

Coalition Press

Photo courtesy of Ersilla Ferron

FUCK
GIULIANI
AND
PATAYAN

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Shut the City Down!

43 Hunger Striking Students Arrested by Campus Security Force

RH on the scene

Tuesday, April 11, the City College security "peace" officers arrested forty-three students conducting a peaceful hunger strike to protest the Governor's proposed budget cuts to the CUNY system. The students held their hunger strike in the open rotunda in the North Academic Center (NAC), a large building which is usually open to students round the clock. Yolanda Moses, President of City College, entered the NAC at midnight to announce that the building was closed and to order the arrest of all students choosing to remain there. With media observing, the special campus security team used their power of arrest to cart off the students to the 24th Police Precinct on west 100th Street where the fifteen women and twenty-eight men were held all night until being released at eight o'clock in the morning. All were charged with criminal trespass, a misdemeanor B. Upon being released, the students quietly returned to City College to continue their hunger strike.

NYPD riot police had also been called onto campus but remained outside the building. This was the first time CUNY security has arrested students. The police-trained security team is an innovation of Chancellor Reynolds in response to the 1991 CUNY-wide take-overs.

The following day President Moses explained that she had ordered the arrests to prevent a building take-over. However, it was pointed out to her that the students had made no attempt to close the building or exclude anyone from entering. Nevertheless, she insisted that students would not be allowed to continue their hunger protest over night.

The student government is housed in the NAC building and is given permission to use the building at all times. Among the arrested hunger strikers were two student government officers, Malik Small, President of the Day Student Government (and son of CCNY Professor James Small), and Tyler Hemingway, the President of the Graduate Student Government. In solidarity with the group, they allowed themselves to be arrested as well.

The event was covered by New York 1 and WBAI, and was reported in the *Amsterdam News*, *El Diario*, and *The Village Voice* as well. The mainstream press has so far shown little interest.

18 Thousand Students Protest at City Hall

70 Students Arrested

RH on the scene

In the largest student protest in years, twelve thousand students swarmed over City Hall Park on Thursday, March 23rd to protest Pataki's budget. CUNY students were joined by thousands of high-school students and many students from the private colleges in New York.

Although the organizers of the rally, the CUNY Coalition against the Budget Cuts, had announced its peaceful intentions and had called upon the police in letters to the Mayor and the Police Commissioner to respect that peaceful intent, the police — in full force of astounding numbers including riot police and police mounted on horses — were given orders to barricade the crowd in order to forcibly prevent a march out of



the City Hall area to Wall Street. Under these orders, the police refused every attempt on the part of groups or individuals to leave the rally area for whatever reason. The police refused even to accommodate children's groups from elementary schools brought by their teachers. All exits were forcibly closed to keep the crowd penned in.

Violence erupted when the police allowed a small group to begin a march north onto Chambers Street, then closed them off from the rest of their fellow protesters, surrounded them, and began to arrest them without warning. Many in the group, among them a faculty Chair from City College in cap and gown, then sat down in sign of passive protest but were arrested anyway.

After the initial violence subsided, the police at the corner of Chambers and Broadway indicated that the demonstrators should march to the east around City Hall. As they proceeded to march in this direction they encountered more police who were not informed that the marchers had been told by the westernmost police contingent to proceed. These officers pushed angrily into the crowd instigating further violence and making more arrests. Police hit indiscriminately at women and men, hitting one woman with a billy-club who was loudly screaming that she was pregnant. Several members of the press were beaten and thrown to the ground. A representative from City Council Member Tom Duane's office was hit and shoved to the pavement and then told to get out of the street. One police officer was hit on his helmet with an army helmet wielded by a student in the crowd. The officer was knocked unconscious by this blow and had to be dragged off by his fellows.

When this skirmish calmed and the attacking police were called away, the crowd resumed its peaceful march around City Hall. As the marchers approached full circle at the stage area, some gathered at the barricades

at Broadway and demanded to be allowed to cross the street. The police gathered on the opposite side of the barricade, shoulder to shoulder, about four bodies deep and pushed the barricades against the protesters who, however, refused to give ground. Although rally leaders using bullhorns urged the students to back away from the barricades, students continued to gather to help keep the barricades back. The students and police engaged in a ten minute face off with the barricade between them. The police began to shove the barricades over, entrapping students who were sandwiched between their comrades on their side and the advancing police on the other. The situation nearly resulted in serious injuries ironically prevented only by the escalation of the police assault: They sprayed the crowd with pepper gas causing sudden dispersal and confusion in the crowd during which they made further arrests.

The crowd, which had intended to gather peacefully and was not prepared for these assaults, gradually backed off with the arrival of the mounted police. Several school contingents then left the park and headed to Borough of Manhattan Community College. There they regrouped and headed to 1 Police Plaza where many of the arrested students were being held.

The protest then continued with speakers using a small megaphone. As the speakers walked away from the area they were arrested for using a bullhorn without a permit. Among the speakers arrested was the faculty Chair from City College who had only moments

While police were running amok in the crowd, a police lieutenant was heard yelling at his officers "What are you doing in the rally area? You're not supposed to be here. Get back behind the barricades!" Clearly the police were out of control.

before been released from jail on his arrest at the City Hall rally site. The by now modest crowd, which contained many high-school students, was almost outnumbered by riot police. Observing these arrests, the group decided that it would leave en masse to prevent anyone from being singled out for arrest. After several more speakers were heard, everyone began to move towards Park Row. As night fell the group left the area without further incident.

Public Outrage

March 29, 1995
Honorable Rudolph Giuliani
Mayor
City Hall
New York, New York 10007
Dear Mayor Giuliani:

I am writing to express my outrage and my extreme concern regarding the New York City Police Department's response to student demonstrators at Thursday, March 23rd's rally opposing cuts to education funding.

It is my understanding, from a number of eyewitness accounts, including a member of my staff who was acting as a legal observer, that it appeared as if the vast majority of the students arrested were randomly picked out of the crowd, and some were then recklessly assaulted by the police. Additionally, numerous incidents of random strangling, macing, choking, grabbing, and dragging of student demonstrators and observers by police officers were witnessed. Finally, excessive police verbal harassment of students included a



enormous amount of profanity and inappropriate anatomical references. Most of these incidents came in response to peaceful behavior by the students. From all accounts, the violence on the parts of the demonstrators appears to have been limited.

Because I had concerns that such incidents might occur, I assigned one of my staff to monitor the rally. While acting as a legal observer with Rev. Timothy Mitchell of the Ebenezer Baptist Church, he saw a young, African American woman being dragged and strangled by several police officers on Chambers Street. When my assistant and the Rev. Mitchell shouted to the police to stop

hurting the woman, Rev. Mitchell was promptly grabbed by four police officers who then slammed him against the side of a police vehicle. In response to this violence, my aide tried to communicate to the officers that the man they were attacking was a clergy member. A police officer then knocked my aide down with his nightstick. Once on the ground, he was told to move to the sidewalk. Officers then promptly walked over him. For your information, my aide has since filed a complaint with the Civilian Complaint Review Board.

Thomas K. Duane
Council Member, 3rd District, Manhattan

April 4, 1995

St. Mark's
CHURCH IN-THE-BOWERY
Hon. Rudolph Giuliani
Mayor
City of New York
City Hall
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mayor Giuliani:

The members of our congregation were distressed to witness and to hear of the attacks on people of our City March 23, 1995 at a demonstration on behalf of schools of the City University of New York.

We realize, of course, that the actions of the police may have been undertaken without your personal knowledge. We do, however, regret that none of your public statements since March 23 seem to recognize the nature of the assault on the Constitutional rights of New Yorkers. We had wished for better from someone with such a long and distinguished legal career.

Rights of New Yorkers were violated. Innocent citizens were beaten, attacked with chemicals, and manhandled. Credentialed members of the press and Legal Observers were attacked by NYPD officers. We are enclosing a resolution requesting what we

consider quite reasonable steps by your Administration.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Canon Lloyd Casson
Priest-in-Charge

A RESOLUTION

Whereas, the Congregation of St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery has a long history of supporting the Constitutional right of citizens to peacefully protest the actions of government with which they disagree; and

Whereas, this Congregation also upholds the well-recognized role of the City University of New York in the education of the people of our City, especially the sons and daughters of poor, working-class, and immigrant families who struggle to improve their economic condition; and

Whereas, by eyewitness reports of people of our congregation, officers of the New York City Police Department attacked many students and other New Yorkers who were present at the otherwise peaceful CUNY demonstration on Thursday, March 23, 1995 in opposition to the unconscionable budget cuts recommended by you and by Governor Pataki; and

Whereas, in addition to witnessing attacks on demonstrators, our people also witnessed unprovoked attacks on credentialed members of the press, credentialed Legal Observers from the CUNY Law School at Queens College, and innocent passersby;

And whereas, we believe that such conduct by officers under the authority of the Mayor of the City of New York does a disservice to law and order in this city by reinforcing many negative stereotypes about police officers held by many young people and by teaching young people that their police are free to violate Constitutional rights of freedom of speech, press, and assembly;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Vestry of St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery strongly condemns the unprovoked violence and violations of Constitutional Rights by the police of the City of New York during and following the City Hall budget-cut protest of Thursday, March 23, 1995;

And be it further resolved that the Vestry strongly urges that the Mayor of the City of New York undertake the following steps: (1) investigate the police misconduct and discipline those officers responsible; (2) direct that those citizens who were injured by unprovoked police action be appropriately reimbursed for damages suffered; (3) offer immediate, unambiguous assurances to the people of the City of New York that as they carry out their lawful rights to assemble and protest that there be no repetition of the police actions of Thursday, March 23, 1995.

Adopted unanimously by the Vestry of

St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery,
New York City
April 3, 1995
Brigid Allyson, Clerk of the Vestry

CUNY Coalition Calls on Mayor and the Police Commissioner to Commit to Non-Violence

Press release prior to March 23rd's rally at City Hall:

The CUNY Coalition will announce the events planned for March 23, 1995. Students from throughout the New York City area will be striking and carrying out peaceful demonstrations to protest a 25% reduction in spending for both the CUNY and SUNY systems, as well as the elimination and reduction of financial aid for all university students. The Coalition wants to avoid a repetition of the events that took place at Hunter College on Wednesday, March 15, in which the police dispersed a peaceful demonstration by means of force, causing one student to be hospitalized. The Coalition will demand that the Mayor and the Police Commissioner make a commitment to denouncing the use of violence against those demonstrating on that day.

In response to the hospitalizing of a Hunter College student participating in a peaceful demonstration against the proposed cuts to higher education, the CUNY Coalition called on Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Police Commissioner Bratton today to make a formal commitment to non-violence in responding to many peaceful demonstrations being organized by students.

Before writing to the Mayor and Bratton, the CUNY Coalition spoke with eye witnesses and reviewed press reports and video footage of the incident. Based upon this review, it determined that the attack was unprovoked and occurred just as the students were leaving the area. "We said our peace and were moving off the street, when they rushed in and started hitting anyone within reach," said Jed Brandt, a Hunter College student. The demonstration organized by the Hunter College students had about 150 participants.

The CUNY Coalition expressed its fear that the Police Department would respond to its March 23 rally at City Hall, which is expected to have more than 7,000 [more than 10,000 actually appeared] participants, similarly. The CUNY Coalition's letter asked the Mayor and the Police Commissioner to "send a clear and unequivocal message to your officers that violence cannot be used to curtail this demonstration." A commitment to non-violence has been the CUNY Coalition's public position, which it reiterated in its letter. The actions of the students, the Coalition argues, is not the question. Commenting on the Mayor's response to dissent within his administration, his attacks on the press, and response to groups opposed to his budget cuts, the CUNY Coalition expressed its deep concern that this Administration will respond to peaceful political dissent with violence. "Look. We're committed to non-violence. We've trained dozens of marshals to ensure that it stays peaceful. But if the Hunter incident is any indication, this Mayor and Police Commissioner have decided to use violence to suppress their political opponents", said Alex Vitale, a Sociology graduate student.

"Did the Mayor or the Police Commissioner respond to the beating of the Hunter student? No. They sent the signal that beating people up who peacefully disagree with the government is OK. The Mayor needs to reverse that message at the March 23 rally," said Yvonne Lassalle, a CUNY Graduate Student.

The CUNY Coalition is using the March 23 rally to focus attention on the State's and City's lack of commitment to providing access to higher education, health care, social services etc. that have traditionally been the cornerstone of a free and democratic society. For the CUNY Coalition, the current round of cuts to higher education are a continuation of a national trend towards social and economic austerity.

CUNY Coalition against the Budget Cuts
212-642-2851
Hotline 212-642-2549

March 20, 1995
Police Commissioner Bratton
One Police Plaza
New York, New York 10038

Dear Commissioner Bratton:

We are writing to express our deep concern over the New York City Police Department's unprovoked attack against several Hunter College students on Wednesday March 15, 1995. These students were participating in a peaceful, non-violent demonstration to bring attention to the proposed cuts to higher education. Based upon our conversations with eye-witnesses and our review of news reports and video footage of the event, there can be no doubt that the Police Officers in question

What the Press

attacked the students without cause as they were in the process of leaving the area. Such behavior is unacceptable.

As you are well aware, the CUNY Coalition will be holding a peaceful rally and march on March 23, 1995 at 12:00 P.M., which will convene at City Hall. The march will proceed from City Hall to Lower Manhattan. We expect over 7,000 students, faculty, parents, union members and their leadership and elected officials to participate in this peaceful demonstration. Over 1,000 faculty and administrators will march separately to this demonstration via the Brooklyn Bridge walkway. Like demonstrations organized by the CUNY Coalition in the past, this demonstration will be conducted peacefully.

The CUNY Coalition has made a strong and public commitment to non-violent political expression and has organized a large number of well trained marshals and legal observers to ensure that the March 23 demonstration runs efficiently. Like the Hunter College students, the CUNY Coalition is exercising its right to peacefully make its concerns and positions known.

We urge you, in the strongest terms possible, to make a public commitment to not use violence to suppress the peaceful actions that will occur on March 23. You must send a clear and unequivocal message to your officers that violence cannot be used to curtail this demonstration. It is imperative that the Police Department not repeat the Hunter College incident. Acts of intimidation and violence will only heighten the tension that has already been created by the Police Department's previous acts of unprovoked violence.

Sincerely,

The CUNY Coalition

A copy of this letter was also addressed to the Mayor.

**The following is a statement given to the press
on March 28, 1995**

Today, March 28, students from the CUNY Coalition against the Cuts joined other CUNY student groups, Public Advocate Mark Green and representatives of several elected officials to hold a press conference at the steps of City Hall. The press conference was called to respond to Mayor Giuliani and Governor Pataki's statements and to media coverage of the events that took place in March 23.

The media's coverage of our rally, with a few notable exceptions, seriously misrepresented the event. The media have chosen to insist upon the isolated incidents of violence that took place. Furthermore, the media have exaggerated and belabored the role of the students in them. Finally, in spite of the fact that both the Mayor and the Governor's opinions on these issues have already received detailed treatment in the media, the media have continued to highlight them, while consistently downplaying the demands of the demonstrators. Just as the Mayor attempted to silence us by force, the media has attempted to silence us in print.

First and foremost, the students demand an end to the trend of disinvestment from CUNY, which has been intensified since 1989. The yearly rounds of cuts CUNY put through since 1989 has meant the budget will have been cut close to 40% in 6 years. These cuts

Students assert that the budget crisis is largely created by State policies that cut taxes for corporations and the most wealthy. The Governor's tax cut will amount to about a \$20 tax savings for the average New Yorker, while dramatically increasing the cost of higher education and reducing other vital public services. Students argued that these cuts represent a continuation of the State's attempt to renege on its responsibility to provide public goods - education, health care, social services etc. Already New York State ranks 47th in the nation the percentage of state taxes spending on higher education. Students insist that the State is using public spending as a straw man to divert attention from the current revenue shortfalls created in large part due to the absence of a progressive tax program. Since close to two thirds of CUNY students work over 30 hours a week, their demand for progressive taxation is made as workers and tax payers. Students are adamant: the City and State must put an end to corporate welfare, and stop renegeing on their responsibilities to guarantee minimal standards of living for New Yorkers.

(Yvonne Lasalle, CUNY Coalition against the Budget Cuts Media Committee)

Won't Print

undermine CUNY's ability to fulfill its historic role of integrating minorities and recent immigrants into the economic, cultural, and political life of the city. They also threaten CUNY's long-standing record of academic excellence, which has produced more top corporate executives and Nobel laureates than any other educational institution in the country. Students want to be heard loud and clear: full funding to meet enrollment must be provided. They will not stand by and watch their University turned into a trade-school system.

The students' insistence on reinstating free and open admissions in CUNY comes from a deep-seated conviction that the state's responsibility to guarantee equal educational access can only be properly fulfilled through funding of public higher education. Students believe that proposals that attempt to solve fiscal problems through the centralization of programs at specific CUNY campuses do not address the devastating implications this will have on students' educational opportunities. These proposals also fail to take into account the positive role that many campuses play in otherwise seriously economically depressed areas. Just as deplorable is the attack on remediation programs, for it is the City and State's own failure to educate at elementary and secondary levels that creates these needs. Why should those hurt by the government's incompetence be punished twice?



Our Untrustworthy CUNY Board of Trustees: At the Source of CUNY's Troubles

Andrew Long

What many people have to understand, especially liberals, is that any discussion of the CUNY Board of Trustees and the policies they implement is also, necessarily, a discussion of finance capital and the privatization of public debt and assets, notably our col-

WHERE WE STAND:

leges and our educations. The New York City and state budgets (and this goes for the Federal budget too) are finally determined around the question of public debt service, incurred through the issuance of municipal and state bonds. The School Construction Authority, the Urban Development Corporation, the Port Authority, and the NYS Dormitory Authority are a few examples. Much of this money goes toward the construction of large buildings or public works, such as the Javits Center. When CUNY builds a new building, for example, the debt is financed by the Dormitory Authority.

What we must understand about this debt is that the authorities which are responsible for it, that is, for its incurrence and for its service, are not elected, but are appointed by the New York State Governor and the Mayor of New York. In fact, the State of New York and the City cannot incur debt without a referendum. In the early 1960s a New York lawyer, John Mitchell (yes, of Watergate infamy) worked out this plan to sidestep these public debt laws by setting up these authorities which are not bound by the law, and yet, can act in the name of the state. This "right" was affirmed when the UDC went bust and a court of appeal decided that the state had a "moral" obligation to pay off the UDC debt. So, working class and middle class tax payers (clearly the same thing) pay debt service for a debt they did not vote for and cannot control. Remember, New York State does not have a progressive tax, but rather one which favors corporations, which pay less and less these days, as well as the wealthiest residents of the state. Consider also that the wealthy individuals who buy this debt from the financial houses which sell it, Lazard Freres and Fleet Financial Group, for example, receive interest payments which are exempt from city, state, and federal taxes. They get you coming and going.

And so with the CUNY Board of Trustees. There are 13 trustees appointed by the Governor and the Mayor to terms of varying lengths. There is also an ex-officio trustee for the faculty, Sandi Cooper, who does not have a vote, and one for CUNY students. The student trustee is the chair of the University Student Senate, Anthony Giordano, and he does have a vote. Of the 13 current trustees most were appointed by Cuomo, Koch, and Dinkins, and that's where liberals get a lump in their throats. Consider that this group of trustees selected Ann Reynolds as the CUNY Chancellor, raised tuition, and has now declared fiscal exigency. Moreover, while this group of trustees was in power, again, appointed by our liberal Governor and

Mayors, from 1989 to 1993, CUNY lost \$200 million in funding. We can't get rid of this board, whom one state Senate aide likened to Giuliani in the way the way they lose state funding.

Still, the stench gets stronger. With regard to the information above consider that James Murphy, the chairman of the board, is also a vice president for the Fleet Financial Group. This bank is one of the largest in the region, and has supported many upstate

Republicans, and in 1993 supported Liz Holtzman's candidacy for the U.S. Senate with a \$450,000 donation. This is notable because Holtzman was then the City Comptroller and chose Fleet as the underwriter for, yes, municipal bonds. The scandal forced the otherwise quiet and stately Murphy into the limelight, and showed what kind of financial rodent he really is. How can a man whose job is about private profit from public debt sit on our Board. What about a conflict of interest?

The next suspect is Michael Del Giudice, who worked for State Assemblyman Stanley Steingut and is now a general partner with Lazard Freres. Lazard Freres also traffics in public debt, particularly through Felix Rohatyn, the chairman of the Municipal Assistance Corporation. Del Giudice also emerged to the light of day for his role on the quasi-public body known as the Hudson River Park Conservancy. This group wants to take the Westway land and do the usual (private) development. Lazard Freres owns several large plots of land in the 30s. Tanning on the piers at Christopher Street or taking a stroll by the Hudson, has assumed an immense, and expensive, political significance. Their plan includes private residential units and commercial spaces which will block public access to the waterfront. Michael Del Giudice should not be on our board, again, due to a conflict of interest.

Finally, we get to William Howard. Although he is African American, he has always acceded to the racist caricatures of CUNY students, and never spoken out against the press and his fellow trustees when they have gone "wilding". Howard is currently employed by the New York State Banking Department, though his past includes stints with various banks and insurance companies, notably with the New York branch of the Bank of Credit and Commerce (BCCI) the bank that was manipulated by the CIA to fund various dictators around the world including the Saudi regime. They finally fleeced their smaller and poorer investors in the Middle East when they bellied up and were eventually closed.

The point is that the CUNY Board of Trustees is about big money, as we know from the budget debate. CUNY is a significant portion of the budget, and if your professional obligations lead you to argue for a good credit rating with Standard and Poor's as well as debt service, then you will not support increases for public institutions like CUNY, unless there is some profit to be made. What we need is an accountable board with some conflict of interest guidelines.

The Historical Mission of CUNY

Michael Roberts

The CUNY Coalition against the Budget Cuts supports both the original mission behind the establishment of City College in 1847 and the Open Admission Policy established in 1969.

The establishment of City College in 1847 as a free tuition academy reflected a **democratic vision** that viewed the university as the **foundation** for a democratic polity. Our goal at the CUNY Coalition is to restore that vision. A democratic polity requires both educated citizens and visionary leaders. The City University of New York was established to serve these functions. In the original vision of the establishment of CUNY, the University was to be the measure of the degree to which culture is democratically disseminated throughout the City. A progressive, dynamic culture depends upon the University as the site of new forms of knowledge production and cultural resources that foster the development of the free individual and a critical citizenry. The CUNY Coalition supports this democratic vision and will fight to uphold it. We see the attack on CUNY as an attack on democracy.

The democratic promise of a University cannot be fulfilled unless we have a way of ensuring that the University students reflect the qualities of the citizens of the City as a whole.

CUNY has been an effective force in ensuring that the working poor, women and so-called "minorities" are able to participate in the democratic polity of New York. The Open Admissions Policy established in 1969 upholds the conviction that elitism has no place in a democratic polity nor in a public university. African American and Puerto Rican students who organized the student strikes of 1969 that were instrumental in the establishment of the Open Admissions Policy, realized that they represented the changing face of New York. The CUNY Coalition supports their historic victory and the results of that victory. By 1971, enrollment of students of color increased by 24% at the senior colleges and 36% at the community colleges. The CUNY Coalition would not be here today if it were not for the visionary foresight of those students from 1969. We define our struggle in part as a continuation of their fight for democracy.

The City University of New York is the only guarantee we have of maintaining a democratic polity in New York. CUNY is a precious cultural resource. The citizens of New York cannot afford to place their future in the hand of reactionary forces that threaten democracy. CUNY is the best mechanism we have, as citizens in a free society, of overcoming the serious class, race and gender divisions that have plagued the history of our country. To uphold CUNY and to foster the growth of CUNY is to further the development of democracy. **words:505**

The Virtue of Remedial Programs at CUNY

Rob Hollander

CUNY is regularly attacked for offering remedial courses in English language skills and mathematics. Remedial offerings, it is claimed, compromise CUNY's reputation by lowering academic standards in the curriculum. A level of proficiency should be a prerequisite of admission to an institution of higher learning, say such critics as our own Board of Trustees member Hermann Badillo. Those without required skills should not be admitted.

The attack on remediation is, in other words, an attack on open admissions.

The argument against remediation contains a simple fallacy and is further confused by the irresponsibility of CUNY's critics and the subterfuge of their political ends. That a university can only be judged by the lowest end of its curriculum is simply false. Offering remediation at CUNY in no way compromises its higher level offerings. The mere presence of remediation cannot prevent dedicated students from obtaining the high quality education CUNY has provided for decades. On the contrary, remediation brings that opportunity to many dedicated but underprivileged students who otherwise would be unable to take advantage of it.

By offering remedial courses, CUNY broadens its curriculum to provide a service unavailable in our failed public high-school system. If New Yorkers cannot learn to read and write in the distracting drug- and weapons-filled public high-school environment, why shouldn't they be taught in an environment conducive to learning? The high-schools are filled with very young kids struggling to grow-up under our society's most adverse conditions. It's no wonder so little actual learning happens there. The CUNY colleges, however, are filled with serious working adults (75% of CUNY students work, 33% full-time) who have chosen to put some direction in their lives. College is about learning, thinking, questioning, sharing knowledge, expanding horizons, and working hard — very hard — to keep up and to get ahead. Drugs and violence are not a part of the scene. The role models are professors, not drug dealers. The college environment is exactly where we want our kids to be even if it's just to learn to multiply fractions and read a newspaper.

Those who wish to eliminate remedial courses offer no responsible alternative to them. If our young people are not to learn basic skills in college, and cannot learn them in high-school, what third alternative is there? Are we to consign an entire segment of our society to illiteracy? Is it to the benefit of this city that many of its citizens cannot read a newspaper to inform themselves of what is happening around them and to them? Does anyone really think that the answer to our urban woes is educational ghettoization? Not having an informed and critical citizenry may be in the interest of those who wish to maintain a stranglehold on political power, but it is not to the advantage of society at large. The members of civil society must be educated and informed or they will not have the wherewithal to bring themselves successfully into the future. Self-determination cannot be replaced by paternalism, as our current administration well proves.

The City University is and should be unlike any other university: New York is unlike any other town. New Yorkers must understand that remediation is not a danger to CUNY. They must recognize the crucial need among the young of the inner city for remedial offerings, and they must recognize that the integrated college environment is the best place for a remedial program.

The Governor's proposed budget will do more harm to CUNY's reputation, standing, and standards than the presence of remedial programs ever could. Tenured faculty will be fired, making it increasingly difficult to attract high-quality teachers to come here in the future, knowing that tenure means nothing at CUNY. Professors' burdens will also increase.

Downsizing will force professors to travel from campus to campus, making the job even less attractive.

Let's stop worrying about how the fulfillment of CUNY's mission will affect the maintenance of its academic standards. CUNY has proven time and again that an institution of higher learning need not be elite and exclusionary to offer the highest possible quality of education. It cannot continue to do that without reasonable funding. The down-sizing of CUNY is not the solution to the problem of declining standards, it is the sole cause of the problem.

CUNY COALITION AGAINST THE BUDGET CUTS DEMANDS
NO BUDGET CUTS
NO TUITION HIKES
SAVE TAP AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS (SEEK HEOP)
RESTORE LITERACY PROGRAMS
RESTORE OPEN ADMISSIONS
FULL FUNDING TO MEET ENROLLMENT
TAX WALL STREET TO FUND OUR SCHOOLS
CANCEL THE DEBT
NO DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS TAKEN IN ANY MANNER AGAINST STUDENTS, FACULTY, OR STAFF ORGANIZING AGAINST THE CUTS:
COMPLETE IMMUNITY FOR ALL

Who We are and Why We are Important to New York

Christopher J. Malone

"Maybe instead of protesting...go and find a job for a day so you'd make a little extra money so you could pay for your education."

- Mayor Rudy Giuliani, on the March 23rd Protest

Once again, Giuliani has erred. This time it is especially egregious, since his petulant comments made in the wake of the March 23rd student protest were so far off the mark that the mind boggles to think they came from the lips of a politician who claims to understand New York. Well, in this mean season of debate over education, we might stop to do some educating ourselves - please, pay attention Rudy.

First of all, CUNY students work. Period. In larger numbers than most higher education school systems. 31.7% of students at senior colleges work full time; 32.4% of community college students work full time. Two thirds of all CUNY students work over 20 hours per week. And over 75% of all students in the CUNY system hold down some kind of job outside of school.

Why do we work? Quite simply, because we have to. Consider this: 91% of the students at Hostos College, for instance, live below the poverty line. Half of all CUNY stu-

dents have family incomes below \$22,000. Over 80% of all senior college students come from families earning less than \$50,000; nearly 90% of community college students come from families earning less than \$50,000.

In short, if there is anyone who understands the realities as well as the importance of work, it is the CUNY student and her/his family who comprise the working poor and lower middle class of New York City.

In addition, CUNY is one of the most ethnically diversified colleges in the world. 32% of CUNY students are African American; 30% are White; 26% are Latino; and about 11% are Asian. 60% of senior college students are female, while 65% of community colleges are female.

If our Mayor cannot quite understand who we are at CUNY, then perhaps he might understand what we mean to the New York economy.

The tax revenues: CUNY graduates pay \$414 million more in State and City taxes each year than they would pay had they not gone to college. In addition, CUNY employees pay another \$63 million per year in State and City sales and income tax.

The expenditures: The direct economic impact of CUNY on New York, adding up all the direct expenditures attributable to the system, totals nearly \$6 billion. This includes: about \$1 billion a year spent by students while in college; \$3.9 billion spent by the graduates from the years 1970-1993 that they would not have spent had they not gone to college; \$167 million in university expenditures; \$170 million in construction; \$521 million in employee expenditures.

Now, take this expenditure figure and multiply it by 2.1 - the factor provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce which is used to account for **additional** economic impact that results from responding after original expenditures - and you get a total economic impact of CUNY on New York of \$12.1 billion, **9 times the annual CUNY budget.**

If 40 jobs are created for each million dollars pumped into the New York economy (Department of Commerce estimates), this means that CUNY necessarily leads to the creation of 484,000 New York jobs. Combine this with the 25,000 CUNY employees, and that is over a **half-million jobs generated by CUNY.**

Pataki and Giuliani want to cut back on funding for education. Apparently they need a little educating themselves. If they do not want a lesson in either the social demographics of CUNY students or the financial impact of the CUNY system, then perhaps finally they might prefer the humanities. I have in mind a quote from a German poet, Goethe, they might consider as they go about their mindless business: **"There is nothing more frightful than to see ignorance in action."**

NOAM CHOMSKY: AN INTERVIEW

*Noam Chomsky, one of the most respected voices on the left today, an early outspoken critic of the war in Vietnam, was blacklisted throughout New York media for his sharp criticism of U.S. support of the State of Israel. He currently holds a Distinguished Chair at MIT where he teaches linguistics, a field he revolutionized in 1957 with his book *Syntactic Structures*. His recent political publications include *Manufacturing Consent*, a critique of corporate control of U.S. media. He is interviewed by Bryan Lesseraux, one of the eight Hunter students arrested for peaceful protest on March 18th, and also one of the hunger strikers arrested at CCNY.*

L: To begin with, do you consider the US to be a democratic society? If not, what is not democratic about it?

C: Well, democracy isn't a matter of yes or no, it's a matter of many dimensions. Countries can vary on those dimensions in a whole bunch of different ways. In some respects the US is a very free society and a very democratic society. People are free from state control and violence here to an unusual degree. There's freedom of speech here to a unique degree. You have the formal right to participate in elections. All of these things are things which have been fought for and are worth achieving and maintaining. And they're steps towards a democratic society.

On the other hand it's a society with a deeply totalitarian character in many respects. It's a business-run society. Since early in this century, private corporate powers — which are really just tyranny — have gained enormous privilege and power over the society, the economy and, by now, the international economy. It's not just here, but it's strikingly here. These are powers which are not in the constitution. They were never given by legislation. They were fixed by courts and lawyers primarily. It's just a form of tyranny. It was strongly opposed in its very early days by American libertarians, people like Thomas Jefferson, as it was even opposed by Adam Smith, who barely could see it in his day. It very much narrows the actual functioning of democracy.

Furthermore, there's the matter of propaganda. The leading scholar of corporate propaganda—there are a few, not many people study it, but it's a crucially important topic—the leading scholar, Alex Carey pointed out in one of his essays that there are three major developments in the 20th century: one is the growth of democracy, two is the growth of corporations, three is the growth of corporate propaganda in order to prevent democracy from functioning. This is very conscious. It's particularly true in the United States where there is a very class-conscious business class and, for all kinds of historical reasons, this is a uniquely business-run society.

The public relations industry is a US invention and it is designed, as its leaders say, to control the public mind; to win "the everlasting battle for the minds of men." And it puts huge resources into this for obvious reasons—it wants to protect privilege and power. The corporate media are just one part of it. Our educational institutions are another. The scale of these efforts is really staggering. It ranges from everything from television and cinema to books, articles, media, classes—it goes right across the spectrum—sports events, recreation, churches. There is no institution in the US that hasn't been under corporate attack as an effort to win the everlasting battle for the minds of men. They've spent a huge amount of money and it has changed the country. It's one reason, I think, why this country is so far off the spectrum on issue after issue. I mean, we're the only industrial country that doesn't have a health care system. We're the only industrial country where the working class is so weak and beaten down. It's the only country in the industrial world where there's such a level of religious fanaticism. It's extraordinary, the US is off the spectrum in this respect; there are cults all over the place. It's just a very strange society. I think in large measure, not totally, but in large measure, it is attributable to this [corporate propaganda].

Also, the intellectual culture is extremely narrow and very conformist. I don't want to exaggerate, it's not all that different in other countries, but it's unique here. It's particularly dramatic because it's such a free society. So it's a kind of voluntary totalitarianism. People aren't doing it because they're afraid they're going to be sent to the gulags.

So you've got a very complicated situation with many positive things and many very negative things. And there have been struggles over this for two hundred years. It doesn't just take shape. This is the outcome of many struggles, some of which have been won, some of which have been lost by the general population. And you end up with the thing that you see when you look out the window; New York is an extremely rich city, probably the richest in the world, and it's a third world city. Large parts of the population are living in third world levels of misery.

L: Since this interview will be published in student newspapers, let me ask you a question about academia. I think that, ideally, the role of the academic should be about giving to society an original, forward-looking and transformative vision of the world. Is that even possible in the US considering the conditions you've just mentioned?

C: Well, there are people who try to do that but they're weeded out. In fact, they're weeded out from kindergarten. The educational system has institutional prop-

erties and one of them is to try to instill obedience and conformism. Now, this is never one hundred percent successful. There are all kinds of people who escape it and go on to do remarkable things, but it's never easy. The general pattern of privilege and punishment is such that the outcome, to a very large extent, is conformism, obedience and so on.

Now, there are differences. For example, the natural sciences are different. If you instill conformism and obedience in the natural sciences or mathematics, they just die. In the fields that are not so closely connected to ideological control and domination there is a much greater tendency to support and stimulate creativity and independence of thought. But not in fields that matter for ideological management and control. Now again, this is not a hundred percent. But the tendencies are, I think, fairly clear. I see it very clearly from right where I'm sitting [Chomsky is speaking from his home in Massachusetts near MIT.] I'll compare two of the world's leading universities which are within a mile or two of each other where I've lived all of my adult life. One is Harvard, the other is MIT. MIT is a science-based university. Harvard is a sort of humanities-based university. Each has the other, of course, but those are the centers. MIT is politically, I suppose, much more conservative. But for someone like me, MIT is a far more hospitable environment than Harvard. I get along fine at MIT. People are often very reactionary [at MIT], but at Harvard I couldn't survive for a minute. [Chomsky is interrupted momentarily by a phone call.]

L: Before getting off the topic we were discussing, let me read you a question that was prepared by a friend of mine which ties right in with this discussion: Real democracy requires substantial preparation on the part of large sectors of the population—people must be able to take over the management of public affairs and make decisions about production, distribution, investment, etc. However, the educational system, primary and secondary school, are designed to instill submissiveness, apathy, and obedience to authority; to impose regimentation and control; and to snuff out creativity and curiosity which are necessary for participation in public life. How badly does this affect the process of democratization? Is it even possible in this context?

C: Sure, it's possible. We're the richest country in the world. Let's take the poorest country in the hemisphere, one of the poorest countries in the world, Haiti. People in Haiti live under conditions which we can't even imagine. I'm talking about ninety percent of Haitians, not the few who live up in the hills and have super wealth. The peasants of Haiti and people living in Haitian slums succeeded a couple of years ago in creating the basis for a democratic society. They created grassroots movements, unions, associations and so on. They had no resources; they were living in real misery. Yet, they created a lively, vibrant, civil society which swept their own President into office to everyone's amazement and shock. Then they had to be crushed by force, in which we helped. You read in the newspapers that we have to go to Haiti and teach them about democracy. You can only collapse in ridicule when you read that. We need to go to Haiti to learn something about democracy. Again, it's a sign of the totalitarian streak in the intellectual culture that people can't see that. Many educated people could hardly understand what I just said, although, if you look at it, it's quite obvious. [The Haitian people] didn't have a great educational system, you can be sure of that. If they can [create a democratic society], we can do it.

In fact, this has happened all through history. Take a look at the formation of unions. They're one of the major democratizing forces in modern industrial society. They support the creation of rights and so on. Take a county right next door, one that is very much like us, Canada. One of the reasons why they have a functioning health care system and other social programs is because they had a strong labor movement. That's where it comes from. Well, who formed the labor movement? People who went to Harvard? No, it was the workers struggling on the steel strike lines creating democracy.

So sure, we have to understand what the institutions [which prevent democracy] are, although most of us are very privileged people; we have all kinds of opportunities that most people don't have. If we decide to use those privileges, fine. If not, too bad for the world.

L: What are the possibilities for achieving non-violent social change which might lead to meaningful democracy? Developments which threaten to change the way power is distributed might be expected to provoke resistance from the "ruling class". Is it therefore even possible to achieve change within a non-violent framework?

C: Nobody knows the answer to that. Look, you can't predict tomorrow's weather. To try to predict the result of social struggles is completely hopeless. A rational person will try to push non-violent methods to their limits. Nobody wants violence if they're sane. So you try to achieve what you can by organizing people to create more democratic and just forms. If those efforts are resisted by violence, well, then you have to ask yourself the question, "Do we undertake self-defense through violence or no?" That's basically the question.

L: This may be a bit out of theme, but what you are saying makes me think of the situation in Chiapas. Any violence on the part of the Zapatistas was used as a last resort.

C: Incidentally, it was not a violent movement. They happen to hold guns, but they're not particularly violent. In fact, they're mostly resisting violence. Now you can ask whether that's right or wrong, I happen to think it's right, but that's another question.

L: Right, here's a situation where armed struggle was turned to as a last resort. It seems to be a very just movement. The organization is very democratic. They have a kind of bottom-up way of organizing. They seem to be abiding by the rules of the Geneva convention. They're not killing enemy prisoners or running around slaughtering innocent people. There's a lot less violence there than in Peru.

C: There's no question. If you're thinking of Shining Path it's not even close.

L: You would think that this would be something that could really inspire people. You have a lot of Mexican immigrants living in very poor conditions here in the US. Those whom I've spoken to are very much in support of the Zapatistas. Plus you have a lot of groups on the Left who have been waiting for a revolution close to home. Human Rights groups and foreign journalists are saying that whatever atrocities there were in Chiapas were committed by the government and not the EZLN. I wonder why this isn't galvanizing large groups of people in this time of crisis. It would seem to be an excellent model for people to follow.

C: Well, it did. The way the government reacted to the Zapatista movement when it finally broke—they knew it was there beforehand but I'm talking about once it became public—they reacted very violently and then they backed off. And the reason they backed off is because they were afraid that Mexico was going to blow up. They had too much support. Maybe people didn't support everything they were doing but they were in sympathy with a good bit of what they were up to. So you had huge demonstrations in Mexico City, and it just happened again May 1. One respect in which the United States is off the map is that nobody knows what May 1 is. Everywhere else in the world people know what it is. It's a labor holiday in solidarity with the struggles of American workers.

You have to look very far to find somebody who knows this. One of the enormous propaganda successes in the United States is that even that has been driven out of people's heads. But elsewhere they know it and on May Day in Mexico there were big anti-government demonstrations, which is kind of unusual. They have a kind of Stalinist-style union which usually controls the thing, but not this time. ...So, why didn't it galvanize people? It did galvanize a lot of people.

L: I was referring to here in the US, specifically.

C: It did here too. There's a lot of interest



BY BRYAN LESSERAUX

in it on the Left. A lot of people went down to the convention [in Mexico City]. It doesn't get around here, partly because the Left has no resources. If you want to get information around you have to be part of some network. But if you read the Left journals like *Z Magazine* or *In These Times*, it was there. People were interested, but in order to "galvanize" the Left there has to be a Left. And while there are plenty of people, and a lot of them are doing very important things, they're very scattered and very isolated. That's the effect of atomizing people. The major effort of the whole advertising, propaganda system has been to separate people from one another, to turn them into atoms of consumption—just you and the tube, that's the perfect arrangement. And when you get to that stage, people aren't in contact, they don't know what it means to work together and so on.

L: Let me ask you a question about the cuts to education and also to social services, here in New York and throughout the country. Who, generally, do you think is going to benefit from these cuts? In whose interests are they?

C: (He laughs) Well, I share everyone else's opinion. It's not even an opinion. The *New York Times* pointed out a few days ago in an article about the Giuliani budget, and if you look you'll find, buried in the article somewhere, this sentence, "all tax cuts benefit businesses." The cuts that are made in things like education and transport and health and so on, those are taxes. They don't call them taxes. But if you cut down public support for transportation, you're increasing the cost of transportation. Now that's a tax. You may not call it a tax but that's exactly what it is. It's a transfer of public funds to the state, to government authorities. That's what a tax is. But it's a very regressive tax. It's a tax paid by the poor for the benefit of the rich. The rich benefit when poor people take subways. If poor people didn't take subways they wouldn't be able to drive their limousines or take taxi cabs. I don't know if you were around for the last subway strike—well, you're too young—but you couldn't live in New York. So the rich gain by having people take subways, but they

don't want to pay for it. They want poor people to pay for it and pay through the nose. Rich people do what I did when I went down to NYU the other day [to give a lecture entitled, "Bringing the Third World Home".] They come by airplane and spend three hundred dollars to get from Boston to New York and back. Now that's not for the folks downtown. Well who pays for the airplane? The public pays. They pay for the cost of building them, they pay for the maintenance of the airport and so on. So those things stay up. A good part of the Pentagon budget is for that, plus other things.

The same is true of tuition at CUNY. It's a tax! It's a civic institution, you're putting funds, in this case, into the city government, and the idea is to make the poor people pay for it. They call this "cutting taxes". It's not, it's just redistributing taxes. It's redistributing them and making them even more regressive than they are.

And it's nice of Giuliani to say publicly what everybody knew all along—that he's trying to drive

poor people out of the city. New York is supposed to be a city for rich folk, not for ordinary people. It used to be a working class city. The manufacturing base was destroyed. It didn't just disappear. It was destroyed by social planning and investment and destroying factories and building high-rises and so on. This is all social planning designed to turn it into a city for investment bankers, corporate lawyers and so on and so forth, and Giuliani is just pursuing it a step further. There's a good book on this by Robert Fitch called, *The Assassination of New York* that gives you some of the background. It's all just continuing right now in front of our eyes. And the whole budget is just an illustration of this, down to the tiny details.

In this respect it's like the Gingrich Contract, which is just a way of redistributing power, even more, towards the rich and away from the poor. Poor means here most of the population, mind you. I'm not talking about slum dwellers, I'm talking about eighty percent of the population.

L: Yet, we're being told, and most people seem to believe, that these cuts are inevitable, that there simply isn't enough money available for social spending, that we have to cut back now in order not to get our economy into further trouble.

C: Why are they inevitable? New York has got money coming out of its ears. Pick up the May 15 issue of *Fortune* magazine. I haven't seen it yet but I'm willing to guess that, in their article on the Fortune 500, they're going to be euphoric about the rate of profits. That money is there. Look at the financial institutions, take a walk down Madison Avenue. Does it look poor? There's plenty of money around. The idea is to just put it into the pockets of rich people even more and to make poor people, the general population, suffer even more. There's nothing inevitable about budget cuts. It's a decision to tax the general population for the benefit of the rich.

L: I think that people are beginning to realize that, in fighting against these cuts, it

is futile to fight only for a particular group, such as students. I think people now see that these cuts hit us all in many different areas and that it is necessary to start uniting with other groups out there.

C: Now that's interesting. I noticed a sort of striking asymmetry about that when I was down at NYU. I was in contact with the Clerical and Technical Workers Union. They gave me some of their literature and, in fact, I talked about it at the conference. They are calling for working together with students. But I didn't here students talking about working together with them. This is just an example. The idea of reaching out is not hard. There are plenty of people that want to reach out.

L: Well, at Hunter, and at some of the other CUNY schools, we've reached out in the sense that we've had demonstrations alongside 1199, the Health and Hospitals Workers Union; and also the Transit Workers Union. Reverend Al Sharpton was also involved in the April 4 demonstration. We've gotten together for the purpose of a demonstration, but not in terms of something long term.

C: Well, that's what has to be developed. What we're missing in the country, in fact, what's been shattered is cooperative work among community groups and labor groups and student interest groups and so on, who basically all have the same interests. That has got to be rebuilt. It was shattered by plan.

Let's take, say, the unions. They didn't just disappear, they were killed. During the Reagan years, for example. *Business Week* had a very good article about a year ago in which they described the way the Reagan administration, cooperating with owners and investors, simply carried out completely criminal actions—*Business Week* described them that way—to destroy the unions. For example, there are laws about firing labor organizers. But the Reagan administration told business enterprises that they would not apply the laws, that it was fine to fire labor organizers. As a result the unions declined severely. They stopped enforcing the OSHA regulations—the safety and health regulations. So, industrial accidents shot up. The social policy was designed to drive down wages. That drives two members of the family into working with low wages, with much higher hours and no benefits. And an awful lot of them, about twenty five percent, are part-time. This is all social policy and it has had its effects alongside all the other stuff. And it's got to be reversed, there's nothing automatic about it.

L: Do you think what we're facing here, with the city and state budget cuts to CUNY and other programs and institutions, are a local version of what's going on with third world countries forced to undergo austerity measures?

C: Sure, it's exactly that.

L: I know that some of the same institutions are profiting from both situations. Chase Manhattan bank, for example, has interests in both CUNY and the Mexican economy. Is this indicative of what's going on? Are the same institutions profiting from both situations?

C: Sure. I've been writing about this for a long time. Look, there's been about a century and a half of struggle in which people tried to gain some kind of decent social contract. There was a time, not very long ago in fact, where the great mass of working people simply wanted to take over industry. They didn't see any reason why they should be subor-

dated to orders from authorities. This wasn't very far back, incidentally. But by about the 1920's that was declining. In recent years, and also in Europe and elsewhere, there has been a kind of a social contract established in which privilege and power is maintained, but with certain conditions—adequate standards of living, health care, workers rights and so on. Some kind of contract like that was established differently in different countries. And it didn't just come, there was a lot of struggle involved. In the United States, in particular, it was very violent. The United States had a much more violent labor history than any other industrialized country, and it was last to get these rights. [These rights] have been on hold since about the 1950's and, in the United States, actually reversed. Starting from about the 1970's there has been what you can only call a "rollback" going on. The effort has been to rollback the whole thing and drive the society back to what the dream always was; namely, that (the US) would be a third world society at home just as it is abroad. And that's exactly what's been happening very dramatically in the last fifteen years. The current goings-on in Washington and in City Hall and Albany in New York are just a part of it. They're an acceleration of it. It's very much like structural adjustment. All of these programs have very standard features: market discipline for poor people, plenty of privilege and power and state subsidies for rich people—of course, nobody believes in the market for themselves.

B: I want to ask you about a response you gave to one of the questions I asked you after your lecture at NYU. You said that pressuring legislators through letter-writing and whatnot does help, that it does make some changes.

C: It can often make a lot of changes.

B: OK, but the democrats have been cutting social services for a long time also. You see that with Mario Cuomo, he cut everything with the exception of the cops. And they aren't proposing any real alternatives.

C: Well, make them do it. Either make them do it or throw them out. That's the way democracy works, you make them do it or you throw them out.

L: But in our two-party system both parties are beholden to the same interests.

C: Yes, they are, but that's because we don't do anything about it. Remember, there's one group that's fighting a bitter, unending, self-conscious, class war. And if they're the only ones fighting it they're going to run the whole political system. It's pretty simple.

L: So, what are the best steps to take, voter registration drives, trying to get people to write letters, protesting in the streets?

C: Everything. Everything is a step to take. You organize people; you get them to go on demonstrations; you get them to form political clubs; you then get them to beat on the doors of their legislators and the editorial offices; to set up their own newspapers; to make a third party if that's necessary, actually, a second party would be more honest; you form unions. It's all the right thing to do. All of it is right. There are questions of tactics, where you put your efforts. That you just decide. That I can't tell you. But all of these efforts are the right ones.

Look, if you were on the other side of the barricades, sitting in some corporate board room, and the question came up, "Where should we put our efforts, controlling the media, creating artificial wants through adver-

tising so people get hooked, cutting down the mass transport system?"—the answer would be everywhere.

L: Historically, or at least within the last century or so, what do you see as having been the most successful student movement in terms of affecting long-term change, in helping to create more lasting, democratic institutions. What student movement could serve as a model for students now?

C: There are no models, you have to make up your own models. First of all, students are a transitory group. They're not a fixed social group. You go through your student years. Furthermore, students are young, so they're kind of marginal within the social system. And they're under a lot of pressure; you've got to shape up or you might get kicked out—like everybody else. Although students happen to be a lot freer than everybody else, freer than they'll ever be the rest of their lives. There have been times when students have done something with these privileges. For example, during the 60's. Now, I thought a lot of things that the student movement did were completely crazy and destructive, including things like the Columbia strike—and I got into a big argument with them about that. But a lot of the things they did were very important, and not just to young people. They changed the country very dramatically. It's just a very different country from what it was, say, in the 1960's—and a much more civilized one. And the same thing happened right through the 80's, like with the anti-apartheid campaign, a lot of them were students. And, to a lesser extent, in the solidarity movements with Central America there were some students involved. And it's the same on issue after issue. [Students] just have to decide where they want to put their energies and efforts. You can put them into getting ahead and becoming a corporate lawyer or you can put them into trying to do something decent about the world. Make your choice, the same way you do in later life.

L: I think that's the shift that has to take place, a shift away from seeing our school years simply as a launching pad for a career in big business or whatever. We spend four, five, sometimes six years in college. That's a long time for something that many of us view simply as a transitory phase. Maybe if these cuts go through and begin to really affect us, students will begin to make the shift towards building up our strength here at school in order to have something in place that can affect change.

C: I would agree with that, but I would also think that taking a walk through the streets of New York would make you think, even without the cuts. I mean, New York is just obscene. The contrast of super wealth and misery is so sharp in New York, you just can't walk through the place without feeling disgusted, cuts or no cuts.

The question people have to ask themselves is, Who am I? What kind of a person am I? What kind of a world do I want to live in?

L: But, realistically, if you look around, students and the general population don't seem to be tremendously affected by it.

C: That's because they don't see it. You can walk around and not see it. The first thing you have to learn to do is look. Look at what's in front of your eyes and ask yourself, "Is that the kind of world I want to live in?" "Is that the kind of person I want to be?" I think very few people would say yes.

L: I agree. I think that we allow our-

"Remember, there's one group that's fighting a bitter, unending, self-conscious, class war. And if they're the only ones fighting it they're going to run the whole political system. It's pretty simple."

selves to be brainwashed into believing that the people out there who don't have jobs, who aren't cleaning themselves and who are living on the street, are at fault for their own circumstances; that they have the same chance as everyone else in society but they can't cut it.

C: That's what's drilled into your head. And it's not just about the people out on the streets, it's also about the guys working. They don't live like the people in the high-rises, although they're working twice as hard. That's what's drilled into your head, but people should have enough independence of mind to be able to resist that kind of nonsense. I mean, look, if you went back to the Soviet Union, people had a lot of communist propaganda drilled into their heads and a lot of people were affected, but you didn't have to be.

L: I think we undergo a kind of anti-communist propaganda which is very similar. Taxes being used for government programs that help people are seen as a move towards socialism, communism and all the things those systems are associated with.

C: Put yourself back in that corporate board room and ask what you want people to see and what you want people to believe. What you want them not to see is private tyranny. What you want them to see is big government. And if they're unhappy about things they should be unhappy about government. Now, from the point of view of the guy in the corporate board room, government is a good thing because it funnels money to them. But it's also a dangerous thing because, theoretically, the public could get involved. Government is potentially democratic; corporations are not, they're only tyrannical. So, naturally, they don't want you to see corporations and private power. **They want you to see government.**

And on this, there is no difference between the two parties. If you read Bill Clinton's campaign literature, it's a joke. They started off with their little book called, Mandate For Change, which they were selling in drug stores and what not. The first chapter of it is called 'Entrepreneurial Economics' or something like that. It's about how "we" (Clinton, Gore, etc.) are "new" democrats, not the old-fashioned democrats, and how "we" are going to help "workers and their firms." If you take a look through that chapter, nothing about bosses, investors, owners, managers, profits—that's not there, just "workers and their firms". They do mention entrepreneurs, which are the nice guys who come around everyone once and a while to help the "workers and their firms." This is just childish propaganda Stalinist-style. But it's for democrats. And nobody even pointed it out. That's the level of brain washing in the educated population. Just try to find the word "profits" in the mainstream press. When they want to say "profits" what they say is "jobs". So, Clinton goes to Indonesia and gets "jobs" for Americans; namely, a thirty-five billion dollar Exxon contract to develop an oil field. (Sarcastically) This is going to create a lot of jobs for Americans. It will create profits for a few Americans but you're not allowed to say that.

From Prison

The following letters are two of a package of four letters sent to us by a sister from a prison in New Jersey. The CUNY Coalition encourages its readership to reply. If you want to reply, or need more information, contact the Coalition Press care of The Advocate, CUNY Graduate Center, 33 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036 or call 212-642-2852. We are printing the letter anonymously for the author's protection.

New Afrikan Solidarity:

4-1-30 ADM

Sistahs, Brothas; i apologize for the delay in getting this here out to you, but i ran across a few problems that needed my full attention.

I hope that this will get to you in time before the next demo. [i think] this would be of some encouragemnts, and spiritually sound...

Let me know when and if you recieve this because it is important that you let me know these people here sometime mess with my outgoing mail!

Also, let the brothas, and sistahs in prison or jail who was arrested that they are not alone and that we in here have them in mind as well!

I would have sent you other things but i am was/is pressed for time and i need to get this out to you now, But when i'm sure that you got this i will send perhaps some of my poems and other writings ... Looking to hear from you soon and hopefully we can work together in the future on more politikal issues, politics, and struggle -

Long live the Resistance!

With Love...

Revolutionary Solidarity:

Sistahs, Brothas, Faculty Memebas, & Everyday People

March '95

On behalf of Andrew Long of the students government, I am able to forward you this letter of solidarity, on behalf of my komrades and many other New Afrikan prisoners in and outside of the state of New York...

First of all, "we love you!" We in here not only praise your efforts but we whole-heartedly and unkompromisingly support you as well. There is no power on earth that is more greater than the absolute power of the people; the people will soon feel their own power only if we/you keep the pressure on and never letting up until the demands of the people has been met..."we will win!"...

Sistahs & brothas, anytime a government put more prisons before education is a gov't that is unjust and is a gov't that cares nothing about the of children and their families...And, it is a gov't that is taking a backwards road to internal death, and a people's revolution will ultimately sweep across this sick and fascist government!

Sistahs & brothas, please, don't

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Solidarity

From Faculty

April 12, 1995
Chancellor W. Ann Reynolds
City University of New York
535 East 80th Street
New York, NY 10021

Dear Chancellor Reynolds,

What initially began as an impressive and exciting unity of college administrators, faculty, staff, and students in our struggle against Governor Pataki's proposed budget, may be in jeopardy. Events over the past several weeks have exposed a University policy which is creating an increased climate of repression and divisiveness. This is occurring at the very moment when we need to expand the activities of faculty, staff and students to fight together against the impending budget cuts.

With the budget cuts at hand, we believe that every effort should be made to support and exercise democratic rights to protest and express the varied views of the CUNY community. The rights to speak publicly, to assemble, and to communicate without impediments are inherent in the democratic process and must not be abridged in this moment of intense need for political response.

Reports from campuses include:

excess police force in the arrests of Hunter demonstrators at the moment of their disbanding (including threats of college disciplinary charges);

arrests of peaceful demonstrators from City College who were not, in fact, disrupting any college activities;

use of video cameras by university security to record demonstrators, protesters, and observers;

interference with university e-mail of activists in the movement to fight the cuts;

unusual presence of security personnel around the offices of faculty activists.

We are concerned that these incidents reflect the lock-step guidelines that were issued by you to the college presidents, requiring specific security measures in responding to campus protest. We urge the CUNY community to end this atmosphere of intimidation and to encourage rather than dissuade peaceful democratic protest in behalf of the survival of the institution.

Sincerely,

CUNY Coalition of Concerned Faculty and Staff on behalf of all campuses

mis-understand what is already going on people are already in Amerikkka's prisons because of no education or the lack of education; because of the impossibilities of not finding jobs. Perhaps, if I had had a full and proper education, and perhaps, if I had had a chance to work [probably] I wouldn't be here to-day in prison...So, don't play into the head games in thinking that this is something new that just started when certain assholes got into power there in New York! The students in N.Y. are just now getting to feel the effects of what so many others have and/is suffering from. Do not let the nonsense by few assholes in government, as well as, some of these leadership figures disengage you the students from the overall struggles of oppressed people s all over this society. We can only rock and change this system as one united voice whether we are in prison or outside of prisons, But the struggles must be join on all fronts (especially) if we/you want to be effective in the fight back against these racist cuts!

In konclusion, I was listening to (WBAI) the whole time of the demonstration and I kan kome up with only one analysis; one konclusion—and, that is, (the demonstrations wasn't about education - it was about "life!")...

Sistahs & brothas, you have all intered into a stage where your lives are at stake; the moment the pigs vamped down upon you their wicket intentions proved to inflict such an injury upon you that you'd think twice before you kome back out there, en mass...But you must keep the pressures on and let them know that you will not submit peacefully to their terroristic and fascist tactics because the people's spirits are greater than any racist governmental forces!

Sistahs & brothas, education is a basic human right, therefore, any government that take the people's right to education and to, too, a future have simply kalled into question, "A People's right to a Revolution..."

Power to the people

N.A.P.