

CUNY CONTRACT: VOTE NO!

BUILD STRONG UNIONS

7,500 members of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) are currently voting on ratification of a new contract for CUNY. Faculty Action is not a union caucus (see "Who We Are") but as part of the defense against the continuous assaults on our schools, our students, and our ability to teach, we see unions as a central - but not exclusive - focus of activity for teachers. We are committed to building our unions as the strongest possible weapon in the hands of teachers to fight for our needs.

The battle for a good union contract is important, but negotiating contracts is only one function of a strong union. In building a movement for a "no" vote at CUNY we are after the best contract we can win there. This must also develop an organized rank and file so the union can consistently fight for education in every appropriate way, even when contract issues are not immediately involved, e.g. joining with students to oppose imposition or increases of tuition, or closing of schools.

What follows is the text of a leaflet distributed by Faculty Action to CUNY faculty urging a "no" vote on their proposed contract.

Ballots are in the mail for the ratification of the new PSC contract. A "yes" vote puts our necks in a noose. Here's why.

WHAT WE LOSE NOW

Two weeks' pay and eight months' increments are deferred until July 1978. A cost-of-living adjustment of, at most, 2 per cent may be thrown out by the EFCB.

A wage deferral is based on the city's ability to pay in the future. But the city in crisis pays the Chase Manhattan Bank and political appointees long before city employees. City employees are retrenched or fired. And the full tide of the cuts hasn't hit yet. We have no guarantee the city will ever repay this forced loan.

There are no meaningful provisions on job security, teaching load, and class size. "Financial exigency" is still management's ace-in-the-hole. Chancellor Kibbee himself said that even if the contract is ratified, full-time jobs will be lost next fall (Daily News, 4/29/76).

WHAT WE LOSE FOR THE FUTURE

The immediate losses are bad enough--worse still is how the contract sets us up for further defeats in contract negotiations 16 months from now. A bad contract, with no rank-and-file struggle behind it, strengthens management's hand and weakens our own.

A contract that is not protection for us is a weapon against us. YET WE'RE TOLD THAT PUTTING THIS WEAPON IN MANAGEMENT'S HAND IS THE "RESPONSIBLE" THING TO DO.

RESPONSIBLE TO WHOM?

Not to our students or to ourselves. Look at the situation:

CONTINUING ATTACKS ON EDUCATION: The effects of decreased enrollments, tuition, changes in admission policies, school closings/mergers/ phase-outs will start hitting us this summer. Yet against imminent firings and the steady erosion of educational programs, the proposed contract offers no defense. Nor against already stringent and demoralizing conditions for those of us who manage to keep

our jobs--we have more classes, more students, insufficient academic support services, fewer supplies and unworkable equipment.

CONTINUING ATTACKS ON OUR LIVELIHOOD: The contract offers us job insecurity and what amounts to a pay cut--on top of already increased "productivity." Under its terms, an assistant professor making \$20,530 "defers" about 7.5 per cent (about \$1,600) in wages and increments, while giving up outright approximately 8 per cent in real wages (buying power) due to inflation. The pitiful 2 per cent COL adjustment that's supposed to offset this is already under fire from the state as a wage hike! With such a contract as precedent, what will the 1977 agreement look like?

"BUT THERE'S NO MONEY -

Sacrifice for what? For whom? The proposed contract will not save one job in September. It will not stop the tuition steamroller. It will not restore the 40% decrease in CUNY applications. It will not bring minority and white working class students back into CUNY and keep them from being thrown onto the jobless streets. The only thing that the contract will do is invite the Chancellor and the Board to hit us even harder the next time.

The EFCB, the state and the city tell us there's no money. Of course. They're running the city in behalf of the business and financial community, which demands that millions of dollars be siphoned off from social services, including CUNY, to finance past and future bank debts.

What's good for Chase Manhattan is bad for us, for our students, for their parents, and for everyone else facing unemployment and school/daycare/hospital closings. Like them, we have no other choice except to fight to hold on to what we need.

"BUT IT'S THE BEST WE CAN DO"

The best that a general can do with no army is surrender. There were lots of potential troops to fight for a stronger contract, only they were never mobilized. Large numbers of students as well as faculty would have supported a real contract fight if it had been waged as part of the overall fight to defend CUNY, free tuition and Open Admissions. Instead, the contract effort was narrowed to the question of wages and grievance procedures.

The key questions were and are job security and the future of CUNY. There can be no job security or future for CUNY when we have tuition and restricted admissions. There can be no job security unless the rank-and-file is mobilized to fight for it.

"BUT WE CAN'T GO ON ANY LONGER WITHOUT A CONTRACT"

What difference does a contract make if it doesn't give us anything, and in fact takes away what we have? CUNY teachers need an agreement that makes it more difficult to fire people, not less, that holds the pre-1975 line on teaching load and class size, and that doesn't push down our living standards.

A NO VOTE MEANS YES TO A BETTER CONTRACT, YES TO BETTER EDUCATION FOR MORE STUDENTS, YES TO A MORE EFFECTIVE UNION. A NO VOTE IS A STEP FORWARD TO BUILDING THE STRENGTH OF THE RANK-AND-FILE TO FIGHT FOR WHAT WE NEED.

UNION MEMBERS, HOLD FIRM FOR A STRONG UNION THAT DEFENDS THE NEEDS OF TEACHERS AND EDUCATION. VOTE NO!

BUILD A TEACHERS

Editor's note: The following is the call distributed to teachers in the New York-New Jersey area which initiated FACULTY ACTION. It has been slightly edited.

Dear Fellow Teachers:

We are some of the hundreds of teachers in the New York-New Jersey area who have been taking part in the recent growing resistance to the cuts in education. We are fed up with these continuing attacks on education, on our students, and on our ability to teach. Neither we nor our students can ignore the absurdity of graduation into unemployment or the training of needed nurses and medical paraprofessionals while hospitals are closed down. Every program cut, every increase in tuition or class size takes us further from our hopes of conveying the accumulated rich knowledge of humanity to our students so they can contribute to advancing society still further. More and more we are asking ourselves whether what we teach in our classes reflects reality and the way all aspects of society develop, or hides it.

We are fed up with the deterioration of society we see all around us. Inflation robs our pay while the spread of X-rated garbage and the forced closings of libraries and museums robs us of cultural developments as the economic crisis pushes all of society into an intellectual and cultural wasteland of decadence.

We do not want to live this way. We are convinced that these attacks on education and throughout society can and must be resisted and thrown back by a strong, united, organized mass movement in which teachers have an important role to play.

Every time we turn around, some governor or mayor or corporate leader behind them announces another "plan" to gut education, throw tens of thousands of students into the street, close schools, and do away with hundreds of teachers, even overriding tenure. These "plans" come amid other plans to close hospitals, factories and firehouses, cut pay, break unions, and crush people in a hundred different ways.

The bewildering variety of "plans" comes in part from a deliberate attempt to confuse and demoralize us with uncertainty, to divide us and make us hope someone else will get the axe in the end. But the long procession of "plans" really shows that the rulers of this country have no plan at all. The economic crisis has called out the deep conflicts among competing ruling political and economic interests, as different sections of the political bureaucracy and different corporate and banking interests throw mud at each other and desperately try to survive at everyone else's expense.

The rulers have to experiment with trial balloons to test out the resistance and see what they can get away with. They are scared to death of the anger the people feel under the cuts, and rightly so. The real extent of the cuts is by no means predetermined. It depends to a great degree on our ability to throw off demoralization and uncertainty, organize and fight back together with the millions of others -- students, teachers, and workers -- who have no choice but to fight in order to maintain even the barest necessities. We want to help build that fighting movement.

The cuts in education and the deterioration of living and working conditions do not come from the ill-will or temporary irrationality of college administrators, politicians, or industrial and banking leaders. As the general economic crisis has developed, the political and economic leaders have been forced to admit that the problems go deep, the "options" are extremely limited. For them the crisis is a crisis of profit -- not enough of it today to make production worthwhile, a "capital shortage" of trillions of dollars that creates a bottleneck to their profits and production in the future.

Of course our capitalist society runs for profit. In times of crisis it is just more obvious what this means in terms of cuts and suffering. To "save New York City from

default", thousands of jobs were lost and services cut. Federal "aid" really has meant more hospitals closed, education crippled, and still more suffering for the people. To make business recover, workers are laid off and those who remain work doubly hard in unsafe conditions to increase production. All to "save money" -- which means to put money in the hands of big business.

To restore profitable business conditions and get out of the crisis, the rulers of this country must attack working people, must try to cut back on social services, must bring us closer to war. They must take their crisis and try to put it on the backs of the people. This is not a matter of choice. No amount of pleading or reasoning with them can change this. But organized resistance can limit their ability to get away with it and can go on to win more victories.

Throughout the country, and in the New York-New Jersey area in particular, this angry resistance is growing. With thousands of other teachers and students, we have marched and demonstrated against the cuts in New York City, Albany, Trenton, Washington, D.C. and on local campuses. Like so many others, we have taken strength from news of worker and community resistance to hospital and firehouse closings, layoffs and other abuses.

But too many of these demonstrations, particularly those focused on education, have been frustrating because the faculty union and student government leadership follow a strategy of pleading and reasoning with the corporate leaders and their political front-men. People are called to rallies to "show we care," and to strengthen the union or student leadership or some politician in their participation in planning the cuts. This strategy cannot work. We care very much, but that isn't the real issue. We are not creating polarity or manufacturing disunity to point out that the people of this country and their economic and political rulers have nothing in common. Our experience in the crisis teaches us this reality. A strategy based on pleading and a willingness to concede is not based on reality, cannot mobilize the people in a sustained way, breeds cynicism and confusion, and only plays into the hands of those making the cuts.

People can be won to persist in resisting these cuts only on the basis of a realistic assessment of their origin and the steps needed to build a broad, uncompromising, organized movement of millions of people going on the offensive to declare: "We will not live this way -- we can live better!" No amount of crocodile tears and bicentennial flag-waving from the economic and political hit-men can long keep us all from aiming our anger and struggle directly against them.

Such a social movement is much broader than teachers alone, although teachers have an important place in it. Already many students, workers in factories and city government, and community residents are getting organ-

I want more information about FACULTY ACTION ____.
I want more information about July 4th ____.
I enclose a contribution toward the cost of
this paper and the work of FACULTY ACTION ____.

name: _____
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school: _____

mail to: FACULTY ACTION
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or call: Bill Friedheim (212 781 1702)
or Mike Zweig (212 568 7346 or 516 246 5070)

FIGHTING ORGANIZATION

ized, participating in many battles, winning some, and gaining in understanding and strength. The economic crisis is not going away. New York City faces at least three years of mandated cuts while the problems of New York State, New Jersey, and elsewhere are just beginning to surface. A long series of battles lies ahead of us, but armed with understanding and organization we can join in the resistance which is sure to grow, win a lot, and in building the unity and strength of the people help lay the basis for a bright future.

We teachers need organization too. Most of us are in one teachers union or another. We think our unions must play an important role in organizing resistance to every attack on education and must take up the fight on a broader front as well, bringing teachers into united struggle with others in society. We will continue to work in our unions to accomplish this by consistently relying on the energy and initiative of the rank and file and bringing to the teachers a political understanding and plan which can effectively mobilize them.

But our experience in the unions so far has convinced us that we cannot confine our activities there. We cannot quickly overcome the sell-out stand of the union leadership and their present control of many campus formal structures. The urgency and widespread nature of the attacks require immediate unified work throughout the New York-New Jersey area to bring together teachers from the different school systems, each with a different union (and some with no union at all), into one organization which can lead teachers to strengthen our unions and also take up issues of concern to which our unions cannot now be won.

We therefore propose that a new faculty organization be formed immediately, uniting college teachers from the many schools and systems in the New York-New Jersey area. The organization should be composed of campus chapters and individuals from schools at which there is not yet a chapter organized. This organization would have as its primary responsibility mobilizing and organizing thousands of teachers into active resistance against the many attacks on education, in cooperation with the rising student movement. To this end the organization must



SUNY TAs STRIKE — WIN JOBS

Recently the History Department graduate students at the State University of New York at Stony Brook learned that ten Teaching Assistant (TA) lines were being cut from next year's budget, almost a 25% reduction. This threatened to end graduate education for a number of current students and cripple the Department's ability to support incoming students.

The TAs rejected any scheme to keep their own lines next semester by cutting funds from new students. They also turned back a plan to allocate TA lines on the basis of financial need, which would mainly have taken money away from married women graduate students. This plan was simply a rationalization for the cuts and divisive among the students.

After unsuccessful meetings with the Administration, the TAs voted unanimously to strike immediately until the lines were restored. With the support of most of the faculty, the TAs picketed every History class and refused to meet their own classes. They won the support of undergraduate History students, who have every interest in joining to secure jobs for teachers so the education process can continue without overcrowding or cancelled classes. The TAs were able to build broad support by taking up the cuts as a battle for education, not limiting the question to their own jobs.

After five days the Administration came up with eight new TA lines, not pirated from other departments, showing again that the extent of the cuts is in no way predetermined, but depends on our ability to build unity and fight for everything we need.

take up ways to make the unions themselves real fighting organizations. We should be based in work on our own campuses but be able to draw faculty into city- and state-wide actions and have an influence far beyond our own campuses.

In connection with this central function, the teachers' organization would also mobilize teachers to participate in an organized way in the broad social movement growing in opposition to every aspect of social deterioration stemming from the economic crisis. Only by strengthening and building this broad resistance will we be able to simultaneously build the strongest, most focused resistance to educational cuts on each and every campus. By mobilizing the largest numbers of teachers we will also be able to play the best possible role in the unions, making them fight for our needs as well. We want to develop a fighting movement based on a realistic assessment of the crisis, directing the anger and strength of the teachers, united with students and others, at the economic and political rulers of this country. This is the way to overcome cynicism and to win.

We remember in the past our colleagues joining in the thousands with students and others to unite with the struggle for Black liberation, to protest the Vietnam War, to fight for open admissions and ethnic programs, to defeat Defense Department research. Recently teachers have again joined in struggle around budget cuts, helping to win some victories and learning better how to fight. In proposing this organization, we do not envision a union caucus, nor are we turning our backs on the unions. We are anticipating a growing anger and fight against the persistent attempts to place the crisis of capitalism on the backs of the people, including teachers.

No single battle will resolve this long-term problem. We know this organization will be small at first in comparison to the needs. But a first step is necessary and is now possible, so that as the struggle does mount we will be able to enter into it in an organized way, attempt to give leadership to the teachers in it, and in that way grow in numbers and unity and make the greatest possible contribution to changing the conditions of society.

UNITE WITH THE STUDENT MOVEMENT



600 students fought their way into a N.J. Board of Trustees meeting at Paterson State College to demand an end to teacher firings. The action resulted in the rehiring of 64 teachers.

We've Carried the Rich for 200 Years Let's Get Them Off Our Backs!



Demonstrate July 4th

Jobs or Income!

We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War!

Come to Philadelphia!

The point of NY-NJ FACULTY ACTION is to organize teachers, in unity with students, on every campus. That's where we are and that's where we're being attacked. But we know that ours is only one arena and that we are part of a broad social movement fighting every attack on our lives and livelihoods. On July 4th in Philadelphia the Vietnam Veterans Against the War has called for a demonstration of all people involved in struggle on every front. We call on teachers everywhere to build this demonstration, which in turn will strengthen our sense of organization and determination to fight when we return to campus next fall.

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Bicentennial--our first reaction is to get as far as possible from all the jingles and speeches. But their elaborate song and dance is not just a commercial gimmick to sell red/white/blue paper cups and fancy coins (they'd be selling us green paper cups and Batman coins if it weren't the nation's 200th birthday). It's really an attack on us because it calls for "national unity"--unity between rich and poor, acquiescence to their mounting attacks on us, and it tries to convince us that we're all in the same boat - if only we eat less, pull harder at the oars and don't rock the damn thing, the rotting timbers will keep us afloat.

They use the bicentennial to sum up history for us as a series of events over which we have no control or a series of dead heroes' gloriolous deeds. They point to everything we are proud of in this country, everything built and fought for by the American people, and tell us we have them to thank for it: Washington beat the British and Lincoln freed the slaves, the Rockefellers and Fords created the great wealth of this country, and Roosevelt ever-so-kindly presented us with unemployment benefits and social security.

But its getting harder and harder for them to convince anyone with this stuff in 1976 --after Vietnam, after Watergate, in this era of massive unemployment and severe economic crisis, in this era when the seeds of world war find fertile soil in the open contention between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. for political and economic control of Angola and South Africa, Egypt and Israel, Portugal and Italy. Reality stares us in the face: half-built schools and hospitals rust while construction workers remain idle; tens of thousands of students are forced out of college; people suffer and die from lack of medical care; crime and inflation run rampant.

So the corporations are forced to call out their chorus line of public relations men and politicians who work overtime trying to sell us blinders. Things are a bit rough right now, they say, but stick with us: our system "was and is the most effective, efficient economic system ever devised." (Continental Oil Co. ad in Life Bicentennial Issue).

And July 4th in Philadelphia is supposed to be the biggest whitewash job of all. They want to weaken our ability fight by presenting in all their media for America and all

the world to see a responsible citizenry, responsibly tightening our belts and cheerfully celebrating their rule in the "cradle of democracy."

Because our responsibility is clearly to fight every attack on education, on our jobs, and in our communities, we will go to Philadelphia, not to celebrate their rule but to throw back in their faces the call for us to support their crises and their wars. We must say that we have nothing in common with them, we must demand jobs or income now and their profits be damned!

The July 4th demonstration in Philadelphia is not a 60s protest march, not a counter-bicentennial. It is a militant statement by thousands of veterans fighting for decent benefits and against another rich man's war; employed and unemployed workers fighting for jobs or income and against layoffs and speedup and wage cuts; youth and students fighting for the right to an education and a meaningful future. July 4th is a day when we stand together to show our unity and resolve to fight harder on every picket line, every shop floor, every unemployment line, and in every community for hospitals and firehouses, and every school.

As teachers, we must and will respond to this bicentennial offensive. Thousands of us search for non-existent jobs. For those of us who have jobs anxiety has become a constant companion: How much will there be in next month's check? Will I have a job in the fall? Next fall? What kind of life will my children have? And what kind of life have I -- I like to teach and I want to do useful work. A teacher, I thought, could develop the skills and talents of others toward a decent, meaningful life. As the attacks on us increase so does our anger and so must our resistance: at demonstrations in Trenton and in Albany, on campus after campus at CUNY, SUNY, and Jersey State, teachers are developing their strength by joining with students to say with people everywhere: "We can't live this way - and we won't!"

Our fight is a just fight. Our demands are just demands. In building for July 4th we are strengthening our unity and organization and strengthening our understanding that we, as teachers, are part of a broad social movement which fights for our needs: "We've Carried the Rich for 200 Years - Let's Get Them Off Our Backs!"

JULY 4th COALITION Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee, Revolutionary Communist Party, Revolutionary Student Brigade, United Workers Organization NY-NJ