

SPHERIC

CUNY Community News Service Vol. X, #1

Everyday People Have Their Say

• Birth • of • an • International •
special coverage begins page 9



SPHERIC

695 Park Avenue, Room 207TH New York City 10021

(212) 772-4279

Volume X, Number 1: Birth of an Internation

Spheric Staff

PonyBoy Editor: Jed Brandt

ButterFLYgirl Copy Editor:

Joselyn Mirabal

Original Man Financial Manager:

Adam Perez

SubComandante: Ramiro Campos

La SadGirl Latin Linguistic:

Sandra Barros

Chief: Asif Ullah

Brooklyn Hit Squad:

Sattara Lenz and William Kopp

Conceptual Legal Counsel:

Ron McGuire

Contributors:

Ersellia Ferron, NYU -- photography;

Carl, Fordham; Alex Vitale, CUNY Grad;

Christopher Day, Hunter; Rebekah, Hunter; Jorge

Matos, Hunter; Suheir Hammad, woman-about-

town; the *Revolutionary Worker*; Epiphany Praxis,

New York; Neesha Anduze, Hunter; Fred "I'm Not

On Acid" Zabinski, Hunter escapee

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¿What is Spheric?

Coming out of all the troubles of last year, several of us at Hunter and Brooklyn Colleges have gotten together to try and find OUR voice as CUNY students.

Times are rough and looking ahead, they're getting rougher. Every night the Governor and President get on TV to tell us how all their decisions are the will of the people. But, you know, that doesn't seem the case. I didn't see any one out in the streets demanding larger class sizes and increased tuition. Only a bunch of landlords and financiers in political fundraisers complaining about taxes. We decided to start getting ourselves organized.

More than just reacting to attacks on our school, we see that the big decisions affecting our lives are made by groups hostile to us. We are hoping that through these pages we can discuss our dreams for a world where we have overcome the lack of power in our communities.

We need submissions from everyone, no matter how well we think we write, or what kind of politics we have. SPHERIC aims to be a community paper for all of CUNY's community colleges and senior colleges. Not having a line of communication and information was a real weakness for the student movement in the Spring of 1995. Let us begin here. All Power to the People!

The ACT of the Paper Is More than the Fact of the Paper

Sometimes people seek their freedom outside of people, their justice outside of the everyday, or their love in the distillation of passed down poems before finding the sweet hand of a lover. Some people fight for the idea before the actuality. In school we are

taught about history as if it stopped happening and language is trapped by static prophets in dictionary prisons.

Sometimes our lives demand more than this life has presented us with and we begin to move. When we are trying to move through a newspaper, the truth is no longer enough. The newspaper becomes another part of the flood, a current in the stream that looks at itself and tries to figure where it is going. We begin to try and guide ourselves in a Movement to change life.

What is true and holy to one kind of person is blasphemy to another. The freedom of New York is a terror to Wall St. In trying to build a newspaper for the people, we must accept that the daily truths we see and know are

lies to the men of power. But police don't beat people in USA Today, they get to work right down the street. This should not slow us down for a moment. Whether in print or in life, there is an impetus to action in the lining up of sides.

The New York Times and its near infinite little brothers pretend to speak for all of us. They say they are objective, balanced and only presenting the news fit to print. But who does their news fit? And if we can ask who their news fits, we can ask who we are and what news fits us. They are the pretenders to objectivity and the partisans of capital. We must be our own partisans and have no shame.

Movement newspapers are a tool, not the product. The act

of the paper is more than the fact of the paper. Movement papers reproduce the same relationships as establishment papers unless they consciously build unity of thought and being in our communities. A particular unity based on self-awareness and self-direction for self-emancipation. The real point of the major media is advertising. The real point of people's papers is revolution.

The major media has three ways of operating to retard the process we are attempting: non-critical appearance, final truth, and a dialectic of domination.

Non-critical appearance is the pretense of speaking on behalf of truth outside of the

PONYRANT



Art by John Thompson. Words by Jed and Fred.

Treason to whiteness is loyalty to humanity

It's the look of surprise that always gets me. Eyes bugged out, hand over the mouth, a quickly escaping "oh my". White shock in the face of black reality never ceases to amaze. In the aftermath of the Rodney King verdict, Black folks tear it up in Los Angeles and white folks are confused and afraid. A predominately black jury acquits OJ Simpson of murder after learning that the investigative officer who found the most damning evidence called blacks niggers and lied about it.

The jury didn't hear him bragging of beating black people until their faces "turned to mush" or planting evidence or thinking genocide was a decent solution to the "black problem". The jury only knew what life was like for black men in Los Angeles when it came to the police.

White people, in general, saw a black man "playing the race card" and getting away with murder. White people really didn't get the OJ Simpson's trial was about a lot more than Simpson being a murderer. It's really like blacks and whites are living in two different worlds. But we're not.

Black people hear white commentators on television, see white politicians making policy for the black community, are trained in European history and in general know quite a lot about white people.

They know white people don't get beaten by their neighborhood cops for sport. They know white kids

take drugs to "experiment" and black kids do it cause "they have bad parents". They know white people get every benefit of affirmative action in that they own the companies they work for, or their uncle does, or their uncle's friend. Black people didn't seem surprised that Fuhrman was a racist. The black people on the Simpson jury said they knew he was lying before they even heard the tapes. And here's the real fact: So did every white person watching.

It is impossible to live in America and not know. But just like a smoker who knows every drag kills them, white people are living in a dream world where their own chickens will never come home to roost.

See, most white people don't think they are racist. They don't say nigger, don't even think it. They go to

This theory assumes that whites in general have created these programs, which they haven't. Powerful groups in this country created those programs to mollify the black liberation movement which was shaking the foundations of America throughout the 1960's. They created a small black middle-class while the cities rotted and jobs evaporated.

What was never attempted was to meet the black demand for self-determination. The white power structure just gave enough carrots to compliment the sticks then viciously putting down the leaders and organizations of the black movement.

It was not whites in general doing any of this. It was owners of companies and police, political parties and liberal think tanks. Most white folks simply came to under-

stand some small part of how racist America was.

They adjusted their behavior to not be offensive. They passively supported both the suppression of the radical groups such as the Black Panthers and the Young Lords, and the social programs which were being born, such as Affirmative Action and Head Start.

White people, identifying as "white", confused the content of their own participation. Though they had *privilege*, they as individuals did not and do not have *power*. Yet as white people, they benefit economically, legally and generally from white supremacy.

White people, who don't necessarily wish black people harm, feel slighted by black anger. Every time a black speaker talks about "the white man", each white person says "not me".

black equality should follow suit. Unless, of course, black people really are inferior.

More than just feeling these things, whites are conditioned to think them. So are blacks for that matter. We (I mean all of us) are told so often about all the good things whites have done for blacks, that the news of TV becomes more real than what's happening right down the street.

Over and over we are shown cultural images of successful black people such as a black reporter covering some civil rights convention or even a "general" news story, a sitcom with comfortable unangry blacks and even condemnation from government officials of the stupider faces of racism.

But for all the talk of forced bussing, our schools are as segregated as thirty years ago. For all the talk of affirmative action, black people per capita have 1/20th of the property whites do. For all the talk of community policing, brutality numbers climb year after year. For all the talk of a color-blind society, Harlem is black and Westchester County is white and you must be blind to color not to see that.

So long as the debate over race is a matter of how white people should treat black people, we are still not ending racism in America.

The question is not whether white supremacy will be nice or brutal. It is when will black people own and control their own means of sustenance. Redistributing power was never on the white supremacist agenda. Now that even playing nice is considered a waste of time by the white power structure, everyday white people need 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.

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Prompted by stilted debates in the media, white people hear word of all the programs like affirmative action and desegregation, welfare and the rise of a black middle-class and think that white benevolence has run amuck. From official statements, even Jesse Helms and Bill Clinton, politicians whose bread and butter is racist, talk of how they help blacks.

The logic we are given is that whites in general have tried to uplift blacks at their own expense and it hasn't worked.

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But most whites don't own the companies or make social policy. They work for companies and are subject to the laws others write. Most white people don't have power in America. They have white-skin privilege. Both white people and black people have been hesitant to say this. In this void, a *psychology* of race has come to dominate white discussion.

Racism is not about how white people feel, it's about how we all actually live - it's about power.

White people in general continue to view race as a problem of perception and "fear". This psychological view of race acts as if no one benefits from the social construction of race. It assumes that if white people don't actively hate black people (in public), if they use the right words and vote for the right politicians, then

ESPAÑOL

¿Cuba Libre?

por Sandra Barros
Octubre 22, 1995 encontro a la comunidad de Harlem recibiendo con brazos abiertos al presidente de Cuba, Fidel Castro. Mientras que los otros dignatarios que se encontraban en Nueva York para el 50 aniversario de las Naciones Unidas celebraban entre ellos mismos, Fidel revivio su famosa estadia en Harlem, cuando en 1960, visito por primera vez a los Estados Unidos. En esa ocasion se dieron la mano Malcolm X y Fidel Castro, uniendo simbolicamente la revolucion de Cuba y la lucha de los Afro-Americanos en los Estados Unidos.

La noche del 22 las personas que se unieron en el Abyssinian Baptist Church vinieron bajo ese mismo espíritu. Una mezcla diversa de activistas puertorriqueños, dominicanos y afro-americanos asistieron. Entre ellas estuvieron figuras como Angela Davis, Nydia Velasquez, Sam Anderson y organizaciones estudiantiles como Malcolm X Grassroots Movement y Student Power Movement (la nueva generacion de activistas). Vinieron todos a demostrar su apollo y solidaridad con "Cuba revolucionaria" y a denunciar el bloqueo económico que tiene hasta el cuello al pueblo cubano.

Ver a Castro, "el barbudo," fue para mí una experiencia llena de ironía y contradicciones. Una de las preguntas que más resonaba en mi mente era:

¿Cuál es la lógica que propugna al gobierno Estadunense a ser mucho mas recalcitrante un embargo económico que no ha tenido otro resultado mas que ser aún mas miserable la situación del pueblo cubano? Los E.E.U.U. pinta una imagen de Castro como un dictador fanático que impede la democracia y reprime al pueblo cubano. La realidad, como dijo Castro mismo esa noche, es que la revolución ha tenido innumerables realizaciones sociales: se eliminaron siertos niveles de pobreza; se redujo el nivel de mortalidad en nacimientos a 10 por cada 1000; el promedio de

vida subio a 76 años; y se levantaron los niveles de alfabetismo al 96% entre la población adulta. Estas son estadísticas positivas para un país del "3er mundo" que ha sido aislado y rechazado por un conjunto de las potencias mas grandes del mundo.

Estos logros de Cuba hacen mas obvio la ineffectividad del sistema capitalista de resolver las necesidades de las minorías. La nación mas rica y poderosa del mundo no puede garantizar las necesidades mas básicas a su pueblo. Aquí existe la disparidad económica mas grande entre los países "industriales." Política como la proposición 187 en California y el Artículo 95 en Nueva York ejemplifican la ideología racista que permea los hechos del gobierno. En estos esfuerzos anti-emigrante del partido Republicano propone reducir substancialmente el "welfare," la ayuda médica y el acceso a la educación, no unicamente a los indocumentados, sino a aquéllos que no sean ciudadanos de los E.E.U.U.

Pero esperen, esperen! Como les dije, háy que analizar la situación en Cuba desde varias perspectivas. Mientras oia el discurso de Castro esa noche, estuve pensando que aunque ay que reconocer las realizaciones que a logrado Cuba, no se puede cometer el error de idealizar la situación en Cuba o de convertir a Castro en un idolo monolítico.

"Que viva Castro, que viva" decian dos jovenes sentados frente de mí - sus ojos encendidos de pasión. Yo entendí lo que sentian. En los E.E.U.U. (como en el mundo) nos encontramos una ves mas en una epoca en cual la injusticia social, económica y política ha aumentado sus fuerzas contra la humanidad. ¿Donde estan nuestros revolucionarios? Lolita Lebron? Malcolm X? Castro y Cuba suelen ser uno de los únicos vestigios de la vieja izquierda - una vislumbre de lo que puede ofrecer el socialismo, la revolucion viva - eso representan Fidel y su país para muchas personas.

Pero la obligación de ellos que sigen en la lucha, ellos que todavia



creen en la posibilidad de tener un mundo verdaderamente libre y democrático. . . Su obligación es analizar de manera crítica las contradicciones de la situación en Cuba.

Las comunidades mas vulnerables en los E.E.U.U., sean Washington Heights, El South Bronx o Liberty City en Miami entienden la urgencia de obtener las necesidades materiales. Adquirir vivienda decente, ayu-

da médica y educación son el objetivo principal en estas comunidades. Pero estos factores representan solamente parte de lo que requiere la justicia social: La libertad política, la expresión libre de ideas, tiene que existir a la par de las necesidades materiales porque "ambas" son derechos básicos del ser humano.

Sabemos que en los E.E.U.U. existe la represión política; sea el caso

de Mumia Abu Jamal o los prisioneros políticos puertorriqueños. ¿Pero que de Cuba? En su discurso en Harlem, Castro dio a entender que en Cuba no existen tales injusticias.

¡Casi me caigo de la silla al oír estas insinuaciones! Aunque el número de prisioneros políticos en Cuba a variado, actualmente existen presos. El fotógrafo de Frances Pierre Golendort, quien estuvo preso por 38 meses en 1970, presentó evidencia que aproximaba 20,000 prisioneros de conciencia - gentes que expresan su desacuerdo con la política y entonces, en las palabras de Castro, representan una amenaza a la seguridad nacional. Otras figuras calculan números entre 80 y 200,000, depende la época desde la revolución. En los '80's, cientos de prisioneros fueron liberados, sin embargo, "Amnestia Internacional" ha presentado evidencia sobre el abuso de los "plantados;" ellos que mantienen aislados en celdas oscuras por semanas.

Desde el '91, el ministerio del interior Cubano ha organizado y autorizado lo que llaman "brigadas de respuesta inmediata" que hostigan a los opositores del sistema, incluyendo activistas humanitarios. El punto no es que régimen de Castro sea fundamentalmente represivo - no depende de eso:

La gran mayoría del pueblo apoya a Castro. Pero aun, eso se debe en parte a las formas sutiles de represión que existen en Cuba.

Castro Speaks in Harlem

by Joselyn Mirabal
"This world is filled with so many injustices that they speak to us about a heaven which we don't want to form a part of. We want to go to a heaven of justice, human dignity and brotherhood, and for that heaven I will die." Fidel Castro

Cuban President Fidel Castro spoke at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem on October 22nd to an enthusiastic crowd of African-Americans, Cubans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, politicians and other public leaders.

Among those who attended were 70's radical Angela Davis, Rep. Nydia A. Velasquez, Rep. Jose Serrano, and others. His visit marks the 35th anniversary of his historic visit to Harlem in October 1960 where he shook hands with Malcolm X. The

event was sponsored by the Africans in the American Committee to welcome Fidel Castro.

The crowd applauded Castro's statements about Cuba's numerous contributions to the world (specifically in Southern Africa) and called for an end to the US embargo against Cuba which he says prevents his people from receiving adequate medical, economic and nutritional aid. "A blockade is a noiseless atom bomb which kills people," said Castro. Working class Cubans are against the blockade, but others oppose Castro's rule.

Opposing groups protested outside during his speech. Some held up signs which read "Cuba Yes, Castro No." Inside the church people showed their full support, chanting "Viva Cuba revolucionario." Castro responded to the crowd by saying, "you are part of the group who were

never deceived, and for that I will be eternally grateful."

Castro says he's not against human rights. According to him, thousands of Cuban doctors and teachers (majority female) have volunteered their efforts to Africa, North America, and Latin America. He added that only Cubans fought alongside Angolans for 15 years shedding their blood fighting forces sponsored by the South Africa Apartheid regime. (He failed to mention that Cuban troops also backed a brutal military dictatorship in Ethiopia at Soviet behest. — ed.)

According to Castro, the United Nations does not mention these contributions; it's as if the United Nations accomplished the fall of apartheid through talking, because not one Cuban name is mentioned. People write history, but they forget reality.

Returning to the issue of the blockade, Castro said 2,000 Cubans have shed their blood in Cuba's fight against colonialism. "Others have not changed in their opposition, so will not change. We are in the right."

Castro's humor about religion and politics helped to lighten the tension in the church. "I am not here because they did not invite me to dinner," he said in reference to his exclusion from an official dinner. "I am not here because I am the devil." He went on to say, "I'm not sure if I might cause damage to any political activity, but if I accepted any invitation, my appearance would have been out of mere courtesy." He added that being surrounded by so many political leaders is sometimes insupportable.

He thanked his supporters for coming out and said that it is right-wing fascists who are working against the economy of Cuba.

Why Black Students Owe Their Time and Energies to Save the Life of Mumia Abu-Jamal

by Carl

For many of us, college will give us an opportunity to raise our living standards and will be the launching pad to new careers. Black college students like other college students, have worked diligently to succeed in the academic world.

However, many of us have forgotten about the hard work that our elders have put in to give us access to higher education. Many of us believe that our high school averages and SAT scores are the only reasons why we have gotten into these institutions. We must remember that only 25 to 30 years ago these schools would not even consider letting Black people in. Let's keep it real, do you really think that you are any smarter than your parents or grandparents who were denied opportunities at higher education in vast numbers? Do you really believe that white institutions woke up one day with some new found moral courage and said "Okay, it's time we gave a few of them a chance?" I don't think so, but many of us are miseducated enough in these places to walk around here thinking that we earned our way in with good grades.

We have no concept of the fact that our people have put their lives on the line for this society to change the little that it has. Power concedes nothing without struggle, but how many of us today continue on with that struggle, and how many of us are just trying to fill the few slots that have been allotted for us in the job market?

Many of the freedom fighters involved in the social movements of the 60's and 70's are still languishing in amerikkkan prisons, but we don't know about them because we are too busy trying to get that good job to stop and find out. Mumia Abu-Jamal



is one of those freedom fighters. Mumia is a former black Panther Party member and an award winning journalist from Philadelphia. Mumia was well known in Philadelphia for his critical reporting on police brutality and government misdeeds. He has been fighting for the human rights of Africans in amerikkka since he was a teen-ager and now Mumia is

fighting for his own life.

In 1982 Mumia was falsely convicted for the killing of a police officer. The circumstances surrounding the incident and subsequent trial led to Mumia being railroaded into jail and sentenced to death. On the night of December 9, 1981, Mumia was moonlighting as a cab driver when he saw his brother Billy being beaten by a cop. Mumia was shot in the stomach as he was rushing to help his brother. The cop was found dead at the scene. Witnesses said another man shot the cop and ran off. However, when other police came on the scene, and noticed that Mumia was the person shot and lying next to a dead cop, he was immediately arrested and beaten. Even though Mumia needed immediate medical attention, he was brutalized by cops before and after being taken to the hospital.

At the trial Mumia was denied the right to represent himself or have counsel of his choice. Mumia's incompetent court appointed defense attorney was allotted only \$150 for the complete pre-trial investigation. This made it evident that he was fighting a losing battle. In a city which is 40% black, only 2 blacks were chosen for the jury, one of whom was replaced by a white. Eleven potential black jurors were struck down. The presiding judge, Albert Sabo is a lifetime member of the Fraternal Order of Police and has sentenced more people to death (31) than any other judge in the country (29 or them people of color). He refused to let in evidence obtained under the Freedom of Information Act from the files of the FBI that proved Mumia had been a target of harassment since he was a teenager.

The District Attorney did not

"evidence" that Mumia quoted Mao, saying that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." All of this was supposed to suggest that Mumia had been wanting to kill a cop since he was a teenager.

Now after Mumia has been on death row 13 years, the Governor of Pennsylvania has signed Mumia's death warrant. Mumia was scheduled to be executed August 17th on Marcus Garvey's birthday. However, the powerful outpouring of public support has led to his getting a stay of execution. Subsequently Mumia's appeal for a new trial has been turned down and must now proceed to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Mumia has been sentenced to death not because he killed a cop but because Mumia is an uncompromising freedom fighter in the struggle for justice for African people in amerikkka. As noted before, like so many activists of the 60's, Mumia has been under surveillance by the FBI since he was a teenager in the Panther Party. Mumia, Dr. King, Malcolm X, Huey Newton, Stokely Carmichael, and Fannie Lou Hammer were watched not because they were guilty of any crime, but for daring to speak up against police brutality, racism, government corruption and challenging the merit of a society that puts profits in front of humanity.

We must get involved to save the life of Mumia. If Mumia is killed then that makes it easier for one of us to be next when we decide to stand up and struggle for our human rights.

No — Mike Tyson was not a political prisoner but Dhruba Bin Wahad and Angela Davis were . . . No — Tupac Shakur is not a political prisoner but Geronimo Pratt and Mumia Abu-Jamal are. Ask yourself why the former names are much more familiar to you than the latter, and what we can do to change that. All Power to the People.

make ballistics evidence available to the defense. Officer Faulkner had been shot and killed with a .44 caliber hand gun, but Mumia had a licensed .38, and there was no powder residue on Mumia's palm. At Mumia's sentencing the evidence presented included Mumia's being a member of the Black Panther Party and that he had used the term "Power to the People." Also the D.A. brought in

¿Fidel?

existen en Cuba.

La Union de Escritores Cubanos (UNEAC) se encarga de promover obras literarias que apoyan el gobierno y censuran o suprimen opiniones divergentes y temas que no sean culturalmente apropiados. El escritor Nicolás Guillén es el poeta oficial de Cuba debido a su trato de temas eróticos y afro-cubanos. Ambos temas son "muy aceptados." En los '80's, autores que denunciaban el sexismo, el racismo o la homofobia fueron censurados. Muchos que se oponían al régimen se vieron obligados a huir.

Otro ejemplo de represión social es el trato dado a las víctimas del SIDA. Por la asociación de la enfermedad con la homosexualidad, los enfermos son aislados, víctimas de su "preferencia sexual."

En este momento, entiendo porque sentí tanta inquietud al ver a Fidel. El pan y el agua "no son suficientes." La libertad de expresión tiene que ser protegida y estimulada. La democracia que yo imagino requiere que se oigan las voces del pueblo entero. Que las voces sean

diversas, controversiales o conflictivas, pues, es la obligación del gobierno encontrar la manera en que todas las opiniones den luz al tipo de sociedad que habra de existir. No existe democracia si unas cuantas personas desarrollan ideas y "convencen" a los demas. La sociedad tiene que ser construida desde abajo para arriba. Sea el sistema que sea, tiene que aceptar la diversidad y proveer materiales básicos.

Analizar y entender las contradicciones que han caracterizado al sistema cubano tiene que ocurrir a la misma vez que estemos ofreciendo respeto a este pueblo que tantose lo merece. Cuba debe enseñarnos que el Imperialismo no es invencible y que "si" es posible proveer las necesidades basicas al pueblo. La revolución debe servir, no como un ejemplo idealizado, sino debe representar un experimento que no ha llegado a su fin - un experimento del cual nosotros, las nuevas generaciones, podamos sacar lo que nos sirva para construir "nuestro" futuro tratando de evitar los mismos errores. Para ellos que buscan los heroes de la izquierda, deben saber que la revolución no pertenece al "lider," sino a la humanidad - queda

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OFFDAPIGZ

The Mark Fuhrman Quota

Don't like pigs?
Neither does the
SubComandante

by SubCom. Ramiro

The trial of OJ Simpson, went beyond the gruesome murders of two people. The trial, and especially the verdict, centered around the racist role of the police, commonly known as da pigs, in our society. The main reason that OJ was acquitted was because of Mark Fuhrman. The jury said the verdict was about Mark Fuhrman, and about all the Mark Fuhrmans in all the police department in amerika.

Mark Fuhrman is not the exception, but the rule in every police department across the country. I'm not saying that every cop is a Mark Fuhrman, but that there are enough Mark Fuhrmans and Stacey Koons in every police force across the country to get the job done, to fulfill the role the police have to play.

The question of these Mark Fuhrmans is the question of the role of police in our society. To answer this question, the question inside of this question must first be answered: what are the police? According to Merriam-Webster it's: the department of government that keeps public order and safety, enforces the law, and detects and prosecutes lawbreakers...also, the military personnel detailed to perform this function. An anthropological definition is: an armed force standing over and above society whose function is to act as an occupying army (notice that they have military ranks) at the behest of the haves to keep the have-nots in their place. Many radicals assert that the police serve as the chief instruments for the ruling class to perpetuate their domination over society.

Huey Newton and Bobby Seale called them "pigs" because of the disgusting and de-humanizing acts they commit day in and day out such as random beatings, handcuffings human beings as though they were animals, and then caging them.

Interestingly enough, the lexical definition of "the police" does reveal the military aspect. In reality, "police departments" are a relatively new social institution. Our ancient hunter-gatherer ancestors had no need for the "police," and neither do present hunter-gathering societies. Looking back through history, the institution of "army" developed in response to the emergence of "kingdoms," which developed as com-

merce increased between stable, surplus producing agricultural societies.

Taking the ancient East African kingdom of Axum as a case in point, the kingdom grew when merchants in the hills of present day Ethiopia needed protection from roaming bandits, as they brought their commodities to market. Allegiance was given to the warrior who could command enough men to act as bodyguards for the merchants, and establish a relative peace in the area. In fact, when trade across the Red Sea began to fall prey to bandits a few centuries later, the king of Axum sent an army to "police" Arabia, serving as an occupying army for the Axumite merchants.

However, the police as known today, has had its "birth" in the past few centuries. As the wealth of mod-

I'm not saying that every cop is a Mark Fuhrman, but that there are enough Mark Fuhrmans and Stacey Koons in every police force across the country to get the job done.

ern industrial societies became concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer, police departments were established in order to maintain the status quo.

In the southern US states of the early nineteenth century, the "overseers" were established for this very reason. Slave revolts were much more common than is commonly known, and the role of the overseers were not only to maintain the status quo, but to harass and brutalize the enslaved Africans at will. They served as the chief instruments of the slavocracy in their domination over the very people who produced the wealth of their plantations.

As this example demonstrates, when a people are robbed of their wealth, or have no means to even provide for their own subsistence, an armed force is needed to suppress the violent impulses that are created from their de-humanization which comes primarily from the unequal distribution of wealth (hunger, poverty), and their social conditions (e.g., chattel-slavery, wage-slavery) and lack of political power (subject to

laws written by the ruling class).

Today, police operations across the country are still disproportionately aimed at the people of African descent. The fundamental reasons remain the same, but a deeper analysis is required.

At the beginning of the 1980's a restructuring of the distribution of wealth began. From the early 1980's up until the present, about one million jobs were permanently lost (i.e., although new jobs were, and are still being created, about one million workers were permanently displaced), while at the same time, the number of people in prison rose by about one million (coincidence?).

At the same time, a "war on drugs" began. This highly militarized police campaign against the drug problem was primarily targeted against the variant form of cocaine known as "crack". While the federal and local governments insisted that crack was the greatest threat to the "quality of life" of the US, powder cocaine was very rarely targeted.

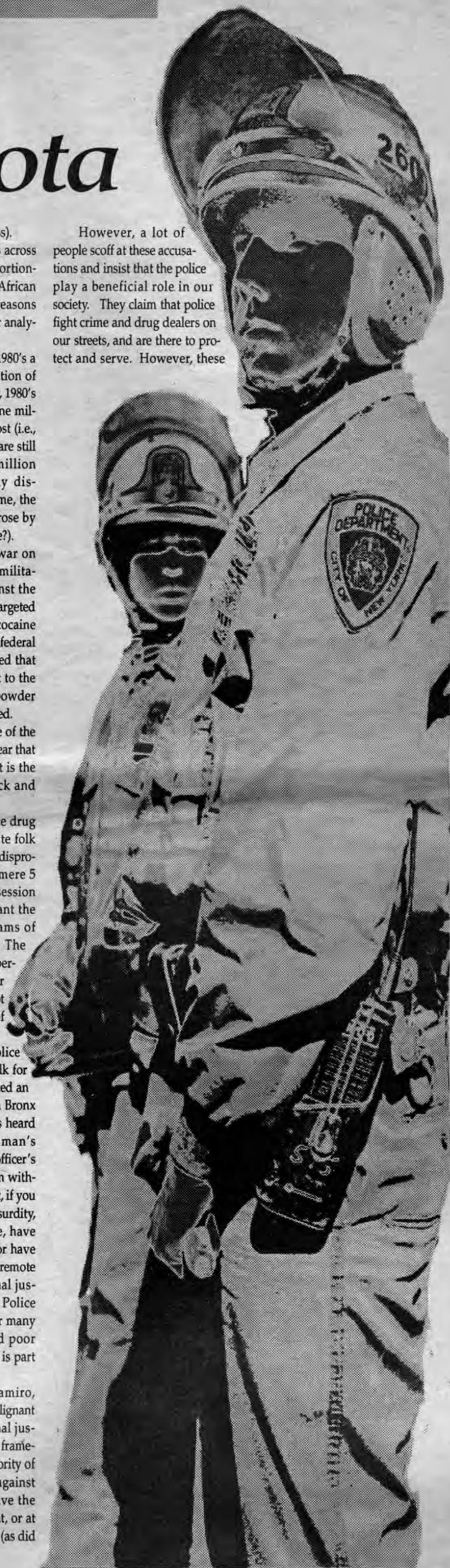
Looking at the racist role of the police in history, it becomes clear that crack was targeted because it is the drug of choice of poor Black and Latino addicts and dealers.

Cocaine, however, is the drug of choice of the affluent white folk across the country. To further disproportionate the situation, a mere 5 grams of crack cocaine possession would heap upon a defendant the same sentence that 500 grams of cocaine possession would. The likelihood of ever finding a person with 500 grams of powder cocaine in the ghetto, does not compare with the 5 grams of crack.

Is the concept of the police framing Latinos and Black folk for crimes they have not committed an absurdity? Consider this: in Bronx county, 90% of criminal cases heard by juries in which a Black man's word is held against a white officer's word are dismissed. But even without citing this little known fact, if you think that such a fact is an absurdity, then you are probably white, have had a comfortable life, and/or have never had not even the most remote experience with the "criminal justice" system in amerikkka. Police frame-ups are a fact of life for many young Blacks, Latinos, and poor white folk across amerika. It is part of the police's job.

I, SubComandante Ramiro, assert that the police are a malignant institution, that our "criminal justice" system is predicated on frame-ups and lies, and that the majority of these attacks are mitigated against poor people who do not have the resources to obtain competent, or at least willing counsel for them (as did OJ).

However, a lot of people scoff at these accusations and insist that the police play a beneficial role in our society. They claim that police fight crime and drug dealers on our streets, and are there to protect and serve. However, these



HANGING SONG

by epiphany praxis

his was the song of hot coals left on
the tongue
smoking in the hours before dawn
in a room without windows
he sang his people
as birds resting heavy on a tree
mocking birds in sway
over the black tar rooftops of
brooklyn
vibrating lullaby humming of new
mothers with
smoking incense on sunday
mornings up
into the heights of cathedral rafters
the hope of thousands
in union aloft
reaches pigeons roosting in the
rafters
and they gurgle,
giggles the poet with a hot coal
blackening his teeth

I leave my eyes on display
for my children if they will have
them
if they will eat them like bibles
they will stand upright before the
sun
warmed on the beaches before the
iambic tide
proud and alive
in the company of a daylit moon

and could be lovers smiling
as they pass
This glowing cheek and wind
caught hair
I hold before gallows
and the coarse hemp of rope
in a country called my home
I feel the sun forever more
as mine

Loose the fire!
Omens collect
the institutions and paperwork
the ghosts of lorca and che and
coltrane
bring mine down on mau-mau
wings
of mockingbirds and the willfully
mad
mad poet women in asylums
mad poet men in prisons
haikus snow through all the
bellvues
textures of lead and callused satin
haunt Attica
all these hung poets singing
within the sun
singeing the skin
singing the skin
and the turning of leaves



The Furhman Quota, cont'd

individuals are ignorant of many things, of what the police do every time they go out on the beat.

A case in point is the current investigations of as many 10,000 arrests in one precinct alone in northern Philadelphia on the possibility of frame-ups and wrongful charges pressed against individuals by the Pigs. They OJ verdict may be seen by many as a vindication of their innocence.

Ask any Puerto Rican from Bushwick, who was celebrating Puer-

to Rican Day 1995 about the police. Ask any black man who drives a nice car in Bed-Stuy, Brownsville or Uptown, or for that matter, any young Black kid who rides a mountain bike in a white neighborhood, who the police serve. Ask any white West Virginia coal miner, who has been beaten up by strike-breaking police who the police serve, or the multi-racial strikers in Detroit who are routinely attacked by the police who they really serve.

The police are more than a mili-

tary institution, or the personnel of an occupying army in place that serve to perpetuate the system we live under. To give some credit to the young women and men who join the US armed forces, the differences between police officers and regular military personnel must be addressed. The majority of Armed Forces personnel enlist because they need a job, need the GI Bill, or to get the high-tech training that will supposedly give them a competitive edge in the job market.

Police officers, however, are a different matter. Police work is a

career choice. They choose to become pigs, not necessarily because they believe that they will be doing some good for society. Even if they "want to help the community", the despicable things that police work involves usually turns a rookie's idealism sour. Many times, rookie mentality is shaped by the veterans of the force, many of which joined out of racist sentiment, or have become racist through many years of racist police work. So, when someone joins the police force, they are quickly thrust into the job of patrolling and controlling communities that they are not from, much like occupying armies, and are quickly made into pigs, by veterans, or the very experience of having to deal authoritarily with people who have been driven to break laws written by rich people.

For example, white cops who commute from Long Island or Westchester County to NYC, will have no qualms in being brutal and piggish with the Blacks, Latinos, and poor white folk of NYC, because they are not from the community. The NYPD are following the diabolical example of the Roman Empire who recruited soldiers from one part of the empire to subjugate and control newly conquered peoples.

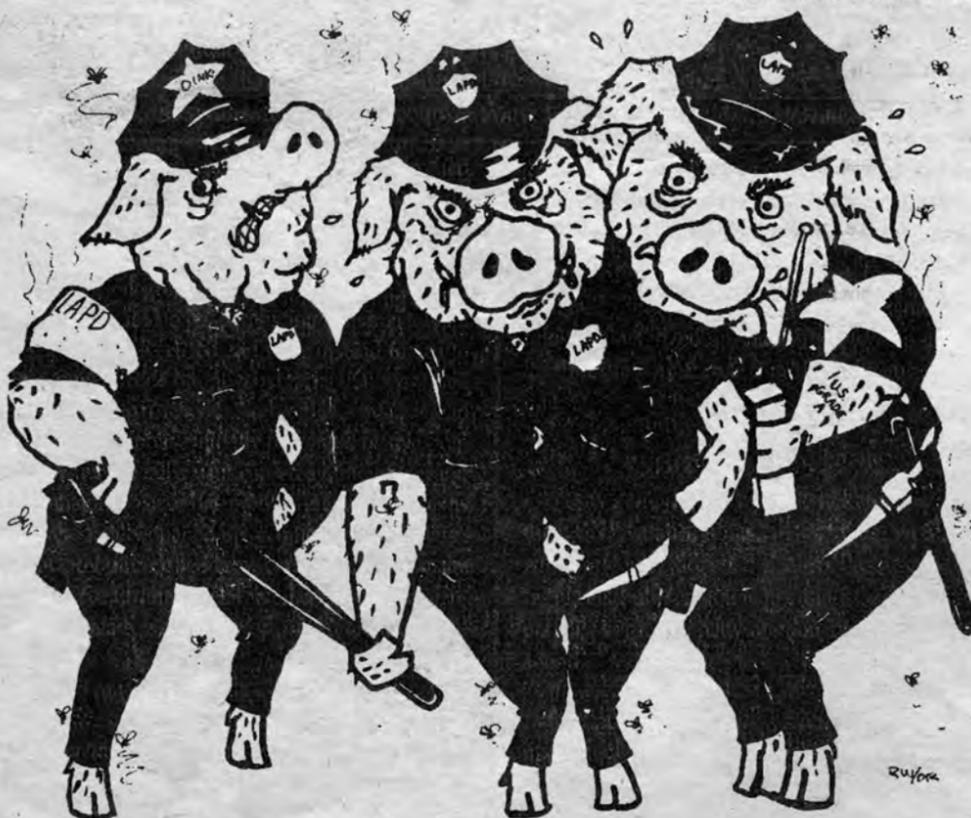
Many of you may find this column offensive, and hard to believe. Many people believe that the police are socially necessary in order to control the criminal elements of our society, and for the protection of the populace at large. But, wouldn't it be much better to solve the problems in

our society that produces these criminal elements, to counter those social relations that de-humanize our people and divide human beings into classes? Crime is a symptom of the problem. We've all heard this song before, but it is still yet to be done.

It is the system itself that is the real criminal, and it is the system that produces the poverty and desperation that is prevalent in the ghettos, barrios, and other parts of our society. In this web of deception and misery, the police are the paramilitary institution gutting society, in order to maintain the status quo. And in the unflushed toilet bowl which is the police force of every city in our country, the Mark Fuhrmans of every police force are sure to maintain the police departments on track.

A 19th century German philosopher once said, "Being determines consciousness", and the very role that police officers have to fulfill makes them pigs. Every morning, they have to decide whether or not they have to go to work that day, knowing well the crimes they have to commit against the communities they work in, and they consistently decide to continue being PIGS.

What's in store for the future? Cops are already on are campuses and moving into our high schools. The prison industry is now the fastest growing industry in amerika, and in two years, the estimated prison population in amerika will surpass the estimated enrollment of college students...



ADVICE

"The Man" Wrecked My Game

**Prudish pigs,
weeping
wallflowers,
& funky
fingers**

I moved - if any of you care. I no longer live on Avenue D. I'm moving up in the world. I now live in Brooklyn. Yeah, yeah, whatever. I know you think that nobody ever goes there willingly - usually people try to move from Brooklyn, to Manhattan. But that is all just part of my charming rebellious nature. And it's great. Now I always need to use the subway. I think the transit people know my schedule, and decide to fix the tracks at the times I need to use the train. And now I'll get to pay a buck fifty for that pleasure. I live with ten cats, and two roommates. To protect the innocent (I like these guys), I'm not telling you their real names. "Chris" and "Mary" (ah - the joys of being an advice columnist, and seeing so many stupid all-American names in quotes!) are a far cry from Morningstar and Kiki (remember them? I threw Kiki's dog into a closet for a week.) They are my closest friends, and that makes it so much easier for me to yell at them. Everywhere I step, there's a cat. Our neighborhood isn't used to multi-colored hair and body piercings, but we provide them with visual entertainment. Street cats flock to us like we are feline messiahs or something. So we keep bringing more and more in. It's getting really out of hand. Anybody want a cat? Anyway, I'm doing this advice thing again. You know what to do. I'm waiting. Please give my life meaning. Give me something more than cats and fare hikes. Please. (Shit - now I'm begging again!)

Ask Topaz
Spheric

DEAR TOPAZ,

I'm going to be as blunt as possible. I am a twenty-five year old normal woman with an abnormal problem. I can't stop masturbating. I don't do it in public - yet - but lately I've had to literally fight the urge to do so. Every time I'm alone, and there's no one around (they could be in the next room, however) I am at it. Especially when I go to bed. I can't fall asleep without doing it. And it's not like I don't get sex, because I do. But even when I'm in bed with a man, I want to push him away during foreplay and do it myself. I just do it the best but I feel like a pervert. I thought only men had this problem. What do you think about this?

Itchy Fingers

Dear Itchy,

Yo - you better stop. That shit could put fur on your palms. You could go blind. And crippled. And when you die - you'll go straight to hell. Yes, that's the guilt you carry around every time you go meddling around down there. Maybe you are a bit excessive, but there are probably people with your "problem" who wouldn't ever admit it, in case they want to run for congress, or future

dictator or something. Yeah, wacking off might be considered a "guy" thing. But you aren't hurting anyone - staining sheets, perhaps, but causing no fatal harm. It's just another regular habit that no one has to know about. It's definitely not as gross as picking your nose, and if you're careful, you have a much less risk of getting caught. Of course you want to push a guy away and do it yourself. So do I. So do a lot of ladies. Half the time, men have no clue - they just play around with you to figure out where to stick their thingie. You aren't a pervert, unless you fantasize about small children, or aardvarks, or Giuliani in a bikini (that could get any women hot.) It's no sin to be horny, girlfriend.

DEAR TOPAZ,

I am a Sophomore a Hunter College, majoring in philosophy. Last spring, I went to the CUNY budget cut rally and met a really cute chick. We totally hit it off. We walked together, chanted together, and she held my hand when we tried to make this barricade. Even when it didn't work she kept holding my hand. At this point I was all set to make my move, when all of sudden this fucking pig grabbed me. I tried to fight him off, but he got me in some choke hold headlock, and threw me in this goddamn paddy wagon with three of my other buddies. What the fuck? I swear, I was doing nothing - maybe yelling a bit, but nothing criminal. Don't these asshole cops have more dangerous people to gather up? Man, I fucking hate them.

I never saw that chick again. I never had a chance to get her number before those goddamn motherfuckers whisked me away like I was some serial granny sodomist or something like that. So I have two questions. One: How can I find that girl? Two: Why are cops such fucking dicks?

Down with bacon

Dear Bacon,

All those in favor of cops, a show of hands, please. Anyone? Anyone? No, really - not all cops are bad. I'm sure there are some nice ones out there. It's just that all the nice cops don't bug us for no reason - only the power-crazed pigs bother us with bullshit. So of course, we never do get to see the nice ones, for the very reason that nice cops only arrest the bad guys. I'll spare everyone the bad donut jokes, and give our lovely NYPD blues some due credit. When they are needed, they do their job. The trouble is, they seem to be around a lot more when they aren't needed than when they are. If you were an average Joe with a badge, a gun, and a flashlight, would you rather deal with a psychotic, machete wielding madman on dust (there are so many of those around, I know), or a stupid little college student pissed off about his tuition? You'd go for the easier one, right? (Actually, come to think of it, which is the easier one?) Yeah, cops suck, and so does life. And nothings' going to change. Our tuition will keep going up for fewer classes and zero programs. Tokens will someday in the future cost about \$3,000, and there'll be one train working for the entire city. And what can we do about it? Nada. Zip. Diddly squat.

As for the babe, she could be in any CUNY school, or just a concerned citizen. You may run into her again. You may not. You can blame the dick-

head cops for destroying a potential soulmate. All I could tell you is bomb your nearest precinct for revenge. You'll even put the nice ones out of their misery. Tell 'em Topaz sent you. No, wait - on second thought, don't mention me at all.

**"So I have two questions. One:
How can I find that girl? Two:
Why are cops such fucking dicks?"**

DEAR TOPAZ,

I'm kind of shy at parties. What's the best way to act, and to break the ice in social settings?

Wall flower

DEAR FLOWER,

I know a lot of people might tell you to be yourself. Have some common sense. Be honest with yourself - if you are a total dork, then obviously you aren't going to want to act the way you normally do. Don't be extreme and try to disguise yourself

(Remember Jan Brady's curly black wig?) But don't talk so much. Don't try to pretend to everyone you are way cooler than you are - people see right through that shit. And to tell you the truth, there are people whose dogs are probably way cooler than

you. But don't let that get to you. People will talk to you if you give them free drugs. That's always a sure thing. And they might call you after the party to "hang out" if you're really generous. (And hey, if you get arrested don't expect them to have your back).

Don't talk too much. Be mysterious. Pretend to listen to everyone - the person who seems to listen the most is the real life of the party. A nameless being with no personality is what's desired at get-togethers these days. It makes all the others actually seem intelligent and interesting. Don't be unsocial and weird. Don't be overly talkative, or too engaging. Try

to find a happy medium between likable and dull. You'll be referred to as "what's-his name," but eventually somebody will remember your name and dig your number up from a gum wrapper in their junk drawer some place.

Also - never get too drunk where you can't make it to the bathroom in time to puke. No one appreciates vomit, no matter how cool you are. Puking on someone's carpet will definitely get you blacklisted (or whitelisted-assistant ed.) from any other party until your mid to late thirties. Trust me, my child, they never forget. Good luck. And remember - if you see me at a party, don't say hi. I don't know you.

Thanks for all your queries, folks. If you send me letters, you will see them answered - I promise you. Or you'll get your money back. I'm only doing my best. Come on - give me a chance. I'm good, I tell you. Really good. Advice is my calling, next to crossing the Hudson River wearing nothing but a Batman cape. Now, which do you think would help our student community more?

Hudson Bladder Blues

by Fred Zabinski

I am sitting in the dark on the West Side pier, trying to get up the nerve to piss in the water. For the past fifteen minutes or so I have been telling myself the obvious: that practically no one will see me and that there is no reason to care if anyone does. And for these past fifteen minutes or so I have been unable to stand and do it, amazed and mortified by this sudden irrational inhibition.

I have just come from having sex in a video booth store on Christopher Street. It was pretty satisfying, but upon leaving the store I didn't feel like getting on the subway and going home right away. I felt that old deep discontentment with life and my mind was racing, noisily chasing jumbled thoughts.

The pier would be a good place to meditate a little, I thought; quiet sounds and water rippling was what I needed most right then. And, I thought, I could piss in the water before the long trip home. I had no idea this weird psychological paralysis would hit me.

This is ridiculous, I tell myself, it's not like I haven't done this before. It's obvious that nobody would even care. This is Greenwich Village, forchrissakes, the fucking West Side pier. I've had sex here. Everybody has sex here. On my way over to the most secluded spot I could find, I passed a man standing with his shirt off and pants down, showing another guy his erect cock.

Sitting behind the fence, more than half the pier's length from the shore, I hear the muted sounds of people laughing, talking, playing house music. Occasionally, someone passes by, but never close enough to

discern me. Yet, I feel completely exposed.

Trying to reason with myself, I observe how dark it is; there are no lights on the pier, and the moon is barely visible behind clouds and smog. Reflections from the shore provide the only light. I would probably not be able to tell if one of the vague silhouettes standing in light were peeing right now. And yet there may as well be a spotlight on

**Quiet sounds
and water
rippling was
what I needed
most right
then. And, I
thought, I
could piss in
the water.**

me for the way I feel.

This is not like me at all. I am usually happiest when violating some law or social taboo. This is something even the cops would ignore. Pissing into the Hudson? Big deal.

I think of all the times I've broken the law, how half the motivation was the thrill of risking getting caught. Most of them involved smoking weed in one place or another. Is a newfound cowardice the price of quitting?

Well, I guess I'll have to wait till I get home. Let me at least try to calm my mind and Zen out for a minute. It's why I came here.

Ripples beat against each other,

the surface shivers in confusion, frenzied as the jabbering in my head. I would like to stop these waves.

I think of the despair that came over me earlier this summer. I had just quit smoking weed, and I doubted that I would ever really be happy. My own existence disgusted me, keeping me up all night. I couldn't stand to have the lights on and see my room or myself. But the darkness was scary, too, with the sound of myself whimpering softly. I felt the suicidal urge as if it were some alien thing, a man waiting just beside me with a knife. Sheer will power kept me going through those ten days, and the darkness passed. While life may be less than joyous, until tonight I have at least felt like a single, unified person.

It is useless to ignore the pain in my bladder or this conflict inside myself. There is no hope of finding peace here if I don't make my body comfortable and assure myself I am not a coward. It's either piss now or leave.

If I leave without doing this I'm going to hate myself. It will haunt me that I surrendered to irrational fear, that the will power I take such pride in could not even get me through something so silly. My mental health is at stake.

I force myself to stand. I walk to the very edge, unzip, pull out my cock and let it go. The urine joins the river and is quickly swallowed by the deeper current. Intense relief overcomes me; I am amazed at how long it keeps flowing out.

When it is over I zip up and slowly take my seat again, without looking behind me. It is quiet here.

Snot drips into my mouth. Sitting, I spit into the water, hard and loud.

March 23rd: We're not asking for what is ours



• Birth • of • an • Internation •

On the cool midday of March 23rd, 1995, a 16-year-old Puerto Rican girl from Spanish Harlem squeezed her way through thousands of protesters, past the weak stage security and with unself-conscious courage approached the stage manager demanding to speak. She explained that she had stayed up half the night writing a speech and no one would hold her back. Chaos was already ruling the stage as every guy with five friends demanded his turn on the mike. Politicians including Al Sharpton and Borough President Ruth Messinger were turned away from the stage, yet this young woman took her turn. She told the story of her life, her family coming to New York, her schooling and hopes. She asked why people so obviously hostile to her and her family were even able to make decisions that so poorly effected them. She spoke in Spanish and English and declared she would never be quiet. The crowd roared in response. How was it that the largest student protest New York has seen since the 60's was more interested in the words of a young

woman from Harlem, than the practiced speeches of liberal government officials? How was it that people came out on the 23rd to speak for themselves?

To understand what happened and to figure out which way to go in our struggle for education and self-determination, we need to study the many lessons and different stories from Spring '95. Spheric has collected stories from a variety of viewpoints in an attempt to present the full breath of opinion. By printing an article, Spheric is in no way endorsing the opinions of the writer, we are only trying to give a complete picture.

We hope this collection serves as a springboard rather than an ending. The struggle which we all unleashed is about more than just classrooms and books, it was about we the people standing on our own feet for once. And while we didn't stop the budget ax, we have learned much about power in America, the power of people united, and that our future really rests only in our own hands.

INTERNATION

Half a Year After the March

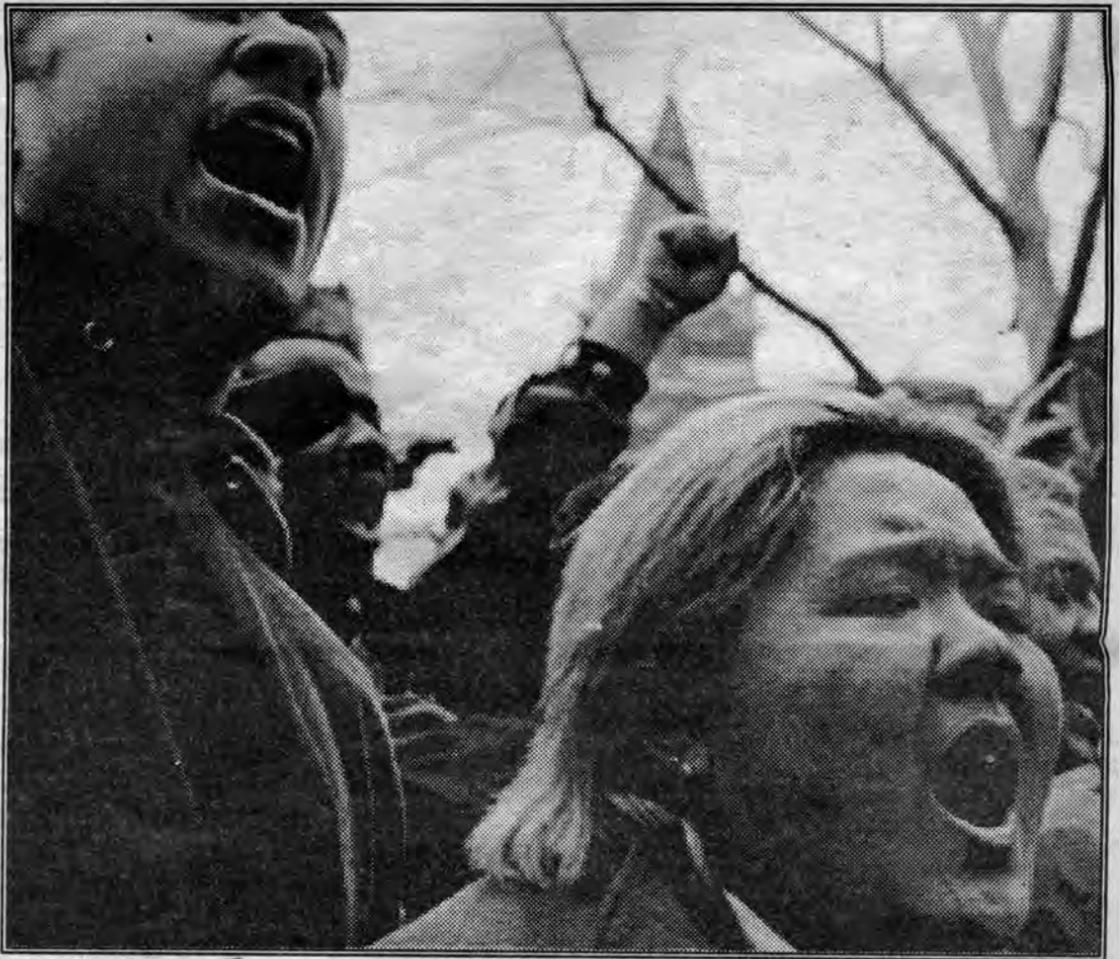
Under the blanket of common hope and purpose of adolescence, seniors, students, professors, and lists of other stabbed by the daggers of elitist persecution, flooded the streets of City Hall on March 23rd, in a cry for justice. Half a year later the voices of students then linger on many of the same minds now, except this time their slogans are followed by question marks.

"It's as if March 23rd never happened", a grieved Neesha Anduze. "Pataki or Giuliani don't have to go to school, work, ride the subway, and pay bills under a salary that is barely above minimum wage."

Neesha, a senior at Hunter College and a retail employee, is one of the thousands devastated by the increase in tuition and cutbacks on financial aid. Although her grandmother finances the school bill, this year Neesha was forced to scrape up

over a quarter of it as a direct result of runaway tuition inflation. "They don't know what it's like to be black, working class, or poor and try and make it out here," she said referring to the Governor and Mayor. "It's just not fair."

Much of the school staff didn't think it was fair either. Since March 23rd, faculty and classes have been reduced by almost 25%. Invaluable programs have been eliminated. Among the departments shut down or reduced considerably are the nursing school at City College, remedial classes at most of the CUNY's 18 colleges, music, theater, and environmental health departments at Kingsborough Community College, communications, media studies at Hunter College and Lehman College, which dedicated a \$45 million gymnasium, was forced to resign their physical education major. "These are rough times," said Hunter Sociology Professor Carter during a teach-in on



March 15th to a sea of cheering students. Another professor from the Sociology Dept., said the termination of faculty is "in addition to the 17% already laid off over the past four years." The teach-in was held to build consciousness as well as momentum for the City Hall March

that followed the week after.

According to a New York Times article, "not since tuition was first imposed during the fiscal crisis of the 1970's has the City University faced such deep cuts."

The deep wounds left by the budget stabs are certainly unbound, for they hit primary, secondary and extra-curricular education, as well as CUNY. Less money would be spent on rehabilitating school buildings and textbooks from the 1960's will get life extensions even as enrollment flourishes. Meanwhile, Board of Ed officials maintain that the \$750 million cut would not significantly effect classrooms.

Beyond the world of education, everything else directly pertains or somehow interlinks. \$750 million cut from Welfare and Medicaid payments. \$58 million cut from the MTA which means stricter guidelines for the 350 thousand student recipients of free train passes another token fair hike by 20%.

"It's just like Vietnam all over again," said Andre White, a homeless veteran of the controversial war in the sixties and an attendance of the March 23rd City Hall protest. "It's like they don't realize that there are men dying out there until too many have died," he said painfully staring off into space as if reliving the war. "Well they're doing the same thing again. They're killing us and don't realize it, and if they do they sure as

hell don't care."

Many feel the "they" have won. "I went to the march and although I don't regret it, I don't think I'd do it again if there's another one," said an angry Alisa Ali, a junior at City College in reference to the march. Alisa, who was considering entering the discontinued Nursing program at City, has now settled for English writing. "There's no use in fighting them."

Still there are many who are less pessimistic on the outcome of the march. "I think March 23rd was a start", said Ivan, a History major at

This time their slogans are followed by question marks.

Hunter. He is critical of the system, and felt optimistic of the demonstrations significance. "The march was very effective, although they wouldn't let us know that," he said. "Finding myself in a crowd of 20,000 who all came together for a common purpose only reinforced my views and made me stronger."

Ivan and many like him, feel the march was the reason why tuition was raised 25% instead of 50%. "We scared them," Ivan said smiling.



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OPEN POEM TO THOSE WHO RATHER WE NOT READ...OR BREATHE

Fascism is in fashion
 but we be style
 dressed in sweat danced off Taino and
 Arawak bodies
 we children of children exiled from
 homelands
 descendants of immigrants denied jobs
 and toilets
 carry continents in our eyes
 survivors of the Middle Passage
 we stand
 and demand recognition of our humanity

Starving for education
 we feed on the love of our people
 we flowers
 the bloom on Amsterdam Ave
 though pissed on by rich pink dogs
 through concrete cracks

We passion kiss in the backs of police vans
 recite poetry in prison cells
 stained walls in blood tracing brutality
 know the willow she weeps for
 we her jazzy tears tasting of the strange fruit
 of southern trees

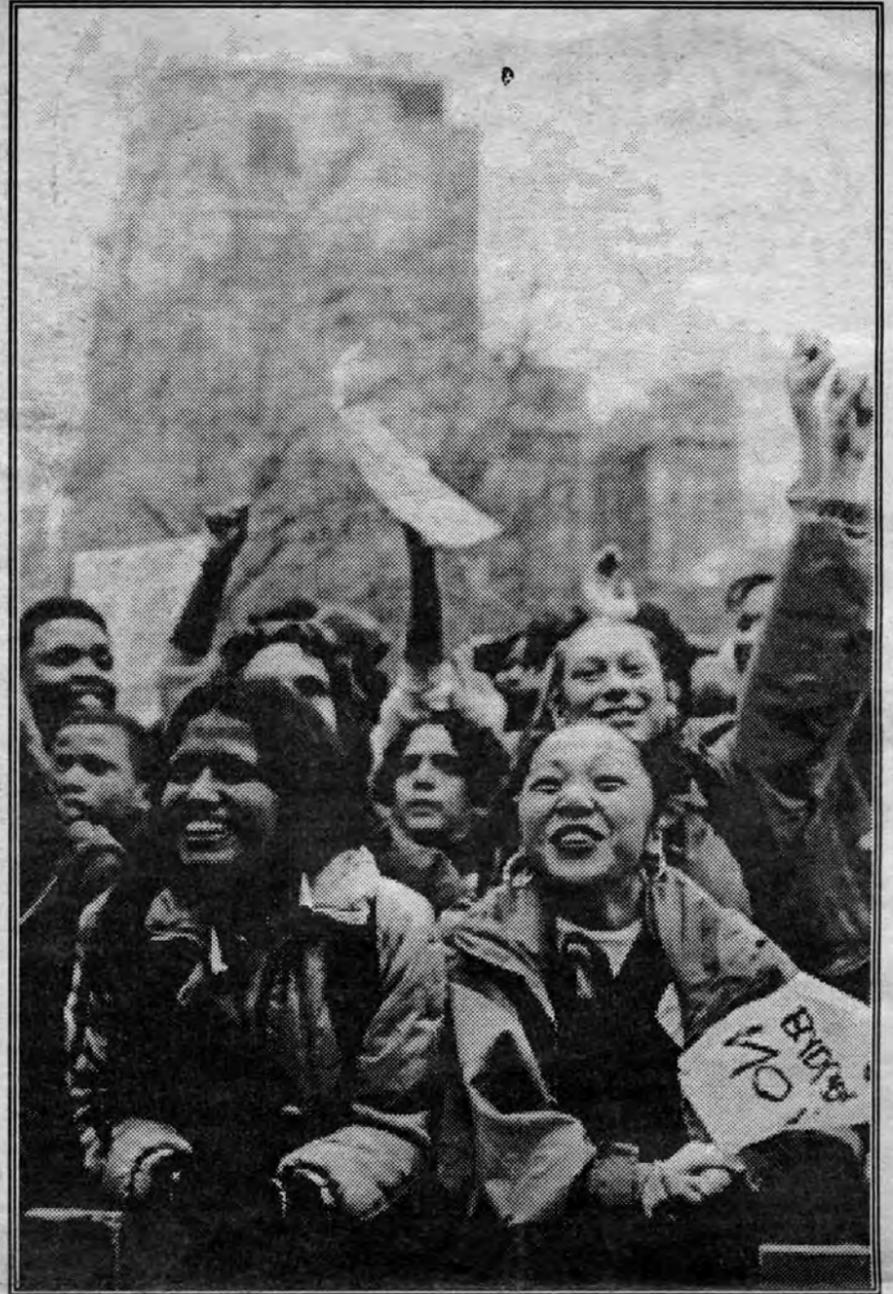
Fascism is in imperial fashion
 but we be style
 our tongues (long slashed to keep silence)
 wear blood jewels
 our heads sport civilizations
 our hips are velvet wrapped in music
 and you can see the earth running
 right under our skin

In a state of police
 cops act as pigs treat men as dogs
 mothers as whores
 the bold youth of a nation hungry and cold
 an entire nation of youth
 behind bars grown old
 the mace and blood did not blind we
 witness and demand a return to humanity

We braid resistance through our hair
 pierce justice through our ears
 tattoo freedom onto our breasts

The bluesy souls of brown eyed girls
 clash with the blackened blood on the pale
 hands of governments of war
 cops who think they're bluer than they are
 black
 mercenaries sent on a mission to set back
 our strength power love

We be eternal style



While evil is wearing itself down with
 badges guns contracts laws cash
 and rouges its thin lips with human juice
 strained off billy clubs
 and tightens its power tie around necks
 that just won't bend
 we see the price tag hanging out
 the cost is our death
 and we refuse to pay

We be political prisoners walking around
 semi-free
 our very breath is a threat
 to those who rather we not read
 and think and analyze and watch out and
 fight back
 and be human beings the way we need to be

We wear warrior marks well

Fashion is passing
 style be everlasting
 we

Suheir Hammad
 42195

*Dedicated to those who realize our empowerment is
 through education.*

JOURNALS

In My Blood

by Lenina Nadal

My family never gave up on freedom. In the 1950's, while young girls wore poodle skirts and housewives wore high heels on television, my grandmother was learning powerful English words to curse out members of the Board of Education. She scolded them with passion hoping the school would finally listen to the needs of Latino parents in her community. My grandfather worked in a restaurant cooking

We were tied to one another by a quiet love, one that touches all who undertake the risk to fight for freedom.

meals for the rich and well-dressed. He would long to come home and reminisce about his youth as a warrior for Puerto Rican Independence. He tickled his lips playing patriotic songs on his harmonica.

When I was a child, overwhelmed by throngs of people at the Puerto Rican Day parade, I held my country's flag tightly in my fist as my father balanced me on his shoulders. I held strongly to the dreams which were fought for by my family. Whenever I resisted authority, I touched on this spirit which rushed through me and filled me with strength. But, marching through the rain last April, the spirit which guided me was my

own.

It was a simple thought, "why should we have to pay more for education? Shouldn't we be able to explore our world for free?" that led the students at various CUNY universities to rebel. For this question we were made to feel intimidated, as if our questions were unreasonable. When some students decided to starve themselves for the sake of education, the students were told that we did not have the right to protest in school and that we would be arrested. We were gathered in a commons area of the college and were resentful to the authorities. We walked out of the college with conviction followed by the guards who breathed upon us heavily, asking us to move. It was midnight and it had started to rain. When we reached the streets, we huddled close in puddles of water mixed with gasoline on the sidewalk. I let the rain pour on me, soaking my hair and my long blue dress. I longed to be naked for my clothes were heavy and constricting.

We were tied to one another by a quiet love, one that touches all who undertake the risk to fight for freedom. I watched the students. Some were kissing new loves, others shooting up their fists and chanting. Others were sliding on the wet concrete giggling at a dance move they created. There were children dressed snugly in their raincoats, standing by the side of their moms. Others were peeking at me and hiding behind their parents' legs. These were the moments when time stood still, when I realized the eternal nature of struggle. These streets had a history of soaking up the energy of the many who stood up in the past and those who would rise in the future.

As we marched through Harlem at midnight, people watched us from



the windows of their apartments, some raised their fists in solidarity. Cars drove by and honked as we chanted "fight, fight, fight, education is our right!". For all the grunts, all the angry drivers locked hopelessly in their cars who sneered at us, there

were also signs of appreciation, a smile, a salute.

We marched because we believed in the power of presence and the power of the human glare. We did not need weapons, we burned our enemies

with strong, youthful eyes.

I rode the subway home that night, filled with the same dreams for freedom of people who stay hoping, who have fought, sung and died.

The Flurries of Winter, the Furies of Spring

by J. Kim
date uncertain

Of what I have learned, or absorbed from one of my black mentors, this one anecdote stands out.

His past recollections of his youth, 15 years old, growing up in black working class Detroit.

It is the 60's, and he describes to me of the fire in his heart raging and coursing through his veins. The East Wind prevails. The flames of communist revolution are sweeping all thoughts and actions.

"I swore", he'd say, holding out his arm, extended open palm displaying five fingers, "that there would be revolution in five years."

He is now a man in his forties, ever so defiant, ever so brave, and with all the years of struggle behind him, only a lingering taste of regret remains, that he never saw the revolution in those five years from his fifteenth year of birth, as a revolutionary.

early 1995

Much has changed, but much more remains the same. Revolution, uprising, rebellion, defiance saturates

the air, fills every fiber of being. It is an uneasy tension that too has an uncertain existence - like inner voices unknown, neglected, but upon having borne too much insult must real-

Who could forget when the imperialist red, white and blue flags were lowered to be rightfully replaced with our colors?!

ize, conceptualize and actualize itself to free itself from its bonds.

2/95

Amidst the flurry of winter winds and unfinished papers from the fall semester, select bureaucratic administrators from CUNY began to initiate their first steps of resistance, setting up the first SEEK student con-

ferences. It was apparent that the GOP fascist "revolution" was threatening to engulf them as well.

Only weeks before, the students of Rutgers University stole the national spotlight, having a sit-down protest during a national conference basketball game. The first salvos have been exchanged.

I was attending a private art school at the time, of which the majority of students were middle class and/or Asian. They did not, as a totality, sense the urgency of the situation, the overlooming threat to us all.

Perhaps it was the division of private and public spheres, though all students were to be affected by the cuts on federal grants. Perhaps it was the greater promise or illusion of the American dream. For most Asians, their model minority status and self-acceptance in the status quo, as well as the white supremacist culture they embraced, was enough to immobilize them into complacency.

The majority of my work was done with City University students at Baruch. One of my comrades in arms called me to his aid. As ever, you

must go to where the struggle is, if a long-term goal of organizing in a specific set locality appears to be non-pragmatic to accomplish the task at hand. A better strategic approach is indeed to include all aspects of struggle, only if, your resources are not limited.

Quite recently I had excommunicated myself from a Marxist-Leninist party of which I was a member for about five years. contrary to popular belief of the autocratic party structure, it was their unbearable whiteness of being which actually reinforced my resolve to quit. It was as easy as it was hard. Though I found myself an orphan of sorts, the struggle remained. (Without which there would be no so-called parties of any sort.)

For the first time I ventured beyond the city boundaries, visiting state colleges in Long Island, trying to establish ties, forge links. On the homefront we were engaged in struggle - leafleting, holding forums, consolidating a political cadre of sorts. The Student Power Movement was conceived at Baruch as a result, we were unifying our points of resis-

tance. Prior to that however, the CUNY Coalition as it was known, began to meet on a regular basis.

A conglomeration of different views peppered these meeting leading to structural challenges, puzzle-like in form — puzzles that would ultimately be solved to some degree on the field of practical activity. I honestly have very little to gripe about the CUNY Coalition. It's faults were to be expected.

3/16/95

"Pataki! Pataki! Pataki's on fire! He don't need no water, let the motherfucker burn! BURN MOTHER-FUCKER, BURN!" The Black and Latino Caucus/USS rally was a tremendous outpouring of student defiance. The chants thundered throughout the path to Wall Street. Thousands jammed the street in protest, but unfortunately, it was tightly regulated by political apparatchniks, as it always seems to be.

Their presence, as usual, guaranteed that the masses would be offered as a sacrificial lamb to the bastard sons of capital.

March 23rd, 1995

A demonstration

Kate McCarthy

Vast and deep - an ocean of people rushed into the trap like a crashing wave
They gathered for a cause but ended up digging their own grave.

A whirling chaos that drowned the outcries of the demonstrators.

Driven by anger and frustration - an unpredictable current had formed.

A cause pulled back to the seas.

Let a drift for people's personal scenes.

A seawall of billy clubs and mace.

This time, had they lost the race?

The temperamental sea of people were forced to retreat.

As they slowly walked away - bittersweet smiles never showed their defeat.

the rosy row calls
red beyond red, blue past blue
"you see, but we be"



The nature
of this flower
is to bloom

This is not a love song

Joselyn Mirabal

There is a man
I want to meet
Just to have
for one day
in a room with a view of
times square
tie naked to the bedpost
I'd stand there
smiling to myself
waiting until his dick got
hard
to then cut it off
and see the sheets fill with
red
against his pale white skin
I'd take pictures
&
mail them to college students
all around New York
Then I'd leave him bleeding
& crying
singing
"I hate you, You fucking dick
Pataki you're a
motherfucking
moneygrabbing, politician,
white shit"
But halfway down the stairs
I'd stop and turn around
because
it's wrong to leave a human
being suffering.
So I'd go back to the room
and put a bullet through his
head

Flurries

Who can forget the magnitude? Fire in the lungs of every man, woman, and child who came down to claim our right, our might, our collective self-determination! Over 20,000 strong in one place with one will. Black, Latino, Asian and White proudly repeating "Black Power!"

Afrocentricity in the context of a multi-racial/multi-ethnic uprising seized the day! The echo still resonates in my mind. Who could forget when the imperialist red, white and blue flags were lowered to be rightfully replaced with our colors?! Flack of African liberation, of the Dominican Republic, and the ole' stars and

bars replaced with Anarchist Black!

The following disarray (the part that made the front page of every newspaper in New York and then some) never really bothered me, though our tactical defeat at the hands of NYPD goons became the source of bitter disputes for all following gathering to come. But no force on Earth, volcano eruption or tsunami tide can drown out the echoes of the students on the 23rd of March.

No. That was not the end. It was followed up with further acts of defiance. The City College hunger strikers that on one night led to a hunger march through the streets of

Harlem - April 26th (read it and weep!) - the Silver Palace demonstration (workers and students in Chinatown fighting for a livable wage in restaurants) where about a dozen students finally got a chance to say "fuck Pataki, Fuck Pataki, FUCK Pataki!" right to his face.

Postscript

Somebody I met in the course of the struggle told me that we may be the first "post-modern" activists of our kind. I'm still entertaining that thought. We fought hard and we'll even fight harder in the future. We have to, there is little recourse left but defeat, and victory is ever a brighter alternative to defeat.



INTERNATION DEBATE

You Say You Want a Revolution..... Yes, We Do

by Alex S. Vitale, CUNY Grad

Soon after New York Governor George Pataki joined the nationwide assault on education by proposing 25 percent reductions in state support to both the State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY), an ad hoc coalition of student activists from a number CUNY campuses began meeting to organize a militant, multi-issue response. Unlike in past years, when student organizing had focused on the administrators of the CUNY system, the newly formed CUNY Coalition chose as its target the new Governor, the State Legislature and the downtown business interests that they felt were ultimately behind the austerity measures. This analysis, combined with an open and democratic organizational structure, created the framework for a mass mobilization of CUNY and high school students fed up with the barrage of cutbacks, and the politicians' rhetoric of hate. Unfortunately, however, students were not able to build on their successes, and organizing efforts degenerated into sectarian debates over revolutionary strategies which left many alienated and demobilized. A closer examination of the tactical decisions made by organizers may help us to better prepare future responses to the continu-

Student reaction to the day was mixed. Many students were alienated by the militant rhetoric of the speakers and the sense of poor organization.

ing tide of global austerity.

The first challenge that faced the Coalition was how to deal with the official CUNY-wide student government, the University Student Senate (USS), which was aligned with progressive state and local legislators. The USS's goal was to preserve CUNY programs through intensive lobbying within the Democratic Party, backed up by carefully orchestrated mobilizations that they would control politically. The two groups came into immediate conflict as each began to plan demonstrations in March. The USS, working with the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus of the State Legislature, called for a march to Wall Street for the 16th. The CUNY Coalition called another march to Wall Street on the 23rd. A battle ensued over which event would be more prominent and which group would come to represent the legitimate center of the struggle.

The USS decided to work with established student leaders at the campuses; their political positions were determined by a centralized leadership. In contrast, the CUNY Coalition created ad hoc committees that were open to everyone. On some campuses, these committees were closely tied to student governments or major student organizations and on others they were not. As a result, the Coalition's organizing was high on energy, and inclusive of diverse people and ideas, but often low on resources. Both groups were more racially diverse than most student coalitions but neither was as diverse as the overall CUNY student population. The issue of racial composition did come up on individual campuses, but it was not a point of difference between the USS and the CUNY Coalition.

COALITION GAINS MOMENTUM

As march drew on, it became clear that student support was galvanized around the coalition. The USS was having limited success outside of a few campuses where it had strong student government support. The major Senior Colleges (City College, Hunter, Brooklyn, and Queens) were all working with the Coalition. Progressive faculty, organized as the Coalition of Concerned Faculty, were also supporting the more open and radical politics of the CUNY Coalition.

On the 16th, the USS had its event. Some 5,000 students, most from six campuses with strong student government support, as well as

by Jed Brandt, Hunter College

In the months since we fought to stop the cuts, a lot of discussion has gone on trying to figure out what happened and which way to go. From cultural nationalist critiques, to distorted liberal moanings, to the truly bizarre "general strike" rhetoric which haunts every public meeting, each group has tried to put their own spin on the student movement.

No, we didn't stop the budget cuts and, no, we didn't start the revolution. We did, however, unleash ourselves and thousands of everyday people to stand on our own feet. Never in my life have I seen such passion, such

Republican Party by itself, rather it would make a critique of capitalism and head for Wall Street. Hardly an arbitrary decision, we collectively saw that the Republican Party was acting on imperatives from the economic restructuring of capitalism. I know that's a mouthful but neo-liberal economics is taking a toll all around the world — and Wall Street is where the men of power buy and sell this world we live in.

We decided that we would not allow politicians from the Democratic Party to speak from the stage. Only students, union representatives and teachers would get to address the crowd.

We decided that we would not get a permit. The slogan for the march was "Student Strike Against the Cuts! Shut the City Down!" Having a ritual parade where we begged the state government not to do bad things to us was just not going to happen.

Based on the last round of student activity in '89-'91, we saw that once a critical mass of students was formed, we could go pretty much wherever we wanted. This did not turn out to be true.

Once 20,000 students gathered in the

No, we didn't stop the budget cuts and no, we didn't start the revolution. We did, however, unleash ourselves and thousands of everyday people to stand on our own feet.

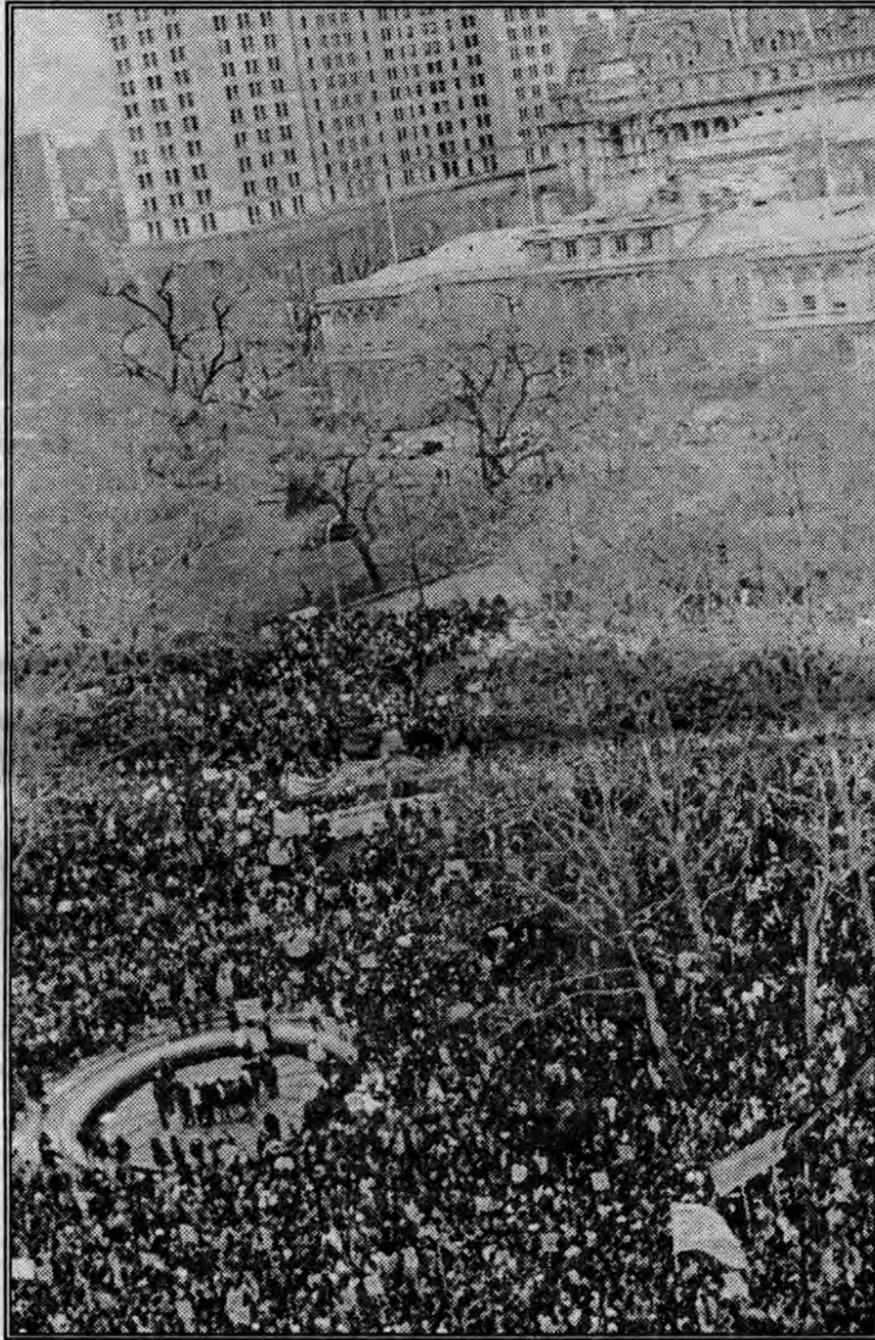
plaza of City Hall, the tactical team for the March (Anthony Lyles, Bronx Community College; Joan Parkin, ISO - Grad Center; Adonis Rozon - teacher; Alex Vitale, Grad Center; and Jed, Hunter) attempted to negotiate our way out of the barricades. We had decided not to speak with the police up until the morning of the 23rd, since we really wanted to shut the city down and not just wander around chanting.

Getting a permit required a scripted march route, which would have sapped our whole point. This decision was reached after six weeks of fierce argumentation and the tactical team was carrying out the directives they had been given by near unanimous votes.

The police decided not to let us leave and we as a group tried anyway. We failed. Our organization was not sufficient for the thousands of high schools students who came from wildcat walk-outs and CUNY students not in contingents.

Many left angry and confused. Some had not been aware of the radical direct action intentions of the march, most were and had come excited with the possibility. If we had succeeded in breaking through the barricades, then this political discussion would be moot.

However, even though people had genuine feelings of failure, let's remember that it was not until a demonstration outside the control of the Democratic Party occurred that talk of compromise began. The budget cuts were only a third of what had been predicted. The



March 23, 1995 -- Students gather to storm Wall Street.

photo E. Ferron

some labor and community groups, marched from the Borough of Manhattan Community College to a large parking lot at the World Trade Center where the Governor has an office. In advance negotiations with the police they had not been able to get permission to march to Wall Street as advertised and were instead forced to follow a route of only six blocks that was lined by police barricades. And as the march came to a stop, the police initially prevented people from leaving the rally. This caused a minor panic and a major sense of disempowerment. When exits were finally opened up, people streamed out. A greatly diminished crowd remained to hear the speeches from legislators and student government leaders, which were often indistinguishable.

From the start, the CUNY Coalition's strategy was more militant and less bureaucratic. Over the course of many heated meetings the

aspirations talked about in public and such genuine grass-roots activity come to fruition.

For good or bad, we're all still here. Instead of pointing fingers and crying over spilt milk, I'll try here to list the major points I think characterized our movement to help us all find the way forward in these turbulent times.

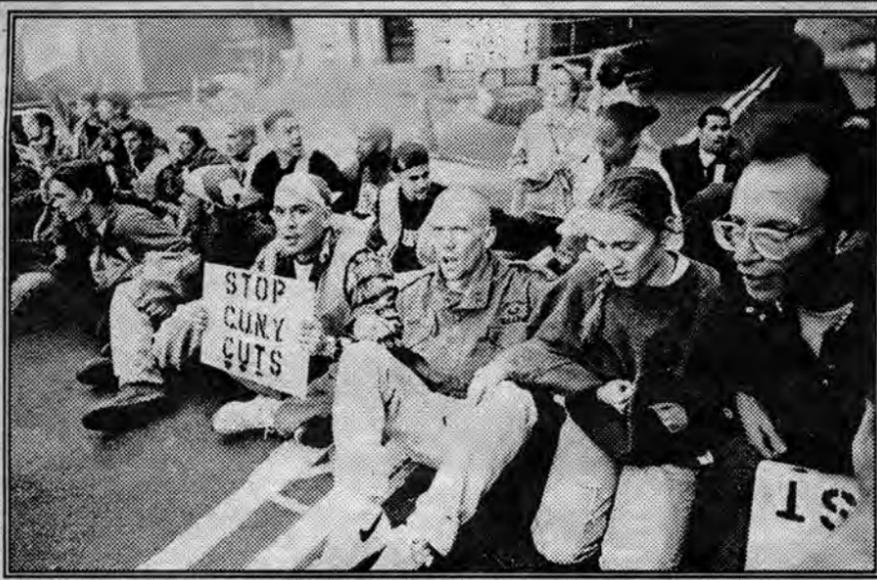
THE PROBLEMS

Any gathering of students talking about the CUNY Coalition has a list of what went wrong and who did what. Some of this discussion is helpful. Often it is not and is based on partial experience, petty opinion and political agenda. Most of the griping starts with the "failure" of March 23rd.

Weeks of discussion in the CUNY Coalition led up to a definite picture of our central day of action. The march would not target the

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April 25, 1995 -- Students blockade Holland Tunnel.

Vitale, continued

Coalition voted several times that the goal of the March 23 event was to "shut the City down." In practice, this meant drawing 5-10,000 students to City Hall and marching through the financial district, causing maximum disruption of business as usual. By not scripting the day, the Coalition hoped to give participants the sense that they had a role in shaping the event as it occurred. It was hoped that this level of empowerment, like the open organizational style would create momentum to build a sustainable student movement that could take on the budget cuts and a wide variety of political issues.

On the 23rd, some 7,000-10,000 high school students, up to 1,000 university faculty, 7,000-10,000 university students and over 1,000 union and community members turned out. These numbers far exceeded organizers' expectations and caused major logistical and crowd-control problems, especially for those managing the stage.

POLICE OUT IN FORCE

The NYPD also turned out in force. During the final days before the event, the police had requested meetings with organizers and had offered a march permit to the World Trade Center. Student leaders had decided not to meet with the police, instead planning to force them into negotiations during the event, or to start the March through sheer numbers as in 1989 and 1991, the two most recent CUNY Mobilizations. In response, the NYPD assigned more than 2,000 officers to the rally.

The police indicated to organizers that they were going to use whatever force they needed to prevent a march. A police provocation was clearly in the works. In spite of this threat, organizers attempted to start a march by moving people quickly into the street through one of the few pedestrian openings in the barricades. Many students were also prepared to push through the police lines, despite assurances from organizers that this was not the intended strategy. Several scuffles broke out - all initiated by the police - and dozens were arrested. At one point, as the march turned and headed toward the southern end of the park, the tactical committee, which ostensibly was leading the march, got split up and had to scurry to regain control. After several confrontations with police and a great deal of chaotic discussion, groups of students began to pull out and reconvene at a campus nearby.

Student reaction to the day was mixed. No one expected such a big turnout. But many students were alienated by the militant rhetoric of the speakers and the sense of poor organization. Though at the event there had been widespread support for attempting a march, some were also opposed to a confrontational strategy. It became clear that the structure of the coalition was open and dynamic but lacked sufficient accountability to ensure that the outlook of the CUNY-wide organizing group adequately represented the views of students on

the various campuses. The coalition attempted to solve this problem through a representative system but it was not implemented until early April, after the group had lost its momentum and some of its legitimacy.

One of the best aspects of the action, however, was its ability to connect issues. CUNY students are from New York City; what affects the community affects them. If schools, transportation and public hospitals are hurt, then students are hurt. Many students work in the public sector, and they face a tuition increase and a loss of employment at the same time. This overlap gave organizers a sense that there was a real possibility of a multi-issue, student-led movement to oppose the entire program of government restructuring.

The student speakers made threats against the police, and tried to motivate the crowd through extremist, and at times, offensive language.

The next day, Rev. Al Sharpton and Denis Rivera, president of 1199, the public health care workers' union, called the Coalition and suggested another City-Hall-to-Wall-Street march under a unified community-student-labor banner. They had both been present March 23rd and were appalled by the police tactics. They proposed a joint event for April 4th, the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination.

Students voted overwhelmingly to support the new coalition, but not without voicing

turn to page 16



April 25th: CCNY student arrested at Holland Tunnel.

Jed, continued

papers announced the news in the following days.

The second major problem I see was that we could not hold together the city-wide coalition after the spring. The reasons for this are many. We are coming from a variety of different communities and we have radically diverse philosophies. Times of crisis gel us in opposition to government policy, but in terms of what we want, there is not a clear vision which unites us at this time.

The list of people I've heard blamed for the disintegration of the CUNY Coalition include: radicals, liberals, anarchists, Maoists, "white people", black nationalists, professional leftists, trotskyites, police infiltrators, the Grad Center, and on and on. Rather than finding one particular cause, it seems that without a unifying vision of the world we hope to attain, we cannot keep unity beyond these moments of crisis. Unfortunately, little work has been done to try and find our unity and much has happened to cement our differences.

No matter how much bad blood is spilled, events will again force us together. Let's try to keep politics in command and know what we want, clearly argue for it, respect differences and achieve the highest level of unity we can. Our enemies have done a damn good job of unifying, let us keep this discussion alive.

Thirdly and perhaps most importantly, the issue of "representation" has been floating around. This has been put forward in the following ways: the coalition was run by white liberals/radicals who endangered people of color by pushing militancy, that even with one-person/one-vote - whole groups did not take an active part in those discussions so they didn't even get the chance to vote, that small and aggressive trotskyite organizations were able to talk at length about things no one wanted to hear without a popular base to justify it, that meetings were dominated by "powerful personalities" and not the positions they raised, that meetings were packed by various factions, that the placement of meetings at the CUNY Grad Center gave too much influence to graduate students who tended to be white and middle-class, and that a standing leadership body was not elected.

These various criticisms boil down to two essential issues: democracy within the CUNY Coalition and its representation as a body of CUNY students as a whole.

No group can represent everyone. People form different collectives to do particular things. People form groups to use different tactics. The CUNY Coalition was formed to be a grass-roots body to really reach out on the campuses rather than take directions from USS and the state Democratic Party (e.g. Denis Rivera, Ruth Messenger and Al Sharpton). Did it represent every CUNY student? Obviously not, but those

students who supported the call came out, and bodily supported the objectives raised by the Coalition. If they did not support them, they would not have come. Maybe some were ignorant of the permit issue, but the flier calling to strike and shut the city down seemed pretty explicit to me.

The idea that internally there was some secret cabal pulling strings and manipulating votes is absurd. Yes, there were factions. These factions did not break down, however, along racial or school lines internal to the Coalition. The radical direct action faction included poor, working-class and even middle-class students. The liberal "lobbying" faction included same.

The direct action faction won the discussions, based on the strength of the arguments and the actual popular will on the campuses. No other explanation fits the actuality.

I've seen years of liberals sapping the creative power of popular movements under the banner of "inclusion". But I want more than a rally. I want a world where the decisions which affect our communities, schools and workplaces are made by us and not some jackass in Albany or Wall Street. And I'm not alone in feeling this. That was the sentiment that broadly made March 23rd proceed with its radical vision, and no backtracking can deny it.

Were some people "alienated" by the radicalism of March 23rd? Yes, but I think that had more to do with not really shutting the city down. Some didn't want that to happen in the first place, but they had NYPIRG, the Democratic Party, and the USS to represent them. Those groups were multi-racial and multi-class in composition also, but the vision and politics

Self-reliance is knowing we have no saviors. No miracle politician or half-baked demagogue is going to open the treasure chest of America and rain gold chains on our heads.

they carried out seem about as tired as Bill Clinton's fat mug. It's not just rhetoric to demand "all power to the people", it's what the struggle is all about.

SO YOU LIKE THE CUNY COALITION?

Nothing's perfect, but the student mobilization last spring changed my life. Never before had I seen such fine people rise up on their own terms, with their own demands and stand strong in the face of the government. People were beaten, spied on, harassed, maced, degraded in the media and abandoned by the liberals in Albany... And we kept coming. The power of the people is a beautiful thing.

What good was the CUNY Coalition? It brought the people out without begging. It said that we ourselves, the poor and working-class people of New York would set our own terms. It said that it's not just some suburban clown named Pataki we have to blame, it's a society that buys and sells human life like steel or pork bellies.

Before I get all romantic on ya'll, it's three central points of orientation I want to remember and keep with us: self-reliance, systematic critique and Mass Line.

scoot to page 16

DEBATE, CONTINUED

People to the Power or Power to the People?

Vitale, from page 15

withering attacks against the union leadership. Many students especially those from hard-left sectarian groups, including the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and the Revolutionary Workers' League (RWL) as well as anarchist groups like Love and Rage, attacked the union officials as reformist bureaucrats and lauded the radical potential of rank-and-file workers. They saw April 4 as a chance to build a rank-and-file movement that might result in city-wide strikes; union leaders, on the other hand, saw it as a more limited opportunity to capitalize on momentum within labor and student groups to stop the Republican attacks on services. One exception to the narrow sectarianism was the International Socialist Organization (ISO), which advocated strong links to labor and a representative organizational structure.

Students, labor leaders from 1199 and District Council 37, and a representative of Rev. Sharpton formed an organizing committee. The Coalition selected students who strongly opposed the union leaders because it was believed that they would be the best negotiators of an uncompromising political position. The committee agreed to three demands: no budget cuts, no tax cuts and an end to corporate welfare. It was also agreed the event would be non-violent in the spirit of Dr. King.

Most students felt that the very act of a joint march to Wall St. represented a huge victory, but some wanted to push things further. During the final organizing, students continued to denounce the unions. And at the last meeting, several proposals were put forward for civil disobedience actions and resistance to any police efforts to divide the crowd. While specific CD plans were reflected, the Coalition approved the principle of preventing any police intervention.

Turnout for the event was relatively small, about 5,000, made up equally of unionists and students. The marshaling was well integrated and, despite a brief rainstorm, things moved smoothly. However, several of the student speakers used the opportunity of addressing rank and file workers to espouse the possibilities of shutting the city down through united action. They made threats against the police and tried to motivate the crowd through extremist and, in some cases, offensive language.

In response, Dennis Rivera addressed the crowd and stated that if such rhetoric continued he would pull his members out of the march. Boos rang out, but primarily from students. Rather than inspiring the rank-and-filers, the students alienated most of them. For better or worse, most municipal workers are not politicized beyond immediate workplace concerns. And there is no compelling reason why they should look to students for political leadership. Students have low standing socially, few resources, no proven track record and limited political experience. Revolutionary rhetoric will not make up for these things.

During the final rally on Wall Street, a group of students prevented the police from establishing a crowd control barrier to keep a cross street open to pedestrians. It appeared that they might be arrested. This enraged the union organizers who were already stinging from the inflammatory speeches. Fortunately, the crowd was dispersing fast enough that the police decided that the barriers were no longer necessary.

as a result of the speeches and the street action, ties between the CUNY Coalition and local unions were seriously damaged. The possibility of any future joint actions was gone.

Some of the student speakers later admitted that they had been swept up by the moment and regretted their tone. None of the students had communicated a clear message of why the CUNY system was under assault and what it would take to defend it. Instead they were more concerned with projecting a revolutionary vision which they thought would inspire people to look beyond the immediate crises.

It is important to think beyond immediate circumstances in planning political activities. It is also important, however, to understand where, politically, your potential constituency is. The repeated decisions by the Coalition to favor a revolution-building strategy over a stable and effective student campaign against the cuts left most students and student activists sitting on the sidelines. There is not support in the current climate for revolutionary rhetoric. People are willing to engage in a certain degree of political activity, even militant activity, but only if they believe it will have short-term meaningful consequences. Any attempt to build a long term student movement must operate with this understanding. It is by doing a good job on a clearly defined issue that students will gain the respect of their peers and make a more broad-based movement possible.

The CUNY Coalition should have found better ways to sustain coalitions with organized labor. This doesn't mean giving in to reformist Democratic politics. Ways can be found both to push a radical agenda and to find common ground. It was clear that the union leaders were willing to accommodate the students a great deal. And students represent an important political constituency for both a community/labor struggle against the cuts and the Democratic Party. By working with the unions, the Coalition's own student organizing would have been enhanced; and the unions might have been will to provide resources that would have been of great help to the Coalition.

The fiscal problems of the public sector cannot be solved by voting for the Democrats, but at the same time a movement for economic reform is not going to be built on rhetoric.

Political mobilization are built on a vision of change and the possibility of real successes along the way. The CUNY Coalition, while maintaining an inclusive, non-hierarchical structure and radical politics, became dominated by a desire to create a revolutionary student movement out of thin air. As long as this form of sectarian naiveté is the dominant force in the CUNY Coalition, a stable base of student support will not be forthcoming.

Jed, from page 15

Self-reliance is knowing we have no saviors. No miracle politician or half-baked demagogue is going to open the treasure chest of America and rain gold chains on our heads. The CUNY Coalition explicitly, right from the get-go, refused to take direction from official leadership. We were non-partisan in that the Democratic Party was understood to be part of the problem, that the union bureaucracy did not represent the rank-and-file workers we so desperately wanted to unite with, and that only the voices of students and everyday people would speak for us.

This orientation is both essential for organizing around particular issues like our schools and the budget cuts, and for creating the possibilities of redistributing power in New York and America. If we continue in the tradition of "speaking truth to power", we never address the fact that we don't have that power. The CUNY Coalition attempted to reach unity with broader forces, such as the unions, without compromising our orientation to our communities.

Unfortunately, people like Denis Rivera can't handle democracy. The reason he wanted to unite with us, was that the popular movement had escaped the control of the official Democratic Party leadership of which he is a part. When we speak, as a movement, on our own terms — these official demagogues lose their reason to exist. We've seen the fruit of two decades of their bankrupt liberal leadership. This is not sectarian, this is a fact of power and the CUNY Coalition attempted to address it.

Only by relying on the organized collective strength of the working class and poor students can we realize even our smallest dreams. If this is "unrealistic" and "adventurist", then we might as well not even bother. But, if we are going to bother, let's do more than irritate the police, let's build clear organization united around egalitarian vision and the determination to carry it out.

Systematic critique was going after Wall Street and not the Republicans. Maybe it was Pataki who made the proposals to cut CUNY. But by only attacking the Republicans, we play into the hands of the Democrats. I'm not going to hearken back to the glory days of Dinkins, Cuomo and company. Five years ago we tore it up because they were cutting CUNY. Support for the Democrats is a mile wide and an inch deep. This lesser of two evils bullshit has now

come to an end. Let's not kill our movement by delivering it into the hands of snakes.

Wall Street is the center of the empire. Whole nations are traded on their boards, people's lives ruined for a penny a share. That is the process that destroys CUNY, those are the people who make the money from the work we do. If we know this to be true, and most of us do, let's stop fucking around about it and do what logic necessitates: Take back what is ours!

The CUNY Coalition, while formally founded because of the budget cuts, understood these truths and acted accordingly. America is not a democracy. The bourgeoisie owns New York and our futures. It trades them for profit. We will point our finger at the source and not apologize. This second point is essential and must be maintained strongly and centrally in our movement, whatever particular forms it takes.

Mass Line is understanding that we have been given no special right to tell people what to do. That our ideologies and personal ambitions are secondary to the material conditions of our people's lives. That we must go out in our communities, listen to people's concerns and hopes and try to make them into a plan of action. If we do this well, the people will move.

This movement will be of a profoundly different character than the cattle-drive marches on Washington DC or Albany. Mass Line is about unleashing the conscious activity of all the people, breaking down the leader/follower trap, and our taking the desires of people for their own world and giving it form. We are organizers, not preachers.

In the February 27th NYPIRG march on Albany, all the people were there as props for the lobbying inside. We were just a backdrop until several hundred students tried to storm the State Building. Just then, the people themselves took action on their own terms, not waiting for someone else to do our work. The liberals who don't trust people are just a flipside of the trotskyite jabberheads who don't listen to people, both think something else — a politician or a political formula — will save us. And, again, we have no saviors.

Mass Line is trying to build forums for broad participation, while not sublimating real political direction to mythical unity. Whatever our particular political stripe, we must listen to people in our communities and find what we believe to be the highest common aspiration and then put that into practice. That is radically democratic and effective.

This part of the CUNY Coalition (minus the jabberheads) worked a real human miracle. We, regular students, brought out more people on a higher level of unity than the Democratic Party, USS, NYPIRG, the MORE Coalition, the official union bureaucracy — and all with minimal money or resources. We cannot forget that "the people" are us. We, the people, can never be defeated once we stand up clearly on our own feet.

For all the difficulties we had last year, it changed many of our lives. Many of us are now dedicated to changing the whole set-up in America. Some of us are in particular groups, many of us are not. But let's never forget the power we saw unleashed, the joy of people's faces in our unity and the hopes that have yet to die out. Let's criticize the problems and fix them. Let's clarify the strengths and incorporate them. Let's keep up the dialogue and keep up down the long march to freedom. All Power to the People!



Scream, dude, scream! Yes, Spheric is running low on pictures.

ANARCHY IN THE USA

CUNY Love, CUNY Rage

**We are right
now
witnessing the
birth of a new
movement**

by Chris Day, Hunter

The movement against the budget cuts last spring was a significant development for all people who hate this system and want to live in a freer and better world. There have been many argument about particular aspects of the struggle.

What follows is an account of the course of major actions in the street, in other words those moments when thousands of ordinary people became actors in struggles that affect their lives.

I also attempt to analyze the complex dynamics between different forces within the movement and how they contributed to its successes and failures.

OPENING MOVES

On February 27, 8,000 students, mainly from the State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY), attended a rally organized by the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) at the New York state capitol in Albany against dramatic proposed cuts in the state budget for higher education. The NYPIRG rally was organized to coincide with a day of student lobbying of state legislators.

Many of the students gathered in Albany were in no mood to beg politicians for what they consider a basic right. Growing impatient with an endless array of speakers emphasizing the importance of registering to vote and writing to our legislators, groups of students organized an impromptu march that managed to capture the whole crowd. After marching up and down a long mall the students started to march past the state capitol building which was guarded by no more than a dozen cops on horseback. Students waving the flag of the Dominican Republic were the first up the stairs of the capitol building. For a moment the crowd hesitated and then proceeded up the stairs to the doors of the capitol.

The NYPIRG organizers panicked and pleaded with the crowd to return to the rally site. It was too late. Several hundred students poured into the lobby of the capitol building chanting, among other things, "Revolution! Revolution!" before the NYPIRG organizers, working with the cops, managed to secure the doors and prevent the rest of the students from getting in. The rest of the crowd then marched several blocks to the administrative headquarters of SUNY where the police were better prepared. After several unsuccessful attempts the crowd managed to push through the police and get into the

SUNY building, where they remained for about twenty minutes.

The demonstration obtained only local Albany coverage in the capitalist media. While the students were not prepared to transform these spontaneous actions into effective occupations, their insurgent spirit was an indicator that the movement against the budget cuts was going to be militant. This pattern- was to repeat itself several times, with the rank and file of the student movement breaking through the boundaries established by their self-appointed leaders.

TURNING UP THE HEAT

Several days later on March 1, 20,000 hospital workers organized by their union, 1199 marched from the Empire State Building to Belvue Hospital in opposition to proposed cuts in Medicaid and hospital funding. Over the next several weeks the movement began to turn up the heat.

When recently- elected Governor George Pataki came to speak in a New York City hotel his path was blocked by AIDS activists and students. On March 15, speak-outs were organized by faculty at many CUNY schools. At Hunter a CUNY college, a speak-out turned into a confrontation with the police after theater students in a mock funeral procession were followed by about 100 students into the street where they were attacked without warning by the police. Eight students were brutally arrested.

On March 16, about 3,000 students organized by the CUNY University Student Senate (USS) marched from the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) to the World Trade Center.

STUDENT STRIKE ROCKS NEW YORK

On March 23, 30,000 students turned out for a demonstration organized by the CUNY Coalition Against the Cuts with the explicit aim to "Shut the City Down." Only about 20,000 were able to get to the rally area around City Hall. The rest were prevented from getting to the rally by the police and clogged the streets surrounding the rally.

The crowd included thousands of the 14,000 High School students who walked out of classes that day. When the students at City Hall attempted to get through the police barricades and into the street in order to march on Wall Street they were met with horses, mace and billy-clubs. Seventy-five students were arrested and many more were maced or otherwise injured. Reporters and photographers were also caught up in the police riot.

Eventually the repeated attacks by the police broke down the determination of the crowd, which gradually dispersed. Several thousand students regrouped at BMCC nearby and several hundred organized a march to 1 Police Plaza, police headquarters, where the people arrested earlier were being held.

Later that evening Police Commissioner Bratton attempted to speak at a previously scheduled event at



Hunter College. Students disrupted the event by shouting Bratton down with accusations about police brutality at the demonstration. After one of the students was thrown out of the room a crowd of students gathered outside and chanted loudly throughout the event. As Bratton left he was pursued by an angry crowd of students chanting "Cops Off Campus! Run Bratton Run!" The news blackout on the movement against the budget was finally broken. The March 23 demonstrations got front page coverage in every English and Spanish language daily in New York in addition to extensive national and international coverage.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

The March 23 demonstration seriously shook the power structure by announcing the existence of an autonomous working-class student movement outside the control of any of the traditional "progressive" forces of New York City politics.

The CUNY Coalition refused to let any politicians speak from the stage. Ruth Messinger, the liberal Democratic Manhattan Borough President, was told to get off the stage. The response to the March 23 demonstration was immediate. The "left-wing" of the Democratic Party represented by the Rev. Al Sharpton and 1199 President (and vice-president of the New York State Democratic Party) Denis Rivera, called for a march from City Hall to Wall Street on April 4.

Just as March 23 demonstrated the power of the people to take matters into their own hands the April 4 demonstration showed the determination of the system to bring any such

expression of our power back under control. The April 4 demonstration had many lessons to offer the new student movement. Rivera and Sharpton promised the CUNY Coalition that they would be "equal partners" in organizing the demonstration. They were everything but.

About 5,000 people, mainly students, turned out for the demonstration. 1199 did not mobilize its own membership in anything like the significant numbers they turned out for March 1. 1199 overrode the CUNY Coalition on several important issues from who would get to speak to how the marshals would respond to police provocations.

At one point after several students had made uncompromisingly radical speeches, Denis Rivera took the microphone and threatened not to participate in the march if there were any more "provocative speeches." The crowd, including many 1199 members, booed Rivera. Al Sharpton had to intercede to save his and Rivera's political fortunes.

In an expert piece of demagoguery, Sharpton played the firebrand, riling the crowd up with chants of "No Justice, No Peace," and then turned around and announced that any "provocateurs" would be "handed over to the police." Those who were familiar with Sharpton's past as an FBI informant didn't doubt his willingness to collaborate with the cops.

April 4 cost the movement some momentum but it also taught some important lessons about alliances with "progressive" Democrats. After April 4 the momentum returned to the individual campuses.

At SUNY Binghamton, Governor

Pataki's car was stoned by students as he attempted to visit his daughter who was participating in an event on campus. On April 11 about 20 students at the City College of New York (CCNY) in Harlem initiated a hunger strike in a 24-hour access building on campus. That night CCNY president Yolanda Moses called in the police to arrest the hunger strikers and their supporters when they refused to vacate the building at 11 p.m.

In 1969 CCNY was the site of an occupation that led to open admissions at CUNY. Since then there has been a tradition of not bringing the cops on campus. Moses' decision to use mass arrests against a hunger strike outraged not only other CUNY students but also community activists in Harlem and Washington Heights.

Only minor charges were brought against the 47 arrestees, but they were held in police custody overnight and the hunger strikers were denied any fluids in a blatant effort to break their resolve. The next morning the hunger strikers returned to CCNY, and by early evening they had been joined by several hundred supporters from the community, from other CUNY schools, and from Columbia and other private schools. That evening a decision was made to avoid arrests and to leave the building when ordered to. The crowd then marched in the rain for several hours in a spirited demonstration through Harlem. Answering an offer of sanctuary from Columbia students the crowd attempted to gain access to Columbia but were blocked at the main gate by police. The crowd then rushed a smaller gate and about half

Still Loving, Still Raging

Chris Day, cont.

the people got in before the cops were able to close the gates and arrest three students. After a brief occupation of the lobby of a library the crowd decided to disperse.

The next evening Gov. Pataki

April 4 cost the movement some momentum but it also taught some important lessons about alliances with "progressive" Democrats.

ventured into New York City, attempting to speak on Staten Island. He was met by an angry crowd of transit workers, school bus drivers threatening to strike, and students who successfully shouted him down.

BUDGET OF THE DAMNED

Until 1969, when open admissions was won CUNY was almost all white and tuition was free. By 1976 CUNY was predominantly Black, Latino and Asian, and for the first time tuition fees were charged. Since then there has been an almost unrelenting attack on CUNY. Each budget proposal is accompanied by a vicious campaign to demonize CUNY students as undeserving of higher education.

Pataki's budget proposal is in effect an effort to destroy CUNY as a serious university offering a broad liberal education to working-class youth. One of the astounding things about Pataki's budget, however, is that it is visiting similar cuts on the more white and middle class upstate SUNY schools. Because of inequalities in how CUNY and SUNY are funded, and because of the relatively more privileged position of SUNY students, SUNY will be able to absorb the cuts more easily than CUNY. But the cuts created a broad working- and middle-class alliance against the cuts that put Pataki on the political defensive.

...OR DOES IT EXPLODE

For the majority of CUNY students, going to college is an enormous struggle. Few CUNY students can count on significant financial support from their parents. The vast majority of CUNY students hold down at least one job. Many have children or other family members to take care of. Many are the first in their families to ever attend college.

For these students, for their families, and for their communities, a CUNY education represents their deepest hopes and aspirations. The proposed budget cuts are a direct assault on these dreams and aspirations. For every one of the 200,000 students in CUNY there are at least ten more people watching to see what will happen. Every CUNY student forced out of school by these budget cuts represents younger sisters and brothers or friends on the block who will give up hope and numb their despair with drugs. The budget cuts are quite simply a matter of life and death for the communities affected.

One of the main battles within the anti-budget cut movement has been over where the budget cuts are coming from. Liberal groups ranging from NYPIRG to 1199 have emphasized the mean-spiritedness of the cuts and have focused their attacks on the Republican politicians in Albany.

Over and over one hears from these quarters the refrain that the politicians don't know what the cuts will do to the people who will be affected by them and that the purpose of the movement is to let them know.

In contrast to this, the CUNY Coalition Against the Cuts took a somewhat more explicitly anti-capitalist position that the cuts are part of the general process of capitalist restructuring taking place around the world and that the real power behind the budget cuts is on Wall Street, not in Albany. But even in the CUNY Coalition there is a lack of clarity.

Frequently, activists argue that the budget cuts in higher education will be bad for New York's economy because CUNY produces so many people who are trained to work in high-paying skilled professions, as if the ruling class has just made a big blunder in calculating the effects of the budget.

In fact the budget cuts are perfectly rational from the point of view of the rich. In the new global economy the high-paying jobs that support the US's large middle class are being greatly reduced. At a time when the pool of high-paying jobs traditionally reserved for the white middle class is shrinking CUNY is producing thousands of Black, Latino, and Asian competitors for those jobs. This under-

The NYPIRG organizers panicked and pleaded with the crowd to return to the rally site. It was too late. Several hundred students poured into the lobby of the capitol building chanting "Revolution! Revolution!"

mines the ability of the system to maintain a stable base of support in the white middle class. It is also producing raised expectations among an enormous layer of well-educated peo-

ple of color that the system can not deliver on.

From the point of view of the rich, CUNY costs a lot of money and is contributing vital materials to future social explosions. The budget cuts are, in effect, a form of long-term riot control.

WE DON'T NEED NO STINKING PERMITS

The anti-budget cut movement was very broad and there were enormous contradictions between the various forces it has brought together. Perhaps the sharpest contradiction has arisen between the "left-wing" of the Democratic Party as represented by 1199 and the more autonomous CUNY Coalition.

While 1199 has a membership of tens of thousands of working class people who will be directly affected by the cuts, the leadership of the union is in the hands of people who will be affected in a very different way, the cuts will undermine their claim to institutionalized power.

By contrast, the CUNY Coalition, in spite of many failings, was honestly led by students who were not directly concerned with future political careers. The March 23 demonstration was more than an attack on the budget cuts. It was a challenge to the ability of the Democrats to keep opposition to the budget cuts within the bounds of protest as usual.

The Democrats and the rest of institutionalized progressivism (the unions, churches, etc.) are in deep trouble. They have lost much of their traditional support among white workers to the right. Their one remaining claim to viability is their ability to rein in the unruly elements of the more despised sections of society. It is clear that on the whole the system is choosing to rely more heavily on repression (cops and prisons) than on the strategy of co-optation represented by the progressive Democrats. Demonstrations like the one on March 23 only reinforce the idea that the ungainly bureaucracies of institutionalized progressivism are as ineffective and irrelevant as they are expensive.

The hastily organized April 4 demonstration was nothing more than a cynical attempt by politicians and bureaucrats to get in front of a mass movement and then to bring it back under control. The failure of March 23 was our failure to break through police lines and march on Wall Street.

The CUNY Coalition had deliberately decided not to get a permit for such a march in order to avoid working with the police in blunting the power of our own demonstration. Denis Rivera and Al Sharpton sought to capitalize on this failure by organizing a permitted march from City Hall to Wall Street. They succeeded in moving 5,000 people from point A to point B, but in so doing they sacrificed what made March 23, even in its failure, an expression of our power, the willingness of 30,000 people to show up to a demonstration with the explicit intention of shutting the city down to defeat the cuts.

THE CUNY COALITION

The CUNY Coalition was for-

mally initiated at the start of the Spring semester by the president of student government at Bronx Community College, but most of the initial work to build the coalition appeared to be carried out by the International Socialist Organization (ISO), a Trotskyist group, working with the student government at the CUNY Graduate Center.

While the ISO has large chapters at a number of private colleges in New York, the only CUNY campus where they have a significant presence is the CUNY Graduate Center. Initially CUNY Coalition meetings were supposed to rotate from school to school, but because of the superior facilities offered by the Graduate Center the meetings became fixed there.

Both the ISO and the Graduate Center are considerably whiter in composition than the rest of CUNY. CUNY Coalition meetings had a majority of white students while the movements on the various campuses are overwhelmingly made up of people of color.

In addition to the ISO and the Graduate Center a number of other tiny Trotskyist groups representing almost no significant base on the campuses decided to make CUNY Coalition meetings a forum for airing their various party lines at great length. The net effect of all this was an atmosphere of distrust and poor communications between the largely white leadership of the Coalition and its largely Black, Latino and Asian bases on the cam-

and logistical screw-ups. In spite of these weaknesses March 23 also demonstrated the incredible power represented by the CUNY Coalition in the fighting spirit displayed by the thousands of youth who turned out to do whatever was necessary to shut the city down.

While the CUNY Coalition failed to organize an effective action to actually shut down the financial center of the world, it must be credited with making that potentiality clear to the students of CUNY and to the world.

THE BIRTH OF A MOVEMENT

For the past several years we have witnessed the almost complete disintegration of any sort of radical oppositional politics in the US. The movement against the budget cuts in New York is a significant reversal of this trend. Also, events like the Los Angeles rebellion have demonstrated the existence of broad and deep contempt for the existing order and a willingness to take to the streets to challenge it.

While it is still in its earliest and most vulnerable stages, we are right now witnessing the birth of a new movement. The anti-budget cut movement was not a tired re-run of all the failed last stands of the old left of the '80s. It successfully mobilized thousands of people who have never participated in any sort of politics before and their vitality is palpable.

This spirit was expressed clearly the day after March 23 when students

The budget cuts are, in effect, a form of long-term riot control.

pus. This played itself out on March 23.

March 23 was the largest demonstration by youth of color in New York history. While the call for the demonstration emphasized our intention to shut the city down, the Trotskyists packed the committee which determined the speakers list and inflicted an interminable program of speakers, including every vaguely progressive union bureaucrat any of them had ever met, on a crowd eager to get into the streets.

Security for the demonstration was organized independently by each school with a coordinating apparatus that never actually worked with the consequence that there was no effective stage security and everybody with a buddy over 175 pounds could get on the stage and demand a turn on the microphone and many did.

After almost two hours of music, speeches and visible chaos on stage, the announcement was made that we were going to march to Wall Street. The problem, of course was that there were several thousand cops gathered and ready to stop us. The bigger problem was that there wasn't coordination within the crowd to break through police lines.

While some of the failure of coordination can be blamed on technical problems, the real failure was political. The lines of trust and communication between campuses had not been built up to the point that they could overcome the predictable technical

at Hunter College gathered to sum up the demonstration and to talk about where they wanted to go. While the room was filled with pacifists, militants, democratic socialists, anarchists, communists, nationalists, Christians, Muslims, Jews and independent radicals, there was a profound feeling of unity. When it was suggested that everybody take a minute to say what it was that they stood for and wanted the group to stand for that unity was made clear. Although our commitment to defeating the cuts and defending CUNY had brought us together not one person mentioned either. All but two people spoke specifically of revolution. One Palestinian student said simply "I believe in love" and was met with loud applause.

In that moment it was apparent that the CUNY budget cuts unleashed something much more powerful than another protest movement. It had unleashed the profound feelings of love and solidarity that are the cornerstone of any truly revolutionary movement.

This is a rewritten version of an article that appeared in Love and Rage, the newspaper of the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation. For further information on Love and Rage contact:

Love and Rage
P.O. Box 853
Stuyvesant Station
New York, NY, 10009

LAST WORDS

Off With Our Heads!

by Asif Ullah

I know that many people, especially Marxists, have Nostadamus-fortune-telling abilities, but I still can't believe the proposed tuition hikes went through.

I thought that tuition hikes and budget cuts only happened in Queen of Hearts Nightmareland, where a white Jabba the Hut woman with a crown walked around swinging a yardstick and commanding her deck to be: "OFF WITH THEIR HEADS!"

I found out that my head was no exception to Nazi-Queen of Hearts rhetoric when I received my bill for fall semesters tuition - \$1665.00, and no financial aid, which meant a glacial devastation to my lint rich pockets. It is a sum that has dictated my life since day one of the semester. Now in day 50, 60 or another something, my cloths transcend the rule of bagginess and Discover Card has rewarded an additional \$500 to my limit, most of which has been withdrawn for transportation.

All this financial exhaustion has left me running to the permanent Visa/Mastercard fisherman who strung me by the abdomen without the help of free t-shirt bait. "Sign me up", I said. "For everything." The salesman, who couldn't be more than 30 and was dressed like one of us (college student), smiled whole-heartedly at me as only a kiddy piggybank can. "Come back with friends, friend." he shouted.

The word "friend" rung in my ear for days afterward. Everytime someone used it, I glared at them suspiciously. Maybe it was his repetition of the word friend. Did he mean for me to bring back more of my friends, so we could all be friends. Or, just to give him a chance to exchange a handshake of meaningless prizes for valueless plastic money? Whatever his use for it, the word was permanently devalued. I grew as weary of

people as I did of my naiveté. Pocket holes have left me more keen to the game of dollars and sense.

In the world of tuition inflation, wage deflation, schools are ghastly and bodegas crowded with college-aged males who gulp down just about the only affordable pain reliever on the market. Women learn the trade of educational celibacy and capitalism of youth to climb the white male penis ladder of the corporate world. Young mothers push strollers

up and down the block as if searching for fathers, but not knowing where to look or even where to go.

In the world of pay more for less, I'm not sure I know where to go either. Classes resemble the volume in the 6 train during the evening rush hour and more professors speak English as a second language or one only understood to themselves. The worst thing about this world is that it is real.

When I attended the City

Hall demonstration on March 23rd to protest the proposed budget cuts on the entire board of education, including city and state universities, along with 20,000+ elementary, high school, and college students, I knew we were fighting some Lex Luther and his crew. I also knew that it was a class, race, and education battle, but little else. This evil in my eyes was bigger than every last one of us. In fact it was so great that it wasn't real, just an it. So all the speeches, marching, and

slogans were just acts of student solidarity. Kids came together to say HO!, but not What?. Or rather, they were there to say What?, but really said HO!, as they were clueless to what it really was and just what it can do.

Well it did it. It, of course, was Pataki and Giuliani but not just them. It got their appointed staff of trustees at the Board to tell the parents and students that a \$750 million cut would mean just a difference of a subtraction of a class period for high school students, and an addition of a class lecture for professors. This, and a little cut of a quarter of professors and guidance counselors, 100% cuts of after school programs for teens, library hours for college students and a billion other things. But no, these are minor alterations and wouldn't change a thing. Maybe it may change Giuliani's salary by an increase of \$35,000. Besides, according to Mr. Giuliani, who evidently makes light of the issue, a tuition hike may be a good thing as it may encourage students to work harder. We all owe Mr. Pataki and Mr. Giuliani a very HOT thank you.



Love Story

by Neesha Anduze

One day this girl loved this man so much that she married him. They were the best couple. They wanted to always be together. They had no money, she felt there was still something she had that meant more and that was her husband. When they lived in a shelter they held on to each other and worked together to try to make their lives better. When there was little food to go around they would make sure the other had enough to eat even if one of them had to do without. When they finally got on their feet again they held on tighter for they knew they were all they had to depend on. When jobs were unfair and paid them very little they still went on while holding on to each other. One day her husband went to sleep after coming home from a long day from work and never woke up. She pleaded with him to wake but he didn't. She cried over him like she lost part of herself in him. She felt the extreme sense of loss. She thought about the support he gave her and she knew without him she would have never survived. Their union is what kept them together all those long hard years. She realized this and with sad tears she decided to join her beloved husband where they can truly be happy without the demands of society that says you need money in order to be happy. This is the true love story of a poor couple.

The F/ACT of the Paper

from page 2

writer's place in human relations. Journalism clothes itself in a shroud of objectivity as if it were above the human relations it covers. By choosing which particular facts to cover, newspapers decide what is important. Their criticism of the world exists in the choosing and ordering of events. Their pretense of non-criticism trains us to take the news at face value with every word as final.

Finality is one of the great lies of this, and every, epoch. Those who have power like to act as if their arrangement of power in the world is the natural and final culmination of previous history. Newspapers tend to continually downplay the motion of the world. Change only happens after the fact. Motion is only alluded to. Every fact reported, debate recorded or interview conducted is taken as a fact out of the

world. Their facts are treated as if eternal and simply rearranged according to different particularities.

Non-critical appearance combined with a framework of finality lay the foundations for a dialectic of domination. The media is the teacher who knows and we are the students who are ignorant. The media taken as one facet in the larger system of domination means that even our means of thinking become conditioned by their framing. If they are non-biased, then what they say is true for all. If the world and its many "facts" never really change, then the way of the world is "true". But since they do take sides and the world is a cauldron of flux, they really only present a picture and a commentary on the world which tries to keep it as is for those who benefit. This is how media acts as one of the pillars of

power. This is why we create our own.

If the paper's first priority is to the bettering of people's lives concretely and not to some abstract principle, the reality of the world must be ruthlessly dug into. Everything must be put in perspective and the paper's own perspective needs to be put in perspective. And on and on...

This back and forth process between the paper and the world means continual openness to transformation. Opposite the static world of facts traditionally shown, the paper discussed here is changing just as much as New York City or Russia.

SPHERIC's views and goals should be as open to change as the world it envisions. Poems, journalism and images will continually unfold in the world and mixed with inspired action will change it. The paper should

be ever open to a new color.

This relation of openness and change creates a radically different dialectic than one of domination. It is a dialectic of revolution. From the people, to the people, from the people — though never so neat beyond the page, is a dynamic to strive for. Trying to clarify who we are actively leads to changes we cannot even envision.

Roads untraveled lead to cities unknown. This is SPHERIC's whole point. There are no lecturers, or jailers of verse — only prophets and dreamers, writers and readers, trying to make sense of it all. This dialectic is the act of the paper.

The same way two lovers are more than just two people together. Something higher is made. That something is the flow of revolution.

B e c a u s e

Because woman's work is never done and is underpaid or unpaid or boring or repetitious and we're the first to get the sack and what we look like is more important than what we do and if we get raped it's our fault and if we get bashed we must have provoked it and if we raise our voices we're nagging bitches and if we enjoy sex we're nymphos and if we don't we're frigid and if we love women it's because we can't get a "real" man and if we ask our doctor too many questions we're neurotic and/or pushy and if we expect community care for children we're selfish and if we stand up for our rights we're aggressive and "unfeminine" and if we don't we're typical weak females and if we want to get married we're out to trap a man and if we don't we're unnatural and because we still can't get an adequate safe contraceptive but men can walk on the moon and if we can't cope or don't want a pregnancy we're made to feel guilty about abortion and... for lots and lots of other reasons we are part of the women's liberation movement.



**SO STEP THE FUCK BACK AND
SHOW SOME RESPECT**