

THE PAPER

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—Langston Hughes

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.

STAFF CUTS CATASTROPHIC

By Stephanie Skinner

City College was forced to fire 95 instructional faculty during this summer in order to meet the required cutback.

At present, two college spokesmen, Vice-President Robert F. Carroll and Mr. Levine of the public relations office, could not be positive about the immediate and future job security of instructors and the assumed security of tenured personnel.

When the \$5.6 million budget cut for City College was mandated by the Mayor and the Board of Higher Education during recent months, students were not the only members of the academic community to bear the burden of the college's retrenchment plan. Although the sudden imposition of tuition, which ended a 129 year-old policy of a free education within the City University, was the most dramatic decision made, the college's overall budget retrenchment also affects services, academic programs and many jobs.

The decimation of teachers combined with the imposition of tuition are definite means of accomplishing the college's overall plan to reduce enrollment.

However, the significant number of teachers fired and retirements



Vice-president Robert Carroll

made by professors over the summer were surprising. Particularly, the ousting of tenured personnel was both a surprising and threatening measure forced to be taken by the college.

In the past, a tenured person was assured of their position indefinitely. The system supposedly provided for the general preservation of academic flexibility at an institution. This freedom would allow instructors leeway in their teachings and in turn protect their jobs.

Usually, tenured faculty have been awarded this status after spending a successful period of about six years at a college.

A drastic financial crisis, such as the college's present situation, can warrant the dismissal of tenured persons. Even during a financial emergency, tenured faculty are fired according to seniority.

Out of the total 95 instructional members fired, nine were tenured. However, no classroom instructors were included and that number also represents such positions as lab technicians.

Mr. Levine reported that so far, there has been no filing of appeals or grievances made by any of the fired tenured persons.

"It was very unpleasant," stated Levine, but he felt that all involved understood that it was necessary and unavoidable.

The remaining breakdown of instructional firings include: 16 persons with continuous employment certificates (persons subject to evaluation) and 70 non-tenured faculty.

The loss of teachers had its greatest impact on students at registration, which commenced on September 8. Many students were bewildered when they discovered an outstanding number of courses



Mr. Israel Levine

cancelled because there were no teachers to teach them. The missing staff added to the already confusing registration ordeal.

An official breakdown of racial minority and sex groupings is not available yet. At present, Carroll says that because the firings were implemented departmentally, and since that kind of separation is hard to know by the last names, the college is not yet able to officially determine the effects these firings might have had on any one particular group.

Carroll did state that the Black Studies department was not affected by the firings.

When asked about the possibilities of teachers getting their jobs back, Carroll reported that 10 teachers have been rehired since August.

Carroll also said that President Marshak was continuing efforts to raise money specifically to rehire more teachers. Since there is no chance of getting tax money, because the job lines have been taken away, the President has been raising what is called "soft money."

Carroll said that City College has a good chance of raising these private funds from foundations, businessmen and donors, because City College has the largest alumni in the City University.

Blacks and Firings

Proportionately, it can be observed that there has been a more significant decline of Black and Hispanic instructors. One means of dismissal has occurred according to seniority and in many cases Blacks have only increased in instructional jobs over the past few years. Thus, unable to accumulate a sufficient number of years to receive tenure they would be the first to be fired.

(Continued on Page 3)

Student Boycott: Success or Failure?

By Diane M. Wilson

The September 8th boycott of registration was both a success and a failure. Although the organized but weakly supported demonstration did not turn out to be a "9-10 month struggle to maintain the college closed" as Black Economic Survival leader Moses Harris predicted it to be, the boycott did bring a few important issues to light.

Firstly, City College was the only CUNY institution to publically draw attention to the plight for the maintenance of free education. This was due primarily because of the efforts of the Student Senate and the United Peoples party. The organizing ability and persistence of these two college based groups indicates that City College possesses a significant portion of the leadership potential to con-

tinue the free education struggle. What must now be realized is the need to solidly unify with other CUNY schools and the University Student Senate. If such a unification could occur time would be on the side of the no tuition supporters and a sound foundation could be built from which to work in the future.

Secondly, the participation of Black Economic Survival in the boycott illustrated the role that community organizations must play in the future no tuition fight. Community participation must be active but go beyond the chaining of doors and the overturning of tables. The struggle is not only "through the pocketbook" as Moses Harris indicated, but through the vote. It is imperative that the State Assembly legislators who voted against the 129-year-old no tuition policy not be re-elected. Community leaders and groups can aid students in such an effort and help force those hidden Congressmen and other politicians seeking election to take a stand.

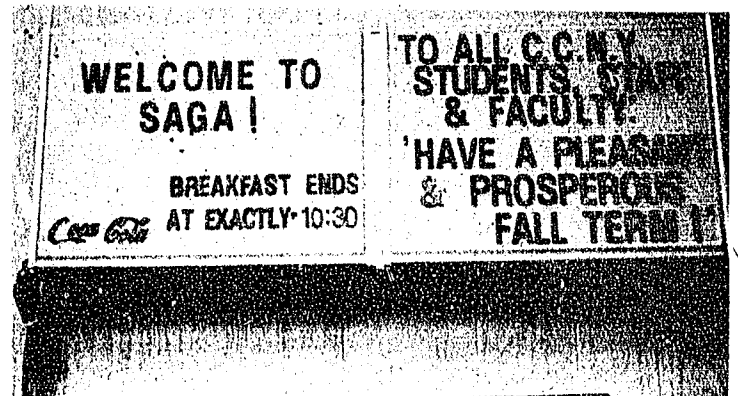
In examining the failures of the boycott one must point to student apathy and indifference as a major factor. In the months to follow measures must be taken that will raise the awareness of students and educate them about the steps that can be implemented to reverse the imposition of tuition decision. Many students agreed with the principle behind the take-

over but not with the methods used by the demonstrators. The organization of workshops, art displays, dramatic skits, etc., are ways in which the free tuition plight can be focused upon on campus in the future and students themselves can become actively involved in the restoration of the no tuition policy at CUNY.

The demonstration also collapsed because of non-support by many faculty members. A strong faculty-student relationship will be necessary with each group helping the other if a strong front is to be developed in the future efforts to restore the free tuition policy and help bring back those teachers who lost their jobs as a result of the financial fiasco the city finds itself in. Students and faculty must do more than sympathize with each others plight; the two groups must meaningfully come together if CUNY is to survive.

Although the boycott of registration did not achieve its overall goal of restoring the no-tuition policy the efforts to do so must not be abandoned. Community leaders, politicians, students, and faculty must all join to effectively channel their energies toward the reinstatement of free tuition at CUNY. The foundation exists if intelligence and patience as practiced during the upcoming months. As Moses Harris stated before his arrest, "the struggle can't be won in a day."

City Gets Saga



By Angela Henderson

The contract to manage the food services at CCNY has been awarded to Saga Dining Hall, Inc. City College no longer runs the food services because the college has been losing money.

Saga was awarded the contract on June 28, 1976. The corporation began managing the North Campus Cafeteria, the South Campus Cafeteria and Snack Bar, and the food tables in the Science Building and Townshend Harris Hall on August 2, 1976.

The West Coast based corporation was one of five companies who bided for the food service contract. The four other companies were: Blanchard Management Corporation, Globe Food Services Corporation, Horn and Hardart and Interstate United Corporation.

Each of the four is a New York based company.

In going outside of the college for food management services, City College isn't losing money. In all five of the companies' bids, the financial arrangements guaranteed that the food service operator pay the college 2.5% commission on gross sales or \$20,000, whichever was greater.

According to Richard Morley, Business Manager and Comptroller of the college, a student-faculty committee spent this past spring reviewing the food service before the decision to switch to Saga was made.

Explaining why Saga was chosen, Mr. Morley noted that the company had purchasing power and "overall professional approach and services."

(Continued on Page 3)

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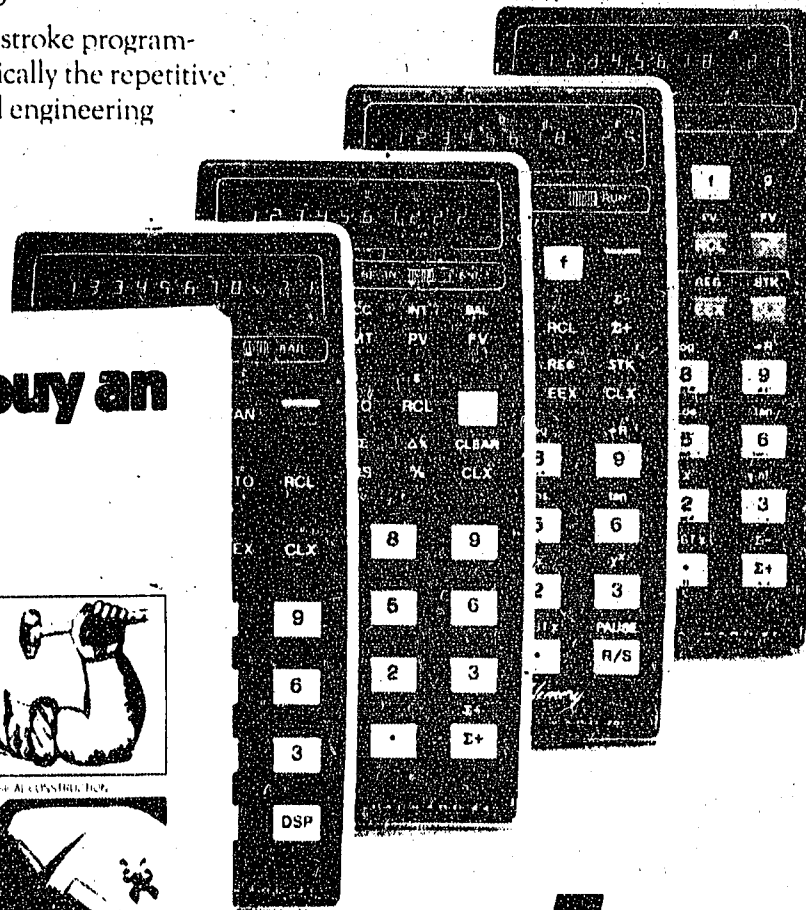
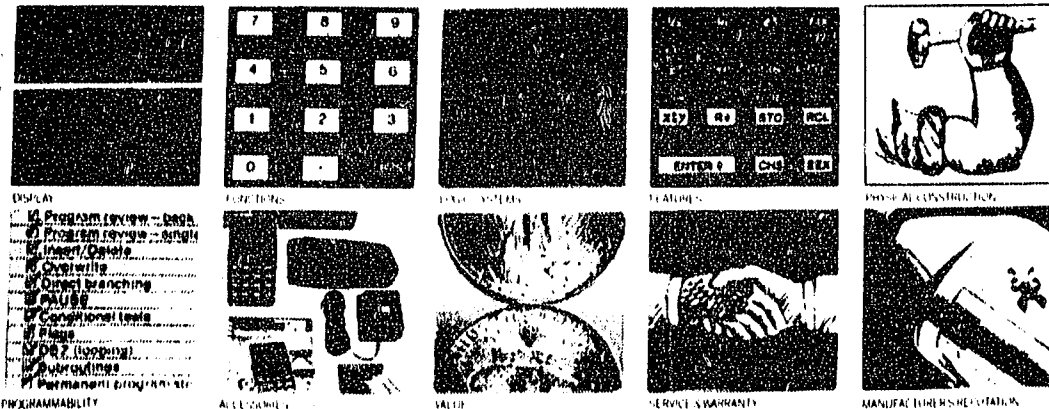
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I AM SOMEBODY

By ERNEST B. BOYNTON, Jr.

A somewhat skeptical, but attentive audience tuned its ears to attention as the trim, petite woman spoke:

"Every person has a second chance if he will accept it and really work to make good. Each person can wipe his slate clean, discover that life can open anew. I did it. So can you."

The speaker was Dr. Joyce Brothers and her topic was "The Psychology of Poverty." Her audience was a mixture of minority races, mostly blacks, and some whites, brought together by Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), the city's anti-poverty agency. The setting was plain, an open room with folding chairs, obstructive posts and a coffee urn.

Why could Dr. Brothers, one of the nation's best known psychologists — a "shrink" to her audience — interrupt her non-stop schedule of three television shows, several radio programs, and press conferences to talk to people engaged in this forum on poverty?

Dr. Brothers made very few direct references to poverty. She just talked about issues that develop a psychology of poverty among those who accept certain stereotypes. She quoted new research which denounced the accepted branding of youthful delinquents as "lonely misfits" and "members of well organized gangs . . . mostly from minorities . . . ghettos . . . broken homes."

Dr. Brothers said, "This is all wrong. It's a picture not of the typical juvenile delinquent, but rather of one who gets caught, referred to court, and entered into statistics."

Most juvenile delinquents never get caught, and many who do are not taken to court, she asserted, because they are high status white males. According to research by Dr. Martin Gold, these youths reported "more serious delinquent behaviour than their lower status peers. Police just don't look for crime among these youngsters."

CONT. FIRINGS

(Continued from Page 1)

Dr. Leonard Jeffries of the Black Studies department reported that many faculty were lost, though there were no official firings. All adjunct persons were lost and four other positions.

Professor Jackson was asked to retire to prevent two younger teachers from being fired. Jackson taught African history, was a popular visiting professor and the author of two outstanding books: *Introduction to African History and Man, God and Civilization*.

Francis Botchway, deputy chairman of the Black Studies department resigned to become chairman of the Black Studies department at the University of Cincinnati. His position here is permanently lost.

Although official firings were avoided within the department it was still affected by retrenchment. The main reason, Jeffries stated, that there were no firings was because over the past three years the department has had a continuous increase in student registration while similar departments have declined.

Within the English department, Dean Gross commented that there has been a conscious effort to hire Blacks and women over the past few years. As a result of retrenchment all adjunct persons were lost and 12 full-time teachers were fired: ten were women, two were

Just because a youngster is a black male living in a ghetto, he should not automatically be singled out as a potential delinquent, Dr. Brothers said, but many Americans do think this way, showing fear when they see a group of black teenagers.

Prejudice is another cause of unfavorable American stereotypes for black people and other minorities. Current studies of racial prejudice, Dr. Brothers said, suggest:

"Rather than denying differences in color or preaching a disregard for them, parents who want their children to grow up unprejudiced would do well to provide their children with happy experiences with people of different races and backgrounds. Then children will be less apt to grow up stereotyping people by skin, color, accent, or dress."

Although anti-busing proponents say integrated schools are reducing the quality of education and polarizing the races, new studies do not support this theory and there is less prejudice in schools today than in the past, Dr. Brothers said.

After her address, she explained her interest. "Nobody needs to be poor, but anybody can be poor if he thinks of himself as poor. And money is not necessarily the determining factor."

In an interview, she said, "I came here to talk to people. People are friendly and American people and their problems have no boundaries. There are no small towns nor big cities. Television, newspapers, and magazines have brought America to everyone. There is no pattern to American problem."

Telling about change in her own life, Dr. Brothers said that after reaching the age of 40 she decided she did not have to relegate herself to the scrap heap as a woman reaching menopause, one no longer sexually attractive, one waiting to grow old and pass away. As she was about to launch a television career, she took a thorough look at herself and did not like what she saw. So she gave up her

pretentious psychology office, her prim wardrobe, and her butterball figure. She transformed herself into an attractive, sparkling person who talks to everyone.

"You cannot sit in a New York City high rise office and pontificate on the state of mankind and the world," she said. "And I have received another reward — other psychologists tell me I have spread their information to people in a language they can understand. They say I have helped the profession."

The lesson and message of Dr. Brothers can be applied to black and minority people who have achieved, as well as to those who still think of themselves as handicapped in a white world.

Boston is a city, for example, in which blacks and certain white people exemplify a psychology of poverty. Their poverty is in their minds. Too many minority people cry about some white student calling them names in a hostile atmosphere in a white neighborhood where they have been bused. They complain that people don't like them because they are black. They fear they will not succeed because they are black.

At the same time they ignore opportunities offered by more than 65 colleges and universities of top quality located in the Boston area. Only 19 percent of Boston's high school graduates — including those from the city's three prestigious schools, Latin Academy, and Tech — further their education.

The University of Massachusetts at Boston, established to provide college study for people who cannot afford private colleges, had to cut back its enrollment goals or seek students from out of the city and state because not enough city students utilized its commuter-oriented campus.

Because such a small number of Boston area blacks think big, policy-making positions for minorities go to people from other areas. Black college professors, industry

executives, community agency leaders, and other professionals working in Boston have mostly migrated to Massachusetts.

The Boston story can be retold in other cities throughout the United States. People who grew up in black ghettos see themselves relegated to lives of being slicksters, shysters, con people, hustlers, and petty criminals — parasites on their own people, with no chance of making good beyond the perimeters of their limited communities.

Police stereotype damage these people and inferior schools affect their education. More than that, their low self-esteem harms them from within more than statements of hate, segregation, or blatant prejudice can do.

During this bicentennial year, American minorities can reflect on the American revolutionaries of 200 years ago, most of whom came to the western hemisphere after being misfits in their native lands to seek a better life and a new start.

Black people of today are in the same position as the patriots of yesteryear. They are at the bottom of the American stockpile with nowhere to go but up.



Bert Smith

The United States is still a land of opportunity. Of course, every minority person who seeks to get ahead must be a pioneer and overcome great odds. But he or she can do it.

"We shall overcome" inspired the civil rights advocates of the 1960's. "I am somebody" can catapult the disappointed minorities of the 1970's.

No American need practice the psychology of poverty on himself.

Mr. Ernest B. Boynton, a professional journalist turned educator, teaches English and journalism at the College. He is the Faculty Advisor to The Paper.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Drop in Undergraduates

By ANGELA HENDERSON

This past summer session has been an historical last semester for free tuition at the City University. But surprisingly, undergraduate summer enrollment at City College declined. Last summer 6,528 undergraduates registered, this summer only 4,642 enrolled.

Norman Wagner, the associate dean for the summer session, was surprised at the lower enrollment. He thought that attendance would increase over last year's because this summer was the "last shot at free tuition."

The number of undergraduates at summer session had increased annually since 1969, reaching its peak in 1975 and plunging this year. Dean Wagner thinks that part of the reason for the decline was because after the school closed for two weeks at the end of the spring term, students didn't know if the college would reopen. As a result, they made other plans. Also, many students decided to work to help defray tuition costs.

The Board of Higher Education has mandated that the college adopt a tri-semester schedule beginning September, 1977. Consequently, accordingly to Dean Wagner, there will probably be no summer school after August, 1977.

Remedial Students Excel

Four out of five students participating in a remedial English experiment in New York high schools and City University colleges showed significant improvement in writing ability after a semester of highly structured reading-related instruction. These were among the results of an eighteenth-month "read-to-write" study involving 2,066 students and 71 teachers at eighteen high schools and five City University colleges.

The study, conducted by R. Bossone of the CUNY Graduate School and L. Troyka of Queensborough Community College, was sponsored by the Graduate School and supported by the Board of Education and the Board of Higher Education.

D.A.

men and three were Black (two Black women and one male).

The English department which has a staff of 114 was said to be overstaffed, explained Prof. Greene, chairman of the department.

Professor Greene said that the department has a meager amount of soft money which can be used to rehire teachers. Courses needing specialists to teach them, such as the creative writing courses, will play a part in determining who gets rehired.

Although decisions are not made by the department, Greene said that they are trying to get back June Jordon, one of the Black female teachers fired this summer.

Enrollment though, will be the pending factor on the rehiring of staff.

Saga Analysis

(Continued from Page 1)

The decline in the number of businesses with their corporate headquarters in New York City is continuing; for various reasons these companies are looking outside of New York for their home bases. The moves mean a loss of revenue and jobs for the city.

The business exodus, which is economically disastrous for New York, should make responsible city institutions strive to employ those companies which are based in the

city. A public establishment such as CCNY should re-examine its choice of the West coast based Saga Dining Hall, Inc. to manage its food services.

In order to bid, each of the five companies had to meet a minimum criteria. According to the financial statements of Blanchard Management Corporation, Horn and Hardart, Interstate United Corporation and Saga Dining Hall, Inc., each was financially qualified to perform under the cafeteria contract. (The financial statement for Globe Food Services Corporation was unavailable.)

City College should help give New York's businesses the incentive to stay. The administration is obligated to weigh its decision in view of the type of institution City College is and the public the college is here to serve.

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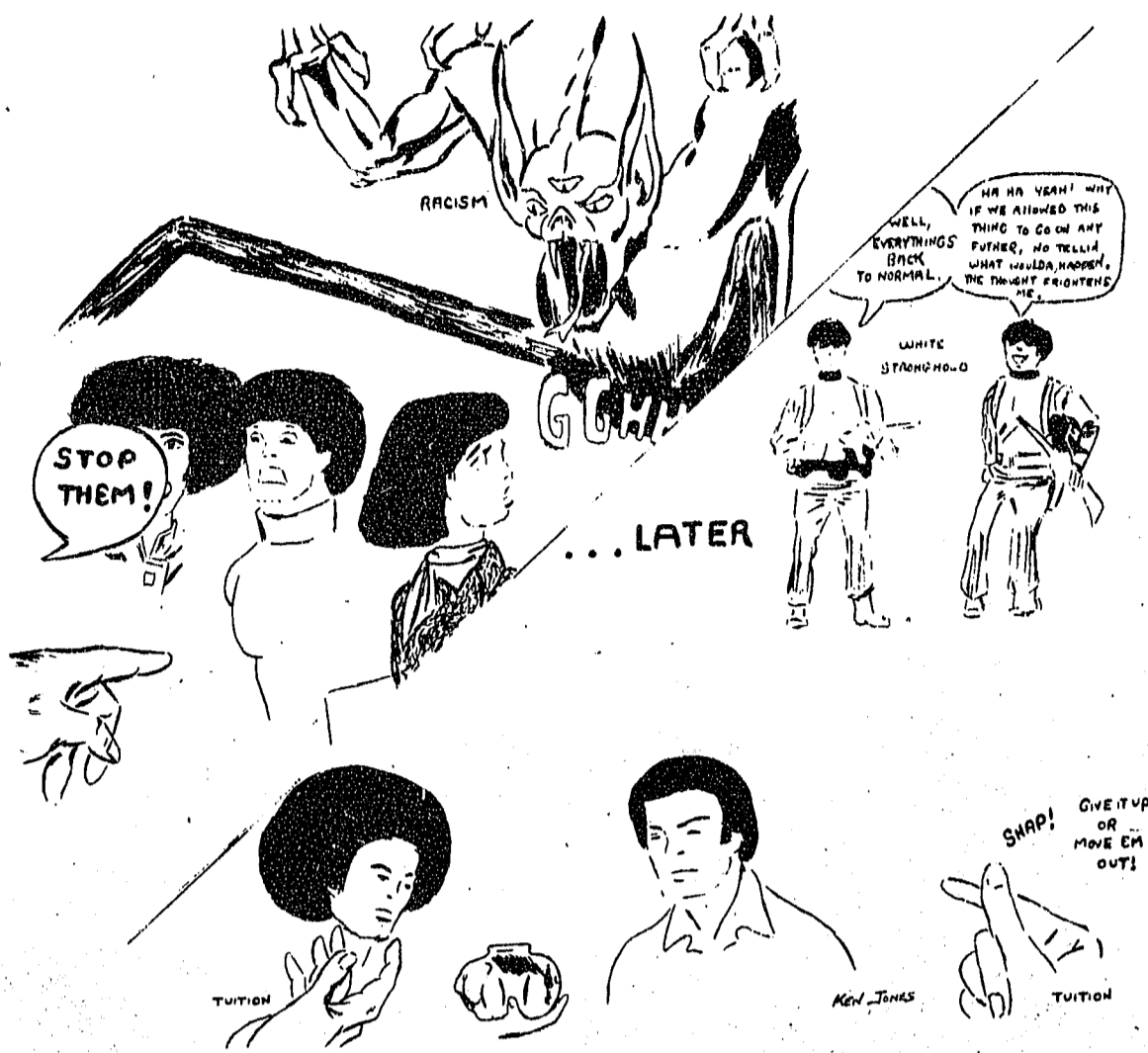
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**Commentary:
Student indifference
not a joking matter**

By Darryl Alladice

During my four years at City I really believed people could accomplish anything they wanted if they tried hard enough. Really. If they tried hard enough. If they tried.

The demonstration against tuition on September 8, 1976 in front of the Science Building showed me that there weren't many people who really wanted free tuition because if they did, I assure you there would've been more people demonstrating and less people breaking down the doors to get their packets.

It's not funny when you think about it. It's not.

When lower-class people give in to the castrating rules of the higher-class it only shows they — the lower class, the last hired and first fireds — have finally given up everything they've been fighting for for centuries.

I guess the sixties have finally passed and nobody wants to be Black anymore. After all, it's not "in" to organize and believe in yourself; it's not "in" to burn the school down when it's castrating you at the same time. It's not "in."

The wrong people have the power and it's about time we stop letting this happen like reruns on the late show. It's about time we organize and get things in order for ourselves and our future generations. It's about time we change ourselves into really together people who know how to organize and fight the system to the end. We do have power and we can make the laws that speak for us. Let's start making things work for us instead of for the people who don't care about us. Let's stop being the same for others' convenience. We know what has to be done . . . The only thing to do is **DO IT!**

Letters to the Collective

In view of the recent decision of the food services committee which awarded the contract to Saga Dining Halls, the Student Senate must issue a notice of protest.

Some points of protest are:

1. When the vote was taken out of a total of 7 persons only 1 was a student.
2. When a second member of the student body (who was also elected by that student body to represent them) wanted to exercise that right to vote, the committee's chairperson, Mr. Ron Spalter denied him that right.
3. There was ambiguity as to the committee's composition. When asked how many students should be on the committee, Mr. Spalter replied that it was up to his discretion. He also said that it was his responsibility to encourage student participation, yet he failed to contact as many students as he did administrative or faculty persons.
4. Committee decision seems to have included an aspect of racism. After a preliminary vote Blanchard Corp. and Horn and Hardart Corp. ranked highest according to the committee's standards. Also, after fully examining all of the criteria, including the cleanliness of H & H, several persons on the committee had reservations about awarding the contract to H & H which left Blanchard in the most favorable position according to the committee's preliminary vote. At this point the committee decided to adjourn. Next meeting the emphasis miraculously moved from the Black owned Blanchard Corp.

to the previously unconsidered Saga Dining Halls.

5. Committee was influenced by persons who may have had prior involvement with companies—Dean Safarty, Mr. Moorely, Mr. Sutter.
6. Saga Corp. is a nation-wide corp. with its home office in California.
7. We all know that the larger the company the more the command is removed from the community being served.
8. Thus when problems arise, it is even more difficult to solve them. Of the two small companies, Globe wasn't even considered by the committee. The remaining company, Blanchard Corp., not only has a New York City base but it has a base right in the Harlem community.

Selwyn Carter
Campus Affairs
Vice President

I graduated from City College in June, 1975. Since that time I have worked as a tutor in the SEEK program, while undertaking graduate studies at N.Y.U.

Words cannot express the despair, hopelessness and depression I have experienced since September. You cannot possibly imagine what it has been like to get off the train at 125th Street and witness first the destruction of Open Admissions, and then the dismantling and dismemberment of CUNY.

City College was always an institution I believed in more than anything else in my life. If I didn't believe so strongly in this system, I wouldn't be here tutoring now.

We cannot stand idly by while CUNY becomes a political football that no one wants to catch. We cannot cut further and hope to have a viable university left.

The President's Retrenchment proposal may have been conceived of in good faith but we must resist it. We cannot cut remedial programs to even half the extent that Marshak calls for.

The City University is the only way thousands of Black, brown and white working class people can escape poverty and build prosperous lives. We cannot let their dreams go down the sewer. We must keep this university intact and tuition free.

We should be prepared to do whatever becomes necessary to defend this institution from the forces that seek to destroy it. It doesn't take that many people, for instance, to tie up traffic in midtown for an hour. An action of this nature could possibly attract considerable media attention and serve to educate the population of the city about the racist nature of these attacks.

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Darryl Alladice, Stephanie Skinner, Diane Wilson

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Viabile News Service Threatened

By DENNIS MACK

"I cannot say to anyone that I can insure CNS' existence. I know that until the bank rolls are empty and nothing dribbles in, I'll be here. But I can't say how long that will be."

Community News Service — a non-profit organization which provides major news organizations with information from New York's minority communities — is threatened with extinction partly because, in a period of retrenchment, "Blacks are . . . unpopular," according to CNS Executive Editor Annette Samuels.

In the summer of 1967 racial disorders occurred in American cities. The worst coming during a two-week interval in July, initially in Newark and then in Detroit. At the end of July President Lyndon B. Johnson established a National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to try and find out exactly what happened and why that summer, and what could be done to prevent future disorders.

The Kerner Commission recommended that expanded coverage of the Black community and of race problems be undertaken immediately. They also recommended that the major media recruit more blacks into journalism and promote qualified Blacks to positions that carried more responsibility.

The idea for CNS was initially

formulated by members of the Commission. And, an urban reporting project at the New School of Social Research set out to investigate the need and value of such a service. In 1969 CNS evolved from a proposal stipulating that at a certain point it should become an organization directed by Blacks and Puerto Ricans. Those two groups along with sympathetic whites in editorial capacities formed a board of Black and Puerto Ricans to direct the organization in May, 1970, and moved its headquarters from a progressive college in New York's Greenwich Village a 125th street loft building in Harlem.

The funding problem is a result of the fact that there is no longer any pressure on the white establishment to provide funds. From its very beginning the Ford Foundation has provided the largest funding source. But, by August 31, all Ford Foundation funding will probably be terminated, according to Samuels. Foundations are no longer pressured to give money to specific minority press projects. Today foundation money is channeled mainly into juvenile, educational and child abuse programs, according to Samuels.

In the past CNS has received money from Chemical Bank, Consolidated Edison, Fund for the City of New York, New York Foundation, New York Post Foundation, The Episcopal Church,

First National City Bank, Xerox, Exxon Corporation and the Journalism Council. Some of these organizations can be relied on to provide future money, however the amount will probably be insignificant.

It has now gotten to the point where minority people are told that you must compete and adopt the same standards as others," said Ms. Samuels. Minority journalists always compete and adopt these standards she said.

Completely new funding sources must be found to insure CNS' survival. "My job, as I see it, is to present the most succinct story possible to get them to give me some of their money."

The Community News Service — like other similar alternate news services, such as Liberation News Service, is not highly regarded by the major media. "We're considered renegades," continued Samuels. "We're not accepted as a news service, and I doubt we ever will be," she said. "CNS and other minority publications are simply tolerated. If they were to go out of business tomorrow some of the major media wouldn't care. The organization's reporters aren't trusted as much as Associated Press or United Press International reporters, according to Samuels.

Even *The Daily News* — which is a "people paper" is told to be extremely careful in checking out the

facts. According to *News* reporters who have discussed this with Samuels. The *News* is a heavy utilizer of the service. "They see the value of using it even if their point of view is totally different from ours," said Samuels.

CNS stories consist of profiles and features, but they rarely cover straight news because this is usually covered by the major media as well. They try to write features on some of the conditions that precipitate a major news story. It is more important to deal with innendos that occur in Black and Puerto Rican communities, according to Samuels.

CNS stories consist of profiles and features, but they rarely cover straight news because this is usually covered by the major media as well. They try to write features on some of

In covering minority communities CNS is extremely careful to thoroughly check out any allegations that can damage a minority person. Ms. Samuels has a modified view of full disclosure of information.

"If we were living in a country with a system that was honest and aboveboard full disclosure wouldn't hurt anyone," she said. "Because I know that the system can't be honest; I can't unequivocally come out in favor of full disclosure." Ms. Samuels believes that small, insignificant, powerless people" can be hurt by full disclosure.

CNS covers the Black and Puerto

Rican communities in all five boroughs. In addition, other minority communities are aware of and utilize CNS. Ms. Samuels believes that "If people in larger society don't have any idea about life in a minority community, when the call for change comes they'll not going to now why." That's why we had riots in the sixties."

Samuels believes that there has been very little change in coverage of the Black community since the Kerner Commission report. She contends that while there are more stories about minority communities in the paper, the content varies very little from that which was published in 1969. Stories then and now contain a "tinge of racism" and usually adopt a "condescending attitude," according to Samuels. "If anything most major publications are retreating from commitments made 6 to 8 years ago to improve."

A typical issue is planned in much the same way as every publication would plan a typical issue: mail, personal community centers, and incoming telephone calls. They give more careful attention to the mail major publications usually palce in the wastepaper basket.

CNS may be a viable alternative which is threatened with extinction, but some people will be there "until the bank rolls are empty and nothing dribbles in."

BEFORE BIRTH

Anxiously,
you are memorizing
the light leaning against
the entrance

Like an entertainer

before an audition

you are
tucked under her reflection
in the mirror

as if you were
on a moving train
glaring out the window

While all this time
destiny observes casually
like someone wearing

dark sunglasses
right above
the fine print.

—ken jones

Poetry Corner



REMEMBER

Remember, those of you young, gifted, Black
While jet-propelling through the crippling supernatural
Darkness of ghettos and slums,

Shining in the dimness, like the incorporeal radiance
of lavalieres,

Swimming beneath the floors of empty eternities, like
light breaking through cloud embankments,

Hydrofoiling above the machinery of various twilights and
dispair,

Grasping, Clinching, Holding . . . remember that all the
time

It
was
yours.

—ken jones

BOOK REVIEW:

Meridian

By Darryl Alladice

Meridian is a new novel by Alice Walker set mostly in the deep South and New York about a young Black woman, Meridian Hill, who's struggling to free herself from her past at the same time she's trying to cope with the present.

At seventeen, a mother and a wife, she was abandoned by her husband who was her childhood sweetheart. Out of loneliness she gets involved with the Civil Rights Movement and meets Truman Held, a dedicated Blackman who wants her love. Lynne, Truman's wife, is a white woman not willing to let Meridian have her husband even though their marriage is on the brink of destruction. This is where the novel takes off.

Meridian becomes confused when Lynne tells her all about Truman's good and bad points. Then, Meridian starts judging Truman by Lynne's standards, and the relationship between Meridian and Truman comes to a halt. All this happens between trips to the South and New York. (Between the North and South of Dixie.)

The style of the novel is extremely dramatic. What disturbs me about the novel, though, is Ms. Walker's ridiculous European morals. When Meridian accepts Lynne's reasoning that Truman — let alone a Black male — is only a sex object, it's an insult to the Black male and female. Since Ms. Walker has accepted a very cheap definition of Blackness — let alone Black masculinity — one would ask: Is this writer Black?

Meridian is a very ambitious novel but because of the many degrading implications about Blackness (and about people, in general) it doesn't hold up as a novel and a work of art.

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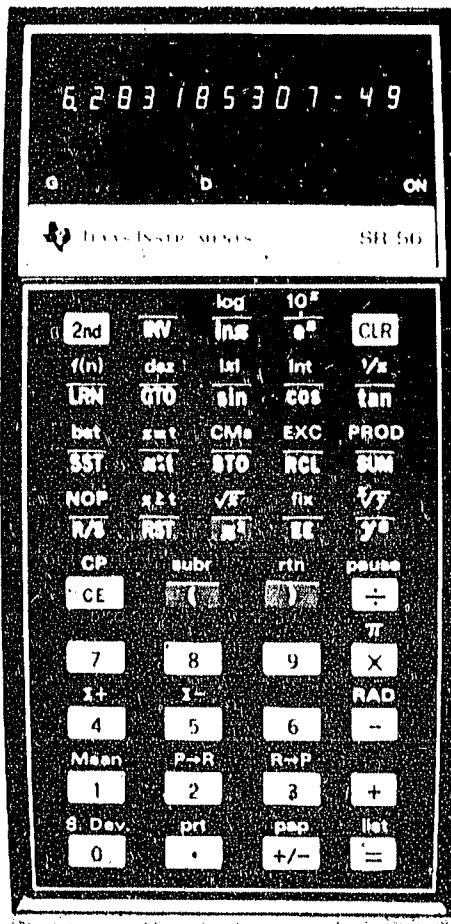
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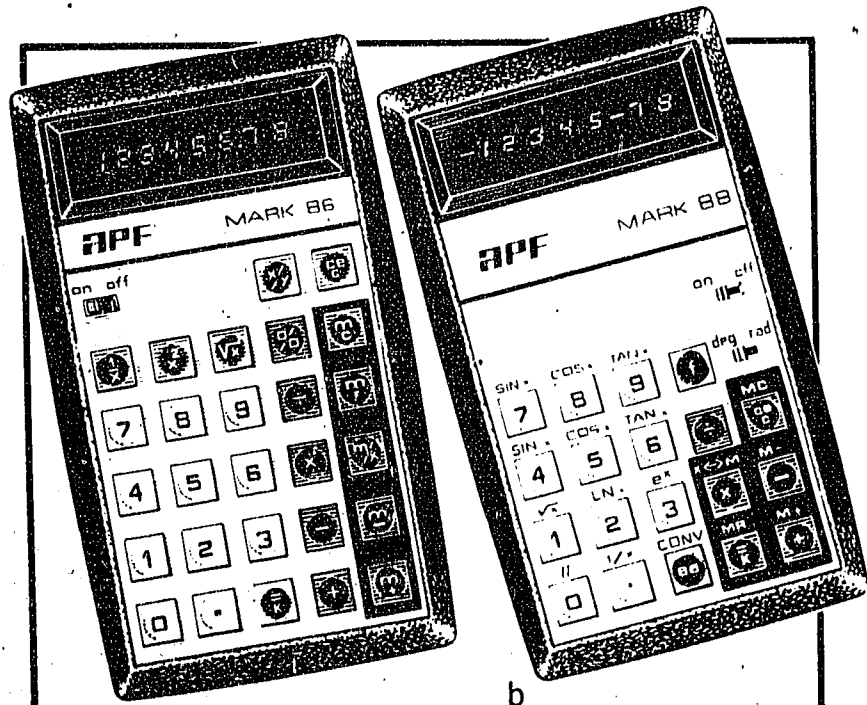
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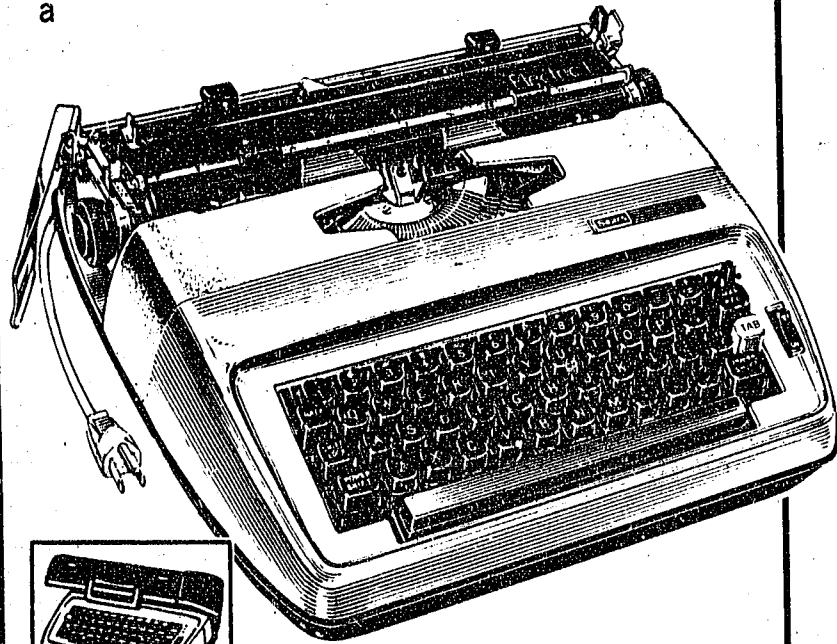
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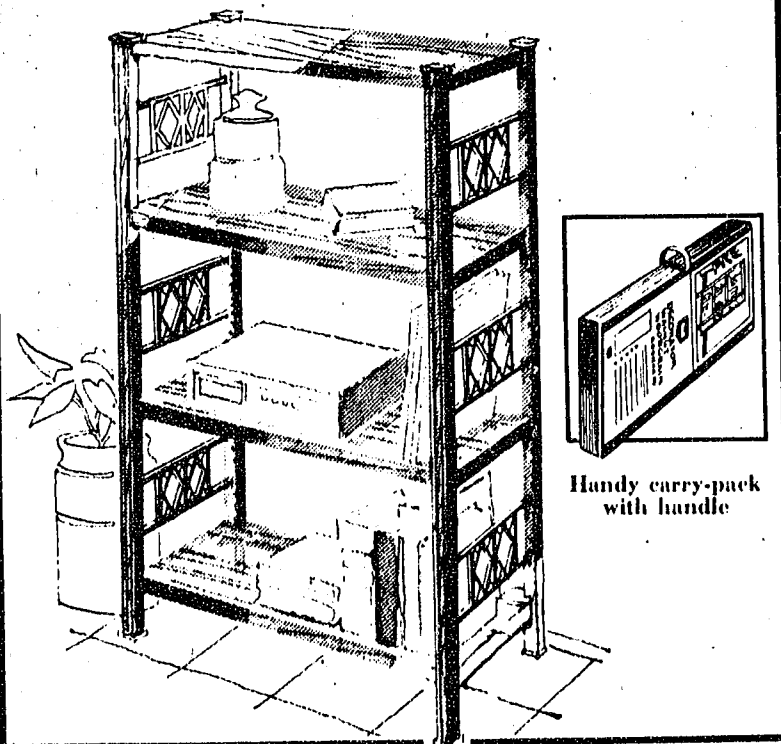
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For Colored Girls: Explicit but Bitter

By STEPHANIE SKINNER

Unfortunately, when white press highly acclaims and popularizes Black art I become apprehensive. If it is not a piece, such as the Black production of the *Wiz* or *Gyps and Dolls* that is solely entertainment, white dominated producers and media suppress and even denounce progressive works for and authored by Blacks.

Seldom do message-oriented productions last or even reach the Broadway arena. Since Broadway, the concentrated center of theatre and arts in New York traditionally represents the epitome of American culture, any ideologies that strongly suggest radical changes or threaten status-quo would be understandably inappropriate for its stages.

A good case was *Poison Tree*, which made an explosive statement against the prison system in American capitalist society, casted with predominantly Black and impressive actors, that lasted only several days on Broadway. Had it been written by a Black person it probably would have reached no major theatres at all, and if it had the engagement probably would have been limited.

Usually, it is only after Black leaders and revolutionaries are dead that their lives and ideas are allowed to be re-created for major theatre. If dead their ideas are not threatening, for they cannot elaborate nor defend their views.

Now that producer Joseph Papp has brought *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When The Rainbow Is Enuf* to the Booth Theatre on Broadway (which prompted my need for an analysis) I find myself increasingly examining the after effects of the ideas and images expressed in the production.



Scene from "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/ When The Rainbow is Enuf."

Colored Girls will undoubtedly be considered one of the most dramatic moving collections of poetry and sassafras to have emerged in theatre during the present decade.

It has moved from the free showing at the Henry Street New Settlement community theatre to the N.Y. Shakespeare Public Theatre, now to the highest circle of Theatre (Broadway) and is projected to tour nationally.

Not only has the production become one of the most talked about dramatic works,

but significantly the author — Ntozake Shange is a living example of the works and a constant perpetrator of the ideas the production expresses.

Standing on its merits as simply a piece of art, *Colored Girls* deserves the rapid rise in popularity and attention that it has triggered. There is no question in my mind to the creatively strong way in which Ntozake fashions her feelings to foster some emotional response. However, the emotion experienced by most Black men who saw the play seemed to be resentment and that concerns me.

Colored Girls is a very explicit and bitter expression by Ntozake (and colored girls) about experiences with male relationships. But as a Black woman, a colored girl myself, still baffled and hurt from the turmoils and traumas of male/female relationships in a society of changing and uncertain values, I must look for more than simply the technical aspects on the subject of what makes a moving theatrical piece, but one that promotes unity to this fragmented dilemma. There is the more objective and whole responsibility to offer some positive alternatives or at least be — to raise the need. *Colored Girls* is narrow and subjective in its scope.

The first time I saw *Colored Girls* I felt a commonality with all women and was personally relieved that I had not been singularly naive or abused in my relations with men. The second time I saw the production I become conscious that I had been taken on a purely emotional trip. Aside from being intensely stimulated by such biting experiences as latent rape, abortion, prostitution, three-way relationships and one-sided love affairs, I am now disturbed at the bitter after-taste and the negative image too many of the audiences have attached to Black men from *Colored Girls*.

Especially after reading that Ntozake Shange respects communistic approach I would expect some mention of the overall social effects on the prevailing attitudes of men towards women. We must all face the cold truths that exist between us; but rather than allow them to antagonize us we should redefine constructive alternatives. If Black men and women cannot relate in positive, progressive relations we cannot expect to progress as a people.

Bingo Long: More

Than Just Another Black Comedy



By Sadie Mills

The *Bingo Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings*, a recently released Berry Gordy production, is destined to become a classic. The film, starring Billy Dee Williams in the title role, is both dramatically and comically entertaining. James Earl Jones and Richard Pryor round out the cast of leading men in which Mr. Williams sensitively portrays a young, Black baseball player segregated out of the white leagues. He does not, however, let his misfortune discourage him from deciding to create his own team and make the most of his situation.

James Earl Jones is believable as Bingo Long's amicable and easy-going partner in the venture. Richard Pryor portrays one of the many diversified and comical characters of the team. He amusingly unveils his various schemes to break into the white leagues, first by posing as a Black Cuban and then as an American Indian, since admission as himself, a Black American, is was totally unacceptable at the time.

In this new film on Black life in the 1930's the director effectively depicts the extra pains this black team must take in order to be accepted by their white audiences



Two sides of Billy Dee Williams

once they are banned from the black stadiums by a group of thugs. The team is forced to use sight-gags such as a midget on the team, as well as to insult and trick each other in the mist of games. They are also forced to have a black vaudevillian shuffling parade to announce their arrival in each new town.

The continued high spirits of the team members, in spite of their forced position to give morally debasing performances, serves to make a less overt statement of the Blackman's plight in the Depression Era. However, the fact that the point of racial hatred is more subtly made and subsequently is presented in a thought-provoking way, makes for a longer lasting impression.

The *Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings* displays a refreshing new approach by Black men to the problem of baseless prejudice. The example of this black team's keeping faith through most of their hard times is inspiring even to Blacks of today. This film's positive perspective will make it memorable when other Black exploitative films will have long since been forgotten.

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