

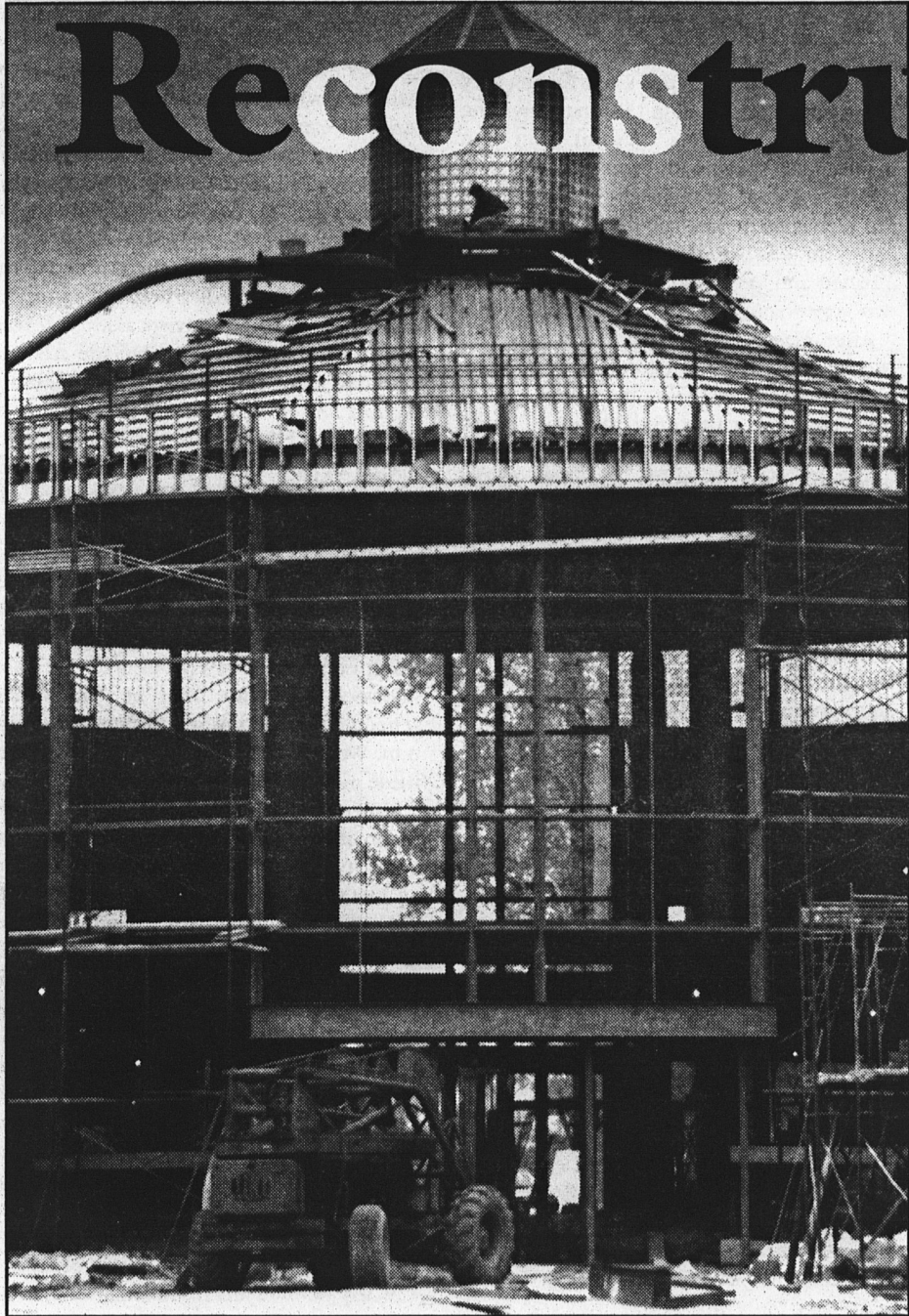


# the college voice

For Free Tuition and Open Admissions

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## Reconstructing CSI



Voice Photo Archives

*Falk continued to outline his position in the May memo by stating that, "This department has precisely the number of black faculty that is warranted."*

among them, 'Death Row: New Versions of African American Urban Folklore' and 'Toward the Decolonization of African Literature', Jemie had been denied tenure. Although the English department had recommended him for tenure, President Marlene Springer ultimately vetoed the recommendation.

Following this controversy the *College Voice* printed a memo penned by Dr. Jemie to his English Department colleagues responding to Springer's evaluation of his work. Jemie wrote that, "President Springer substituted her wisdom for that of these others (the Appeals Committee and the English Department), but her wisdom appears more like an exhibition of the arrogance of power driven by some as yet unexplained personal animus."

In exchange for Springer's shortsighted review of his work, Jemie presented the analysis of scholars in the field who had evaluated his scholarly work. The first scholar wrote, "I remain enthusiastic about him and the appropriateness of tenure for him, based mainly on my knowledge of his excellent book on the poetry of Langston Hughes." The second scholar wrote, "Jemie's curriculum vitae shows that he is amply qualified for tenure and has been for two decades." The third scholar evaluated his work in the following way, "His work reflects the probity one would expect from a senior scholar in the field of African -American and African studies."

### The Context of the English Department

This denial of tenure to Jemie was conducted within the context of a department woefully underrepresented by minority groups both physically and intellectually. The 1998 Affirmative Action Report stated that out of 34 professors in the Department only 1 was categorized as Black - Jemie. In addition to this, in a memo dated September 12, 1994 Jemie outlined the academic deficiencies that existed within the entire college in relation to non-Western literature in the course offerings and library holdings. Jemie wrote that, "we need to create a balance in our course offerings, between Anglo-American literature and the other American literatures. In short, what we need, it seems to me, is to hammer out a fresh consensus."

In a memo recently discovered by the Voice, dated May 20, 1998 to all members of faculty, English Department Chair David Falk stated that, "I am not going to waste time defending myself against the charges of racism levelled (sic) at me by Professor Jemie at Monday's meeting with President Springer. You know me too long and too well for me to worry." In an interview with the Voice late last semester Falk stated, "It was made clear to him that the work that was done in the past was old and it wasn't going to cut any ice here. It was old and it was what got him in the door. You have to remember that this is a university, not a museum."

Falk continued to outline his position in the May memo by stating that, "This department has precisely the number of black faculty that is warranted."

### A Racial Forced March

In a December 13, 1996 letter President Springer called for, "positive, emphatic and energetic efforts to actively advance equal opportunity for minority group members and

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### No Tolerance for Racism—College Voice Editorial

Racist actions cannot be suppressed. For each step taken to cover up and submerge issues of race a new leak emerges which sheds light on discriminatory actions. The case of Dr. Onwuchekwa Jemie bears this point out. After disclosing information regarding discriminatory patterns in the English Department's handling of his tenure application, the *College Voice* has received information which reveals deeply imbedded sentiments of racism from the Chair of the English Department.

### A Short History of the Incident

In the March 1998 edition of the *College Voice*, Editor Devon Blinth outlined the facts regarding the denial of tenure to Dr. Jemie. Blinth wrote that despite the fact that, "Over a twenty five year period he (Jemie) has published numerous books and essays,

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# Computer Science Professor Resigns After Charges of Bigotry

WILLIAM WHARTON

After two separate charges of academic incompetence and racism were filed against Computer Science Professor Dr. Melvyn Bernstein, the students of Computer Science Class 326 class are finally getting a new professor. These charges follow an increasing pattern of institutional racism at CSI which includes the denial of tenure to the Nigerian-born scholar Dr. Onwuchekwa Jemie and a complaint filed last year of racial discrimination in grading by a group of Asian students in the Computer Science program. Following the resignation of Bernstein, the student organizers who issued the complaints fear possible retribution for their actions. The Computer Science Department, along with the CSI Administration, have staunchly refused to deliver an apology to the students.

## Bizarre Activity Precedes Racist Verbal Assaults

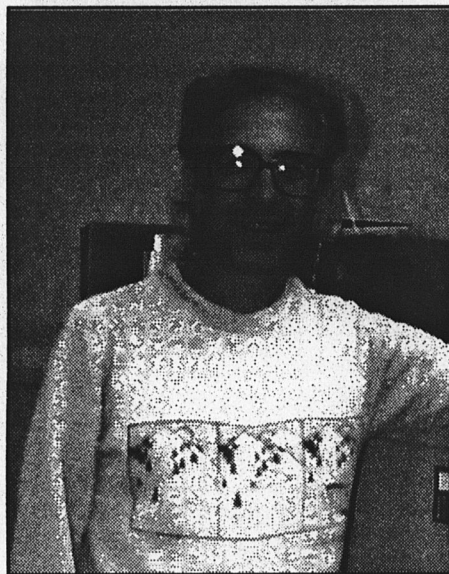
The students of CSC 326 began this term when their scheduled professor, Dr. Goertzel, decided not to teach this semester due to the success of a computer program he was instrumental in creating. Instead, Interim Computer Science Chairperson Emile Chi introduced the students to Dr. Bernstein whom, as one student recalls, Chi described as a "person I have known for a long time. He's a good friend of mine. He's a physician, he's a lawyer, he's a great guy and he is one of the original graduates from the Masters program." The students soon discovered that Bernstein was not all that Chi had made him out to be.

According to another student source, who asked to remain anonymous out of fear of retaliation, "He came in and he just started laying down the law....The first day he gave us this assignment from a graduate calculus book....What were we suppose to do with this stuff? Hardly anyone could figure it out." Hamed Latif, one of the students in the class, recalled how "we didn't know where he was coming from." After students began to question the difficulty of the assignments along with the amount of time allotted for their completion, Bernstein reportedly told them, "There's not going to be any back and forth [dialogue] here, I talk and you listen."

In a petition that was handed to Chairperson Chi on September 11, students requested that changes be made in the course to make it more accessible. One student commented that, "He thought we were all going to bask in his brilliance, we needed someone to teach us." Seventeen out of the twenty-three students attending the class signed the petition in support of making changes to the method of instruction of the course.

According to student organizers in the class, Bernstein's strong-arm tactics took a turn towards racism on September 8, when a female student from China came forward and asked for a clarification on a point he had made. According to the student, Judy Gong, Bernstein told her, "The medium of instruction in this course is English and I suggest that you learn it."

When asked if such language was appro-



Interim Head of Computer Science Department Professor Emile Chi

appropriate in class, Shannoe Trombino, a student who refused to sign the subsequent petition, believed "he could have had more tact but I don't think there was [meanness] or spitefulness." Judy Gong, the student who was the target of Bernstein's remark, had a different opinion. She told the Voice, "I was very much hurt by this comment, but I don't

want to hurt him or do anything to hurt him, but he really did this and it made me feel really bad." Gong said that the comment kept her up all night so she decided to confront Bernstein directly before the next class.

Gong told the Voice, "The night after the class I went to speak with Professor Bernstein [to] tell him that I was feeling very angry, but he just wouldn't listen to anything I was saying. After this, I [again] went with my friend to speak with Professor Bernstein and he asked me, 'Is that right in China [that] the government kills people and asks the family to pay for the bullet?' I was very insulted and very angry. I thought that this was very wrong."

After class the seventeen students met and decided that something must be done to stop further incidents like these. Out of this meeting came the petition dated September 11. In this petition there is no mention of the Bernstein comment in the previous class, just some suggested academic changes in the course curriculum. Little did the students know that the worst was yet to come.

On September 10, an Asian male student informed Bernstein that his homework assignment would be late because of the short amount of time he had been given for its completion. He reportedly told the instructor, "I'm not quite done with the assignment. I might need another day." To this, Bernstein responded, "You know, 'No-Tickee, No-Washee.'" Following this incident, a student organizer told the Voice that the students "finally realized they had to get this guy out of here."

A student organizer reported that they presented Chi with a petition dated September 11 which outlined the academic charges against Bernstein. The following day at 3:30 p.m., the petition was dropped off at Chi's office. Although the secretary told the student that he had left for the day, she stated that she would make sure he received it. After Chi didn't respond to the petition, a student representative went to meet with him directly. The representative approached the chair and asked, "Dr. Chi can I speak with you for a moment." Chi reportedly responded with a sharp, "No!" "This is

urgent can you find the time?" said the student. Chi then reportedly said, "I don't know if I can find the time" and walked down the hallway.

## Student Organizers Face a Crackdown

On September 15 a letter was penned by a student who was particularly upset at the series of events. The letter outlined the discriminatory language used by Bernstein and was presented to the Dean of Science and Technology Dr. Norbert Chencinski on September 15.

The student organizers then turned to the College Voice for further help in this matter. Last semester, Voice activists assisted several Asian Computer Science Graduate students who had faced similar discrimination based on race. After hearing the students' complaints about Bernstein, the College Voice placed a call to department head Chi to set up an interview. Chi accepted the idea of the interview and responded with shock when he was informed of the allegations of racial discrimination that had been lodged by the students. Chi told the Voice, "My first duty is always to the students in the Computer Science program." He also informed the Voice that he had already scheduled a meeting with Bernstein at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday September 17 to discuss these matters.

When students returned to class later that night, they found that Bernstein, far from being contrite, had gone on the offensive against the organizers. Bernstein entered the class accompanied by Chi and launched what one student described as "a tirade." Seemingly comparing himself to Jesus Christ, Bernstein reportedly told the class, "Forgive them father for they know not what they do." Bernstein singled out one student and told him he was "playing the race card." He reportedly told this student that it was "despicable and beneath him and that it was skillful way to get rid of him." A student organizer also stated that Bernstein condemned the seventeen students who had signed the petition and that "Professor Chi has shown me the signatures. I know

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9/11/98

To: Chair of the Computer Science Department

From: Students of CSC 326 (Section 9620)

Dear Dr. Chi,

We are concerned about the manner in which Dr. Bernstein is teaching our class and would like to bring to your attention a few problems that we hope will be alleviated. We feel that he has assigned us work that does not fall within the course description (i.e. covering material taught in CSC 382 and Math 232). Moreover, he has imposed a fifteen minute deadline and has so far barred two students from entering the classroom after this time. Most importantly, his lectures appear to be completely unprepared and we are not learning anything in the way of data structures. The class would benefit greatly if he changed his strategy and taught the class in a more productive way by (1) ending the fifteen minute deadline, (2) preparing a syllabus and (3) relating the homework assignments to class lectures (as well as to the course description).

9/15/98

To: Dean of Science and Technology

From: (Student Did Not Wish To Be Identified)

Dear Dr. Chencinski,

I would like to bring to your attention a disturbing matter concerning the conduct of Dr. Bernstein, who is currently teaching CSC 326 (section 9620). The students of this class have signed a petition which listed a few problems with Dr. Bernstein, including his rude behavior and his teaching of material outside the course description. The petition didn't mention two occurrences in which he insulted individual students directly. The first occurrence happened last Tuesday, when a Chinese student had asked the teacher to clarify a point he had made. His response was, "The medium of instruction for this course is English, I suggest that you learn it." A second rude outburst this teacher happened last Thursday. This time another Asian student asked for more time to complete his assignment. Dr. Bernstein's reply was, "No Tickee, No Washee!" I believe that this kind of arrogance in a teacher is intolerable and smacks of racism. I left the petition for Dr. Chi, who is acting chair of the Computer Science department, along with my telephone number. He has not tried to reach me concerning this matter. This afternoon I asked to speak with him but he was quite busy. I hope that you could address this urgent matter. At the very least, Dr. Bernstein owes the class an apology for his insulting behavior.

Sincerely,

(Student Did Not Wish To Be Identified)

## Computer Science Professor Resigns After Charges of Bigotry

*Continued from pg. 2*

who you are and I will not look favorably upon you because of it." Students reported that during all of this the while Chi looked on in approval of Bernstein's speech.

Following a break in which the class switched its room to a computer lab, Bernstein returned with a different message. After teaching for a short time and collecting homework assignments, student organizers reported that Bernstein slipped back into soapbox mode and began a speech about comparative world religions. Bernstein reportedly said, "Buddhism, the Judeo-Christian religions and Islam all share the same tenet of 'do unto others as you would have done unto you'." He then finished the class by reportedly stating, "I leave you not in disgrace but in disgust...I was warned about you CSI students" and informed the class that he was resigning. Students were then told that a new instructor would be provided for them.

### Targeted For Elimination

After hearing the news about Bernstein's apparent resignation, student organizers rejoiced but wondered why Chi had turned over the names of the seventeen students to Bernstein. One hour prior to the scheduled interview between the Voice and Chi, a secretary called to inform the paper that "Dr. Chi was canceling his 12 p.m. appointment." When a request was made for another appointment, the Voice was informed that, "All further inquiries should be made through the personnel department." Chi's denial of an interview was an icy precursor to what would take place when the students returned to class.

On September 17, students returned to class expecting to greet their new professor

but instead were met with an angry Bernstein backed by Chi. Student organizers told the Voice that the students were "presented with a letter of apology that Dr. Bernstein had written, a letter which they put on the table and Dr. Chi told the students to sign it." Bernstein reportedly responded to this by stating, "It doesn't matter what they sign I'm not teaching those seventeen students. It's reprehensible that they created this petition." Computer Science Professor Roberta Klibaner, who had accompanied Chi and Bernstein to class, then reportedly suggested that they should leave class to give the students "more time to think it over and hopefully [they] will sign it and we will see what happens." The students then engaged in a debate in which the six students who earlier had not signed onto the petition attempted to coerce the other seventeen who were against Bernstein, into signing the apology. After fifteen minutes, the seventeen students maintained their solidarity and Klibaner returned to the classroom to find a blank apology lying on the desk.

Bernstein disappeared and Klibaner reportedly informed the class, "Anyone who wants to learn can go into the lab and learn from Dr. Bernstein and the rest of you can do whatever you want." Klibaner then reportedly offered everyone in the class a full refund of their tuition money if they wanted to drop the class, indicating that a deal had been cut with higher ranking members of the administration. Student organizers reported that none of the students went for the administrative deal and insisted on receiving the instruction they had paid for. Hamed Latif told the Voice, "He knew that the students were against him and nobody signed the letter and he was still telling us 'Shame on you.'"

Phone calls placed by the Voice to Mirella Affron, Dean of Academic Affairs, inquiring about the nature of this tuition offer were not returned.

### Damage Control - Bernstein Resigns

On September 24, several activists from the new STAART (Students Taking Action Against Racist Teachers) program entered the classroom to support the 17 student organizers. Department Head Chi entered the room and informed the class that as of 3:00 p.m., Professor Bernstein had resigned. Chi also spoke of a proposal he had made to the administration to split the class between the 17 students who had signed the petition and the six who had not. Bernstein would continue to teach the six and a new professor would be found for the rest. The administration reportedly refused to allow this split.

When STAART activists questioned Chi about the reasons for Bernstein's resignation, he responded, "I think we all know the reasons why Dr. Bernstein is leaving." When asked about an investigation into the charges by the students, Chi told the class, "There was no investigation that I know of, at least not by the Computer Science Department." When the Voice questioned him about why the students were presented with an apology letter to sign even though there was no investigation, he became confused. After he was clear as to what the meaning of the question Chi said, "I wrote no apology. I thought you meant an apology to the seventeen students. That didn't happen."

### Computer Science Department Falls Back on Culture of Intolerance

Students like Judy Gong and others should be honored for having the courage to stand up and speak the truth to the powers that be. The resignation of Bernstein is a shining example of the students at CSI not having tolerance for racial discrimination in the classroom, regardless of who the professor is. While Bernstein's actions are obviously deplorable, the lack of response from Chi and the CSI Administration is a demonstration of the deeply ingrained culture of institutional racism at CSI. In order to smash this culture a coalition representing students, progressive faculty and concerned community organizations must come together to publicly denounce cases like these and demand action.

Student organizers in CSC 326 placed themselves on the firing line in their quest for justice. Faced with the possibility of a semester long struggle against a racist professor and department head who had openly threatened them, they stood their ground. Their demands that Bernstein be removed from the class and be replaced by a competent instructor have been met. Now the department must issue an apology to the students for wasting both their academic time and for the racist treatment they endured from Bernstein. You can assist them in this effort by calling the Chair of the Computer Science Department, Emile Chi, at (718) 982-2445 and registering your support for the issuance of an apology. In addition to this, you can phone Dean of Academic Affairs, Mirella Affron at (718) 982-2440 and register your complaint about the administration's role in this affair. CSC 326 is the first in a long line of what will hopefully be future victories for the STAART program by working with the students of CSI to root out racism in the classroom.

## STAART Program Launched by the College Voice

Combating racism within the classroom is often a lonely and dangerous endeavor. The student or students who speak up immediately become the target for recrimination by the professor, the department or even the administration as a whole. Isolated, with bureaucrats holding their futures as ransom in exchange for silence, many valid complaints of racial discrimination are squashed under the collective weight of the administration. Students are forced to hide their heads in their books and accept the conduct of their professors.

Unable to mobilize an organized response to racial discrimination the list of abused students will grow larger and larger. To combat this problem, which has proven to be quite commonplace at the College of Staten Island, the College Voice is launching a program called STAART. Student Taking Action Against Racist Teachers.

STAART will attempt to act as an organizational and historical bridge between students organizing against racial discrimination and the collective strength of the administration. The program is not a replacement for students standing up to racism within the classroom, it will simply facilitate the creation of an organized student response. The collective success and failures of previous organizing efforts will give new student organizers valuable information regarding their particular situation. The program will focus on committee building tactics, how to use the administrative chain of command to organize, what your rights are as a student organizer and how to go public with your efforts.

Speaking out against racism is always a major step for students, especially at a university like the College of Staten Island which is 70% white. STAART will help to connect students with other organizers on and off the campus as well groups committed to fighting racism wherever it breeds. The witch-hunting of Nigerian scholar Onwuchekwa Jemie and the current controversy surrounding the racially motivated insults made by Dr. Melyvne Bernstein point to a heightening of racial bias within the walls of CSI.

As veteran organizers for social justice, the College Voice understands that only protection for students standing up against racist professors comes from taking the campaign public to the students of CSI. The Voice also understand that having to face racism within the walls of the classroom is absolutely intolerable and unacceptable to the vast majority of the student body. Professors engaged in racially biased activity should be dealt with swiftly by the administration through the development of a "no tolerance" strategy. The STAART program is a first step in the direction of ending a culture of CSI which has consistently turned a blind eye to racism.

If you have been racially discriminated against by a professor at CSI please call (718) 982-3101 and register your complaint. If you would like to be a STAART organizer call or visit the College Voice in room 1C-230.

# Reconstructing CSI

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women." This rhetoric is contradicted by the fact that out of 118 Administrative positions only 10 are held by African-Americans. Falk's sensibilities, the idea that diversity entails only doing what is "warranted" also falls painfully short of Springers supposed criteria. Both of their actions, Falks underhanded tactics and Springers outright dismissal of Jemie shed light on the reasons for the sad state of affairs for minority faculty.

Intellectually Falk's attack on Jemie comes from rocky ground considering the lack of credentials he brings to the table. Lacking a doctorate degree or any substantial publications, Falk is merely seeking to protect his position as department chair. A professor such as Jemie, with the intellectual ability and courage to challenge the status quo in the English department immediately becomes a threat and must be disposed of.

In the end, the group that suffers the most as a result of this racial discrimination are the students of the College of Staten Island. We not only lose a scholarly professor who will challenge us to expand our minds, we lose the possibility of tapping into the vast intellectual space of African, African-American and Global literature. As Jemie wrote in his memo dated May 28, 1998, "It took only weeks to find a Journalism line," he continues "new lines are quickly found and old lines replenished for British and

Anglo-American literature."

## Decolonizing the College of Staten Island

With this, the *College Voice* demands that the College of Staten Island undertake the following program of decolonization. In the short term the mindset of the Administration and faculty should be that, "The time for action is now!" Progressive professors that have stood by quietly on the sidelines must come out publicly and participate in the process of restructuring the college. Short term measures include the following:

- Professor David Falk should step down as Chair pending a public hearing as to his role and language concerning the hiring of minority faculty at the College of Staten Island
- An immediate offer of full tenure and an apology to Prof. Jemie should be issued
- President Marlene Springer must give an explanation for both the Onwuchekwa Jemie tenure dismissal and racial discrimination case in the Computer Science Department (see article on pg. 2)
- Progressive faculty must stand up and publicly denounce the state of affairs at CSI and work towards change
- A Town Hall Meeting should be held in which the Chairs

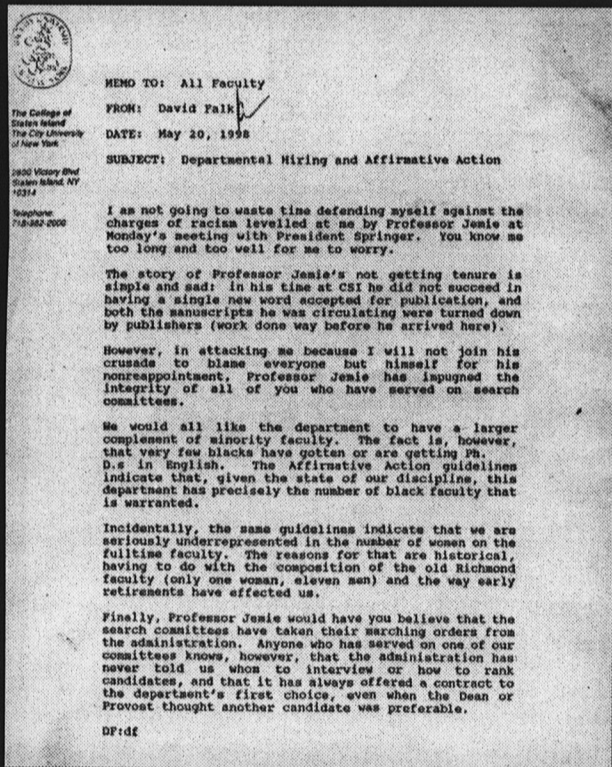
of each Department discuss proposals for integrating both the faculty and the curriculum.

- An immediate infusion of \$250,000 to the CSI Library for the purchase of Third World History and Literature should be made by the CSI Administration.

The following long term measures should also be undertaken:

- A Student-Faculty review committee to develop a report examining the personnel and intellectual state of affairs at CSI should be established
- This Student-Faculty committee should develop a zero-tolerance policy for racial discrimination.
- Departmental reports on faculty hiring and the thorough integration of non-Western history and literature into CSI's course offerings should be implemented.

Together students, faculty and the administration can build the "fresh consensus" that Dr. Jemie spoke of in 1994. The possibility of this bright future will only come with a radical restructuring of sensibilities among CSI's administrators and departmental chairs. Instead of honest commitments to make change, it is almost inevitable that the atmosphere of silence and cover-ups will continue. If so, the fate of future minority scholars who dare to speak out against the entrenched bureaucracy and offer positive suggestions for change, will be trampled underfoot in the same manner as Jemie.



## Falk Memo



MEMO: All Faculty

FROM: David Falk

DATE: May 20, 1998

SUBJECT: Departmental Hiring and Affirmative Action

I am not going to waste time defending myself against the charges of racism levelled (sic) at me by Professor Jemie at Monday's meeting with President Springer. You know me too long and too well for me to worry.

The story of Professor Jemie's not getting tenure is simple and sad: in his time at CSI he did not succeed in having a single new word accepted for publication, and both the manuscripts he was circulating were turned down by publishers (work done way before he arrived here).

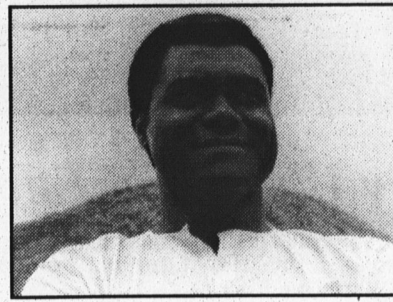
However, in attacking me because I will not join in his crusade to blame everyone but himself for his nonreappointment, Professor Jemie has impugned the integrity of all of you who have served on search committees.

We would all like the department to have a larger compliment of minority faculty. The fact is, however, that very few blacks have gotten or are getting Ph.D.s in English. The Affirmative Action guidelines indicate that, given the state of our discipline, this department has precisely the number of black faculty that is warranted.

Incidentally, the same guidelines indicate that we are seriously underrepresented in the number of women on the fulltime faculty. The reasons for that are historical, having to do with the composition of the old Richmond faculty (only one woman, eleven men) and the way early retirements have effected (sic) us.

Finally, Professor Jemie would have you believe that the search committees have taken their marching orders from the administration. Anyone who has served on one of our committees knows, however, that the administration has never told us whom to interview or how to rank candidates, and that it has always offered a contract to the department's first choice even when the Dean or Provost thought another candidate was preferable.

# Jemie's Response



Dr. Onwuchekwa Jemie

TO: English Department Faculty  
 FROM: Onwuchekwa Jemie  
 SUBJECT: David Falk's Memo on hiring & Affirmative Action (May 20)

I am attaching a copy of David's memo for your reference. One positive fall-out of this argument is that David can at least quit masquerading as a supporter of my case for tenure, and openly join Joan, Mirella and Springer.

David is wrong, and he knows he is wrong, when he asserts that my non-reappointment was because "in [my] time at CSI [I] did not succeed in having a single new word accepted for publication." The facts simply contradict that assertion, and anyone in doubt but sufficiently interested can reread Springer's letter to me of January 6 and my memo of April 30 addressed to you.

My non-reappointment has everything to do with my race and the world view I personally represent. It is a view which challenges that status quo and puts its defenders on the defensive both within the department and in the larger academic community. It is a view that says that huge, giant steps have been taken backwards from the achievements of the civil rights movement and the promises of equity for black, and this should not be. It is a view that says that it is anomalous in these 1990's for students to major in English at CSI with no knowledge of African American literature; that it is anomalous that out of some 70 courses offered in literature in the department (not counting the writing, speech, or journalism courses nor those few courses where black authors might expect to be included), only two are in African American literature, one of them (ENH 221) offered every semester, the other (ENL 392) every other semester. It is a view that says such imbalance is without justification and ought to be redressed.

Mine is also a world view which says that for a department of 40 full-time and 50 part-time faculty in a unit of the City University of New York to have only one black member is ridiculous. David tells us that the reason is that "very few blacks have gotten or are getting Ph.D.s in English." This should be news to Joan Hartman who told me over and over that my case for tenure is hinged on "supply and demand": "It's a matter of supply and demand. There are many black Ph.D.s out there," she said to me again and again. Whose view is closer to reality? You be the judge. Either way, the argument serves its intended purpose: there's plenty of fish in the ocean when you want to fire, and a fish famine when you want to hire! These well worn raggedy arguments have been deployed for decades to keep blacks from getting equitable treatment in every phase of American life. And the defenders of the status quo, those who say they want to see racial justice but are willing to make no more than minimal accommodations to achieve justice, feel no shame in continuing to put forward these and similar excuses. Is this what is called racism, or is it something else?

Am I reading David wrong? Consider this: after lamenting the supposed scarcity of black Ph.D.s, in the very next sentence he tells us that we needn't worry, that things are fine as they are: "The Affirmative Action guidelines indicate that, given the state of our discipline, this department has precisely the number of black faculty that is warranted." Just pause and ponder the meaning of the sentence!

That "this department has precisely the number of black faculty that is warranted"? One out of forty? ... I didn't know I was hired to be your "token"!

What is this "state of our discipline" that justifies such imbalance? And if the largest department in the college is required to have no more than one black (and one Asian?), what then is required of the smaller departments—"three fifth of a man"?

And the worst part of it is that David says this with pride, and without shame—whereas he ought to be too embarrassed to say such a thing, regardless what the "affirmative action guidelines" say. Indeed, if this is all that "affirmative action" amounts to, then CSI's reputation as the CUNY campus most inhospitable to non-whites is entirely undeserved; and David's pious declaration that "we would all like the department to have a larger compliment of minority faculty," is exactly what it is—empty, phony, patently fraudulent, a deliberate insult!

As for the oversupply or undersupply of black Ph.D.s, it appears that white men (and women) almost always manage to slip through on waivers of one sort or another. Could it be that waivers, exceptions and special considerations are "for whites only"? When it comes to blacks, positions seem to harden, cracks and loopholes get sealed rather quickly, and we are assured that special considerations will only keep us unequal longer. When you're black, you have to more than meet each and every qualification to the letter; you have to be a star! It's heads I win tails you lose.

Joan Hartman said my case was a "cliff hanger." That sounded suspiciously like a version of the "low tree" from which white liberals are said to prefer to hang black men. Mirella Affron said my case had to be "nuanced." Well, we've all seen

in which direction it got "nuanced." When it comes to a black man, other standards apply.

In a memo dated September 12, 1994, in response to David's memo on departmental self-study, I made the following observations:

An obvious weakness is that many [of our majors] graduate without ever having taken courses in Afro-American literature, nor, for that matter, in Native American, Hispanic, Chicano or Asian-American literature. We need to create a balance in our course offerings, course content and course requirements between Anglo-American literature and the other American literatures. This would call for additional courses in the underrepresented areas, and for the deployment of available faculty to those areas as well as the hiring of additional faculty. In short, what we need, it seems to me, is to hammer out a fresh consensus (never an easy task!) on what ought to constitute a major in English at CSI.

This was a red flag. A fresh consensus? A challenge to things as they have always been in the department? David said nary a word. He didn't invite me to discuss, nor did he invite the department to consider this bold proposal.

The following year, in response to another self-study memo, I repeated this proposal, with two addition: that African American literature be required of all majors; and that a two semester survey in African American literature be offered to provide preparation for upper-level work and to make possible a choice of "literary period or movement" or of "major figure" from within African American literature.

David received numerous other self-study proposals on other aspects of the department's offerings. At the first meeting on these matters he brought up each proposal and called for discussion—discussion which got so exhaustive that the meeting had to be continued to another date. At the second meeting, the same scenario; finally he began compiling a list and when it became clear that he intended to say not a word about my proposal I spoke up and had it put on the list. At the third meeting he brought up each proposal and again allowed an exhaustive airing of views. When he got to my proposal he did not call for discussion, he simply dismissed it, saying that the schedule of required courses was already so tight that African American literature could not be accommodated. And that was that. Naturally he would like to shift the burden to the department and say that no one spoke up. But the way he brought up the matter, only to dismiss it, was very much in the manner of the chief executive who whenever faced with a proposal he did not like, would call his financial officer and say, "We don't have the money for such a project, do we?" "No sir, we don't," the finance man, sharp to his cues, would reply. "I thought so.... You see, he says there's no money." And the matter would end there.

Now it's up to you, members of the department, to decide who should bear the burden of that disregard. But one thing is clear: this outrageous imbalance in departmental staffing and course offerings could not have persisted for so many years without your consent. David boasted to me that he was the one who obtained that line on which I was hired and that he obtained it as soon as he was elected chair. He was angry that I was not sufficiently grateful. When I asked what Joan Hartman was doing all those years she was chair, David yelled: "Am I Joan?" "She tells you what to do," I retorted—and he exploded with curses and unprintables. Evidently I had touched a raw nerve! Is this why he twisted the whole exchange into "search committees" and "marching orders"? Search committees have not relevance to this issue, and I never mentioned them. Does Joan need a search committee to tell David what to do? The agenda he operates was set by her, and I see no change he wrought that should earn him applause. It took only weeks to find a journalism line when we asked for it. New lines are quickly found and old lines replenished for British and Anglo-American literature (one a year for the past three years)—no hassle. How many years did it take to replace William Demby? Joan sat on the line for years, or allowed the line to slip away—and the department let her—and it took Dave-in-shining-armor to finally retrieve it! Great day!

I spoke to Joan Hartman twice about how shabbily David Falk treated my proposals for reform. The second time she looked me straight in the eye and said: "Well, that's the way it is. Or do you want to lead an African liberation fight over it?"

I'm sure by now you've come to realize that, yes, you have indeed been harboring a subversive in your midst, one traditionally described as "uppity," one who, if he had tenure, would certainly not let you rest until some change is made. Now that you're rid of this troublesome presence, the questions will quietly go away, won't they?...

What the heck, have a great summer!

# EDITORIAL

## *Sometimes Sorry Isn't Good Enough*

Getting a child to say "I'm sorry" to an injured playmate is a major event. Parental skills are put to the test as the stubbornness of childhood blocks the ability to admit guilt. A child's recognition of guilt demonstrates a quantum leap in character development. For an elected official, merely admitting guilt amounts to little if that admission is not followed up by a systematic program of change.

The case of the grand apology of Student Government President Morgan Healy is a clear demonstration of personalizing issues to save ones political neck. The heartwrenching apology delivered by Healy was enough to escape the anger which is growing among many senators on student government. Instead of dealing with the concrete political issues, Healy was allowed to go the route of personal pity to protect himself from impeachment charges based on his ineptitude. In the meantime the students of CSI suffer because the opposition on Student Government fell for the sympathy plea. In order to understand the depth of the crisis lets look at a few of the affected groups of students:

**Part Time and Evening Students** - Just about the only thing a part time and evening student can hope to salvage out of her/his student activity fee is a cup of coffee. For the last several years, the CSI Student Government has provided night students with coffee and tea during their class breaks. Under the Student Union controlled student government of last year this program was expanded to include the summer session and the library area. This semester these students get nothing because of the ineptitude of student government leadership. The saddest part of this situation is that during last years student elections Joanne Gallo and Morgan Healy (see cartoon for relationship between the two) made a point to promise evening students an end to the supposed "leftist reign of terror" in student government. Healy/Gallo recently announced that they were cutting out coffee hours at the library. The only thing Gallo/Healy have succeeded in doing is paralyzing student government, thereby depriving evening students of a cup of Joe. Great job!

**CSI Clubs** - On paper Morgan Healy is named as the Club Commissioner. In reality, the Club Commission is the private domain of Joanne Gallo. Gallo, who was disqualified from the previous student government elections for trashing opposition literature, is not a senator but holds the title of club coordinator. When asked what this position means, Healy told inquisitive SG senators that "It's kind of a made up position." When SG senators Meredith Fogelman and Timothy Jenkins mustered the courage to challenge this domination in a recent SG meeting, Healy retorted that "Everything is getting done isn't it?" The point is not to simply "get everything done." The idea is to allow committed SG senators to use their creativity to expand the role of the commission and make it more effective in servicing CSI clubs. Instead of new and bold ideas, the commission is maintained as the personal political swamp of Joanne Gallo under the guise of the apartheid democracy of

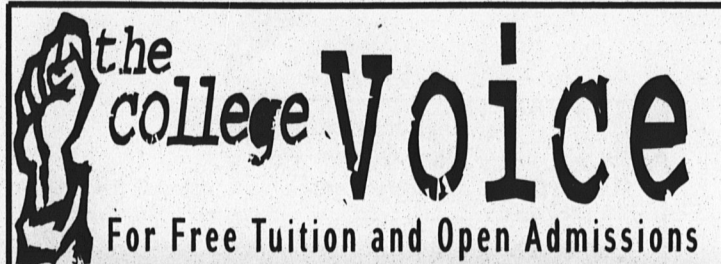
the Club Council. Remember you can speak but you can't vote!

**No Money for Textbooks - No Dice** - Last years student government made a firm commitment to provide textbooks to students who could not afford them. In addition to this, last years student government contributed \$30,000 to library to purchase new holdings. By working with the NYPIRG Book Exchange, funding the purchase of reserve books and new holdings for the library, the SG employed creative tactics to address the problems of students. This year, students get, you guessed it...Nothing! Because the SG hasn't passed their budget no new textbooks have been purchased. Tough luck students! The situation is so confusing in SG that they couldn't even think about running a Book Exchange program. To much gray matter required.

This is just a sample of the problems ahead for the students of CSI. In order to maintain personal zones of political power, the presidency and the club commission, Healy and Gallo are happy to sacrifice the needs of students. While some members of SG have spoken up against this activity, they too should be taken to task. As a potential opposition group they have yet to hold a meeting to organize themselves outside of the student government, content to waffle their way through SG meetings providing limited resistance. Until these students hold a serious meeting and develop a long term strategy for change it will be business as usual for Gallo and Healy.

Opposition members are so disorganized that few even noticed the fact that Morgan Healy committed a serious violation of democratic principles and ethics in the most recent SG meeting. After debating and losing a vote in the Publications Commission to increase the mandatory membership for each publication to 15, Healy re-introduced the motion at the table during an SG meeting. The decision made during the Publications Commission was a democratic one which involved members of each campus publication and SG senators including Healy himself. By bringing the motion through the backdoor, Healy showed that not much has changed politically. Democracy is meaningless when masta' tells you to jump.

The point is that sometimes saying sorry is not enough. It is going to take real political change to put the SG back into working condition and that change must start at the top. The opposition, if it is to be the least bit effective must organize itself, and the students must think long and hard before they go to the polls in October to elect new SG senators. As we have seen from the current SG meltdown, when students are elected who are more interested in representing themselves than their fellow students, it can be extremely harmful to everyone. After some of the accomplishments of last year its sad to see that the opportunists are back in full force and worse then ever. Its time once again to formulate progressive solutions to regressive student leadership and move forward into the future.



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# Letters

I think Mayor Giuliani and the CUNY Board of Trustees has gone too far to eliminate open admissions from students who can't go to private colleges in and out of state. These cronies are a bunch of rich Republicans who wants to take away the rights of a higher education from the poor and middle class students in the city. The Board of Trustees last late May told security to kick the protesters out of a meeting that was uncall for and violated their free speech.

Herman Badillo a Giuliani ally has sold us out and is a big time coward and a jacka\*\* to his community. It time for us to fight to keep open admissions for current and incoming students, it is time to say enough is enough. Let's throw our fist in the air to show that mean business. The Board of Trustees, CCNY Yolanda T. Moses and other high ranking CUNY officials are a bunch of scabs(union term).

Mystery Man

## 'toon z



The College Voice (CV) is a publication committed to the interests of working people. The working class is composed of all those people who own nothing but their ability to perform manual or mental labor and are forced to sell it for a wage. As students at CUNY, we recognize that we are a part of the multi-racial, multi-national working class of New York City. The severe attacks that CUNY has undergone are mirrored by the endless assaults on the jobs, wages and living standards of working people, as well as by the attacks on trade union, democratic and civil rights.

We oppose the poisonous divisions fostered on the basis of race by the bosses, who make black and white workers fight each other for the crumbs off their table...even though it is the workers who produce all the wealth.

We oppose the systematic attempts to reduce women to a defined "feminine" status, that serves to legitimize the special oppression they face as women and the additional exploitation they undergo as workers.

We oppose the vicious attacks on immigrant workers, who are the most vulnerable victims of the bosses job market, and who are thus used to drive all workers wages down.

We oppose every form of bigotry, on principle, as unbecoming our species and recognize that the fight for human liberation will be achieved only in the course of combatting these divisions.

We oppose the use of the environment as a source of short-term profit and plunder by the ruling rich regardless of the consequences for the majority of the world's population.

The CV recognizes that it is the capitalist system, based upon the private ownership of the means of producing the wealth, that is fundamentally responsible for the fant astic hardship and misery that the vast majority of our species undergoes across the globe...in the midst of plenty.

The CV recognizes that this contradiction, far from being some "natural" condition, is one maintained by the armed power of the capitalist state (army, cops and courts) and ideological apparatus (media, church and schools) of the capitalist class that insures the domination of the few over the many; of the bosses, who produce nothing and appropriate everything over the workers, who produge everything but appropriate nothing.

The CV recognizes the possibility and the burning necessity for creating a society in which the productive forces are democratically organized through the cooperative association of workers and production is based on human needs instead of private profits in harmony with the environment.

The CV recognizes the necessity for creating a revolutionary party of the working class, based upon a program of militant mass action and class struggle politics, that will organize internationally against world capitalism and its multi- and transnational corporations and fight for a socialist revolution against them.

The CV seeks to engage all those who are committed to fighting exploitation and oppression in common action against the common enemy...capitalism.

# LOOKING BACK

# MOVING FORWARD?

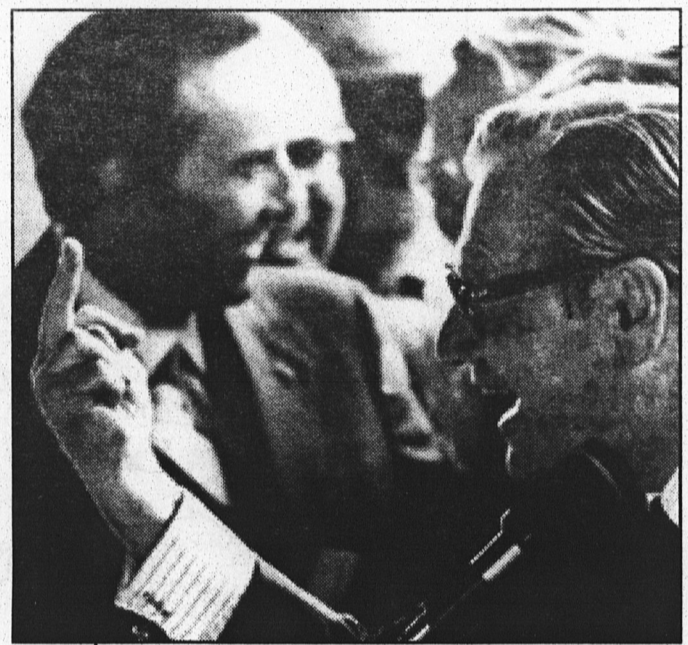
## CUNY In Historical Perspective

DEVON BLINTH

The City University of New York traces its beginnings to an 1847 municipal referendum in which citizens were asked if they were willing to assume financial responsibility for a tuition free college. Tuition free higher education had been the demand of many workingmen's groups during the early to mid 1800's and the referendum passed overwhelmingly by a vote of 19,305 to 3,409. The Free Academy, as CUNY was then called, was established in 1847 as a men's college. In 1866 it became the College of the City of New York. However the invisible hands of merchants, judges and Wall Street bankers helped to orchestrate the referendum for the Free Academy to complement Columbia and New York University. In 1847 Townsend Harris, a crockery merchant and later the first ambassador to Japan, authored a report urging the establishment of a free college for public high school graduates. In the report he argued that Columbia and NYU's pedagogy was geared toward, "... the Pulpit, Bar or the medical profession" rather than a curriculum, "most important to a manufacturing, agricultural, and commer-

history. Harris prevailed and the legislature allowed the referendum to go the people for a vote.

In 1870 the Normal School, later Hunter College was established for women because a need in the New York City public schools for teachers. By 1927 the State Legislature established a municipal-college system with the creation of a 21-member New York City Board of Higher Education, to oversee the collegiate end of the public school system. Brooklyn and Queens Colleges were established soon after. At this point the City College system with its four colleges (CCNY, Hunter, Brooklyn, and Queens) began to assume an institutional identity though the individual campuses remained autonomous. By the end of W.W.II business leaders and government officials realized that technology was a means to insure the nations economic and military strength. Colleges and universities around the country prepared to churn out graduates fluent in the language of technology and the City issued the Strayer report urging the, "... municipal colleges [to become the] breeding ground for a new



I got your "Open Admissions" right here. Governor Rockefeller expresses his displeasure at protesters.

elevated to a four year institution in 1960. During this period the colleges began to work more closely with government and business in order, "to do their share in meeting the demands of industry and national defense for skilled specialists in technology and science."

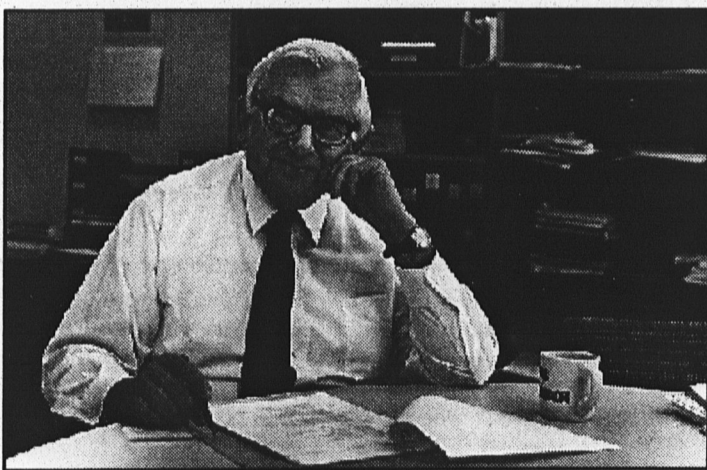
By 1958 newly elected governor Nelson Rockefeller ordered the formation of a panel to advise him on the reorganization of higher education. The Heald Commission as it was later called consisted of high foundation and government officials who shared the view that higher education must become more responsive to new social and economic needs.

The panel recommended a variety of proposals to "streamline" the system. They proposed a system wide centralization, a Council of Higher Education Advisors composed of, "a small body of prominent citizens" whose function it would be, to assess higher education in the state, to compare it with what is being accomplished in other states, to review progress that is made toward the achievement of the goals and objective set by the Governor and the Legislature, and to recommend publicly and loudly what ought to be done to keep our system of higher education in line with our needs-statewide, nationally, and in view of the world situation. The Commission proposed the federation of the municipal college system into the State University of New York, SUNY Central in Albany would be responsible for the administration and edu-

cational direction of the municipal colleges in New York City. A tuition of \$300 dollars would be imposed on the students of this federated University; which of course would have ended the municipal colleges 113 year policy of tuition free education.

The Heald Commission also urged the introduction of "modern management techniques" to increase efficiency, "Education could learn from such dynamic industries as chemicals, electronics, petroleum and even agriculture." Aware of the potential public backlash the report would generate. The Board of Higher Education countered with the release of a an interim report recommending that all New York City public colleges be reorganized into the City University of New York to strengthen centralization and meet "an increasing need for doctoral programs to serve business, industry, education and all segments of community life." The University would remain tuition free and ultimate authority over the new bureaucracy would remain with the Board of Higher Education. In essence the municipal colleges would go along with the recommendations of the Heald Commission of course but under the aegis of the Board of Higher Education.

A massive public outcry greeted the release of the Heald Commission report. A cross section of New Yorkers from various ethnic, religious, civic, labor, and business groups angrily denounced the report. Community leaders argued that the preservation of free tuition and local control kept



Former CUNY Chancellor Albert Bowker

cial people." He proposed an institution which would produce highly skilled workers knowledgeable in the major trades of the time. Many business men resisted the idea insisting that the working class lacked the intellectual capabilities to succeed in higher education. Others felt that the Free Academy would become a haven for the middle classes whose graduates would become professional or business men.

The later prediction proved accurate during the early years of the Free Academy but Harris' main goal of vocational training set the tone of the University for the rest of its

labor force of highly skilled scientists, technicians, managers, and workers." The report recommended the establishment of two year technical schools. The four college presidents agreed unanimously and called for the massive expansion of the municipal college system; Baruch College was established in 1951, New York City Community College in 1953 (the present day New York City Technical College), Staten Island Community College in 1955, Bronx Community College in 1957, Queensborough Community College in 1958 and Hunter College in the Bronx was



public higher education in the city responsive to the aspirations and needs of the city's working class youth. Local control and free tuition proved decisive in maintaining interclass support for the public college system. Under intense pressure from New York City residents the State Legislature agreed to take no action on the Heald recommendation and in 1961 passed legislation creating the City University of New York.

In 1963 newly inaugurated Chancellor Albert Bowker argued that the future direction of CUNY must be planned by examining "the employment profile of our city." Jobs for unskilled workers were scarce but opportunities for workers with Associates degrees increased during the early and mid 1960's. Large numbers of unskilled immigrants began arriving in the New York area from Latin America and the Caribbean during this period. Addressing this issue in his inaugural address Chancellor Bowker stated:

There will be more jobs in developing New York City but they will be jobs of a new kind-jobs which require what has been called sub-professional education. The jobs will be here-the question is, will young New Yorkers be trained to fill them or will they be filled by persons brought in for the purpose from elsewhere? Our tremendous push on the community college front represents a major answer: We want the children of the newer migrations to rise to fill in the newer needs!

Under Bowker's leadership the University continued to expand with the additions of the Graduate School and University Center in 1962, York College, John Jay College, Richmond College (which federated with Staten Island Community College during the 1970's budget crisis to create the College of Staten Island), Kingsborough Community College, and Borough of Manhattan Community College all were established in 1966. The Board of Trustees strategically located some of these institutions in the blighted areas of the city because "they would give local residents, personal upgrading in market scarce job skills." On face value the goals of the Chancellor appeared laudable but he was motivated solely by the needs of the employer class. No proposals were put forward by the Chancellor to educate working class students about the social forces impacting their reality. The personal and cultural benefits that might flow from philosophy, language, or literature courses was apparently not as important as training young New Yorkers to fit into the corporate machine.

### The Open Admissions Struggle

During the late 1960's city planners predicted that by 1978 the city would require 250,000 service workers and 75,000 fewer blue collar jobs. During this time the city's working class was increasingly composed of African-Americans and Latinos, who were mostly high school educated blue collar workers. If the planners predictions became a reality, this sector of the working class would be plagued by unemployment in the very near future. The New York City Master Plan summed up the situation: "The growth of the labor force has been in people who have little education, and few skills."



Protesters accompany CCNY President Buell Gallagher to negotiations during 1969 Open Admissions Strike.

The public schools were in disarray; in 1968 45 out of every 100 children who entered an inner city school at first grade did not drop out by high school, and only 13 of that number graduated with a diploma. During each year of attendance the student body of the NYC public schools became lighter in hue "11th graders in 1968 at such schools consisted of 24% blacks, 11.7% Puerto Ricans, and 64.3% whites and others. The next year found blacks had dropped to 21% Puerto Ricans to 9.5% and whites and others had risen to 69.5%. By 1970 when that first class graduated, it had changed once again: blacks 18.5%, Puerto Ricans 7.5% whites and others 73.8%." These numbers continued into CUNY, "In 1969, first time entering freshmen were 13.8% black, 5.9% Puerto Rican, 75.9% white and all others 4.4%." Needless to say these numbers were way out of line with the actual number of people of color residing in NYC.

In light of the statistics the Board of Trustees (BOT) decided to mitigate the mistakes done by the public schools and bring African-American and Latino students into the productive system. As such the BOT announced in the 1968 Master Plan a course of action for the implementation of Open Admissions by 1975 providing "each student, regardless of high school achievement, the opportunity for more advanced study so that each may progress to his full potential." Though the BOT pledged that all NYC high school students would have the opportunity of a CUNY education

once the Open Admissions policy was in place, the three track system they proposed to implement it with would not guarantee students an equal education. The program would go as follows: the top quarter of high school graduates (mostly higher income whites) would be admitted into the senior colleges. The top-two thirds would be tracked into the community colleges and the bottom one-third (mostly lower income whites, blacks and Latino(a)s) would be sent to "Educational Skills Centers," for vocational training.

The response of students and many faculty was vitriolic. The campuses exploded in protest during the spring semester of 1969. CCNY students of color demanded guaranteed access, a voice in the hiring and firing of SEEK personnel, a separate school for black and Puerto Rican studies, that education majors destined to teach in the NYC public schools be required to take some black and Puerto Rican history, a separate orientation for black and Puerto Rican students, and the study of Spanish. Students at the other CUNY campuses began major protests centered around the CCNY demands. By May 9 Francis Keppel chair of the Executive Committee of the BOT relented and approved the SEEK, separate orientation, and the education major demands but he requested further negotiations on the pivotal issue of guaranteed access. Political leaders vigorously criticized the capitulation, while students and labor unions urged the Board to take the extra step and open the University to all right away, not in 1975 as planned. The BOT held a special meeting on July 9, 1969 in which they decided to "offer admission to some University program to all high school graduates of the City", the program would begin in 1970. The "some" of course was a loophole by which the BOT would perpetuate some form of tracking system.

### Moving Forward?

CUNY is still under continued attack with corporate-like restructuring. Public higher education is in the midst of a reorganization in the interests of "greater productivity" and "efficiency" This re-engineering of the University does not occur in a vacuum rather it is one symptom of a larger national and international economic restructuring in the interests of business. This attack becomes apparent when the CUNY administration assigns each campus a specific educational task within the frame work of a system wide master plan ensuring "cost efficient management controls" on the individual campuses. The rationale being that requiring each campus to specialize in teaching the skills needed for certain sectors of the economy will reduce duplication or overlap of courses which quite naturally is anathema to the free market. Institutions of higher learning are encouraged to define production quotas (i.e. "goals" and "missions"). In pursuit of these "goals" and "missions" broad humanistic learning which produces truly well rounded people capable of coping with a wide range of societal and personal problems and needs are thrown out in favor of producing workers prepared to be channeled into the corporate machine.

## Task Force Addresses Faculty

ROB HOLLANDER AND DEVON BLINTH

Two members of the mayor's Schmidt task force investigating CUNY met with faculty members on the evening of September 15. Richard Roberts, of the mayor's housing department, and Richard Schwarz, who has orchestrated other privatization/downsizing campaigns for the mayor in the past spoke of the goals of the task force and tried to dispell rumors of bias. Also present were two staff members, both on loan from city agencies, and a representative of the Rand Corporation, the group which will produce a policy study for the task force. Benno Schmidt, the chair of the task force and veteran of numerous school privatization schemes, was unable to attend, nor were noted CUNY enemies Heather MacDonald of the reactionary Manhattan Institute, and Herman Badillo, a Giuliani cheerleader and Board of Trustees vice chair.

The Task Force was expanded during the Spring semester with the announced

goal of examining how CUNY spends its city subsidy, investigating the impact of open admissions on students and to explore arrangements for other institutions, such as Kaplan Inc., to provide remedial services to CUNY students. Several faculty members spoke of the fact that the mayor has proven to be hostile to CUNY's historic mission of open access to education. The task force has come under heavy criticism for its bias in favor of the mayor's privatization schemes. Many faculty members pointed to the fact that most of the members of the commission work in city agencies and as such are beholden to the mayor.

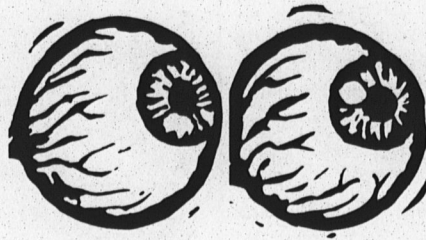
Responding to many questions from skeptical and highly distrustful faculty, the two commission members explained that they did not know much about CUNY, that they had no educational policy experience, they did not understand the notion of "governance" as distinguished from "administration" in the con-

text of the academic tradition, and most significantly, that they hold continued underfunding of the university as an unquestioned assumption. They were additionally criticized for approaching the investigation with the "bias" that privatization is a task force goal. This was in response to a question about the "biases" which the members bring to the study. Both members responded to this question with the same answer, often looking at each other for mutual approval and agreement. The faculty drew attention to many issues: one reason graduation rates appear low is that a large percentage of CUNY students stay two or three years before going off to a private college to graduate. The mayor's 1% statistic on graduation rate at community colleges is tainted by the inclusion of part time students, remedial students who are not enrolled in fully credited courses, and occasional students who are not pursuing degrees. In a recent year, it was

found that only forty-seven students enrolled full time for two continuous years at the community colleges, and of those, twenty-two graduated within 2 years, almost 50% and above the national average. It was also mentioned that while the state contributes Bundy Aid to private colleges, those colleges are not being investigated, despite the fact that students from private colleges do worse on CUNY assessment exams than CUNY students at the same credit levels. Students transferring from Hofstra, LIU, St. John's and Adelphi need more remediation than students transferring from CUNY community colleges. Faculty also questioned the authority of a mayoral task force to investigate the senior colleges to which the city contributes no money at all. Staff member Sally Renfro admitted that the city's contribution to the CUNY budget was "a very small percentage".

# Big Brother is Watching You

DAFINA LOVELACE



"I think it's a good idea to install [the cameras], if it's going to stop people from writing on the computers." A member of the club High Society believes that "there could have been other ways to spend the money to protect the computers," but he also feels that "no one watches the cam-

eras already located on campus. This is evident by the number of cars that are stolen from the campus parking lots which have video cameras." Says Professor Carlin: "Big mirrors should have been put in the back of the rooms in order to see what the students were doing."

If you take a look up at the ceiling in any one of the following labs you will notice the eyes of the administration peering down at you. The labs are as follows: 1L-202, 1L-208, 1L-212, 1N-004, 1N-005, 3N-102, 3N-107, 3N-109, 3N-113, 3N-115, 3N-217. A major concern among many students is the question of who will be monitoring what the cameras are watching and what the tapes will be used for. The administrators who ordered these cameras to be put in place could not be reached for comment.

So this is what O.I.T. has in store for us. On the surface, these additions seem to be beneficial to students, but in reality, they are another tactic used by administration to keep a watchful eye on students. So remember, no matter where you are on campus, the eye in the sky is watching you!

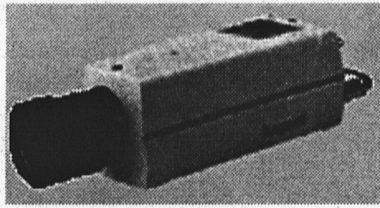
So you want to know what's new in computer technology at the College of Staten Island? Well have I got some news for you. It seems as though the Office of Information Technology (O.I.T.), the department in charge of maintaining most of the computers on campus, has been hard at work spending much money during the past summer months. At first glance, most of these new changes appear to be helpful to students. In reality, they are just another way for administrators to keep an eye on what students are doing.

Many administrators have received system upgrades, the latest being Dell Pentiums with Windows 95. How many of these faculty and staff members who received the upgrades actually know how to use or understand the advantages of Windows 95? Only about one out of every seven!

During the summer, O.I.T. also decided to spend a few dollars on the students. The Macintosh Lab once located in room 202 in the library is no longer. In 1L-202 you will now find some beautiful 233Mhz Pentium computers running the Windows

95 operating system. For all you computer illiterate people out there, that means fast machines that will make web surfing a breeze. The open computer lab located in 3N-217 has also been upgraded to 133Mhz Pentiums; once again faster machines, but this time lacking a better equipped operating system. Perhaps those members of the administration who received the better upgrades should have been given these huge paper weights instead of tuition-paying students.

Another wonderful thing I must warn all incoming students and upperclassmen and women about is the "free" e-mail space the



college offers you. What "free" e-mail really means is that the president of the college, Dr. Marlene Springer, is free to read your messages anytime she feels like it. So be

very careful of the content of the e-mail messages you send and receive. Your best bet would be to find an e-mail provider over the internet and check your mail from home.

But that's not the best of it. O.I.T. has also employed some of the same tactics used by security at City College of New York (CCNY). Spy cam is here and big brother is watching! In most of the open computer labs, and also in some computer-equipped classrooms, video cameras have been installed. Unlike the security apparatus at CCNY where the cameras are pencil-thin, the ones at C.S.I.'s are huge. Sources say that these cameras will help identify those people who choose to deface the computers with juvenile comments like 'This school sucks,' 'Hi Ryan,' 'Dean Wuz here' and other attention-getters.

Professor M. Carlin of the Computer Science Department feels that the "vandalism is horrendous" and that "the school doesn't have money to keep replacing the computers." Lisa LaRocco, an employee of O.I.T. and an Honors College student, says,

## Summer of Spying & Drama

It was June 1, the day before last spring's commencement, and four days after the CUNY Board of Trustees voted to end all remedial courses at four year colleges at a tumultuous meeting where 24 people were arrested. On that day, a CCNY employee approached a CCNY student who he knew to be an activist. He told him that what appeared to be a smoke detector in front of NAC room 3/201 really wasn't a smoke detector at all. He said that the "smoke detector" actually was a surveillance camera. The CCNY employee said he had seen the surveillance equipment—a receiving device, a TV monitor and VCR recording the image in front of the "smoke detector" in the room next door to 3/201. The student, David Suker, gained access to the room where the employee had told him the recording equipment was. Upon entering, a long, bizarre summer started at CCNY.

### Why NAC 3/201?

NAC 3/201 has been the center of student activism on campus since it was taken over by student activists during a student strike in 1989. The room was renamed the "Shakur-Morales Community and Student Center," in honor of two revolutionary leaders who had gone to CCNY in the 1960s, and it was dedicated to student activism and building links between students and the Harlem and Washington Heights communities. It is the home of the Pre-University Program, a grassroots student-run program to prepare high school students for college. The Pre-University Program brings over 200 high school students to CCNY every Saturday. It is organized and staffed entirely by volunteers, and it is free for the students.

### Going Public

After Suker saw the surveillance equipment, he and two other students—Ydanis Rodriguez and Brad Sigal—videotaped footage of the surveillance camera and equipment, and called student-rights attorney Ron McGuire, who immediately came to campus with a reporter from the Amsterdam News. The equipment was examined and it became clear they had uncovered an organized surveillance operation. Attorney Ron McGuire filed a lawsuit against City College on behalf of the three students two days later, alleging that their constitutional rights to free assembly had been violated. They did not, however, know who exactly at CCNY was running the surveillance operation. The equipment was anonymously given to Mr. McGuire for safekeeping, who immediately brought it before the judge. At that point the CCNY Security Department, seeing that they had been "caught in the act", acknowledged that the equipment was theirs.

The students held a press conference on the steps of City Hall to break the story to the public. That night, the story broke on all the television news programs (it was the lead news story right after one of the Chicago Bulls playoff games), and over the next week it hit almost all of the New York newspapers including the New York Times, El Diario and the Daily News.

### Moses Busted

CCNY President Yolanda Moses didn't seem to know how to respond. If she knew about the surveillance, then she authorized spying on students organizing peaceful and legal activities. If she didn't know about it, then she was out of touch with possibly ille-

gal spy operations going on under her reign. So the CCNY administration made up a far-fetched tale to explain their political spying.

The June 5 Daily News reported that, "Officials at the Harlem campus said the camera was a routine security measure to stop thieves from swiping computers." CCNY Security Director Timothy Hubbard stated, "This was just a standard surveillance device we use to determine criminality. It's a standard practice we have employed over the years to combat crime." It is certainly unsettling if it is "standard" for CCNY security to spy on students with hidden cameras. But even that explanation, unsettling as it was, did not give the whole story.

Many on campus questioned Hubbard and Moses's story. The New York Times reported on June 17 that, "Gary Benenson, a Mechanical Engineering professor at City College and chairman of its faculty union chapter, said security officials were correct in saying that there were burglary problems on campus—he has lost six computers in his lab in the last two years, he said. But, he added, the security office had done little to prevent thefts, and he had been told to install his own alarms."

### The Real Reason for the Surveillance

Reality finally caught up with Security Director Hubbard. When he was subpoenaed by McGuire and the students, he was forced to submit an affidavit explaining his reasons for the spying operation. In his affidavit, dated June 10, 1998, he still tried to maintain that the main reason for the surveillance was to prevent computer theft. But the truth squeaked out at the end of his affidavit.

Directly contradicting all the administration's denials of political spying, he said there were also two other reasons, both political. In Hubbard's June 10 affidavit, he states:

"Finally, the third reason for placing the camera outside room 3/201 was in response to a report of a possible student or non-student take over of all or portions of NAC, including room 3/201. [I was informed] that a group of students (or non-students) might be planning to attempt to take over the building sometime around commencement, on June 2, 1998 ... [so] we decided that the security staff would keep an eye out for unauthorized persons on the premises, including in and around 3/201."

This stunning admission directly contradicts every other statement made by President Moses and university spokespeople. For example, Moses stated in a "Presidential Communiqué" dated June 22, 1998, "I wish to assure the College community that [the use of surveillance directed toward students or other persons based upon their political views] has never and will never occur at CCNY." In her affidavit to the court dated June 23, 1998, Moses repeats the same theme, saying, "City College has not conducted and will not conduct any surveillance against any of the plaintiffs or any other students or visitors to City College ..." Hubbard says one of the reasons for the surveillance was to monitor for a political protest or building takeover at commencement, while Moses says City College has never and will never engage in political spying. Since their affidavits contradict each other, it appears that either Hubbard or Moses is lying under oath.

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# CUNY's War On CUNY

ROB WALLACE

**S**eptember 9-In late May, the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York ended CUNY's 29-year-old policy of Open Admissions by aborting remediation classes at CUNY's senior colleges. City College is a senior college. But in August a State Supreme Court judge blocked the change in policy.

## The Fight to Preserve Open Admissions Against Attacks by the Board of Trustees Involves Nothing Less Than Ending Educational Apartheid

As started in 1970, the Open Admissions policy allows any New York City high school student who obtains a diploma a spot at CUNY. Those students who can not handle the college material are placed in remedial courses until they can. The point of the policy was to allow access to a college education to students that were traditionally provided substandard high school educations by the public school system. Open Admissions was implemented after black and Latino students at City College started successful protests against the exclusionary nature of the CUNY system which in 1969 was comprised primarily of white students.

Following implementation of Open Admissions, a veritable revolution in education swept New York City. By 1976, the majority of CUNY students were of color. By the early 1990s, 63% of CUNY undergraduates were non-white, 54% black or Latino. One barrier in the racial apartheid of New York education had been smashed.

On May 26, the Board of Trustees began to implement the apartheid once again. The Board voted to block from entering CUNY's four-year senior colleges any student who could not pass proficiency tests in math, reading, and writing. The Board planned to implement the new policy at CUNY campuses starting September 1999. The Board, comprised primarily of Mayor Giuliani and Governor Pataki appointees, oversees CUNY-wide policy.

The new policy would effectively end remediation classes at the senior colleges. As of now under Open Admissions, students who could not pass any one of the tests could still attend the colleges, take remediation courses, and retake the exams when ready, albeit within a certain set time. The remediation courses were therefore a linchpin of Open Admissions.

The Board's decision turned the three assessment tests into entrance exams. You can't pass the tests? You can't enter CUNY's senior colleges. No other public university in the country uses such entrance exams. The tests act then as another barrier for New York's poor and working class. The senior colleges have been shown by studies by Lehman College's David Lavin to be gateways to higher education and professional jobs for a generation of students of color. The Board's vote to end remediation officially returned apartheid and class war to CUNY.



APARTHEID AGAIN

Anne Paolucci, the chair of the Board of Trustees, told reporters after the vote, in revealing language, "We are cleaning out the four-year colleges and putting remediation where it belongs," at the already devastated two-year community colleges.

The end of remediation at the senior colleges will effectively "clean out" tens of thousands of poor, principally black, Latino, Asian and immigrant students. According to CUNY's own study, five colleges, including City College, would lose half their entering students under the Board's new policy. City College has already lost over 3000 students, many in good academic standing, over the past three years. The losses at City College can be attributed to budget cuts, tuition hikes, and City College-specific departmental closures. In 1995, Yolanda Moses, City College's president, closed, among several other departments, four ethnic studies departments and an entire School of Nursing.

The CUNY report declared under the new Board policy minority students will be worse hit. The report stated 55% of Latino, 51% of Asian, and 46% of black students who would have been allowed entrance under present admissions criteria will be barred from entering the senior

colleges. Whites too will be blocked, with 38% kept from entering by the new policy. In total, 12,000 students-46% of 1999's entering class-will be barred if the policy is successfully implemented.

The CUNY report seconded projections by Lehman College professor Lavin who has for years tracked the positive effects Open Admissions has had and continues to have on CUNY students and New York City. Lavin and colleagues reported that of the 8,000 regular students who entered the senior colleges in Fall 1997, 5,000 would have been excluded under the new policy. That included 2/3 of the entering black, Latino and Asian students, and half of the white freshman.

Clearly, if this policy is implemented it would represent one of the worst defeats New York City's working class will have suffered this half-century.

The Board of Trustees was provided the CUNY report a week before it voted in the new policy. And Lavin's study had been available for months. So Board members, many of them bankers and government hacks, were quite aware what impact their decision would have on the schools and their students. Indeed, before the vote, the Board met for an hour with CUNY lawyers to discuss the likelihood lawsuits would be leveled at the university system on the grounds the new policy racially discrimi-

nated. Mayor Giuliani, who has continually hammered CUNY with threats and recriminations, called the Board's vote "courageous". He declared, "[The Board's] vote sends a powerful message that CUNY is starting the important process of restoring its reputation as one of the great public institutions of higher learning in this country."

Under the new policy, many students brilliant at political science or physics, for example, but not so verse at the material any one of the entrance exams would test, would be barred entrance to the senior colleges. Imagine a newly immigrated Einstein barred from City College because he flunked the reading entrance exam. Completely unreasonable-indeed mad-and certainly not "restoring [of CUNY's] reputation" as thousands of remarkable students are driven away in a veritable brain drain.

One of the vilest villains in this affair, and they are numerous, is Board of Trustee Richard Stone. Stone, who seems your usual wet noodle liberal, had been wavering for months on ending remediation, before casting the deciding vote against remediation. He declared the vote, "one of the most difficult decisions I have ever made in my life." In sum, Stone, a Columbia University law professor, voted to end remediation at an inner city college system, while his own elite Ivy university continues to offer remediation for comparatively more affluent and better prepared students.

### A LEGAL BATTLE WON

On August 10, State Supreme Court judge Elliot Wilk served an injunction against the Board's decision to end remediation at CUNY's senior colleges. The decision stems from a suit brought against the Board for violating state Open Meetings Laws when it voted against remediation May 26. The suit was brought by Professor William Crain of City College's psychology department, and David Suker, a CCNY graduate student.

New York's Open Meeting Law or "Sunshine" Law which, as of October 1979, provides the public the right to attend meetings of public bodies and watch their decision-making process. As defined by the law, public bodies include state agencies, and public corporations

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## CUNY'S War On CUNY

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like cities, counties, and school districts. The Board meetings are held in a first floor conference room at CUNY Central on E. 80th Street. The plaintiffs charged, and Justice Wilk agreed, that the meetings violated the Open Meetings Laws because they were held "in a room which [the Board] knew to be too small." Moreover, the Board would reserve many of the available seats for Board staff, CUNY administrators, and the press, leaving few seats for the public.

Furthermore, on May 26 the Board ejected what few public audience members remained. Inside the meeting, six audience members were arrested, "including those watching and listening peacefully," as Justice Wilk's ruling put it. Among those arrested were a Franciscan nun and Assemblyman Ed Sullivan (D-Manhattan), the chairman of New York State Assembly's Education Committee. Outside the building, 20 demonstrators protesting the decision were arrested.

The Board, never elected by their CUNY constituency, would not permit such violation of Board "democracy", as Chair Paolucci called making fundamental decisions on the future of CUNY behind closed doors!

"This is a huge victory for the forces of democracy in this city," said Crain of Wilk's decision. "Hopefully, it will force

the CUNY board to reconsider their closed-meetings policies, as well as the destructive decision to eliminate remedial education for thousand of students who need it."

Anthony Coles, a senior Giuliani advisor, called the ruling "ludicrous". He declared, "There is very little question that this decision will be promptly reversed on appeal and will not stand in the way of CUNY's efforts to raise standards. The opinion clearly is written by a judge who considers his own personal viewpoints to be more important than the law."

The Giuliani administration has lost just about every lawsuit filed against the City for violating Open Meetings and Freedom of Information laws. NYC Advocate Mark Green, State Comptroller Carl McCall, and then-Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger all won Freedom of Information suits against the city. New York taxi drivers won an Open Meetings lawsuit. That indicates "personal viewpoints" aren't the problem, but that crimefighter Giuliani and his agencies continue to break the law.

Coles' comments, and later Giuliani's personal attacks, apparently so pissed-off Wilk that in late August he denied what CUNY had automatically received from other state judges in the past: a stay of the injunction while CUNY appealed. That means the Board's decision is currently blocked and the campuses must refrain

from making any moves to dismantle remediation programs.

The Board's decision is also being contested on another front. Earlier this summer, former City College administrator and current faculty Board of Trustee representative Bernie Sohmer requested New York State's Board of Regents to review the decision to end remediation. The Regents oversee education state-wide, including CUNY's master plan, a document describing the structure of CUNY and the principles by which the university is to be run.

Sohmer charged that because ending remediation fundamentally changes admission standards and the very structure and mission of CUNY, the Regents would have to review the decision. A key question the Regents are looking into is whether sufficient access to CUNY would be maintained if remediation were ended at the senior colleges. From CUNY's own report and Professor Lavin's work access under the new policy would be denied.

That so worries the Board of Trustees that, in their usual style, the Trustees have launched a war against the Regents, bitterly questioning the Regents' authority to review the Trustees' decision. That in turn pissed off the Board of Regents which is less open to political pressure from Giuliani and Pataki. As of Messenger presstime, the Regents are still reviewing the Trustees' decision to end remediation,

### But to Clinch Victory...

But ultimately, the decision to end remediation will have to be blocked by CUNY students. Legal and bureaucratic finagling won't get the job done. Political power is the only reason why this absurd decision to end remediation is being pursued. So it is political power, the kind that is exercised in protest out in the streets, that will in turn counteract these racist, classist attacks. After all, political protest was how Open Admissions and remediation were won in the first place. Moreover, City College student protest and organizing in 1989, 1991, 1995-1998 helped blocked budget cuts, tuition hikes, arming of security guards, and the swindle of a new ID card-CUNYCard.

CUNY students need to exercise political power by organizing against the CUNY administration, both at CUNY Central and here at City College. Only those most affected have the interest, and the power, to defend an Open Admissions policy that permits New York City's working class and black, Latino, Asian, and immigrant peoples the right to earn a college degree. Otherwise, CUNY administrators, whatever race they may be, will willfully send CUNY back in time-to educational apartheid-if it would further their own careers.

## Summer of Spying & Drama

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### Moses Retaliates

Stung by the bad publicity, President Moses lashed out in retaliation at the students who had discovered the secret camera. On June 18, President Moses took the highly unusual step of declaring last spring's Graduate Student Council elections "null and void," while also changing the locks on all GSC offices to keep out both the outgoing and the incoming student governments. These actions effectively shut down the graduate student government.

CCNY administrators locked the editors of the CCNY Messenger graduate student newspaper out of their office as well, asserting that the CCNY Messenger was actually just a newsletter of the GSC, and therefore it would be shut down along with the GSC. This was convenient for Moses, since one of the plaintiffs, Brad Sigal, was also editor of the CCNY Messenger, which had consistently criticized the Moses administration's inaction in defense of open admissions.

### Why Moses Did It

President Moses resorted to these anti-democratic measures because she didn't like the slate who won the GSC election, which included Rodriguez, Sigal and Suker. The election was swept by the "New Millennium" slate, who won 10 of the 11 council seats. The slate included many prominent activists in the struggle to save remediation and open admissions at CUNY. Moses had been wishy-washy on the issue all year, and CCNY students had confronted her numerous times to try to get her to take a stand against Mayor Giuliani and the CUNY Board of Trustees. Moses was fearful of an activist student government that would demand accountability and political

backbone in this tumultuous time at CUNY.

The Student Election Review Committee (SERC), which coordinates and certifies student elections, had already certified the GSC election as a free and fair. Normally, this would be the end of the story. But President Moses twisted a rule allowing college presidents to review SERC decisions, declaring that the election was not certified until she said so.

President Moses accused the CCNY Messenger graduate student newspaper of 'biasing' the election, saying that it was biased toward the New Millennium slate. Even though it did not endorse any candidates, Moses asserted its supposedly slanted coverage constituted a subtle endorsement. Therefore, she said in a twist of logic, the CCNY Messenger constituted campaign literature, and therefore the cost of producing it (which she said cost \$1400 even though receipts show it cost less than \$400) put the New Millennium slate over their spending limit.

Most student newspapers at CUNY overtly endorse candidates every year. This is normal and acceptable journalism. The New York Times, the Daily News, the Post, etc, also endorse candidates in elections. Elections are not cancelled because a news-

paper endorses candidates. This past spring, student newspapers at College of Staten Island, Hunter College, and Brooklyn College all endorsed candidates, including candidates that were on the staff of the endorsing newspaper.

The inconvenient fact for President Moses is that there is nothing illegal, wrong, or even unethical about a newspaper endorsing candidates (which the CCNY Messenger didn't even do!), even if it is an endorsement of a slate that includes members of a paper's own staff. The public can determine the bias of a newspaper on their own; it is not the role of a college president to determine for students that a newspaper is biased and then shut that paper down and cancel an election.

### Challenging Moses's Actions

The legal process grinds along at a snail's pace, and if the courts find President Moses's actions illegal, it will probably be after the goal she desired-damaging student activism at CCNY-has already been accomplished. The legal challenge is important, but student activists are focusing more on putting mass pressure on President Moses.

The CCNY Coalition to Defend Open Admissions is demanding that President Moses recognize last spring's legitimate GSC election and re-open the CCNY Messenger graduate student newspaper. While this has not yet happened, the campaign has generated a huge showing of solidarity from students and faculty across the country. Over 50 graduate student governments and graduate student unions signed an open letter to President Moses written by Bryan Hannegan, the President of the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS). Hundreds of individual students around the country have also sent protest letters to Moses.

NAGPS President Hannegan's letter to Moses expressed "strong opposition to your recent actions against the City College of New York's Graduate Student Council (GSC)." Hannegan's letter declares that Moses's actions "set a precedent which threatens the rights of students at any college or university in the United States, and these actions show blatant disregard for the fundamental principles of a free society: freedom of speech and association."

As students are speaking out around the US, students at City College and other CUNY schools must also speak out more vocally if Moses is to feel the pressure. Until CUNY students' bring their collective weight to bear, President Moses will continue to run roughshod over democracy. This will make it that much easier for Giuliani and the Board of Trustees to implement their insidious plan for educational apartheid at CUNY.

Students are encouraged to contact President Moses and let her know that you oppose her actions in shutting down the GSC and the CCNY Messenger. President Moses can be contacted at: Phone: 212-650-7285 Fax: 212-650-7680 Email: ytm@crow.admin.cuny.cuny.edu



President Moses of CCNY

# FOLLOW THE MONEY

ROBERT LAURO

For the past few years all the mainstream media has jumped on Rudy's bandwagon. They have sung his song on how much tax money would be saved if only we, the "regular" people, would go along with Rudy's ideas on how to make the city more livable. Unfortunately for many, this entails removing the poor from sight.

I noticed that when the mayor began his second term he had a healthy majority of voters behind him. That's not to say that he had a majority of citizens in favor of his ideas, just a majority of voters. These are two vastly different sets of numbers. The media have a vested interest in creating and enhancing Rudy's perceptions, are lax in making the average citizen aware of this basic fact. To elaborate, say that there are 100 citizens who can vote. They are old enough and meet the residency requirement. Out of that 100, 30 of them actually vote, 20 vote for Rudy and 10 for his opponent. The papers report that he has won by a 2 to 1 margin or has garnered 66% of the vote. He immediately declares that he has a mandate from the people to implement his policies. In reality, although he won the election, he had only 20% of the population behind him.

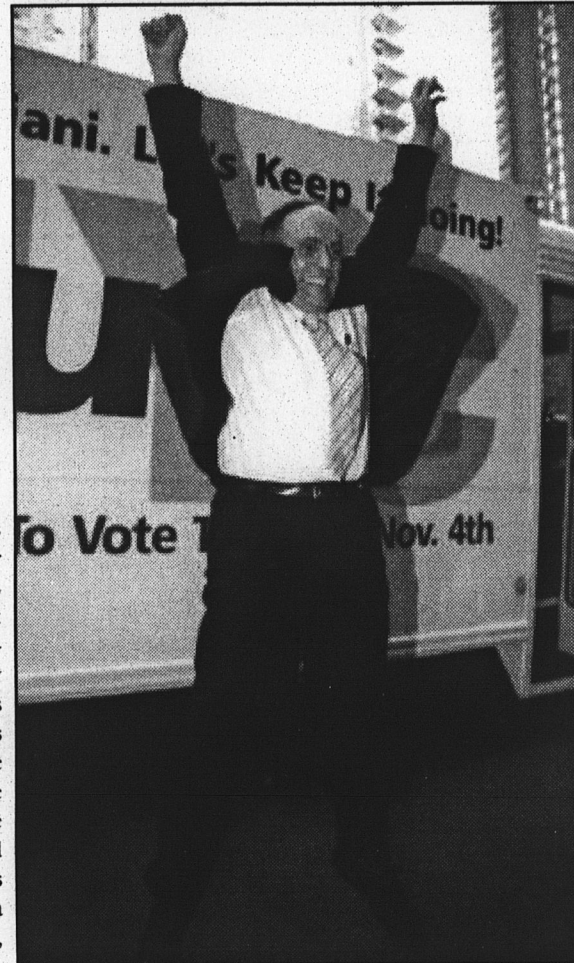
Needless to say, in American politics the winner takes all, so Rudy felt he had carte blanche to control the city. He promised to cut welfare to the bone and has done so. He has increased the fines people must pay for any infraction. Remember the jaywalking plan? How about fining store owners for not cleaning the sidewalks outside their businesses immediately after the private trash carriers pick up, usually before 6AM.

As for welfare, Rudy has repeatedly said how he has cut tens of thousands from welfare and hasn't seen any evi-

dence of people suffering! He fails to say where he looks and worse, the media never questions either his statistics or does any independent study to ascertain the veracity of his statements. They don't question where all this saved revenue is going. If, as Rudy says, 400,000 people are off welfare, where's the money that was saved? The average check for a married couple on public assistance is \$234. That's about \$67 a week per person for rent, electric, telephone and carfare. A person gets approximately \$20 per week in food stamps and is eligible for Medicaid, hardly the popular assumption fostered by Rudy and his pals in media of the "welfare queen" driving her Cadillac to pick up her "big check"!

Even at that meager amount, saving  $\$67 \times 52 = \$3,484 + \$1040$  in food stamps saves  $\$4,524$  per year  $\times 400,000 = \$1,809,600,000$ . When looked at it over that time span, it's quite a sum. Where is all this money? One may also ask, how much Human Resource personnel have been laid off? After all, any private company, with which Rudy loves to equate city agencies, that dropped 40% of its business would look to lay off at least 40% or more of its workforce. Nowhere does one see these questions asked in the "mainstream" media. Nowhere do reporters, save a few

What's happened to all the tax money the city has saved throwing people to the dogs?



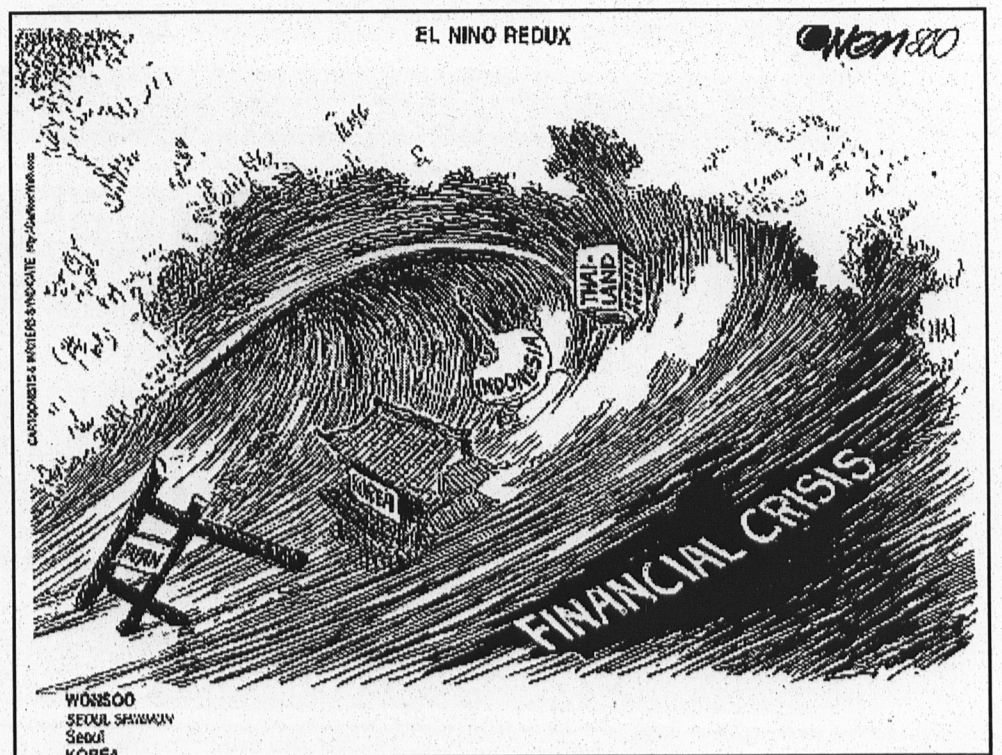
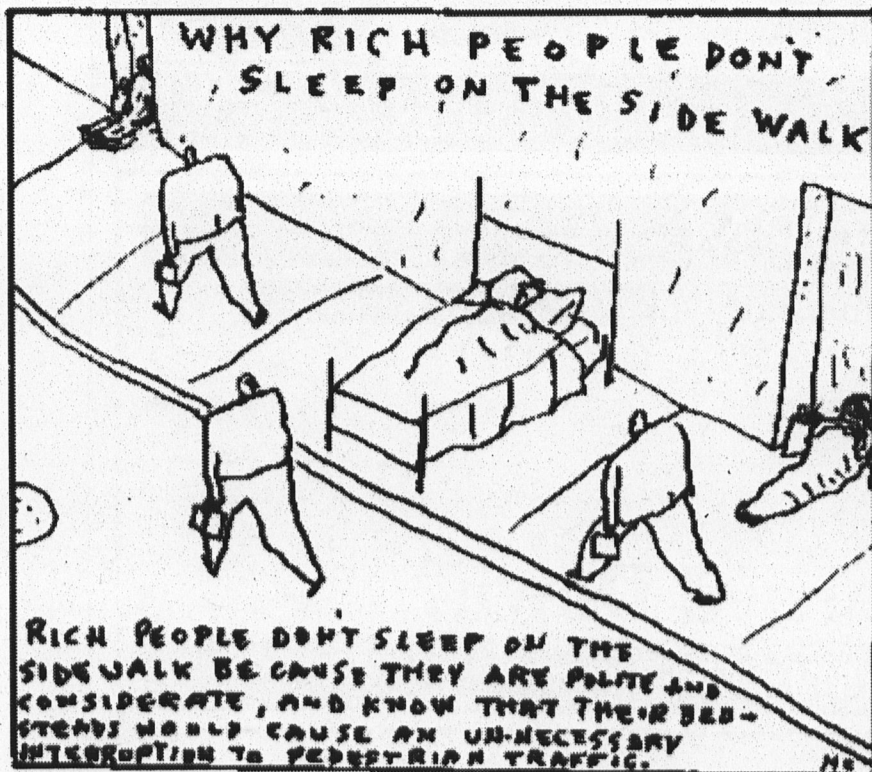
tepid articles in the Village Voice, ask any of these questions. All we are constantly told is how lazy, or how much a drain on the middle class the poor have become.

Nowhere does this administration open its books to compare how much is being lost by the granting of enormous tax breaks to major real estate firms or the Wall street crowd. The kow-towing to George Steingraber is but the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Your tax money is not only not being refunded due to savings from cutting the little bit that the poor get, your tax money is going into the pockets of those who are rich beyond their wildest dreams!

Yet in the current atmosphere, the lower middle class working family is constantly scapegoating those who are below them on the economic scale. They are skillfully manipulated into believing that the poor are a threat to them.

This premise would mean that the poor of our city have some as yet unidentified power to impact on those richer than they. Actually, the reverse is true!

Of course on reflection, the workers are far too busy just trying to keep one step ahead of the wolf at the door to spend time messing with the poor. There is a group who not only have the time, they have the motive. The motive is to keep workers and poor, some of which were once workers, from noticing where the real threat is. The savings that I referred to before has gone somewhere. If the poor and workers don't have it, what group does that leave? Just follow the money and you'll find out who is gaining and who is losing. That is, that your not too afraid to look. But, after all it is our tax money. We have a right to see where its spent and why we are still paying for helping people that aren't getting any help, or worse still giving help to the rich who don't need it.



# Recognition of Our Species: Through The Eyes Of The Child

ROBERT LAURO

Sept. 18, 1998 New York City, traveling from Staten Island to Brooklyn, I saw something transpire that gave me that flash of insight we get when we glimpse at truth. This flash was much more than truth. It is more like a window into those unanswerable questions we grapple with from the time we are cognizant of self until we leave this plane of existence. Many of us hope that we will find our answers in that plane. I am one of those who doesn't know if there is or isn't a plane after this at all. I guess I'll just have to wait and see, or not see, whichever the case.

Back to this flash that I mentioned earlier. History is my major and this semester I am taking three classes, all history, which means that I spend most of my time either reading or contemplating one of these three classes. I usually do this in one of three ways. One, catch up on my required readings, two, contemplate what I've read to apply and understand more fully what I'm studying and lastly, extrapolate those lessons to make some sense of society. That is, to understand why we are where we are as the human species.

It causes me to ask untold and somewhat paradoxical questions. The questions I was thinking about on my trip to Brooklyn went along a path of the "Who died and left you boss?" genre. I started my trip from Great Kills, SI. This is a middle to upper middle class area populated predominantly by Italian-Irish & Scandinavian ethnics with a higher than average amount of civil servants. As I traveled along Richmond Road

toward the ferry, the upper to middle class housing became middle to lower middle class. Once I passed underneath the SI Expressway, there was a dividing line of sorts. The areas became not only lower priced but the people became more non-white. South Asians, West Indians from Haiti, the Dominican Republic were present along with Americans who were black, white and Puerto Rican. The much-ballyhooed melting pot didn't seem to be melting except along certain ethnics of the same race.

in which all of us reside. If it were only the differences apparent on the Staten Island part of this trip the situation would still be wrong but probably addressable without too much social upheaval.

The second part of this journey gave me much to think about and that flash of insight into humanity that both makes me wonder why I didn't see it previously and gives me a sense of hope. The A train travels from Fulton street near Wall St. in Manhattan to my destination, East New York, Brooklyn.

in today's political climate. Why do we, as a society, allow such a situation to exist? Surely we cannot continue to witness this huge transfer of wealth into the hands of the few without reaching a point where the social fabric of society is shred beyond repair? Why do we continue to see one another as different? Are we really different, or has this been some manner of keeping each group so busy fighting one another that nobody notices the wealth being stolen from us all?

The last flash on this rather long trip. While on the subway three sets of parents got on the car I was on. Each belonged to an ethnic group different from their neighbor. Each had a three-year-old child in a stroller. Each studiously avoided looking at the other two couples despite the commonality of their having a child the same age. The flash came when, while I watched this subtle interplay, I noticed that the children noticed one another and unlike their respective parents, they began to smile at one another. Soon enough they were laughing and had made up some kind of signal game unfathomable to my aged mind. Why could these children see that they belonged to the same species and their parents could not? More intriguing is how and when we as adults lost that ability to recognize that we are of the same species. Everything else is sheer affectation, style, fashion or a way to make others of us all. Take time to speak to someone you feel is different than yourself. You will find that we are much more basically alike than any man made construction of difference. Try it. Let the children lead the way.



Crossing the bay, I saw Battery Park City astride the towers of Manhattan. The proximity of the source of Battery Park's residents wealth, Wall Street, started that first flash. As a student of history, I know how our respective ancestors acquired the wealth that has been parlayed into this metropolis


This line travels from the pinnacle of this cities source of wealth through what can only be described as slums, to terminate in what by any description rivals what one may find in many third world countries. Utter devastation, people with little hope of change and less access to effect that change

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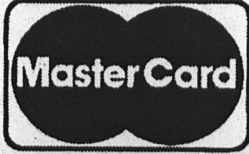
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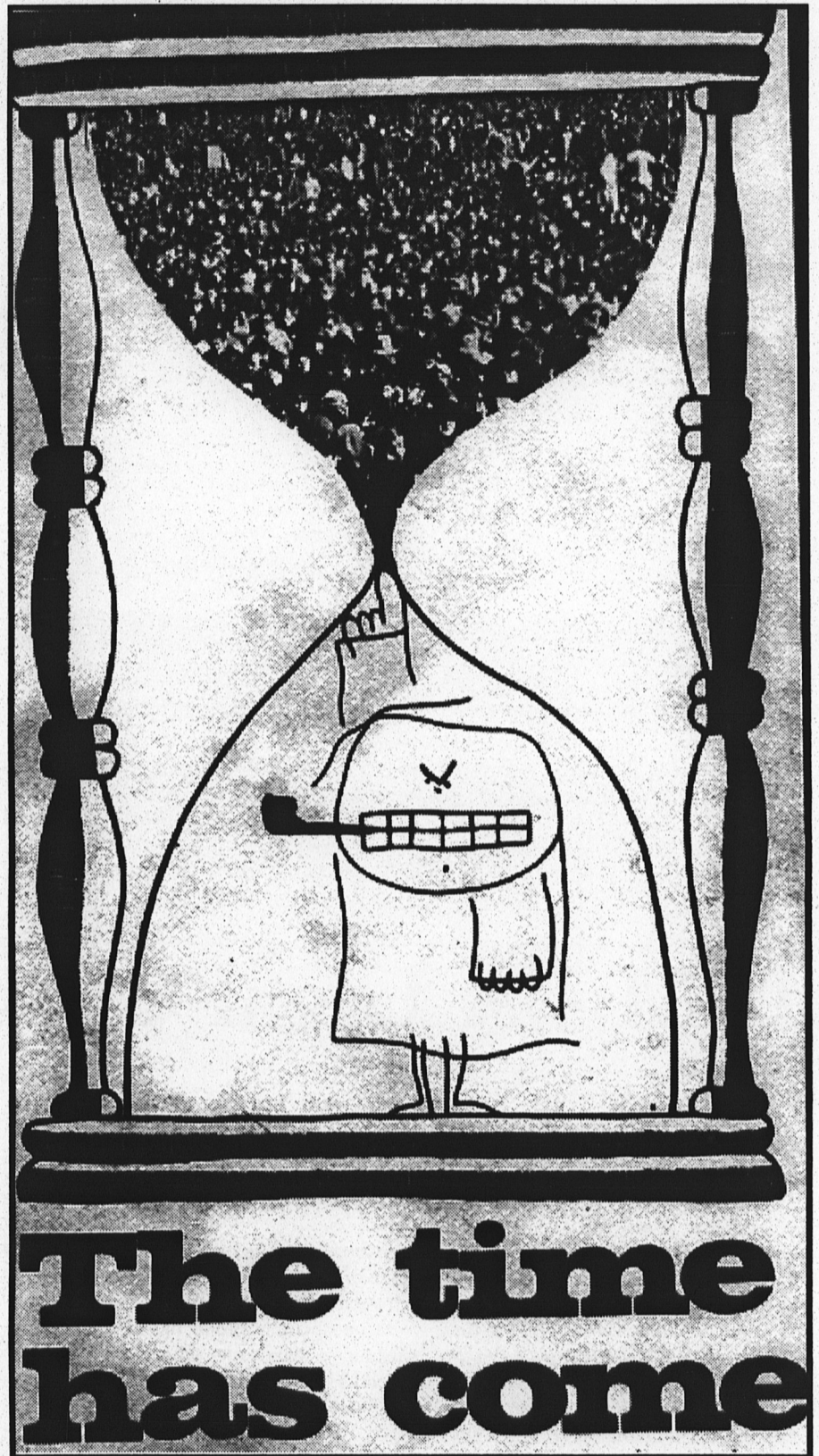
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# Muhammad's Call For Violence Toward NYPD At Million Youth March

TARA L. MARTIN

"If any of those bastards [NYPD officers] attack you, take their nightstick, and...ram it up their behinds." This is a sample of the rhetoric preached by Minister Khalid Muhammad, national conveyor of the Million Youth March (MYM) that took place Saturday September 5, 1998. An angry melee erupted between NYPD officers and march participants when the Giuliani-tutored Gestapo moved in to shut down the rally. Many MYM participants threw steel police barricades, chairs, bottles and anything they could get their hands on at the reprehensible NYPD officers who used pepper spray to disperse the crowd. Police Commissioner Howard Safir called for the arrest of Minister Muhammad for inciting a riot, in which one person was arrested, 16 people were hurt, some including police officers. The confrontation occurred after four hours of uneasy peace between 7,000 to 10,000 march participants and 3,000 police officers at the Harlem event. The MYM was billed as a social youth forum, convened to address issues concerning black youth. The conflict occurred when corridors of cops in riot gear pressed toward center stage to shut down the rally at 4 pm, the time that the event was to end by court order.

Marchers and participants from all over the country, as far away as Dallas, Texas came to hear speeches from many notable people, such as the Rev. Al Sharpton [MYM National Black Christian Movement Director] and the ever-controversial Dr. Leonard Jeffries, professor of African Studies at City College -

CUNY. Amid chants of "black power", speakers touched on host of issues such as:

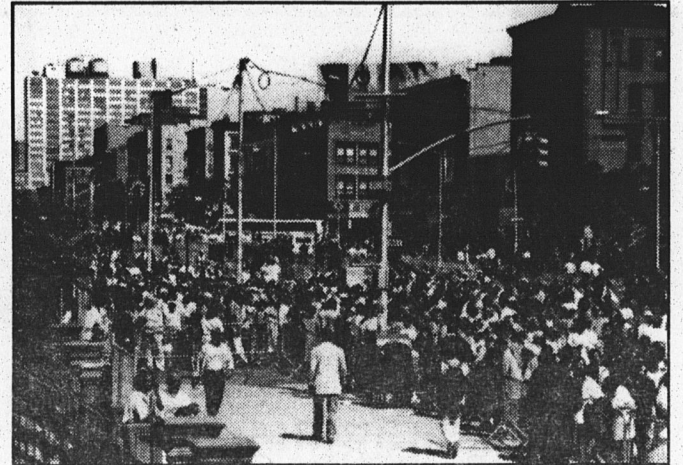
- the release of political prisoners
- an end to gang violence and conflict
- black business and economic development
- jobs for black youth and adequate resources that will improve conditions for black youth
- financial aid to black college students
- reparations for the descendants of slaves
- police brutality
- responsible motherhood and fatherhood

Some of the speeches were laced with anti-White, anti-Semitic, anti-police and anti-Giuliani references and rhetoric. After much antagonism by Mayor Giuliani and his uninformed rhetoric about the march, calling it "a hate march" and "... a pathetic showing", the Million Youth March went on with the help of Muhammad, Atty. Malik Zulu Shabazz [National Youth Director], Sister Malukah Shabazz, youngest daughter of Dr. Betty Shabazz and Malcolm X, and Sister Ericka Ford of the December 12th Movement and The Code, a grassroots political activist group. Rally organizers predicted that 50,000 people would attend. Organizers blame the low turn-out on the mayor, who fought to restrict the crowd size. Crowds were kept behind steel barricades that existed all the way down Lenox Avenue, which blocked pedestrians from crossing streets. Between 250 and 300 cops stood clustered, shoulder to shoulder, on street corners, some on rooftops and others on sidestreets.

In two instances, a police helicopter swooped down about 200 ft. above the crowd, to intimidate participants. Four subway stations were closed along the No. 2 line by the Transit Authority, making it even more difficult to reach the march.

Khalid Muhammad, a former aide to Minister Louis Farrakhan, prompted offense in recent days by referring to the mayor as "a cracker" and Jews as "bloodsuckers" who are taking "tractor trailer loads of money out of our [Black] community on a daily basis." During his anti-Semitic, anti-Giuliani speech, he called for the use of violence against the police, if they attempted to use force to disperse the crowd. "In self defense, if they attack you, take their guns. Beat the hell out of them [NYPD officers]...if they as much as touch you", were some of the messages which came from Muhammad's mouth. As he called the NYPD officers a "bunch of no-good bastards", he goaded the mayor by reminding Giuliani of these people's constitutional right for assembly, saying "...we have a right, a God-given right, a constitutional right to defend ourselves against anyone who attacks us."

Many politicians and local organizers that earlier supported Muhammad, based on the



MYM Photos by Kwan Burton

premise of the march, have stated their discontent at the folly of Muhammad during the march. State Senator David Paterson [D-Harlem] said Muhammad, "certainly should be held in contempt and probably arrested for exhorting young people to violence while he runs away." Paterson also blamed cops for turning Lenox Avenue into a "police state", adding "the entire community, whether you were in support of the march or not, was under siege." Police Commissioner Safir watched the gathering from his office at Police Headquarters from a video feed by police technicians. Cops carrying riot helmets stayed at the rear perimeter. Arrest teams with dozens of handcuffs and shackles hanging from their belts were standing by, while police buses were waited in case of mass arrests.

## MYM - A Legal Observer's View

RON MCGUIRE

I was a legal observer at the Million Youth March (MYM) and was behind the stage when 100 riot police formed a skirmish line at 3:55 PM. Michael Warren and Roger Wareham, the lead attorneys for MYM were there and told the police brass that the program was ending, Khalid Muhammad had finished speaking and the crowd was about to disperse in compliance with the 4 PM finish time ordered by the Court. At 4:03 PM, as crowd was dispersing the police stormed the stage. A group of about 50 or 60 Black youths at the back of the stage heroically tried to block the police assault.

Many of the police appeared half-hearted about the order to charge into a crowd that had been peaceful and well behaved all day. Unfortunately, other cops took the order to charge as an excuse to vent their bottled up rage at the black youth. Several police seized metal barricades and flung them at the protesters. Some young people wanted to fight back, but the leaders of the march, who the youth respected, prevented the police from getting the confrontation they tried to provoke.

When it became clear that the police were about to assault the stage, Khalid Muhammad led the crowd on a short march north from the stage to allow the young people to disperse out of harms way.

The image of the day which is seared most indelibly in my memory came as the

police were assaulting the young people behind the stage as many of the young security monitors tried to non-violently block the police assault to give their brothers and sisters time to leave the stage area. At this point several of the police got out of hand as some of the kids tried to hold metal barriers between them and the police.

At one point, a group of riot cops were pushing a barricade where one of the defenders was a small young woman, who appeared to be about 14 years and was much less than five feet tall. She clutched the barricade when one of the cops next to me grabbed her neck in his hand and began to squeeze her windpipe in a choke hold. He stopped when I shouted that I was a legal observer. But I will never forget the look of determination that child-woman's face as she clutched the barricade with all her strength, her eyes locked, angry and defiant, on the cop who was choking her as he and his comrades continued to push the barricade back on her and the other youths vainly trying to stop the assault on the stage. I saw the spirit of Soweto reflected in that angry young face and I wonder, as I write this, what perversion moved that cop to viciously and reflexively assault a black child for no reason.

And I realize that it is the same sickness which led Mayor Giuliani to condone an assault on a peaceful rally which would be

unthinkable at the St. Patrick's Day parade or any gathering of white people.

The Million Youth March was a beautiful event, although the city and many of the white police officers tried to disrupt the event from the start. Initially the police sealed the entire area of the march and would not let people onto Malcolm X Blvd. until after noon. I was at 117th street and Fifth Avenue where police said the street to Malcolm X Blvd. was closed and directed the people, who had followed the City's directions by taking the Number 6 train to 116th Street, to go north. However, every street was closed up until 125th Street where the police told us to go to Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. At 125th and Malcolm X Blvd. I complained to a Black police captain about the confusing and contradictory directions and he told me that the "people in charge" wanted to make it as hard as possible for people to get to the march and that the entire area was going to be sealed off until noon.

When I got to ACP Blvd., I found that the streets there were still closed. A white police inspector at 123rd street was exhorting the marchers to enter a barricaded area on 123rd street which he diplomatically described as "the pen" where the people would be detained until noon and then let onto Malcolm X Blvd. He could not seem to understand what so few of the Black youth wanted to walk into his "pen".

Like many marchers, I walked nearly a mile following misleading directions from the police before I was able to get onto Malcolm X Blvd. After noon the police finally allowed people to enter Malcolm X Blvd. from the west, but refused to open access from the east. When I arrived at Malcolm X Blvd. I saw that the entire street had been partitioned into small holding pens secured by metal barricades with "frozen zones" occupied by police between the barricaded areas. The police would not allow people to move between areas so when I arrived at 123rd street, I was unable to walk south to the stage on 118th street. The result was to compartmentalize the demonstration and to prevent large numbers of people from filling the street.

People demanded the right to move south on Malcolm X Blvd. and eventually the police relented and permitted people to move south, but many police herded the marchers through "choke points" and kept the "frozen zones" off limits. The result was incredible congestion and crowding with police present everywhere throughout the demonstration.

One of the significant stories of the day was the obvious split between many of the Black police officers from some of their white counterparts who seemed to be try-

Continued on pg. 17



# Million Youth March...Whutz Da Deal...

BY RALLY

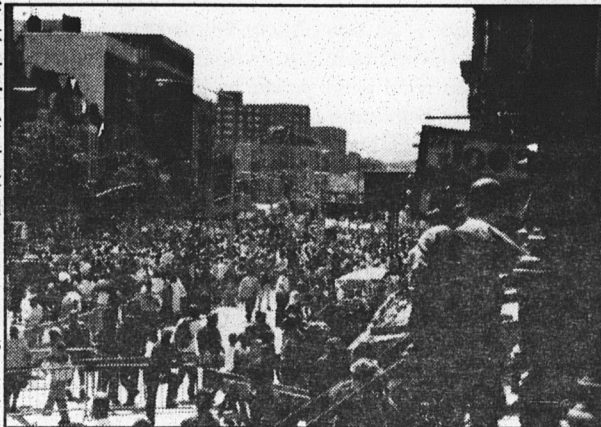
I am attempting to set the record straight by explaining, in detail, the Million Youth March. I am not saying that I am an expert on this event, but I have followed the organization of it since April 1998. Khalid Abdul Muhammad had the idea of sponsoring a march "The Million Youth March" (MYM). The intentions of the march were for the youth to march in favor of Black Nationalism, an end to gang conflict and violence, dual citizenship, and many other issues pertaining to the liberation of the Black men, women, and children. In addition, the youth were to speak out against racism, sexism, classism, police brutality, and ignorance. That is not what happened!

## The Beginning...

Muhammad quickly found obstacles in his path. The beloved Mayor of our beautiful city, Rudolph Giuliani proved to be Muhammad's greatest challenge. The opinion of a significant amount of people was that the two, Muhammad and Giuliani, should settle their personal differences at another time, and cooperate together to make the event a successful one. That was almost impossible. The first major difficulty that the MYM faced was obtaining a proper permit. Giuliani thought that it was not feasible to have the march on 118th Street because it was a residential area. He thought that it would be a better idea to have it at either Van Cortlandt Park or Randalls Island. Muhammad insisted that the march be held in Harlem. Alternative sights were not an option for Muhammad or the other organizers. Despite the fact that the organizers had a constitutional right to assemble where they chose, Mayor Giuliani insisted that the march be held elsewhere. Muhammad threatened to have the event in Crown Heights, the center point of tension between Black and Jewish residents, since the 1991, with or without a permit. After legal battles, the permit was granted to have the event on September 5th, 1998. The march was to be held between 118th street and Malcolm X boulevard and 125th street and Malcolm X boulevard, at 12 p.m. until 4 p.m. The troubles were not over yet.

Despite the valiant efforts of numerous organizers, the event was overshadowed by Muhammad's character. Instead of people commending Muhammad's intentions, they attacked his morals, insulted the man's intelligence, and mainly they tried to sabotage the event. The main objective of the anti-Muhammad movement was to turn as many people as they could against Muhammad. This included statements from people in high places like Abe Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League. Foxman

was against allowing Muhammad to march in Harlem. Foxman said the constitutional right to free expression "does not mean a hate monger with a history of intimidating and threatening Jews and other non-blacks should be given carte blanche to march through any neighborhood he chooses." In



defense of the MYM, Amadi Ajamu, co-chairwoman of the march's New York organizing committee said that "this march has nothing to do with Mayor Giuliani or the Jewish community. It's about Black and Latino youth coming together around some critical questions, like police brutality, troubled schools and, yes, racism." Taking the focus off of the true problems is always harmful to finding solutions. Rather than individuals participating in a movement to uplift those who need uplifting, people try to shoot down the hopes and aspirations of the oppressed. The youth (not just black) need guidance!

## The March...

The day of the march should be commemorated as a beautiful day, where old and young people participated together in making society better for all. It is terrible that when this event is spoken about, the words that are said will be disparaging and miserable ones. Individuals will constantly voice their opinions about what happened at the MYM. Speaking about Giuliani's police force blitzing the stage at 4:08 p.m., or Muhammad making suggestions to the adolescents to overpower police officers and seize their weapons.

Many people attended the MYM with their children to help them become educated about the trials and tribulations of prior years and decades. But when I asked people questions, at the march, I found that not many were in it to bestow a supportive foundation for the organizers. People were more or less quiescent and passive, not aware of the full situation. When I asked a mother, and her son, what they were trying to acquire through the days activities, the mother

answered "some T-shirts and autographs." Maybe she thought that this was Woodstock, or Summer Jams, and not a march to better life as she and her son knew it today. The best response that I received was from two older gentlemen (early thirties) who said that they were trying to keep their younger brothers and sisters out of jails, hospitals, and for them to finish their education. They also handed out paraphernalia on groups like the All-African People's Revolutionary Party. There were many mixed agendas this day.

The masses gathered in the hot, blistering sun to listen to the words of many respected men and women of color. These speeches gave enlightening optimism and confidence to all that attended. As the different speakers shuffled on and off the stage, incantations of desolation and calamity bellowed through Harlem. For blocks and blocks the chants you

heard by the common people were, "BLACK POWER, and THE HELL WITH GIULIANI!!!" The paramount message that the majority of the speakers were attempting to get through the skulls of the multitude was: How will black people get to and through the next millennium? A question that can not be answered as easily as it is asked. But these



At least somebody had public transportation!

positive persons gave many contrasted views on how all people can obtain dual citizenship, and hopefully get along together in this world as equals. The plan of how people can prosper mutually is made with good intentions, but how can we implement these blueprints of these plans?

## Public Opinion

The more the MYM is spoken about, the more people seek ways to criticize the event. Too many people feel that there was evidently something wrong about the march. Did Giuliani and his tactics to stop

the inevitable? Or was it Muhammad and his efforts to make the MYM a success, no matter what the cost? Mixed opinions about the two gentlemen shaded the outcome of this event. Too many people did not care to be involved because of the two men who were orchestrating the whole affair.

On Giuliani's part people felt that he wanted to make an example of his power at 4:08 p.m., on 9/5/98. This wasn't fair because the actions that the police department took, on Giuliani's command (of course), caused an outburst that led to the arrest of a few, injured police officers, and almost incited a riot. Giuliani should have taken into account the steps of having a rally, such as this one, and been a little bit more understanding, when pertaining to the closure to the event.

The consideration that should have been given was that the organizers knew that at 4 o'clock they would wrap things up as quickly as possible. The conception of those who were there was that Giuliani insisted that the police officers shut down the stage promptly at 4pm, with force if necessary. Giuliani hoped that something greater would escalate, making his premonitions correct. Now that his harbinger has come to pass, it will make it that much more difficult for the next group of people to acquire a permit to rally. Damn!

On the other side of the spectrum lays Mr. Khalid Abdul Muhammad. His actions portrayed him as an opportunist. People cannot look to him as a leader. There were many things that people felt that he did wrong. Most important was telling the youth to grab a police officer's gun. This is not something that you should tell anyone... let alone the children of our future. There are already too many examples of violence in the neighborhoods that the young black children see on a daily basis. There is no excuse for anyone to suggest that action, or similar ones, to a group that is so

impressionable. Muhammad had the right idea... just bad execution of the plan. So much more could have been performed to let the world know that black people are here to benefit in society, the same as every other race, creed, or color. People see Muhammad as a man who is trying to wear the same shoes as Malcolm X, and they feel that the comparison could never be. When I asked Ms. Dhaydia Smith about Muhammad she stated that "he had a good vision, but his politics overshadowed the day." This confirmed some of the assumptions made by the multitude.

Continued from pg. 16

ing to do everything possible to make the demonstrators uncomfortable and crowded. At one point a group of police officers closed off the barricades near the Mt. Olivet Church (I believe this was at 121st street) as the crowd surged and demanded the right to continue to march south. Eventually an obviously annoyed Black lieutenant came and, ignoring the objections of the white sergeant, he began to move the barricades himself, to the annoyance and chagrin of the white officers on the scene. Vignettes like this were repeated during the day as many of the Black police were caught up in the peaceful and joyful spirit of the marchers.

I saw many CUNY students at the March. The New York Regional Coordinator of the MYM is Erica Ford (York '97) who was brought up on disciplinary charges for defying an illegal speakers ban on Black Solidarity Day activities at York College in 1995. Erica is also the lead plaintiff in Ford v. Reynolds, the civil rights lawsuit brought by York college students and community activists to protest the speakers bans CUNY imposed at York College from 1993 through 1995.

She spoke about the need to inculcate positive values in Black and Latino youth and to universalize "the Code", a code of conduct for young people which was for-

mulated by Mutulu Shakur, (a former youth leader of the Black Panther party who is on death row in Pennsylvania). One of the other key speakers was Malik Abdul Shabazz, a young attorney who was recently a student activist at Howard University.

The central theme of the day was an uplifting and long overdue affirmation of the worth and purpose of Black Youth and a recognition of the genocidal nature of the attacks on the youth which we at CUNY are all too familiar with. I was proud to have witnessed this important event and I believe that we will see its influence at CUNY in the coming months. The Million Youth March was a significant event in the rebirth of the

Black student and youth movement and I am grateful to its organizers.

After unsuccessfully trying to stop the march, the City attempted to provoke a confrontation to prove the point they alleged in Court that, the demonstration could not take place without violence. The last minute police assault on the stage was nothing less than the City's final attempt to create the confrontation Giuliani wanted. However, the marchers and the march organizers refused to allow themselves to be taken in by the thugish tactics employed against them.

# Inside the Corporate Mantra: The Case of Wal-Mart

SAM BAIN

"We're all working together; that's the secret. And we'll lower the cost of living for everyone, not just in America, but we'll give the world an opportunity to see what it's like to save and have a better lifestyle, a better life for all. We're proud of what we've accomplished; we've just begun."

Sam Walton (1918-1992)

The year is 1945. Japan surrenders to the United States after being hit with two Atomic bombs, Franklin Delano Roosevelt is president, and New England's textile workers are holding out in a marathon 133 day strike over a threatened wage reduction. A star is born: the first Wal-Mart store opens in Bentonville, Arkansas.

In its fifty-three year history, Wal-Mart has evolved from a general store in Bentonville Arkansas into the world's 39th largest economy, ahead of 155 sovereign nations. With more than 750,000 employees (officially dubbed "associates") and 2,800 stores in the U.S., Wal-Mart is both the largest non-government employer and the largest retailer in our nation.

In the last ten years, Wal-Mart has spread its wings, opening more than 400 locations in Mexico, 7,150 in Canada, and other locations in Puerto Rico, Brazil, China, and Indonesia. According to the 1997 Wal-Mart annual report, top executives are enthusiastic about expanding their international and cultural horizons, "The Wal-Mart Supercenter looks right at home anywhere in the world." That is to say, anywhere where a 200,000 square foot warehouse and several acres of parking lots will fit.

Wal-Mart's success (profits soared to 7.6 Billion in 1997) is due in large part to their ability, as a huge retailer, to purchase products at very low prices. In their garment sales department, Wal-Mart has been able to eliminate labels all together, and instead produces clothing directly and markets the products under its own brand names, such as Arizona jeans, Kathie Lee women's wear, or Faded Glory men's clothing.

Profits on these "exclusive" labels have been tremendous; the Kathie Lee line alone makes over 100 million a year. Kathie Lee took home a cool 10 million from the deal in 1996 (she gave 1 million to a children's charity in New York). Other labels have been successful as well, although the Kathie Lee line, which now includes hand bags, eyeglasses, shoes, and the like is the store's premiere money-maker.

Wal-Mart's policy is to seek out the lowest costs possible; even when profits are soaring for the chain as they are now. Wal-Mart constantly attempts to cut production costs: wherever the lowest wages are, you will be sure to find Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart produces all around the world, including countries where protection of workers rights are non-existent: Bangladesh, where child labor is rampant; China, where workers are paid 12 cents an hour and held in prison-like dormitories; Indonesia, where workers are threatened with death for talking about factory conditions; Nicaragua, where workers' pro-

tections have been stripped away since the defeat of the popular revolution there. On average 80% of Wal-Mart clothing is made outside the U.S. The industry-wide average is 60%.

In the tens of thousands of factories around the world, in countries with little or no protections for workers, abuses inevitably occur. In Bangladesh in 1992, NBC Dateline investigators found children as young as nine years old sewing shirts for Wal-Mart for eight cents an hour until late in the night. Faced with video footage from inside the factory, Wal-Mart CEO David Glass, who raked in 4.6 million dollars plus millions in stock options in 1997, said "Children you and I might define that differently." The factory owner in Bangladesh explained that the workers on the tape just looked young, but are actually malnourished adults.

A Wall Street Journal report in 1995 exposed a factory in Guatemala producing for Wal-Mart where teenagers as young as 13 reported working up to ninety hours a week for below subsistence wages. Wal-Mart's response to the report was to drop production at the factory immediately, rather than trying to help the workers.

In neighboring Honduras, a National Labor Committee investigation found Wendy Diaz- a fifteen year old who would later come to the U.S. to testify before Congress about child labor-working 12 hour shifts with other teenagers sewing Kathie Lee label pants. A great scandal ensued, Kathie Lee burst into tears on national television, and after a meeting with Wendy, agreed to try to end child labor and sweatshop abuses in her factories.

More recently, a three part investigative report by Hard Copy and the National Labor Committee uncovered Wal-Mart "Faded Glory" jeans in production at the Chentex factory in Nicaragua. Workers reported that their paltry 23 cents an hour met only a third of their basic needs for survival, and workers who dared to speak of factory conditions were fired immediately.

Wal-Mart's general response to these scandals, which generated significant media attention and national outrage, has been the same: deny it, then refer the public to their corporate "code-of-conduct" and internal monitoring of factory conditions. If the smoke screen doesn't work, Wal-Mart is likely to end their contract with the factory in question and move to a different location farther away.

In it's six years of existence, Wal-Mart's code-of-conduct and internal auditing of fac-

ories has done little to improve conditions for workers in the many countries where the retail giant produces. The code is only just beginning to be translated and sent to factories. The list of factories in which Wal-Mart produces (which exceeds 1000 in China alone) is a kept secret, and the doors of these factories are not open to any sort of monitoring by human rights, religious, or workers' organizations. In fact the doors to most of the factories in Central America are guarded by armed security who search workers on their way in and out of work.

In the United States, corporations like Wal-Mart have rights above and beyond those of individuals. Wal-Mart guards its list of factories as "trade secrets." A Wal-Mart spokesperson said "If we use a factory, then K-Mart will want to use it, then Target, Nordstrum, then everybody." As in shoe manufacturing, where Nikes and Addidas are made side by

side have seen Wal-Mart put entire towns out of business.

In a November 1994 (10/11/94) article in the Wall Street Journal, Ms. Robinson from New Hampshire was quoted as saying "I really hate Wal-Mart. Everything is starting to look the same, everybody buys all the same things- a lot of that small town character is lost. They disrupt local communities, they hurt small businesses, they add to our sprawl and pollution because everybody drives further, they don't pay a living wage, and visually, they're atrocious."

Organized labor is a natural ally-as well. Job creation in this country over the last decade or so has been largely in low-paying service industry jobs in worksites such as Wal-Mart. While the manufacturing base has declined, and union membership has slipped to 11% of the workforce, unions have seen the need to organize new work-



side in the same factory, apparel from many different retailers is produced by the same factory already. The Chentex factory is a perfect example: the same underpaid workers sewed jeans for Wal-Mart and J.C. Penny side by side. Rev. David Dyson from the People of Faith Network on Wal-Mart's "trade secrets": "They are not making smart bombs or guided missiles. They are making blue jeans and underwear."

In response to their years of talks with sweatshop workers in Central America and China, the National Labor Committee is planning a major campaign for this fall and beyond calling for corporate disclosure of factory locations, open factory doors for inspection by independent local labor, human rights, and women's groups, respect for international and local labor law, a living wage, and of course the right to organize. Wal-Mart is the target for this campaign. "If we set our sights high on the largest retailer in the world, and win, the rest will follow," says Barbara Briggs of the Committee.

This year, there is no call for a boycott. Director Charles Kernaghan has said "This is the very opposite of a confrontation with Wal-Mart shoppers, who are the very people we want to work together with. We want to preserve jobs in the developing world, jobs with dignity, respect for human rights and that pay a living wage."

The campaign has found the National Labor Committee a new set of allies including community groups who oppose the Wal-Mart because of the traffic and environmental consequences and local merchants who

ers in the service industry.

Wal-Mart has used stock options as an incentive for its "associates", whose average hourly pay is \$6.19. The company, according to United Food and Commercial Workers president Douglas Dority, is "fiercely anti-union." Wal-Mart says it prefers not to deal with a "third party" in worker-management negotiations.

In Toronto last February, a provincial labor board ruled that Wal-Mart, because it had subtly threatened to close the store during a union organizing campaign the previous May, must recognize the United Steelworkers as the legal union for a Toronto location. This makes Toronto the first of Wal-Mart's 2,800 North American stores to have a union. Marie Kelly, a lawyer for the Steelworkers, said that the ruling should make it easier for other locations to organize.

Wal-Mart has plans to open 200 new locations a year- essentially one every other day. It already stands as the retail industry's undisputed champion of sales and profits. Within the tens of thousands of factories Wal-Mart uses to produce its goods around the world, and in its stores here and abroad, there exists a glaring injustice. Workers, underpaid, overworked in filthy sweatshops and denied the right to organize must have little idea that Wal-Mart's profits were up to 7.6 billion dollars in 1997 or that CEO David Glass paid himself 4.6 million dollars last year (plus millions more in stock options). But, Wal-Marts go up, every other day, and workers are still left behind.

# Masked Racism: Reflections on the Prison Industrial Complex

ANGELA Y. DAVIS

Imprisonment has become the response of first resort to far too many of the social problems that burden people who are ensconced in poverty. These problems often are veiled by being conveniently grouped together under the category "crime" and by the automatic attribution of criminal behavior to people of color. Homelessness, unemployment, drug addiction, mental illness, and illiteracy are only a few of the problems that disappear from public view when the human beings contending with them are relegated to cages.

Prisons thus perform a feat of magic. Or rather the people who continually vote in new prison bonds and tacitly assent to a proliferating network of prisons and jails have been tricked into believing in the magic of imprisonment. But prisons do not disappear problems, they disappear human beings. And the practice of disappearing vast numbers of people from poor, immigrant, and racially marginalized communities has literally become big business.

The seeming effortlessness of magic always conceals an enormous amount of behind-the-scenes work. When prisons disappear human beings in order to convey the illusion of solving social problems, penal infrastructures must be created to accommodate a rapidly swelling population of caged people. Goods and services must be provided to keep imprisoned populations alive. Sometimes these populations must be kept busy and at other times particularly in repressive super-maximum prisons and in INS detention centers they must be deprived of virtually all meaningful activity. Vast numbers of handcuffed and shackled people are moved across state borders as they are transferred from one state or federal prison to another.

All this work, which used to be the primary province of government, is now also performed by private corporations, whose links to government in the field of what is euphemistically called "corrections" resonate dangerously with the military industrial complex. The dividends that accrue from investment in the punishment industry, like those that accrue from investment in weapons production, only amount to social destruction. Taking into account the structural similarities and profitability of business-government linkages in the realms of military production and public punishment, the expanding penal system can now be characterized as a "prison industrial complex."

## The Color of Imprisonment

Almost two million people are currently locked up in the immense network of U.S. prisons and jails. More than 70 percent of the imprisoned population are people of color. It is rarely acknowledged that the fastest growing group of prisoners

are black women and that Native American prisoners are the largest group per capita. Approximately five million people including those on probation and parole are directly under the surveillance of the criminal justice system.



Three decades ago, the imprisoned population was approximately one-eighth its current size. While women still constitute a relatively small percentage of people behind bars, today the number of incarcerated women in California alone is almost twice what the nationwide women's prison population was in 1970. According to Elliott Currie, "the prison has become a looming presence in our society to an extent unparalleled in our history or that of any other industrial democracy. Short of major wars, mass incarceration has been the most thoroughly implemented government social program of our time."

To deliver up bodies destined for profitable punishment, the political economy of prisons relies on racialized assumptions of criminality such as images of black welfare mothers reproducing criminal children and on racist practices in arrest, conviction, and sentencing patterns. Colored bodies constitute the main human raw material in this vast experiment to disappear the major social problems of our time. Once the aura of magic is stripped away from the imprisonment solution, what is revealed is racism, class bias, and the parasitic seduction of capitalist profit. The prison industrial system materially and morally impoverishes its inhabitants and devours the social wealth

needed to address the very problems that have led to spiraling numbers of prisoners.

As prisons take up more and more space on the social landscape, other government programs that have previously sought to respond to social needs such as Temporary

Assistance to Needy Families are being squeezed out of existence. The deterioration of public education, including prioritizing discipline and security over learning in public schools located in poor communities, is directly related to the prison "solution."

## Profiting from Prisoners

As prisons proliferate in U.S. society, private capital has become enmeshed in the punishment industry. And precisely because of their profit potential, prisons are becoming increasingly important to the U.S. economy. If the notion of punishment as a source of potentially stupendous profits is disturbing by itself, then the strategic dependence on racist structures and ideologies to render mass punishment palatable and profitable is even more troubling.

Prison privatization is the most obvious instance of capital's current movement toward the prison industry. While government-run prisons are often in gross violation of international human rights standards, private prisons are even less accountable. In March of this year, the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the largest U.S. private prison company, claimed 54,944 beds in 68 facilities under contract or development in the U.S., Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Following the global trend of subjecting more women to public punishment, CCA recently opened a women's prison outside Melbourne. The company recently identified California as its "new frontier."

Wackenhut Corrections Corporation (WCC), the second largest U.S. prison company, claimed contracts and awards to manage 46 facilities in North America, U.K., and Australia. It boasts a total of 30,424 beds as well as contracts for prisoner health care services, transportation, and security.

Currently, the stocks of both CCA and WCC are doing extremely well. Between 1996 and 1997, CCA's revenues increased by 58 percent, from \$293 million to \$462 million. Its net profit grew from \$30.9 million to \$53.9 million. WCC raised its revenues from \$138 million in 1996 to \$210 million in

1997. Unlike public correctional facilities, the vast profits of these private facilities rely on the employment of non-union labor.

## The Prison Industrial Complex

Private prison companies are only the most visible component of the increasing corporatization of punishment. Government contracts to build prisons have bolstered the construction industry. The architectural community has identified prison design as a major new niche. Technology developed for the military by companies like Westinghouse are being marketed for use in law enforcement and punishment.

Moreover, corporations that appear to be far removed from the business of punishment are intimately involved in the expansion of the prison industrial complex. Prison construction bonds are one of the many sources of profitable investment for leading financiers such as Merrill Lynch. MCI charges prisoners and their families outrageous prices for the precious telephone calls which are often the only contact prisoners have with the free world.

Many corporations whose products we consume on a daily basis have learned that prison labor power can be as profitable as third world labor power exploited by U.S.-based global corporations. Both relegate formerly unionized workers to joblessness and many even wind up in prison. Some of the companies that use prison labor are IBM, Motorola, Compaq, Texas Instruments, Honeywell, Microsoft, and Boeing. But it is not only the hi-tech industries that reap the profits of prison labor. Nordstrom department stores sell jeans that are marketed as "Prison Blues," as well as t-shirts and jackets made in Oregon prisons. The advertising slogan for these clothes is "made on the inside to be worn on the outside." Maryland prisoners inspect glass bottles and jars used by Revlon and Pierre Cardin, and schools throughout the world buy graduation caps and gowns made by South Carolina prisoners.

"For private business," writes Eve Goldberg and Linda Evans (a political prisoner inside the Federal Correctional Institution at Dublin, California) "prison labor is like a pot of gold. No strikes. No union organizing. No health benefits, unemployment insurance, or workers' compensation to pay. No language barriers, as in foreign countries. New leviathan prisons are being built on thousands of eerie acres of factories inside the walls. Prisoners do data entry for Chevron, make telephone reservations for TWA, raise hogs, shovel manure, make circuit boards, limousines, waterbeds, and lingerie for Victoria's Secret all at a fraction of the cost of 'free labor.'"

## Devouring the Social Wealth

Although prison labor which ultimately is compensated at a rate far below the minimum wage is hugely profitable for the private companies that use it, the penal system as a whole does not produce wealth. It devours the social wealth that could be used to subsidize housing for the homeless, to ameliorate public education for poor and racially marginalized communities, to open free drug rehabilitation programs for people who wish to kick their habits, to create a national health care system, to expand programs to combat HIV, to eradicate domestic abuse and, in the process, to create well-paying jobs for the unemployed.

Since 1984 more than twenty new prisons have opened in California, while only one new campus was added to the

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# Global Sweatshops - The Time for Action is Now

WILLIAM WHARTON

"But mom all the other kids are doing it!" Corporate America has turned towards this childhood mantra for improper action as the push for profits leads them all over the globe. Beefing up the corporate bottom lines has translated into internationalizing the labor forces of almost every major corporation in the world. Almost all of your favorite brand names - The Gap, GUESS?, Wal-Mart, Disney, Nike - have taken advantage of unorganized workers in underdeveloped nations. Organized for profits not humanity, these corporate powers have become the centerpiece of national economies throughout the world. Whether it's sneaker plants in Indonesia or shirts factories in the Dominican Republic, workers throughout the world feel the sting of multinational profits on a daily basis. On Wall Street, these super profits have fueled an unprecedented seven year surge in stock prices, that has been built on corporate America's ability to transfer jobs from unionized workers in the U.S. to the cheapest labor force available.

For workers in the target countries, multinationals have radically transformed their everyday realities. Low pay, dangerous working conditions, long hours and near constant harassment have become the norm for sweatshop workers. Female workers in particular, suffer through a consistent program of sexual harassment by management. Backed by the cultural power of the public relations industry and the blind eye of the U.S. government, corporations are able to shield American consumers from this brutal tragedy and focus their attention onto their products. Operating on an international basis, multinationals have been able to elude their nationally based, trade union, human rights and social justice opponents.

## Whistle While You Work - The Case of Disney In Haiti

The Walt Disney company has literally cornered the market on marketing and selling childhood dreams. Disney has successfully

taken cartoon images such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck and used them to bridge generations of eager consumers. At a time in which American society seems to bombard people with images of sex and violence nothing could be more innocent than the Disney message. Deeper than this, Disney has sought to offer its theme parks as the perfect place for the regroupment of the shattered



American family. Hidden beneath this image is the reality of the workers producing the goods that fuel the massive profits of Disney.

Childhood dreams are not what many young people in Haiti are focusing on every day. Survival is much more consuming. The fact of the matter is that Disney doesn't actually have any factories in Haiti. Instead, the business is subcontracted to outside garment producers. There are currently 12 factories in Haiti which are dedicated to producing the hats, shirts and other apparel products that are sold at Disney's theme parks and retail stores. Among these corporations are L.V. Myles, N.S. Mart, Classic Apparel, CEE-Vetex, Genasco, Confections et Emballage, Megatex, Michiko and #32, #21 and #22 in the Industrial Park. Up until 1995 many workers in these factories were paid only 11 cents an hour for their work. Thanks to the organizing efforts of the workers and international support activities, workers now receive the minimum wage in Haiti which is set at 28 cents an hour.

Despite this improvement, work continues in the factories in 90-95 degree heat under the constant harassment of management.

However, the workers in these factories are not standing by idly and accepting this abuse. In May of 1997, Disney workers in the L.V. Myles plant in Port-au-Prince circulated a flyer opposing the horrible working conditions and low wages. In response to this management identified and fired 180 workers who they considered to be the organizers. In compliance with an early agreement for self monitoring of their distributors factories, a Disney investigative team visited the L.V. Myles plant in November 1997. Following this visit each worker who had rightfully complained about conditions was systematically fired by the company.

## International Pressure Produces Positive Results

Recent developments at the Megatex plant in Port-au-Prince have pointed to the power of coordinating international support with workers organizing efforts. On August 26, 1998 the Haitian workers organization, Batay Ouvriye reported that, "That Megatex management has agreed to engage in negotiations with the union and a lawyer." Such an action is unprecedented in the history of Haiti's worker-management struggles. Representatives at Batay Ouvriye credited, "international pressure, your letters and faxes, with this new level of cooperation on the part of management." The need to avoid negative publicity has apparently forced the company into a position in which it will have to deal with the workers collective bargaining unit.

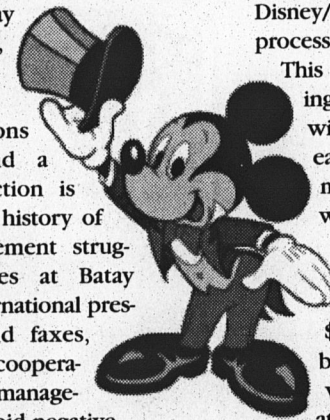
This recognition came after an August 10th campaign by the workers to have their union certified as the official bargaining unit at Megatex. As part of this process union leadership had to list the names of the union officials thereby challenging the company to take punitive action. This bold move did not

occur in isolation it was backed up by an international effort which flooded the boardrooms of Megatex and Disney corporation demanding that workers right to organize be respected. This action was backed up by a history of political protests taken by Haitian workers support groups such as the Disney/Haiti Justice Campaign in New York. The combination of the private campaign, the letters and faxes, combined with the threat of the public campaign, protest marches and public leaflettings in front of Disney stores, combined to exert the need pressure on Disney and Megatex.

## Ending Disney's Fantasia

People in America can play a key role in the struggle to defend workers rights internationally. On an individual level citizens should refuse to purchase the sweatshop products that Disney sells under the public relations guise of innocence. On a collective level people can join groups such as the Disney/Haiti Justice Campaign and begin the process of educating the American public.

This campaign can begin at home by raising the question of Disney's role in Haiti with friends and family members. With each conversation, we can come that much closer to creating a world in which mass exploitation is a thing of the distant past. The magical fantasy world of Michael Eisner, the CEO of Disney, in which he gets paid \$97,600 an hour has been built on the backs of thousands of Haitian workers who make 28 cents an hour. This situation cannot be tolerated for long and the Haitian workers have shown the courage to stand up, the least the American public can do is lend them a hand in this effort.



If you're interested in organizing to end sweatshop labor contact the College Voice at 982-3101. For more information about Disney's labor practices in Haiti check out [home.earthlink.net/~dhjc](http://home.earthlink.net/~dhjc).

## Child Labor in America

Every five days in America, a child is killed on the job. For 14-year-old Alexis Jaimes, that day was June 7, 1997 on a Saturday morning on a construction site in the Texas town that was his home. As Alexis bent over to move hydraulic lines for the pile-driving crane he worked beneath, its 5,000-pound hammer broke loose and fell on him. Frozen by the sight of the boy's broken body, his back, legs and ribs crushed, a co-worker could only tell police, "It happened very quickly" according to the Associated Press.

America's more than 4 million working children, legal and illegal, encounter many dangers. A total of 100,000 children are injured on the job each year, one-third needing emergency room treatment according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. But both political parties have protected their corporate friends by failing to enforce the existing laws. Despite a maximum fine of \$10,000 for illegal hiring of child labor, the average fine in 1997 was \$881. This is hardly a great deterrent, especially since there are only 800 inspectors nationally severely limiting the charges of being caught.

Child laborers are as young as four-year-old Angel Oliveras, who stumbles between chili pepper plants as tall as his chin in New Mexico. Bruce Lawrence is eight years old and has worked for over three years in

Florida's bean fields.

A recent Associated Press investigation followed the work products of 50 children to more than two dozen major companies, including Campbell Soup Co., H.J. Heinz, J.C. Penny, Sears and Wal-Mart - all household names and top 500 companies. For example, at Grayson Sewing in Texas, seven children under 14 years old were found folding and bagging dresses up to 12 hours a day. The youngest was nine years old. These products were bought by J.C. Penny.

A century ago more than 2 million children labored in American factories, fields and mines. The justification then was that each of them might be a miniature Horatio Alger hero who could rise to riches through hard work and perseverance! The socialist and labor campaigns of those days exposed this hoax, which led to the introduction of child labor laws starting at the local and state levels. It took the huge upsurge of workers and labor in the 1930s for national legislation.

The most onerous child labor was banned under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. This banned children under 14 from farm work (except small family farms), and children under 16 from working during school hours and in factories. Child labor is clearly a result of the miserably low wages that tens of millions of workers earn. "If adults were paid

a living wage, we wouldn't have child labor," says Ann Millard, a child labor specialist from Michigan State University. Three out of four migrant families earn less than \$5,000 yearly.

Pesticides also wreck the lives of child laborers. From California's Central Valley to Florida's strawberry fields, tens of thousands of children work in a sea of toxic chemicals whose long-term health effects are almost completely unknown. Although there are government standards for pesticide residues in the food supply, these standards intentionally ignore the children who work in the fields picking crops. The political pressure of big farm owners and the food companies have ensured that these children are sacrificed for greed and larger profits. The federal government has totally failed to fund research on child farm workers. The federal government has spent only \$2.5 million for research on injuries to child farm workers, compared to, for example, \$700 million spent each year on crop and livestock studies.

What has been the political response to this scandal? In 1996, Congress relaxed laws related to child labor in certain mechanical jobs. The old argument about hard work building character and giving children an economic start in life is making a comeback. The real situation is that long work hours already interfere with the chance for millions

of children to get a decent education. Companies today are demanding more labor for lower wages. There has been a massive increase in part-time employment of children in fast food and in retail - work that used to employ adult workers with full-time jobs with benefits. They argue that we need to compete with cheap foreign labor. Does that also mean we need to match the abysmal standards in many countries related to child labor?

The trend of falling levels of child labor ended in 1995. Don't look for conscience when it comes to making a profit. That's why we need to put economic decision-making into the hands of ordinary workers, not the millionaires who own the factories and farms and pay the politicians. We need to fight for wages that are adequate for working families, strict legislation against the exploitation of child labor by the employers, workers' control of safety enforcement in every job site, and the right of every worker to belong to a union.

Darlene Adkins of the National Consumers League questions the labor department's commitment to do anything about child labor. "If there were a toy that was harming 200,000 kids a year," she says, "it'd be off the market."

# Death of a Dictator

## A Turning Point for Democracy in Nigeria?

OLUSOJI OLOWULE

For many Nigerians, the death of General Sani Abacha on June 8, 1998 offers the best hope for the restoration of a democratic government. Three months ago, the only industry in Nigeria was the wild nationwide campaign proclaiming General Abacha the "best" candidate for the Nigerian presidency. After banning the opposition parties, Abacha was declared as the civilian candidate of choice of the major parties continuing his facade of democracy.

Not only were hunger and unemployment running the nation ragged, they were not even officially recognized as problems. Petroleum products were forever in short supply, despite the fact that oil is a major resource for export. The sight of vehicles parked on roadsides or gas stations as their owners kept vigil for supplies that never arrived became commonplace. Three months ago, the public power supply was only available in fits and starts, in an inverse relationship to the frequency of despair and need in Nigeria.

Earlier in April, all five political parties had elected Gen. Sani Abacha as their candidate. The government elections were scheduled for this past August. This was done to eliminate the possibility of any ulterior motives by the military junta and the official political parties. After that

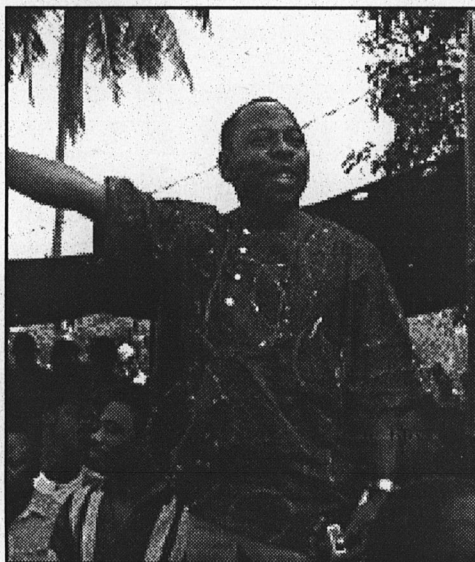


Sani Abacha

decision by the parties, voter participation for the elections was the lowest in the history of the country reflecting an acknowledgment by the people this was no real plan for democracy. Since Nigeria gained independence from Great Britain on October 1, 1960 the nation has been ruled by civilians for only nine years. Nigeria has been mostly ruled by a small elite of military rulers. As a result, democratic rights and civil liberties were frequently suppressed and large protests smashed by governmental force. In Nigeria there was another destabilizing factor, the struggle between the several different regional powers for control of the different oil rich areas.

After gaining independence the country had to deal with the fact that of over 250 ethnic groups existed within its borders. The three largest tribes are the Hausa/Fulani in the North, the Yoruba in the southwest, and the Ibos in the southeast. There was a civil war between 1967-1970, when the Ibo Biafran Republic tried

to secede from the rest of the nation. A major reason for the abolishment of the June 1993 election was that a political leader named Chief Moshood Abiola, a Yoruba, had won the election. General Sani Abacha and other military rulers, who had previously carried out a coup to attain power, threw out the election and imposed a brutal dictatorship that left many opponents of his regime in political prisons. For human rights activists like Ken Saro-Wiwa, protesting the Abacha gov-



Ken Saro-wiwa

ernment and challenging the hegemony of multinational oil companies translated into execution at the hands of the state.

After the death of General Sani Abacha's death, General Abdulsalaam Abubakar became Nigeria's new president, chosen by a group of military generals. As a symbolic gesture for national reconciliation, many political prisoners were swiftly released and all criminal charges against the prisoners were dropped. General Abubakar also confirmed reports that government investigators were searching for money that had disappeared during General Abacha's five year dictatorship.

According to government reports, billions of dollars vanished during Abacha's rule, much of it into his overseas bank accounts and those of his family, friends, and top government officials. In terms of Nigeria's return to democracy, General Abubakar insisted that the elections are to be held on February 27, 1999, and a new chief executive is to be sworn in on May 29, 1999. The general has said that he would not seek office. Nigeria has become accustomed to military coups in its history, and many Nigerians fear that despite Abubakar's promises, the military will find a way to hold on to power after the transition date.

## Masked Racism: Reflections on the Prison Industrial Complex

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California State University system and none to the University of California system. In 1996-97, higher education received only 8.7 percent of the State's General Fund while corrections received 9.6 percent. Now that affirmative action has been declared illegal in California, it is obvious that education is increasingly reserved for certain people, while prisons are reserved for others. Five times as many black men are presently in prison as in four year colleges and universities. This new segregation has dangerous implications for the entire country.

By segregating people labeled as criminals, prison simultaneously fortifies and conceals the structural racism of the U.S. economy. Claims of low unemployment rates even in black communities make sense only if one

assumes that the vast numbers of people in prison have really disappeared and thus have no legitimate claims to jobs. The numbers of black and Latino men currently incarcerated amount to two percent of the male labor force. According to criminologist David Downes, "treating incarceration as a type of hidden unemployment may raise the jobless rate for men by about one-third, to 8 percent. The effect on the black labor force is greater still, raising the [black] male unemployment rate from 11 percent to 19 percent."

### Hidden Agenda

Mass incarceration is not a solution to unemployment, nor is it a solution to the vast array of social problems that are hidden away in a rapidly growing network of pris-

ons and jails. However, the great majority of people have been tricked into believing in the efficacy of imprisonment, even though the historical record clearly demonstrates that prisons do not work. Racism has undermined our ability to create a popular critical discourse to contest the ideological trickery that posits imprisonment as key to public safety. The focus of state policy is rapidly shifting from social welfare to social control.

Black, Latino, Native American, and many Asian youth are portrayed as the purveyors of violence, traffickers of drugs, and as envious of commodities that they have no right to possess. Young black and Latina women are represented as sexually promiscuous and as indiscriminately propagating babies and poverty. Criminality and deviance are racialized. Surveillance is thus focused on communities of color, immigrants, the unemployed, the undereducated, the homeless, and in general on those who have a diminishing claim to social resources. Their claim to social resources continues to diminish in large part because law enforcement and penal measures increasingly devour these resources. The prison industrial complex has thus created a vicious cycle of punishment which only further impoverishes those whose impoverishment is supposedly "solved" by imprisonment.

Therefore, as the emphasis of government policy shifts from social welfare to crime control, racism sinks more deeply into the economic and ideological structures of U.S. society. Meanwhile, conservative crusaders against affirmative action and bilingual education proclaim the end of racism, while

their opponents suggest that racism's remnants can be dispelled through dialogue and conversation. But conversations about "race relations" will hardly dismantle a prison industrial complex that thrives on and nourishes the racism hidden within the deep structures of our society.

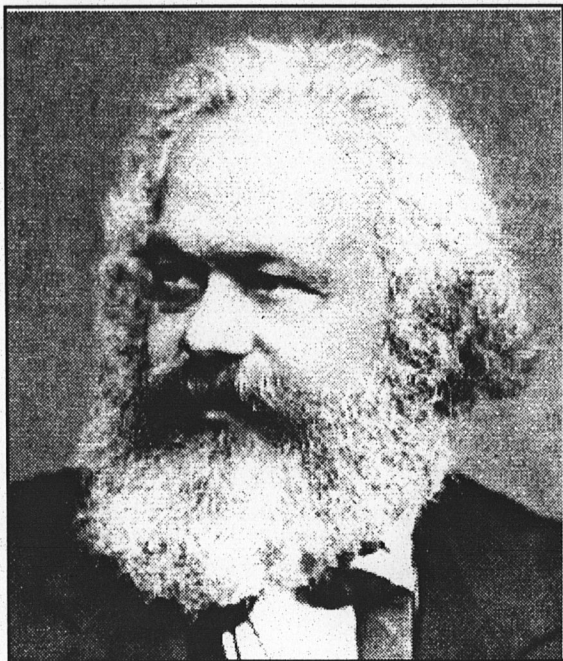
The emergence of a U.S. prison industrial complex within a context of cascading conservatism marks a new historical moment, whose dangers are unprecedented. But so are its opportunities. Considering the impressive number of grassroots projects that continue to resist the expansion of the punishment industry, it ought to be possible to bring these efforts together to create radical and nationally visible movements that can legitimize anti-capitalist critiques of the prison industrial complex. It ought to be possible to build movements in defense of prisoners' human rights and movements that persuasively argue that what we need is not new prisons, but new health care, housing, education, drug programs, jobs, and education. To safeguard a democratic future, it is possible and necessary to weave together the many and increasing strands of resistance to the prison industrial complex into a powerful movement for social transformation.

**Angela Davis is a former political prisoner, long-time activist, educator, and author who has devoted her life to struggles for social justice.**



# 'A Movement of the Immense Majority' 1848-1998

WILLIAM WHARTON



labor from the sit down strikes in Flint that helped form the United Auto Workers to the creation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). To help in celebrating this momentous document we will examine the social, political and economic realities of the late 20th century with message of Marx and Engels.

## Global Expansion - Not A 20th Century Phenomenon

Until the recent almost worldwide financial meltdown, business journals throughout the land have expounded the victory of the global market system. The expression "its a small world" seems to have gained a new validity as multinational corporations penetrate every corner of the globe. In truth, the

Global markets in crisis... The President about to be impeached... Less than half of Americans voting... The gap between the rich and poor expanding every day... The tremendous uncertainty that builds each day gives more fuel to the mystical notion that the turn of the century will spell doom for all of earth's citizens. But as the world heads towards the new millennium, the time has come to tally up the score of the 20th century to reveal the course of the future. This latter half century has unmistakably been the era of capitalism, the system of production that ensures the profits of the few on the backs of the many. After beating back the growing workers movements of the early part of the century, the capitalist elite have demonstrated that profit has become the deciding element in almost every national and international decision. We have recently seen a series of currency devaluations followed by the harsh austerity measures of the IMF as millions of people throughout Southeast Asia suffer, lending credence to the notion of "profits before people."

With the fall of the Stalinist Soviet Union and sharp retreat towards capitalist restoration by the People's Republic of China, the fate of millions of workers has been left in the hands of the powerful few. Multinational Corporations such as Wal-Mart, General Motors and Nike (to name a few), have literally torn up the globe in their feverish race to exploit the cheapest labor and commodity markets. Lacking a viable socialist alternative, the workers of the world have been left defenseless to crawl to the thrown of bourgeois mastery.

However, as we prepare to celebrate the millennium, another auspices commemoration is underway - the 150th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto. The Manifesto's authors, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels are considered to be forefathers of the modern socialist theory and created the manifesto for German workers on the edge of what they thought would be a successful revolution in 1848. Since that time, the document has been the foundation on which revolutionary movements from Peking to Chiapas have stood. Armed with its theoretical power, Communists across America worked tirelessly to create and sustain organized

real global expansion traces its origins to 1492 and the landing of Christopher Columbus in the "New World." This historic event triggered the systematic elimination of native societies in the Americas and the global expansion of European capital via the colonial system. Writing in the mid-19th century, Marx and Engels revealed the tendency within the capitalist mode of production for global expansion, "The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere." Today, the survival of corporations such as McDonalds is based on their twofold ability to identify and exploit new markets of consumers and the ability to globalize their supply sources to meet these markets.

This process of globalizing comes with dire consequences for both the new consumer and newly created commodity producers. The Manifesto points to the idea that, "It compels them (all nations of the world) to introduce what it calls civilization in their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word after its own image." This standardization of society in the image of the bourgeoisie, is not one of the even development of nations. It is one of "combined and uneven development" as people in China have their culture submerged below a massive heap of Big Mac's and workers in South America suffer as their environment is trampled upon by herds of cattle. The reorganization of these national economies to meet the needs of multinational corporations radically transforms the productive activities of citizens and connects them to the market economy for subsistence. All this in the name of the accumulation of profit concealed in a mask of bourgeois freedom.

## Freedom and Bourgeois Society

A consistent argument advanced against communist society is that the capitalist system provides for the protection of individual rights. Marx and Engels tackled this question when they examined the true meaning of freedom in bourgeois society, "By freedom is meant, under the present bourgeois conditions of production, free trade, free

selling and buying." Free trade has overtaken existential freedom as capitalism continues on its course of social coercion. Forced proletarianization, the movement of workers from the fields to the cities to find food and shelter, has been the standard course in "developing" nations as national economies are redirected from subsistence production to market production. No better example is offered than that of Indonesia where the once agrarian based population has been radically forced into the urban slums of Jakarta to provide for their existence.

Within the context of the "industrialized" world, bourgeois notions of freedom of the individual have been smashed by the commodification of social relations. Instead of being able to deal with each other based on shared humanity, the post-industrial American cultivates relationships connected to the exchange of currency or products. One need only take a trip to one of the num-



berless shopping malls in America to understand that large sections of the population are trapped in the powerful allure of the consumer lifestyle. Within this framework, the only freedom is the freedom to purchase more and feed into an insatiable appetite to acquire more material goods

Property relations, the ability of individuals to control private property more specifically, is the foundation of bourgeois conceptions of freedom. Institutionalized in America by the mythical notion of the brave American homesteader courageously staking out his piece of land, it totally disregards the damage done during this process and masks the true meaning of private property. The Manifesto defends communistic notions of property ownership by stating, "You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths." This notion of focusing societal powers towards providing for the nine-tenths of society challenges previous historical movements which Marx Engels felt were, "movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities." Using class as the binding ele-

ment, "The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority."

## The Organization of the Proletarian Majority

In order to carry out this movement the Communist Manifesto issues a warning about the role of the liberal wing of the bourgeois and its interaction with the working class. The authors describe "Political power, properly so called" as "merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another." With the expansion of bourgeois dominance in industry they have, "conquered for itself, in the representative state, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." This framework allows us to gain a sharper insight into the seemingly incessant repetition of the American political system.

Every four years candidates are trotted out onto the public arena representing the interests of the ruling class in its different forms. The outright attack programs of the Republican party which target minorities, women and working people in general are easily detectable. The Democratic Party, on the other hand, provides a different stumbling block for the working class. As the Manifesto stated clearly, "A part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social grievances in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society." Democrats speak not of transforming society for the benefit of working people but of attempting to moderate the brutality of a society based on the accumulation of profits. Marx and Engels pointed to the foolishness of this notion when they wrote that, "The socialistic bourgeois want all the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and dangers necessarily resulting therefrom. They desire the existing state of society, minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements...the bourgeoisie naturally conceives a world in which it is supreme to be the best..." The results of this failing strategy can be seen in the destruction of the American labor movement and the sharp decrease in hourly wages for workers over the last twenty years as working class politics have remained firmly tied to the Democratic party.

Instead, the authors point to the long term struggle for the organization of workers into collective structures as the winning strategy of the class struggle. The constant clashes between owners and workers create many violent confrontations, some of which provide momentary relief for the masses. The Manifesto states, "Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies not in the immediate result, but in the ever expanding union of workers." This is the thrust of what it means to be a communist, namely to assist in the organization and radicalization of workers, within the trade unions, the communities and in the political realm. Internationally, this points to efforts by workers such as those in Haitian workers centers like Batay Ouvriere, who are attempt-

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# Russia: The Capitalist Experiment Fails

MANJULA WIJERAMA

"Communism is dead!" was the triumphant cry of the corporate media, capitalist politicians and academics all over the world upon the collapse of the Soviet Union. The "New World Order" proclaimed by then US president George Bush was to usher in a new historical epoch of unbridled global capitalism led by the political and military leadership of the US showering the world with the fruits of private enterprise bringing in to the capitalist heaven those countless millions trapped in communist decay and third world misery. The people of Russia and the so-called Third World had only to follow the "success" of the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) like South Korea to enter the "first world" of capitalist prosperity.

In 1997 the South Korean economy went bust along with the rest of the NICs of the Asia. In 1998 Russian capitalism, a basket case from the very start, has hit a dead-end. Russian capitalism from its birth a creature financed and politically supported by the leading capitalist powers has been incapable of developing internal political stability or economic growth. The vast majority of Russians and the other peoples of the former Soviet Union live in poverty and extreme insecurity. Unemployment is rampant, prices too high for basic goods and those that have work are not paid for many months of labor. Pensioners are reduced to begging and selling trinkets to supplement their paltry incomes, young women are turning in droves towards a growing sex trade with international connections, soldiers are without wages and have hardly adequate clothing.

Basically every section of society whether one is young, old, male, female, manual laborer, intellectual, farmer or soldier has been in crisis. However Mercedes Benzes, cell phones, Italian suits and extravagant wealth is also in evidence in Moscow and other cities.

Russian capitalism has enriched a tiny layer of Mafioso, former state managers and international speculators. The shortages of quality consumer goods typical of the old Soviet days is no longer a problem. Today the problem is only a tiny percentage of the population can afford to buy these goods. Capitalism exists in Russia in its most basic and naked form, stripped of its democratic pretensions and the language of upward mobility. With the massive social dislocation and no prospect of living standards getting better, all the nasty fascist, anti-semitic, clerical forces from the days of the Czars are returning to capitalize on the discontent.

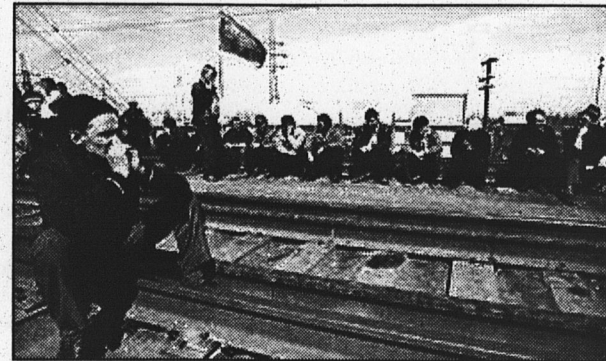
The US and Europe have openly stated that a military dictatorship may be the best option if Yeltsin is incapable of preserving Russian capitalism. As usual behind the language of freedom and democracy, world capitalism is interested in the final analysis only in preserving free markets for profit making. The US has been coddling a relationship with Russian strongman General Lebed as a possible alternative to the politically weak and ailing Yeltsin.

In the last month output has plunged by at least a tenth, prices have shot up by two-thirds, imports have plummeted by a third and Russians are ever more worried about having food and fuel for the winter. Russia has defaulted on billions of dollars of debt owed particularly to German banks. Yeltsin's choice for Prime Minister



Chernomyrdin, a free marketer, was overwhelmingly rejected by the Communist dominated parliament, the Duma, and Yevgeny Primakov a choice put forward by the Communists appointed. Included in the new Cabinet are other figures close to the Communists such as Yuri Maslyukov, the senior deputy prime minister overseeing the economy and Victor Gerashchenko, chairman of the central bank.

However the voices of capitalism in Russia like Anatoly Chubais are not too worried. Despite talk of renationalization most of the new appointees are merely putting forward policies that will shore up the falling ruble and



pay some of the back wages owed workers and pensioners. While any talk of helping workers is anathema to world capitalism they realize that Russia has reached a point where the harsh measures of capitalist restoration have to be suspended and the people ameliorated in order to stave off a wholesale social collapse.

The working class of Russia while placing their support behind the Communists led by Gennadi Zuganov to protect them from Yeltsin's capitalist madness will find that these unreconstructed Stalinists have no program for an alternative to capitalism. The Communists today are a social democratic party committed to the defense of private property. While they may go so far as to even nationalize some failing banks or industries they will do this only as a way of maintaining the overall health of Russian capitalism. A new political culture has to be created in Russia, one that learns from the failure of Stalinism to provide democracy and individual freedoms for the people, one that learns from the dead end of capitalism, a culture that draws from the pre-Stalinist period of Lenin and Trotsky.



## "A Movement of the Immense Majority" 1848-1998

Continued from pg. 22

ing to form a union to demand higher wages and better working conditions from contractors of the Disney corporation. Nationally, the creation and expansion of the Labor Party since its inception in June of 1996 offers the opportunity for the organization of the working class into a political power.

### The Coming Communist Revolution

A future of revolutionary upsurge in America and internationally offers bright hope for coming generations. It promises to end the wastefulness of bourgeois society, to sweep away the foundation of greed and create a society where, "we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." This is a long and arduous task which will require disciplined action by workers, students and all other oppressed peoples. This "free development" comes only from the suppression of the exploitative tendencies of bourgeois society. As Marx and Engels wrote, "Communism deprives no man of the power to appropriate the products of society; all that it does is to deprive him of the power to subjugate the labor of others by means of such appropriations."

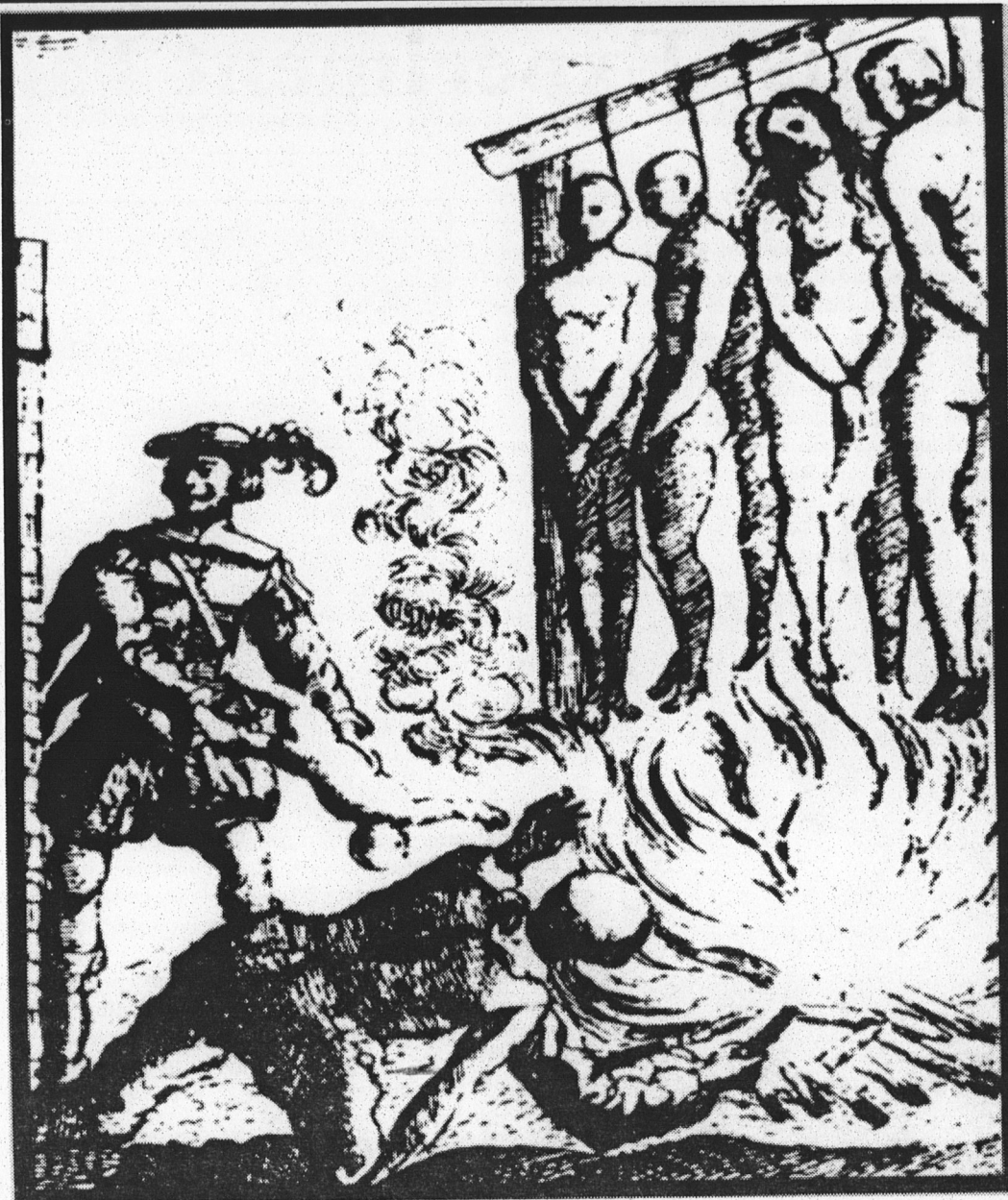
As the authors foresaw in the 19th century, the possibilities provided by this movement are virtually limitless. Even

in the realm of relations between the sexes the Communist Manifesto faces down the hidden secrets of bourgeois society when it states that, "What the communists might possibly be reproached with is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed (system of male dominated philandering), an openly legalized system of free love." This line alone may be enough to make one Arkansas Democrat a candidate for the development of revolutionary consciousness.

The new Communists, of the 21st century, must take the collective lessons of their ancestors into the new movements of the future. The Communist Manifesto offers many of the most important revolutionary lessons and should be used as a principal document in the re-creation of the socialist project. Where there is human suffering and oppression there will always be resistance and movements emerging from these societal conditions. The effectiveness of such resistance lies on the ability of revolutionaries throughout the world to articulate notions of real freedom and a new set of social relations wiped free of "naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation." A parting statement of advice from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels encouraged "Communists everywhere (to) support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things."



Ernesto Che Guevara



## October 12: Genocide Day

IMAN EL-SAYED

Ever since I was a child, I was taught that Christopher Columbus was an American hero and the discoverer of this beautiful land. It is disgusting to brain wash children into believing such crap about Columbus and his voyages. First of all, this land was not discovered by Columbus, and he was not a terrific hero who did good deeds with the people who inhabited this land. Native Americans had built great civilizations with millions of people long before Columbus was born.

On October 12, 1492, Christopher Columbus and his crew arrived at an island in the Bahamas, which he thought was India. After three voyages to America and more study, Columbus still believed that Cuba was part of Asia. Upon his arrival to the Caribbean, the Arawak people ran and greeted Columbus and his sailors bringing gifts and food. He wrote the following in his log: "They brought us parrots and balls of cotton and spears and many other things, which they exchanged for the glass beads and hawks' bells. They willingly traded everything they owned. They do not bear arms, and do not know them, for I showed them a sword, they took it by the edge and cut themselves out of ignorance. They would make fine servants. With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want. As soon as I arrived in the Indies, on the first Island which I found, I took some of them by force in order that they might learn and might give me information of whatever there is in these parts."

Columbus had made agreements with Spain that he would get 10% of the profits for bringing Spain gold and spices, also he would be named "Admiral of the Ocean Sea" so, he went on another expedition, promising more gold and slaves.

There was only a small amount of gold on these

islands, so they went on a slave raid. On the second voyage, the Spanish rounded up 1500 men, women and children and chose the best 500 and took them on the ship. Of the 500 who were captured, only 300 survived this horrible trip and were sold when they arrived in Spain. But, slaves weren't satisfying enough for the king and queen and the people of Spain. Columbus went back to the "New World" in search of gold. In Cicao, Haiti, he ordered all the Natives to collect a specific amount of gold, and every three months he came to collect it and if they didn't gather enough, their hands were chopped off and they bled to death. Their job was impossible, obviously there was no gold but bits of dust of it in the stream. The natives had no choice but to flee, but were hunted down and killed. They formed an army of resistance, but weren't strong enough for the Spaniards' armor and weapons.

The Arawaks had no choice but suicide. Many Arawaks killed their children and themselves, for it was far less horrible than being murdered by the Spaniards. Bartolome De La Casas (who documented Spanish travesties in the Americas) described the Spaniards as becoming more conceited everyday. After a while they refused to walk any distance, instead riding on the backs of the Native Americans as if they were horses. If not on their backs, the Spaniards were carried on hammocks and had the natives carry large leaves to shade them from the sun and fan them from the heat.

The Spaniards were very brutal and heartless. They knifed people and cut slices off their bodies to test the sharpness of their blades. The natives' attempted to defend themselves but failed. Las Casas reports "they suffered and died in the mines and other labors in desperate silence, knowing not a soul in the world they could turn to for help"

We should also take time to look at the whole history, not only at what the Spaniards did. The Europeans should be called "conquerors" not discoverers. They did not come to lend their culture, but to conquer and to colonize people. Driven by the need to find gold, Europeans began invading the indigenous lands of North, South and Central America. They came and started setting down their flags and claimed it for their kings and queens without ever asking the occupants. The worst system of all was set up by the United States government. It has the most deplorable features of colonialism of any government. The United States incorporated the land and not the people. During the formation of the United States between 1865 and 1890 there were 64 official Indian Wars declared against the indigenous people of America. They glorified genocide and made sport of killing indigenous people.

After 1890, the whole system had the Native Americans where they wanted them. Everyone had surrendered and been placed on reservations, was in prison or was dead. The United States government had instituted a policy against them where they violated 371 treaties that the government had signed with Native Americans. As a result of this, they were forced to live under conditions which created the highest unemployment rate per capita in the United States, the highest suicide rate (one suicide for every ten persons), the highest poverty rate and the highest rate of alcoholism in North America. They created such bad conditions for the indigenous people, that they were guaranteed no existence for another 500 years.

The majority of these people ended up drunk and weak or in prison. However, prison is where a number of these men and women were meeting and saying "Enough is enough, we cannot take it anymore!" This sentiment led to the birth of AIM, The American Indian Movement, which directly challenged the United States government and renewed a resistance movement that had stopped for a period of 84 years since 1890

The idea that I question, given this history is: Why do we celebrate such a day like Columbus day? Like everyone else, I like a day off from school, but for a decent cause. It seems totally wrong to have a day off for a mass murderer like Christopher Columbus. For example, how would everyone feel if we had a day off to celebrate Adolph Hitler?

However, not many people seem to see it that way, because we were raised in school believing that Columbus was good. They want us to believe this, so the government won't look so bad and we'll keep on respecting it as much as possible. This quote from Bobby Castillo of the AIM gets to the root of the problem, "I don't think you can build for a better future by teaching lies and distortions. Every one of our societies has done something wrong. What's wrong with facing the wrongs that we've done? You look at the wrongs and you correct it. Build a future. But I think we've got to look at those things"

This is why we should take action now and get to know what is really going on, the real history of this and other nations. We should try to seek out the real truth behind the stories, because if we don't we will always be lied to. We should also have sympathy for the Native Americans who we call Indians. They are not Indians, they are Americans the real inhabitants of this land and we should respect them by not celebrating Columbus and Thanksgiving day. We should use these days off to try and educate ourselves by looking on the internet or reading books and then teaching our friends and family the truth. Part of that truth is that over three million natives were killed and we just don't hear about it or just don't care to hear. This was a true holocaust.



# Clinton, Sex and Society: The Challenge Facing America in the 1990's

MANJULA WIJERAMA

The Clinton sex scandal has shown America and the world the utter bankruptcy of the US two-party political establishment. When the President's sex life becomes the most pressing issue of congressional debate and the central subject of media attention, it reveals more than just the character of Bill Clinton. It reveals the character of the entire ruling class. Despite repeated polls showing the majority of people being indifferent to and disgusted with the spectacle rather than with the supposed crime, the media and the country's political class press on with their muckraking.

It would be different if the issue were one of a non-consensual, forced relation or if some form of sexual discrimination were involved in the relationship between the Clinton and Monica Lewinsky. In a society where women are still limited by prejudice and male supremacy the issue of sexual violence against them must be dealt with as a national priority. However because Clinton is not guilty at all by admission of rape, the Republicans and the Christian Coalition cannot charge that against him.

The legal argument of Kenneth Starr is framed in terms of Clinton lying under oath about having sex with Monica Lewinsky. What right does Starr have to ask Clinton about his sex life? The investigation leveled against Clinton was from the very beginning a conspiratorial one driven by the sole intention of removing him from office. The investigation probed into ultimately every aspect of Clinton's public and private life. Where no usable crime was evident, a different area was brought under scrutiny, until finally Clinton was trapped into lying about his extramarital affair.

Even though the legal charge is perjury, the charge is loaded with the sexual moralism of the Christian right, that sex is a "sin". He may have violated the trust of his wife, if indeed they had a monogamous relationship, but those are decisions that are the sole prerogative of Hillary Clinton, not Kenneth Starr or the Congress. The political right and the Christian right which is predominantly Republican but increasingly includes a significant number of Democrats, have used the public fund to carry out a witch-hunt whose ultimate target is not Clinton's sex life, but the sex life and freedom of all citizens.

## Bill Clinton, the Victim

ONICA JACKSON

We are all aware that our "esteemed" President has been literally caught with his pants down. This story has become so much a part of our daily lives that the Clinton-Lewinsky affair, or "Sexgate" as the media has dubbed it, is sure to go down in history as one of the worst scandals to befall a U.S. President. My take on the matter is that it should stay behind the President and the First Lady's closed door. I question our country's insistence on knowing every aspect of our President's sex life.

The attempt to shock and shame the public into self-righteous moralism with the airing of the most intimate details of Clinton's encounters with Lewinsky has not worked. Behind this attempt at shaming the public is the attempt at restricting the most personal of freedoms, the freedom to have sex consensually regardless of gendered roles and church dogma.

The sexual Puritanism of the US is not something just in the minds of bigots like Pat Robertson and Jesse Helms, but is in the law books and the courts of the land. Homosexual sex remains illegal in many states, same sex marriage is prohibited in virtually the whole country, the laws against sodomy define the kinds of sex you can have with your own spouse and children, while rampantly abused commercially and by families, are severely restricted legally from having sex with who they chose. Prior to the massive struggles of the 60's by young people, women, gays and minorities to achieve equal rights, America was a land ruled by a harsh, hypocritical moral code which was rooted in misogynist and racist assumptions. A white woman should have sex only with a white man, and then only in wedlock. Black men were often castrated by lynch mobs as a way of showing the sexual as well as the social supremacy of white males. Black women since the time of slavery who were sexually abused by white men could find no justice, only indifference and blame.

The sexual mores of the poor, both black and white, never quite fit the bourgeois mould. There was no point in maintaining a hypocritical charade about sex, shrouded by guilt and awash with lies the poor could not afford it. Fortunately for the present generation, the generation that came of age in the 1960s drove the racist, sexist culture of bigotry and intolerance underground. The danger at hand is not one of Clinton getting impeached, but a resurgence of the same forces of bigotry that were pushed back in the 60s. What is important is not "who" is on trial but "what" is on trial.

Clinton is no friend of the working class, but a man whose policies from his first day in office have benefited the wealthy at the expense of the poor. He played the leading role in the capitalist assault on unions, wages, job conditions, the rights of poor women and children, of students and the environment. Despite his

Yes, he committed adultery (a quite common practice in the 1990's) and it should not be condoned, but his private life is private and should stay that way. It is obvious that he was unable to resist the advances of an attractive younger woman like Monica Lewinsky. How many times is it necessary for him to go on national television to apologize for his actions?

One cannot help but pity Bill, especially with his puffy face and swollen red eyes and the sound of hurt and shame in his voice. To make matters worse, he is a victim of a vindictive, witch-hunting prosecutor who felt it necessary to squeeze every

loyalty to the capitalist agenda, he has come under attack by a influential wing of the capitalist class that is organized around the Christian Coalition that feels he has not gone far enough in his attacks. This group would like to see Affirmative Action overturned nationally, abortion made illegal, gays and lesbians driven back into the closet, youth made to shut up and stay home and the poor and immigrants criminalized.

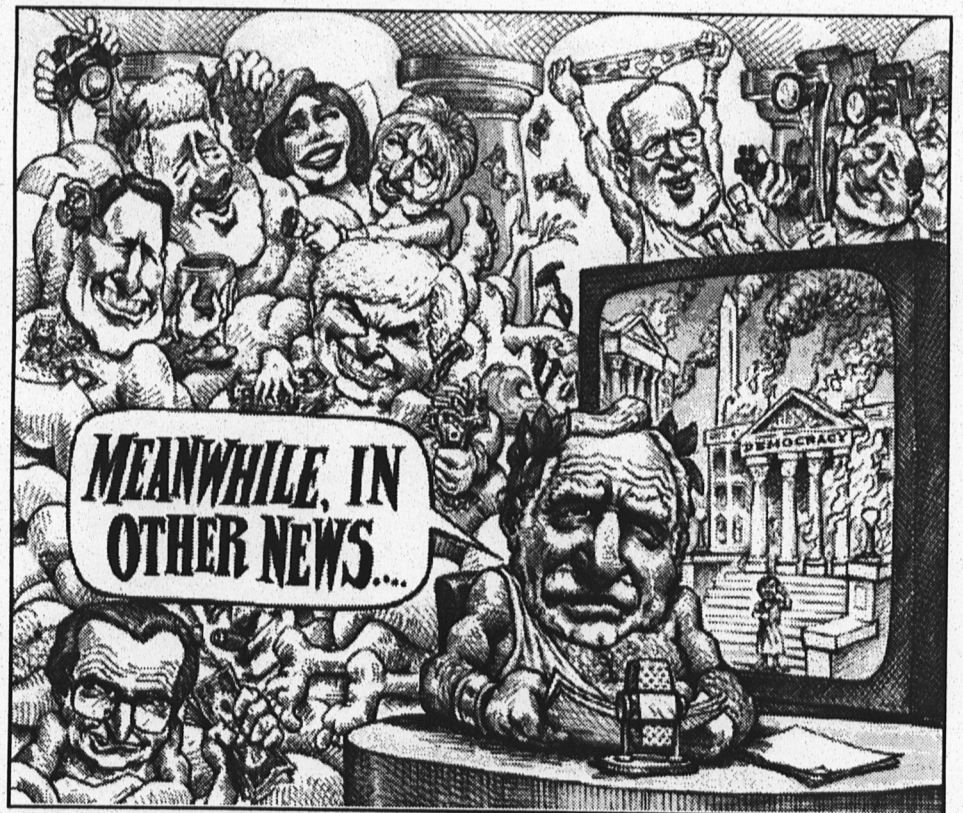
Clinton however has shown himself to be made of the kind of stuff that can be shaped by the prevailing political wind. He has made a presidential career out of making right-wing policies his own. Now, once again, he has become a tool of the extreme right, although this time involuntarily. However, he is incapable of mounting a defense since he has compromised himself on matters of principle time and again and shown his willingness to adopt the right wing agenda.

To fight the Republican assault, it is necessary to counterpose a whole different set of principles that speaks to the rights and realities of the working class and the poor. This is the only way of fighting the authoritarian culture of intolerance that is in danger of becoming the official culture of the State. Standing behind Clinton is the surest way of failing to prevent this, as well as being pulled by his opportunism into ultimately accepting a version of the agenda you are trying to fight.

Clinton has already accepted the morality of the right wing and has been acting accordingly, apologizing and asking for forgiveness from God.

It is necessary to say loudly and clearly that the business of governance is not the private sexual lives of the citizenry. It is necessary to say loudly and clearly that the crimes of Clinton have nothing to do with who he has consensual sex with, but with who his policies have killed and impoverished and for whose gain. The media owned by several multi-billion dollar corporations have shown themselves to be hostile to the majority of people by making the affair a global spectacle even as they read, with surprise, poll after poll showing that people have had enough of it.

The movement that started in the 1960s for equal rights for all, for tolerance, for economic justice must be renewed to fight the growing tide of authoritarianism in the US. For the cultural revolution to become a real thorough transformation, it must be part and parcel of a political and economic revolution that transfers the means of production from the hands of a handful of greedy capitalists that poison people against one another for profit, into the hands of the vast majority to run democratically.



detail out of the Clinton-Lewinsky romp in the name of "justice", but he has merely created a smear campaign which has served to embarrass our highest public official. And was it necessary for him to release such a sexually explicit report to the public with writing that seems more appropriate for Playboy or Hustler magazine?

As for Monica, it seems as if she has an agenda all of her own. Perhaps her intention all along was to set up the president. Aside from sexual harassment cases, why would anyone feel the need to save a sperm-stained dress? Monica, it seems, has

a lot of "dirty laundry" she apparently wanted to air. She may go down in history as the most infamous "whore" in America. My heart feels goes out with sympathy to the Clinton's, and especially their daughter Chelsea, who, despite her outward appearance, must be going through a lot emotionally. It is a given that Sexgate will not be going away for quite some time. I say, let's get our priorities together and focus on the more important issues this country has to face and leave the President and his family alone.



# The Communist Chef

## Internationalist Stew

- 3 tablespoons of Olive Oil
- 3 large Onions cut
- 2 teaspoons of dried basil
- 4-6 pieces of chicken - legs or thighs
- 1 - 13.5 fl. Oz. Coconut Milk
- 2 - 1lb. 13 Oz can Goya Black Beans
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 Bay Leaves
- 1 - 10 oz. Chopped package of frozen leaf spinach
- 3 teaspoons of garlic powder
- 1 - packet of Goya Sazon seasoning

Sautee onions in heated olive oil for three minutes in a large boiling pot, add basil to onion olive oil mixture. Sautee for 5 minutes and mix in the chicken. Cook for 10 minutes mixing the chicken and olive oil/basil/onion mixture. Add the coconut milk, black beans and seasonings stir thoroughly. Bring the mixture to a boil and then cover and lower the heat. Cook on low heat for 1 1/2 to 2 hours and serve over rice.

While you are cooking up the Internationalist Stew sing the first few lines of the Internationale, the song of working people throughout the world.

You know how it goes:  
 Arise ye prisoners of starvation  
 Arise ye wretched of the earth  
 For justice thunders condemnation  
 A better world's in birth  
 No more tradition's chains shall bind us  
 Arise ye slaves no more in thrall  
 The earth shall rise on new foundations  
 We have been naught we shall be all

## Clam Sauce a la Gramsci

- 3 tablespoons of Olive Oil
- 3 10 oz. cans of chopped or minced clams
- 4 cloves of garlic chopped
- 3 teaspoons oregano
- salt and pepper

Sautee garlic in olive oil for 3 minutes over high heat stirring constantly. Add oregano to the mixture and cook 1 minute. Add clams, juice and other seasonings to mixture and bring to a boil stirring constantly. Lower heat and simmer for 20-30 minutes stirring occasionally. Serve with one pound of linguini.

Stir this delightful sauce and ponder Gramsci's position on the philosophical nature of common sense:

Common Sense: Gramsci calls this the " 'philosophy of non-philosophers', or in other words, the conception of the world which is uncritically absorbed by the various social and cultural environments in which the moral individuality of the average man is developed. Common sense is not a single unique conception, identical in time and space. It is the 'folklore' of philosophy, and, like folklore, it takes countless different forms. Its most fundamental characteristic is that it is a conception which, even in the brain of one individual, is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is." (419).

## Lumpen Proletarian Stew

- 1 large onion chopped
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1.3 lbs Italian Turkey Sausage
- 32 oz. can of crushed tomatoes
- 1 package of Pierogies (12)

Sautee onion in olive and add 1/2 of the seasoning (oregano, basil, bay leaves, garlic powder) and stir. Add the sausage to the pot and stir, cook for 15 minutes until meat is cooked. Transfer cooked ingredients to a tupperware dish and add the tomatoes and the perogies. Bake at 400 degree heat for 30 minutes. Serve with a loaf of bread and a hearty glass of stout.

## Chicken Connolly

- 4 teaspoons paprika
- 3 teaspoons cayenne pepper
- 3 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons rosemary leaves
- 3 teaspoons salt
- 8 chicken thighs

Mix all of the dried ingredients together in a bowl. Place chicken thighs on a baking sheet and sprinkle an ample amount of the mixture on top of each piece. Place in the oven and cook at 350 degrees for 35 -45 minutes. Serve the chicken as part of a traditional working class dinner of mashed potatoes and gravy.

This chicken will sure be tasty but not as tasty as James Connolly's understanding of the relationship between nationalism and socialism:

"When you talk of freeing Ireland, do you only mean the chemical elements which compose the soil of Ireland? Or is it the Irish people you mean? If the latter, from what do you propose to free them? From the rule of England? ...But all systems of political administration or governmental machinery are but the reflex of the economic forms which underlie them. ...If you remove the English army to-morrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organization of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country and watered with the tears of our mothers and the blood of our martyrs."

Socialism and Nationalism 1897  
 James Connolly

**Contact the Communist Chef at  
 commiechef@usa.net**



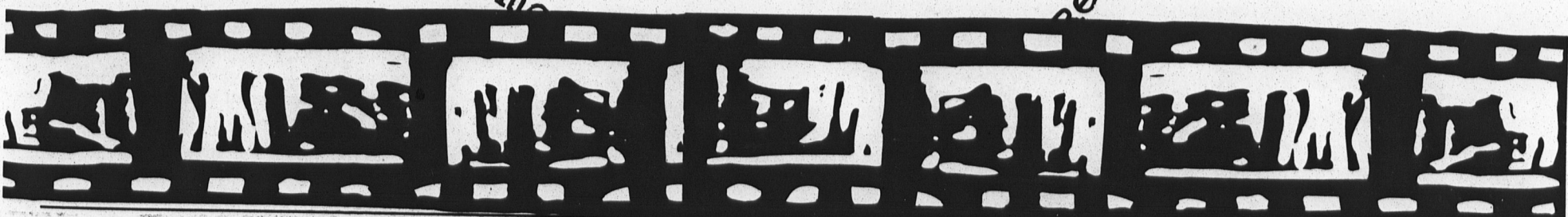
Repaso de la politico cinema  
 Besprechen der polstisch Kino  
 the political cinema  
 Tar Kastella  
 maisee omistaj se poliittinen  
 Rewia  
 polity czay  
 de politico cinema

*In Search Of A Political Cinema*

*In this issue of the College Voice, I have decided to raise the question: Can the political cinema really exist? The following films, Bulworth and Riff Raff, being reviewed are two completely different political films. One major difference between them is that everyone has heard of the film Bulworth, a formulistic film, which has many major problems. Still, it succeeded in getting your attention and getting it's point across. On the other hand, Riff Raff, which has its flaws as well, uses a realistic style of shooting and is far more authentic. However, it is not nearly as popular as Bulworth. The point of my question is: Do we, as the viewing audience, accept a film like Bulworth because of it's accessibility and excuse it's major flaws? At the same time, does a less popular film like Riff Raff, with it's lack of Hollywood cinematic conventions, lose its effectiveness as a political film? Can or should a near flawless political film get the attention it requires, without the conventional shooting style and narrative of Hollywood?*

**THE CINEMA POLITICA**

Seconda visione del politico cinema



# BULWORTH:

## ALL RAP. NO ACTION.

DEBRA BEHR

In the film *Bulworth*, Warren Beatty plays a corrupt Democratic senator who, just days before an election, remakes himself into a rapping radical populist. The film revamps the old image of a white actor performing in black face as Beatty dresses in a 'Boy from the Hood' get up. The only strong and effective element in this film are the political attacks on the media, electoral politics, and corporations. Unfortunately everything that is effective is lost as a result of the structure of the political satire.

The film opens with the senator alone in his office on Capitol Hill. He is sunk in a deep depression as a result of viewing watching his own ads. The ads preach his white, middle class constituency about family values. Self-loathing and suicidal, Bulworth arranges to have himself assassinated while campaigning in Los Angeles on the weekend before election day. However, the pending hit sets him free. He drops his stump speech about the millennium, with its clear echoes of Clintonist bridge building and starts preaching on popular, radical issues. His conscience becomes free as he insults various groups in a semi-constructive manner. He addresses Hollywood hot shots as "the big Jews". He lambastes them for corrupting youth with sex and violence, and then promises that his people will "put something bad about Farrakhan" into his speech in exchange for campaign bucks. He warns members of the black community to "put down the malt liquor and chicken wings and get behind somebody other than a running back who stabs his wife".

Everything that comes out of Senator Bulworth's mouth is, of course, Beatty's critique of the real world presented in a flamboyant and shocking manner. Beatty has the need to present his politics using this flamboyant structure. As the dialogue falls from his mouth, we are shown shots of corporate CEOs, media mongrels, and his campaign reacts in horror. Are we really that shocked and outraged to hear the truth about the society in which we live? Don't we all know that the media is controlled by corporations and the ruling class? Oops, I forgot that this is the College of Staten Island. We are not allowed to think those thoughts or Student Government will censor us.

Yet, a question that needs to be raised is how serious does the film want to be taken considering the comical edge attached to it? Yes, the film's attacks on corruption, media, politics, etc. are important topics which require serious critique. I'm even happy that Beatty attempted to do so. At the same time the importance of the message is muted by the chuckles in the audience. For those who didn't know the relationship between the multi-media, corporations, and politics, they know know thanks to Mr. Beatty. Still, you had to be entertained and tickled just to get you to take notice.

At the church stop in South-Central LA, Bulworth meets a beautiful young black woman, Nina (played by Halle Berry), and falls in love. I hate when a film, especially a political one, has to include kissy-pooie and tooshie shak-

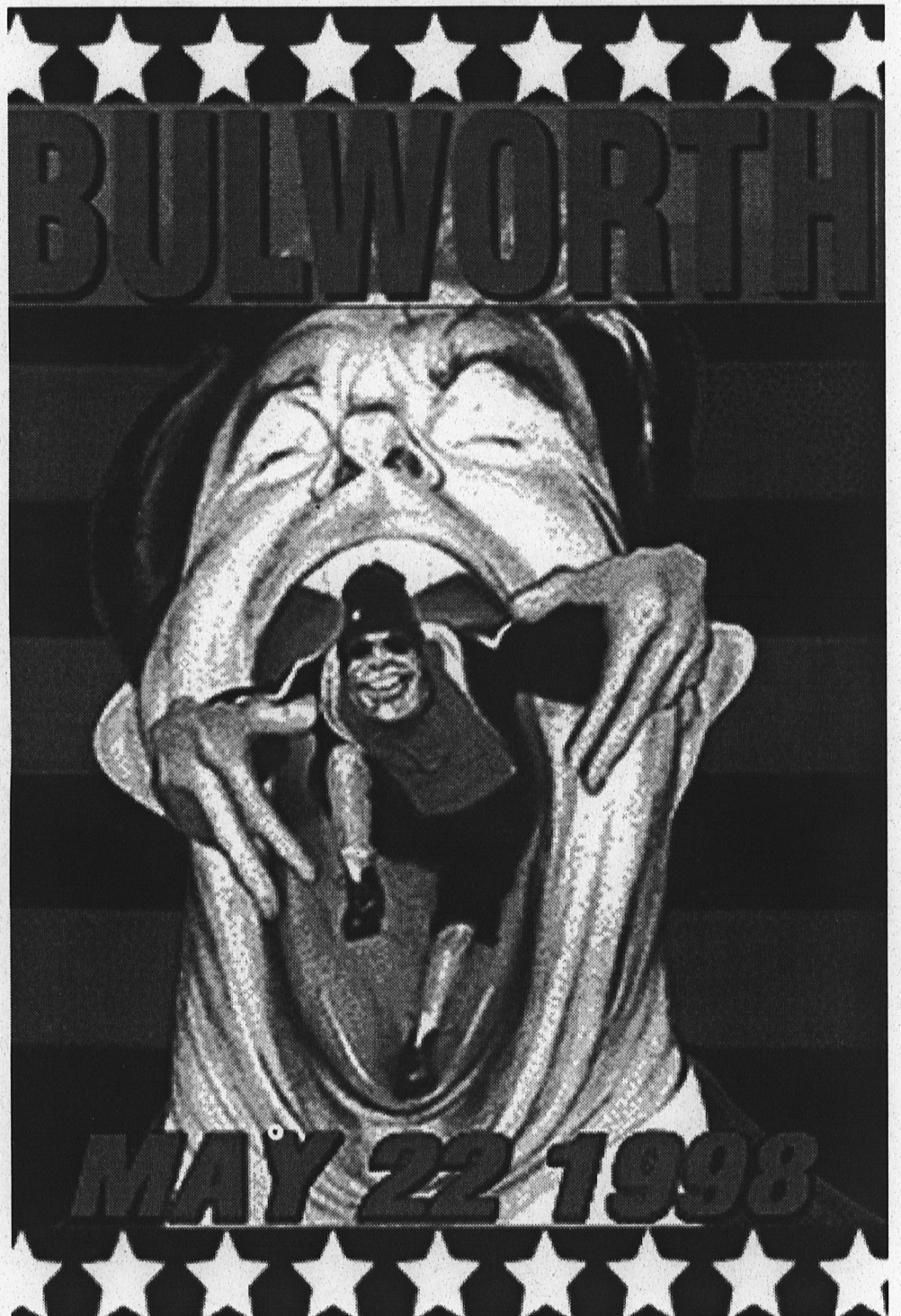
ing bullshit. Is this Beatty's attempt to make Bulworth warm and human by including a love interest?

Revitalized by this woman, he rediscovers his political voice. "If you want to be a sprit, you have to sing" a homeless man tells him which helps to revitalize him. Bulworth tries to call off the hit and begins talking more and more about radical injustice, first in comical rhyme and then in pure inner-city rap. Nina who from the start is reduced to Bulworth's sexual fixation, lacks any depth or development. In one of the film's most intimate scenes, Bulworth and Nina stare into each others' eyes and discuss the lack of black leaders and blue-collar jobs that have been exported to Korea and Thailand resulting in not only the loss of employment but their place in political structure. Unfortunately, this seems to be Nina's only attempt to reach intellectual depth. Even worse, in terms of narrative structure, Nina is the hired hitman. She needs the money to help her brother out of a jam. Which bring to your attention another weakness in the film. The film's back story with its disguised hit men, car chases, and bungled assassination attempts, takes up way too much time. In fact it gets tiresome.

The messages Bulworth raps struggle to become more than comical and outrageous. The audience is still laughing. Yet, without the film's comical structure, it would not have reached the mass audiences. Moreover, I am trying to figure out or even to come to some understanding of how an upper-class right wing politician, through a mental breakdown, can ruth-

deliver the important message of social injustice? This is just another example of how a film can undermine itself. It has to seduce us first in order to get its point across.

Yes, underneath this film is a strong and angry message which with no doubt needs to be delivered. Nonetheless, the message is camouflaged by the satire structure. We are supposed to feel uncomfortable and gain awareness. The



lessly critique middle-America and the capitalist structure. Talk about a fantasy. Furthermore, how can Beatty pretend to have any concept of black nihilism in inner cities? At one point in the film, Bulworth rehearses an Oliver Twist version of an inner-city drug dealer. Once again the white guy feels the need to take the black guy by the hand and teach him how to deal with his social injustice. Excuse me, but isn't that a little racist? But now the white guy is wearing baggy pants and shades. So I guess that makes it acceptable. Why does Beatty have to create a character who feels the need to imitate the inner city clique of Black youth (the gangster rapper) in order to

film succeeds in that respect. However, I am more uncomfortable watching Beatty act like a gangster rapper.

Beatty, audiences, and other film critics may consider *Bulworth* to be a political triumph but it ended up as just another summer flick we forgot about as soon as that big lizard came stomping through the tri-state area. Better yet, talk to me when a real politician makes the same statements and not an actor. Yes, I know Mr. Beatty has a constant history of involvement in left wing politics. But this film is no substitute for needed political movements; such as fighting against sweat shops, workfare, and police brutality.

Of course the film gets you excited and makes you feel like there just might be some social changes outside the movie theater after the final credits roll. Sadly, this is far from fact. All that happens is that a film's radical and political statements might be briefly discussed during coffee and ice cream at your favorite diner.

# R I F F R A F F

DEBRA BEHR

Riff Raff, directed by Ken Loach in 1993, is a political film that tells the story of a group of transient construction workers during the Thatcher era. The workers are non-unionized. Their work environment consists of dangerous conditions and health hazards including a nest of rats living behind the walls where the men have their lunch; busted toilets, and scaffolding that is not secure. They are renovating an old hospital into a luxury apartment building. It could be suggested that the rats are used as a metaphor for the workers.

The film's first shot is the rats roaming around the construction site. We are introduced to the workers as they joke about the division between them and the bosses. The contractor has no responsibilities and the worker shave no rights. Loach does not allow them to organize themselves to overthrow the bosses. In fact, most of them are far from taking any political stance. Still, Loach manages to communicate his political beliefs through the complicated construction of his characters.

The only worker that has a clear class conscience is Larry who is played by Ricky Tomlinson. It is obvious that Loach has created the character Larry as representation of his own political voice. Yet, Loach does not turn Larry into a political hero or leader. Larry uses every opportunity, without being too overbearing, to give a class analysis. Which in turn, the other workers do not take very seriously.

Loach, whose politics can be very easily branded as leftist, does not romanticize the working class in this film. He tries to maintain the reality of their faults which makes them authentic. One worker almost falls off the scaffolding because

ing from one city to the next. He is hired to work on the construction site where he meets Larry and the other workers. The film conveys a notion of solidarity as the other men help Stevie find an apartment to squat in. In England during Thatcher, it was very difficult for the lower-working class to afford proper housing without being on the dole.

Stevie has had a difficult life - coming from a troubled family and being in and out of jail for petty theft. He has petty (bourgeois) dreams of one day opening up a little booth in a flea market selling men's boxers shorts. As such, he displays very little knowledge of the class struggle even though the film conveys the message that his life is fully immersed in such a struggle. He lives in an abandoned building with little or no furniture. He has to wake up in the morning and go to work and take the abuse from his bosses. Also he is renovating luxury apartments which he'll never get to own.

Unfortunately for the film, Loach feels the need to include a male/female relationship. This is definitely not one of Loach's strengths as a director and as a result is one of the film's weaknesses. Stevie falls head over heels for this girl, Susan, who is played by Emer McCourt, whom he meets by chance. He recovers her bag from a dumpster.

Susan is a pathetic flake. She is extremely needy and is delusional about her singing abilities. Stevie and Susan are mismatched but that does not stop them from moving in together. I do not understand the reason why Loach chose to create a weak and emotionally dependent female character. I know poverty can cause sorrow but depression and the inability to pull oneself together but associating these traits with femininity is a bit much. Loach's portrayal of her does not

Larry and his mates from work stand in the back quietly listening while the rest of the members of the English working class yell for her to get off the stage. Yes folks she's that bad. As a result, she runs off the stage crying. Larry, a wonderment of class consciousness, quickly intervenes by getting on stage and correcting the proletarian's bad behavior. Loach uses scene to convey another moment of solidarity among the working class. Susan returns to the stage to sing to 'I get by with a little help from my friends', while everyone cheers her on.

The film lacks a tight and neat Hollywood narrative. Instead it is built around many antidotes and gags. There is one cute gag in the film at Larry's expense. Larry needs to take a crap but the only port-a-potty is busted. He is told by another worker to use the bathroom in the new model apartment on the top floor. The apartment bathroom is decorated in that modern art deco that can cause constipation. Larry forgets altogether that he has to take a crap. Instead he takes advantage of the opportunity and indulges in a hot bath. Of course Loach is setting Larry and the audience up for the gag. At the same time Larry is



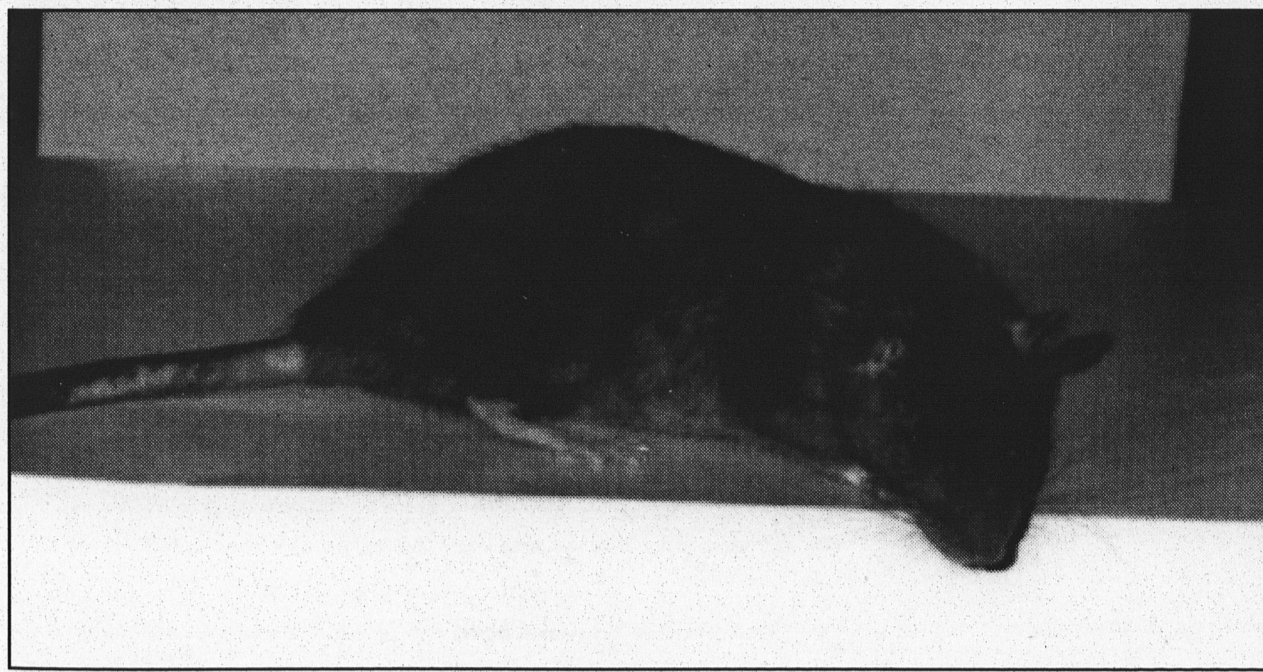
enjoying himself, someone from the company is showing the apartment to three Islamic women who are interested in buying it. They find Larry standing in the tub hiding his privates with his hard hat. "I'm just checking the plumbing", Larry says as he is chased out. Keep in mind Larry is around fifty

They burn down the construction site. This raises questions because throughout the film, Stevie never appears to be radical or militant enough to resort to arson. Stevie's sudden act of radical sabotage is more the romantic fantasy of Loach than reality.

During this scene, we see the same rats as seen in the opening scene. This time the rats are trapped in the blaze. This leads to a different question. What do the rats symbolize? It can be suggested that the rats symbolize the worker's entrapment during the Thatcher era. Yet, at the same time, the rats can symbolize Thatcher and the workers are burning down their common enemy.

Loach's cinematic technique lacks the Hollywood conventions of a fast paced story with quick editing and sensationalized drama. In fact, this film would never last one day on Staten Island because it lacks any form of the escapism that Staten Islander's crave. The film uses a documentary realism style with its observational point of view and wandering camera. Riff Raff also includes elements of classical realism with it's long takes, two-shots, and the use of middle distance. These are elements we rarely ever see from Hollywood films.

Even though the film has its flaws, I feel it is worth taking a look at. Loach's politics are set and made clear throughout the film. Loach is interested in the need for social change and he gives us a realistic sense of the social and public world.



the men are not given the right equipment in order to secure it properly. As a result of the accident, Larry confronts the bosses and demands proper safety equipment. He, of course, stands alone and is sacked for it on pay day.

The film is centered around the character Stevie, played by Robert Carlyle. He is a young laborer, with a trouble past, drift-

get better towards the end of the film. The film gets undermined when she is turned into a drug addict. There is no need to dramatize a character who is pathetic to begin with.

Perhaps one of the only moments in the film where Susan's character is used well is during the pub scene. There she displays her inability to carry a note. Stevie,

and he is about fifty pounds over weight. In other words, it is a pleasure to watch him run butt naked.

The film's final scene raises a lot of questions. After one of the West Indian workers nearly falls to his death as a result of the scaffolding that Larry was fired for complaining about, Stevie and another worker resort in an act of arson.

The U Inside of Me: Into the Great Us (us)

\*images for the damned

C.L. O'Brien

She has a heartless soul  
And a scandalous mind  
She goes about spewing  
Her madness all the time

She thinks she's so damn slick  
And not to mention clever  
When she goes about saying  
She wants everyone to be together

She is the source of every conflict  
And the instigator of every brawl  
But when the heat comes down on others  
She refuses to take the fall

She claims she does no wrong  
And we're to believe she only does good  
But to get what she wants  
She'd manipulate ones mind if she could

She always has the loudest mouth  
You can't get a word in edgewise  
As she twist every word out your mouth  
She becomes someone you instantly despise

Hey, she may just be a little off  
Her temper not hard to tick  
She puts one in mind of that mental guy  
You know, the one in those psycho flicks

But there's nothing to fear, just know to stay clear  
For she's headed for self destruction  
So don't enter her path, you might get drawn in  
And you'll suffer the repercussions

Shenika Aspinall  
Spring '98

evidence A.  
along the river  
where I walked  
as a child  
I watched as  
the "law",  
an authority,  
would hit the  
homeless men  
who occupied  
the benches  
where the rats  
had once  
lived  
The men  
had  
n a m e s  
such as  
x or y  
and there  
was a  
lad  
named U  
who would  
come to  
peer  
behind a  
tree  
perhaps  
with lament  
for the  
injured  
never interrupting  
until  
U  
himself was  
hit  
and inside  
a me  
he had found  
an  
awakening  
a task  
a consciousness  
that he  
and  
you  
were both  
human

beingignorancekillsconsciousness&timesaminutethroughouttheworldspreading  
withhateandangerdippeddemocraticallyintoaworldbetterknowntothethinkeras-  
melodra//chaosandinflition

Who Raped Me First?

By Junior Hersh

Was it the stranger who tightened his grip  
around my neck  
under the highway?

Was is the police who questioned me  
over and over again

"What were you doing there  
past 11:00 p.m.?"

Was it my cousin who snuck into my room  
when I was six.

Was it my family  
who asked me

over and over again

"Why did you let him in  
past 11:00 p.m.?"

Today

I feel the burn  
between my legs.

I ask myself

"Does it matter who?"

I still feel those hands  
around my neck.

I still hear my cousin  
creep into my room.

I know I was raped  
past 11:00 p.m.

Twice by men.

Twice all over again.

I'll Write a Happy Poem!

Wherever i read my poems  
I get this stare,  
This unanimous, unidentifiable stare saying  
"Write a happy poem!"

Aright Mr. or Ms. Anonymous,  
I'll do you this favor  
and write about  
merry-go-rounds and cotton candy.

I'll spare your ears  
and silence my stories  
of penis-sucking friends  
and suicidal parents.  
I'll smile and tell you  
all about the pretty pansies in my garden  
and flutter my mascara covered lashes.

Just this once I won't talk  
about the monsters I sleep with  
or the color of my tombstone.

I'll humor you for a while  
and pretend to be the giggly, blue-eyed blond  
that you'd like me to be.

And to protect your delicate eyes  
I'll remind my parents to hide their wrists  
and my friends their cum covered lips.

Just so you're safe,  
my honest friend.  
Sweet dreams!

Laura Zoe Dombrowski

Siting in the Stapleton projects

I hear the echo of my childhood.

Lonely street have not been a reality until my hot salty summers came.

I learned to kiss and wear short shorts.

Learned what "Mira,Mira" meant

I have to hail the cab down on the corner of 54th Ave. Or Grand Concourse.

No, go to the pool on Sat. With all your cousins and friends

Your cousin Kashya is beefing because mommi took her radio to the beach and got sand in it

Do daddy play games no he yells to reflect the summer times

pound the pavement

no see the zoo

go to tio and titi Iris's house

never stairs to no where and mommi is telling me to move cause I am to tired to walk up those stairs

mom pound the pavement from Fordham to 149th

I am tired, man

I see the damnation of rehabilitation and drugs.

Backstabbing you with open dreams and you.....

I saw those pictures of you mommi posing with experience  
smiling with all he things you do.

I want to be naked mom in front of men and tell me how sexy I was

no, I was grown when my friend downstairs pulled me in and told me I had pretty lips.

Go to the back room.....

hot times summer in the city

I'm sober and clean now no more chasing guys for weed now

I walk to the corner to buy a pack of cigarettes .

summers..... I remember I walked the pavement but in a mountain.

by Natina Berrios

**NATIONAL day of PROTEST to**

# **STOP POLICE BRUTALITY,**



**Repression, and the  
Criminalization of a Generation**

**OCTOBER 22, 1998**  
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**CALL (718) 982-3101 FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**EVERY FRIDAY**

**October 22nd  
Coalition Meeting**

**3:00 pm**

**College Voice**

**Room IC-230**

**OCTOBER 21**

**Cultural and  
Political Action  
Against Police  
Brutality**

**2:30 pm**

**Campus Center**

**OCTOBER 22**

**March Against  
Police Brutality**

**4:00 pm**

**Union Square  
march to City Hall**