

Issue #1: October 2008 CUNYTIME!

A collective effort by:

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There is a liberatory potential in making a people's CUNY.

There is a pressing need to take back our university.

The CUNYTime! Collective calls upon your mutual-aid.

This periodic periodical is devoted to creating a counter-narrative of the University. It requires your effort: contribute content – articles, cartoons, graphics, art, resources, etc. – or be an editor, be a designer, be a printer... Email us: cunytime@gmail.com

beginnings

1969 – Students cast demonstrations, clashed with police, and even set fire to the City College Auditorium in a pitched reaction to decades (or centuries) of neglect. Barriers were torn down. This radical activism gave birth to new campuses such as Hostos Community College, Medgar Evers College, and York College. These actions forced CUNY to serve new communities within the city. They also brought about open admissions (which lasted until 1999) and free tuition (which lasted until 1976).

African-Americans, Latinos, women, and working class whites swarmed CUNY. With them came Black Studies, African and Puerto-Rican/Latino Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, and Labor Studies. CUNY's hallowed halls were opened to the subaltern.

If the 1960s, those famous radical years, have an aura, it's just an engineered mystique. Our potential now is as great as always.

In 1969, students mobilized for change and autonomy. In 2008, the struggle continues. We are united by our commitment to building a better world, and in that better world there will be a better CUNY. At least this is our belief.

This better CUNY is something that we will have to imagine, together. And it is something that we will have to fight for, together. These are the goals; this is CUNYTIME!

Let's make a better CUNY.



"Slowly the man opened his eyes, a dead man's eyes. Slowly a sticklike arm reached down and fumbled in his pocket, producing a roll of bills. "Give me," he said then, and his voice held the croak of a raven in a churchyard, give me a ticket to wherever it is."

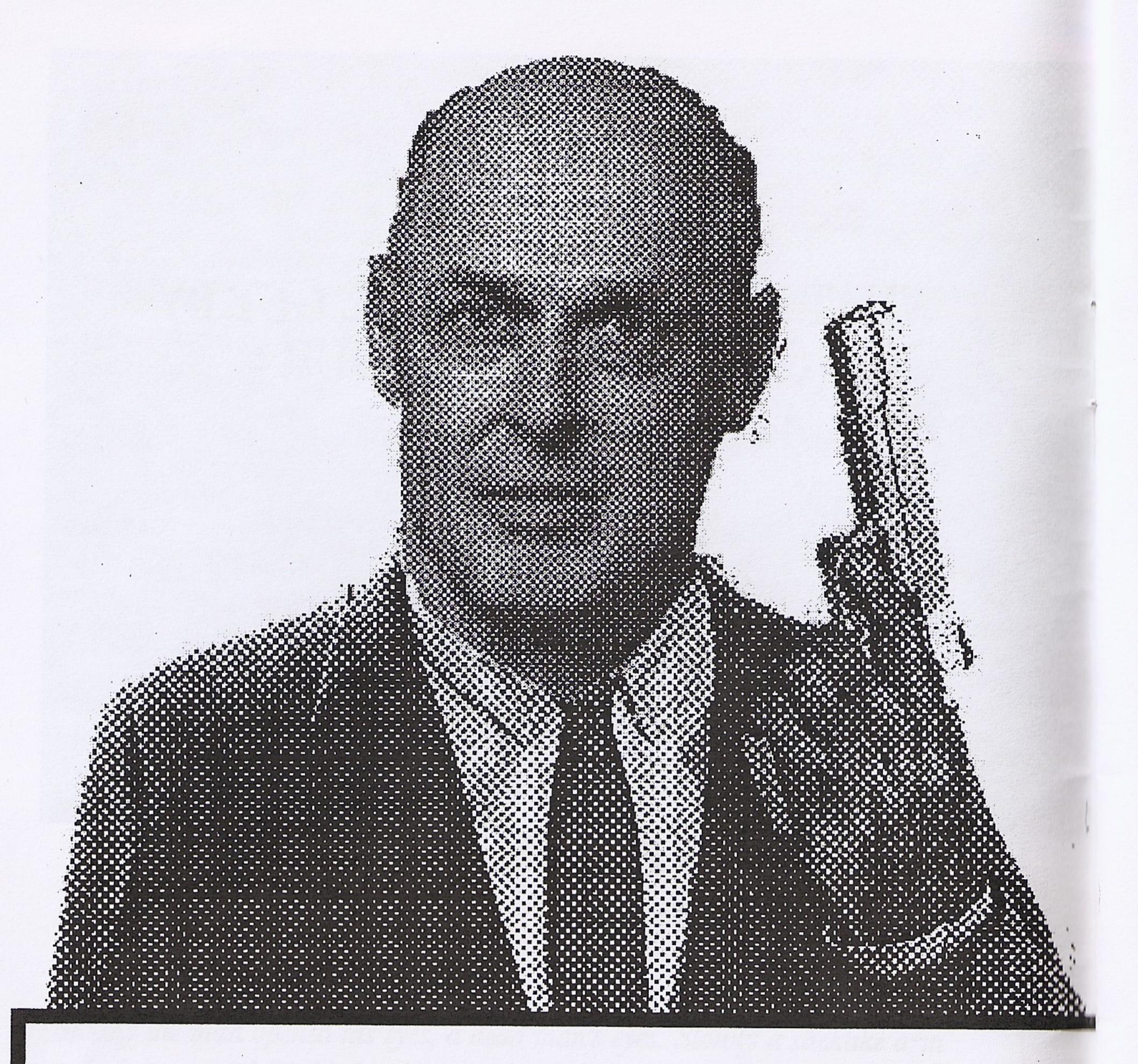
Get your degree. It might get you everything you want, and maybe things you never even thought you wanted. Or it might not.

But we ask you:

WHAT EDUCATION DO WE GET BY GOING INTO DEBT FOR OUR EDUCATION?

WHAT DO WE LEARN WHEN WE LOSE CONTROL OF OUR LEARNING?

What life would we have if education was a right? CUNY is a public university. But who is this public? And where is our space?



Bankster Capitalism and CUNY

The banksters profit from education. The economic crisis is upon us. But all the prophetic language and catastrophic imagery cannot mask the fact that crises, while a bust for most, are a boon for others. It's not that some folks are impervious to financial downturns but that—drum roll please—they have power! Meaning they can use their power to make sure that their portion of the collective resources remains constant or even grows, even while the overall amount of resources diminishes. At the forefront of this powerful elite are the banksters, in other words, legal gangsters. Here is more or less how it works.

Destroying the CUNY system is profitable; destroying the whole public school system is profitable. The Wall Street banksters, commanding the money of the global elite, own tax-free municipal bonds on public capital developments, including CUNY. The city and the state pay the interest on these bonds with their tax revenue. But when times are rough—and for city governments times are always rough—they cut back on education and other social services in order to pay off the bonds. So we taxpayers pay more taxes and get less in return.

The banksters, rarely in need of the types of social services on the chopping block, make sure the city allocates funds from its now anemic budget to their banking brethren first. If the leftover budget can't keep CUNY afloat, then no big deal; not for them at least.

This is not just a local phenomenon; it's happening across the country and around the world. Public education has been sacrificed by every country that has signed up for an IMF or World Bank loan, every country that has been "structurally adjusted." They are forced to cut back on education, health care, and any social service that isn't clearly related to making profits right then and there. That is what the banksters make them do to pay off the interest on their debt. Both the working poor in the US and the poor nations of the world are trapped by their minimum monthly payments, and Wall Street reaps the benefits. Now New York City is crumbling like a Third World Country, at least the parts of New York City where working people live, as opposed to the manicured and securitized environments created for the global elite whom Bloomberg seems to prefer. And so in New York, as in every other city, rich enclaves are thriving while the working class is falling. This is neoliberalism, right here; it's privatization and globalization returning home to roost.

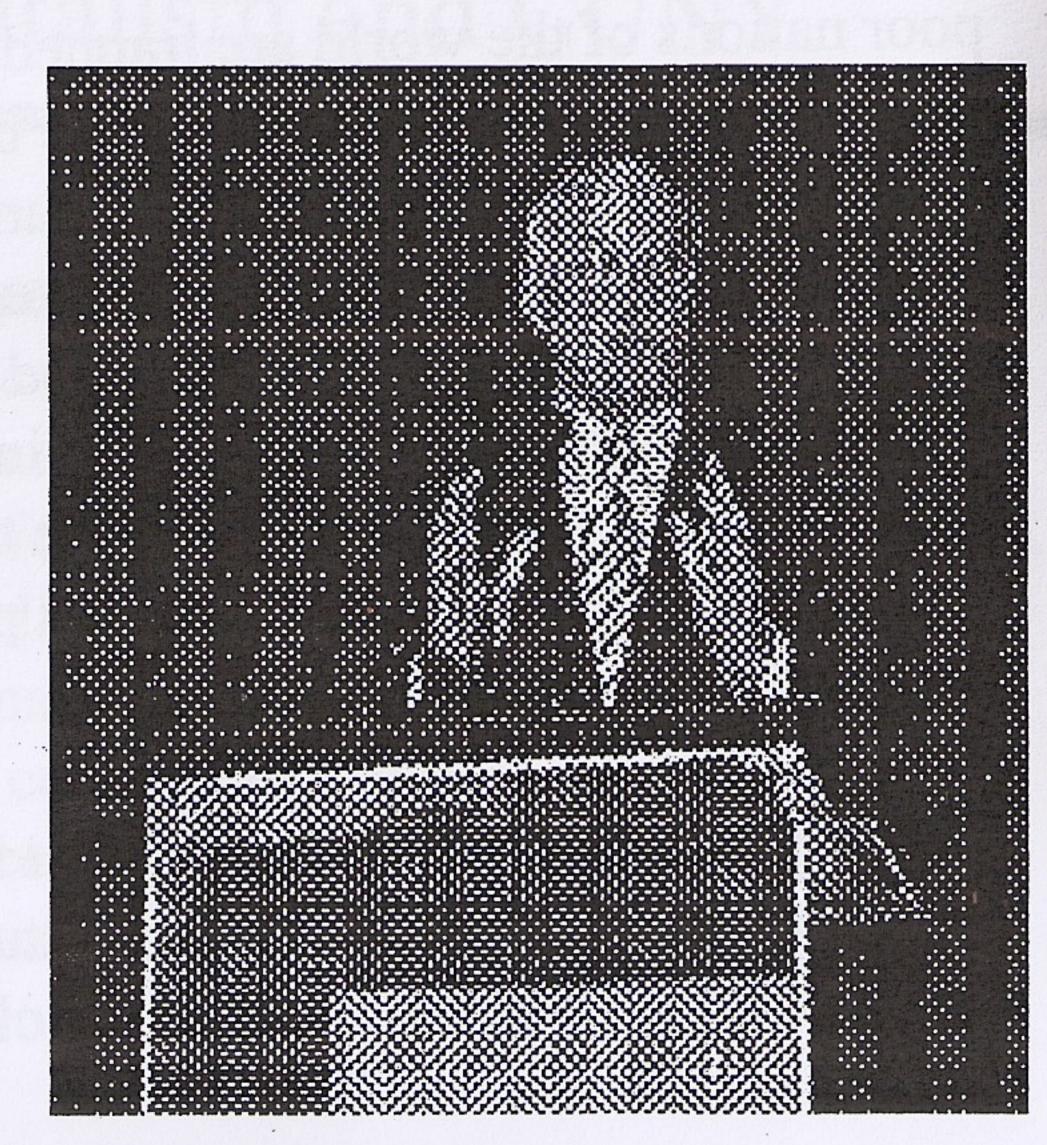
This crisis is a credit crunch, but it is not that the banksters have no money. In fact, they are sitting on a lot of dough; they just don't want to invest it. This is a classic case of "capital"

congestion" as economist-imperialist Charles Conant wrote in 1898, when the world capitalist economy experienced another great crisis. Back then, the US launched an imperialist project to take them out of the crisis. Today's equivalent is called "globalization" and has already been going on for quite some time now. Maybe it has even reached its limit?

When students borrow money, the banksters profit. They didn't profit when CUNY was free. But they profit now. Bloomberg, the bankster masquerading as a liberal politician, wants to be elected again. And again. And again. And he wants to cut 1 billion from NYC mostly from education. That is what banksters do.

We are in the beginning of a severe recession. The US economy in the 1930s was not as developed, nor was capital investment as global as it is today. Things have changed. International capitalism has grown gigantic. This is the crux of the problem. The current economic crisis did not begin with the sub-prime scandal; it is the result of a long economic and political assault that has been erasing what the working class gained from WWII to the late 1960s. It is a crisis of overproduction. Remember when they closed our factories down and moved out in order to

find cheap labor in the rest of the world? The banksters financed the deindustrialization of the US and the industrialization of the Third World and Eastern Europe. To keep us content, they made sure that the people 'over there' wouldn't be able to afford all the shoes and computers and cars they made, but that we would do the purchasing instead...on credit.



One world of production, another world of consumption, and the banksters in the middle of it all. All the goods that are produced somewhere else need to be consumed, paid for and used. But customers need money, and without sufficient wages on hand, the banksters came to the rescue with credit - massive amounts of credit. So much credit that by the time the 21st century came around, the only folks they hadn't 'hit up' were the poor. So they extended credit cards and suspicious loans and mortgages to them, because everybody else—the middle class, the corporations, the financial institutions—was already caught in the credit vise.

We watched as Paulson and Bernanke—whom no one elected—frog-marched President Bush out to tell everyone that we needed to give a trillion bucks to the banksters. It was a stunning display of power, a humiliated president having to acknowledge that there is a power even stronger than his tyrannical war on terror, his massive military apparatus, his homeland security. This greater power is the ruling class, married to capital, whose interests and needs trump all of the rest.

The banksters are economic leaders of the ruling class. They own the mortgages on our apartment houses and on our private homes. They own our credit card debt, our cars, our educations, our homes...our everyday lives. The banksters advance credit to the city for running every municipal agency, and the government turns our taxes over to them in return. And when that's not enough, the banksters come knocking and shake out even more from the government. Threatening financial insecurity, they demand that the government maintain their markets, or 'the integrity of the system', which basically means the integrity of their profits. Bailout might as well be called blackmail.

Wall Street is the enemy of the vast majority of us—the working class. This financial crisis is allowing more of us to see that we are not them, and that they—the banksters, the government—serve each other, and not us. They are a ruling class and we are being ruled. More of us can see this now.

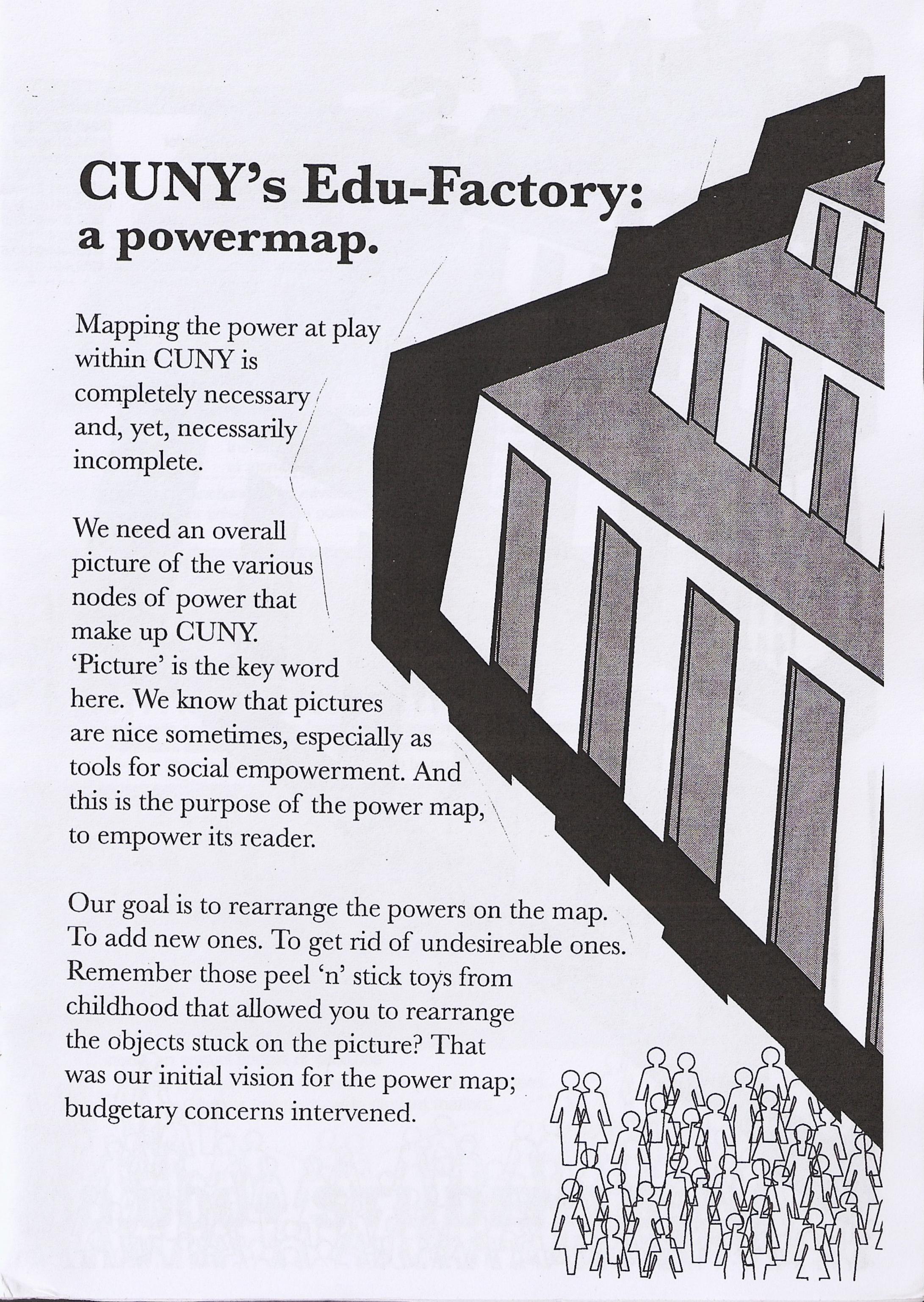
When the dust settles, if the dust settles, nothing will ever be the same. Life after the bailout and after this Wall Street debacle will be raw. Students won't be able to afford to stay in school because of job loss, or because of frozen credit. Our fellow workers will be 'let go.' And more and more of us will see what is really happening.

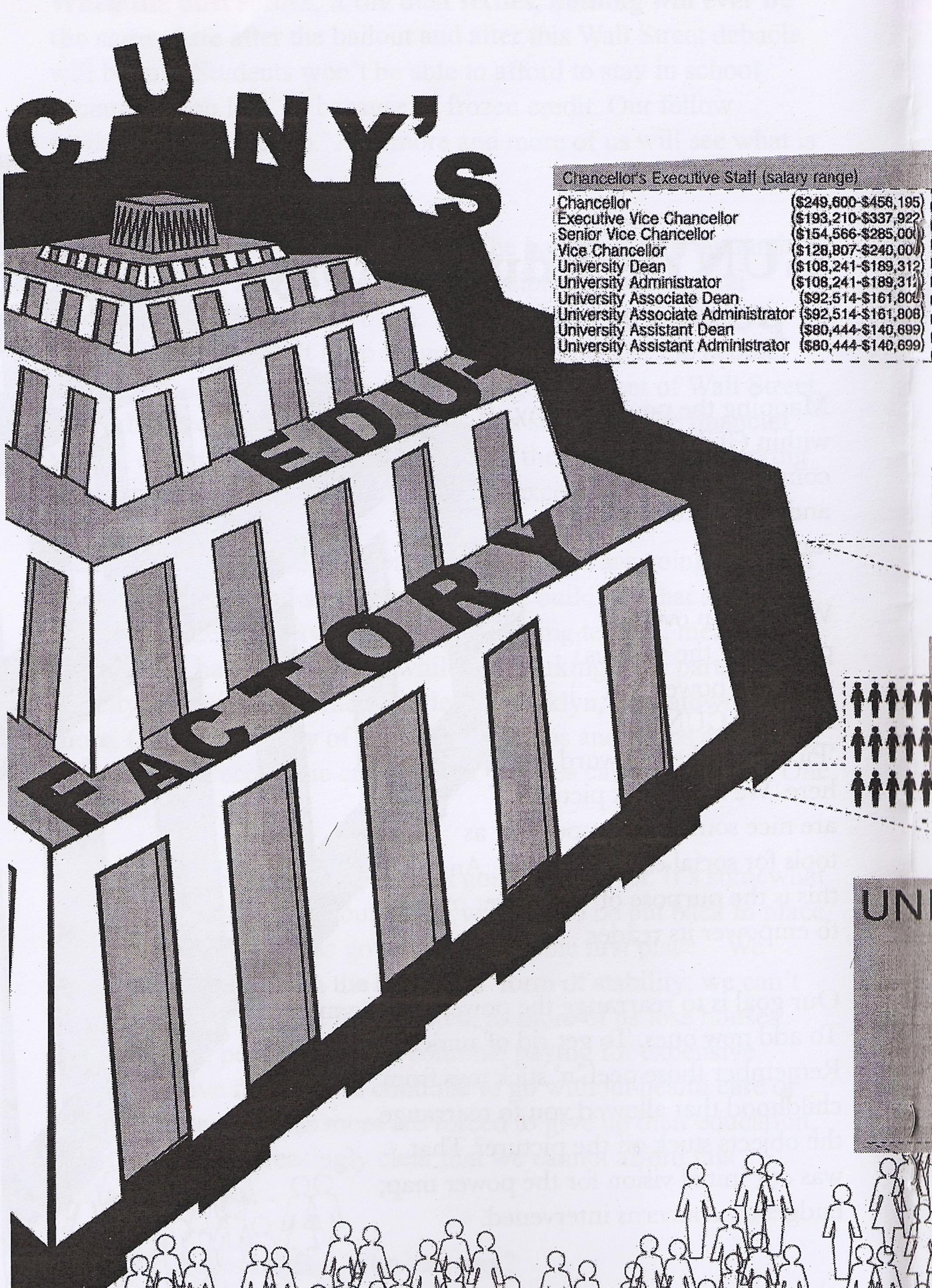
Structural adjustment is on the way. The banksters will demand more cutbacks, and the states and municipalities and federal government will give it to them. Mary Lease, from the Populist Party, said in 1890, "It is no longer a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, but a government of Wall Street, by Wall Street, and for Wall Street." It is still true. The financial wealth of the United States was built on the backs of the working population. And nothing has changed...except for the worse.

Heating oil will cost 50% more this year; rents are going up; food prices are rising, and some renters live in buildings that are in foreclosure despite having stable rent-paying tenants, meaning tenants will have to go. Meanwhile the working class parts of the city are being gentrified: Harlem, Brooklyn, Chinatown and more. (Although many of those huge condos and coops are empty. Thanks to the economic crisis, fewer yuppies can afford them. One small silver lining?)

It is magic to believe the system is going to recover. It's somewhat delusional to think we would even want 'it' to be put back in place, seeing as 'it' is what has gotten us here in the first place. We have to turn away from the banksters' form of stability; we can't afford it. As more of us feel cheated, as more of us lose houses, jobs, savings, pensions, as we continue paying for expensive gas, expensive food, as we continue to go without health care or affordable day care, as more are forced to give up their education, it will become increasingly clear that we cannot afford this business as usual.

If CUNY raises tuition, who can pay?
No more tuition! CUNY should be free!





BOARD of TRUSTEES

10 governor appointments 5 mayoral appointments

1 member from the faculty senate

1 member from the student senate

CHANCELLOR

 Appointed by the board of trustees Chairman of the council of presidents
 8 the chief educational and administrative officer of the university

President's Executive Staff (salary range) (\$152,675-\$266,580) President Senior Vice President (\$127,281-\$222,272) Vice President (\$110,000-\$162,498)
Assistant Vice President (\$92,901-\$162,498)
(\$92,901-\$162,498) (\$92,901-\$162,498) Administrator Associate Dean (\$83,705-\$146,091, Associate Administrator (\$83,705-\$146,091) Assistant Dean
Assistant Administrator (\$72,419-\$126,968) (\$72,419-\$126,968)

College Presidents: *Appointed by the board of trustees

The executive officer of the college with final authority on the development of faculty,

the allocation of the budget, & the disciplining of members of the college community

The Council: Functions as an advisory unit to the chancellor for university-wide policies

UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE (UFS)

Governs university-wide academic matters (curriculum, degree requirements, institutional mission)

Senators elected by the faculty governance bodies at each college

- . - Chair is an ex-officio member of the board of trustees

UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE (USS)

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

 Senators elected by their respective colleges, either by the students; or by the elected student government within the college : Undergraduate campuses are represented by 2 delegates; Graduate: campuses are represented by 1 delegate

Controls an annual budget of \$600,000

· Chair is an ex-officio member of the board of trustees Governs university-wide student matters

Still, we want to know what the landscape looks like when you place the student and faculty senate alongside the board of trustees; we want to know how different the map looks when the chancellor and presidents are not board appointees, but elected by the people they ought to serve.

This map is static, but the very real and very unequal academic landscape upon which it is based is not. This is the first reason why we say the map is necessarily incomplete; we need to alter it.

There's another reason why this map is incomplete. And that is because it maps only a small portion of the power that influences students' daily lives. What about a CUNY budget map that shows where our tuition dollars go, from where other sources of funding come, and who makes the most important budgetary decisions? What about a departmental map that shows which departments are receiving more funds, which departments are being forced to do more with less, or which departments are jumping on board with the neoliberal agenda? What about a power map of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), the union that represents the CUNY faculty and staff and within which adjuncts are marginalized? What about a map that showcases the everyday forms of racism, patriarchy, homophobia, and injustice that students encounter all too often in their lives?

There's much to be mapped and we need help in making this project a little less incomplete. If you have something that you would like to map, or data that you think would make an empowering graphic, email us: cunytime@gmail.com.



A Neoliberal CUNY or A People's CUNY?

CUNY's origins can be traced to the founding of the Free Academy of New York in 1848. Opened with the dream of providing higher education to the working class of New York City, this dream went unrealized until 1969, when struggles by the Puerto Rican and Dominican students at City College forced the city to cede to their open admissions demands – allowing any NYC high school graduate acceptance to CUNY. This historic win, "a landmark achievement for access and equality," fundamentally altered the scale and composition of the student body at CUNY. Between 1969 and 1975 CUNY's enrollment bloomed from under 100,000 to more than 220,000. The student body at the senior colleges, which in 1969 was 96 percent white, by 1975 became predominantly non-white and working class. Today, CUNY has a student body that is 72 percent people of color and 62 percent women.

However, ever since this momentous shift in the race and class composition of its student body, CUNY has been subjected to continual budget cuts and systemic underfunding. In effect, CUNY has been subjected to neoliberalization. But what does this mean? It means that CUNY, and therefore you, the student, has been subjected to a series of cultural, economic and political practices designed to enforce privatization, commodification, deregulation, corporate control, and personal responsibility.

A Neoliberal CUNY is a university that increasingly operates according to the logic of a corporation:

- (1) higher pay for management than for faculty;
- (2) a robust administrative structure to oversee and discipline faculty and students;
- (3) the creation of a two-tier teaching structure (tenure-track and adjuncts);
- (4) productivity increases for faculty translated into increased workloads and larger class sizes;
 - (5) state and city defunding of CUNY through budget cuts;
- (6) cost burden borne by the "consumer" -- the student -- through "user fees" -- tuition increases; and

(7) reliance on philanthropy to fund CUNY's operations, essentially leaving control of CUNY to the wealthy.

What follows is a brief overview of some main features of a Neoliberal CUNY, and how it degrades education as a social right. Subsequent installments will address the rest.

Escalating Chancellor Pay:

The two trends of increasing Chancellor pay and increasing student tuition are entirely related. CUNY is now run like a wall-street investment firm -- all the money is channeled up to the top, extending the gap between the lowest and highest paid employees. In 1965 the economy-wide ratio of C.E.O. to worker pay was 24:1 and stayed relatively constant until the early 80s when it started to veer upwards, finally hitting 71:1 in 1989. Yet, it was not until the 1990s that C.E.O. to worker pay exploded; the ratio stood at only 100:1 in 1995 but zoomed to 248:1 in 1999 and stands at 262:1 today.

Much like a CEO, the Chancellor's salary has increased \$145,000 within the last decade alone! [see graph]. The Chancellor's position is also handsomely compensated with many non-salary perks: a \$90,000 a year allowance for housing costs plus a car and driver, making the total compensation closer to half a million dollars.

\$25,000 \$140,000
\$140,000
Ψ1 10,000
\$158,000
\$250,000
\$350,000
\$395,000

Note: The Chancellor's pay packages includes a \$90,000 per-year allowance for housing costs plus a car and driver

The struggle for a free and open CUNY must call for an end to such outlandish pay packages and force the Chancellor and his trustees to submit to "salary austerity." Tenure-track faculty positions start around \$60,000 and adjuncts are paid around \$2800 for each course they teach. While the Chancellor's pay has been on the rise, pay for faculty, both full-time and adjunct, has not even kept pace with inflation. This is due in part to severe budgets cuts that CUNY faced in the 1970s and 1980s, which led to tenure-track faculty salaries dropping in value by 30 to 40%, (a drop that has never been corrected). And currently, adjunct pay has only about two thirds of the value, in real terms, that it held in 1971.

Money always magically appears in order to raise the Chancellor's salary and keep it "competitive" with salaries at major corporations. Yet, the money tree dries up when it comes to paying faculty competitive salaries: CUNY faculty are paid much less than their counterparts are paid at comparable schools. And unlike the Chancellor and college presidents, faculty do not get any subsidies for housing in the most expensive city in the United States.

The Adjunctification of CUNY:

Fiscal crises in the 1970s, 80s and 90s resulted in the mass firing of tenure-track faculty and their replacement with adjuncts. This movement towards the "flexibilization" of the academic labor supply has created a two-tier teaching system, with a small number of well paid tenure track faculty at the top, used for prestige and marketing purposes, while the majority of teachers are overworked and underpaid adjuncts. CUNY is now understaffed by tenure-track professors and is utterly dependent upon low-paid, part-time, contingent faculty who lack any job security, receive few benefits and earn less than a third the base salary of tenure-track professors.

The Chancellor tells us, "In 1975, CUNY employed more than 11,000 full-time faculty. Today, only 6,600 full-time faculty work at the University." This is a decrease of more than 40% while enrollment has grown to its highest level in over three decades - 232,000, an increase of nearly 19% since 1999. This has resulted in a ballooning of the student-full-time faculty ratio. In order to return

to the 1975 figures CUNY would have to hire over 4000 full-time tenure track faculty!

Privatizing CUNY through Tuition Increases:

Part of the Neoliberalization of CUNY is shifting the cost of education from corporations and the state - those who can and should bear the cost of public education - to those least able to pay: the students themselves. Privatizing access to CUNY means viewing education as a privilege, available only to those who can afford it because they are "personally responsible," rather than as a social right open to all no matter their economic "worth."

The re-privatization of CUNY can be traced to the 1976 "fiscal crisis" when tuition was first charged. This occurred at a time when CUNY's racial and class composition had undergone radical shifts. Establishing tuition was a maneuver to re-whiten and re-middle class CUNY. Every subsequent "fiscal crisis" (1983, 1991-6, 2003 and 2008) has been used as a strategy to further embed access to CUNY as an economic privilege [see graph] and to deny education to thousands of people of color and the working class.

	Annual Tuition	Annual Tuition
	Four-Year	Community
77	Colleges	Colleges
Year 1848-1975	Free	Free
1976	\$925	\$775
1983	\$1,225	\$1,225
1991	\$1,350	\$1,350
1992	\$1,850	\$1,750
1993	\$2,450	\$2,100
1996	\$3,200	\$2,500
2003-2008	\$4,000	\$2,800

Between 1989 and 2006 CUNY tuition and fees rose 94% in inflation-adjusted dollars, while the state's contribution fell 35% and the city's by 24%. As a result, tuition payments as a percentage of the CUNY budget have doubled since 1990. In 1990, tuition payments constituted 19.9% of the budget and by 2006 increased

to 42%. The students are expected to bear more and more of the escalating financial cost because corporations and the wealthy place their right to profit before your social right to an education.

If Chancellor Goldstein has his way, you, the student, are on the road to continual tuition increases. Not only does the 2009 budget call for a 5% increase in tuition, but it calls for linking tuition increases to the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI), which has averaged a 5% annual increase since 1990. The Chancellor is therefore calling for endless tuition increases to deal with the state and corporate attack on funding higher education, even though the state and corporations are the ones who benefit from a skilled labor force.

The Defunding of CUNY

Corporations and the wealthy refuse to pay for the expanded and affordable access to CUNY that was won through struggle in 1969. The tax revolt of the 1970s continues today, through President Bush's tax cuts and the balanced-budget legislation that has subordinated public spending to the business cycle. Therefore, when the business cycle goes into a downswing educational funding and other social services are subjected to massive cuts. The state is no longer allowed to run deficits or increase taxes to ensure open and affordable access.

Once again "our" Chancellor outlines a key problem: "Nationwide, between 1980 and 2000, the share of universities' operating expenses paid for by state tax dollars was cut by 30 percent." This problem of defunding when enrollment is increasing means less money for each student: "spending per FTE student has declined at public institutions relative to private institutions, from about 70% in 1977 to about 58% in 1996."

State and city de-funding of CUNY is not mere fiscal policy, but the institutionalization of racism into CUNY's budget. Compared to SUNY, where the student body is only 18.9% people of color, we see a stark disparity in funding. "In 1991 per-student funding at CUNY was 81 percent of per-student funding at the State University of New York; by 2004 the ratio had dropped to 55 percent."

So what to do? Chancellor Goldstein proposes the CUNY

Compact as his solution to "too little revenue and too little investment" in CUNY. Essentially, further the neoliberalization of CUNY and increase the cost of public education to people of color and the working class. The Compact argues that this defunding of CUNY can continue because the costs can be passed onto the student through continuous tuition increases, larger class sizes, increased course loads for faculty, more adjuncts, increased specialization programs for the "gifted" and "talented," and a reliance on philanthropy.

The CUNY Compact argues that all new programs can be funded with only 30% of the money coming from the state and city. This is because the rest will come from restructuring (read: increased class size and teacher work loads) and enrollment growth [15%], philanthropy [14%], and tuition increases [41%]. This means students will bear the greatest financial cost increases. The CUNY Compact will deny more and more people of color and the working class access to higher education. It will continue the funding of programs conducive to maintaining the existing social order of oppression and exploitation, and speed up the defunding of programs and teachers committed to radical social change.

A People's CUNY

Access to CUNY is a civil rights issue. tTis means it is an issue of power and an issue of social struggle. Increasing student tuition and chancellor salary and the defunding of CUNY are not the outcome of some autonomous and necessary fiscal policy, but are in fact the byproduct of an attack on people of color and the working class of New York City.

In an era of the Neoliberalization of CUNY it is vital to put forth a counter-vision of the university. It is time that we, the people of CUNY, reimagine the CUNY that will produce the world in which we desire to live, one that embraces liberatory change, fights for equality, empowers its participants, incorporates diversity, and is radically pluralist. In order to realize these goals, CUNY would have to be self-managed by those who constitute CUNY and on whose behalf CUNY is supposed to serve — the community, students, faculty and staff. We all must play a role in realizing the potential of CUNY as a community resource and institution of community

empowerment.

We ask that you imagine with us a people's CUNY. What might this mean?

POST-CAPITALIST AUTONOMOUS URBAN UNIVERSITY

A people's CUNY would have an open admissions policy that made space for anyone who wanted to learn. It would not be a low-fee institution but a no-fee institution. And even that doesn't go far enough! Even if education is free, one must still work to put food on the table, a house over one's head, to have transportation to get around, to clothe oneself, etc. A truly open CUNY would provide living stipends to all who enrolled. When students are spending most of their time working to pay the bills, the quality of their education is jeopardized – they have less time and energy available not only for studies, but for involvement in the life of the university community.

This is a start, at least... Will you help us push the idea farther?

Brooklyn resources

LGBTQ

Audre Lorde Project: http://www.alp.org/ Lesbian Herstory Archives: http://www.lesbianherstoryarchives.org/

HIV Testing and Prevention

Diaspora Community Services: 718-399-0200 Brooklyn AIDS Task Force: 718-622-2910 http://www.batf.net/

Syringe Distribution:

502 Bergen Street, Brooklyn NY 11217; (718) 622-2910 Ext. 106
2222 Church Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11226; (718) 826-5669

All mobile unit locations; Call (718) 388-0028 Ext. 124 for location and time.

HIV Testing: 502 Bergen Street 718-622-2910 Ext. 106, or 143.

Abortion Providers

Planned Parenthood Boro Hall Center: 44 Court Street 6th Floor; 212.965.7000
Early Options http://www.earlysimple.com/718.638.4361
NY Abortion Access Fund: http://www.nyaaf.org/(for women who need funds to access abortions)

Walk In Mental Health

Jewish Board of Brooklyn Family Services -- 1592 Flatbush Avenue 718-258-1714 (sliding scale beginning at no fee)

Domestic Violence

Park Slope Safe Home (718) 499-2151 Ctr. for the Elimination of Violence in the Family: 718-439-1000

Victim Services Agency: 212-577-7777

Free-ish Food

Brooklyn Food Not Bombs: http://www.myspace.com/brooklynfnb (corner of Marcy and Lafayette, Saturdays, 3-5pm)

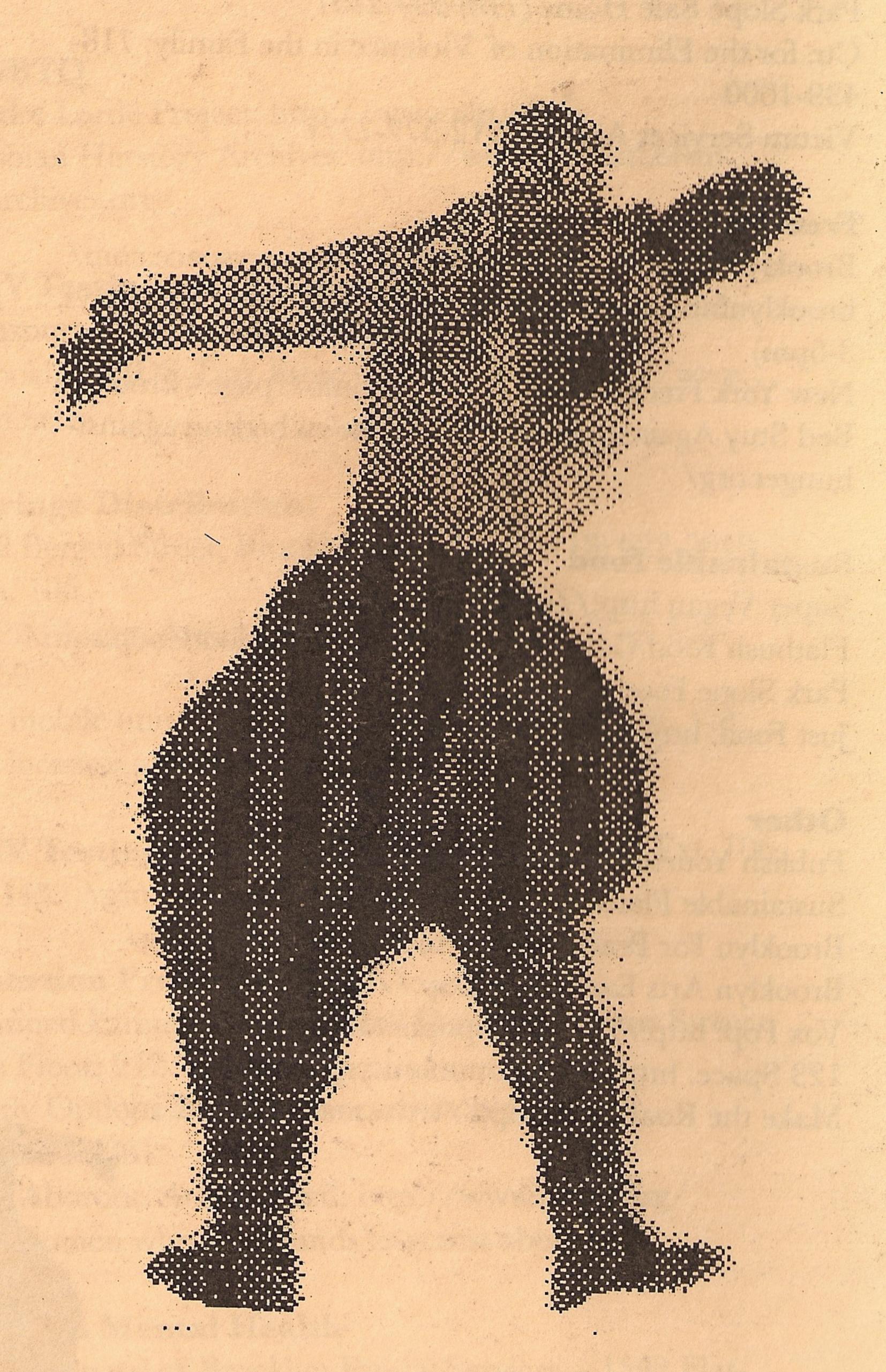
New York Freegan http://freegan.info/?page=Brooklyn Bed Stuy Against Hunger: http://www.bedstuyagainst-hunger.org/

Sustainable Food

Super Vegan http://supervegan.com/ Flatbush Food Coop: http://www.flatbushfoodcoop.com/ Park Slope Food Coop: http://foodcoop.com/ Just Food: http://www.justfood.org/jf/

Other

Publish Yourself: http://longdash.com/
Sustainable Flatbush: http://sustainableflatbush.org/
Brooklyn For Peace: http://brooklynforpeace.org/
Brooklyn Arts Exchange: http://www.bax.org/
Vox Pop: http://www.voxpopnet.net/
123 Space: http://123communityspace.org/
Make the Road NY: http://www.maketheroad.org/



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