

# THE OADFLY

Vol. 1, No. 6 United Federation of College Teachers, BMCC March, 1966

## URGENT

The BMCC Chapter of the United Federation of College Teachers will convene an EMERGENCY meeting this Wednesday, March 15, at twelve noon in room 393.

For reasons that are both arbitrary and spurious, the College has decided not to renew the contract of Syeus Mottel, an instructor in the English Department. The decision was in large part premised upon an observation of a final examination (yes, a final examination!) and an evaluation report full of innuendo and unsupported statements which Mr. Mottel first saw and was asked to sign on January 17, the very day the President sent out a letter informing him of the decision. Mr. Mottel never had a chance to answer any of the unsubstantiated charges catalogued in the evaluation before he was separated from the faculty.

On February 10, Mr. Mottel, through the chapter, formerly appealed the decision to the President. At that time the chapter's executive and grievance committees submitted an eight page statement and Mr. Mottel a sixty page refutation of the evaluation and observation reports to President Block. It is the substance and not the bulk of Mr. Mottel's refutation which is truly impressive. Fortunately, he is a very meticulous man. He saves and files almost all of the memoranda and documents he receives at the College. As a result, about two thirds of his refutation consists of supporting documents.

Seventeen members of the English Department signed a statement in support of Mr. Mottel. Unfortunately, it was all for nought. On March 10, after an entire month had elapsed, the President turned down Mr. Mottel's appeal and reaffirmed the original decision.

On Wednesday, Mr. Mottel will present his case to the chapter.

As we type this statement, the Union is just four members shy of 50% at BMCC. We are strong. If we act collectively, we have nothing to fear. But even if we were weak, we would defend Mr. Mottel. If we do not act when injustices are perpetrated, if we do not make men answer for what they have done, then we are all cowards. If we do not challenge arbitrary decisions, all of this will happen again and again and again. It is imperative that members and non-members attend on Wednesday and that they judge this case on its merits and then act as conscience dictates.

In Memoriam  
Academic Due Process

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\* Documents in addition to those noted are on file in support of Mr. Mottel's case and are available for examination upon request to any officer of the chapter

I. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT BY WILLIAM FRIEDHEIM

The United Federation of College Teachers protests and appeals the termination of Syeus Mottell's contract on two grounds:

1. His observation and evaluation were in violation of academic due process.
2. The procedures employed by Gerald Cohen, Chairman of the English Department did not allow for a proper evaluation of Mr Mottell's classroom performance.

Professor <sup>Cohen</sup> Mottell did not apprise Mr Mottel of his written observation and evaluation reports until January 17, the very date affixed to his letter of separation. In effect, the Chairman confronted Mr Mottell with a fait accompli. Only now, ex post facto, can Mr Mottel enter a defense on his behalf and correct what he considers errors of fact, judgement, and sound academic procedure. On the last count, we find Professor Cohen wanting and in breach of due process.

Although Professor Cohen sat in on Mr Mottel's classes twice during the semester, he filed only one report. He based his assessment upon an observation of a final examination in one of Mr Mottell's performance classes. Under no circumstances do we feel a final examination is a fair or proper gauge of an instructor's ability.

President Block has previously directed Departmental Chairmen to observe members of the teaching faculty three times a year. Over the past twelve months, Professor Cohen placed only two reports on file in the Office of the Dean of the College. One of these we described above. We submit that by the college's own standards, Mr Mottell's teaching has not been properly evaluated.

What we find most disturbing, is that Professor Cohen's evaluation and observation of Mr Mottel was solely punitive and not at all corrective. An observation report is of little benefit to an instructor unless he is a party to it and after sufficient discussion, provided an opportunity to correct whatever his shortcomings as a teacher may be. Clearly, by using it only to document his case against Mr Mottel, Professor Cohen violated the intent of the observation report.

We suspect that Professor Cohen approached the particulars of Mr Mottel's case deductively. He started with the general premise that the College should not renew Mr Mottel's contract. With this as his point of departure, he sought the evidence necessary to support a recommendation of dismissal. Evaluation and observation reports did not shape his decision but rather his decision shaped his observation and evaluation. AS DEPARTMENTAL CHAIRMAN, HE NEVER CONSULTED WITH MR MOTTEL WHEN HE HAD CAUSE TO DOUBT THE PROPRIETY OF HIS ACTIONS, BUT RATHER WILLY NILLY TURNED HEARSAY EVIDENCE AGAINST HIM. One example will suffice for this introductory statement. When a student aide at Mr Mottel's request, asked the Chairman for a grade sheet so that she could record the marks on post cards, provided by the students, Professor Cohen gave her a sheet and then cited the incident negatively in Mr Mottel's evaluation. If he questioned the wisdom of allowing a student aide access to a grade sheet, he could have confided the fact to Mr Mottel (instead, he of his own free will, permitted the aide to copy the grades). Why did he permit the aide to copy the grades unless he wanted the episode to serve another purpose, to build a case against Mr Mottel. Professor Cohen did not evaluate Mr Mottel, he kept him under surveillance. In essence he assumed the role of a policeman. He collected evidence against Mr Mottel, who in turn was never privy to this information and, hence, could not answer to it.

Professor Cohen's evaluation of Mr Mottel is a three paged single spaced compilation of offenses, allegedly perpetrated over the past year. Only now, after the decision to terminate his contract, does Mr Mottel know the charges against him.

In his defense, we submit Mr Mottel's point by point refutation, complete with supporting evidence, of Dr Cohen's written observation and evaluation and an analysis of both these documents drawn up by the Grievance Committee of the BMCC Chapter. The presentations of both Mr Mottel and the Grievance Committee should substantiate the general conclusions of this brief introductory statement.

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II. CHAIRMAN GERALD COHEN'S REPORT OF HIS OBSERVATION OF MR MOTTEL'S SPEECH CLASS OF DECEMBER 19, 1966, DATED JANUARY 6, 1967.

The aim of the lesson was the presentation of 10 minute speeches (arguments). The organization of the lesson was thus based upon delivery of these speeches, and this constituted the full class hour. The following topics were treated by the students: ESP; Red China; Viet Nam; woman's role in society; LSD drugs.

With regard to student response, there was no opportunity for discussion or for the raising of question. Mr Mottel remained seated throughout the session, and he himself commented on the subject matter of most of the speeches. Some of the students were not attentive, and were giggling and talking, two of them rather excessively. The

instructor did not discourage them. There were eight students attending; then one arrived at 11:15; another left and returned later; a new arrival came in at 11:35. Since this has happened in the past, it is recorded here for purposes of discussing the matter with Mr Mottel.

Another matter that should be mentioned concerns Mr Mottel's comments; they were limited to commendation on length, research, "beautiful" control of information, sources, being two minutes short. Although the instructor was probably recording errors in organization, delivery, pronunciation, no mention of these was brought to the student's attention during this session. There were numerous serious errors being made which should have been called to the attention of the class. Some examples follow: slurring of words; "listenin'," "tree" for "three," "incourage-dem-reconize-reconition, de key-prezzing." There were other errors in intonation, accent, mispronunciation, and slurring. When Mr Mottel held up cards indicating time used, the speakers seemed nervous.

### III. Mr Syeus Mottel's Refutation of Chairman Cohen's Report

From the time of the observation to the date of its presentation to me (January 17, 1967), Dr Cohen did not, at any time, discuss the report or offer me any suggestions as directed by college regulations and as stipulated on the observation sheet itself.

Dr Cohen did not indicate anywhere on his report that he was observing a final examination and not a representative lesson. During a regular lesson, corrections are made, but not during a final examination. Allowing students to converse amongst themselves offers a release of tension between presentations of individual ten minute final oral reports. Hence, students were permitted to talk between presentations, but never during the speeches themselves.

The question arises: Is it advisable for a departmental chairman to observe a final examination as an official observation without indicating it in a report?

Dr Cohen makes note of a student leaving a returning later. The student who left and later returned did so with my permission, previously agreed upon.

Dr Cohen makes note of the tardiness of two students. A teacher can exercise little control over a student's tardiness on any one particular day. Dr Cohen alleges that my classes are characterized by frequent tardiness on the part of the students, but fails to substantiate his accusation. Also, he did not discuss the matter with me as noted in the report.

Dr Cohen states "instructor was probably recording errors," however, Dr Cohen never asked to see these notations. His inadequate grasp of the speech sciences is evident in the particular "examples" he noted. Dr Cohen was aware that student errors are indicated on personal rating sheets. During a final examination, it is not the practice to make public issues of them. The students' rating sheets are available for inspection and review for the students and student-instructor conferences are conducted to reinforce comments made on rating sheets.

Dr Cohen notes "the speakers seemed nervous" by the holding up of cards to indicate the passage of time. The students and I agreed collectively upon the use of the time cards. This is a usual procedure in most formal public speaking occasions. Also, the pacing of the student's talk was one of over-all considerations in determining student's effective control of the speaking situation.

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### IV. CHAIRMAN GERALD COHEN'S EVALUATION OF MR MOTTEL'S ROLE IN THE DEPARTMENT FOR "SECOND ANNUAL APPOINTMENT," DATED JANUARY 9, 1967. MR MOTTEL'S REJOINDERS ARE INTERSPERSED IN INDENTED PARAGRAPHS

(Although this report was written January 9, 1967, I was not given the opportunity to read it until January 17, 1967. -- Syeus Mottel)

Since the last general evaluation of Mr Syeus Mottel on February 18, 1966, a few weeks after my arrival here, I have had the benefit of additional contact with his classroom, his students, and his colleagues. I still feel that Mr Mottel brings to his students what I have called a "facile" way of treating his subject matter. To his credit, he does have a sense of humor; however, as I indicated earlier, I have not seen a sufficient demonstration of scholarly effectiveness in the classroom or elsewhere. The observation reports indicate that there is not much evidence of student response in the classroom, that there is a need for immediate on-the-spot criticism of students' delivery, pronunciation and accent, and that there is distraction in the classroom. In other matters pertaining to scholarly ability, I have already reported (in December, 1966, and on January 12, 1967) that Mr Mottel has not advanced in graduate work since

he took two courses in New York University's graduate theater program, summer, 1964. Considerable time has passed since he received his MA degree.

While I have not attended graduate classes since 1964, my activities with various professional and theatrical organizations have directly contributed to my effectiveness as an instructor of speech. Professional contact with organizations such as Speech Association of America and Speech Association of Eastern States are cited as examples. Directing productions for United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Long Island Repertory, Actors Studio, Kornblee Gallery Players are cited as professional theatrical examples.

It should be noted that my earlier reports were written during my earlier association with Mr Mottel; their negative criticisms was not over-emphasized since I had hoped that encouragement would lead to improvement. This has not been the result

Suggestions made directly to me by Dr Cohen about my classroom performance have been considered and incorporated by me in my classroom techniques. (e.g. immediate comment to student upon conclusion of talk.)

Last spring, and again this semester, I have listened to complaints from students, and I have received two phone calls from parents.

Why were these complaints from students and phone calls from parents never communicated to me by Dr Choen? There is no substantial evidence of the incidents given nor any indication as to the nature of these alleged complaints.

Some students expressed dissatisfaction with Mr Mottel because of his arrangement of one contact hour per week in the language laboratory. They said they felt a lack of contact with the instructor.

If students complained of lack of contact in my classes, why was I not consulted? How could I resolve the situation or answer to the students' complaints unless I was made aware of the circumstance. Again, Dr Cohen does not substantiate his remarks.

I did not honor their requests for section changes but referred them to further discussion with Mr Mottel.

The requests for "section changes" were not "referred" to me; nor is there any reference to the identities of these students.

My attention has also been called to reports of Mr Mottel's absence from the laboratory sessions while they were in session. I discussed this with Mr Mottel, with the director of the language laboratory, and with the Division Head.

These brief absences, when they did occur, were necessitated by physical discomfort resulting from a packed schedule. The language lab, however, was never left unattended. There was always a technical assistant or student aide present. (ED. NOTE: Mr Mottel here has attached a copy of his schedule in the language lab which shows, for Friday, hours in the laboratory from 2:15 to 5:50, a class FROM 6:00 to 7:05 and Language Lab again from 7:15 to 8:20.)

There have been other difficulties in Mr Mottel's relationship with students: the instance of Miss Jacqueline Waterman (memo of April 19, 1966), regarding her hearing disability and her problems with the laboratory;

I notified Dr Choen that Miss Waterman's hearing disability made speech class a trying experience for her; she needed a special kind of class:

The request for exemption was refused by Dr Choen and I therefore dropped the matter, What difficulties is Dr Cohen talking about?

the instance of a student (November 17, 1966) who was described as "highly disturbed and emotionally overwrought . . . near hysteria," due to Mr Mottel's interrogation about a workshop exemption.

Whose quote is this and to what does it refer? I was never consulted on the matter by Dr Cohen.

In December there were problems in the Performing Arts Club; these were called to my attention by students, and I directed them to Mr Mottel. I felt that they should discuss their criticism of him as their faculty advisor with Mr Mottel since this is a club activity

I served as faculty advisor since the beginning of 1965. I am pleased with all accomplishments of this club as noted below. I know of no problems in the club related to my conduct with its members, and can only assume that what Dr Cohen is referring to is the discussions I had with Dr Paula Langsam, who expressed an interest in the club.

The memorandum of October 6, 1966 is a reply to Mr Mottel's description of 'overcrowded' classes at a time when classes were in the process of being split. On September 30, when an effort had been made to split one of his classes, Mr Mottel attacked the qualifications of the teacher who had been assigned to the split class during the emergency.

I presented my professional judgement and was upheld by Dr Gourevitch on this basis. At no time did I attack the qualifications of the teacher. (ED NOTE: Mr Mottel here has attached two memoranda, one from the teacher in question who writes "I've never taught speech before." The second memoranda, from Chairman Cohen, discusses the class split under discussion.)

He wanted to secure additional part-time teachers and I reminded him in the memorandum of October 6, that department chairmen could not staff courses in the way he suggested.

I never attempted "to secure additional part-time teachers." I merely requested information and guidance from Dr Cohen. (ED NOTE: Several memoranda are here attached. They consist of an exchange of notes between Mr Mottel and Chairman Cohen on the subject.)

At that time, I received a call from "a friend of someone in the department" who stated that she heard that the Speech classes were "overcrowded," and her friend told her to call me about a position. When I inquired about the source of her exaggerated information, she hung up the phone. I found the whole matter unfair and distasteful, especially since enrollment problems were resolved shortly after the beginning of the semester.

Quote of "a friend of someone in the department" links me to this incident without substantiation. If there is anything unfair and distasteful about this matter, it is the blame placed upon me for a call from someone unknown both to the Chairman and to me. How does this unsubstantiated situation enter into an evaluation of an instructor's qualifications?

We have had discussions about these matters, and in addition we attempted to organize a Communication Arts Workshop. Mr Mottel was unwilling to follow the suggestion (memo of November 7, 1966) which had been relayed to me by our administration (and by a member of the City University Office of Development) to the effect that all negotiations between Actors Studio and BMCC should be based upon the institutions themselves, and not upon the role of Mr Mottel in these negotiations. He then notified me that the negotiations were terminated.

I am very proud of my efforts, however unsuccessful, to organize a Communications Arts Workshop through the Actors Studio at BMCC. At all times, I pursued the matter through channels at the suggestion of Dean James.

The Actors Studio had asked me to serve as a liaison representative between them and BMCC. As indicated in my report, my role was unofficial and resulted from my association with both institutions. Dr Cohen insisted that my name and the name of Lee Strasberg (artistic director of Actors Studio) be withdrawn from the proposal. Not I, but the Actors Studio, for reasons separate and apart from this circumstance, decided to terminate the discussions at approximately the same time Dr Cohen had made his suggestions.

I urge the administration to review this matter most carefully, not only with respect to my dismissal, but also as to the reasons underlying the loss of this most promising opportunity for BMCC. (Ed Note: Several memoranda substantiating Mr Mottel's remarks are here attached as well as the proposal for the workshop)

The minutes and correspondence of the department's Speech Committee indicate that Mr Mottel has not been cooperative, and that he has been involved in considerable conflict with some of his colleagues. They have complained that he has placed departmental issues (new electives, laboratory, syllabus, definitions of workshop) on a personal level, and that he has not contributed to the attempts to improve the Speech program and the role of the laboratory. This difficulty in his relationship with colleagues was first noted February 18, 1966.

The discussions within the speech committee were supposed to be on a professional basis. I would hope that differences of opinion would not be construed as "conflict with some of his colleagues." The situation within the committee was presented several times to the Head of the Division of Liberal Arts for review of basic disregard of democratic procedures.

The procedure of Dr Langsam, as chairman of the speech committee consisting of four members, was to initiate new business by memorandum, decisions by memorandum, decisions by questionnaire, and offer little opportunity for open discussion. Normal democratic courses of open discussion, debate and compromise were thereby curtailed. (ED NOTE: Attached memoranda deal with arbitrarily cancelled meeting of the committee, decisions of the committee chairman pertaining to a debate course, a questionnaire for committee members, a memo asking members if they wish to have a meeting as suggested by a committee member, memorandum requesting a mailed vote on a potential new course, exchange between chairman of committee and Mr Mottel on the lack of discussion, etc.)

The items dated March 8, 1966 and January 12, 1967 describe additional problems. On March 8 Mr Mottel wrote to me about changing a student's grade in speech "from a C to a B" to "enable her to make the Dean's List." I discussed this matter with Mr Mottel on March 9, and refused to consent to this action.

I appreciated Dr Cohen's thinking on the matter and considered the matter ended with his lack of consent allowing for the grade change.

Another example of poor judgement regarding students was called to my attention on January 12, 1967, when three student aides were discovered entering Mr Mottel's grades. When they were questioned they said he had requested that they enter the grades because it was "too late" for him to do it himself. The students were reported to be embarrassed because they knew they were not allowed to handle grades, but they felt they were obliged to comply with the request of a faculty member. I questioned them and this was confirmed. Similarly, Mr Mottel's final examination was at first typed in the English Office, and he was reminded that this was a violation of College regulations and security.

The facts were not fully stated and hence, by implication and omission, are damaging. The student (only one, not three) was not entering grades on an official form. She was asked to copy grades onto postcards supplied by students. She was asked to do this in Dr Cohen's office, in his presence and with his full knowledge. If he felt that this was not correct procedure, he could have contacted me and denied the aide access to the grade sheets. This he did not do although I handed in all my completed grade sheets TWO DAYS IN ADVANCE of the set deadline. The quotation Dr Cohen uses ("too late") referred to the time of day not the lateness of my performance.

I asked the secretary of the English Department to type portions of a draft of the final exam on single sheets, since they derived from various sources. She was requested to do this away from all students. Thereafter, she informed me that the typing of even a draft should not be done in that office and I removed all the papers and brought all papers to the proper office.

The memoranda of September 21, October 3, October 4, October 6, and October 10, 1966, call attention to Mr Mottel's failure to cooperate with the scheduling of classes. On these occasions, and others, my attention has been called to the arbitrary rearrangement of his schedule, students and rooms. This was particularly disturbing to the department's schedule during fall semester when there was anticipated heavy enrollment in Speech which took time to resolve. I have continuously honored Mr Mottel's requests for program changes, often with some inconvenience; however, the memoranda show I have had to stress several times that the college requires all members of the faculty to be available to teach courses throughout the day and evening. Although I always block programs to suit faculty needs, Mr Mottel's insistence on certain hours has proved to be unreasonable.

Rearrangement of my schedule was always conducted with Dr Cohen's knowledge and approval. Never did I fail to cooperate with Dr Cohen's suggestions or requests. I always respected the Chairman's judgement in regard to his scheduling of classes.

There is a serious conflict between his duties to Actors Studio and his obligations to our college.

A careful consideration of my activities at BMCC and my open interest in aiding the college's development would belie this statement. If Dr Cohen disagrees, an explicit statement of this "conflict" would be helpful both to the college and to me.

In a related matter, the administration of this college has called to Mr Mottel's attention, and to mine, that protocol and correct procedure should be observed by him in college affairs. The above-mentioned memos to him indicate that he has not followed academic procedures although his attention has been called to these. (On October 10, 1966, Mr Mottel was told that he could not reschedule a class to Wednesdays 12-2, since this is against college regulations).

Specifically, how did I violate "protocol" and "academic" procedures. Again, Dr Cohen has not substantiated his comments. Dr Cohen may be referring to the one occasion when I consulted Dean Moscolo regarding a change of room/ It was done in order to relieve Dr Cohen of an unessential chore. I never had any thought of superseding college protocol. Rather, I was concerned with the humane desire to aid my chairman by not burdening him with trivia when his varied concerns were heavy. . . . If there are any other incidents, I would welcome Dr Cohen's detailing of them since I was never informed of them. The "Wednesday incident" was immediately resolved when I was informed that . . .

The memorandum of October 6, 1966 is a reply to Mr Mottel's description of 'overcrowded' classes at a time when classes were in the process of being split. On September 30, when an effort had been made to split one of his classes, Mr Mottel attacked the qualifications of the teacher who had been assigned to the split class during the emergency.

I presented my professional judgement and was upheld by Dr Gourevitch on this basis. At no time did I attack the qualifications of the teacher. (ED NOTE: Mr Mottel here has attached two memoranda, one from the teacher in question who writes "I've never taught speech before." The second memoranda, from Chairman Cohen, discusses the class split under discussion.)

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I urge the administration to review this matter most carefully, not only with respect to my dismissal, but also as to the reasons underlying the loss of this most promising opportunity for BMCC. (Ed Note: Several memoranda substantiating Mr Mottel's remarks are here attached as well as the proposal for the workshop)

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What does the date of February 18, 1966 indicate? Dr Cohen did not assume his duties until a few weeks prior to this date. In the "few weeks after my arrival here" stated on page one of Dr Cohen's evaluation report, was he aware of "difficulty in his relationship with colleagues," and if so, why was I not notified.

The present members of the Speech Committee were not members of the faculty at that time. I have every reason to assume that Dr Croman, who was chairman of the Committee in February, 1966 and formerly Co-ordinator of Speech, was quite satisfied with me and my professional conduct. How does Dr Cohen support "difficulty in his relationship with colleagues" when I received the next highest number of votes permitting me to serve on the Faculty Council for the remainder of this school year?

ED NOTE: Attached memorandum reads: "To Whom It May Concern: At the request of Mr Syeus Mottel, I submit the following history of the Speech Committee insofar as it may help to refute Dr Cohen's charges against Mr Mottel with respect to this Committee. In all honesty, I make the following statements because having been Mr Mottel's supervisor for at least two quarters, I found Mr Mottel's work quite satisfactory. As co-ordinator of the English department during the Summer Quarter of 1965 and as Co-ordinator of Speech during the Fall Quarter of 1965 I had occasion to directly observe his work in and out of the classroom. My favorable report is in his file. After January 1, 1966 I was not required to observe classes, but as Chairman of the Speech Committee until September, 1966, I always found Mr Mottel very cooperative.

As of September, 1965 the Speech Committee was comprised of Mr Edward DeRoc, My Syeus Mottel, and myself. During the year 1965-1966 we held one contact hour of speech in the language laboratory where students used specially prepared tapes for voice and diction improvement. At the end of the Spring Quarter, favorable evidence of the success of this method was sent to Dr Cohen and Dr Gourevitch in the form of student comment. Mr Mottel had been most cooperative and had spent much time in preparing tapes.

In April, 1966, Dr Cohen placed Mr Charrier on the Committee. Mr Charrier was then teaching one speech course in the evening division. Mr Charrier and Mrs Langsam were on the speech staff during the summer session. While Mr Mottel and I were on vacation, one member of the Committee revised the syllabus and wrote letters to department chairmen in other colleges. This revised syllabus was submitted at the first meeting of the new Speech Committee on September 26, 1966 by the new chairman who was also elected at that same meeting by a 3-2 vote. The committee was now composed of Mr Charrier, Mrs Langsam (Chairman), Mr Polisar (lecturer), Mr Mottel, and myself. Objections to this syllabus were raised and after a series of five meetings, a new syllabus was a proved by the committee. Between October and December 19th, the chairman of the committee initiated three pieces of new business by memorandum and asked for written comments. Since open exchange was not allowed, policy by fiat became the standard. A request for an open meeting was turned down and at least one piece of business presented to the department chairman had never been presented even in memorandum form to the entire committee. On December 19th a committee meeting was held but the agenda as it had been set up in the meeting of October 31st had been reversed. A rather important item pending for months did not get discussed.

With reference to Mr Mottel's behavior, at no time did I consider his actions to be on an unprofessional level. From an analysis of the minutes, there is nothing that would denote Mr Mottel's suggestions as being on a personal rather than a professional level. I regard any comments made by Mr Mottel in correspondence to the Committee Chairman as being in the interest of the democratic process of committee operation.

SUBMITTED BY A COLLEAGUE OF  
MR. MOTTEL

Mr Mottel has not fulfilled his departmental responsibilities which were to implement the programs (department forum, department contribution to Student Life programs, arrangements for speakers) of the department committee of which he is chairman. I have not received a single report from him, nor have we seen any evidence of progress; there are no programs or speakers.

As far as departmental responsibilities, I submit the attached documents of the minutes of the Extra-Curricular Committee and activities concerning the Department Social. All minutes were submitted to Dr Cohen contrary to his statement. (ED NOTE: Several memoranda are attached.)

Although I have made every effort to accommodate Mr Mottel, and to give him the opportunity to improve, I do not feel that he has demonstrated sufficient growth in his relations with the department, its programs, and the students it serves. I do not recommend the reappointment of Mr Mottel in September, 1967.

I complied with all recommendations made directly by the Chairman to improve my effectiveness as a faculty member of BMCC. Unfortunately, Dr Cohen did not confide most of his criticisms incorporated in the evaluation report to me

until January 17, 1967, the day my letter of reappointment was dated. His approach disregards fundamental considerations of academic due process.

I therefore respectfully request for this reason and those previously mentioned in this refutation a reversal of the decision made on January 17, 1967.

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V. STATEMENT BY THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED FEDERATION OF COLLEGE TEACHERS, BMCC CHAPTER.

An analysis of Dr Gerald Cohen's observation and evaluation of Mr S Mottel indicates that the presentation can be conveniently organized around the following main headings:

1. Class Scheduling
2. Speech Committee
3. Relations with Students
4. The Actors Studio
5. Professional Growth
6. Departmental Responsibility
7. Observation

This study of Dr Cohen's comments will be succinct and does not purport to be definitive. In general, it should be noted that the animus of Dr Cohen's remarks, the injurious tone of this presentation ill becomes a senior member of a department. It is disturbing that thoughts and ideas are not logically related, that there is no basic paragraphing and the entire report mingles heresay, ambiguities and half-truths.

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY: Memoranda covering this (Extracurricular Activities) Committee to which Mr Mottel was elected Chairman indicate that he was as active a chairman as most chairmen of similar committees throughout the college.

It is almost unbelievable that on the basis of the facts Dr Cohen can write with no hesitation that Mr Mottel "has not fulfilled his departmental responsibilities."

CLASS SCHEDULING: Dr Cohen makes much of Mr Mottel's failure to cooperate with scheduling of classes. Actually, reference to memoranda of September 21st, October 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 10th is spurious because these memoranda dealt with one problem which is quite simple. Mr Mottel was given two classes of thirty students each. The optimum number of students for a speech class is twenty. Mr Mottel requested Dr Cohen to form another section of twenty students and he volunteered to help the Department recruit part-time instructors. Dr Cohen first assigned Miss Braun to teach the section. However, as Miss Braun stated she had never taught a speech class, Mr Mottel questioned the advisability of assigning the section to her. Therefore Dr Cohen took the assignment away from Miss Braun, did not create another section, did not receive part-time help and thus forced Mr Mottel to teach two sections, each fifty percent larger than the designated maximum population.

By innuendo, Dr Cohen suggests that Mr Mottel was behind the phone call of an unnamed lady who inquired about a part-time job teaching speech.

Dr Cohen's discussion of this problem of over-crowding actually distorts the problem involved. For example, how did Mr Mottel "attack the qualifications of the teacher?" Did not the teacher herself write Mr Mottel that she had not previously taught a speech class?

As one studies this case, it is difficult to find any reason to blame Mr Mottel's conduct.

SPEECH COMMITTEE: Dr Cohen tries to use Mr Mottel's behavior as a member of the English Department's Speech Committee to indicate that Mr Mottel has not been cooperative. However, what real evidence does he present? He refers to minutes and correspondence of the committee but nothing is presented to document this viewpoint. The fact that all members of the committee did not necessarily get along with the Chairman, who joined the faculty last September, does not mean one is uncooperative. The tenuous nature of Dr Cohen's allegation is underscored when he states that he first noted Mr Mottel's difficulty with his colleagues on February 18, 1966, only a few weeks after he (Dr Cohen) joined the BMCC faculty. How, after such a brief tenure as Chairman, could Dr Cohen be fully acquainted with the facts?

The statement submitted by Dr Croman on the history of the speech committee should remove any doubt of there being anything at all in Dr Cohen's charge.

RELATION WITH STUDENTS: Dr Cohen's statement about Mr Mottel's relations with students show to what extreme Dr Cohen has gone to try and make a case out of nothing. Dr Cohen writes that he has listened to complaints from students. Which students? Were these complaints ever referred to Mr Mottel? Dr Cohen also states that he received two phone calls from parents. Who are their children? Why did not Dr Cohen discuss this with Mr Mottel? Dr Cohen goes on to say some students expressed dissatisfaction with Mr Mottel because of one contact hour per week in the laboratory. However, Dr Cohen did not speak to Mr Mottel about this and, furthermore, no student mentioned it either.

Dr Cohen raises the issue of Miss Jacqueline Waterman. Mr Mottel tried to obtain an exemption for this young lady in her own interests and because her degree of deafness made the whole period a tense and useless experience.

Dr Cohen also tries to criticize Mr Mottel's conduct as Advisor to the Performing Arts Club. However, Dr Cohen does not tell us that the Chairman of the Speech Sub-Committee of the Department has intruded on the conduct of this club thus undermining Mr Mottel's position. She had visited a rehearsal of the Performing Arts Club and discussed her theatrical background with a view toward replacing Mr Mottel as advisor. She later apologized to Mr Mottel for visiting the rehearsal without discussing it with him. Subsequently some students went to Dean Cohen to discuss the possibility of a new advisor.

THE ACTORS STUDIO: Mr Mottel, who had been with the Actors Studio since 1959, worked out in conjunction with the studio a teachers' training program. The proposal was submitted to Dr Cohen. Of course, this proposal spoke of Mr Mottel as the liaison representative and was submitted above his name. Dr Cohen states that "administration" at this college and "a member of the City University Office of Development" requested that Mr Mottel's name not be used. Of course, Dr Cohen does not state which administrative office at this college or who at City University objected. There are reasons to believe that the objections to use of Mr Mottel's name are exaggerated. Proposals submitted by Dr Scolnick, Prof Irving Cohen, and Prof Jesse A Pavis were filled in with their names. At any rate, Dr Cohen requested Mr Mottel to delete all reference to himself. The Actors Studio, which was primarily working through Mr Mottel, withdrew from the proposal.

Mr Mottel was trying to organize an exciting program for the college and was hamstrung at almost every turn. Even superficially considered, one wonders about Dr Cohen's motive.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: Dr Cohen writes that, "There is a serious conflict between his (Mr Mottel's) duties to Actors Studio and his obligations to our college." In no place in his entire evaluation is any documentation offered to back this assertion.

Indeed a more logical understanding of Mr Mottel's relation to Actors Studio in the theatrical life of New York is ignored. Everyone is familiar with the commanding role of the Actors Studio in the theatrical life of New York and the nation. Mr Mottel's active participation with the Studio, his continuing training under the direction of Mr Lee Strasburg, is active professional growth in the best meaning of the term.

Mr Mottel's continuing experience in the theater will not only enrich his own ability to teach and communicate but will in years ahead result in concrete achievement for this college if Mr Mottel is allowed to develop projects and plans like that with Actors Studio.

OBSERVATION: Dr Cohen did not indicate that he was attending a final examination in speech. He raised the issue that there was talking and noise but did not point out that this occurred between speech presentations. Dr Cohen's observation that there were late students does not deserve comment.

Dr Cohen went to great lengths to turn evidence against Mr Mottel when he cited his use of "beautiful" and student phrases such as "incourage-dem-reconize."

Actually, little of substance is presented by Dr Cohen. Since Mr Mottel was conducting a final examination, he did not discuss the student's presentation with them after delivery. Obviously, Mr Mottel as well as Dr Cohen noted all the errors made by his students. Dr Cohen himself wrote that Mr Mottel was recording errors.

That Dr Cohen should take such exception to an agreed upon manner of indicating time (holding up cards) is petty.

We also question Dr Cohen's competence to observe Mr Mottel. Dr Cohen's training is not in the area of speech. Why did not Dr Cohen ask a senior member of the speech faculty to sit in on one of Mr Mottel's classes? The only faculty member who both specializes in speech and observed Mr Mottel, Dr Charlotte Croman, filed a favorable report in the Fall of 1965.

CONCLUSION: This point by point analysis of every item brought up by Dr Cohen shows the vindictive and specious nature of the charges. Indeed, what is striking in the four pages of observation and evaluation is that on internal evidence alone the allegations are without substance and validity. It seems clear and without the least doubt that any reasonable person must entirely discount and discard Dr Cohen's curious four pages.

Among his colleagues on the faculty Mr Mottel is respected as a fine teacher, gentleman, and a man who is also doing serious work in the theater. Mr Mottel has now been given a seat on the Faculty Council since the college-wide election placed him as first alternate member.

Last spring, unasked and without profit for himself, Mr Mottel photographed and selected a brilliant display of inauguration pictures. In every respect Mr Mottel is a man who has given a great deal to make BMCC the challenging college it is.

#### GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

Charlotte Croman  
Verdelle Garnett  
Jesse Pavis  
Mayer Rossabi

## VI. STATEMENT ON MR MOTTEL'S DISMISSAL BY MEMBERS OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Fourteen members of the English Department signed this statement in its entirety. Three additional members signed an alternate statement which omitted the second paragraph. This comprises over 75% of the Department's regular faculty.

We are deeply concerned that Syeus Mottel has not been reappointed for 1967-1968. As colleagues, we respect his professional attitudes toward teaching, committee work, and extra-curricular activities as well as his cultural contributions to New York City.

We feel that the reasons for his dismissal have not been sufficiently clarified and that the procedure of his dismissal was highly questionable. In such an atmosphere of doubt, insecurity, and reprisal, we all feel unduly vulnerable. If Mr Mottel's dismissal were to be upheld under these circumstances, department morale would be severely lowered and the continuation of academic due process at BMCC would be undermined.

We therefore respectfully request President Block to reconsider the case and to help us form a true and unbiased opinion of this affair.

## VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND ANALYSIS

An additional comment or two is in order.

When the Chapter formally appealed Mr. Mottel's case before President Block on Friday, February 10, Dr. Block introduced two new arguments in support of the original decision. First he pointed out that there were other documents on file which reinforced the conclusions reached by Dr. Cohen, Chairman of the English Department. We asked to see the documents. Obviously we could not defend Mr. Mottel if we did not have access to all the pertinent evidence. The President answered that he could not meet our request. At that point, we indicated that an appeal was no more than a futile exercise if we did not know the full extent of the administration's case against Mr. Mottel. Should a lawyer defend a client without first knowing the charges against him?

The President indicated that Mr. Mottel did not have a PhD nor was he progressing toward one. His original letter of appointment had specified that a PhD. was necessary for a tenure appointment. (Mr. Mottel was not up for tenure this year.) Our answer to this was quite simple. A number of faculty members teaching academic subjects, had been granted tenure without a PhD. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, MR. MOTTEL, WHO HAS NOT TAKEN A GRADUATE COURSE (NOR DOES HE INTEND TO) SINCE HE RECEIVED HIS MASTER'S DEGREE, HAS MORE THAN THE EQUIVALENT OF A PHD. IN HIS FIELD (SPEECH AND THEATRE) GIVEN HIS EXPERIENCE AND AFFILIATION WITH THE ACTORS STUDIO, PROBABLY THE PREMIER THEATRE GROUP IN THE COUNTRY. PRESIDENT KAPLAN OF THE NEW STATE UNIVERSITY WHICH WILL SPECIALIZE IN THE PERFORMING ARTS (INCLUDING SPEECH AND THEATRE), HAS INDICATED THAT HIS COLLEGE IS NOT GOING TO SEEK OUT PHDs, BUT RATHER MEN WHO HAVE TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH GROUPS SUCH AS THE ACTORS STUDIO. (SEE PAGE NINE FOR MORE ON THIS.) May we also point out that Dr. Cohen did not substantiate any of the charges he levelled against Mr. Mottel in the evaluation report. Of particular significance is the observation that President Block, when hearing this appeal, played the role of advocate, constantly intervening on behalf of Dr. Cohen. He did not adjudicate the case impartially.

In the letter in which President Block notified Mr. Mottel of his decision, he indicated that in addition to examining the material submitted, he discussed the case with the "responsible (emphasis ours) supervisory personnel of the College, and with various faculty groups, including members of the English Department." We find the adjective responsible quite curious. In addition to Dr. Cohen, only one other person ever observed Mr. Mottel's classes. (S)he submitted a very favorable report. Is (s)he irresponsible? How does one define responsible? Is Dr. Cohen's evaluation responsible?

In the same letter Dr. Block stated:

It is the prerogative and responsibility of an institution