
CUNY Adjunct Alert

Vol. 2, No. 6

March 1999

Produced by *CUNY Adjuncts Unite!*

P.O. Box 1360, NYC 10163 212/780-2155 <http://www.soc.qc.edu/adjunct>

Irwin's Rules of Order

The Professional Staff Congress (PSC) Delegate Assembly, our union's policy-setting body which, under the leadership of President Irwin Polishook, consistently refuses to follow any parliamentary procedure (including its adopted *Robert's Rules of Order*, really outdid itself at its January meeting. In a predictable vote along caucus lines, the Delegate Assembly rejected proposals 1) defending CUNYTALK and the First Amendment rights of faculty members; 2) supporting the recruitment of new members and of members' rights to recruit; and 3) supporting objective external vote counting for all contract ratifications and referenda. Setting aside the indefensibility of rejecting these resolutions--the DA was informed that active recruitment efforts (unknown to *CAU!*) were currently underway on certain campuses, and we've had the Malthusian arguments against enforcement of agency fee for adjuncts thrust at us for years--it was the *manner* in which these sound resolutions were defeated that is particularly outrageous. In each case, after the resolution was offered to the body, it was debated, and amendments were offered by the body and accepted by the makers of the motions. In each case it seemed clear that, as amended, the resolutions would pass. But in each case, in a new flagrant violation of parliamentary procedure, Polishook, at the conclusion of the debates, offered these resolutions only as originally written, not as amended by the body as is proper. Inevitably, in each case the motion failed. Polishook consistently refuses to appoint a parliamentarian for the body, as is proper, and has at times even arrogated the duties himself. When germane passages from *Robert's Rules* are read from the Assembly floor to the body, they are typically ignored nevertheless. It seems time for CUNY faculty--perhaps led by the part-timers--to demand that its union conduct its business fairly, properly abiding by established parliamentary procedure. Robert's, not Irwin's.

CAU! Wins Northstar Grant

CUNY Adjuncts Unite! applied to the NorthStar Foundation for \$2000 to pay for the expense of printing the *Adjunct Alert*. They were so impressed with the justice of our cause and our current activities that they awarded us \$3000! We still need to raise more money for literature for our referendum campaign; we need to get our point of view out to all the members of the union, so please continue to send your contributions to *CAU!* at the address above.

Referendum Alert! Deadline Extended! Be sure to get all the signatures you collected to *CAU!* by March 15. On Thursday evening, March 18 we will hold a press conference before the PSC Delegate Assembly meeting, when we deliver the petitions to the PSC. Come join us at 7pm at the GSUC (33 W 42nd St). Until then, *keep collecting!*

**Come to the Next Meeting of
CUNY Adjuncts Unite!
Friday, March 26 @ 3pm
Room 400 25 W 43rd St**

next Friday meetings: April 30, May 21

DUES DEDUCTED FROM LUMP SUM \$

As of January 1999, the new union dues are \$138.42 (up from \$133.20). The amount of \$7.69 is deducted from each paycheck. Computer systems can't differentiate lump sum payments, so if by the end of 1999, your deductions come to more than \$138.42, call the PSC (212/354-1252) and speak to Diana Rosato to apply for a refund.

Letter to the Editor

[edited to fit allotted space]

Something Is Holding Us Back? The Massachusetts-born social historian and critic, W.E.B. DuBois, is often quoted for writing this statement: "...the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line" (1903).

But for me, his most "unAmerican" statement was made thirty-two years later when he wrote *Black Reconstruction in America (1860-1880)*, subtitled "An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America." His Reconstruction book is primarily a class discussion, hence the first two chapters are titled, "The Black Worker," and "The White Worker."

CUNY faculty, whether full or part-time workers, too often skirt our mutually unresolved questions of class and caste within the political and economic structure where we

cont'd on next page

Letter to the Editor cont'd

earn our daily bread, also called wages. Possibly it is due to the way most of us were trained, are rewarded or not rewarded (receive raises, get hired, promoted, even fired). Some of us even remember that there were firings of teachers in the late '50's and early '60's, from the not-yet-CUNY system, for being "too radical." Court cases ensued and ultimately litigation was won, even back pay rendered. But the dialogue became soft.

But a truth long buried will rise again. Class questions haunt all negotiations between faculty and administrators. We teach in classrooms and the "C & C" denials are present in all "union" discussions and contract terms. Something is holding all of us back. With only two official political national parties driven by capital, I do not anticipate coalition politics in America, such as are presently active in either France or Germany. Yet ideologically, ideas coupled with activism were historically, and are presently, needed within the CUNY system. Is it just consciousness that is holding us back?

-Myrna D. Bain

Conference Alert! The third annual conference of the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor, COCAL (formerly The National Congress of Adjuncts, etc.) will take place in Boston on Friday evening, April 16 & all day Saturday, April 17. There will be adjuncts from CUNY participating and we hope to have many more in attendance. Call 212 780-2155 to join our trek to Boston. Check out the COCAL website omega.cc.umb.edu/~cocal for location and scheduling info. Also check out Gary Zabel and Harry Brill's article on the latest adjunct organizing news for the electronic journal *Workplace* www.workplace-gsc.com

Why You and Your Colleagues

Should Support the CAU! Referendum

Why should full-timers vote yes on our referendum to include adjuncts in the union on the same basis as full-timers? Won't adjuncts take over the union?

SUNY's union has had automatic deduction of the agency fee for part-timers since 1977, but only 60% of their part-timers have joined. The percentage joining at CUNY would probably be similar.

Won't full-timers be voting against themselves if they include adjuncts in the agency shop?

It is very much in the interest of full-timers to improve the situation of adjuncts because having a second tier undermines the first tier by increasing the pool of low-paid labor, thus obviating the need for higher paid faculty. The reduction of CUNY full-time staff lines by 5,500 in the 20 years is proof enough. Other unions--most recently the pilots' union at American Airlines--have recognized this. Ours should too!

Isn't it unfair to adjuncts to deduct a fee from every piddling paycheck they receive?

What's really unfair, not to mention patronizing and paternalistic, is to have full-timers making decisions for adjuncts. Let us have a voice and a vote!

Won't adjuncts demand a greater share of the CUNY pie and leave less for full-timers?

We are convinced that the union will be stronger if adjuncts join in proportion to their numbers because a larger union will have more power in Albany. Besides, what kind of group represents workers without giving them any say?

CAU! Party Alert! 6pm Friday, March 5th at 10-52 46th Road, Long Island City, just over the East River, accessible by subway. Call our voice mail for directions (212-780-2155). Free Edibles. \$5 plus cash bar to benefit CAU!

Academic Labor Deja Vu?

According to *Jonathan Zimmerman History News Service*, "By now, everyone has probably heard horror stories about freshly minted academics who can't find gainful employment in academia. Some of them serve as 'adjunct faculty members,' the migrant poor of the modern university. . . . As the Right will argue, most of these people are 'in transition,' shifting their jobs to meet new workplace realities. The Left counters with its own market strategy, calling upon graduate schools to limit the number of students they admit. Once we reduce supply, its argument goes, demand will shoot up. . . . No magic market will do that trick. Only government--dare I say it?--can perform it. . . . It has happened before. During the 1930's . . . the so-called 'white collar' New Deal . . . provided jobs for artists, actors, and especially writers. . . . If the federal government were to employ academics today, what useful work could they perform? Our civic discourse is so constricted--so beholden to market mechanisms, and so blind to public possibilities--that we almost never ask this question. [Let us know what you think. -Ed.]

CUNY Adjuncts Unite! Contacts

Baruch	Jim Feast	718-449-0677
BMCC	Shirley Rausher	212-721-0099
Bronx CC	Ingrid Hughes	212-254-0635
Brooklyn	Vinny Tirelli	212-642-2143
CCNY	Rob Wallace	212-650-8179
CSI	Harry Cason	212-838-1374
Hostos	Anna Lopez	212-427-3874
Hunter	Mark Halling	718-596-0654
Hunter Soc.	Susanna Jones	718-243-0660
John Jay	Michael Seitz	212-229-9180
Kingsborough CC	Jerry Karol	718-330-0916
La Guardia	Costas Panayotakis	718-852-2069
Lehman	Kyle Cuordileone	212-491-2653
Medgar Evers	Eric Lehman	212-674-1767
NYC Tech.	Wendy Scribner	212-982-0097
Queens	Eric Marshall	212-642-2143
Queensborough CC	Howard Pflanzler	212-496-7452
York	Mike Vozick	212-874-7650
