

**THE  
STONY  
BROOK**

# PRESS

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# **Nixon comments on**

## **The Press :**

**"They are above average in intelligence. Most of them are liberal politically. Virtually all are ambitious, not so much for money as for status. They are proud of their profession and sometimes find it difficult to hide their contempt for the less well-educated politicians and businessmen they cover ... Press people don't mind being despised, that's their business."**

## **Join The Press**

**Next Meeting:  
Monday August 31, 1992  
8:00pm  
203 Central Hall**

**Wear old sneakers.**

## A Long Ride to Madison

# First National Conference of Grad Employee Unions

By Jean Rousseau

member of the GSEU coordinating committee

The first National Conference of Graduate Employee Unions took place this summer in Madison, Wisconsin. Organized by the Teaching Assistants' Association at Madison, the July 23-25 conference brought more than 50 union members and interested graduate students together. The Graduate Student Employees Union delegation of nine representatives from the SUNY centers had the opportunity to meet with participants from the Universities of Wisconsin at Madison and Milwaukee, Michigan at Ann Arbor, California at San Diego, Massachusetts at Amherst, and Rutgers.

Upon their arrival at Madison, the GSEU delegation was greeted with the exciting news that SUNY had lost its appeal against PERB, setting the stage for a certification election as early as the Fall semester. The good news was duly celebrated at the university's student union building, located on the shores of the beautiful Lake Mendota. A large terrace overlooking the lake allows students to enjoy a beer or two while watching windsurfers, ducks and other swimmers. Beside this picturesque hangout, State Street is but a short walk away. It offers a broad assortment of cafés, restaurants, shops, bars and more bars. For the Buffalo and Stony Brook contingents in particular, it was a student's dream compared to the dreary social environments of their respective campuses.

The conference was organized around a series of ten workshops. Besides the soporific workshop on building democratic unions, where everybody agreed on the obvious, the most useful workshops for GSEU representatives dealt with practical issues such as negotiating contracts and grievance procedures. During the last afternoon of the conference, delegates agreed to form an official Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions (CGEU) to maintain a depository of useful information

such as copies of contracts and lists of grievances. The coalition will also meet annually at a different university during the summer, with the 1993 conference for Ann Arbor.

For many male participants, the most significant event was the impromptu formation of a women's caucus, and the dialogue that ensued. This discussion was necessitated by the propensity of many men to dominate the debates. Their points were often redundant and, according to many women, the men tended to exclude women's viewpoints from the discussion. Anna Geronimo, president of the Graduate Student Association at Buffalo and spokeswoman for the caucus, declared that "Women must be part of males' circles of power without copying their behavior. Debates should be inclusive of women's ideas and ultimately lead to a better understanding of issues, expectations, and gender dynamics," she added. The following day, a big improvement was noticed, but it was still only a beginning.

All of the participating graduate employee unions are affiliated with national unions. On Saturday afternoon David Newby, secretary-treasurer of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO, talked about the relationships that should exist between Graduate employee unions and their parent unions. It was an invitation to become more involved with the parent unions in order to gain influence and make sure the concerns of graduate employees are heard. The issue of union dues was also raised. At Madison, dues represents one percent of members' salaries. One-half is sent to their parent union, the Wisconsin Federation of Teachers (WFT), which is itself affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers. One-quarter of the dues is given to the AFT and, after a \$2000 allocation to the AFL-CIO, the remaining dues (about 25%, or \$50,000 per year) is returned to the Teaching Assistants' Association.

But their relationship with WFT is quite productive. They are presently lobbying their state legislature to obtain full tuition waivers for grad employees; currently, grad

employees are only guaranteed partial waivers. On the other hand, the small amount of money that is returned to their campus is a pity. It allows them to hire only two half-time organizers, which may account for the relatively low level of participation among members. In fact, the TAA effectively represents 15% of all TAs and GAs, even though they are all part of the union.

This is one more example that shows the quality of the agreement between GSEU and the Communication Workers of America (CWA). In this agreement, one percent of members' salaries must be collected once they ratify their first contract. Of this amount, a maximum of 40% will be paid as dues to CWA. The GSEU will mainly receive legal and organizing assistance from CWA. In the meantime, a large share of the dues will stay with GSEU to use as its members see fit.

Graduate employees unions are here to stay, but the focus of their fight will vary. At Ann Arbor, a strong emphasis was put on supporting other unions' struggles, like the Kroger supermarket employees strike. This outreach allowed them to build coalitions that will support them in their efforts to improve workers' conditions.

Surprisingly, very few unions seem to have given much thought to the training of TAs and issues like the quality of education. The latter issue has gained support among graduate students at Yale, for example. At the conference, the TAA clearly offered the best example of an organized structure and had come up with many creative solutions. Among other examples, they have what their contract calls "Mentor Appointments for Teaching Assistants" whose role is "to provide input and assistance during the orientation, training and evaluation processes for their peers as well as make recommendations for the improvement of undergraduate education." A committee with equal numbers of graduate students and faculty choose the mentors. These appointments are paid \$500 more than the minimum wage level.

# Irving and O'Neill Colleges to be Investigated

by David Yaseen

On the heels of a June 28th article in *Newsday*, ("SUNY to Probe Cancer in 7 Ex-Students"), a Stony Brook research team, headed by epidemiologist and statistician Roger Grimson, is conducting a two-pronged investigation to determine what, if any, hazards exist for past and present residents of Irving and O'Neill colleges. As of yet, according to Grimson, there is no evidence of a higher-than-average incidence of cancer in residents of these colleges or of the presence of any cancer-causing conditions there. However, there is no evidence that there are not, either. Until the research is completed, there is simply no data on the subject.

The research is divided into two parts. The first is statistical; it is necessary to compile information about cancer incidence on as many past and present residents of Irving/O'Neill as possible, to determine whether they have a higher incidence of the disease than other students or than the U.S. population at large. The researchers will examine the records the Tumor Registry of New York, to which doctors report any and all cases of cancer in their patients. The Tumor Registry also receives data from New Jersey and Connecticut, so that data from students there will be available to the researchers. Between 10,000 and 15,000 past and present residents will be studied to insure the validity of the statistical findings, according to Grimson.

The second component of the research effort is environmental. Air, water, construction materials, and electromagnetic fields (EMF's) within the buildings will be tested to determine if unacceptable levels of cancer-causing contaminants or other factors are present. Also, the researchers will be looking into what uses the land the buildings now occupy had in the past. The levels of these

factors that will be used by the researchers to determine acceptability are those set by the Environmental Protection Agency. These levels have long been criticized as being too high, and insufficiently protective of public health, however. Also, according to Grimson, "There is no public threshold for unacceptable levels" of EMF's, certain types of which have been firmly correlated with cancers of the brain, central nervous system, and with leukemia in young children.

While normal research procedures in such a case would be to conduct the statistical component first and then the environmental, both parts are being done simultaneously because of the short amount of time left before students will be moving back into the buildings in the Fall. Grimson characterizes the research effort as "very extensive and thorough." He also said, however, that "everyone who is gathering the data is employed by the University."

A letter, dated July 28th, exactly one month after the appearance of the *Newsday* article, was sent out to new and continuing residents of Irving and O'Neill colleges, stating that it is "highly unlikely that there is a single environmental cause" for the cancers. The letter goes on to say that "Based on our discussions with Dr. Grimson and other experts in environmental health, we are confident that Irving and O'Neill will get clean bills of health."

The specific basis for this confidence, however, was not mentioned.

According to Al DeVries, Assistant Director of Residence Halls, 65 out of approximately 600 residents have asked to move out of Irving and O'Neill. They have been given other room assignments.

STONY BROOK

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs

July 28, 1992

Dear Resident of O'Neill College:

You may have read or seen reports in the media in which a former student expressed concern that some of her friends who lived in Irving and O'Neill resident halls in the mid-1980's had subsequently developed cancer. As these stories have indicated, the fact that several different kinds of cancer are reported makes it highly unlikely that there is a single environmental cause. Indeed, we have no evidence of any connection between these cases and the fact that the individuals lived in Irving and O'Neill.

Nonetheless, to ensure beyond any doubt that these buildings are free of any health concerns, the University has initiated an exhaustive series of tests for environmental factors known to cause cancer. Leading this study is Dr. Roger Grimson, a professor in our School of Medicine's Department of Preventive Medicine and a national authority on the phenomenon known as "cancer clusters." The centers for Disease Control in Atlanta and the New York State Health Department have agreed to review the study and provide other assistance.

Based on our discussions with Dr. Grimson and other experts in environmental health, we are confident that Irving and O'Neill will get clean bills of health. However, you may be assured that no students will be housed in these buildings if the tests reveal a problem of any kind. These tests will be completed before the beginning of the fall semester.

Knowing the concern that the word cancer causes in today's society, we wanted you to be informed about this matter before you arrive on campus. If you have any questions, please call the Office of the Dean of Students at 632-6700.

Sincerely,

*Frederick R. Preston, Ed.D.*  
Frederick R. Preston, Ed.D.  
Vice President for Student Affairs

State University of New York at Stony Brook  
Stony Brook, New York 11794-5000  
Stb. 632-6700

Letter sent home to all residents of  
O'Neill College



# How To Survive

By Lawrence Tierney

It's 8:05 am Monday morning and you're on the A-train going to work. You slurp the Big Gulp-sized coffee you just purchased at 7-11 to try to regain consciousness from a very long and lethargic weekend. Your head is still weeping as if someone was systematically sticking yarn needles through it. You are suffering all the symptoms of a class 1 hangover. Nevertheless, off you go.

As you manage the three flights of stairs you calmly but gracefully punch in. While doing so, you glance at a memo from your supervisor, Ivy M. Fink, that says that the employees on the first three floors must report to the infirmary for a physical examination. Part of which will be a routine urine screening for controlled substances; i.e. a piss test. Nobody will be allowed to leave, and all people who do not show up will be reprimanded. Don't panic. You remain calm, even though the joint you smoked a week earlier may show up as well as the booze that still might be lingering in your system from last night. You walk over to your desk, drop your coat over the office chair, and sip your coffee. What do you do? You remain calm. Why? Because you know how to beat the test.

What you just discovered was that you are going to

be on of one of the many "volunteers" to participate in this process by putting your urine into a plastic cup while several people watch you (depending on the situation). Drug testing in the workplace had been a controversial issue ever since they have come into existence. The compulsory nature of such tests tampers with a person's constitutional right to privacy, as well as the implied suspicion of workers by their companies with (quite often) no probable cause. Whether you believe that the tests should not be given, or that it is just as bad to have "help" on them, it is best to be prepared, and for you to decide if its your boss' right to know what you do and don't do.

The first thing to avoid a situation like this is simply not to do any type of legal or illegal drug. This obviously is the best way. However, depending on your moral standards and health problems, all Americans have some drug of choice. Although some over-the-counter drugs are perfectly legal to take, they may trigger false positive reactions on drug screening tests. Ibuprophen, for example, can trigger a positive reaction for the presence of marijuana. ALL DRUGS SHOULD HAVE WARNING LABELS. Over-the-counter drugs can be just as harmful, if not worse, than those that are illegal. Be careful. A lot has been said about the accuracy of some of these tests. If you do turn up positive, ask to re-take the test with a different company.

The first think to avoid when taking one of these tests is try not to be surprised. Depending on the job, they may/may not tell you if your going to be tested. When enlisting in the military for example, they will inform you that you will be subject to screening. Later on, it may just be a surprise. Certain drugs stay in your system longer than others. Marijuana, for example, can stay in your body for as long as 30 days. On the other hand, your system could be purged from alcohol in less than 48 hrs. See the chart entitled "Drug Retention Period".

The second thing to do is educate yourself on the what type of test it is, and what they may/may not be testing for. Most likely, it will be a thin-layer chromatography (TLC) test or a EMIT test. Abuscreen is the most accurate according to a Center for Disease Control survey. Also find out who will be processing the samples. The majority of federal companies use the EMIT, while private sectors swap between the TLC and the EMIT. They may/may not be the same people as the ones that are giving it.

If you know what type of test it will be, crosscheck it with the provided chart. How, do you find all of this out, well, that part you have to be creative with.

You should find out who is giving it. If its a fellow employee, you have a better chance of finding out more both about the screening, what type of test it is, how it will be conducted, and possible security. In a nutshell, if you know that you are going to be screened, find out as much as you can about the test prior to post-time.

First of all, there is no need to get scared for nothing. Chances are that it may be in your contract agreement to not be allowed to be tested. If you realize that your company is conducting the screening, the first think you should do is STOP TAKING DRUGS. This makes a lot of sense. If you know a month or even a week beforehand, then refrain. If you cannot refrain, chances are you should seek some professional help. Don't chance it.

The second possibility is that if you do know, but your not sure if it will turn up or not because of the amount of days between the use and the test. The first thing to do is start drinking a lot of water. This is the best way to purge your system clean of any substance. Start adding 2 or 3 big glasses of water to your diet every day up until the test. Depending on metabolism, some people's bodies will get rid of all those nasty particles floating around in the bloodstream faster than others. If you jog or participate in some type of aerobic exercise, this can help too. Exercise increases your metabolism, and you "sweat out" faster all of the fluids in your body. If you have a sauna, use it. If you don't exercise, add an extra glass of water. If you hate water, drink another type of fluid.

The second thing to remember is that the day of the test you should try to urinate as often as possible prior to post time. The first piss of the day has the highest concentration of particles. The key thing is to clean yourself inside and out. In you have to stay up all night and drink water, do it. And if you don't want to, well, it's only your job.

When the day of the test arrives, be calm. Your body should be cleansed. If you want to know for sure and you have the time and the cash, give yourself a sample screening. You can find any participating lab in the Yellow pages.

The one thing also to remember is to stay calm during the testing. Although you may be by yourself (I.E. in a stall by yourself) Always think: *Be positive in your mind and negative in the cup.*

Testers may ask you to fill out a consent form. Basically it says that you give permission to have your piss more closely looked at. Don't feel flattered. It's up to you whether you want to sign or not. If you plan to quit anyway, have found a better job, or simply you are rightfully opposed to urine screening, then don't sign.

At that time, you will also be asked to list all medications you've taken in the last week. Cross out week and put month. If somebody says something, just make something up like "I heard that medication I took for the flu could still show up even now." It's worth a shot. List all the medications. Some drugs may cross-react with others (see chart). If you don't have time between the test and when you've taken something, you may want to list some cross-reactants. I.E. if you know you smoked pot, you can list that you've taken Ibuprofen or Advil.

The third and worst scenario is suppose is a surprise test and you are pretty sure you might have something in your system. You've had no time to prepare, and they are being very strict in the testing. Most of the time, the testers will remain in the restroom, but not enter the stall. This makes your job a lot easier. You have one of two options; you can add water to your own urine or simply substitute someone else's (that you know is drug free) that you've managed to take with you. Dilute the urine directly with warm water (85-95

TABLE OF CROSS-REACTIVITY

Drug/Metabolite	Cross-Reactive
Amphetamine	Phenylpropanolamine (found in OTC cold medications: Nyquil, Vicks Nasal Spray, Neosynephren, Sudafed) Methamphetamine/Phenmetrazine/Phentermine (found in prescription diet medications) Dopamine HCL Ephedrine (found in prescription asthma medicines)
Barbiturate	Mephobarbital Barbituric acid (rarely prescribed compounds)
Cannabinoids	Ibuprofen (Advil, Nuprin, Motrin, Mydol, Trendar—extremely common pain relievers)
Cocaine	Amoxicillin (unconfirmed)
Methaqualone	None reported to date
Morphine	Codeine (in any prescription form) Dihydrocodeine bitartrate/Levorphanol/Oxycodone (found in prescription analgesics) Poppy seeds Hydromorphone (found in prescription anti-tussives)
Doxylamine	(found in OTC antihistamines and sleeping pills)
Phencyclidine (PCP)	Dextromethorphan (found in some prescription cough medicines) Diazepam (found in Valium)
LSD	Methysergide maleate Ergonovine maleate Tryptophan (all the above are derivatives of LSD; rarely medicinal)

Note: Cross-reactions depend upon concentration and duration of chemical in the human body. Reported cross-reactions are not associated with any manufacturer's screen. That is, cross-reactive compounds are not specifically linked with EMIT, Abuscreen, or Thin-Layer Chromatography. This book cannot guarantee the validity of cross-reactions, based on our limited testing and on potential improvement in screening accuracy. OTC means over the counter.

(Sources: U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment, Syva; Roche Diagnostics; Byrd Labs)

# A Urine Test

but no more degrees F.) that you've taken in with you. A quart of water is not necessary. Simply 4-5 ounces will be sufficient. Quietly, but calmly, dilute your urine with the water. Always use warm water when substituting—handing a cold jar to testers may arouse suspicion and they may ask you to re-submit another for

## DRUG RETENTION PERIOD

Compound	Approximate Retention
Amphetamines	20-25 days
Barbiturates	10-14 days
Cocaine	2-4 days
Ethyl Alcohol	1-2 days
LSD	20-40 days
Marijuana	14-30 days
Methaqualone	14-21 days
Opiates	10-14 days
Phencyclidine (PCP)	10-14 days

(Note: Length of retention varies because of many factors, including body weight, metabolism, body fat ratio, and the quantity and concentration of drug. The author cannot guarantee the validity of the retention period.

fear of tampering. Remember, the idea is not to totally clean out your system, but to make the toxicity level below what they can test for. If the toxicity is low, the machine won't pick it up.

The possibility of your urine not looking that neon

yellow because of the dilution, no problem. Simply take Vitamin C capsules starting a couple of days beforehand. That should give it that appetizing yellow zest in color.

Suppose there is maximum security. That's bad, but your not licked yet. Be creative. Try blushing your kidneys. Something like 5% of the public gets "stage fright". If that happens, kindly inform the observer "Please, I can't do it while your watching". If that fails, try to position your body between you and the stall. Use your hand placement to conceal your activities. And if this is all new to you, it helps to practice.

Substituting can be a difficult thing. How do you get it into the bathroom? One way is to purchase a Bard Dispoz-a-bag. Drainage bag or something similar used for ambulant patients. They cost under \$4, and come complete with leg bag and a short tube with cap (the large size works best). Simply strap or tape the bag to your abdomen and wear it in when it's time to "urinate". When you do urinate, use your abdomen, and not your leg, and let gravity do the work. If you don't want to wear tape, then wear panties or jockey underwear. When in the stall, calmly reach in or pull down (whichever the case may be. Then, simply start to "urinate".

mercy. The technicians that are hired to conduct screening are not that well paid. Or just look him straight in the face, and say "I'll be out in a minute."

Of course, these are preventative measures designed to protect you, the reader. The right to privacy should include (as if it doesn't already) the right to be able to urinate without somebody checking it out. Drug testing in the workplace had been a controversial issue ever since it have come into existence. The constitutionality of such tests tampers with a person's right to privacy, as well as suspicion with no means of probable cause. Whether you believe that the tests should not be given, or that it is just as bad to have "help" on them, it is best to be prepared, and for you to decide if its your boss' right to know what you do and don't do.

Portions of this article are based on Abbie Hoffman's, *Steal This Urine Test*, Peguine Books, 1987

## EMIT, ABUSCREEN, AND TOXI-LAB DETECTABILITY FOR SELECTED CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

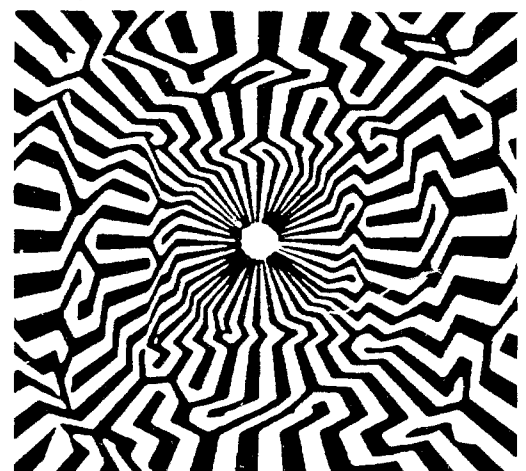
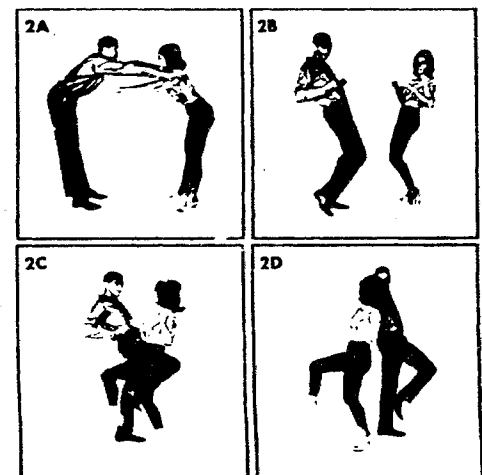
	EMIT	Abuscreen	Toxi-Lab
<i>Drug/ Metabolite Detected</i>			
Amphetamine, Methamphetamine	Amphetamine metabolites	Amphetamine metabolites	Amphetamine
Barbiturate metabolites	Barbiturate metabolites	Barbiturate metabolites	Barbiturate metabolites
Benzodiazepine (Valium, Librium)	No information	No information	No information
Cannabinoid metabolites	Cannabinoids, THC, Carboxylic Acid	THC	
Cocaine metabolite benzoylecgonine	Cocaine metabolite benzoylecgonine	Cocaine metabolite benzoylecgonine	Cocaine metabolite benzoylecgonine
Methadone	No information	No information	No information
Methaqualone, Mecloqualone	Methaqualone	Not yet available	
Opiates	Morphine	Morphine	
PCP	Phencyclidine (PCP)	PCP	
Proxyphene (Darvon)	No information	No information	
Not yet available	LSD	Not yet available	

(Source: Syva, Roche Diagnostics, Marion Laboratories, U.S. Office of Technology Assessment.)

If this sounds all too complicated, their are other possibilities. Additives can be directly mixed into the urine, covering up some of the possible evidence of drug use. One possibility is by mixing in 3 tablespoons of salt into the sample. This will Deceive EMIT tests for all substances. Other possibilities are 1/4 cup of hydrogen peroxide, or three tablespoons of ammonia or chlorine bleach also has been known to work.

If you really don't care about the results and just want to get back at the enforcers, you can substitute hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid or battery acid for urine. This will not disguise the drugs, but will clearly screw up their machines. You should also take extreme caution when handling these additives close to bodily parts.

Sadly, there is the ultimate desperation. While this all may be working, and everything is going smoothly, then the door swings open and the security guard is watching you hold something, but its not your genitals. You can either try the bribe technique by placing a fifty dollar bill in his shirt pocket, or breakdown and plead for



## The Fourth Estate: The Messy Situation In Bushnia

The eyes of the world have been witnessing the recent atrocities in what was once Yugoslavia. Many of us have seen the pictures of the camps of prisoners and the remains of Bosnian villages. In this civil war the Serbian Army has pillaged towns and created over a million refugees as a result. Of these refugees, 90%+ are Croats and Muslims. This is all part of the Serbian plan to capture the land of Bosnia-Herzegovina. These peoples are being driven out of their homeland while the UN does nothing to stop it. Why haven't the United States and the United Nations taken action despite the "ethnic cleansing" of the Bosnian Serbs?

It is clear that the Bosnians are vastly underpowered. They can equip 50,000 troops with only 5,000 rifles. They are being easily overrun by the mortars and artillery of the Serbian forces. Reports that the United States knew of these atrocities indicates that President Bush will not intervene in Yugoslavia.

Many people ask the question of why the United States does not get involved. George Bush feels strongly that he will not consider involving US troops unless he knows; what the mission is, how we are going to achieve it, and how to make it back home safely. The United States can clearly enter Yugoslavia using its Army and Air Force to stop the fighting. It can stop the Serbian forces probably as quickly as it did Saddam Hussein's, primarily in the air. But how will this benefit the United States? The answer is it will not because although many feel it is the moral thing to do, morality is

not cheap. It can be expensive in human lives as well as in cash.

The United Nations must take further action to stop this slaughter. This will never happen because George Bush doesn't care one way or another what happens in Yugoslavia. If it does not concern him, other nations are more likely to follow the path of the "leader".

The United States clearly shows no interest in getting itself involved. Bush wants "America to be the moral inspiration of the world by its democracy and freedom". What we don't say is that there is a price to pay. The United States has been dragging its feet because it does not want to get involved with a type of war which does not involve any current interest of the United States.

All the while, why is it that President Bush is ready to plan another air war against Saddam Hussein in the name of the UN? Why are we so committed to blowing up Saddam Hussein?

The question that George Bush is asking is not what is best for the world, but what is best for the US. This is his new domestic policy. He is not concerned with moral questions. He was not concerned with morality when he didn't sign the Earth Summit Treaty in Rio.

Why has the US resumed a favorable trade status with China? The answer is because many nations, like the United States, are economically driven, not morally.

"We must stand up against unpredictability." George Bush says that

"we must stand for morality". The United Nation's resolution to allow it to use force if necessary in Bosnia to provide food and medical aid only helps after the fact of the suffering. This does not put an end to the fighting.

George Bush says that "I think I've demonstrated that I can make the tough decisions when it comes to putting young Americans into harm's way. But I also learned a lesson from history." Then why is that we still have troops in the Saudi desert even still today? Nobody believes anymore that the reason we went into Iraq was for the Kuwaiti people. But George Bush made it a moral issue to push the UN to take action. And it supported Bush's war to recapture Kuwait in the name of morality and [sic] humanitarianism.

There are many countries now finding themselves in situations similar to Yugoslavia's as a result of the fall of the Soviet Union. It is possible that the leaders of these nations are looking with interest at the world response to this situation because they have troubles with nationality or religion in their own countries. If there is no action taken against conquerors and butchers, they will soon be everywhere. To be completely selfish about it, how much would it cost the nations of Europe and elsewhere to deal with the enormous refugee problem that would ensue from this, and from Yugoslavia itself? Certainly putting a stop to aggression in Bosnia is both right and worth our while.

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## LETTERS

This space could be yours.

### The Press

welcomes letters and viewpoints. They should be approximately 250 and 1,000 words in length, respectively. Handwritten submissions will be burned.

# Along The Color Line: The Breakdown of American Politics

By Dr. Manning Marable

In recent weeks, little Danny Quayle has been roaming the country, attacking what he calls the "cultural elite." Television programs like *Murphy Brown* erode public morality, the Vice President solemnly declares. Quayle praises the Los Angeles Police Department and condemns the "rioters" who took to the streets against police brutality. Why are Quayle and Bush deliberately polarizing the electorate?

The provocative behavior of the Republican candidates, their overt appeals to the Far Right, can be explained as part of the general breakdown of our political system. The sudden emergence of Ross Perot as an independent candidate, and even Bill Clinton's selection of another Southern centrist Democrat, Tennessee Senator Al Gore, as his running mate, are also part of the collapse of traditional politics.

Since the late 1960's, Democrats and Republicans have had a marriage of convenience. Conservatives usually controlled the federal executive and court system, and Democrats usually ran the Congress and state legislatures. The external "threat" of world Communism and a commitment to the political economy of militarism (what some refer to as the "permanent war economy" or "military Keynesianism") cemented the two major parties together for all practical purposes. There was no fundamental difference on economic, fiscal or foreign policies, for example, between Nixon and Kennedy in 1960, for example, or Carter and Ford in 1976. But with the breakdown of the Cold War, the external pressure which forged the bipartisan consensus domestically began to evaporate. The space for new challenges to the

bipartisan coalition form of government was greatly increased, leading to challenges from the left, right, and center. Such challenges were prefigured twelve years ago by the liberal campaign of Edward Kennedy against Carter in the 1980 Democratic presidential primaries, and by Republican moderate John Anderson's independent race in the general election. The Jackson assault of the Rainbow Coalition in 1984 and 1988 also eroded the connection of the Democratic party with the Republicans, by pushing a progressive agenda. Finally, in 1992, the fragmentation erupted on the far right, as conservative journalist Patric Buchanan ran a largely symbolic campaign against President George Bush in the Republican primaries. More effective was the challenge by eccentric billionaire Ross Perot, who launched an independent campaign for the presidency. Despite Perot's abrupt withdrawal from the race last month, these independent-style challenges indicate a "crisis of legitimacy," when people question whether the entire electoral process is relevant to their daily lives. The rationales for both major parties seem to most Americans ineffectual and anachronistic.

The end of the superpower struggle with the Soviet Union revealed the massive destructiveness created by four decades of militarism. Much has been written about the defeat of Communism, but in truth, both the Americans and Russians "lost" the Cold War. The real winners were Japan and Germany. Trillions of dollars which were spent on weapons should have been allocated toward hospitals, highways, public transportation, upgrading old factories, and improving public education. The real incomes of American workers below the age of thirty have dropped one third in the past 20 years.

Both major parties have manipulated the "Communist

Menace" to deflect criticism or scrutiny from their shabby records at home. This is especially true for conservatives like Quayle and Bush. So instead of talking about real issues, the Republicans are now forced to attack new political "villains" to replace the Communists. That's why the Republicans are attacking "political correctness," "multicultural education," "affirmative action," abortion rights, and anything undermining so-called "family values."

In this new post-Cold War environment, Bush and Quayle are solidifying their base among the cultural conservatives, anti-abortion rights extremists, and big corporations. Clinton and Gore are trying to take back the South from the Republican Party, and are making overt appeals to white, suburban middle-class voters who had backed Reagan in the 1980s. Both Republicans and Democrats are scrambling after Perot's disillusioned, embittered volunteers. But no one seems to be talking to African-Americans, Latinos, the unemployed, the homeless and most union members.

Ultimately, unless Blacks and other progressives develop a strong and independent political organization which can really challenge the policies of both parties, African-Americans' interests will continue to be ignored. The collapse of the American electoral system today forces us to reexamine everything we know about politics.

*Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of Political Science and History, University of Colorado. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 250 publications and is broadcast by more than 50 radio stations internationally.*

# Here Comes the Schmooze

by Sensate Mass

## Posturing again as usual

The day that H. Ross Perot dropped out of the presidential race, Bush advisors were, to quote *Newsday*, "privately overjoyed," not willing to go public with their euphoria, but amenable to a conventional press leak. Such cynical, poll-watching toe-dips are typical of Bush Administration tactics in unfamiliar waters. The consensus seems to be that Clinton has been the beneficiary of Perot's departure.

The most prominent characteristic of the Bush presidency is cowardice. The President's spineless maneuverability has allowed him to stop on a dime and do an instant about-face when polls showed him to be slipping in popularity. His "fearless" attack upon Iraq is no less cowardly. Like a schoolyard bully who knows his opponent is weak, he marched into Iraq, chest puffed, guns a-blazing (it being certain that Bush's cronies knew every nut and bolt in the Iraqi army, having supplied it). He wound up looking like a joke, blowing his overstuffed military bugle like a jackass. The short attention span of the American public would have forgotten even this, had Bush not compounded his idiocy before the war by making Iraq look like the biggest threat to civilization as we know it.

To this can be added the killing of tens of thousands of (non-policy-making) Iraqi citizens, and his murderous betrayal of the Shiites and Kurds, he didn't even take care of the devil he had created because he didn't want to jeopardize his PR high.

Thank God for egotism, though. Like his predecessor, Bush was 'handled' into the office of President; he did what the witch doctors told him to and was elected. But he had pride. After a while in office, he started to become

his own man and (oops!) to think for himself. If he were smart, he would put his mean little mind in neutral and let himself be fictionalized again for the campaign. More than anything, we do not want a real person in the White House, and especially not one whose ideals are going to drive many of the people of this country into poverty and ignorance.

Sinking fast in the polls, Bush is trying to conjure up another apparition of his favorite evil spirit so malignant righteousness and pompous Americanism can again shine through the goggles of our bomber pilots. Please. The Serbians are the worst thing since Hitler, and the State Department doesn't feel that anything should be done about it because there isn't enough oil in Bosnia to give a shit about it. The Somalis are about to starve to death as a nation, and our noble administration can spare none of its precious time from speeches at corporations. It's a toss-up between politically-minded militancy and the complete neglect of the besieged Bosnians in the wake of our "humanitarian" undertaking against tyranny for the Kuwaiti people for the winner of the Nobel prize for hypocrisy.

What the Republicans don't seem to understand is that an enormous cross-section of this country, from former middle-class supporters to a growing segment of the young, *hates* them. While it is to be acknowledged that in the capitalistic spirit of this country the American public can be sold anything, Bush & Co. have not yet noticed that the media now smells blood in his organization. Small gaffes that had seemed inevitable in the past, as lice on the irresistible Republican juggernaut, are now subject to real scrutiny and comparison with the much-evolved Democratic platform. Combined with the recurring allegations of corruption and bias that the public is just now starting to kick itself for having ignored, the Republican campaign is in big trouble. Ronald Reagan is in danger of indictment on Iran-Contra charges in an election year.

James Baker, 3rd. will be taking over the campaign starting immediately. If anyone out there remembers in the 1988 campaign, and how a strange transformation made our friend George into the Second Coming of Sliced Bread, Baker gets the nod for credit. He was an essential cog in the Reagan Machine, and is probably the most powerful man in Washington. If Bush suddenly starts looking better, rub your eyes and get some fresh air quickly.





# Counterspin #9

## A Memo on Campaign Coverage from FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting)

July, 14, 1992

**ANTI-DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION:** It's fashionable to bemoan the networks' lack of gavel-to-gavel coverage of the conventions. Even Peter Jennings said it was "a little sad" that the networks were passing up "a chance to present the democratic process in the purest sense." (Washington Post, 7/12)

Of course, the modern stage-managed conventions are anything but a democratic process — and the media bear a lot of the blame. In the last few Democratic conventions, anything that resembled democracy — a debate over a pressing issue, a resolution that wasn't pre-approved — was denounced as "mischief" from "special interests."

This year is supposed to be different: "Certainly the portents are brighter than they were at the conventions of 1980, 1984 and 1988, when turmoil marred the nomination spectacle," wrote David Broder (Washington Post, 7/12). Juan Williams, in the same edition, praised Clinton for having "a strong enough hand to control Jesse Jackson and Jerry Brown, thereby staging a peaceful, unified convention."

If the Democratic Convention is nothing but a meaningless spectacle, that's exactly what many media pundits have been calling for. Let's hope they don't start attacking the All-Star Game as overly divisive.

**INVISIBLE INTERESTS:** We're hearing a lot about the role of "interests" in the Democratic convention — one Thomas Edsall piece in the Washington Post (7/13) featured "liberal interests," "various minority interests" and (in a quote from a Clinton delegate) "every weird special interest that could exist on the face of the Earth." The "interests" — defined by Edsall as "blacks, gays, unions, feminists" — are invariably contrasted to the "middle class." To present these groups as the opposite of

the middle class is sloppy enough (as if most blacks, gays, unionists and feminists weren't middle class), but to pretend that it is representatives of the middle class that are moving the Democratic Party to the right is downright disingenuous.

With all the talk about "interests," why is there so little discussion of the honest-to-gosh special interests that have real power in the Democratic Party? Take Clinton's campaign manager, Mickey Kantor: His law firm represents such tribes of the middle class as GE, Martin Marietta, United Air Lines, ARCO and Chemical Bank (New York Times, 6/7). Two important fundraisers for Clinton (New York Times, 3/3) are Robert Barry, a longtime lobbyist for GE, and Thomas Boggs, a \$1.5 million-a-year lawyer whose firm has represented various corporate interests, including the notorious was the counsel for BCCI. DNC chair Ron Brown is a partner in Boggs' firm, where Brown has personally represented the Haitian dictatorship of "Baby Doc" Duvalier, as well as the association of foreign auto dealers (Village Voice, 7/14).

The money Clinton runs on didn't come from the middle class. As William Greider noted in Rolling Stone (4/30), "half or more of Clinton's funding came from conservative corporate interests" — including Wall Street investors and Washington lobbyists.

Any serious examination of the real interests of the Democratic Party, and particularly the corporate-funded Democratic Leadership Council which produced both halves of the ticket, will disclose these kind of affiliations. If the way to win is to appeal to the middle class, why is Clinton steering the party so close to the corporate elite?

**POLLS APART:** In an inordinately nasty attack on Jesse Jackson ("There have always been two Jesse Jacksons — there's Jesse the radical, who preaches rage and black separatism.... And there's Jesse the self-promoter, who preaches desegregation and compromise"), Dan Rather (7/13) parroted the DLC line that suburban voters, who he said comprised most of the electorate, are "not in the mood to see much more money spent on the poor." Yet in a May

11 CBS/New York Times poll, 60 percent of respondents said too little was being spent on problems of the big cities, with only 15 percent saying too much. Sixty-one percent said too little was being spent on improving conditions of blacks, while 10 percent said too much. If this poll was flawed, CBS should retract it; otherwise, journalists might be more skeptical of the DLC line that the middle class.

PRETZEL

**LOGIC:** The choice of Al Gore as running mate was greeted enthusiastically by most media organs. Most commentators seemed to accept as logical, as R.W. Apple did (New York Times, 7/10), that since "the general-election contest...will involve Mr. Bush, Ross Perot and Mr. Clinton, three moderate-to-conservative candidates...Mr. Clinton felt no need to move to the left."

A very different logic seems to apply to the Republican Party: The subhead of a recent New York Times Magazine cover story (7/5) read, "Dan Quayle's war on 'cultural elites' is more than just an attempt to toughen up his image. In a three-way race, the Vice President's ability to keep Bush-wary conservatives in line could be decisive." Could it be that mainstream journalists' own biases against constituencies of the Democratic left prevent them from seeing that the same logic should apply to the Democrats' base?

**QUAYLE'S TRIUMPH:** In a sign of how much Dan Quayle's recent speeches have influenced the "media elite," most commentators noted that Al Gore's wife Tipper's crusade against rock lyrics signified a respect for "family values." Family values, apparently, has come to mean blaming family problems on entertainers, and hoping that the government can protect children from these entertainers where parents have failed.

**COUNTERSPIN A Memo on Campaign Coverage from FAIR**

(Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting) 130 W. 25th St., New York, NY 10001

Editor: Jim Naureckas

Associate Editor: Jeff Cohen

## "Can We Stop Making it Horrible?"

# To Live and Die in a City of Angels

By Dave Ratcliffe

Activist Mailing BINET

The following is 58 lines of excerpts from the powerful article in full written by activist and life-long resident of L.A. Ched Myers on his own impressions and experiences of the fire-storm of rage and frustration that consumed the second largest city in America after the gulf between "the dominant culture and poor people of color" was starkly revealed in the Rodney King verdict. Myers repeatedly touches core realities with observations like "the dominant culture . . . looks at the beating 'from above,' intuitively empathetic with the perspective of law and order, as blind to race and class oppression as to the plain meaning of a videotape." Here it is:

White America won't listen until white lives and property are lost; the dominant culture thus renders inevitable the violence it so piously reprimands. As the day goes on, and Governor Wilson and President Bush join the chorus of exhortations to restore order and promises to investigate the causes of the riot, they are only confirming the point. But the us/them discourse neatly obliterates prospects for any real acknowledgment of responsibility...

A short time later my own emotions finally catch up with me. It is 48 hours after the first rock was thrown—the same delayed reaction I experienced after the start of the Gulf War. I get home at dusk, walk back of my apartment, and look toward downtown. It all hits me, all the staved-off feelings: my home town torn up, burned out, divided and under military occupation; nationally paraded and reproached and dissected—but never understood. From Desert Storm until now it has seemed like an endless parade of death and dying.

The Stony Brook Press page 8

personal and political. The tears just keep coming, the raw torment at last released...

By Sunday the real struggle becomes clear: to refuse to cede the interpretive ground to the powers of government and media. So much depends upon how we understand what has happened, and whether we even try at all. As one Black businessman told me in South Central, "I hope something can come out of this. A year from now I want to look back and say, 'I lost my store for a good cause.'"

It is a monumental task. Every image of the rebellion has already been exploited and domesticated. Liberative space forged by community groups is coopted within 24 hours by the public discourse of the powerful. The postmortem "investigations" and "commissions," ... will be studiously ignored. These blue ribbon committees will not ask why our government is able to deploy so quickly in its wars against drugs, against undocumented immigrants, against small Third World countries, and in the poor neighborhoods of Los Angeles—yet cannot seem to address the problems of institutionalized racism and economic inequity. . . .

The other option[,] more difficult, . . . is to look at the structural causes of violence. Wendell Berry's "Home Economics" identifies the real looters and thugs:

"A powerful class of itinerant professional vandals is now pillaging the country and laying it waste. Their vandalism is not called by that name because of its enormous profitability (to some) and the grandeur of its scale...The members of this prestigious class...have no local allegiances; they must not have a local point of view."

Berry is talking about the transnational corporate interests which dictate the movement of capital, resources,

and labor, and therefore dictate human lives and neighborhoods. These are the interests which for the sake of profit and cheap labor have historically exploited Indian lands, African labor, and every immigrant group that has come to these shores. They have for the same reasons exported tens of thousands of jobs from LA to the Third World in the past few decades. Make no mistake: a few corporations have done more to devastate South Central than all the arsonists of 1965 and 1992 combined.

Local self-determination is the only path to a genuinely new LA, wresting control from the interests which have no local allegiances. Ueberroth? He certainly wasn't chosen by the residents of South Los Angeles. A proposal for community renewal coming from the united Bloods and Crips reflects the grassroots much better—but it is being ignored by the corporate-controlled media.



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# Cultural Diversity 2: The other side.

Although an emphasis of the divisions between groups in our (or any) society obviously runs counter to the aims that we might have to move forward, there is a like danger that homogenizing forces on the other side of the issue will attempt to convert the entire population to the cultural sensibilities of the majority. In straddling between the two sides, how is one to judge between divisive juxtaposition and constructive assimilation? There is no firm basis for judging between the advantages of various cultural forms and systems, and no legitimate means of transmitting the best of them to the public even if there were. Does this mean that, in the interests of efficiency and pragmatism, that we should continue the subtle television campaign of 'americanizing' ourselves to the cultural biases of the majority? Of course not.

The culture of the majority in our country is based, not on some venerable, ancient set of traditions, but mainly upon monuments to efficiency, past and present. Culturally speaking, this does not seem to amount to much, but it exerts profound effects upon the daily lives of all of us.

In the beginning, when the ancestors of many of us were systematically wiping out the indigenous peoples of this continent, the efficient cultural construction was to be insufferably self-righteous. Later, when the Indian Threat to Life As We Know It was subdued, we were an underpopulated country spread thinly and attempting to develop itself. So, we became self-reliant. Our workplaces have long had a steady supply of cheap slave or immigrant labor, marked by differences of race and language. To defend the economic advantages of the already-established majority, we are oppressive of minorities until they or their children have succeeded in mimicking us to the extent that they have dropped their old traditions and adopted ours.

This is where our current problems arise. Small problems of communication, magnified through generations of sanctified rhetoric, become justification for cultural blackmail. This influence has never been complete or perfect, but has always been sufficient to submerge most

differences from the view of suburban 'real Americans.'

Culture and tradition are important to people not merely because they provide techniques for dealing with life's problems, but because they give a people a basis for its identity. A rich and successful cultural tradition allows people to favorably define themselves in comparison with others, and gives them a sense of worth beyond their personal accomplishments.

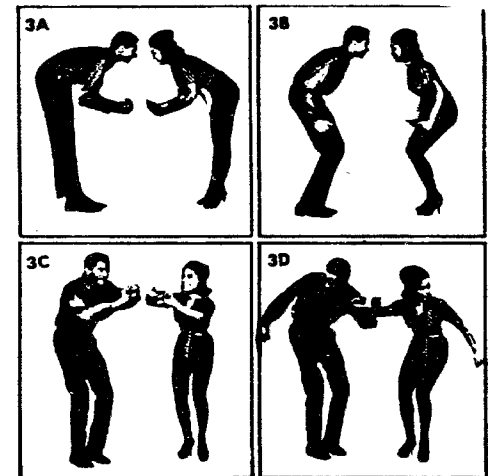
Since most of the immigrants to America in the past were indistinguishable from the majority except for in the areas of culture and language (i.e. they were white), and since they were driven to come here because of bad living conditions in their homes, their assimilation was not impossibly difficult. Most of them felt that they owed little or nothing to their old countries, and were only too happy to take on the culture of a country that promised prosperity to themselves and their children. Also, many of the cultural values that they adopted were in their own interests; self-righteousness gave them the pride and audacity to believe that they could realize their grandest dreams and self-reliance gave them the will to do so for themselves. Their children grew up and learned to speak English, identifying more with American culture than with that of their ancestry. They were impossible to tell from the majority, and became members of it.

The largest part of immigration to this country today is composed of people who have a serious obstacle in the way of assimilation: they are not white. Obviously, the same is true of blacks whose ancestors were slaves. No matter what they do, they are looked upon by the majority as less than American. Seeing the unwillingness of the majority to allow them to assimilate, and at the same time being discouraged from display of their own cultures, they are forced to turn in upon themselves. This is not enough, however, because the majority is everywhere giving examples that they are unable to emulate. Thus comes the movement for cultural diversity, aiming at recognition for the worth of unassimilated groups.

Unfortunately, this effort is nearly doomed because of the bias of the majority.

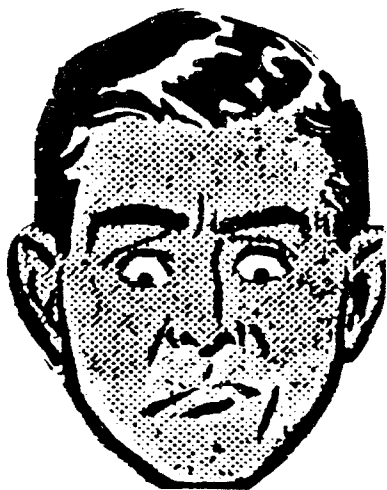
In relation to most cultures, the majority in this country has held its traditions a very short time. This translates into a perceived lack of stability which makes people very sensitive to anything that might be seen as an attack upon their way of doing things, and thus upon their identities. So they jealously guard their culture from the assimilation of anything new or different. While they take their culture as their own even though they had nothing to do with its formation, the minds made simple by inclusion in a mass are unable to take as their own something from a source that *looks* different than they do.

If something is not done, no effort undertaken for the variously divided cultural and racial groups to integrate as a society, we can expect continued violence and hatred, along with the burial of the American underclass.



## Bush telling supporters, "Just drink the Kool-Aid."





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- 13 LAIBACH
- 14 POP STAPLES
- 15 OTTIS REDDING
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- 22 HILT
- 23 JOHN SPENCER/BLUES EXPLOSION
- 24 CURE
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- 26 JOHN PRINE
- 27 BEASTIE BOYS
- 28 SPIRITUALIZED
- 29 ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT
- 30 SOMETHING HAPPENS
- 31 SONIC YOUTH
- 32 WIRE TRAIN
- 33 ELVIS HITLER
- 34 GOD & TEXAS
- 35 MORPHINE

EROS is a student run, peer-counseling organization which provides information, counseling and referral on birth control, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy and sexual health care. If you have any questions that you would like answered in our column, please submit your questions to our office or to the Press office, room 020, Central Hall. EROS is located in RM 119 in the infirmary. Stop by or call 632-6450.

Dear EROS,

A few weeks ago my boyfriend and I were worried that I had a sexual disease. So I went to the doctor and he diagnosed H. V. Vaginitis, and said I probably got it just from being tired and run down. I took all the antibiotics he gave me, but now I have the symptoms again. What's going on?

—In the Dark

Dear In the Dark,

Many forms of vaginal infection are caused by a general lowered resistance of the woman's body (i.e. stress, lack of sleep, poor diet, etc.) BUT even most of these infections can be transmitted sexually. Therefore, as with all sexually transmitted diseases, it is essential that the sexual partner also be treated, even if the partner is without symptoms. This is what is known as "ping-ponging," because you and your partner can reinfect each other over and over again if one of you are sexually active, perhaps your partner was not treat-

ed also. Return to your doctor and ask him about this and other possibilities as to why your symptoms recurred so as to avoid future infections.

Dear EROS,

I have a question to ask you about condoms. I know you can just buy them in a drug store and that they are cheap, but is there a correct way they should be worn?

—Curious George

Dear Curious George,

That is a good question, and YES, there is a correct way a condom should be worn. The condom should be put on after the penis is erect, but before there is any genital contact with your partner. This is because sperm can leak out long before the man comes. When putting on a condom leave about half an inch space at the tip. Be careful as you roll the condom down to push out any air bubbles. Air bubbles can cause breakage.

Immediately after ejaculation the man should grasp the base of the condom (around the base of the penis) and withdraw the penis from the vagina. Check the condom before you throw it away to make sure there are no rips or tears.

Remember, condoms and foams should be used together; this combined method is almost 100% effective form of birth control.

—EROS

By Rachel S. Wexelbaum

In Namibia there lived a baboon who was always hungry. As soon as he found something to eat he gobbled it up right away, feeling full for a little while but hungry as ever afterwards. He wandered the hot sands of the desert dreaming of a feast.

One day a man was watching the baboon and he smiled in amusement. He was also very hungry, and thought that if he caught the baboon he could train him to do tricks and make people laugh. Even after the baboon died, the man could use its skin and bones to make a drum to make people dance. This way he would never be so poor as to not have food again.

After managing to beg enough coins to buy a sack of beans in the village, the man returned to the desert with a plan. He found a crevice on the side of a cave and filled it with beans, then waited for the baboon to appear. Sure enough, our hungry friend came waddling by, smelled the beans and stuck his hand in the crevice to grab the largest handful that he could. However, the baboon could not get his hand out of the crevice because it was full of beans, and he screamed and screamed until the man ran to him with a leash and club.

**MORAL:** If you only work for beans, then you will always be hungry.

**MORE IMPORTANTLY:** If you plan for the future, you will be one step ahead of the monkeys.

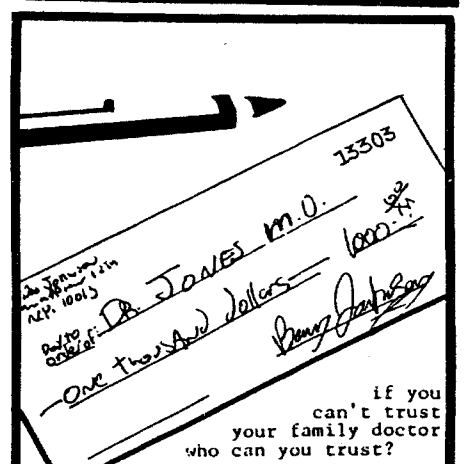
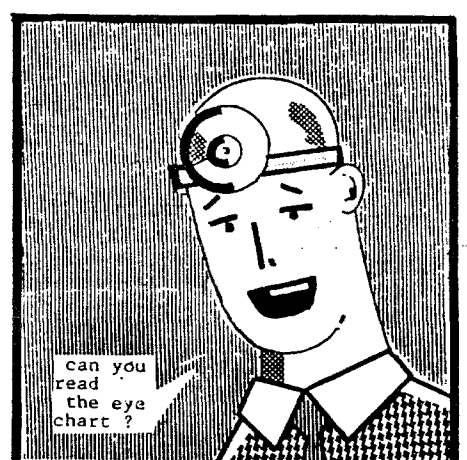
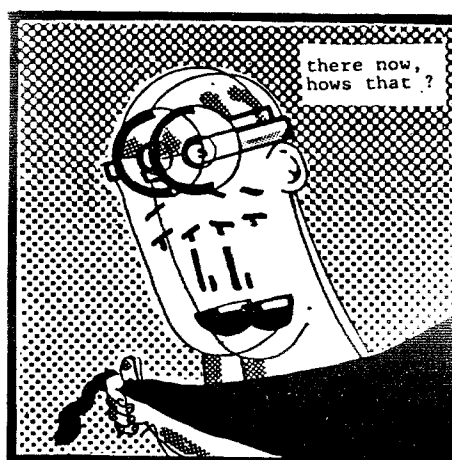
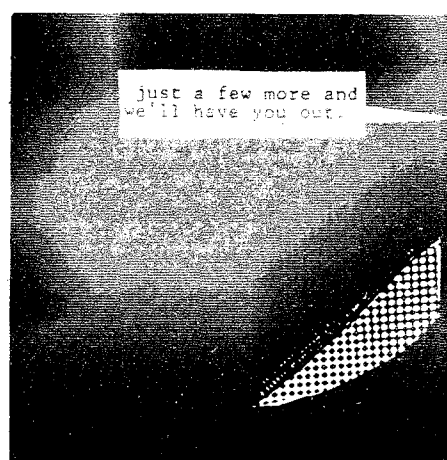
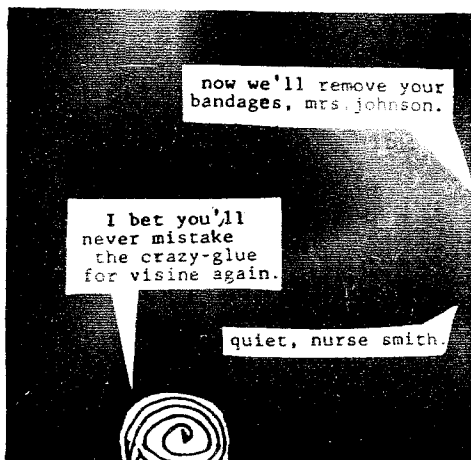


## PAGE 13

Open 7 Days



by James Blonde





# Invasion of the Kiddie Snatchers

## The Return of The Russian Clowns.

by Rachel S. Wexelbaum

Imagine sitting innocently in a large theater, playing the part of a jaded spectator, when all of a sudden utter chaos takes over. The performers scramble over the chairs into the audience where they step over your shoulders and steal young children, screaming unintelligible that you aren't sure are real. You sense that they may be cries of rebellion or revolution, but you don't mind so much because you know that in two hours it will end and the children won't be scared for life. Besides, you find that the actors bring out the child in you as well.

In fact, some people would call the experience therapy. An outlet for our real-world frustrations that reminds one of the simulated tolerance of teenage delinquency that cyberpunk worlds have created to ease the pain of despondent youths living in a nihilistic society.

From July 22 to July 26 at the Seventh Stony Brook International Theater Festival held in Staller Center, "The Russian Clowns" (otherwise known as Theater Litsedei in its hometown of St. Petersburg, Russia) taught an American audience the meaning of the word "nelzya." For those who do not speak Russian, "nelzya" (pronounced neel-ZYAH) means "it is forbidden," or "not allowed." In the new republics of the former Soviet Union, many things are still nelzya under glasnost. Women do not share equal rights with men in Russia to this day, and authorities still have the rights to imprison homosexuals for living an alternative lifestyle. Cross-dressing can lead to forced institutionalization on account of "mental illness." However, clowns can get away with anything, and when one is in the company of such lovable clowns one enters a separate reality where one can forget what is nelzya.

The Russian Clowns' performance consisted of many short sketches, many of them repeated or similar to those in their 1988 performances at Staller Center. The show did not run a full two hours either, probably due to the fact that there were only five clowns this time as opposed to seven in their 1988 debut. To a veteran of the 1988 performance the absence of the whimsical babushka clown who shuffled across the stage in floppy sandals and beat people over the head with her shopping bag was a small disappointment, especially during the "Power" sketch where all the clowns dressed up as street-sweeping babushkas to celebrate the Soviet woman to a disco beat. In this sketch the babushka clown "flew" over the stage with a big grin as if "she" were Superman (Supergirl?), and the loss of "her" made the sketch less powerful. However, Nikolai Terentiev did a wonderful job on the crowd as a cross between a ballerina and Freddie Mercury as he flitted across the stage dressed in schmatas and wielding a mop.

The loss of two clowns also caused the end of the show to fall apart into a kiddie free-for-all. After the "Power" sketch many large colorful rubber balls descended from the sky and the clowns proceeded to kick them into the audience. What the audience was supposed to do was volley them playfully back and forth with the clowns and each other. While this occurred two clowns would go up and down the aisles with fishing poles to catch little kids to

take them backstage and have their faces painted. However, the Clowns decided to have all of the children come on stage to volley the balls with the audience and it escalated into mayhem, a Lilliputian version of a mad headbanger's bash. Some children fell off the stage, and spectators were smashed in the face. Not only that, but the little gremlins refused to leave the stage, crawling all over the poor clowns in their finale until they resembled a "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" monkey sculpture.

Clad in ragged costumes, the Russian Clowns touched everyone with their frail dignity and gentle personalities. Each one was an individual, much like the Smurfs or the Seven Dwarves, and they interacted through sophisticated body language which communicated more to the audience than spoken words. However, each person in the audience could come away with a different interpretation of each sketch, as the clowns did not rely solely on crude slapstick. Unlike American circus clowns, the Russian Clowns gear most of their humor to a more intellectual audience without shutting out the masses. The children enjoyed the boxing sketch the most, in which two clowns duke it out in the ring while a worried one looks on. To make the sound of a punch, a clown on the other side of the stage beat a drum. The two clowns had a reason for fighting—throughout the entire performance one got the better of the other in some demeaning way. It was more violent than most of their sketches; gentle, lovable clowns had no business fighting like that, and in the end neither rival won the boxing match anyway, since the referee knocked out "the champ."

As a veteran of Theater Litsedei's 1988 performance at Staller Center, I was not disappointed with their show



this year, although I found myself asking, "Was that all?" In spite of this, I *knew* the Russian Clowns would give us their best. Founder, director and fellow member of Theater Litsedei, Vyatcheslav Polunine, would settle for nothing less than a full house of bright eyes and smiles. He can't afford not to—in his native country, people have very little to laugh about. Any performers who can please a starving, oppressed people would absolutely *spoil* an American audience, especially when it comes to their children

