

The Paper

So we stand here
On the edge of hell
In Harlem
And look out on the world
And wonder
What we're gonna do
In the face of
What we remember

Langston Hughes

Volume 58 No. 1

A Medium For People of African Descent

March 2002

CITY COLLEGE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

**MEMO TO
PRESIDENT
GREGORY WILLIAMS:
RE-ESTABLISH
THE BLACK
STUDIES
DEPARTMENT!**

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EDITORIALS

The Struggle of Black Studies

By Kelechi Onwuchekwa

The Black Studies Department was formed back in the 1970s with the intent of bringing an Afrocentric perspective to history, which until then (and even still today) was taught with the supremacy of Europe as its foundation. It also was formed with the purpose of gearing its students to help the Harlem community and Africans around the world in general. Although the results were very encouraging - the department grew rapidly over the next decade and made itself a major voice in the Harlem community and African world thru its advocacy and cultural education - it drew ire from the power structure in this city.

The powers that be in city government and CUNY administration, through a concerted effort in the form of repeated press attacks, court battles, and administrative restrictions, cut down the

Department in the mid-1990s to program status. Today Black Studies facing a slow death as enrollment falls and courses are taken off successive bulletins, with the staff members having to dedicate most of their time to teaching in other, more Eurocentric departments. This is a problem bound to get worse as political support fades, as the school directs its resources toward "safe" disciplines like the sciences, and as the student body is increasingly vulnerable to attacks from CUNY and the legislative sector.

Recently, both CUNY and Albany (who gives CUNY its authority) have expanded their radar screen to beyond the Black Studies Department. There are a series of proposed budget initiatives on both tables which pose dire consequences for CUNY students. One hikes the additional fees on the bill one pays every semester and takes away the opportu-

nity to take courses in the semester before graduation for free, while the other cuts 33% off annual TAP awards. Both will make it more expensive to attend CUNY colleges, and may force those on the brink to abandon their education.

This issue will examine the events that are playing a role in the struggle to get Black Studies back to department status. It will examine what Black Studies was, what state it is in currently, and what its future may be. Surrounding this theme will be stories coming out of the Harlem community such as the coming of a new bookstore, and the efforts of local activists to get students more involved in the community's struggle against gentrification. In addition, there will be coverage of TAP and budget cuts, issues that are sure to cause problems as the new year proceeds.

Get Knowledge of Your African History

By Krishan Trotman

The fact that we have to put out this issue dedicated to saving a department that has such a strong history and influence over the study of Blacks world-wide but isn't being truly accredited, only shows that City College students are in the dark. Those that are reading this paper have respectfully chosen to broaden their knowledge on their past and present history as people of African descent. As Black students we must seek out knowledge of all the different

powerful entities that make up our culture. It has been understood that an inadequate amount of Black history is implemented into Western civilization. Now that this is a known truth, one must decide on the next step. Is the next step merely to remain comfortable with this fact and let our children be raised with this lack of consciousness or is it to go seek out our history as individuals. This issue illustrates that one does not have to look very far to seek this consciousness. The Black Studies department is still alive and

operating on the fourth floor of the NAC Building. One class will last a lifetime. The information is in front of the eye only waiting to be acknowledged and examined. This article is not only dedicated to saving the Black Studies Department but maintaining a strong realm of our golden culture.

The Paper

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BLACK STUDIES UNDER ATTACK

The Rich History of Black Studies

By Krishan Trotman

There has been major controversy concerning the educational curriculum created in the Black Studies Department at City College, a department that takes students on a new experience where Blacks have a history beyond Slavery and Jim Crow laws. The Black Studies department has made its own contribution to Black history, due to the intense struggle and effort put forth by prominent leaders in their continuous efforts to keep the department active.

The Black studies department focuses on the "Africanness of Black people," a term commonly used by Dr. Leonard Jeffries of the Black Studies Department. Africanness derives from the idea that the Black mind has to be redirected from the idea that the Middle Passage, Slavery, Jim Crow, modern racism, police brutality, and many other degradations of African culture renders it inferior, and points the Black mind towards the superiority of African culture. The Black Studies Department's curriculum was formed in 1971 to re-socialize Black people with their

Africanness, which is their culture whether they were born in America, the Caribbean, or Africa. The need for Africans in the Diaspora to be re-socialized was acknowledged, and the Black Studies Department was brought forth as the tool of educational exploration for the African people.

The Black Studies Department was a part of Urban Ethnic Studies in 1969, but divided from the pie in 1971 when Robert Marshak, the President of City College during the 70's, put into works an urban model of a college that differed in relation with the standard "Harvard" design. Marshak's urban design of City College was created to service the people of New York. Marshak worked cohesively with Blacks and Latinos to make City College an urban school, which during the development did not undermine the needs of the community. Marshak, a man of Jewish descent, helped to make CCNY a flagship for people of African descent so they could have the educational and mental resources to seize the world by storm.

Marshak's support in the implementation of the Black

Studies Department helped to create a new reality for Blacks. CCNY's department became the largest Black Studies Department in the country from 1972-1982. The curriculum, at the height of the Department, encompassed the

"... the question arises of why is the Black Studies Department receiving a smaller amount of classes and fewer students?"

study of Africa, the Caribbean, and Black America in the sum of 50 courses per semester taught by 22 professors, with an average enrollment of four thousand students a year. The Black Studies Department helped to enable the Marshak design to be developed and maintained by bringing various opportunities and fundamental links such as Sophie Davis Medial Center, Greenberg Law Center, the development of an overseas summer experience in the Caribbean and Africa, the largest group of tenured Black professors, commu-

nity-based internships, scholars from abroad, visiting authors, etcetera, etcetera.

The list of credits and contributions that the Black Studies Department made in the development of City College could run much longer, but the question arises of why is the Black Studies Department receiving a smaller amount of classes and fewer students? Why are fewer Black students interested in learning more about their heritage in a school that is covered predominately with individuals of African descent? The brilliant minds that lay behind the history of the Black Studies department is reason enough to take one of its courses, such as Dr. Jeffries, Professor M.A. Samad-Matias, Dr. Francis Butchweye, Dr. Courdy, Professor Ogunade, Professor Moyibi Amoda, Dr. Perezi Kamunanwire, Professor Eugenia Bain, and Professor James Small. All these individuals come from a long line of professional Black role models who have worked hard for the study of Blacks to co-exist in CCNY's curriculum.

The Black Studies Department created a legacy of
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The Decline of Black Studies at CCNY

By Malik Lewis

The tag-line of a currently running ad on Black Entertainment Television commemorating Black history month reads, "Our greatest history is in our future," implying a level of relative ignorance concerning the accomplishments of African people in history, and a naïve optimism about the current state of the Black world.

The Black Studies department at City College was designed to ensure a brighter future for all students through education regarding their historical legacy. However, today, the program itself faces a questionable future.

Since 1995 the once thriving Black Studies department has existed as a program under the budgetary discretion of the Dean of Social Science, meaning less available courses for interested students.

In a report prepared by the Acting Director of the Black Studies Program, Dr. George Brandon, between the years of 1998 and 2001 the total enrollment in Black Studies courses dropped from 306 to 195. Similarly between '98 and '01 the number of courses offered slipped from 16 to 7; offered sections went from 17 to

a shameful 8, and within the same 3-year period the course load of full-time faculty members in the program was halved.

While administrative non-compliance was cited in Dr. Brandon's report as a contributing factor to the program's steady decline in recent years, the lack of consistent leadership during the past decade stood out as the root cause of the program's most recent failures.

Around campus Black

"Some students have been counseled by advisors not to take Black Studies classes."

Studies has become synonymous with Dr. Leonard Jeffries. The mere mention of his name usually conjures up memories of a 1991 speech delivered in Albany in which Dr. Jeffries discussed his views on the manipulation of the American media by the Jewish community to sully the image of Black America.

Since his dismissal and reinstatement the Black Studies

program has meandered aimlessly through the offices' of countless program directors, both supportive and in opposition to the development of the program.

In the Fall of '99, the semester reporting the lowest student enrollment since the Black Studies program lost its departmental status, three seasoned professors in the department were on year-long leave.

The "Leadership Vacuum", or more appropriately the "Brain Drain" of the Black Studies department in the mid to late nineties supplied enemies of the program's agenda with justifiable criticisms of it and its faculty from a purely administrative standpoint.

Some students have been counseled by advisors not to take Black Studies classes. Administrative confusion has made majoring in the program difficult for others. Much of the credit for the program's current level of enrollment can be attributed to the widely spread rumor that most Black Studies courses are an "easy A". However no such evidence has ever been produced.

The history of the Black Studies department is rich, and surprising compared to the more sen-

sationalized impression we get of it through superficial observations of its more vocal faculty members.

It's projected that the Black Studies program won't regain its departmental status for two years at best, and in the meantime the scattering of its faculty into adjoining departments has only further disrupted the continuity of the educational process throughout the Division of Social Science.

Student groups like Sankofa Roots have stepped-up in the CCNY tradition of student activism to pick-up where the Black Studies program has left-off, but without academic sovereignty extra-curricular activities can go but so far.

Perhaps the program's history has provided for a brighter future at the hands of student-based endeavors? Perhaps Black Studies at CCNY is an idea whose time has come and gone? Perhaps the future of the program has already been predetermined and all we can do is sit back and watch it fade into obscurity? If history is any teacher the solution to the problem facing Black Studies is clear; all that has changed is the year.

BLACK STUDIES UNDER ATTACK

What Students Must Do For Their Black Studies Department

By Ron Donaldson
Special to *The Paper*

As a 1981 graduate of City College and a major in the Black Studies Department, I am extremely concerned about the current and future status of Black Studies at City College. Upon my graduation there was as many as 33 courses offered in Black Studies. This semester there are as few as 14. This expression of concern is directed chiefly at students. Most would agree that students should be the dominant factor in whether programs grow into departments or vice versa. I implore the students as we fast approach the 33rd anniversary of the student takeover of City College to read all they can about 1969, and the heroic sacrifices made by ordinary students to obtain a quality education at City College. These heroic students did not merely petition and protest the need to open admissions to Black and Latino students, but they demanded it!! These demands were

backed up by an actual physical takeover of City College, shutting it down for several days.

Next to open admissions

"Despite what one feels about Black Studies, it is an institution, and like any other institution at the college it should have Departmental status."

was the demand for Black Studies and Latino studies departments. One of the most important lessons to learn from the students of 1969, particularly for Black and Latino students, is that power conceded nothing without the demand. Therefore, more than merely an appeal to the current students at City College to review the past heroics of the students of '69, this is a challenge to carve out your lega-

cy as you study on the backs of past heroes. If you choose to demand the full restoration of the Black Studies Department, be not humble, for it is your right as students whatever your nationality. Be not afraid for your future academic careers if you make such demands, since the students of 1969 have made those sacrifices; they are currently doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc.

As for the college and university administration, it would be in their best interest to join with the students, faculty, and community in restoring the Black Studies Department instead of destroying it or hoping that the demands from students and the community will cease. It would be a mistake indeed for the present administration to underestimate the will of the students and community to confront the powers that be over an institution and principle such as the restoration and development of the Black Studies Department at CCNY.

Despite what one feels about Black Studies, it is an institution, and like any other institution at the college it should have Departmental status. We as students have a right to demand that our political, economic, sociological and historical heritage and future be taught to us from an African perspective. The control over teaching perspectives and traditions are still the exclusive domain of the White establishment. Should students, Black, White, or of any other race or nationality be denied the opportunity to major in a department that educates students about the Black experience from the Black perspective? The need for a fully staffed and budgeted Black Studies Department cannot be overstated in this regard.

In the past few years we have all watched as the Black Studies Department and faculty have been crucified. I am begin-

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Call for Reparations: Students Must Get Involved

By Kahlil Almustafa

Millions of African-Americans will march on Washington, D.C. on August 17, 2002 to demand Reparations from the United States government during the Millions for Reparations Mass Demonstration, March, Protest and Rally. But how many college students will be there?

The Millions for Reparations March is part of the momentum built during the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances (WCAR), in Durban, South Africa, September 2001. Most college students did not know this monumental conference occurred and are unaware of the historical march born from it.

The declaration passed by government delegates from throughout the world was echoed on the front cover of the December 2001 issue of *The Paper*: "UN Officially Declares Slavery a Crime Against Humanity." The demand for Reparations for descendants of enslaved Africans is based on this principle stated in the declaration.

One of the groups responsible for ensuring that this language was included in the WCAR final declaration is the Durban 400, a coalition of African-American activists and organizations. The Durban 400, led by the December 12 Movement and the National Black United Front, were inspired

"Students were instrumental during the 1960's, by hitting the streets to demand cultural and legal changes."

to call one million African-American people to take their demand for Reparations to the United States capital.

The date was chosen to celebrate the birth of Marcus Garvey, who led one of the greatest mass movements for African liberation and self-determination during the 1920's. Like the Civil Rights march in the 1960's, the Millions for Reparations March appropriately takes place in Washington, D.C., the seat of American government.

This march will be an

opportunity to educate and organize around the Reparations issue. Although it has become a foremost interest of many African-American activists and organizations, many people are misinformed about how this struggle evolved.

Most African-Americans are familiar with the term "40 Acres and a Mule." In an article of the *Argus*, Wesleyan University's student newspaper, a student, Sallome Hralima, lays out the Reparations issue in an article called, "40 Acres and a Lexus," titled to relate the current movement with what African-Americans are familiar with. The Reparations discussion has become much more complex than this now-cliché strategy to provide self-sufficiency for Africans around the world.

The most common misconception is that individuals would receive a check in the mail. Reparations is not "40 acres and a mule," a check or a Lexus. Reparations addresses the mal-distribution of land, wealth and resources between African-Americans and White society. There are many forms Reparations could be paid: land appropriation for agricultural ventures, medical

facilities, economic resources for building businesses, review of cases of African-Americans in the penal system, endowments for educational and cultural programs, the creation of museums and memorials, and other endeavors that will address the self-determination lacking in many predominately Black communities.

This event carries significant historical importance, but for it to be successful, college students must spend their Spring semester preparing to be an intricate part in this struggle. The energy and excitement of students have often been the difference in revolutionary changes for African-American people. Students were instrumental during the 1960's, by hitting the streets to demand cultural and legal changes.

There are many ways students can participate the Reparations movement:

1. Join the Millions for Reparations NYC Organizing Committee by contacting (718) 398-1766 or millions4reparations@hotmail.com.
2. Utilize student media such as newspapers, radio and television

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CCNY/CUNY NEWS

*Double Trouble:**Albany To Slash TAP; CUNY To Cut Budget*

By Cecily Canady

Governor Pataki and the CUNY Board of Trustees have recently proposed cuts in the CUNY budget and the reduction of TAP, both of which will be detrimental to CUNY students. The TAP reductions and budget cuts will effectively increase tuition and decrease enrollment. Students are not happy about the decisions. Sean, a City College student, states, "It's not fair. How do they expect us to get an education?"

The New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) has discovered the facts on TAP. According to NYPIRG, the Governor has proposed that the state withhold one-third of all Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) grants and only release those funds when a student graduates. It is not practical to supply funds when a student graduates; students need

financial assistance during their education, not after.

The Governor does not understand how important TAP is to many college students. Reducing TAP from a student's financial aid package is crucial because many students depend on TAP to pay for the majority of their tuition. This plan will make getting an education more challenging because students would have to take out loans or work several jobs to pay for their education.

Deborah, a full-time student at City College, argues, "My TAP is used to pay for my entire tuition. If TAP is withheld I will only be able to attend school part time because I cannot afford to pay for my education." Sally, a full-time student at City College, opposes the governor's proposal and poses this question: "If TAP is cut will other funding be provided for students?" Sally's main concern about

TAP being eliminated is she would have to rely on her family's limited income. "My parents work 14 hours a day; they could pay for my tuition, but there would be a lot of financial sacrifices at home."

The CUNY Board of Trustees, on top of Albany's proposed cuts, have recently approved a series of budget cuts and fee increases that will take effect within the coming semesters. The purpose of this is to streamline administration, cut costs, and increase revenue that supposedly would go towards the University's core academic mission. Beginning Fall 2002, they are adding a \$75 technology fee per semester for full time students and \$37.50 per semester for part-time students, on top of the current student activity fee of \$49.35 for full-time and \$33.35 for part time. This fee is supposed to improve computer services for students and faculty.

They also want to eliminate the Last Semester Free program, which began in 1992 for students receiving a Bachelor's Degree. This would take away a relief from the financial demands of college that was beneficial to students in that it allowed them to concentrate on completing their education. Isha, a senior at City College, says, "I look forward to the last semester free because I have been paying for college. There should at least be a GPA standard for the last semester, but they shouldn't take it away."

The opportunity of getting an education without the concern of paying for it and the privilege of having a university that provides students with the necessary tools are why many students are willing to continue their education within CUNY. With these advantages taken away it may be increasingly difficult for students to get the education they need.

A New Hope for Youth at Empowerment Summit

By Kelechi Onwuchekwa

The emphasis was on the future of Black youth during the African American Male Empowerment Summit (AAMES) at City College on January 25th. This event that featured the organizers of the AAMES as well as representatives from the School of Skills (a social support program that gathers at Riverside Park every Sunday), including former NBA star Pee Wee Kirkland.

Many Black youth from surrounding schools were in attendance, including IS 125. Throughout the event Mr. Kirkland never failed to remind the audience of the challenges youth face nowadays, along with the failure of the mainstream to nurture them.

In his words: "Traditional social programs have failed. If not, then our kids would not be in the condition they're in." The condition being the gangs that have taken over their schools and neighborhoods, the influence of gangsta rap in music and television, and the general lack of hope many youth have for a better future.

His recommended solution to the problem is to create programs that would gear kids to not only enter the American mainstream but for success in life in general. In it, moderators would relate to kids "in their language,"

or the language of the streets, while teaching them what it really means to "keep it real" (respecting self, elders, and the community), and how to deal with the challenges of life in the ghetto. Most importantly, such a program would reach kids early in their lives before the streets would, unlike many other programs that have a high age requirement and cutoff. Mr. Kirkland put forth numerous successful examples of what his idea could do by allowing some of his "students," including School of Skills ambassador Nu Child, to tell of how such a program helped them to turn their lives around and get on the right track. In one case, another "student," Kimberly, told of how her disrespect of her mother put an extreme strain on their relationship, which has since greatly improved since her joining the School of Skills.

Mr. Kirkland later explained that the School of Skills is a non-traditional school that interacts with youth on their level. "We act as a social incubator to address kid's issues and to get them a better future. We give them direction and focus; without these, they have no future." He also explained how students at his school are mentored, which was by introducing them to parents, teachers, and professionals who work in

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CCNY Senior Carmen Navarro Named Clark Fellow

From the CCNY Office of Public Relations - A senior at City College's Center for Worker Education (OWE) who has spent over a decade promoting public health issues in upper Manhattan has been named a recipient of the 2001-2004 Clark Fellowship by the Board of Directors of the Clark Foundation.

Carmen Navarro, a liberal arts student with a concentration in history, has been honored for outstanding academic achievement and leadership in a nonprofit organization. Ms. Navarro is a breast health manager with the American Cancer Society. She previously served as an AIDS advocate and consultant in minority communities.

Clark Fellowships are awarded to exceptional undergraduate students to assist them in preparation for positions of leadership in community-based and nonprofit organizations.

As a Clark Fellow, Ms. Navarro, who will receive her bachelor's degree from CCNY's CWE this February, will receive 30,000 over two years in scholarship support for graduate school.

"I'm planning to pursue a master's degree in public health at Columbia University," she said.

Ms. Navarro added that the Fellowship was a great honor for

her and a tremendous inspiration for her work with nonprofit organizations.

A Board Member of the Latino Commission on AIDS, she was involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS for eleven years before joining the American Cancer Society. She served as a consultant on AIDS and other health-related matters for several agencies, including the HIV Center on Behavioral Change, Hondurans Against AIDS, the Organizations of Africans in the Americas, and the Columbia School of Nursing.

In her current position as breast health manager with the American Cancer Society, Ms. Navarro's primary focus is the Washington Heights and Inwood neighborhoods.

"I'm in charge of breast health education in these communities and one of my responsibilities is to ensure that underserved Latinas get breast cancer information and referrals for screening," she said.

A resident of Manhattan's upper west side, Ms. Navarro has been honored by New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service with the Rudin Award for "Outstanding Services to Women,"

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CCNY NEWS

Edward Evans, Former Director of Co-Curricular Life, Passes Away

By Kelechi Onwuchekwa

Edward Evans, former Director of the Office of Co-Curricular Life, passed away at the age of 59 earlier this week. Evans worked his way thru the ranks of student government while attending school here at CCNY. He later ran the Office for 14 years, during the period when City College was at its strongest in the advocacy front and was most active with regards to bringing events and major organizations on campus. He also served as president of the Black Alumni Association for 2 terms, and has the credit of introducing the annual Career Fair that takes place every March.



Edward Evans, former Director of Co-Curricular Life
Photo courtesy of Microcosm Yearbook

He is remembered by those who knew him as a very good administrator who could bring the best out in those around him, and as one who did not discriminate when it came to serving students here at City. One man in particular, the former Manager of the Finley Student Center, James Small, remembers him as, "beautiful, brilliant... a friend, a comrade." Lenny Edmunds of IMedia says of Evans' ethic: "He was always positive, and looked out for students." Edmunds also said that it was difficult to have a serious disagreement with Evans since "he looked at both sides of the issue."

Black Studies History continued from page 3

being a voice for the Black communities of the world when they shouted the Black history. When these leaders stood in front of classes and spoke of Egyptians as Black and pyramids made from Black

hands, when they taught their students to carry Africanness to engineering or science buildings, when they stood in Cornell armed and ready to fight so that their ancestors, parents, and personal Africanness be recognized, they knew that the past and the future matters and so should you.

Reparations continued from page 4

- stations, and literary publications.
- 3. Organize forums, conferences, debates and cultural events about Reparations.
- 4. Photocopy information to mail, email, fax.
- 5. Read books, such as *The Debt*, by Randall Robinson, *Black Labor, White Wealth*, by Claude Anderson and *Ending Apartheid in America*, *The Need for a Black Political Party* and *Reparations Now*, by Arthur Scrota.
- 6. Get student organizations to sponsor student buses.

where contestants must speak about Reparations in their rhymes. Students do not have to be well versed about the specifics surrounding the Reparations issue to be involved in the movement. It is not even necessary to understand the logistics of Reparations, meaning how, to whom and when it will be paid. Young African-American men and women during the 1960's did not know exactly what changes would come out of the Civil Rights Movement. All it takes is the ability to see that our communities need repair and a genuine interest and commitment to making that change happen.

Reparations Now!

Spreading the message about the march can be as simple as sending an email out to everyone on your email list or as creative as a Poetry Slam or Hip-Hop battle

AAMES continued from page 5

the career fields of the student's interest.

According to the director of AAMES, Mark Lawrence, there are to be more programs like this one over the coming year: "All youth will continue to be invited to the youth piece and selected community leaders will be invited to the following AAMES leadership roundtables...The purpose of the youth workshops is to assist teachers and parents at reaching and establishing

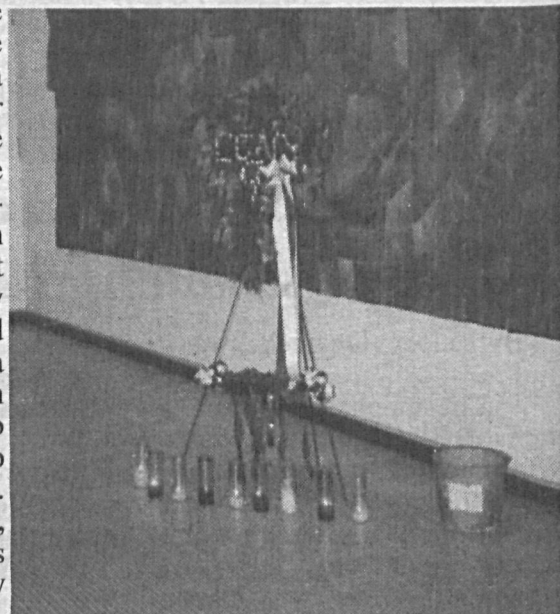
better communications with their children/students."

The entire event was a refreshing example of what could be achieved when older African Americans use their experience and talents to help our youth beat the odds. More needs to be done, however, by other establishments to reach out to youth since too many of them have already or are about to fall through the cracks due to the hostile environments in schools, on the streets, and even in the halls of government.

The CCNY 9

By Kelechi Onwuchekwa

While the rest of the city was celebrating the arrival of the New Year, a different and more somber celebration was taking place here on campus. It was the 10th anniversary of the infamous stampede over in Marshak ("J") Building that took the lives of nine City College students. It occurred due to overcrowding at a major hip-hop event in which 5000 people tried to fit in a gym is designed to hold about 300 students. After initial calls for renting, advertising, and sales reform, the public mostly forgot about this incident. The only reminder of that tragedy is a plaque listing the names of the nine students who perished on that night.



The memorial for the "CCNY 9" in the Science Bldg. lobby.
Photo by Kelechi Onwuchekwa

Did you know...

Did you know, that in February 1995, Bernard Harris, Jr., made history by being the first black astronaut to walk in space? In addition, to making history for himself, he opened the doors for other blacks to follow.

The high point of his journey began at age eight. He dreamed of becoming an astronaut and on the way to his dream, he reached many other personal goals -- pilot, flight surgeon, scientist and mission specialist. Harris dream of a trip to the stars -- had its roots in history. He knew exactly where he was from; and where he was going--straight to the stars.

History shows that Africans have been studying the stars for many years and now we have one walking amongst them.

THE HARLEM COMMUNITY

West Harlem Coalition Warns Students of Gentrification

By Kelechi Onwuchekwa

There was some very interesting information disseminated at the forum entitled "An in-depth look at gentrification" on Thursday, February 7th. It began with a video made by CCNY film student Lashaun McCaouley which discussed the gentrification of Harlem, caused by the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone's (UMEZ) allowing corporations to enter Harlem and the subsequent displacement of the area's Black and Latino residents. In the video Dorothy Hughes, the owner of the Harlem Office Supply store, told of how she was forced to move her store to its current location on 125th Street and 5th Avenue from its former location on 125th and Malcolm X Boulevard due to high rents and the belligerency of UMEZ. It led her to be "pretty sure that UMEZ is associated with anything associated with gentrification in Harlem." She even went so far as to accuse UMEZ of collaborating with the prison industrial complex, saying that she was unfairly outbid in offering her printing services to several institutions in Harlem, including City College itself.

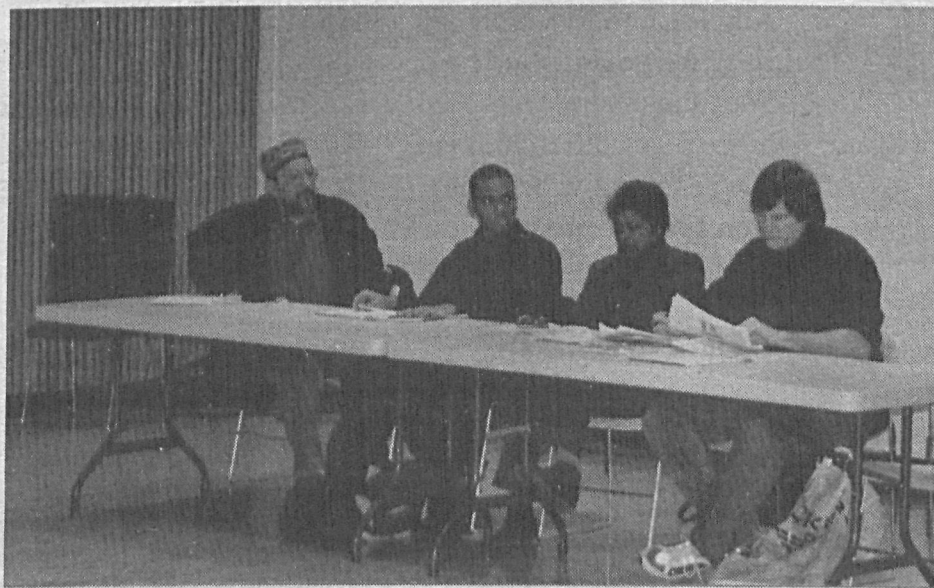
The accusations against UMEZ did not stop after the tape. In the panel discussion that followed, three members of the West Harlem Coalition (WHC), Hamidullah Al-Amin, Nellie Bailey, and Tom DeMott, added their two cents to the situation. Ms. Bailey accused UMEZ of down-

playing gentrification, saying that it "doesn't want to talk about the displacement." She warned that the City's \$4 billion budget deficit would hurt Harlem residents in the form of reduced legal and housing aid services. She also told of the economy's shift to the service sec-

aim of gentrification was to get the suburbia's affluent residents (mostly White) back into the city. In the process the City's current residents, now mostly people of color, would be either be forced into the streets or into the rural areas where services are sparse and local govern-

islature so that they get rent laws passed that are favorable to them, along with their resorting to legal and even lethal force to silence the most vociferous activists. Finally, he accused some of Harlem's politicians of "being in bed with these people," commenting on the lack of political support that tenants have in their struggle.

One student in the audience, Nicole Fowler, expressed the same amount of exhaustion that the activists on the panel have had in battling gentrification (she has a similar battle going in her off-campus residence). Holding back tears, she said: "I've experienced the same type of harassment." Ms. Bailey consoled her by explaining that one weapon that landlords use on tenants is "psychological warfare." This was echoed by the rest of the panelists, who basically said that the ultimate goal was to get tenants to quit and accept their fate. Although the consensus was, especially on the part of Mr. McCaouley, that the fight must continue, it was emphasized that the students in this school and across the city are going to have to take up the struggle, and in the words of Ms. Bailey, to "get involved in the growing anti-globalization movement." This last comment touching on the point that the whole battle against gentrification must be put in the context of the larger fight against corporations' continued economic exploitation of people of color if there is to be success.



From left to right: Mr. Al-Amin, Lashaun McCaouley, Ms. Bailey, and Mr. DeMott.

Photo by Kelechi Onwuchekwa

tor, now being toyed with in Congress, could deal a major blow to residents in the form of lower wages and anti-labor regulations.

Mr. Al-Amin put the problem in an economic context: "It will not be about race but about the haves versus the have nots." He gave an anecdote of how his parents tried living out on Long Island, but found the commute so taxing that they desired to move back into the city, in order to show that whole

ments and law enforcement are very harsh on people of color.

Mr. DeMott gave several examples of the fight that the WHC and tenant's advocates in general have had against UMEZ. He spoke about the beatings activists endured when protesting at a construction site run by the Gotham Construction Company over the way it prevailed during bidding. He also told about how landlords and the real estate sector work the leg-

Hue-Man Books: Harlem's New Bookstore

By Sheria McFadden

In the 1920's and 30's Harlem was home to the Black arts movement and a countless number of reading groups. However, all that was missing was a major bookstore that sold and promoted the works of Black writers. The Harlem community had small mom & pop shops like the one owned by filmmaker Oscar Michaeux and Liberation Books, which still remain on 130th and Lenox Avenue. A number of well-known Black authors emerged from the Harlem arts movements, such as Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Richard Wright. Although, they never made millions of dollars selling their books, they were widely read.

Since 1992 Harlem's community leaders have been trying to

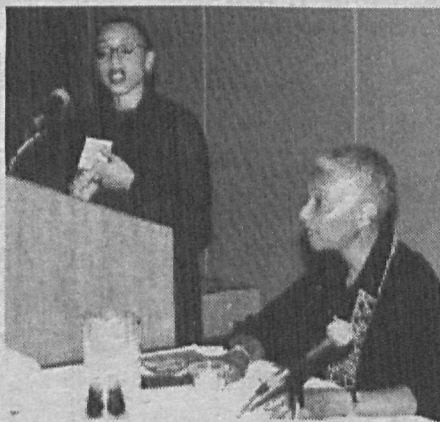
bring a major bookstore to the Harlem USA complex. According to an article on Blackvoices.com, Drew Greenwald, President of Grid Properties - a partner in the development of Harlem USA - said that, "The major chain bookstores have stereotypical ideas, they don't think there's as large a market as there is." Nevertheless, all that has changed and by this April Harlem will not only have a major bookstore but a Black-owned bookstore.

Hue-man Books will occupy 4,000 square feet of space

between Disney and the Magic Johnson movie theatre in the Harlem USA complex, a federally designed empowerment zone that grants tax breaks and exemptions from government regulations to businesses that is located on 125th between Frederick Douglass Blvd. and St. Nicholas Avenue. Clara Villarosa, the owner of the Denver Franchise said, "I had a vision of a large African-American bookstore in a city with a large Black population." With a \$750,000 loan from the Upper Manhattan Empowerment

Zone and pro bono help of Chadbourne & Parke LLP, Ms. Villarosa was able to secure a 10-year lease and enough money to purchase inventory. While other major bookstore chains were apprehensive and not clear of the potential market in Harlem, Ms. Villarosa said, "that a specialty bookstore is just what Harlem USA needs" and according to her experience, "African-Americans buy books by black authors and about black subjects. In addition, they are looking for books that represent their culture."

While the major bookstore chains assume there is no market in Harlem, residents, local community leaders and independent booksellers totally disagree. In a Columbia University article, Mr.



Clara Villarosa (right) at the Chicago Book Expo (2000)

Photo courtesy of OutCry Magazine

continued on pg. 9

THE FIRE THIS TIME

Abusive Relationship

Her face is sore
 from the beating she endures,
 slammed doors,
 the exclamation point to end every sentence.
 His very presence births her hesitance.
 Her innocence disturbed
 and scarred by remarks that would dent steel.
 In the night she kneels
 and prays to the Lord,
 "please give me help
 and stop the pain.
 Allow me the strength
 And take his health if he ever hits me again,
 Amen!"
 A man to his friends,
 but in reality he's a coward.
 She curses his name
 when she sees her bruises in the shower,
 arms and legs discolored and abused,
 threatened if she ever revealed the truth.
 So she stays quiet,
 internally rioting and screaming
 because she's eternally tired,
 depressed,
 emotions suppressed into the furthest depths,
 as she clutches her chest,
 imagining the liquor from his breath
 and the anger
 in which he swings with in full force,
 knocking her senses off course.
 And into a state of unconsciousness
 her subconscious in fear,
 eyes are swollen from his fists
 and her constant nights of tears
 her vagina is torn
 because she's fourteen years old
 and his thirty-five year old penis
 has ripped through her walls many times
 before
 All she can yell is
 "Daddy please stop!"

Liteskin

Canvas

Daddy loved
 in color,
 mommy's heart
 was color-blind.

She felt
 in black & blue
 and red tears
 running
 down her cheek.

Kahlil Almustafa

Guillotine (Let It Toil)

I feel trapped inside this hold
 And you want me out of it
 But you just plunge me deeper
 Into my abyss of life
 Well to hell with that, I will make myself
 and forget you and your
 pain
 confusion
 love
 And learn to live with and without them
 Here we go again
 We sit and vent
 Same feces different toilet
 It will form a whirlpool
 And spin us into oblivion
 Even though it has been done before
 We are blind
 On how to correct the reason through rhyme

Andrew P. Jordan

Chained

You see me suffering and the crowding
 beneath, through the holes and cracks I get
 to breathe. Why do you keep me stolen
 away? As my heart has become purely
 swollen astray, in fear and concrete thoughts
 I dream. My life is but a prison in your
 grasp, but feeling like I won't really last. I
 scramble to find my only way, never finding
 a place to plainly stay. The darkness covers
 everything I see, your always there pulling
 on me, My own soul chained to you, never
 ending, never failing but it's not true. Why
 do you keep a false love, all the pain, all the
 lost, you will find, chained by your own
 imagination, your world above fascination,
 I'm trapped beneath your grasp, I don't
 know how long it will last.

Christopher Velez

The Rhythm Comes First

People always look at me
 And ask me "How'd you do it?"
 I simply smile and shrug and say
 "There's really nothing to it."

I've been around the world you see
 So all I have to do
 Is close my eyes and open wide
 To the beat that passes through.

If I try it any other way
 It goes from bad to worse.
 It's really not the words you see
 It's the rhythm that comes first.

Steve Berlack

Heart Beat

Your true self
 will echo your soul's cry for freedom.
 Listen to its sound.
 It's the sound of harmony,
 Of being in perfect tune with the universe.
 Do not impose a song on your soul.
 Follow its melody and its rhythm
 And change will come at its own pace.

It's not outside force,
 But inner longings
 That set the process of growth in motion.
 If you want to be,
 For force
 Only perpetuate a false sense of reality.

Let yourself be led.
 Dance to the rhythm of your soul,
 For to do otherwise
 Is to go against
 The beating
 Of your own
 Heart.

an excerpt from "Mirrors,
 Reflections of a Woman's Soul"
 by Laura Y. Bowman

got poetry

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 Kahlil Almustafa - Poetry Editor

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE PAPER

Black Pride:

A Short Story for Black History Month

By Monique Minto
from the February 19th, 1992
issue of *The Paper*
edited by Kelechi Onwuchekwa

It was a cold, rainy day, and the breeze blew briskly as we were herded onto the platform. Wet and shivered, many of us wore little more than rags to cover our starved bodies. We had come to the final leg of our long and hellish journey since being abducted from our homeland. Along the final ride, we heard many tales of how hard we would have to work from the slaves who were put to guard us. We were to be auctioned that day to the plantation owners' overseers, who were dirty White men who could not wait to have our blood on their hands. They came finally, filtering among us, poking and prodding at us like cattle, trying to decide whether or not we were strong enough to be worked to death.

With every poke, my hatred for them grew. To them we were nothing more than animals and were to be treated as such. One overseer, whom the others laughingly called "Blackbutcher"

Brown, refused to touch any slave with his hands, so instead he used a stick. Every slave that he poked at, cursed at, and kicked at shrank away in fear, for his face was twisted by an evil-looking scar that ran from the corner of his right eye to a bulbous mole located on his lower left chin. This, added to the tales of punishment and agonizing death that spewed forth from his lips, made him a horror to behold.

Many of the slaves had resigned to their fates but by this time my hatred was so strong that I refused to back down. Brown spat squarely into my face, but I held his eyes without wavering. He struck me in the mouth and a small line of blood began to trickle from the corner of my mouth, but never once did my eyes waver from his. He began to walk slowly around me exclaiming to others what "a powerful nigger" I was and how'd he "just love to break-in an ornery nigger" like me. At that point he raised his stick, ready to beat my defiance out of me, but a sound warning from the slave trader halted his actions in midair. The slave trader, a short, fat, swarthy man named

Jones, started complaining about damaged goods and how Brown could do whatever he wanted to me AFTER money exchanged hands. Following this announcement, Brown proclaimed that he wanted nothing to do with a worthless, troublesome, uppity nigger like me and moved on.

At noon there was a break for lunch for the overseers and we were left to stand and wait, chained to our posts while watching them eat, taunting us with their tasteless meals until the afternoon bidding began. As we waited many of the slaves fainted away where they were standing because of hunger and fatigue. These slaves were beaten back into consciousness and were later sold at a lesser price due to their weakened condition. The rest of us were threatened with harsh punishment if we fainted also. Blood spilled onto my chin from where I had bitten my lower lip to keep from collapsing. The pain I felt kept me awake with its stinging intensity, but it was far less than the pain I would feel after a backlashing, so I kept my wits about me. As I stood there, I nur-

tered Black pride, my hatred mixing it with the hope that all this would change one day. And that I would be there when it happened. It tore at my pride to have to bow and scrape to these smelly White men, but I swore that I would not be beaten. I knew that I would be brought sooner or later, and that I would be worked hard and punished often. But I was not afraid and as long as I was alive in this cruel land, I would never show these evil, cold-blooded men the thing they most desire to see: My fear.

Note: Although this story is included in an issue printed after Black History Month, it was included to prove the point that Black History cannot be packaged into one single month. Black History never ends, but it continues to be made with each passing generation.

Hue-Man Books continued from page 7

Sidi Ibrahima, a Harlem book vendor who's location is in front of the Disney store, says that he sells up to 30 books a day and earns \$300-\$800 per month in extra income from selling books. In the same article Orlando Golber, principal of Rice High School said that he spent more than \$150.00 in books in his last trip to Barnes & Noble and has purchased more than \$700 for his school.

Before venturing to Harlem, Ms. Villarosa owned and operated her first bookstore in the historic Curtis Park district of

Denver. Hue-man books served as a key resource for Denver's African-American community for sixteen years. By the late 80s - early 90s the bookstore had gained national attention by attracting African-American writers such as Maya Angelou and Terry McMillan.

Ms. Villarosa is the first Black woman to serve on the Board of the American Booksellers Association (ABA) and founder of the Black booksellers Association. In addition, she is considered by Black booksellers and writers to be the most respected Black bookseller in the country.

study, teach, and work at City College should join the struggle for the restoration of the Black Studies Department.

Navarro continued from page 5

and by the Washington Heights-based community organization Alianza Dominicana for "Outstanding services to Upper Manhattan."

City College's Center for Worker Education was founded to provide working people with the opportunity to obtain a college education while remaining part of the work force. Most CWE students

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Students continued from page 4

ning to detect a ground swell of passionate outrage by students and the surrounding community about the current status of Black Studies. Black Studies as an integral part of the Black community will always be an institution and a principle worthy of struggling for. All who come into Harlem each day to

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FINANCES

Start Thinking About Your Taxes - Part 1 of 2

By Alecia Edwards-Sibley

The following are tax tips to get us to start thinking about filing. One thing that I want to reiterate is that contrary to popular belief, receiving a big return is not good. It means that you have allowed the government to use your money for a whole year without paying you any interest.

Many people use this as some kind of savings plan, and place the entire refund in their savings account, which is another bad move. Instead, check your withholdings - meaning to see if any major change in your life (marriage, entrepreneurship, etc.) affects the amount you keep. Keep as much of your hard earned money as possible. If you need discipline to save, an automatic savings plan through your employer, or another bank-based option could be explored.

The amount kept in a savings account should be just enough to qualify for free checking. You are not earning enough interest in a savings account to want to keep all your money there. Funnel the rest into a Money Market Fund and start building three to six months worth of expenses there. A Money Market Fund is a low risk investment with a better return than a savings account. As far as tax filing itself is concerned, here is some advice:

File as early as possible after January 1 if you expect a refund unless you owe the IRS money, in which case you would want to hold onto your funds and work out a payment plan with them. Call 800-TAX-FORM and ask for Form 9465 if you are in this situation. All this must be done well before April, however, as the IRS needs time to approve the payment plan; they will charge 5% to 25% in late fees if the plan is not approved in time. If you are having trouble with this, you may request an automatic four-month extension.

Scholarships that pay for tuition, books and supplies are not taxable if you are working toward a degree. The portion of a scholarship that pays for room and board, study abroad, and coursework not applicable toward your degree must be counted as taxable income, however.

If you are a full time student under the age of 24, your parents can claim you as a dependent. However, if the sum of any unearned income (e.g. allowance) and earned income total more than \$700, or if you earned \$4000 or more from a job, you must file your own return.

If you are expecting a big refund, you might want to send your return via certified mail, so there will be a record

in case the IRS does not receive your return.

If you are not married, but have children, filing as "head of household" will allow you to pay less in taxes.

Some deductions applicable to students may include contributions to religious or charitable organization, donations to high school or college associations, and expenses incurred while doing volunteer work.

Some work related tax deductions include the costs of a job search in the same profession, for career counseling, for resume preparation, and transportation. Also deductible are the cost of courses that help you to maintain or improve your status at your current job, along with that of mandatory work uniforms, work-related publications, and dues for professional clubs.

Medical bills totaling more than 7.5% of your gross income are deductible. In calculating this total, premiums, co-payments, the cost of birth control pills, prescription medicines not covered by your health plan, and the cost of transportation are all factors.

If you are self-employed or are running a business, you should file your taxes on a quarterly

basis. For details get a copy of Self-Employment Tax, Publication 533. All business owners should have a copy of Publication 750, a guide to sales tax in New York State. Back this up with Publication 20, a tax guide for new businesses.

Child Care Expenses- Keep track of documents indicating the amounts paid to and dates of interaction with a childcare individual or daycare center while at work. To be able to claim this credit, Unemployment, Medicare, and Social Security taxes must be paid by this employer.

Have a positive attitude toward your taxes. The more you know, the better you will feel. To prevent that feeling of stress file early. Try something new each year such as filing your own taxes, or itemizing, or checking your withholdings.

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IN THE AFRICAN DIASPORA . . .

The FIGHT to Reclaim Zimbabwe

By Sheria McFadden

Presidential elections will soon take place in Zimbabwe, yet the nation is facing possible sanctions from the European governments and aid organizations. Robert Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe for 22 years, has recently come under serious attack for his land reform media bills that were passed in a special session of Parliament.

The land reform bill may be new, but land reform itself has been debated since 1997 when Mugabe stated that Zimbabwe government would seize 4 million hectares of land from White farmers and redistribute it to Blacks. According to a published report by the Zimbabwe government, 4,400 Whites own 32% of Zimbabwe's most fertile agricultural land, while Blacks own 38% of the land, most often in drought-prone areas. The UK's Prime Minister Tony Blair said that they are willing to back the land reform bill only if it benefits poor people. However, the White farmers feel that they should not have to pay for the past and thus should receive compensation for the land. President Mugabe pointed out that the colonialists did not compensate the Africans when they first took the land.

In 1890 the Shona and Ndebele people occupied the land between Limpopo and the Zambezi rivers. In 1889 the imperialist Cecil Rhodes, who made a fortune from diamond mining in Africa, set up the British South Africa Company to explore land north of Limpopo. He obtained exclusive mining rights from King Lobengula of Ndebele for 100 pounds a month, 1,000 rifles, 10,000 rounds of ammunition, and a riverboat. However, according to King Lobengula, they never discussed land rights. Rhodes nevertheless promised the White settlers who came to Africa a 3,000-acre farm and gold claims in return for carving a path through Mashonaland.

The Shona people were so divided they could not resist the imminent British takeover. After securing the land the white settlers renamed it "Rhodesia."



Jonathan Moyo, Minister of Information
Photo courtesy of BBC

In 1965 Prime Minister Ian Smith unilaterally declared independence because Britain would not allow Rhodesia to decolonize as a white supremacist state. During 1966 the Black Nationalist opposition began its armed resistance and two major liberation organizations were formed, ZANU, under Robert Mugabe, and ZAPU, under Joshua Nkomo. In retaliation of Smith's decision, international economic sanctions were imposed and White farmers received major subsidizing. This made it harder for Blacks to maintain their land. It also gave way to the guerrilla war of the 1970s, where both the Blacks and Whites used intimidation and torture on recruits in the rural areas.

After close to a decade of fighting, the Lancaster House Agreement had opened the doors for Zimbabwe's independence; political power was restored to the Blacks but not the land. Although Britain gave 44 million pounds for resettlement projects, much of the land was given to Mugabe's associates and not the poor. When the land agreement under the Lancaster House constitution (which stated that the Zimbabwe government could only buy land from "willing settlers,") expired, the new government passed a law that allowed

compulsory purchases.

While the Zimbabwe's government struggles to regain control of the land, many of the poor people feel that the real issue is creating more jobs. In 2001, the Supreme Court in Zimbabwe unanimously ruled that President Mubage's land reform program was legal, and now White farmers around the country are receiving eviction notices. Zimbabwe's state-owned newspaper listed the names of individuals who will benefit from the land reform bill.

In conjunction with President Mugabe's land reform bill, Parliament has approved his controversial media bill. It calls for changes in the Freedom of Information and Rights to Privacy Bill, The Public Order and Security Bill and the General Laws Amendment Bill.

Under the Freedom of Information and Rights to Privacy Bill, all journalists are required to be Zimbabwean citizens and apply for a one-year license that would allow them to work in the country. It prohibits foreign media from reporting in the country and warrants local journalist to seek special permission from the Information



President Robert Mugabe
Photo by the government of Zimbabwe

Minister, prior to working for foreign media. Journalists are restricted from publishing any unofficial reports of cabinet deliberations and policy and information that is dam-

aging to the law enforcement process and national security.

The Public Order and Security Bill would make it illegal to undermine the president, make unfavorable remark or statements against him, and to hold public gatherings or conduct demonstrations that will disturb public order. In addition, the police would have the right to arrest citizens who attend public meetings without an identification card. However, the police were denied the right to "detain without charge" for seven days.

The General Laws Amendment Bill will create serious obstacles for registered voters and candidates. Voters in urban areas will have to show proof of residence for the last twelve months. Chiefs and village leaders, who are viewed as pro-government, must vouch for anyone registering to vote and the government will only accept postal votes from diplomats and armed forces, therefore, excluding students and workers living outside the country. As for election posters or pamphlets they must receive prior permission before being distributed.

While Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), claims that the laws reflected a desperate regime trying to muzzle the press, Jonathan Moyo, Mugabe's Minister of Information, said that the changes would stop the lies being told by foreign correspondence about the situation in Zimbabwe. He also stated that the European Union (EU) and the Commonwealth should hold Britain responsible for any escalation of violence ahead of the upcoming presidential elections. In addition, Moyo stated that British policy is reminiscent of an equally diabolic strategy by Western intelligence groups, which once worked with former Rhodesians - most of whom are now commercial farmers - to fuel disturbances.

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