

the village

VOICE



ANDREW GOLDBERG

Building a Movement

"Keep recording! This is history!" yelled one hunger striker to a videocam-wielding cop late last Tuesday night, as NYPD and CUNY Campus Security officers closed in on about 40 students sitting in on the second floor of City College's North Academic Complex.

The standoff had begun in the early afternoon, when CCNY president Yolanda Moses had refused the hunger strikers permission to remain in the NAC, where they were set up with blankets, banners, and gallon bottles of water. She insisted that they leave at 11 p.m., or face arrest. They decided to stay.

"We picked a hunger strike to dispel the notion of us as violent," said CCNY student Martha Baez. "We're depriving ourselves of nourishment the way the governments—city, state, federal—are depriving us of an education, a future."

When they came, at about 11:50 p.m., the arrests were sudden. The students were hauled up, cuffed, and led into paddy wagons; the whole operation took about 15 minutes. It was the first time in CUNY's history that armed police were called in to arrest peacefully protesting students.

Though the media has stayed away since the CUNY Coalition's City Hall rally of 10,000 on March 23, the movement to fight cuts of \$162 million from the senior colleges continues. Almost as many students were arrested at last week's hunger strike—47—as at the City Hall demo. And more significantly, just as student organizing has reached a level unseen since the '60s, activists from all over the city are coming together in an explosion of activity one longtime organizer says "hasn't been seen in 20 years."

No fewer than three citywide efforts to bring disparate groups, communities, and activists together are under way, drawing on deep desires for cooperation and coalition after a decade and a half of mostly single-issue regrouping. The

Same Boat Coalition, for example, set up a few months ago as a sort of clearinghouse for community organizations, now has more than 200 groups on board.

April 25.
THIS CITY IS OURS
A DAY OF SIMULTANEOUS PROTESTS

Same Boat, along with the CUNY Coalition, plans to take part in protests on April 25—as do health care activists, advocates for the poor, civil rights veterans, and gay and lesbian groups. Indeed, the April 25 protests—simultaneous actions planned for four sites throughout the city—are bringing together unlikely allies: ACT UP-ers and unionists are taking part, but so are Asian community organizers, shelter residents, clergy, and Latino "street organizations" like the Latin Kings.

"For all of our different communities," says Richie Perez of the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights, an April 25 organizer, "the source of our problems is the same. But we've been struggling in isolation, which leaves us all vulnerable. Now we're trying to build a movement that will be a microcosm of the society we want—a movement that takes into account the multiple identities we all have."

April 25 promises a big splash, but a question raised by Kathy Goldman of the Community Food Resource Center—a Same Boat member—remains: "What's going to happen in a couple of months? Will people just go home?" Perhaps the coalition efforts of Same Boat, the National People's Campaign drive to stage a mass rally on May 6, and the process begun over months of planning for April 25 are signs that Movement-building—not just the building of movements—has begun. —NATASHA

STOVALL & ANDREW HSIAO

Simultaneous protests for jobs and housing, for health care and AIDS care, for an end to police brutality and racial and homophobic violence, and for public education are planned for April 25. Times and places: 780-3293.

**FEEDER MARCHES FROM ALL CUNY CAMPUSES
WILL MEET AT JOHN JAY COLLEGE**

(59th St. and 10th Ave.)

4:00 P.M.

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