was caught on video tape.

General Strike In Bolivia

In Bolivia, on April 2, protests called in late March escalated to full blown rebellion in the streets of the capital La Paz. Striking public workers shut down public transportation, threw dynamite sticks at riot police, and ransacked the offices of the recently privatized state railroad.

The Bolivian Workers Center, the country's leading union, called a general strike in protest of a government plan to sell the state-owned oil company, Bolivian State Oil Reserves, as well as higher wages.

Bolivian police estimated that at least 50,000 workers took part in the April 2's demonstration.

America Still Full of Ghettos

From Chocolate Cities like Newark and Detroit to immigrant slums in Chicago, people are still kept in substandard housing solely on the basis of skin color or national origin.

As the election season gears up, not one single candidate has spoken on this burning issue.



Israeli soldier searches Palestinians in "autonomous" area.

WEATHER

We All Live In This City, Sometimes It Snows

Alone with
the city
I dream and
am free.

by Fred Zabinski
Man About Town



unspeakably beautiful.

Thank God I decided to come out here; all my frustrations and self-loathing seem petty and far away. The snow has even dampened the noise in my mind. I quietly drink in this vision, thrilled to be here, profoundly grateful to be alive and have the eyes to see this.

Every day when I say my prayers I thank God for all Her creations, but in the city Nature remains far away, an abstraction. Now She is right here, taking back the city and quickly burying it.

I can hear the sound of each tree as the breezes move their branches; each one sings differently. I can see small silent eddies of breezes where the snowflakes shift in their flight. Individual flakes glisten everywhere on the smooth white slopes as the shadows of falling snow pass over.

Slowly I wander out of the complex and into the street, stopping here and there to savor some sound or vision. There are no more boundaries between street and sidewalk, no cars are out, so I walk down the middle of the street.

I'm surprised to see an occasional passer-by trudging through the snow, off to God knows where. They look up at me, unsmiling. My black mask completely covers my face; it's the kind the homeboys wear. I know how scary it looks, not that this is my intention. They seem suspicious of my standing silently in the snowstorm. I just look away from them.

I head down 126th Street, towards the water tower and the Long Island Railroad tracks. There will be fewer people there than on Lefferts Boulevard, the shopping strip where I usually wander when depression drives me from my apartment.

As I suspected, the landscape is

step away... My eyes run down the shabby, sagging chain-link fence running the length of the railroad. Is that all there is to keep me off the tracks?

I have been standing in the snow for ten minutes, seeing no reason to move. Again I think of how my neighbors looked at me suspiciously. Looking behind at the dark houses, I imagine someone calling the police on me. I can easily picture a police car pulling up, cops getting out and demanding to know who I am and what I'm doing.

I'm not doing anything, I'm just out watching the snow fall. Can I prove who I am or that I live here? No, all my ID is in my wallet, which I left at home. I can't be arrested for not having ID or for just hanging around outside. But if the cops tell you to move on, you'd better move. And now that I think about it, I'm starting to feel uncomfortable here. I turn around and head on towards home.

Up ahead, on Kew Gardens Road, is where the cops would probably pull up. I stop, catching myself in the middle of this fantasy. It is a recurring thing. It comes at times like these, when I'm alone and aimlessly walking around outside. I start to feel alienated from society, and expect hostility from people. For perhaps the first time in my life, I ask myself what this fantasy means.

Looking up the hill towards the cemetery, now an endless field of white, I feel as if I could actually make that police car materialize just by focussing on the image of it. The whiteness is a canvas on which I can project my fantasies and make them real...

Who are these cops? It's I who have called them. Why do I want them? I call them at times like these, when I can't name a purpose I'm pursuing. They're the behavior police, here to bind me to plans, reasons, disciplines.

When I'm hanging out with other people I can feel free to drop the schedules and programs, to be spontaneous and enjoy purposelessness, but when alone I better be doing something for a reason, or the police come.

All this time I've been wasting on the Internet and bbs's, I've been running from the cops, trying to ignore them. Here in the silence and white emptiness, they stand out before me. I can examine them, see them for what they are. I can make them go away.

Wipe away your preconceptions. Cleanse your mind. Let your thoughts be buried in the snow.

My eyes run down the shabby, sagging chain-link fence running the length of the railroad. Is that all there is to keep me off the tracks?

I walk up the hill. It seems like a different world, but this is nothing but right here and right now. Possibilities are infinite. Like the world of dreams, this place only seems alien and different because I ignore it, knowing nothing but the products of my mind. Expectations, plans, wants and fears make for short-mindedness and inattention; they get in the way and limit the potential. It's how I walk down this landscape that determines what it is.

Know Your Poles



Unabomber suspect Ted Kaczynski.



Spheric designer Fred Zabinski.

A number of phone calls from confused readers have made it necessary for *Spheric* to clarify the distinction between Unabomber suspect Ted Kaczynski and our own Fred Zabinski.

Fred has no relation to the retired professor accused of the string of bombings that have terrorized the nation since 1978. Callers were perhaps led to this mistake by Fred's repeated public declarations that protest letters to Governor Pataki and other legislators are useless unless "you put a bomb in the envelope."

Mr. Kaczynski's guilt, however, remains unproven and Fred has refused to comment concerning his hobbies.

Two weeks since they let me go at my last job, and I've done nothing about getting more work. I've barely started any of the projects I've planned — updating my portfolio, redesigning my résumé, contacting the publications I'd like to work for. The one draft of my new résumé sits in the pile of unpaid bills and ignored paperwork.

All my self-discipline has collapsed. I haven't been doing my yoga, working out or meditating. The worst is that I've completely neglected my diary, which means I've stopped writing anything of value.

It's hard to keep a diary when all day you do nothing you can be proud of. I am very conscious of the fact that I am being a bum; it's always on my mind, but to put that in words and write them down where I'll read them decades from now is more than I could stand.

"The unexamined life is not worth living." This is the credo by which I keep my diary; it is by writing about my life day by day that I gain insight and get in better touch with myself — when I'm not too depressed to write entries of decent length. And now that word "unexamined" seems so perfect a description of the way I've been living. I eat, I nap, I tinker with my computer, I poke around the Internet and blather with strangers. All done impulsively, without plan or reflection, like an animal foraging for bits of food.

I haven't even kept my room clean. But I don't know if the paper and other junk lying around is really worse to look at than the crappy furniture it covers. So much junk I'd love to replace if only I had the money. How many years have I been saying that to myself? The more I think the more I hate my life and myself. So I try not to think.

I'm so ashamed to be spending a Friday night, or any night, like this. I can't stand it anymore; I've got to get away from here. But it's too late to get together with anyone, and no one's going to leave their home with this blizzard raging. Maybe a walk in the snow would do me some good. At least it couldn't make me feel any worse. I bundle up good and step outside into the garden the housing complex surrounds.

The snow is several feet deep. It's falling so thick the water tower is barely visible, yet there is almost no wind, so all is silent. In fact, I have never heard such silence in the city. The snow dampens all sound.

Everything has been transformed. It is a new landscape, white, clean,

Shameless Commie Propaganda

**V.I. Lenin
on the
prowl in
N.Y.C.?**

by Zachary Arcidiacono
Hunter College

At this historical juncture, in which the left is disoriented and demoralized, it is necessary to take a critical self-inventory of the ideologies which have guided the people's struggles for self-emancipation.

Lenin's *State and Revolution*, written on the eve of the October Revolution, remains one of the landmark Marxist treatises on the role of the state in history.

Revolutionary theory is required to guide revolutionary practice, but dogma which insulates people from the harsh reality can only serve to derail the movement for progressive social transformation. Historical experience since 1917 has uncovered numerous flaws in Lenin's understanding of the state. Nevertheless, the basic premises of *State and Revolution* remain true and should serve as a general orientation for any project of human liberation.

What Is The State?

Lenin proceeds from the Marxist theory that class struggle is the motor force of history. He then says that historically the state (i.e., the police, army and the courts) exists not to promote a reconciliation of the classes, but invariably is an instrument of the violent domination of the ruling class.

The state came into being with the division of society into conflicting economic groups; consequently it will disappear when classes have been eliminated.

This is best illustrated by the historical development of human society. In ancient communal societies there was no special armed body (police or professional army) standing above society. Technological development increased productivity, allowing for the exploitation of man by man. Hence the state was necessary in slave holding societies. It continued in various permutations throughout feudalism and capitalism.

The importance of this truth cannot be understated. Any regime would prefer to rule by consensus. However, if the consensus breaks down, violence will be used to maintain order.

This was shown during the social upheavals in the United States in the 1960's. This violence was not applied in a neutral manner. Bourgeois textbooks generally portray the state as a neutral arbiter between competing interest groups. The FBI's

infiltration of subversive groups under COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) targeted left-wing groups, such as the Black Panthers, for destruction, regardless of whether or not they adhered to the law.

Intelligence gathered on right-wing groups such as the Ku Klux Klan was rarely used to prevent them from carrying out illegal, racist attacks. At times these groups were used as unofficial arms of law enforcement, much like death squads in many Latin American countries.

In contrast, the power of the people rests solely in their capacity for extra-parliamentary organization and mobilization around their interests. If our protests are only requests, we never get at the real problem: people whose interests are hostile to ours control the state. We protest to them and so, they can simply say no. They have the state to back them up, we only have ourselves. This applies whether the battle is for abortion rights or against the CUNY budget cuts. Without power, all is illusion.

State More Than Violence

One disappointing aspect of *State and Revolution* is Lenin's emphasis on the violence of the state, to the exclusion of the importance of the ideological hegemony of the ruling class. Power does ultimately rest on violence. However, the authority of the ruling class also rests on its control of the media and educational institutions.

By framing social questions within a certain framework, people's capability for independent action is limited by a range of choices those who have power present them with. The best example is whether we should vote for Democrats or Republicans. We live in a democratic republic, so we can only vote for different styles of management within the same system. No choice is offered which contradicts the right of small groups to control the land, resources and social organization for the rest of us.

Lenin also guts the ideal of democracy. Democracy is a form of political rule and there fore is predicated on class exploitation and the division between mental and manual labor. Democracy only exists for the members of the propertied class who rule society. This was as true in ancient Athens as it is in America today.

Lenin then proceeded to grapple with the implications of his analysis for revolution in the modern era. The violent overthrow of capitalism would result in the triumph of socialism. The period of socialism would be a dictatorship of the proletariat and a transition to a future era of communism.

When communism was reached the state would wither away and society would resume the voluntary character it possessed in ancient communal society. Lenin made



Much maligned and rarely read, V.I. Lenin stands as one of the great figures of the 20th Century. He is most known as the founding leader of the Soviet Union; however, his writings have influenced revolutionaries far beyond those borders. From the Black Panther Party in Oakland to Sendero Luminoso in Peru, people who have been serious about the struggle to bring power to ordinary people have had to read his works. *State and Revolution* stands as one of his greatest. What is government? What does "revolution" mean? In this spirit, Zach tries to figure out what value these theories have for us today.

numerous errors in regard to his understanding of this transitional period, in part due to the fact that Russia was our first sustained attempt at socialism.

His analysis was based primarily on the Paris Commune of 1871. In this short lived uprising the Parisian workers seized control of the state machinery and established a form of direct democracy, dispensing with such institutions as the standing army.

Previous revolutions by rising propertied classes had simply seized control of the old state machinery. Lenin saw the necessity of violently destroying the old state and establishing a workers' state, in accordance with its historic mission of liberating humanity. He regarded the Paris Commune as a model to emulate.

Facts on the ground in Russia quickly illustrated this mistake. The invasion of 17 foreign pro-capitalist armies necessitated maintaining a standing army. This, coupled with the defeat of the international revolution in Western and Central Europe, after the October revolution in Russia, insured the institution would be kept around for a considerable length of time.

Whither the Wither?

Lenin did not anticipate the protracted nature of the socialist transition period and the difficulties which would

beset transferring power to the people.

Related to this issue is how Lenin dealt with the bureaucracy. He stubbornly insisted that bureaucracy simplified the functions of government and therefore an entire nation could be governed like a post office.

After the Bolshevik consolidation of power, problems with the bureaucracy began to crop up. The new Party system became distanced from the people.

Lenin responded with rectification campaigns to weed out degenerative elements. Later, with Stalin in power, the state and bureaucracy assumed grotesque proportions.

Mao & The Chinese Road

It was Mao Tse-Tung who later developed a more systematic Marxist approach to deal with this tendency. He analyzed that socialism contains elements of the old capitalist society as well as the future communist society. This awareness of the internal contradictions under socialism explained the betrayal of leading Party elements as more than just their individual problem. It was a symptom of the battles raging for the direction of society.

The solution was mass struggle, whereby the people would depose these misleaders, transforming their political understanding in the process

Cont. page 8

CUNY

A Short History of CUNY

It's Always Been A Struggle

By Deirdre Kornhiser
Brooklyn College

The City University of New York (CUNY) opened its doors in 1847 as a school for middle class Protestant girls called the Free Academy, which became subsidized by wealthy New Yorkers like Andrew Carnegie with the specific aim of assimilating and acculturating Jews.

Sherry Gorelick states in her book, *City College and the Jewish Poor*, that these philanthropists believed that the Eastern European Jewish immigrants needed to be refined, so the local business entrepreneurs decided to finance the restructuring of the school in return for their carte blanche ability to dictate the school's curriculum.

The Academy was established in time of economic depression. Even then city politicians threatened to defund the college at each recession. Nonetheless, the Academy flourished into what is now known as the City University of New York with 21 individual campuses that has the largest minority population in the country.

This century-old institution has graduated thousands of poor, working class people of all colors, ethnicities, religions and walks of life. It has graduated 11 Nobel prize-winners, award-winning authors, actors, musicians, artists, prominent scholars, politicians and business leaders.

It is important to be clear that many city residents were either denied entrance to CUNY or denied matriculated student status. Many could not play on school teams or run for student government offices because of their skin color or religion.

By the 1950s City College of New York was mostly white, middle class, Protestant and were resistant to accepting applications from Jewish students. The student protests paved the way for a more inclusive campus. Back then, students picketed City College, demand-

ing and eventually winning the entrance of Jewish students.

Moreover, Blacks and Latinos were denied enrollment or matriculated student status until 1966 when Black and Latino students of the Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) and their teachers fought back. The SEEK students and supporters raised their voices on the Brooklyn College campus every day. Many were arrested, and some college staff even lost their jobs fighting for equal access for Black and Latino students.

Through the SEEK movement other forms of activism spread throughout CUNY, especially against the Vietnam War. Many CUNY activists from the Civil rights movement, the SEEK movement and the anti-Vietnam War movement met strong resistance on the mostly bourgeois, white male campuses. However, they persevered by educating and activating the student body.

These movements anticipated one of the most significant CUNY battles for open admissions, the fight to ensure the right of all New York City high school graduates to receive an education at CUNY. By 1972 these activists won the battle for a CUNY-wide open admissions policy. Soon after, tuition was enacted for the first time in the Free Academy's existence. Immediately following the open admissions policy, the percentage of

Shameless Commieprop, from pg. 7

and taking a greater role in administering state power.

This ethos guided the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Lenin's error resulted from not fully applying dialectics to the contradictions contained in socialist society.

Democracy and Dictatorship

One common accusation against State and Revolution made by the apologists and promoters of the bourgeois democratic order, is that it is a blueprint for totalitarianism which negates civil liberties. Errors in this regard actually stem, again, from Lenin's insufficient application of dialectics.

In the era of the proletarian dictatorship, the old ruling class must be suppressed and politically disenfranchised. Therefore, Lenin emphasizes the violent suppression of the bourgeoisie, without regard to "law". This set a dangerous precedent for dealing with future dissenters, both

within and outside the Party.

Lenin, and to a greater degree Stalin, failed to see that such people were often not "counter-revolutionaries", but were engendered by the contradictions of socialism. The led to the dictatorship of the proletariat often being administered as a dictatorship of the Party. Peaceful struggle is the means by which to resolve the political struggles under socialism. efforts must be made to preserve the greatest degree of freedom of expression and freedom of criticism of socialist society. The tragic results of this doctrine were seen in the Stalin era in the Soviet Union.

The importance of State and Revolution rests in its emphasis on the class nature of the state and its insistence on the necessity of violence to overthrow and destroy the old state and establish a new people's power. However, it is also necessary to sum up the lessons of history to avoid dogmatism and prevent the previous mistakes of socialism.

people of all colors admitted rose substantially.

Following the open admissions victory, New York City was engulfed in a fiscal crisis. At the same time, many wealthy and middle class New Yorkers, who were themselves CUNY alumni, left the city. In addition, much of the city government's clout was crippled by an increasingly powerful state legislature. The financial emergency forced the city to relinquish control of its budget to the state. It remains state controlled today in back room deals by basically three people: Governor Pataki, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, and Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno.

For the first time in CUNY history, a referendum requiring a tuition fee for attending CUNY was passed. By 1976 CUNY started charging a tuition fee of \$650. For many, winning the open admissions battle for Blacks and Latinos meant little because people could not afford the tuition fee, which resulted in tripling the cost and size of the administration, and the

mind boggling, but profitable for some, bureaucratic system of financial aid.

For 129 years the City University of New York developed a slogan, "Access, Excellence and Community Service" while it was tuition free; back then it was the University's intention to serve the community by educating the populace.

In 1996, the logo currently used by CUNY, "Access and Excellence" grows more and more misleading as tuition costs skyrocket, thus denying access. And with the current trend to cut the CUNY budget yearly, the system and its students can only strive for an "S" for satisfactory, not an "E" for excellence.

The term public higher education is also misleading because most New Yorkers these days are unable to afford college or even qualify for financial aid as they try to survive in a brutal economy.

CUNY's mission and contract with this city is to educate the highest percentage possible of each generation of New Yorkers. We should be wary of those who suggest that CUNY is no longer financially capable of fulfilling its mission. This is the typical argument used against public education since the Middle Ages.

Historically the City University has faced four economic depression. Each time prompted affluent New Yorkers to immediately point to CUNY as an expenditure to be cut back; nonetheless, CUNY managed to stay tuition free for 129 years. The economic argument is still used to justify the budget cuts that have threatened CUNY and public education nationwide for the last decade.

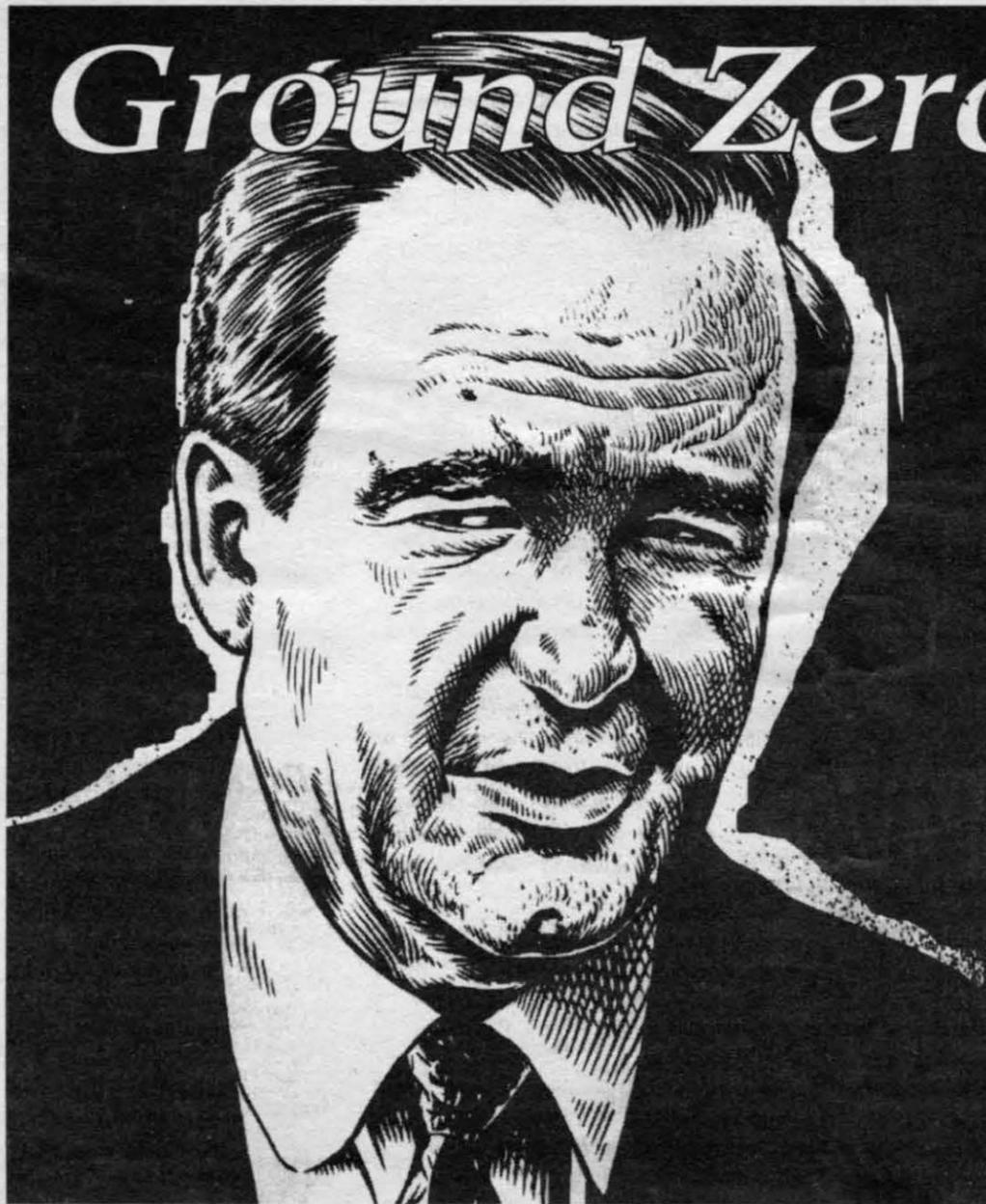
The bottom line of this debate really depends not on financial matters, but rather on our society's priorities. The public education system is a long term investment in any society, and an educated society is apt to be a more prosperous community.

In a few words, the budget cuts are not a force of nature. They are man-made.



Editorial at Ground Zero

Election '96 Promises To Be a Giant Shit Sandwich



Having barely finished walking through the Republican primary field, the Spheric staff keeps checking the bottoms of our shoes 'cause something smells so fiercely of shit it's hard to concentrate in class.

When Bill Clinton has been so hostile to the basic interests of most Americans that a racist goblin like Pat Buchanan can play himself off as a friend of the white American worker, it seems we're more likely to step on a mine than good ol' fashioned political bull.

For the first time since George Wallace ran his segregationist campaign back in the day, a straight-up fascist has hit prime-time in a national election. In simply recognizing the increasing poverty and general insecurity facing the poor and those in the barely middle-class, Buchanan has been able to portray himself as a champion of the common man. The media has been only too friendly to this message, leaving out the fact that every piece of his platform promises more of the same and worse.

In blaming immigrants, black folk, women with their own lives, homosexuals, trade unions, and Jews, Buchanan has simply clearly stated what the realities in America are. For this he is called "courageous", while students who actually stand up for education and equal rights for all people are called truants.

For now his campaign is on hold. But what is really interesting about Buchanan is how he makes Bob Dole into a "moderate". Dole, for his part, has embraced every part of Buchanan's campaign except for international trade policy and the explicit racism. He supports making abortion illegal, criminalizing immigrants (except when they're working for a sub-minimum wage), expanding the powers of police, maintaining an aggressive foreign policy, ending affirmative action and on and on and on.

But what is really interesting about Dole is how he makes Clinton into a "lesser of two evils". Clinton, who signed NAFTA and betrayed the votes of labor. Clinton, who has done more to hurt social welfare programs than Ronald Reagan. Clinton, who has bragged about his record of deporting immigrants. Clinton, who has personally signed a death warrant for a mentally retarded man, while the others just talk about it. Clinton, who promised to help the people of Haiti and ended up invading. Bill "lesser of two evils" Clinton is now supposed to be the only reasonable choice.

All of this campaigning reminds SPHERIC of alchemy. In olden times, would-be scientists tried to turn lead into gold, now would-be social scientists try to turn assholes into presidents.

SPHERIC bets that the people of New York will choose wisely. Just like in past years when given such a choice, New York will resoundingly vote for none of the above.

What we want to know is: If Nobody keeps winning, why isn't Nobody president?

USS Egos Spoil Unified March

Another self-promotion ritual fizzles at CUNY's expense



Tepid march more about enhancing USS Chair Bill Negron's resume than stopping the cuts.

work with the more grassroots focused SLAM! coalition or NYPIRG. As a result the Grad Center spent its effort building for the March 21st demo in Times Square.

The SLAM! activists, who are heavily concentrated at the senior colleges, have a more open and democratic structure and have stated their rejection of a political strategy based on simply supporting the Democratic Party. They are trying to create a multi-issue student movement that could challenge the ineffectiveness of the liberal check-book politics pursued by the USS and the Faculty through the Faculty Senate and the Profession-

al Staff Congress (PSC) leadership.

The USS bases its organizing strategy on gathering together student government leaders and having a carefully orchestrated rally and march in which the people who participate are there to be a backdrop for the political lobbying that the USS sees as its primary political mission. Participants (meaning CUNY students) are excluded from playing a meaningful role in the planning and politics of the events. Turnout is accomplished primarily through patronage systems and the charisma of particular student government leaders.

Originally the USS and SLAM! had attempted to organize a joint event on the 21st. It was hoped that a combined effort by students would draw in the faculty and a major CUNY-wide event could be held. SLAM!, which had been doing the only organizing for the event at that stage, decided that they wanted an event without politicians. Unfortunately, the faculty through the Faculty Senate, the PSC and the New Caucus, a left-wing dissident faction within the PSC, demanded the demo be focused on voter registration and having democratic party politicians on the stage. When SLAM! refused,

they pulled out. The USS from the very beginning chose to follow the lead of the faculty rather than articulating their own politics or having a real dialog with SLAM!

The USS then decided to organize its own event for the 28th. The faculty also boycotted this event because it was on the same day as the March for Racial Justice. The results of the USS's organizing on its own terms was that 3-400 students came out to BMCC. The irony is that the USS's rally was comprised entirely of student speakers. In other words: no politicians.

This indicates that the USS isn't actually committed to a particular political strategy as much as they are to retaining their independent political feifdoms. By refusing to work with a broad base of student activists in a democratic process they indicate their fear of an open political process in which their views are a minority. The USS needs to either work with the students who are really organizing or it needs to get out of the way.

The events of March make it clear that if there is going to be a major mobilization of CUNY students, the faculty and the USS must open up the process and quit pandering solely to the Democratic party to solve what is a much more fundamental political problem of austerity and corporate downsizing.

by Alex S. Vitale
CUNY Grad Center
March is protest season at CUNY, and this year is no exception. As we face another year of budget cuts and tuition increases, students, faculty, and the CUNY administration are all pursuing a variety of political strategies to keep CUNY's mission of educating poor and middle-class New Yorkers alive.

On March 28th the Student government types under the leadership of the University Student Senate (USS) orchestrated their version of CUNY student politics in a march from Borough of Manhattan Community College to Governor Pataki's office at the World Trade Center.

To understand this event it is necessary to deal for just a minute on the internal politics of CUNY. It is probably a surprise to most CUNY students to learn that there even was such a demo. This is in part because the majority of student activists working on the budget cuts have chosen to



Rights of Spring

from page 3

after their school was surrounded by authorities to prevent a mass walkout. Even so, some made their way to the protest.

The conditions in New York City's high schools are horrible. Years of budget cuts and neglect of a system that's mostly students from poor families and oppressed nationalities have resulted in unbearable conditions. A group of students from an alternative high school brought a spray-painted banner that said simply "Our School Sucks!" They came because "we have a library and no books in it and we have a music room and no music teacher and in our gym we can touch the ceiling and our lunchroom we can't even fit 30 people and we have no hot lunch."

A student from a Brooklyn high school said: "We've got books from a long time ago. Like when my uncle went to school they had the same books. They put money into other things that we really don't need, but then when we ask for something, they say they don't have no money for it. But yet they can always find money for stuff that we really didn't ask for and don't really need, like jails, you know what I'm saying? If you give us something to do, we're not gonna be in jail."

Up Against Police Brutality and Prisons

While all kinds of cuts to public services are coming down, the government is putting more cops on the street and building more prisons. New York

State has three new maximum security prisons in the works. And they are moving to "privatize" the prisons. They want to turn them over to private corporations who make a profit, including by forcing prisoners to work for almost no pay. One woman who is a former student at Hunter and was unable to return this year because of last year's cuts spoke angrily to the crowd: "How is it that they can't keep our schools open, but they're opening up jails every fucking day? When they tell you that you can't go to school, what are you supposed to do? They're trying to make us believe that the brothers up in jail have nothing to do with us. But when they toss our people out of school, what are we supposed to do?" The crowd responded with angry chants of "Fight! Fight! Fight!"

MOVEMENT

What's All This Talk About SLAM?

In the last few months, students from a number of CUNY campuses and private colleges have come together and formed an independent student movement. Tired of placing faith in the promises of far away politicians while CUNY keeps getting gutted, the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM!) has decided students need to take matters into their own hands. SPHERIC couldn't agree more.

In a time when the system has declared war on the people, SLAM! has begun to organize so that we, the people, can wage war on this system. That war promises to take many

forms, and SLAM! with admirable foresight, has created a democratic structure to make room for everyone.

Building on the ashes of 1995's CUNY Coalition, SLAM! has tried to remedy some of the student movement's problems by adopting a campus-based representative structure and maintaining democratic decision making. Instead of a set program, different groups on

the campuses, be they clubs or just groups of friends, can have their own input locally and city-wide.

March 21st was SLAM!'s first mobilization against Governor Pataki's budget cuts. Over a thousand students from around the city marched in the rain to stand up for their schools and stand up with pride. A SLAM! member from Hunter College called the march "a

giant organizing meeting, because if the powers that be won't listen to what we've said, then we've got to get our communities together so we can make our own decisions." SLAM! can be reached at 212-642-2549.



INSECURITY

Keeping CUNY S.A.F.E From Students

In the face of unprecedented budget cuts, CUNY Central founds a new security force

by Lee Wengraf

The 1994-1995 wave of budget cuts and student protests has seen CUNY administrators put policing and security front and center on the University agenda. They have not restricted their actions to security issues on campus, but have been directly involved in various forms of policing students of campus.

Many students are aware by now of the role of police during protests last spring. On March 23, the demonstration at city hall against proposed budget cuts drew 20,000 people. Facing off to the police, students and

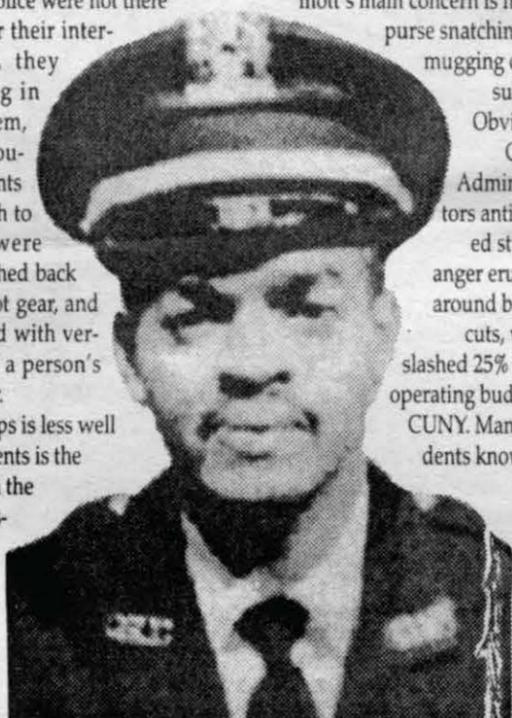
The peace officers themselves have arrest powers and can carry arms if the college president where they work designates them to do so.

faulty were attacked, pepper-gassed, dragged over barricades and arrested. any others faced a dangerous crowding situation as police closed off the city hall park area.

For many students, the actions of the police that day sent a clear message that the police were not there to look out for their interests. In fact, they were standing in the way of them, literally, as thousands of students trying to march to Wall Street were physically pushed back by police in riot gear, and were instigated with verbal assaults of a person's gender or color.

What perhaps is less well known to students is the extent to which the CUNY administration actually worked with the police to keep students at bay.

On August 14,



Goofy alone, menacing in packs, the SAFE Team has to go.

the Daily News and New York magazine both revealed a newly-discovered wealth of information on the CUNY administration's meddling in the realm of student activism.

Documents subpoenaed by Ron McGuire, the arrested students' lawyer, revealed how CUNY administrators spent considerably more time surveying student protests than fighting the budget cuts.

Wherever possible, they followed students at protests, seeking out the assistance of the police and collecting information on student protesters. They have at least 600 pages of documentation on student activities. Although most of the documents report on activities from the last school year, some documents show that as early as spring 1992. Chancellor Wynetka Ann Reynolds sought ways to strengthen ties between her office and the NYPD.

This new information is important for several reasons. For one, many of the documents, memos written back and forth between CUNY administration and the NYPD, show how the University had been preparing for some time to put down student protests. On January 11, shortly after Pataki came to office on a campaign of balancing the budget, the death penalty, and cuts in the state's university systems, Elique met with Captain McDermott of the NYPD's Disorder Control Unit to discuss strategies for dealing with student protests.

In his outline, McDermott recommends specific strategies for dealing with, "civil disorder, student unrest, and building takeovers." He suggests forming a "platoon" of three so-called "Public Safety Response Teams," each with a supervisor and eight "peace officers." These teams would become a "formidable deterrent," says McDermott.

He proceeds to outline a protocol for campus security and NYPD mobilization if, as he succinctly puts it, "a situation arises that would necessitate the possible need of a substantial police response to a specific campus for a non-emergency event, student protests, etc.

It's clear that Elique's and McDermott's main concern is not the purse snatching and mugging on the subway. Obviously CUNY Administrators anticipated student anger erupting around budget cuts, which slashed 25% of the operating budget of CUNY. Many students know that the



Above: SAFE Team gets trial by fire arresting 44 hunger strikers at CCNY, April 11, 1995. Clifford N. Ible / The Campus

administrators have not taken up the fight as strongly as they might have liked, to say the least. In fact, Reynolds was forced out of the California University System by the same sort of university downsizing due to budget cuts. But what these documents reveals that more than being passive hand-writing victims of Pataki's orders, they are working with the NYPD to undermine the student's fight back.

On March 23rd, for example, as students converged on city hall, staff members from the CUNY Administration of Student Affairs hung around the edges of the demonstration, taking notes and watching the goings-ons.

Sheila Thomas, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, wrote a memo to Elsa Nunez-Wormack, Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs, late that afternoon giving a play by play account of the rally, stating how Student Affairs "followed the group." Thomas writes, "Elique confirmed that the group did have a permit to march to Wall Street after the 2 pm rally." She goes on to write that, "Police maintained tight controls to keep everyone on the sidewalk and did not permit students to march along the designated....Police also sealed areas, corralling students behind barricades and at times not allowing people to move in either direction....During the period of 2:45-3:00, confrontations began to occur. Reports were that police had sprayed a number of people with mace."

Staff members on the scene provided administrators with a clear picture of unfolding events and of the

chaos caused by the police's crowd control. And believing the students had a permit to march, administrative none the less stood by and allowed the police to force students into a dangerous overcrowded space, arrest students demanding access to education, and as Thomas puts it, "drag away" students from the scene. Administrators proved to be no friends of students in their battle with police that day.

CUNY administrators have also been busy with other activities concerning student protests. As was

"The timing of the arrival of the peace officers at CUNY when students were protesting budget cuts seemed too much of a coincidence."

widely reported in the press, these 600 pages of subpoenaed documents reveal that they were compiling information on students, including may from CUNY Grad, arrested at demonstrations: at a protest at Hunter on March 15, at City Hall on March 23, at the hunger strike at CCNY on April 11 and 12, and at several bridges and tunnels blockaded by activists on April 25.

Administrators put together what New York magazine described as an "Enemies List" with students' school, race, grade point average, and academic specifics such as whether they were in remedial education programs and so on.

Activists first learned that the

Administration was keeping tabs on them in spring '95.

The Hunter Envoy reported on May 15 that a CCNY student who tried to attend an overnight vigil at Hunter on April 26 was turned away because his name appeared on a list Hunter Security had of people who were to be prohibited from entering the building.

According to Ann Lam, an assistant to the students' attorney Ron McGuire, the Administration initially denied that this list exists. The Hunter Envoy said on September 12 that Jay Hershenson, Vice-Chancellor for University Relations, wrote a letter to New York magazine's editor stating that "There is no emphasis or program to maintain lists of student protesters." Yet it is clear that the surveillance has in fact taken place. Nunez-Wormack has attempted to justify Administration actions by saying that they compiled the list for the benefit of the students, to answer questions from concerned parents about their children following demonstrations. The Hunter Envoy reported on September 12 that she claimed students benefited from the lists for "medical reasons". The lists contained no medical information.

It seems that Jose Elique went to work on this project shortly after the March 23 demonstration. Sheila Thomas writes to Nunez-Wormack on March 30 with apparent regret that Elique was unable to pry information on arrestees' Social Security numbers and birth dates from the NYPD. This development must have thrown a wrench in the works of the spy project as CUNY students are identified in the University's computer by Social Security number. Nonetheless, they did not have too much of a problem compiling the list and circulating it to the college presidents.

The bottom line on all this "secret" information is that CUNY Administrators spent time and money using their highly paid 33-member Special Assistance for Events (SAFE) team to

trail students, and their security staff to research them and devise ways to police them last spring. No figure was given for exactly how much all this work cost, but the University spends \$30 million a year on security, says the Daily News.

The security budget, they state, is up by almost 50% in five years. But apparently keeping tabs on these kinds of student activities went on throughout the academic year, from the protests last November against Mayor Giuliani's budget and continuing through the spring.

Campus security logs record the observations of SAFE team officers working in plain clothes on the scene,

cont. next page

un-SAFE

from last page

The SAFE team is a relatively new incarnation at CUNY. According to Lam, it was first conceived in 1992 and finally implemented last January, drawn from the 559 peace officers that work at CUNY. They are used, as their name implies, as "special event" security, although that has amounted, in reality, only to work at demonstrations.

The peace officers themselves have arrest powers and can carry arms if the college president where they work designates them to do so.

While crime is often the stated reason for increases in police presence, the New York Times reported in August of this year that since the Federal Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act was passed in 1990, "most campuses are very safe, compared with municipalities."

The reasoning behind the growth of police forces on campuses lies elsewhere, the article implies, showing that campus police forces grew during the Vietnam War era. While some college administrations, the article claims, fear that guns "would tarnish the campuses' sanctuary-like atmosphere," CUNY's own Jose Elique, quoted in the very same article, feels chagrined that he must argue for weapons. As he says, "it's somewhat ironic, this is the largest urban university system in the country, possible in the world, and we're still fighting for pepper spray and handcuffs." Incidentally, before coming to CUNY, Elique worked for ten years as the head of Port Authority's Anti-Terrorist Unit.

From their record on surveillance and the peace officers, the CUNY Administration is not making Elique fight too hard. They have given him the green light to intimidate students with armed guards on the campuses and to turn a blind eye to police violence towards students.

Yet CUNY Administrators are hardly original on this score. They're taking their due from politicians who have cut money for CUNY while increasing the budget for police.

The budget for fiscal year 1996 from the City of New York, which mainly affects the community colleges, was \$3.72 million down from \$3.94 million, a 5% decrease, from the year before. The budget for the NYPD for this year is \$2.3 billion, an increase of 10.3% over the previous year's.

This trend is mirrored at the state and national levels. From Clinton's multi-billion dollar crime bill on down, the message politicians are sending is push through austerity in public institutions and have a well trained police back-up to handle any problems. Security officials may very well cry for the need of "crime prevention" and "student protection", but both their actions on the street and their behind the scene dealings show otherwise.

As the peace officer team around CUNY grows, increasingly administrators will scramble to justify their presence and their expense in the face of heightened austerity.

But the peace officers are police on campus just like the NYPD police students off campus. Their roles are the same and students need to call them for what they are. It can be the first step to turning back austerity at CUNY.

Spheric is unlike anything you've ever known. You can't eat it, yet it leaves you full. You can't make love to it, yet it sends you poetry. You can't pay your rent with it, but it would piss your landlord off. *Spheric* can't live without you either. Send us your life, your hopes, your dreams. Send us to hell if you wish, but send us your letters

695 park avenue
Rm 207TH
NYC, NY 10021

Spheric Quiz #1 -- Find the Good Cop



**No matter who you vote for
WE'RE STILL HERE**

THE MAN

Belligerent Budget Battles

What the Republicans and Democrats agree on — aims for the rich

by RW & Sattara Lenz, Brooklyn
 In November, the White House and Congress faced off in a three-week shut-down of many government operations in a battle over the 1996 federal budget.

The Republican-controlled Congress passed a bill which President Clinton then vetoed. Congress responded by temporarily laying off almost 300,000 federal workers and paychecks were held up for most of the government's 800,000 other employees. This resulted in the shut-down of all kinds of government offices and services, from passport services to federal support checks.

Meanwhile, of course, this "government shutdown" didn't shut down the armed enforcers of the system: the military, the FBI, the border police, and the federal prisons. These were labeled "essential". To finance these operations, the Clinton administration borrowed up \$60 billion from the federal pension funds and on January 9, the Republican Congress passed temporary funding for most federal operations. They also borrowed with interest \$24 billion from several privately owned banks. The only crisis is how much money is for military, police and weapons, and none of the key players suffered in the least from the shutdown, however, nearly a million people had to find other ways to feed their families and pay the bills.

The "reopening of the government" does not end this conflict inside the government. There is still no agreement between the White



Who's the Man?: A gathering of wolves: (from left) Democratic President Clinton, Republican Senator Dole, and Republican Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich sharpen their teeth.

planning to go ahead with deep cuts in federal subsidies for welfare, education, health care, arts, non-military scientific research, farm prices and many other programs that one way or another affect the people. At the same time, different sections of the ruling class have opposing views about what should be cut. There is a struggle between them because trillion-dollar budget decisions will affect whole industries and regions for years to come and because budget cuts could provoke massive resistance from the people. None of their differing plans have anything to do with serving the people. All their propos-

frame represents a new agreement within the ruling class. It is significant because the time-frame more-or-less determines how rapid and how deep budget cuts will ultimately have to be. Until recently, the Clinton White House said it was "unthinkable" to balance the budget in less than ten years. Liberal experts said it would mean cutting government expenditures that are necessary for the system and would dangerously increase "social tensions." But in the last few months, the White House changed its position and openly embraced the Republicans' call for a seven-year timetable, maybe because social unrest hasn't increased as much as feared.

Over the last five years, they have forged a consensus that they must sharply reduce its budget deficits and get its national debt "under control." There is no longer much difference in the size of the cuts proposed by the White House Democrats and the Congressional Republicans. Clinton's January 6 budget plan proposes cutting the federal budget \$602 billion over seven years, while the Congressional Republican plan would have cut \$664 billion over the same seven years. This is only a small difference of \$62 billion — within a seven-year overall budget plan involving many trillions of dollars.

At a time when problems like homelessness, lousy education and poverty are intense for us, there is no discussion in the government about solving those problems.

All sides in the Washington budget negotiations plan to cut the government's deficits by cutting federal programs that help most people. A special target is the so-called "entitlement" programs. "Entitlement" programs are the safety nets which provide minimum survival income and

health care for many poor, retired and disabled people — including AFDC, welfare, Medicaid (federal health care insurance for the poor), Medicare (federal health care insurance for the elderly) and SSI (social security payments to the disabled). Clinton proposes \$307 billion in entitlement cuts over seven years — the Republicans' November budget proposal proposed \$381 billion in cuts. Clinton proposed \$102 billion in Medicare cuts — while the Republicans proposed \$201 billion in cuts. Clinton's plan would cut \$43 billion from welfare, food stamps and other poverty programs — but wouldn't cut farm subsidies and student loans. The Republicans want to gut welfare and cut \$4.5 million from farm subsidies and student loans. And so it stands: both government parties support huge cuts that would hurt millions of people.

The ruling class is determined that budget cuts should not weaken the core of its state power: its armed forces and police. Both parties support significant increases in the funds spent for the military, police and prisons — even though the trillion-dollar military buildup of the 1980's was a major cause of the system's current financial crisis.

After a few years of declining military budgets, Congress approved several huge new weapons projects in this year's budget that the Pentagon had not even requested.

On January 6, right in the middle of the "budget crisis," Clinton signed a law increasing the budget of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) by 24% to \$2.6 billion — most of the increase will be spent on militarizing the border and rounding up immigrants. It is not hard to see what parts of the population are being left out of the negotiations.

If you attend a public school,

were to lose your means of subsistence if you lost your job or your business shut down, if you get financial or other aid, or don't own a multinational corporation: this means you. The truth is that the government is negotiating a cold-hearted assault on millions of working people, the poor, the unemployed, the old, and the young. Such cuts would wipe out the thin margins for survival of many people in the ghettos, trailer parks and farms. They will increase hunger, homelessness, poverty, and neglect. They target immigrants. They will make decent medical care even less affordable for the poor, and cause even more sick people to die unnecessarily. These cuts are designed to accelerate major changes in the workforce: the ruling class wants a more desperate workforce — with millions of people willing to work for less, under any kind of conditions.

What is the Government Infighting About?

The insignificant conflicts within the budget battle revolve around three issues:

1. Powerful Republicans in Congress want the federal government to stop guaranteeing a certain national safety net of minimum income and health care. Check your social welfare history, this thinking was the basis for the 1601 Poor Laws in England which made family members economically responsible for each other, made it illegal to beg, to travel to look for other jobs, to refuse the wage that was offered you and put all people without jobs in workhouses. The new American Republic adopted the English plan as a basis for its own.

Again today the government wants its programs to stop being federal entitlements. Instead they want

Clinton is working to draw lots of middle forces into supporting the government by telling them his version is the "lesser evil."

House and the Congress about how much to spend and how much to tax in 1996 — even though the fiscal year 1996 started in September. There is widespread talk that there may not be an agreement on this year's federal budget. They could pass bills for the government to be financed on a day-to-day basis — maintaining an air of conflict and crisis until the 1996 election. This with money they say they don't have in the first place.

This budget conflict is a struggle within the government. The politicians in Washington — of both parties — protect the interests of huge privately owned corporations, that do business all over the world.

Here is what the current government conflict shows: The ruling class of the U.S. is deadly serious about deeply cutting programs that many people rely on to survive — they are

als would strike poor and working class on the edge of comfort hard — and deeply affect the lives and hopes of millions of middle class people too.

What Both Parties Agree On

The mainstream press has focused on the disagreements between the Democratic White House and the Republican dominated Congress, but the things they agree on are even more revealing.

First: One reason the two parties have allowed a government shutdown to happen is because they both want to make budget cuts into an even more commanding issue as the system moves full-steam into its election year.

Both the White House and the Republican majorities of Congress now support reaching a balanced budget in seven years. This specific time-

Belie Strange Bedfellows

to fund all welfare and Medicaid programs as block grants (a set amount). Money would run out for these services even if there is a big jump in need (like during a recession). The Democrats argue that completely ending entitlements would make the system less flexible. Some worry that this could increase the danger of "class warfare" in the U.S.

of people, including sections of the population that are very wealthy. That is why the government can agree to make *major* cuts, while bitterly *disagreeing over precisely where and when to cut*. What underlies this is how far into the future the plan is reaching.

Some of the most blunt Republicans openly talk about the need for another wave of changes after the one

Meanwhile, Giuliani continues to offer millions in welfare too Wall Street.

At the same time, financial projections suggest that the plans now under consideration would not cut deep enough to solve the system's financial problems: The New York Times (November 11, 1995) quotes Senate estimates saying that even if the most extreme plans now under discussion are enacted, the deficits would "rapidly flare" soon after 2002, and the federal government would quickly be unable to finance Social Security or Medicare. All this talk of crisis calls for some one to solve it. The ruling class is creating an illusion of power which calls for its necessity.

The government is basically downsizing, which we have heard so much about, in order to be more efficient, without regard to any worker in a corporate situation or to the masses of people in this situation. The proposals now being discussed could possibly create major new political unrest.

In other words, two opposite fears are underlying this budget: On the one hand, the ruling class is worried that their "restructuring" could go too far and explode, triggering massive resistance. At the same time, they are deeply worried that the cuts

they make may not go far enough toward making U.S. capitalism "lean and mean," more competitive internationally and able to solve its economic crisis, which will never end as long as we borrow money from other nations and banks.

This System Offers No Future But Oppression

This election season is so far shaping up as a game of "good cop/bad cop." Clinton plays good cop, he claims that his plan will protect education, children, the poor and the environment. At a recent press conference, he said, "We can balance the budget. We can do it in a way that invests in our people and reflects our values, opportunity for all, doing our duty for our parents and our children, strengthening our communities, our families and America." Clinton is working to draw lots of middle forces into supporting government cuts by telling them *his* version is the "lesser evil."

At the same time, some "bad cop" Republicans are even more aggressively trying to drive wedges between the middle classes and the proletarian people. They openly promised privileged strata that they will actually benefit from a lower tax

burden after savage attacks on the poor. They promise that slashing the federal budget will "get the government out of the lives of ordinary people." All of these promises are false.

It is certainly true that humanity need to have the U.S. government of its back. The U.S. government is nothing but the state machinery of an oppressive ruling class. It is a swollen and utterly corrupt monstrosity. It sucks up trillions of dollars in taxes and rearranges such money to benefit corporate profits and the stable operations of capitalism. This state mechanism bribes some sections of the people into supporting this system, while it aims armed terror at those it cannot bribe, both in oppressed communities here and around the world.

But nothing decided in Washington corridors will ever lift the U.S. government from the backs of the people. The proposed budgets of both parties intend to finance a rush toward more cops, more prison guards, more high-tech jails, more weapons, more spying, more border control.

This country has always been a nightmare, but now the government plans to take it to another level. That's why their plans for cuts come with plans for prisons.

So, what are your plans?

They are deeply worried that the cuts they make may not go far enough toward making U.S. capitalism lean and mean.

2. The Republicans want to shift much of the control of social policy from the federal governments to state governments. They want to end most federal control over how funds are spent, and allow each state government to establish its own requirements for welfare and levels of benefits.

This would allow state governments to impose extreme reactionary policies locally — including rapid cut-off of welfare, forced work, punishing hospitals that provide abortions, more reactionary school curriculums, etc.

On this issue, Clinton has moved toward the Republican position. Clinton's latest budget proposal, for example, would allow states to reduce Medicaid payments to hospitals and nursing homes, and they would no longer be required to make "reasonable and adequate" payments. The Democrats argue that decentralization would reduce the ability of the government to intervene in different regions, and that extreme unevenness in policies might trigger explosions of oppressed peoples (the way Jim Crow segregation in Southern states caused the Civil Rights movement).

Clinton appointees now allow state governments to experiment with vicious new welfare restrictions. However, Clinton's budget plans still envision federal control over many social policies. This was the same battle between the Federalists and the Democratic Republicans in the writing of the Constitution and again at the Civil War with the North for more Federal power and the South for more state power.

3. The details of the budget battle are less distinct. One of the main issues is the amount of money that is to be redistributed from poor and middle income people to corporations, banks and the government. The Republicans are calling for extensive tax cuts — especially helping the upper classes and corporations.

Clinton has moved close to the Republicans on this too — he says he would approve a \$147 billion tax cut over seven years, while the Republicans insist on at least a \$241 billion tax cut. Already \$700 billion goes for corporate welfare and the budget being negotiated is how much more tax cuts will go to corporations. These varying tax policies shift *billions* of dollars within the economy, affecting the future of industries, regions and various sections of the population. Changes in spending affect the political loyalties and activities of millions

now being negotiated: including completely *abolishing* the federal government's social net: privatizing welfare, Medicare, Social Security and even public education. Some Republican presidential candidates have called for abolishing the minimum wage and virtually all environmental laws.

The ultimate goal here is privatization, which has already started in New York City. Three public hospitals, including Elmhurst and Queens have been put on the auction block and others are being shut down, under the same auspices of a budget crisis.

The New Caucus & The PSC

Faculty Take On the Budget Cuts

by Rob Hollander
CUNY Grad Center

What do you do with a paternalistic and tired union that doesn't organize its rank and file membership, is in bed with politicians and plays off factions within its membership against one another? Organize the grass roots, develop a new progressive program, oust the leadership and take it over. That's what the New Caucus of the CUNY faculty union thinks is the way forward, and that's what they're in the midst of doing.

"The largest army of intellectuals in the city," as historian Michael Weinstien describes the CUNY faculty, is "placated by politicians for the sake of its contract." Liberating the power of that army is what the New Caucus is about.

Union leadership falls into two categories: service oriented bureaucracy and activist mobilizers. Service oriented union bureaucracies organize with other unions and with politicians to expand their field of power while playing a paternalistic role towards their membership, providing good contracts without troubling the membership with the negotiating process.

Activist union leadership engages the membership in the

process of pressuring management. Politically, a paternalistic union runs the risk of complicating its relations with its membership when it incurs obligations to the outside authorities it deals with. Since it doesn't engage its membership in the process of dealing with the authorities that determine the contract, there is a further risk of alienating the membership while servicing those authorities, all in the name of getting a good contract. An activist union, because it cultivates the participation and resources of membership, won't run this risk even when it plays the political game with authority. The City University Union Caucus (CUUC) which currently runs the CUNY faculty union, the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), is a service oriented, paternalistic bureaucracy. Its control is being challenged by a New Caucus of progressive, activist faculty.

The idea of challenging the current leadership, the CUUC, came first to Professor John Hyland of LaGuardia Community College during the student takeovers in 1989. "The PSC spoke at the rallies," Hyland remembers, "but they wouldn't take an official position in support of the students." That fall, Hyland ran against the CUUC slate at LaGuardia and won on a platform of activist opposition to the state budget cuts then being implemented by Mario Cuomo, the democratic governor of New York State.

Hyland's challenge remained an isolated case until the chapter chair at Brooklyn College came up for retirement, opening an opportunity for experienced union activist leader Steve London to run a slate for all seventeen chapter seats. His Independent Caucus of Brooklyn College (ICBC) captured sixteen of those seats in

1993. Then, last year, Bill Friedheim was elected chair of BMCC and the New Caucus CUNY-wide came into being. Currently the New Caucus is running slates at City College, Queens College, and at Baruch College where their slate is unopposed. With luck they will replace Irwin Polishook, CUUC chair, by the end of next year.

These faculty activists plan to give leadership back to the grass roots; to educate, enfranchise and mobilize the rank and file; to revitalize the sense of agency among the faculty.

In opposition to the CUUC, which they describe in their *Draft Platform for the New Caucus* as a "closed elite that monopolizes virtually all decision-making, that removes membership from the policy debates that are the lifeblood of the union," the New Caucus wants "a union that speaks to the diversity of the instructional staff, while forging a unity of purpose" to fight the "passivity and negativism born out of demoralization and disgust."

Crucial to the continued success of the New Caucus will be the cultivation of the adjunct faculty. Currently adjuncts are represented by the PSC but are not encouraged to pay dues and thereby become voting members. Since adjuncts are low-paid and often transient members of CUNY, they rarely choose the option of paying high dues just for the privilege of voting in a union that they do not plan to be long term members of.

As a result, they have historically had little voice in union affairs. The New Caucus has committed to negotiating lower dues for adjuncts, while at the same time requiring that dues be taken out of the adjuncts' paychecks as they already are of full time faculty.

Adjuncts are nearly half the fac-

ulty work force. As long as the New Caucus cultivates this element within its ranks, it will have a voting block large enough to maintain control over leadership. This dynamic has attracted the interest of all adjunct activists, who are looking to the New Caucus as the best access to better wages and benefits.

Better wages for adjuncts will financially coerce the university to return to a preference for hiring full time faculty over adjuncts. This too benefits adjuncts since their ultimate goal is to enter the job market as full timers, a market that has recently suffered — just as the business job market has — from the over utilization of cheap part-time labor. As long as the loss of adjunct positions translates into an expanded full time market, adjuncts within the union will be supportive.

While it struggles to attain authority within the union, the New Caucus will have its own political game to play. Once the CUUC is out, the game is up, and we can expect powerful changes in the image and the actions of the faculty union. The difference for students will be seen in the influence that an activist union will have over the University Student Senate.

The USS has a long history of association with the PSC, which has consistently used the USS as a pawn towards its own political ends. The accomplishment of those ends has too often meant a stifling of student grass roots organizing and a marginalization of student protests disruptive to the political field in which the PSC plays. The New Caucus can be counted on to bring a fresh wind to the stagnant politics within CUNY's institutionalized forces.

MOVEMENT

Greensboro Massacre Remembered

New Play Tells Untold Story of the Fight Against The Klan

by Sattara Lenz
Brooklyn College

The Klan normally were night riders and they would attack people at night wearing sheets and hoods and such. What was different about this was they came in broad daylight and didn't have on their Klan robes, they were just dressed in street clothes and fired on us with the sense that they would get away with it," said Dr. Sally Bermanzohn, a political science professor at Brooklyn College and a survivor of the Greensboro Massacre.

On November 3, 1979, five people were murdered by members of

Men got out of the last car, got their rifles from the back and started to fire at people as they ran for safety.

the Klu Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party of North Carolina; four whites and one black, and eight other people were wounded, including Sally's husband, who was partially paralyzed.

Greensboro: A Requiem, a rendition of the incident opened in February at the McCarter theater of Princeton College. Many of the survivors said they felt some sort of justice will be served by getting their story told.

The playwright and artistic director, Emily Mann has been working on the play for the past five years, and based it largely on Bermanzohn's doctoral dissertation, which she wrote about the survivors of the incident.

Mann also directed *The Delaney Sisters: Having Their Say* which played on Broadway. I attended *Greensboro: A Requiem*, this past week-end and this article is based on an interview with Dr. Bermanzohn.

Bermanzohn said she remem-

bers the signal shot that sent people running towards the slaughter. The organizers were getting ready for the march that was to begin in the black housing project, Morningside Homes in Greensboro, NC. People were scattered across the perpendicular road intersection when at least six cars stopped along the roadway.

A man in the first car fired into the air. She said she remembers crouching down between two cars that were parked in the street. Meanwhile, men got out of the last car, got their rifles from the back and started to fire at people as they ran for safety.

The man Bermanzohn was talking with moments before, Mike Nathan, was shot and killed as he tried to run around the project building to safety. She said she remembers thinking that he was probably smarter than her for running.

Cesar Cruce was in a direct line between the shooters and the crowd and tried to use his large body to give cover to those who were fleeing. He was killed. Jim Waller and Bill Sampson were picked off as they ran. Sandi Smith had rounded up the children and got them to safety behind a building and had come back around to survey the situation when she was shot and killed. Eight others were wounded. Paul Bermanzohn was shot in the head. He barely survived and is permanently crippled.

Sally Bermanzohn had been an organizer in the South for 15 years, beginning in her college years at Duke. Although she had grown up in New York, her mother was originally from the South and she wanted to go down south to take part in the Civil Rights struggles that were exploding all over the area. She was involved in the anti-war movement and the women's movement, but her focus was civil rights and race issues.

After college she worked in the poverty program, and she participated in welfare rights and trade union organizing. She decided to become a

No Klan and Nazi members or law enforcement informants were found guilty, or served any time for the murders.

committed activist and when the larger movement settled down she and other committed activists formed a collective to continue organizing. "The combination of the economic situation and trying to fight racism and sexism became important to us," she said.



Woman kneeling over anti-racist shot by Klan in Greensboro, North Carolina on November 3, 1979.

They had felt very moved by the work that they had done and although major anti-segregation legislation had been passed, she recalls, "there was still much racism and tremendous poverty." In the late 1960's, a federal minimum wage was established at \$1.60 per hour which almost doubled the .85¢ hourly wage of the service workers of the Duke University hospital. She said she remembers the streets in the black communities were not paved.

She remembers people saying at

"As the hospitals, schools, and other public facilities became integrated, they became re-segregated economically." She talked about the mostly white Watts hospital which got a great deal of more funding than the mostly black Lincoln hospital, and also the Duke University hospital which separated its private from its public wards. She remarked, "You don't have to be Communists to put it together."

The collective of white organizers in Durham hooked up with a collective of black organizers that were doing similar work and were both studying Marxism. The two collectives joined and tackled issues like racism and police brutality, also workers and education issues and union organizing. She fondly reminisced that they did a lot of good work together.

Until the late 1970's Bermanzohn says she doesn't remember seeing even one robed Klansman. They were relatively quiet during the upsurge of the Civil Rights movement, but as it died down were becoming more active.

The Klan strictly opposed union

organizing and increased their intimidation in areas where union activity was brewing. The Klan polarized black and white workers who were fighting together for their rights as workers. They resorted to their traditional tactic of crossburnings, but were also intensifying recruitment drives and could often be seen handing out hate literature at high schools, said Bermanzohn.

The Klan was planning on holding a recruitment drive in China Grove, NC, by showing D.W. Griffith's, "The Birth of a Nation." The joined collectives which now called themselves Workers Viewpoint(WV), organized a protest to interrupt the recruiting.

Bermanzohn said she remembers thinking that it was successful because they couldn't recruit. What she says she didn't know at the time was that would be their impetus for what was to occur in Greensboro.

Workers Viewpoint was a local Communist group and two weeks before the November 3rd massacre, they joined the national organization, the Communist Workers Party(CWP).

She said she remembers that it was a big deal to change their name because Communism was a taboo subject. "The atmosphere was very anti-Communist after the incident, and we were dehumanized by the press and in the courts."

The CWP led by now Minister Nelson Johnson was to hold a march on November 3, 1979, which had been permitted by the local police. A permitted march guarantees that it will have police protection. Patrolling police were nowhere to be found, but Eddie Dawson, an FBI mole and former Klan member was working "undercover" for the Greensboro police and was in the armory car with the Klan that day.

Dawson was a major organizer of the event, which was revealed in court transcript and his interviews with the playwright. He successfully brought together two groups, the Klu Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party, to execute a revenge on the CWP organizers.

The groups are only two strains of the same bacteria, of which according to Bermanzohn, the leaders are often interchangeable. "David Duke was both a Grand Dragon for the KluKlux Klan in Louisiana and a leader in the American Nazi group, National Association for the Advancement for White People."

During the organizing, there were also FBI and Alcohol, Tobacco

cont. next page

Timeline of Greensboro Events:

JULY 8, 1979 In China Grove, NC, members of the Klan schedule a recruiting meeting at the China Grove Community Center featuring a screening of D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*. Members of the Southern Conference Educational Fund and Worker's Viewpoint Organization, led by Nelson Johnson, protest the event. Mike Nathan, Jim Waller, Sandi Smith, Cesar Cauce, and Paul and Sally Bermanzohn all join in the protest

NOVEMBER 3, 1979 Shortly before 11:00 am, a

group of protestors gathers in a predominately black Greensboro, NC housing project known as Morningside Homes for the start of a Communist Workers Party-sponsored anti-Klan demonstration. A caravan of vehicles occupied by Klansmen, members of the American Nazi Party, and at least one police informant drive into the area and open fire on the marchers. Five demonstrators, all prominent local activists, are killed, and eight others are wounded. No Klansman is shot.

NOVEMBER 5, 1979 14 members of the Klu

Klux Klan are brought up on criminal charges in response to the Greensboro slayings. Twelve are charged with four counts of murder each, along with individual counts of "conspiracy to commit murder." The remaining two Klansmen are charged with "conspiracy to commit murder."

NOVEMBER 17, 1980 After a week of deliberation, the all-white jury returns a not-guilty verdict on all 36 counts against the six Klansmen

cont. next page



The philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point is to change it.

-- Karl Marx, Theses on Feuerbach

Revolution Books

212-691-3345 • 9 West 19th Street NYC, NY 10011

Ethnic Studies

from last page

and Firearms agents (BATF) that were "undercover" in the Nazi group, one of whom, Bruster Cooper, photographed the event as it happened. No attempts were made either before or during the incident to stop it.

Bermanzohn says she remembers very clearly thinking that there were no police in the area when the Klan cars pulled up. Police dispatch transcript records show that patrolling police were called out of there to go to lunch right before the Klan arrived.

Several news stations had captured the entire event on tape. Despite the footage and eyewitnesses, no Klan and Nazi members or law enforcement informants were found guilty, or served any time for the murders.

November 17, 1980, fourteen Klan members were charged in criminal court with "conspiracy to commit murder." After a week of deliberation, the all-white jury returned a not-guilty verdict on all counts.

On November 21, 1983, nine of the Klan members were brought up on federal charges, "a conspiracy to violate a federal law," and "a conspiracy to violate the rights of a person

because they were participating in an integrated activity." After three-months of deliberation, the all-white jury found the defendants not-guilty on all counts. Bermanzohn said neither the District Attorney nor the federal attorney brought up the issue of police or federal collusion.

In November of 1985 the city of Greensboro settled a civil suit and agreed to pay \$351,000 to the widow of Michael Nathan, and set the total settlement at \$394,959.55. Nathan was the only one slain that was not a member of the Communist Workers Party.

The trial did find the police and the Klan jointly liable in the deaths, which sets a historical precedent in proving collusion in the 100-year working relationship of the groups.

The events have had an uncalculable affect on her life. Bermanzohn said that she is no longer a Communist but still embraces the ideals that led her to Communism, that "all human beings are human beings." She is adamantly opposed to bigotry and still feels strongly committed to economic and social justice.

"I see myself more a part of a tradition of critics of the US and advocates for change that fought for the rights of the scapegoated, like Thomas Paine, Frederick Douglas and Harriet Tubman, as opposed to seeing myself as a Communist."

Many of the survivors feel bonded together by the tragedy and continue to keep in touch. Several of the key CWP members are still organizing in Greensboro. Many are still active through the Greensboro Justice Fund which was created with the settlement money from the civil suit and continue to raise money. They give grants to groups that continue to fight economic, racial, and social injustice.

At the reception following to opening night, the Justice Fund gave a grant to striking K-Mart workers. They have been working for two years without a contract, while the management still tries to bust up the union. The reception audience was in tearful recognition of their experience and of the struggle that must continue.

She continues to fight racism and economic injustice by reflecting her experiences in her teaching, and said she has enjoyed the process of becoming a teacher that has allowed her to reflect on these issues, because they are still present today.

"I think that the budget cuts to CUNY are a perfect example of economic and social injustice. The cut-backs to fund tax cuts for the rich are simply a redistribution of money from poor and middle income to the rich." She said the social aspect is reflected in the politics. These cuts are aimed to hurt New York City and cities all over the country where there are high concentrations of African-Americans and people from all over the world.

from page 4

or worse there are very few other white students majoring in any of the Ethnic Studies departments in CUNY. I am frequently asked why I am in the Department, mainly by other white people. I hope that by answering that question I can also explain why I think it is so important for more white people to seriously take up the defense of Ethnic Studies.

There are a lot of reasons I am in Black and Puerto Rican Studies. But basically it comes down to this: I hate this system. I hate what it does to people. I hate how it compels so many of us to live while a privileged few enjoy the fruits of other peoples' sweat and blood. And I want this system to come down and to be replaced with a very different way of living in which the relations between people are characterized by respect and equality, not dehumanization and oppression. I don't believe that this is a simple task.

In order to bring about that kind of revolutionary change it is crucial to have an accurate understanding of precisely how this system came into being. Who did what to whom when and where such that we live in a world where people sleep in doorwells and children die of treatable illnesses. The problem is that generally history is written by the victors and that is precisely the sort of history that is mainly taught in History Departments.

Departments like the Department of Black and Puerto Rican Studies offer a place where the history of oppressed peoples can be studied and taught by oppressed peoples themselves to some degree outside of control by the academic white power structure.

I believe that we are all products of the brutal history of this country. We all are products of the attempted extermination of native peoples, of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, of the conquest of Puerto Rico and northern Mexico, of the mass importation of Asian laborers to build the railroads. While these events and processes shaped different groups in different ways all of

them shaped all of us and all of us have a crying need to understand these things accurately.

In this sense I reject the "Balkanization" of history — I don't believe that, for example, only white people can truly understand European history or are uniquely qualified to have opinions on it. But I do believe that in general Black people have a much deeper investment in an accurate understanding of the experiences of the African diaspora and that such an understanding is crucial to making sense not just of where Black people are today but also where white people are.

I don't think its possible, for example, to make sense of Pat Buchanan's popular appeal without an accurate understanding of slavery and the system of white supremacy that developed out of slavery. The behavior of white people makes no sense if we don't know the history of Black people. And frankly the place to get that history has been Black Studies Departments.

The system of white supremacy has given lots of white people some very distorted ideas about the history of this country. Many progressive white people uncritically accept all sorts of things that simply aren't true about this country because they have never had to hear those things systematically criticized. This is particularly apparent on questions of race.

The racist nature of this society is glaringly obvious to anybody who cares enough to look. Many white people acknowledge this fact but go no further. They want to be able to think of themselves as anti-racist but they don't want to investigate further the workings of racism in this society because to do so inevitably involves confronting their own place in that system and their own obligation to take action to bring that system down.

This is as true of white professors as it is of white students. Until that situation changes profoundly the call for integrating Ethnic Studies into existing disciplines must be regarded as nothing more or less than an attack on the right of oppressed peoples to know their own histories and to struggle for a better world.



Armed communists stood in defense at the funeral of the Greensboro 5. Over 1,000 people attended the service.

timeline

ultimately brought to trial.

NOVEMBER 21, 1983 Nine of the Klansmen and Nazis are indicted by a Federal Grand Jury under section 371, title 18 of the US code "a general conspiracy to violate a federal law." They are also charged with "a conspiracy to violate the civil rights of persons because of their race and religion" and "a conspiracy to violate the rights of a persons because they were partic-

ipating in an integrated activity."

APRIL 15, 1984 After a three-month trial and three days of deliberations, the jury returns its verdict in the case of the nine Nazis and Klansmen, now known as *US vs Virgil Griffin*. They are found not guilty of the 48 counts against them.

NOVEMBER 6, 1985 The Greensboro Civil Rights Fund attorneys and the plaintiffs in the

Waller vs Butkovich, a \$48 million civil suit originally filed in 1980, announce a settlement: the city of Greensboro consents to pay \$351,000 to the estate of Michael Nathan, one of the slain protestors. The verdict and settlement come after a three-month trial. Total damages are set at \$394,959.55. The Greensboro police and the Klu Klux Klan are found jointly liable in this wrongful death suit. The case sets a historical precedent in proving collusion between the Klan and law enforcement officials. The city of

Greensboro pays limited damages for the police. No Klansman ever serves a jail sentence or pays a judgement.

NOVEMBER 1994 The City of Greensboro sponsors city-wide commemorative events in recognition of the 15th anniversary of the massacre, and lays a plaque to honor the five who died: Cesar Cauce, Michael Mathan, William Sampson, James Waller, and Sandra Smith.

INTERVIEW

Pataki's Secret Confessions to Spheric

Pataki raps with the gang down at Spheric

by I.M. Cutt, U.R. Cutt & Werall Skrewd

So, the three of us who wanted to write this article are basically really good people. We're your average CUNY students. We go to classes. We go to work. We hang with our friends. Whatever, you know? We try to treat everyone nicely, and we assume that everyone else is coming from the same place.

So, when we heard that Governor Pataki had proposed to slam students and all poor and working people with massive cuts again this year, naturally we wanted to know why. Why make the poor pay for tax cuts for the rich? Why disinvest in the very structures that sustain the humanity of our world? Where is George P. coming from? What a cryptic and puzzling man! What an enigmatic soul!

So we conceived the idea of a personal interview. After weeks of phone calling, and waiting outside the Capitol in snow, sleet and hail, we realized he was dissing us. We realized he didn't want to talk to us. We realized, well, he doesn't have a soft spot in his heart for hardworking well-meaning CUNY students at all. Not even a semi-soft spot. Not even medium-firm.

But as we all know, CUNY students are hard to deter. Well, impossible is more like it. We couldn't get the interview, so, well, ummm, we made it up. Sorry George.

Spheric: You've proposed to cut \$39.7 million dollars (or more depending on how you look at the figures) from CUNY's budget this year. Don't you think students got slammed hard enough last year with tuition increases and faculty lay-offs? We can't afford further tuition increases, George. We really can't.

George: Well, umm, I worked hard all my life to pay for my education.

Spheric: Yeah. Us too.

George: Well, I worked really hard.

Spheric: Really? See now, these are just the kind of interesting personal facts we were hoping to uncover in this interview. Where did you go to school?

George: (beaming proudly) I went to Yale.

Spheric: Aaah. How many students work full time while attending Yale, George? 60% of CUNY students work while going to school at CUNY. Let's not talk about working hard for your education, okay?

George: Well, ummm... Private institutions have always served different constituencies than public institutions...

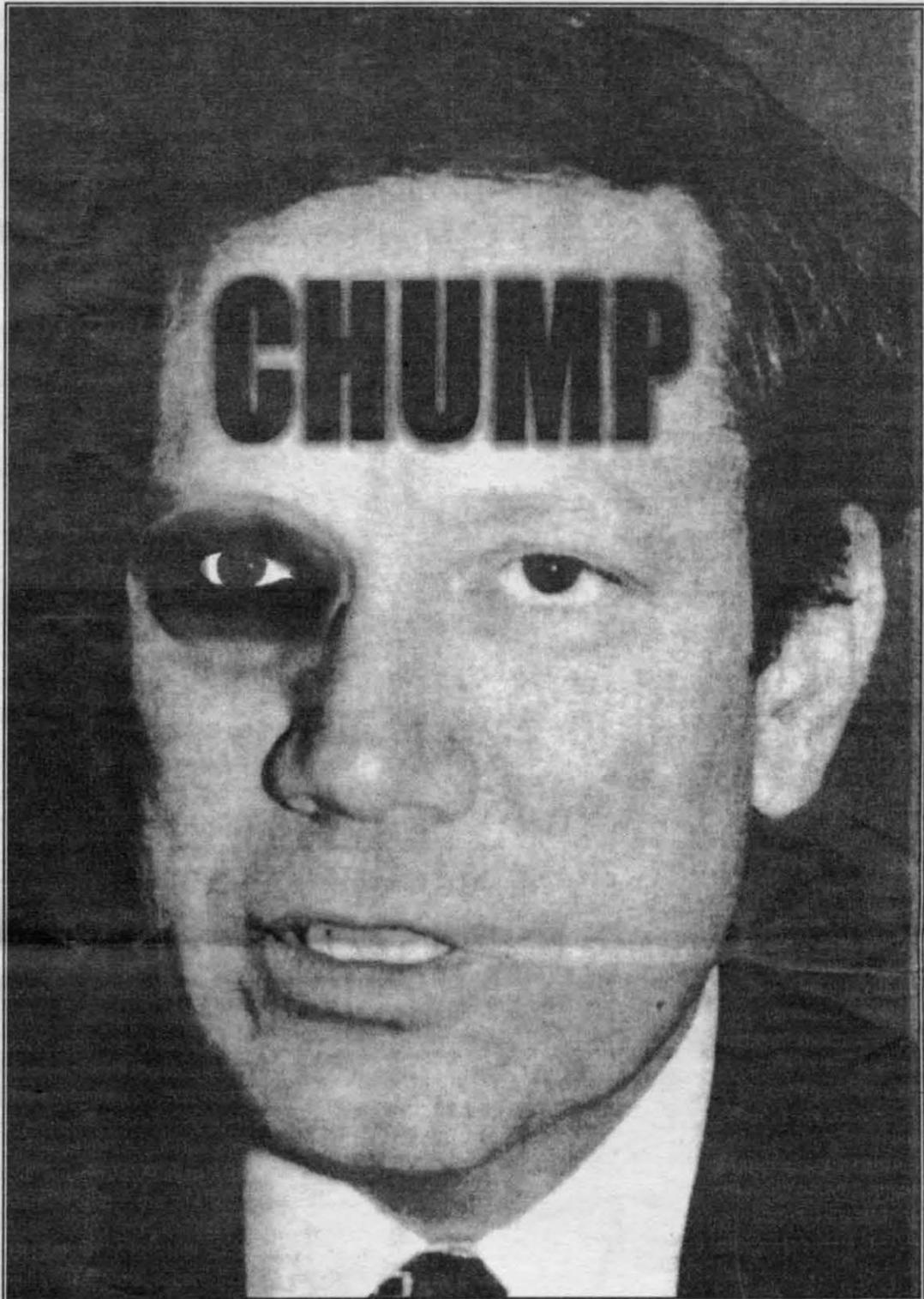
Spheric: "Constituencies," huh? What's that a code word for, George?

People of different economic classes, you mean? Poor people vs. rich people? Black, Latino, and Asian people as opposed to white people? Do you think this kind of segregation is a good idea, George? By the way, is that why you proposed slashing the Higher Education Opportunity Program at private schools by another 25% this year, making the total cuts over the last two years a whopping 50% of the prior HEOP budget? HEOP enables hundreds of economically disadvantaged young people attend private colleges and universities every year. What's bad about that?

George: Well, nothing. I mean... that's not really what I meant.

Spheric: Let's talk about financial aid. You seem to have devised an especially crafty scheme for cutting financial aid this year. It looks like cuts... It feels like cuts... But it's hard to find the cuts!

You've proposed to reduce the tuition level used to compute TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) awards by 50% of a student's Pell Grant. You've also proposed to switch the way TAP awards are computed, by using a family's Adjusted Gross Income instead of their Net Taxable Income to compute the awards. By changing the way that TAP awards are computed, you have essentially reduced aid to CUNY students by 38% and cost them a combined total of \$59 million. You've also created a situation in which the poorest students get hit the hardest, because the cuts to their TAP awards are proportionately larger than those of other students, and of course, the rely on financial aid to a greater degree. Is this all about constituencies again? Are you trying to make sure poor students can't get an education?



Chump deluxe George Pataki after his interrogation by Spheric heavies.

George: I never said that!

Spheric: But that's what you mean George, isn't it?

George: This isn't fair.

Spheric: No George, it's not. That's exactly our point. Moving right along...

Talk to us if you will about the fact that major enrollment losses will surely follow from these backhanded proposals to cut financial aid. You realize that a

10% reduction in enrollment would decrease revenue for the university by \$21.3 million dollars?

George: I've heard those estimates. They're just estimates, though.

Spheric: Do you have any evidence to show that students will magically all win the lottery and be able to pay rising tuition costs even though their financial aid will be cut?

George: Students should work to pay for their education.

Spheric: We do work. We've already been through this. Let's talk about the cuts you're proposing to public entitlements like welfare. Are you aware that the "Workfare" program is forcing some students to choose between courses which are required to maintain a particular scholarship or course of study and reporting to their workfare assignment?

George: I'm not sure that's true.

Spheric: It's true. It's happening to our friends! They've been forced to choose between public assistance money and school. Don't you want these people to get an education so they can get good, fulfilling jobs. Why do you want to diminish people's options that way? Meanwhile, you're proposing a 25% cut in benefits to a family on welfare, and block granting of welfare funds,

proposals which will have a drastic effect on the CUNY student population. 22,000 of CUNY students are on welfare. Don't you think the reason they're in school is because they want to get off of welfare? What is your logic?

Pataki: Students should work for their education.

Spheric: Geez, George! We've been through that already! Tell us about your justification for investing \$700 million dollars in building new prisons while you're disinvesting in education. Is there some kind of message you're trying to send young people in New York?

George: What do you mean?

Spheric: Gee, George. Sorry if we're being to subtle for you. We figured you'd probably be able to catch on, given your stellar education and all. Let's put it this way... DO WANT CERTAIN "CONSTITUENCIES", AS YOU LIKE TO REFER TO THEM, TO GO TO JAIL INSTEAD OF TO SCHOOL?

George: You people are scary.

Spheric: Aaaah! So now we're getting to the bottom things, huh? Our "constituencies" are a little scary to you, huh?

George: I didn't say that!

Spheric: It's okay George. Don't worry. We know exactly what you mean.

F.A.S.T F.O.A.C.T.O.S

TAP is proposed to be cut by at least \$59 million, including:

- reduction of tuition level used for TAP calculations by 50% of Pell Grant
- required "C" average by fifth payment
- one year lag for inclusion of tuition increases in award calculation
- Net loss to CUNY students will be at least \$50 million

Financial Aid Will Be "Block Granted"

- it will no longer be an entitlement, meaning that if the money allocated at the beginning of the year runs out, YOU AIN'T GETTIN' NONE!

State aid to CUNY Senior Colleges will be cut by 11.2% or \$57.6 million.

What does this all mean?

According to CUNY Central Administration:

- 20,000 students would be forced from the system
- 5,000 class sections would be eliminated
- 1,000 professors, including tenured staff, would be fired.

If it is not already clear, this is a bunch of bullshit. **SLAM THE CUTS!!!**

LAST WORDS

Politics Don't "Suit" Me, Dude

Your smooth Tommy Hill gear won't save you

by Asif Ullah
Hunter College

There comes a time in all our lives when we realize our actions are being governed by some obscure external forces. For instance, the other day I found myself signing off \$90 for Salvation Army-like Ralph Lauren jeans that I would probably wear no more than twice a month.

Concerned about the weightiness of my purchase I turned to my Polo plastered friend and began thinking out loud:

"Are these jeans worth a week of shelving a thousand books, answering a hundred phone calls, waiting a dozen tables while people the world over are starving and tuition, transportation, snapple and everything else including toilet paper are seeing the greatest price rises of their life?"

"I'm not into politics," he responded.

In that spirit, the apoliticism of America has gained wide popularity

among today's urban youth.

Validated in the cool circles of high schools and colleges, apoliticism has become an obese smothering goose down bubble jacket. Down the hallways, young women dressed in their best and tightest becoming self-selling models no longer in school, but on a catwalk, while the clustered male population act as highly vocal judges. It becomes difficult to distinguish whether their rampant howling stems from a missed lunch, or from a lack of free lunches and tuition increases or they've just been released from Rikers after a five year bid.

What the I'm not into politics vibe fails to recognize is that POLITICS IS INTO YOU. From the name of the street we walk on to the token we drop to ride the subway, politics is omnipresent. I personally never realized the political undertone of something as trivial as purchasing Polo wear (which is like donating money to Mr. Ralph Lauren's swine bank), until I saw an elderly homeless woman shivering outside the Madison Avenue Polo mansion. My friend had just come out with a sixty dollar t-shirt. Sixty dollars for a t-shirt that read the name of a carnivorous pig, yet we couldn't spare a dime for a fellow human! There's no apoliticism about that.

When speculated on, the term apolitical is an oxymoron, almost a nonentity that societally cannot exist, a state of mental contradiction. The term

at its core suggests a dismemberment of an individual from the body of individuals s/he is unconditionally connected to.

Even the serial killer living in the middle of a forest in Wyoming is a member, however reluctantly, of the larger political system. He has a social

Validated in the cool circles of high schools and colleges, apoliticism has become an obese smothering goose down bubble jacket.

security number! There is little choice, except maybe going back twenty or thirty years and consciously escaping birth. Unfortunately, for many who favor this option, modern technology is still inadequate in the field of I-wish-I-were-never-born.

Now, as for the apoliticism among the in, lowly, and neo-nineties-Gap-hippie, the definition of the term shifts a bit. Their usage of the term as



The Four Horsemen of the fashion apocalypse, (from left) Calvin Klein, Carhart, Polo and, on a pale horse, Tommy Hilfiger

found in the commonly spoken phrase I'm not into politics, draws on a care-free aloofness, an unwillingness to become involved in any organization or group, or take any individual initiative for action. This group suffers from oblivious-complacent-indolence or compulsive-obsessive-MTVdom. They genuinely believe the world is a 1982 Coke commercial, when everyone is holding hands and singing in "perfect harmony." Either that or they just don't care. What the I'm not into politics vibe fails to recognize is that POLITICS IS INTO YOU.

Sometimes the reek of gunshots, police, drugs, racism, or whatever else it is that goes on in our neighborhoods immensely benefits the credence of I-don't-careness. Lack of meals, fathers, education and an abundance of .22's, crack vials, and white male role models may serve as the Novocain for anyone who once cared.

The emotional aftermath of all this usually may set the stage for an implosion, as was the case in L.A. at a more macroscopic level.

Divert the inverted hostility and what you have is the perfect ingredients essential for a power-to-the-people recipe; the one desperately needed to save the disintegrating Apple from altogether rotting. Besides, if we care enough to fight each other over looks, loot and rob in our neighborhoods, we are little more than artificial exemplars of I-don't-careness. Thus, I-don't-care, like its relative root, apolitical, is a lifeless word.

In the interest of this column, apolitical can be redefined as bystander apathy. To gain a clearer image of this, there is the case of Kitty Genovese, a suburbanite, who upon returning home from work was brutalized and raped in her own neighborhood under the agape eyes of her neighbors. As the rapist openly raped Mrs. Genovese her neighbors rushed to their windows, some watched from

outside, one woman almost even called the police. But none did anything. There was said to have been over twenty witnesses to the incident. There was one lone rapist.

What happened to Kitty Genovese is a case of bystander apathy. What happened when millions of black South Africans were systematically being eliminated by the apartheid government while the U.S. and the other great powers watched is

Whatever the case may be, it's cool to be a mannequin. But mannequins are political too!

bystander apathy. What happened when Bangladeshi's were dying in record numbers from the famine of 1941 while many in America suffered from obesity is sheer bystander apathy.

What is happening is that homelessness is a problem in the place of dreams, education is being made for the privileged, to be poor is a crime, jobs are scarce, healthcare doesn't care. The list goes on, not in a foreign country but in the backyards of America. Still we sit and watch. Bystander apathy. But unlike the witnesses to the Kitty Genovese case, we are watching our own rapes by Oedipal-complexed white males who care so much, they go out of their way to suffocate us.

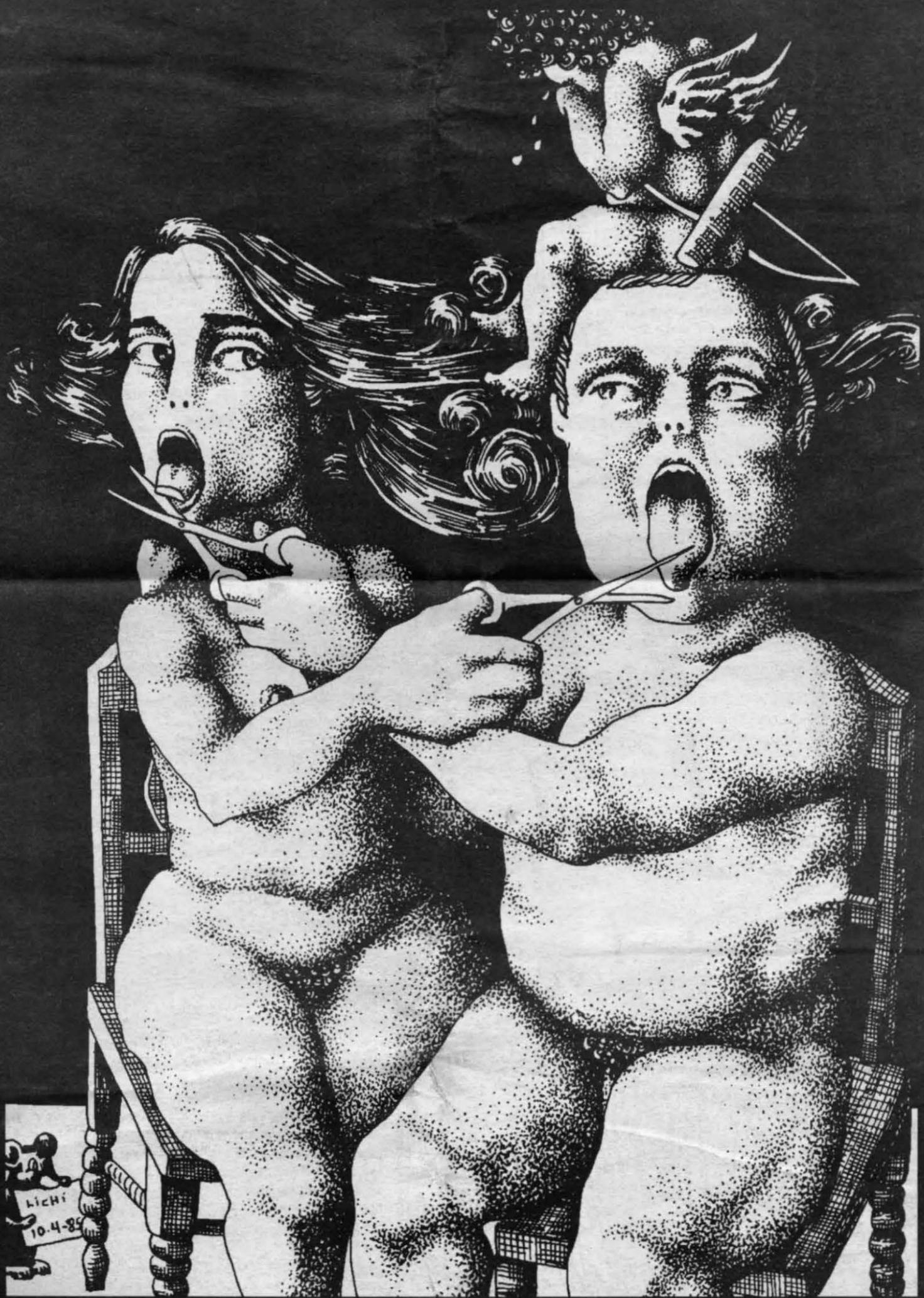
If we can parade in Tommy Hill figure and Timberlands, then we can look to our friends and ourselves to take back our streets, education, lives. Besides, there is little choice or more ungenially put — there is no choice; assuming the born-into-it theory discussed above, we are already.



**To Distribute Spheric
Call 212-772-4279
People will think you're cool**

SPHERIC

Student Community News Vol. X, #2



Ground Zero