

# LETTERS

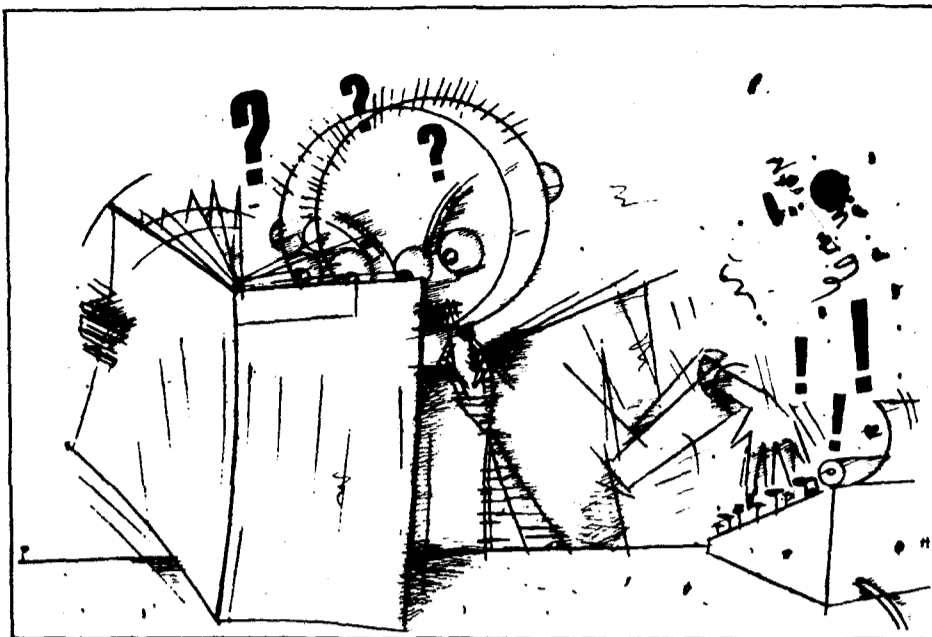
## Gay power

**B**RAVO FOR YOUR INSIGHTFUL REPORT ON "CON-  
tragate fund-raising for guns and lovers"  
(*JTT*, April 22). Some of us have suspected  
for years that the entire New Right was run  
by pairs of gay lovers. Finally, a paper with  
the guts to tell the truth!

Thanks also for exposing the gay domina-  
tion of the straight liberal press. At last we  
can understand why the papers constantly  
run pieces favorable to gays. I guess it was  
naïve not to see this earlier, given the bla-  
tant bias toward homosexuality of our soci-  
ety.

Perhaps next week you can uncover the  
real story behind the media buildup of the  
Palestinians as American folk heroes.

Robert A. Padgug  
New York



## CIA

**R**ICHARD ASINOF'S ABSOLUTELY GREAT COVER  
story on the Northampton trial of the  
demonstrators against the CIA recruitment  
campaign (*JTT*, April 29) calls for a slight,  
but important, supplement. The necessity  
defense that was successfully employed in  
the Northampton trial is permitted not only  
in Massachusetts but all over the United  
States. Trial judges who have denied the  
necessity defense have been overruled in  
case after case, in state after state, and by  
the Supreme Court of the United States,  
which ruled that "so long as the functions  
of judge and jury are distinct, the one re-  
sponding to the law, the other to facts,  
neither can invade the province of the other  
without destroying the significance of trial  
by court and jury." The University of Santa  
Clara *California Law Review* has published  
in its Spring 1986 issue an excellent study  
of the necessity defense by Virginia Stark  
and Robert Aldridge.

Fredrick S. Gram  
St. Paul, Minn.

## Alive and biting

**D**AN LAZARE POSITS IN A REVIEW OF *JEWS IN*  
*America Today* that anti-Semitism may  
raise its head again in America (*JTT*, March  
25). He claims that author Lenni Brenner  
believes anti-Semitism is so far removed  
from most of America as essentially to have  
perished.

I have unpleasant news from working-  
class America. As one who has been a mem-  
ber of three labor unions within the past  
20 years and who has lived and worked  
both in cities and rural America, it is my  
regrettable chore to report that the hatred  
of Jews is very much alive.

The thin and cheap veneer of siblinghood  
applied to the U.S. image was never mean-  
ingful in either an official or heartfelt citizen  
sense. While the government beat its breast  
in the early '40s (finally) over Hitler's hor-  
rors the same government allowed God  
knows how many Jews to die for lack of  
sanctuary.

Penny Lernoux (*In Banks We Trust*) docu-  
ments the vigor with which the U.S. collab-  
orated with and protected Nazis following  
WWII. From Italy to Bolivia to the very in-  
nermost circles of U.S. scientific and intelli-  
gence communities, the U.S. cut deals with  
unrepentant war criminals.

My personal witness to the anti-Semitic  
(and anti-black, Indian, Japanese, etc.) infra-

structure of citizens' belief systems has  
been revealed steadily and surely over the  
years by the many plain folks I've worked  
with. Not all, of course, but a substantial  
portion of average people simply have no  
affinity for official policy of regarding Jews  
as desirable human beings.

On-the-job politeness is not a stressed  
asset. Neither is it in a workingman's bar.  
An economic disaster, plus an accomplish-  
ed demagogue could evoke the vast re-  
serves of existing ill-will.

Tom Hastings  
Ashland, Wis.

## Not lately

**O**N THE EXCHANGE BETWEEN BRENNER AND LA-  
zare over *Jews in America* (*JTT*, March  
25): There is definitely no single view of  
Jewishness either in America, or in Israel.  
On the contrary, there is a multitude of  
vocal writers in both countries. But we must  
judge these viewpoints from a historical as-  
pect. Ideologues are not proper leaders.  
Jews here in Austin, whether Secular, Re-  
form, Conservative or Orthodox, live to-  
gether in harmony, whereas in NYC, DC and  
Boston they are far from harmonious. In  
Israel, sadly, the Theocrats are beating up  
on the Socialists. Is there going to be an  
end to this? Has there ever been a Jewish  
time of peace since the time of Solomon?

Walden C. Pierson  
Austin, Texas

## Close watch

**I**N AN ARTICLE ON U.S. POLICY TOWARD SOUTH  
Africa (*JTT*, March 11), journalist Pippa  
Green seems to add a new twist to "McCar-  
thyism": guilt by observation. She writes:

"U.S. officials and the AFL-CIO's American

Africa Labor Center [sic] (AALC) watched  
closely when Chief Buthelezi launched his  
pro-investment, pro-free enterprise union,  
United Workers Union of South Africa  
(UWUSA), as a rival to the 600,000-strong  
Congress of South African Trade Unions."

Come on now. Were U.S. officials and the  
AALC seen together in a darkened bar  
"watching closely" and were they just stroll-  
ing together in the park? I'll bet a lot of  
other people, including Tambo and Con-  
gress of South African Trade Union officials,  
"watched closely" when UWUSA was  
launched.

David N. Dorn  
Director, International Affairs  
American Federation of Teachers

**Pippa Green replies:** It is well known that  
both the Reagan administration and the  
AFL-CIO have long had an interest in Chief  
Buthelezi. Amid much controversy, Buthe-  
lezi was co-awarded the George Meany  
Human Rights Award by the AFL-CIO in  
1982. Moreover, three weeks before the  
launch of UWUSA, the head of the AFL-CIO's  
South African program was seen having din-  
ner with top UWUSA officials in a Washing-  
ton, D.C., restaurant. After the launch, an  
AALC consultant advised the body on how  
to relate to UWUSA. "Watched closely"  
merely expresses the obvious interest in a  
union that had Buthelezi's backing. The  
word "guilt" is Dorn's, not mine.

## Heroes, then and now

**M**OST OF US CAN REMEMBER THE MY LAI MAS-  
acre, when George Wallace, our lead-  
ing political reactionary, defended Lt. Wil-  
liam Calley as an American hero.

Today, we have another "American hero,"  
Oliver North, with all his Vietnam deco-  
rations, being defended by the inhabitant

of the Oval Office and by members of Con-  
gress—a sad comment on the degeneracy  
of our political system in the intervening  
years. Whether in the case of North, Secord  
or Hasenfus, the madness of the Vietnam  
war stalks the corridors of the Iran-contra  
scandal.

The chief actors in Contragate are going  
before the cameras in civilian garb, but in  
their closets hang uniforms decorated with  
many Vietnam service ribbons. In Ronald  
Reagan's closet there hangs his statement  
as California governor, speaking of anti-war  
demonstrators, "If it takes a bloodbath, let's  
get it over with."

The Reagan era has not been a bloody  
period like that of the '60s, but in the present  
drama we are surely witnessing another  
struggle of the American political mind to  
achieve democratic accord with Third  
World peoples.

Kemp Houck  
Kansas City

## Howard Beach

**J**IM SLEEPER HAS DROPPED THE OTHER SHOE IN  
his Howard Beach blame-the-victim cru-  
sade (*Letters*, April 8). He has gone from  
criticizing the black-led movement against  
racism to shamelessly siding with the rac-  
ists by declaring police suspicion of the vic-  
tims was justified and that the victims lied  
about what they "were doing in the area."

Really, I guess Sleeper believes the vic-  
tims drove their car on the Belt Parkway,  
made it break down outside Howard Beach  
and, after requesting and receiving no as-  
sistance and then heading for the subway  
home, prowled the white neighborhood of  
Mafioso John Gotti and others, at night. As  
for Dominic Blum, who is at best a hit-and-  
run driver, Sleeper has only sympathy. So  
it's "If you're black, get back, if you're white,  
you're all right."

Refuting the rest of Sleeper's assertions  
would take not the length of a letter but a  
book. Some examples now: Sleeper says the  
special prosecutor said Sandiford lied. This  
is flatly untrue. His office was quoted as  
saying that if (a big if) Sandiford's version  
was wrong, it had something to do with his  
being beaten near senseless. In fact, it was  
Queens D.A. Santucci's sham prosecution,  
without Sandiford's version used, that let  
the white youths off. Santucci claimed he  
had no case without Sandiford. Did Sleeper  
miss this?

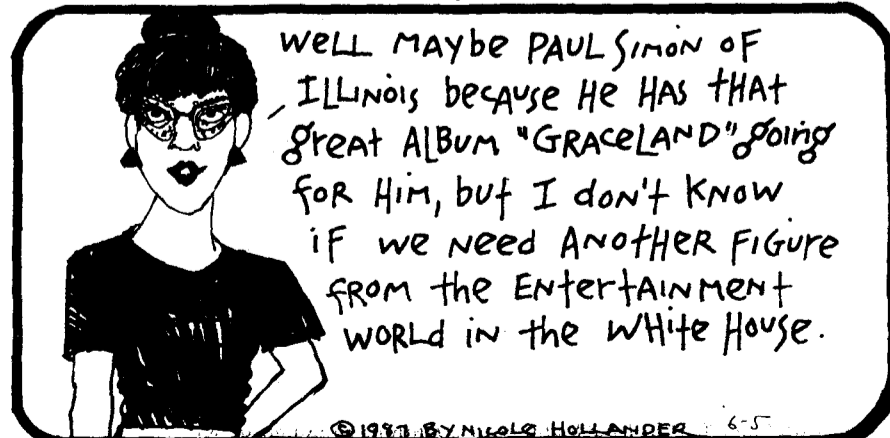
In conclusion, if the predominantly-white  
left like Sleeper continues to attack the  
black liberation movement, which it has so  
often historically done, it will condemn it-  
self to irrelevance at best or to being an  
enemy of the oppressed at worst.

Eddie Goldman  
New York

## SYLVIA



## by Nicole Hollander



By Dave West

**I**T IS A BLIZZARD AT DAWN ON A MONDAY morning in January in New Brunswick, N.J. Two dozen shivering students stand in front of a garage to encourage Rutgers University bus drivers to support striking cafeteria, clerical and custodial workers by refusing to drive. Several campus security cruisers arrive with a video camera and a promise of arrest. The students retreat to a diner for warmth, breakfast and strategy. I am amazed by their high spirits. They tell me that students have been coming out of the woodwork to organize in support of the union. Three days later I join most of these new friends to dance half the night to celebrate the union's victory.

Contrary to popular belief, progressive student activity is once again on the rise. As a recently politicized student and current full-time student organizer, I have participated in a rekindling of activity that is spreading to colleges throughout the nation, and is even reaching high schools.

**Today's students:** The mainstream media have produced a false image of today's young people as conservative. Similar to young people in the '60s who developed their own counterculture, the vast majority of my generation are politically alienated. The political trends that *Newsweek* trumpets run about as deep as the button-down shirts and short hair many of us wear. By this standard, the masses partying at Woodstock were the pinnacle of radicalism and the people who fought for free speech at Berkeley and sat in the Woolworth's in Greensboro were mainstream.

## Left politics is reviving on university campuses



papers (see *In These Times*, Jan. 14).

Many students have become angry about current economic pressures. The most substantive factors in student life today are the skyrocketing costs of tuition, room and board and the shrunken job market. Financial aid for students is harder to come by. Economics limit one's choice of schools. More students work part- and full-time jobs. Students see themselves graduating into a bleak job market and wading in debt. Meanwhile, Education Secretary William Bennett blames students for spending loan money on luxuries and Reagan tells whiners to shut up and open the classified pages.

I felt the tide turning in October 1984 while helping to organize a demonstration after transferring to the University of Colorado at Boulder. National progressive student groups alerted campus organizers that the College Republicans were coordinating pre-election celebrations of "Granada Liberation Day" at key campuses around the country. They illustrated a mailing with photocopies of intercepted College Republicans' organizing materials. A broad coalition of groups at Colorado turned out more than 1,000 students and dwarfed the College Republicans.

As a senior in the spring of 1985, I was thoroughly excited by reports of imaginative organizing on other campuses. Columbia students were blockading their library over investments in South Africa. News of Yale's citizens' arrest of the CIA inspired me to pledge to join 10 other students in my first act of civil disobedience when the CIA came to Boulder. A week after my decision 478 people were arrested.

Now, as a full-time organizer spreading news of successful organizing to others at campuses around the country, the issue that I see brewing is control of the university. Students are demanding to participate in decisions that affect them. At Johns Hopkins organizers started with the goal of influencing the board of trustees to divest. Last spring a shanty built by the Coalition for a Free South Africa was firebombed by conservative students. The administration responded by banning shanties. This fall the Coalition rebuilt the shanty, 14 of its members went to jail and local television brought the issue of free speech at Johns Hopkins into Baltimore living rooms. That same week, the students won their right to build shanties.

It's not just Johns Hopkins and it's not just divestment. The CIA decided to return to Boulder and were greeted by another protest. When the University of Colorado threatened to suspend seven demonstrators, thousands of students protested. Again, the administration was forced to back down. Similar organizing this winter saved students active at Brown University and Oberlin College.

The future of student activity appears bright. Students are building coalitions on individual campuses to link various social issues. Organizers are reaching beyond their campuses to unite with other students and to play leadership roles in community groups. It's time for more of us to take students seriously.

**Dave West** is an organizer at the National Student Action Center, the support center and clearinghouse for progressive student organizers. Write: NSAC, Box 15599, Washington, DC 20003.

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We should be looking at the leadership and political attitudes among students. Students continue to organize successfully for what they believe and polls continually prove that they are to the left of the general population on issues of civil liberties and international relations.

How can I tell that more students are becoming politically active on the left? When I entered Brandeis University in 1981, the campus was a flashpoint of social rest. I had no interest in politics, so I fit in. Reading the *Boston Globe* depressed me. In a lone moment of organized protest I marched with dozens of classmates to demand tenure for a liberal professor during my second year.

Now in 1986-87 students demanding divestment at Brandeis have committed numerous acts of civil disobedience. Last November more than 1,000 Brandeis students participated in a rally for the same cause. There are also groups that organize around a spectrum of other issues including

women's rights, nuclear disarmament, minority rights and justice in Central America.

Brandeis does have a rich tradition of social criticism and action, but one can find a pattern of rising activity on hundreds of other campuses. New groups are sprouting up. The student organizers I work with report that membership in their groups is growing. Increasingly underclass students, rather than seniors or graduate students, are in leadership positions. Seasoned organizers are pleased to see first-year students come to school looking to get involved.

**High schools, too:** The trend that I find most exciting is high school students getting active. This winter more than 300 Connecticut high school students came to a disarmament conference at Yale University. Students at three high schools in California fasted with people at 39 colleges across the country in the Student Fast for Peace in Nicaragua. San Francisco Bay Area high school students have formed a network called Basic Peace.

Several factors have caused the trend toward more activity. Primarily, the national political pendulum is swinging back to the left. Citizens in general are tired of ineffective, offensive arch conservatism. While interest in the Democratic and Republican parties is shrinking, membership in progressive grassroots organizations is growing. It is true that being on the defensive under Reagan has galvanized the left, and organizations are capitalizing on public attitudes by aggressively canvassing and using direct mail and phone-banking.

In addition, the time that most people associate with resistance to authority—the '60s—is no longer viewed with universal distaste. Corporations are marketing products for nostalgic baby-boomers with the music and images from the '60s. Radio waves are crowded with "classic rock" stations. Abbie Hoffman is back in the news-

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