

# action

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*"I consider it important, indeed urgently necessary, for intellectual workers to build an organization to protect their own interests."*

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

The late Dr. Einstein was a charter member of Local 552 of the American Federation of Teachers at Princeton University, and his signature appears on the charter application filed by that organization in 1932. The American Federation of Teachers is the national affiliate of the UFCT.

# UFCT SET FOR MAY CB VOTE

On April 16 and 17, the New York State Public Employment Relations Board will determine the date and method of the collective bargaining agent election at the City University, as well as the unit of coverage. The committee's hearing officer has indicated informally to all of the

concerned parties that the election will probably take place on or about May 13.

Should either the Board of Higher Education, the Legislative Conference, or the United Federation of College Teachers appeal any part of the decision, the PERB undoubtedly would have to postpone the election until next October.

At hearings before PERB on February 27, 28, and 29, the UFCT advocated two units of coverage; one comprised of all members of the instructional staff who teach six hours or more, and a second encompassing all college science and technical assistants. At that time, the UFCT also called for an election by mail ballot.

### OVER 2,500 SIGNATURES

On February 28, the UFCT presented signed petitions and membership cards representing over 2,500 faculty members, a figure far in excess of the 30 percent show of interest required by law for a collective bargaining election.

### 'CONFIDENT OF VICTORY'

Israel Kugler, president of the UFCT, said that, at this point, he is "quite confident of victory."

"The campaign has picked up a great deal of momentum over the last month," Kugler said, adding that union membership has grown over this period by over 200 new members. UFCT field representatives report support for the union is growing steadily on all campuses.

## Petitions to free budgeted funds signed by 2,000, given Lindsay

The United Federation of College Teachers has presented petitions with over 2,000 signatures to Mayor John Lindsay in protest of a prolonged delay by the Bureau of Budget in providing funds already approved by the Board of Higher Education for sabbatical leaves, welfare benefits, and increased take-home pay.

As soon as a meeting can be arranged, representatives of the

UFCT will carry the protest directly to the mayor. At that time the UFCT expects to have 1,000 additional signatures.

Field representatives of the UFCT indicate that over 80 percent of the canvassed faculty signed the petitions. Although the UFCT circulated the petitions, it called for nonpartisan support of its drive to secure the funds that the budget director has held back.

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## Harrington, Hamilton, Keyserling among speakers at UFCT forums

The United Federation of College Teachers is sponsoring a series of four forums during the months of April and May on topics of broad interest, featuring prominent educators and intellectuals of national reputation.

The first forum, April 8, was held at Queens College, and featured Albert Shanker, president of the UFT, and Frank Riessman, NYU sociologist, in a debate on "The Crisis in Urban Education."

On April 24 at Brooklyn College, Michael Harrington, author of *The Other America*, among other books; Robert Heilbroner of the New School for Social Research, author of *The Great Ascent* and *The Worldly Philosophers*, and Leon Keyserling, chairman of the Conference on Economic Progress and former Presidential advisor, will participate in a forum entitled "What's Wrong with the American Economy."

### ON THE RIOT REPORT

On April 23 at Hunter College, the UFCT is sponsoring a forum on "The Meaning of the Presidential Riot Commission Report." Participants are Charles Hamilton, professor at Roosevelt University and coauthor with Stokely Carmichael of *Black Power*, John A. Morsell, assistant executive director, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Bayard Rustin, director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute.

"The Union and the Draft" is



HARRINGTON

the topic of the fourth forum, April 29 at City College. Speakers will be Aaron Levenstein, professor at the Baruch School; David McReynolds, pacifist; and Irving Howe, editor of *Dissent*.

Flyers providing information on the exact times and locations of the forums will be distributed throughout the City University.



KEYSERLING

## Professors, professionals, and power

The stated policies of a faculty association, no matter how enlightened they might be, are purely academic—if you will pardon a bad pun—if they cannot be effectively administered. Good will, a telephone call here and a proclamation there are insufficient if such an association is to translate its programs into a meaningful reality in the context of modern academia.

The contemporary university is obviously not the cloistered academe of the middle ages, but rather an institution that is more and more characterized by an ubiquitous administrative bureaucracy which in turn is increasingly dependent upon public legislatures, large corporations, and foundations for its funds. A faculty association cannot even begin to neutralize the organized power of administration in the best interest of faculty until it has a professional staff of trained experts who can implement the policies that have been democratically determined by its members.

From its inception, the United Federation of College Teachers has retained a permanent staff of professionals who are conversant with and constantly researching the qualitative as well as quanti-

tative problems of university life. The UFCT's office is maintained year-around by its paid staff so that it might better serve its members. Now that a collective bargaining election is imminent, the American Federation of Teachers, the national organization with which the UFCT is affiliated, has provided over a dozen experienced field representatives who are bringing their professional expertise to bear on our campaign. They do not determine our programs, but rather help to carry them out.

As academicians we must realize that decisions rendered at City Hall and in Albany and Washington may well have more effect upon public and private universities in New York than policies determined by administration, let alone faculty. Through its national affiliations and paid legislative and legal representatives, though, the United Federation of College Teachers is in a position to exercise some leverage at high levels of public persuasion. What all of this underscores is that the realities of power, even in the academic weal, do not allow us the luxury of an organization administered by amateurs. That is precisely why the UFCT is proud of its professional staff and its national affiliation with the AFT.

### ★ We're all for it, too

Every red-blooded American will speak in favor of liberty, equality, apple pie, frugality, industry, and democracy. In academic parlance, democracy roughly translates as faculty governance. But, of course, saying you are for faculty governance is just as unenlightening as claiming that "what America needs is a good five-cent cigar." What is important is not the rhetoric of faculty governance, but rather its substance. And to refine the matter still further, we must ask if the establishment of a university senate will provide for meaningful faculty governance at the City University.

Given the limitations of the bylaws of the City University within which it had to work, the senate conference deserves our commendation for the document it drafted. The new senate will provide the faculty a university-wide forum for its views where none existed before. The UFCT supports the senate because it strengthens the faculty's voice in university-wide matters.

At best, though, the faculty senate can only operate as a lobby to the Board of Higher Education, and as such it cannot begin to match the influence exercised by either the administrative council or the chancellor's office. The senate can recommend policy to the board, but cannot legislate independently of it, which leads us to conclude that the term "senate" is somewhat of a misnomer. Until the bylaws are changed, the senate will not be able to assume enlarged authority over matters that fall within the professional competence of the faculty, such as professorial rights and freedoms, curriculum, research, and other academic issues.

The UFCT not only supports the senate, but even more important, it is committed to strengthening it. Through collective bargaining, we are ready to negotiate for a change in the bylaws that would allow the senate genuine powers of legislation over matters of crucial importance to faculty. A powerful senate, coupled with a strong, democratic union negotiating with administration as an equal through the processes of collective bargaining, can redress a power imbalance in academia that is today most definitely weighted in favor of an overbearing and amorphous administrative bureaucracy. When this happens, we will have not just the illusion of faculty governance, but its reality.

### ★ Understocked, understaffed

A library is the hub of any great university. Unfortunately, the libraries of the City University do not speak well for the nation's largest college system. Only its accessibility to many important private and public collections by virtue of its fortuitous location in New York City has enabled the City University to retain its reputation for research and scholarship. As everyone knows, its libraries are woefully understocked and understaffed.

The United Federation of College Teachers considers the improvement of CUNY's library facilities a high priority item on any collective bargaining agenda with the City University. We would negotiate for the following:

- All CUNY libraries must meet the minimum standards established by the American Library Association.
- The University must provide adequate volumes and reserve collections for all areas of the college curriculum.
- The university must provide adequate space so that faculty and students may study and engage in research without the irritating distractions so common to CUNY libraries.
- All new instructional programs must be supported by adequate library funds.
- The current practice of discriminating against some libraries when budgets are made or the requirement of "crash spending" of funds at the end of the school year must be replaced by rational and systematic budget practices.
- Libraries in use during the summer session must be air-conditioned.

A vote for the UFCT is a vote for improved library facilities.

### ★ Humanizing the multiversity

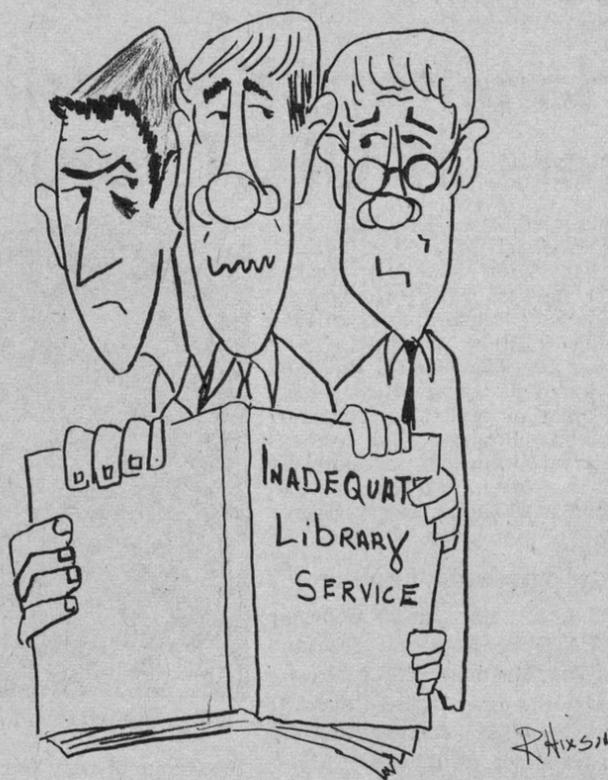
Universities have not always been characterized by faculty subservience to administrative bureaucracies.

The medieval university was an organic community. It survived for hundreds of years without chancellors, provosts, presidents, and other similarly knighted administrators. The university was, in essence, a guild which actively engaged and organized a scholarly community of faculty and students for the mutual benefit of both.

Today, the medieval idea of *universitas* has given away to the bland conformity of the academic factory. The administration is management (in some cases enlightened and in others not), responsible to no one within its factory. It orders about its employees, the faculty, and turns out its product, the students.

Corporate administration, with its managerial hierarchy and massive bureaucracy, has reduced faculty and students to a passive role within the university. The academic community is fragmented and alienated where it was once whole and organic. More often than not, bureaucratic efficiency rather than academic need dictates the programs and indeed the very goals of the modern multiversity.

The realities of power within the modern college do not allow for a return to the vernal academe of the medieval guild. A strong, democratic union, though, operating through the machinery of collective bargaining, can help humanize the bureaucracy and counteract the authority of the corporate management which today is the omnipresent actuality of the university turned factory. Then and only then will our faculties begin to exercise an active and meaningful voice in the affairs of the university.



"Sorry About That."

#### action

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## AFT research grants offered

The American Federation of Teachers (the national organization with which the UFCT is affiliated) provides research grants of up to \$1,000 for research and writing related to major issues facing all levels of education in the United States today.

The AFT established its program of research grants to encourage the publication of studies which will provide insights into significant educational problems.

The AFT encourages research on the problems of higher education. All members of the UFCT are eligible for these stipends. Application forms and further information are available from Dr. Robert D. Bhaerman, Director of Research, American Federation of Teachers, 1012 14th St. N.W., Washington, D. C. 20005.

## Petitions presented

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In a flyer distributed throughout the City University preparatory to the petition campaign, the UFCT explained that the Bureau of the Budget wanted to withhold these funds until the Board of Higher Education had obtained a written pledge from the UFCT and the LC to the effect that they would not, upon winning a collective bargaining election, raise questions of salaries, sabbatical leaves, and welfare until September, 1969.

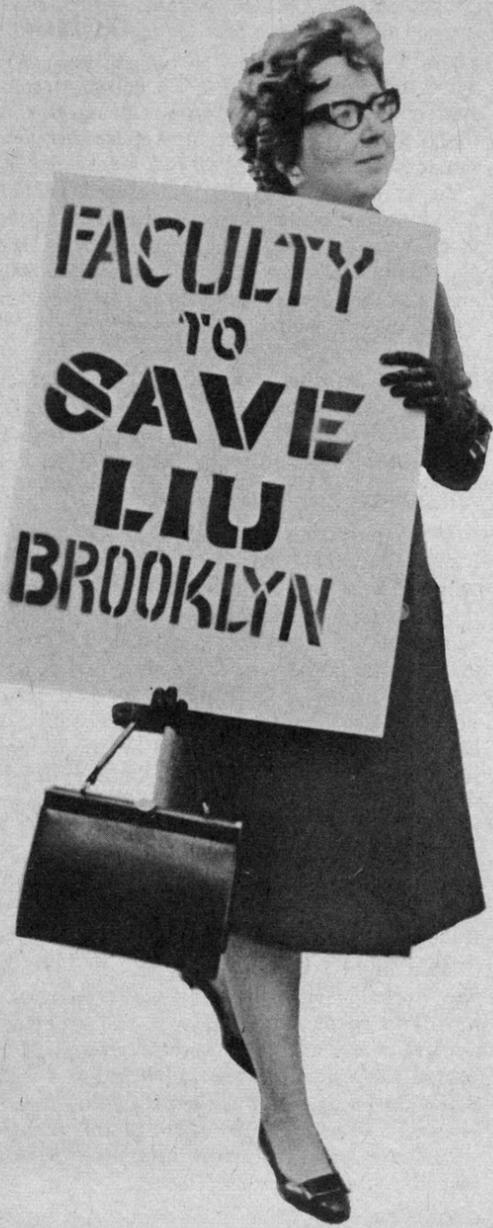
The flyer stated: "In exchange for this pledge, the Budget Bureau may 'promise' (but not in writing) to consider the current requests of the BHE favorably."

The UFCT pointed out that if the current requests of the Board of Higher Education are not honored by the mayor, the only conclusions are:

1. The board is too weak to negotiate with the city and only genuine collective bargaining can be effective.
2. CUNY faculty cannot be content with the so-called parity agreement which limits efforts to certain salary increases. It ignores such vital matters as workload reduction, grievance procedure, pension improvements, etc.

The UFCT feels that only a strong, democratic faculty association, working through the processes of collective bargaining, can effectively represent the interests of the faculty in genuine negotiations.

# Picket to stop LIU sale



The status of the Brooklyn Center of Long Island University still remains in doubt. Gordon Hoxie, the chancellor of LIU, maintains that the sale of the center to the City University is merely a formality because preliminary negotiations between the two parties have already been completed. The Board of Higher Education of the City University, however, has refused to put the item on its agenda.

Dr. Hildreth Kritzer, chairman of the center's chapter of the United Federation of College Teachers, claims that she is concerned lest the board postpone consideration of the pending sale until the summer when, with professors and students recessed for vacation, it will be extremely difficult to mobilize a campaign to save the campus.

On March 25, approximately 100 faculty and students picketed the Board of Higher Education while another 350 held a rally on the campus in an at-

tempt to pressure the City University to take up the matter now. They urged affirmation of informal statements previously made by board members to the effect that they were not interested in purchasing the center because of the ill will and bad publicity such a move would create.

The sale was not discussed at the board's meeting on March 25, nor has the item, as of this date, been placed on the agenda for its meetings in April or May.

## VOTED AGAINST SALE

Sentiment is running against the sale not only at the Brooklyn Center, but also the Brookville (C. W. Post) and Southampton campuses of LIU. Late in March, a university-wide senate voted overwhelmingly against the sale of the Brooklyn Center and, in turn, charged a committee to look into the possibility of affiliating all three campuses with the state university system.

Difficulties at the C. W. Post campus are now building up to

crisis proportions. On February 21 the faculty voted at a mass meeting to urge the trustees to sell the chancellor's "opulent" residence and a lavishly appointed administration building as the first step of a university-wide austerity program. The faculty was agitated because the chancellor and trustees had substantially cut departmental budgets.

If the Brooklyn Center should be sold, the Post campus would have to absorb most of the former's 101 tenured faculty. As a result, nontenured faculty at Post are concerned for their jobs. Hence it is becoming easier to mobilize sentiment against the administration on the Brookville campus.

It was almost exactly a year ago that the faculties of the Brooklyn and Southampton campuses voted "no confidence" in the chancellor. In the face of such a vote, Hoxie has not only remained in office, but is evidently more secure in his job than he was a year ago.

## Nassau UFCT chapter asks bargaining agent election

The UFCT chapter at Nassau Community College has petitioned the county's public employee relations board for a collective bargaining election. On April 10, representatives of the UFCT will appear before the PERB to plead the chapter's case and to present authorization cards representing in excess of 30 percent of the faculty, thus by law mandating an election.

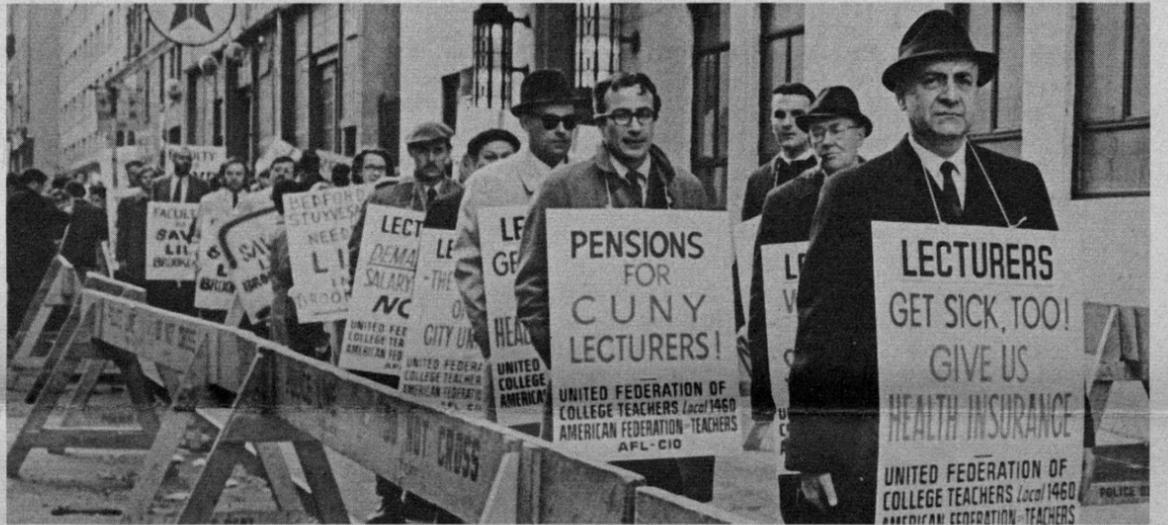
On March 21, the UFCT chapter of Westchester Community College at hearings before that county's PERB claimed that more than 50 percent of the school's instructional staff had

signed cards authorizing the union as their collective bargaining representative. In light of its majority support, the chapter has requested that the PERB declare the UFCT the college's CB agent without going through the formality of an election. The PERB is still deliberating the case as we go to press.

The Onondaga Community College Federation of Teachers (AFT) has been officially recognized as that school's CB agent. Ninety percent of the faculty signed cards authorizing the UFCT's sister local as their CB

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## Lecturers protest at BHE



The United Federation of College Teachers sponsored a picket line of City University lecturers on March 25 in front of the Board of Higher Education offices on East 80th St.

Non-line lecturers were the only group of instructors at the City University who did not benefit as a result of recent salary increases. The pickets demanded an immediate 30 percent salary increase, health and hospitalization insurance, pension benefits, provisions that would provide for

a more rationalized system of reappointment, and the correction of other inequities.

The 4,100 lecturers at the City University comprise almost 45 percent of the instructional staff. They teach over 40 percent of all classes, including those at the graduate level. Although they do the bulk of the teaching at the university, non-line lecturers are incredibly underpaid and work without the benefit of health and hospitalization insurance. Nor do they fall under any of the pension plans currently in force at the university.

## AFT 'alive and well' in California

"Tell them that we are alive and well, very well indeed." This was the immediate reaction of Daniel Stubbs, the executive director of the California State College Council (AFT) when told that a flyer had been distributed throughout the City University stating that the AFT "was defeated by an independent faculty organization in California" in what was termed a "membership election."

### EXPRESSES SURPRISE

Professor Stubbs expressed surprise that anyone would issue such a statement since the state board of regents has never allowed an election to be held. The state colleges in California do not come under a public employment relations law such as New York's, mandating elections once an organization can show interest.

Only the board of regents can call for an election in California. On several occasions, the council has presented the regents with petitions contain-

ing signatures representing close to 40 percent of the system's faculty.

Stubbs pointed out that the infant AFT college council has quintupled its membership in just two years.

Governor Ronald Reagan has been a very effective recruiter for the AFT. In January, 1967, he cut salaries at the state colleges by 1.8 percent. At this point, faculty members, realizing that they were virtually powerless in the face of the authority of both the governor and the regents, turned to the AFT in large and continually increasing numbers.

The council has produced statistics which effectively dramatize the crisis in which the state college finds itself, Stubbs reports. As compared to the national average of 5.75 percent, turnover in the state colleges is presently 10.6 percent. Moreover, the turnover rate has been increasing from year to year.

By June, 1967, 1,206 prospec-

tive faculty members had rejected appointment offers. Of this number, 707 indicated that the salary offered was unacceptable; 463 stated that the teaching load was excessive; and 198 said that research opportunities were too limited (some indicated more than one reason).

On the basis of these statistics and the results of a poll of the entire faculty of the state college system, the council has presented a set of demands to the regents who will consider them at their next monthly meeting, April 24.

### ELECTION BEFORE LONG

Stubbs claims that it will be increasingly difficult for the trustees to turn down requests that legitimately reflect the interests of the faculty. Nor will they be able to hold out much longer against a collective bargaining election. "Things will be quite interesting," he said, "should the regents arbitrarily turn down our demands."



ISRAEL KUGLER, president of the UFCT, pictured with Sen. Wayne Morse shortly after testifying before a joint subcommittee of the Senate and House on the Higher Education bill on March 28. His testimony supplemented the remarks he made before the same committee on March 6 (see story in March, 1968, Action). He spoke on behalf of a bill, sponsored by Senator Morse and Rep. Edith Green, which would widen opportunities for the disadvantaged at public and private colleges throughout the country.

## Teaching the 'pre-baccs'

# HEADSTART FOR COLLEGE

By Leonard Kriegel

The following article originally appeared in the February 26 issue of *The Nation*. It is reprinted with permission of that magazine. Professor Kriegel teaches English at City College, where he is active in that school's chapter of the UFCT. He is currently working on a novel.

THE City College of New York Pre-Baccalaureate Program was begun in September, 1965, with 109 students taken directly from New York City's ghettos. In large part the creation of Dr. Leslie Berger, a clinical psychologist who had been with the college since 1961, and Dr. Bernard Levy, at that time director of the college's School of General Studies, the program is an experimental attempt to take young men and women who possess high school diplomas but who ordinarily would not be admitted to the college out of the ghetto, offer them financial help and psychological guidance as nonmatriculated students, and then absorb those who are successful into the college's degree-granting program.

By September, 1967, City College's program had grown to include almost 500 students, not counting those who had already dropped out or had passed from the pre-baccalaureate to the baccalaureate stage (a point reached when a student possesses an average of B- or better after 30 credits, or C or better after 60 credits). Similar programs are now in operation at Hunter College in the Bronx, Brooklyn, York and Queens colleges, and others are being set up at the Baruch School of Business and the Park Avenue branch of Hunter. Dr. Berger himself is now at the 42nd Street headquarters of the City University of New York, in charge of the entire Pre-Bacc Program. The Alamac Hotel on Broadway and 71st Street has been taken over as a dormitory for some of the students and, beginning this term, will also be used for additional classrooms. At present, there are more than 2,000 students in the program and, according to Dr. Berger, by 1974 or 1975, the program should be capable of accepting 3,500 students a year, with a total pre-baccalaureate enrollment of 10,000.

I taught a freshman English course in the City College Pre-Bacc Program last semester. It was one of the classes in the program especially designed for the Pre-Bacc students; in other cases they attend courses in the regular college curriculum. It had been three years

since I last taught a section of freshman English (in the academic world, one measures success in terms of how far one can remove himself from freshmen—or, for that matter, from students in general). I was in the program at the request of a colleague, Leo Hamalian, who believes as I do that tenured members of the college English Department should teach in the program, especially those who believe that the future of City College is inextricably bound up with the future of the Harlem community.

I confess that I entered the program somewhat hesitantly. Not only was it the kind of teaching that carried no status within the department (a group of younger teachers had been hired to work exclusively with Pre-Bacc students); it was also the kind of teaching that would test my endurance, my patience and my talents as a teacher as nothing I had previously taught had done. Fortunately for me, and for my students, I found the Pre-Bacc teaching staff a remarkably dedicated and helpful group.

### LANGUAGE A THREAT

I learned a great deal in those early weeks. For instance, I now have a much better idea of what T. S. Eliot's Sweeney means when he says to Doris, "I gotta use words when I talk to you." For if to me the art of writing is no more than the formal organization of language into coherent sentences and the subsequent organization of coherent sentences into coherent paragraphs, to the majority of black and Puerto Rican students it is simply an additional confirmation of failure and ineptitude. For these students, language was far more of a threat than it was a promise, and this despite the richness of the language of the streets. From their point of view, my job was to teach them how to make the words drip with the fat of bureaucracy and to tie them together with the formal invisibility of structures designed to rigidify the soul.

I met my 14 students (Pre-Bacc classes are smaller than regular freshman English classes, which average

25 students) on September 14. Although I had been warned of what to expect by my colleagues in the program, I immediately set about the task of discovering what their problems were. I knew that most of my students had already passed a remedial noncredit course designed to eliminate the most glaring grammatical and syntactical errors.

In six years of teaching full time at the City College, I had never before taught a class with more than two black faces in it. But the class I now stood before had eight Negroes, four Puerto Ricans, one Mexican girl, and a young Jewish mother of two children. I introduced myself, spoke about what the course was designed to do and about our texts, and gave my students their first writing assignment, I then asked them to write a description of Canova's *Perseus Holding the Head of Medusa*, which had been unveiled at the Metropolitan a week earlier.

### WHERE IS THE MUSEUM?

If my purpose really was to discover their problems, I succeeded far better than I had planned. To begin with, at least five of these students didn't know where the museum was—and most of them had been born and "educated" in New York. And so I was initiated into the educational box in which ghetto students find themselves. On the day on which the papers were due, a Puerto Rican boy entered my office with a remarkably ornate story of how he had been unable to get to the museum. It was with a shock that I realized that going to the museum frightened him. Not knowing how else to handle it, I told him to bring the paper in the next day or else not to bother coming to class. Fortunately, I hit the right key. He brought the paper in the next day and, by the end of the term, was the second best student in the class.

That night I spent reading that first batch of papers was probably the single most discouraging evening I have ever spent as a teacher. I had expected the grammatical errors and the errors in syntax. I had not expected the kind of paper which began, "When I see in this statue it is the white man holding the head of the Negro." Virtually all of the papers contained, along with the mechanical errors, this kind of thing. Those that didn't were invariably banal.

About a week later, a 27-year-old former bricklayer in the class came to see me in my office. He wanted to speak about something troubling him. "I'm dropping history," he announced.

"Why?"

"I don't know enough." He shook his head, then shrugged. "Listen, I sit there and these kids. . . . Man, they talk about Freud and Marx and I sit here and I don't know what the hell I'm doing. I never heard of Freud before last week."

"Some of it's talk," I suggested. "It doesn't mean they've read Freud either. Look, I was an expert on Marx when I was 18. But I didn't read him until I was 21."

He shook his head again. "I feel so ignorant. You don't know what it feels like to sit there." We spoke for another 15 minutes and I finally convinced him not to drop history (I suspect he had convinced himself and merely came to me for confirmation). I suggested a few books he might read. And from that moment on, he became the class for me.

There is one student, in some classes two, to whom a teacher speaks. And he hopes that he can connect with the rest of the class through that student. I was now talking to Wiley Owens, and hoping that the other 13 members of the class were listening. I wasn't sanguine about their prospects. After that first paper, I jotted down the names of those students I expected to fail. Eight out of 14; not very encouraging. During the next few weeks, I discovered that their chief problem was not grammar or syntax, formidable as such problems were; it was rather to permit themselves opinions. This was true of all the students. Poverty teaches one to tread carefully, and no one, certainly no white professor, was going to convince them in a few weeks that they were entitled to bring the quality of their experience and the amount of their information to bear upon the issues confronting them in their lives. Not, at least, in public.

### THEY 'WANTED IN'

I soon discovered also that not all the problems were theirs. Their teacher had a problem in accepting the idea that their goals weren't really different from those of their white peers. I suppose that what I wanted were students who were going to set about the job of remaking America. What I found were students who "want in." Almost without exception, these students wanted what their white contemporaries had—and they wanted it, significantly enough, at a time when so many white students are turning their backs on it.

For the first half of the term, at least, success was in the air. Curiosity was a luxury, and the civil service





beckoned. Most of the girls in the class reminded me of girls with whom I had gone to college. "Teaching is a good job for a girl until she gets married." Few of them were disturbed about the presence of Dow Chemical on campus, which became an issue for the rest of the college. Unless issues could be framed in terms of race, they were, for the most part, indifferent or apathetic. "I want in" is a far more traditional American motivation than protest. Stereotypes can be turned on their heads, and it may just be that Lyndon Johnson knows this America better than any white radical does. In any case, we are not going to be saved by some updated version of a WPA Spirit of Black America, all muscle, bone and fire.

Of course, opinions may differ as to how one gets "in." The contrast hit me most markedly when I went to hear Nat Hentoff and Dan Watts, the editor of *The Liberator*, discuss the role of the black writer in an emerging revolution. At one point, a student asked, "What should a black student do in a white school?"

"Burn it down!" Watts answered. A few snickers from the audience, almost all of which was black. "Look, what black people in this country have to do is to get a piece of the action. And the way you do that is to point a gun at Whitey's head until he gives. There's no other way."

Then I went home and took out my latest batch of papers. I had assigned an "open theme," and with Watts' rhetoric still ringing in my ears, I turned to my first paper, the work of a rather pretty, shy young girl from Bedford-Stuyvesant. It began, "Of all the different ideas, I think that the very best, aside from Father's Day, is Mother's Day."

That was the first week in November, at a time when I was still discouraged. Grammar and syntax had improved, but most of my students were still writing terribly pedestrian papers. About a week later, their papers began to change in tone as well as style. Quite suddenly, they were students, interested in discovering what they could, aware of Vietnam, the unrest on campus, aware now of a world filled with possibilities as well as threats. The young girl who had written so glowingly about the "idea" of Mother's Day came to me at the end of November to ask whether she could do her research paper on Malcolm X. "He used to embarrass me," she explained. "I used to hate him because I worried what people would think when he finished talking. But then, a few weeks ago, I read his *Autobiography*. And you know, Professor Kriegel, that man . . . he was beautiful."

#### 'SLUMMING' IN TARRYTOWN

On November 11, I drove up to Tarrytown to attend a staff and student workshop at the converted estate of a former tobacco magnate. There was something deliciously American, almost surreal, about these ghetto youngsters being ushered politely to their rooms with that meticulous cool possessed only by headwaiters and house managers. "Jesus, you ought to see the rooms," I heard one excited student say to a just arrived friend. It was a fine weekend—good food, ample drinks, a magnificently symbolic setting, some useful workshops for teachers in the program throughout the City University system, and just the proper spicing of revolutionary rhetoric.

The Saturday afternoon panel was especially interesting. Ten Pre-Bacc students from the college discussed their reaction to the program. Nervous at first, they began to open up about what they liked and disliked under the firm guidance of Addison Gayle, a young Negro writer who teaches in the program at City. As I sat in that audience, listening to these students, I had

the very uncomfortable feeling that, however unconsciously, they were beginning to perform a collective role that had somehow been mapped out for them. For the most part, their barbs were reserved for the psychological counselors. Two students mentioned their sense of inferiority before the counselors. "You can't open up your heart to a man who you know is your enemy," said one young militant. "I want to be accepted as an individual," said a young girl.

I suppose that what disturbed me about the panel is what disturbed me about these two remarks—that they could have been voiced by any white student at the college. In fact, they could be voiced by almost all students, black and white, from Harvard to Harvey Mudd. Perhaps the indictment that struck me as most pathetic was one student's lament, "They don't care." Now the kind of counseling to which these students are exposed leaves me less than satisfied, and my own students were beginning to complain about it in private. But while I have my doubts about the efficacy of what is being done, it seems to me that the problem is that the counselors care too much. They identify with what they cannot really feel. One of my own students was later to complain, "I have problems with my work. I want help. For the first time in my life, I'm really beginning to read. And then, I go into the office with these two other students. I want to talk about what I'm doing. But we always wind up talking about that race business. Man, I know how real it is. Who knows better? But I have other problems, too."

#### RACE ON THEIR MINDS

"That race business," I knew, was on the mind of every one of my Pre-Bacc students. One of the reasons for the existence of the program, undoubtedly the major reason, is the militancy now seizing the ghetto communities of New York. But it takes an exceptional student to hold on to his sense of militancy and racial identity, on the one hand, and the demands made upon him by a system which he views with a mixture of suspicion and desire on the other. This is not an intellectual problem. If I learned nothing else during the semester, I learned that what Nat Hentoff had written about ghetto kids possessing "as much potential as middle-class children" remains miraculously true for many of them—even when they are adults.

But education is one thing, and fusing the demands made by a college curriculum to the demands made by ghetto street life is another. Wiley Owens was able to do it, but he had been out in the world. He had served in the army, he was married, he had worked as a bricklayer: he knew what it was like, he knew the prices he had paid, and he had begun to discover what it was he wanted. But most of my other students, like most of the students on that panel, felt this conflict between their aspirations and their backgrounds. "I want to play the numbers as well as have the knowledge you have," said one student on that panel. It is a desire I believe I can understand, if for no other reason than that I can still remember how desperately I wanted to retain the shrill Jewish street life of Jerome Avenue and Keats' sonnets.

Unfortunately, the day comes when one has to choose, and it seems to me a lie to pretend otherwise. You can afford to be nostalgic about a ghetto only when you have left it. The fact that these students, especially the black ones, also had to choose between their militancy and their desire for "the knowledge you have" accounts for why a goodly number have already dropped out of the program. It is an extremely difficult problem to handle. America is a cruel country; it thrusts choices on us. And it seems highly unlikely that America will permit the fulfillment of aspiration and the retention of militancy and racial pride. It will permit the illusion, not the reality. The day may come when the student is going to find black ghetto life too drab, too dead, too meaningless for him. And if it does, he is going to be faced with the problem of breaking the umbilical cord or dropping out of the world of Whitey's culture.

#### AWAY FROM ABSTRACTIONS

Once they had begun to find a voice, I faced the problem of forcing my students away from abstractions. The function of the humanities is inevitably—and this is especially true at a time when humanism is facing the consequences of all its past compromises—to pull the individual back to a sense of self as well as a sense of other. "I know about you," said a pretty black student on that panel, as she stared out at this audience of teachers and administrators, more than half of them white. "My mother put the wax on your floors." It is, of course, just as simplistic for her to assume that she can create an abstraction out of white people because her mother waxed floors as it is for me to expect all black students to be politically conscious because their mothers, too, waxed floors. Possessed of

my own very real working-class credentials, I know enough about hard physical labor to realize that it provides insight only into fatigue.

What I suspect existed in that student, and in most of the students on that panel, was as much the desire for rhetoric as it was the desire for revolution. And while rhetoric may lead to revolution, it may also—and in America such a possibility seems far more likely—absorb just those energies that would ordinarily be devoted to creating meaningful change. A number of students on that panel vehemently insisted on their right to define themselves in terms of color. But they were just as vehement in denying that they could be understood in terms of color. They object to the inherent racism in our society which enables a teacher of history at City College to begin the first class of the term by asking, "Will all of the Pre-Bacc students stand up?" And since nine out of 10 Pre-Bacc students are black or Puerto Rican, they have become what one student accurately labeled "specimens rather than students."

Without pushing the Pre-Bacc Program out of proportion to its achievements or aims, it is one of the hopeful signs in what is called "higher education" that I know of. Despite Berkeley, despite William Arrowsmith's perceptive and much needed indictment of the humanities, despite the condemnation of the corruption of the academy by the young and a few of their over-30 elders, the fact is that American colleges and universities have managed to remain remarkably unaffected by the cries in our midst.

#### THE WALL OF 'ACADEMIC STANDARDS'

The City College of New York, which built its reputation as one of the country's finest undergraduate institutions by serving residents of other ghettos, stands in the heart of Harlem. But it protects itself from Harlem with a wall built out of "academic standards." What is so hopeful about the Pre-Bacc Program is that it has already dented that wall. And it promises to break it down. I do not know what percentage of my students will emerge with degrees from the college. I no longer particularly care. "You've got to understand," a student said to me just before the term ended. "When I came to this school, I figured that if I could get one year . . . just one year . . . of Whitey's college, I would be changed. And you know, I am. Man, they made me hungry. And it's not the money any more. I want it all. Even to be a poet. Man, I want that, too."

There are problems in the program, including certain signs of tension between black and Puerto Rican students. The black students at the college, both Pre-Bacc and matriculated, have framed a sense of community which the Puerto Rican students do not yet possess. I sense, among many of the Puerto Rican students, a belief that they are at the periphery of the program. Another danger is that the program might become a mere siphon for ghetto frustration rather than a way of breaking through the barrier of "academic standards" which are neither academic nor truly representative of intellectual ability. This is something that ghetto residents will simply have to guard against in the future. One thing mitigating against it is that the chancellor of the City University, Albert Bowker, has wholeheartedly supported the Pre-Bacc Program from its inception.

Teaching in the program affected me in an area I had not at all expected. It taught me to affirm once again that very intellectual tradition I had begun to doubt. Shakespeare, Melville, and Milton are mine once again, perhaps in a way that they never were before. Teaching freshman English with a group of students who began as semiliterates has given me more insight into that tradition than such academic plums as teaching in the honors program or in the graduate school. When the term ended, I went down to Cocoa Beach, Fla., where I saw my first black road gang. A few hundred yards down the road from where those prisoners were working there was a shopping center, its neon modernity structured, its cleanliness antiseptic. On the shopping center billboard, in bold green letters, I read: "See Stalin's Limousine—Help Crippled Kids—Thursday, Friday, Saturday."

Ellison tells us that we are invisible to one another. Watts tells black students to burn the college down, and City College, we all realize, is no more than a momentary metaphor for this America. But metaphors are haunting: they sometimes turn into realities. Ellison knows the virus and I am beginning to think that Watts may really think he has found the cure. And so in desperation I seize upon a line from Melville who, despite the color of his skin, was one of their spiritual forebears, too. "Kings as clowns is codgers—who ain't a nobody?" Melville, I tell myself, knew how limited the choices are. With that in mind, I look forward to meeting again those 12 out of 14 students who successfully completed the course.

# UFCT's librarians' bill passes assembly

City University's long-neglected librarians may finally get vacations the equal of those of other faculty members, thanks to the United Federation of College Teachers' bill in the state legislature.

The state assembly on March 27 passed bill No. A. 787A, on the librarians' vacations. The next move is up to the state senate, which has a companion bill, S. 486A.

Prof. Sydney Schwartz, UFCT legislative representative, and Dr. Israel Kugler, UFCT president, lobbied for the bill in Albany. They urge UFCT members (and any interested citizens) to write

to Senator John J. Marchi, Chairman of the New York City Committee, Senate Chamber, Albany, N. Y. 12224, and to Senator Earl W. Brydges, Senate Majority Leader, same address, to

support the bill in the state senate.

The senate librarians' bill, S. 486A, is sponsored by Senator Bloom. The assembly bill was sponsored by Assemblyman Cincotta.

## Union levels protest against welfare election procedures

The City University Council of the United Federation of College Teachers, comprised of chapter chairmen, voted to protest the procedures that have been established for the election of welfare trustees at the city university. The council took action at its meeting of April 4.

The council feels that the procedures are highly undemocratic, for they do not allow all those eligible for welfare benefits to vote for welfare trustees to represent their interests.

The present trustees, who established the procedures for the coming election, have stipulated that only those who have taught at CUNY for five years or more are eligible to run, and only those who have three years of service or more can vote.

As a result, over 2,000 faculty

who receive benefits under the welfare program have been disenfranchised.

At the Borough of Manhattan Community College, for example, only 11 faculty members are eligible to run for trustee, and only 35 faculty can vote for them, out of approximately 175 in the program at that school. As a result, the two nominees for the college's trustee are administrators, one being a dean and the other a division head, all of which makes the term "faculty welfare trustee" a misnomer.

Each of the locals claims to have the necessary 30 percent show of interest in the form of authorization cards and faculty petitions.

## Nassau asks CB election

(Continued from Page 3)

representative. The local has now drawn up a list of demands and soon will engage the administration in negotiations.

Four AFT locals of the state university (at Brockport, New Paltz, Cortland, and Buffalo) have filed petitions with the New York State Public Employment Relations Board asking that a hearing be held to authorize elections at the individual colleges.

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\* June 23 flight to Tel Aviv includes stopover in Nice from Aug. 11 to Sept. 1.

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Axelrod's headquarters are in the Thomas Hunter Lounge of Hunter College.

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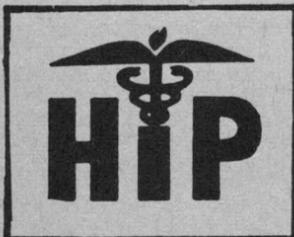


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# King's Poor People's Campaign starts April 22 in Washington

In a momentous decision, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Teachers, the national affiliate of the United Federation of College Teachers, voted at its meeting of March 10 to pledge appropriate financial and human resources to the "Poor People's Campaign" led by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

The "Campaign," beginning April 22, will take the form of a "Poor People's March" on Washington. On that day, Dr. King will arrive in Washington accompanied by a group of 100 nationally prominent clergymen to present the demands of the "Campaign" to Congressional leaders. Caravans of virtually thousands of rural and urban poor from throughout the country will follow in Dr. King's wake to lobby for legislation and to dramatize the plight of the

This article was written before the assassination of Dr. King on April 4 in Memphis. His aides in Washington, D. C., announced April 5 that the Poor People's Campaign is going ahead as planned, and AFT President Charles Cogen announced that the AFT's Freedom Schools sponsorship will be continued with even greater vigor than before.

poor. If there is no response, the participating poor will erect shanty towns in the Washington area as a symbol of their poverty and will remain encamped "as long as it is necessary to convince federal leaders to pass necessary legislation."

## DRAMATIZING POVERTY

It is Dr. King's hope that the Poor People's March and subsequent encampment will make the country aware of the pervasiveness of poverty in the United States. The motives of the campaign are educational as well as political.

SCLC plans to establish numerous Freedom Schools for the poor who encamp in Washington. The AFT's Washington local is helping both to coordinate and staff the Freedom Schools. A significant number of the schools will be manned by AFT members.

Dr. King has been quite emphatic in pointing out that the campaign will mobilize poor from the country as well as the cities and will cut across racial and ethnic lines.

## 40 MILLION POOR

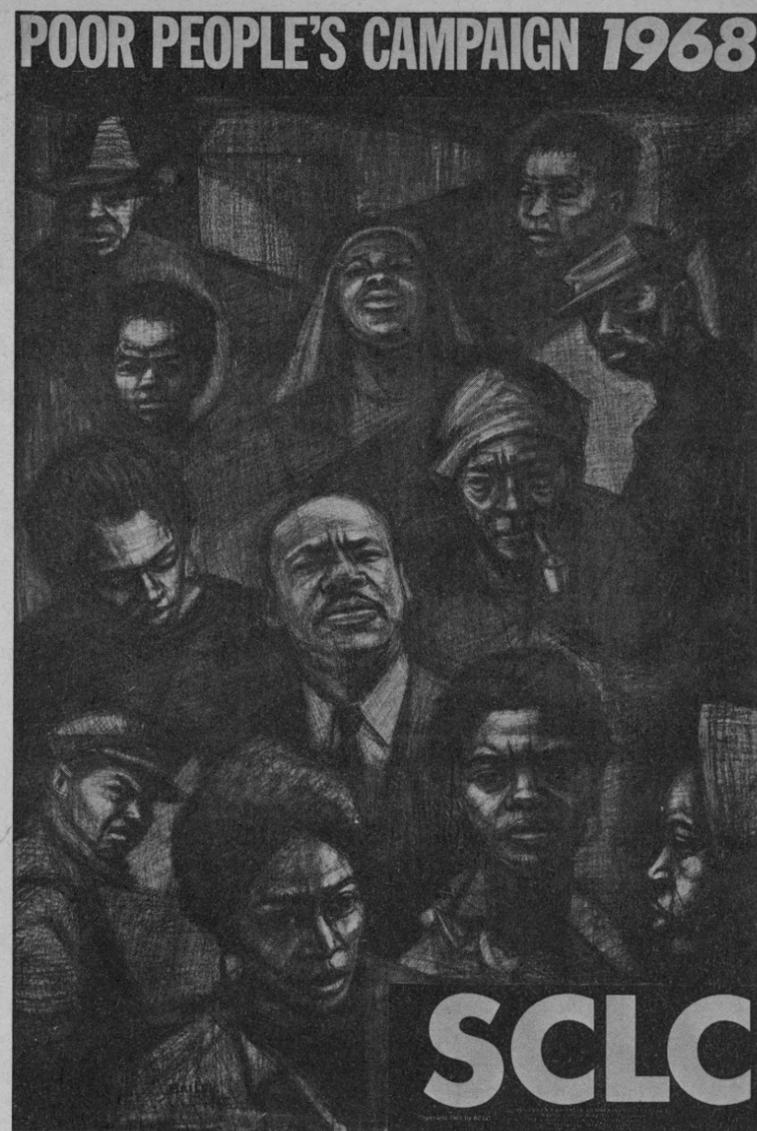
Presently, there are between 35 and 40 million Americans who

fall below the government's poverty line of \$3,130 income a year for a family and \$1,540 for an individual. The leaders of the Campaign feel that the poor are vulnerable to political abuse and economic discrimination because they remain unorganized and hence powerless.

Left to their own devices, in a highly organized society, the poor cannot hope to gain adequate employment, proper housing, a relevant education, decent health care, and just treatment under the law. Through organized pressure upon Congress, the Campaign hopes that senators and representatives will deal honestly and effectively with these and other problems which plague the poor.

As in the past, Dr. King's emphasis will be on nonviolence. He said, "We may be greeted with violence—I cannot guarantee you that we won't—but we will never respond with violence."

Anthony Henry, the Washington coordinator of the march, indicates that participants will be free to commit acts of "moral obedience" which he describes as "being compelled to act not according to man-made laws, but to one's own conscience."



## EXPOSURE AND ESCALATION

Assessing the prospects and goals of the Campaign, King stated: "I am not optimistic about the immediate response of Congress. But you can say the goal of this campaign will be to

expose Congress. We will escalate the campaign on the basis of the response we get."

Numerous religious, political, and labor organizations have pledged their support to King. The AFT was the first national labor union to back King officially.



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## UFCT urges aid for Memphis strikers in honor of Dr. King

The United Federation of College Teachers has urged Chancellor Albert Bowker of City University to enlist faculty and student support in behalf of the Memphis, Tenn., sanitation department strikers, who are trying to get city recognition as a unit of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees.

It was during an appearance in Memphis April 4 in behalf of the strikers that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Nobel Peace Prize winner and advocate of nonviolence, was murdered.

A copy of the telegram sent by Dr. Israel Kugler to Chancellor Bowker appears at the right, along with another telegram commending the City College administration for suspending classes April 5, and urging that City University classes be suspended on April 8.

Dr. Kugler also announced that UFCT representatives will be with the Memphis strikers' march during the week of April 8, and he called on UFCT members to begin immediately the collection of money and clothing for strikers in Memphis in New York college classrooms, involving as many faculty members and students as possible.

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