

SUBJECT TO SENATE APPROVAL

MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SECOND PLENARY SESSION
OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

December 16, 1986

Chair Wedeen called the session together at 6:30 p.m. sharp in Room 1800 at the Graduate School. Present were: Senators Bank, Barbanel, Baumrin, Binder, Bleyman, Bohigian, Boylan, Buianouckas, B. Cohen, M. Cohen, Cooper, Cravzow, Davidson, Depas, Donleavy, Geach, Gluck, Greenbaum, Grossman, Henderson, Huang, Jaffe, Jiji, Karan, Lea, McCall, McCullers, Moyné, Muehlig, Muller, Otte, Picken, Plissner, Riley, Rodriguez, Schlesinger, Seguire, Shaffer, Sohmer, Speidel, Stern, Taylor, Thaxton, Trefousse, Vines, Waldinger, and Zarin; Alternate Senators Blanks, B. Ginsberg, Ladimer, Rowan, and Youkeles. Senators Baxter, Boylan, Segal, Sheridan, Timoni, Yousef, and Zaneteas were excused. Mrs. Ladimer was her husband's guest and Professor Willie, chair of the Nursing Department, Lehman College, the guest of Senator B. Cohen. Other guests were Trustee Everett and President Proshansky. Chairman of the Board Murphy who had intended being present was unable to do so and sent his regrets. Executive Secretary Cantor (PSC) represented President Proshansky who was prevented from attending by a last minute emergency. Trustees Bloom, Howard, Negron, and Rivera also sent their regrets. Chancellor Joseph S. Murphy, Senator Emeritus Valinsky, Senator and Former Executive Committee Member Hunte currently on administrative leave also attended as did UFS Executive Director Ellis.

Trustee Emeritus Wasser, former chairman of the Senate and the only Faculty Trustee Emeritus, was honored by his faculty colleagues at the UFS Annual Dinner Meeting, and he and Mrs. Wasser were the Senate's guests. Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology at the City University of New York, John Jay College of Criminal Justice and The Graduate School and University Center and Mt. Sinai Medical Center Robert J. Lifton was the guest speaker for the occasion.

I. Invocation: Approval of the Proposed Tentative Agenda: Chair Wedeen called for a motion and asked UFS Executive Committee Member and Newsletter Editor Lea (English, Lehman) to so move. Senator Lea offered the following motion:

ON THE OCCASION OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SECOND PLENARY SESSION
OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE, A DINNER MEETING, AN INVOCATION:

Invocations should sing of things grave, solemn, serious--
Of achievements heroic, and of victories hard won--
Of historic fulfillments, feats, exploits delirious--
Of acts pure, great, and noble, expeditiously done.

We might trill of the Minutes furor that erupted
When Doc' Murphy blue-penciled a libelous phrase.
People fussed, frothed, and fumed at a record corrupted--
While Jean Ellis played possum--and recorded the blaze.

Sundry other engagements we strode into, girded:
Central Office appointments, wage increases--and perks.
Teacher Ed', student transfers, adjuncts, audits, and searches,
Budget bugbears, evaluations, Board committees--the works.

Thus we heard from the faithful: Wasser, Picken, Wedeen,
Robust Riley, Campy Cooper, Sassy Sohmer,
Charlotte Muller, Nolan Thaxton, David Alsop--The Lean--
Greenbaum, Binder, Trefousse, King, Zarin, Plissner.

I. Continued:An Invocation (Continued):

Battles won, battles lost, battles still to be waged--
 Gallant struggles that count, for advances they render.
 Warriors all, fresh or frail, tall or short, young or aged--
 Victors all!--Madam Chairman, I move the Agenda.

Madam Chair, I move the Agenda.

Professor Lea's motion was seconded and put to a vote. It was unanimously approved and roundly applauded.

II. Approval of the Minutes of the 151st Plenary Session (November 18, 1986).

Chair Wedeen called for approval of the Minutes and Senator Wasser (English, Staten Island) was recognized for that purpose. She asked him to come to the podium for that purpose.

Senator Wasser said that he was unaccustomed to his role on this historic occasion, that he was more accustomed to call for a motion than to make one but that he considered himself fortunate to have this opportunity and to be celebrating this occasion. He said too that the Senate during his chairmanship had waged many battles and continued to do so, that a battle might be lost, but the body expected to win the war. He then moved approval of the Minutes of the 151st Plenary Session. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

III. Main Course/Communications from the Chair:

Chair Wedeen said that her communications, in written form, were available at the registration table this evening. She then asked that Trustee Emeritus Wasser come forward. She stated that Professor Wasser had chaired the Senate longer than any other chairman in the Senate's history, that his service to the Board and his Trustee colleagues had been acknowledged appropriately but that the Senate had not honored him yet, and that she should now like to do so:

TO HENRY WASSER: A RAP

With you at our helm for the past five years
 Faculty Senators had no fears
 That their cause would be argued without reservation
 Before the CUNY Board and Administration.

A Tiger, relentless you'd prove the point somehow
 And leave the Chancellor and cohorts mopping their brow.
 (Did they really think that when your term expired
 You, Henry Wasser, were going to retire?)

A true evaluation must highlight good and bad
 So we must address ourselves to the single flaw you had
 This blemish, this fault - it does bear repeating
 Affected the length of the UFS Meeting.

III. Main Course: Continued:

You could not temper heated discussion
 For you lacked the necessary "percussion"
 We think it would be rather clever
 To make the adage, "Better late than never".

We now give you the means to control the clamor
 Please accept, with love, this commemorative hammer!

Chair Wedeen then presented Professor Wasser with an engraved gavel on behalf of the Senate. She also thanked Ms. Anne Ellis who had written the "Rap" to accompany the gift, at her request, and acknowledged the Senate's gratitude for all of the help that Anne gave them.

Professor Wasser then thanked his colleagues and said that he wished to share a bit of retrospective with them. He had been in this University for a very long time, he said, a longer time than many of his colleagues might know. He had been a teacher, scholar, held grants that permitted research and other activities abroad-especially in Scandinavia and elsewhere in Western Europe, had been an administrator, and participated in Senate activities. He therefore knew the value of those experiences. Of them all, he thought that none equalled the value of his service as chairman of the Senate. The University was in the business of knowledge but, he thought, that it was through his and the Senate's contribution to the governance structure of the University that he had been able to serve his faculty colleagues in the University - and the University itself - most effectively and personally satisfactorily. He thanked all those present for permitting him to serve in that way and also expressed his appreciation for the Senate's gift.

IV. Chancellor's Report: Chair Wedeen said that the Senate's motion to censure the Chancellor had been withdrawn by its maker because he had subsequently attended the Plenary Sessions and had met with the Executive Committee. She then presented the Chancellor.

In the spirit of the occasion Chancellor Murphy then reported as follows: The withdrawal of the Senate's motion by its maker reminded him of a bit of history during his presidency of Queens College - history that he thought he had shared with some current University Faculty Senators. The Queens Academic Senate had censured him at that time because he had not, as it had requested, circulated a sensitive data card. Therefore the Senate had decided that it was time to recall him and had passed a motion to that effect. He rectified the omission and asked the Queens Senate whether it would not be appropriate now for them to withdraw motion. The response was it is correct that you have not now done anything to merit the motion but the Queens Senate suspects that there will come another time when you do and therefore the Senate will let it stand. Henry Wasser, he continued, therefore lives out a piece of my life and serves as my conscience. I thank him because I appreciate that service and look forward to working with him in other roles in the University and to continuing to work with the Senate.

Chair Wedeen said that contrary to custom there would not be a question period on the Chancellor's report this evening.

She noted also the presence at the dinner of Executive Director Cantor, PSC,

who represented President Polishook, unexpectedly called away. Chair Wedeen noted also the presence of Vice-Chairperson Edith Everett of the Board of Trustees. Finally, she explained that Chairman Murphy who had planned to deliver the Board's greetings on behalf of his colleagues, especially because of the honor being rendered Henry Wasser, was unable to be present. A death interfered with these plans.

V. Dessert/Guest Lecturer: Distinguished Professor Robert J. Lifton -"Nazi Doctors, Psychology, and Evil": Chair Wedeen then introduced Executive Committee member and 'resident Senate historian' Sandi Cooper to present Professor Lifton:

"The annual dinner meeting of the University Faculty Senate provides us with a happy occasion where we can celebrate our collegiality, for a change. Here we can demonstrate that our purpose in life is not merely to trip up, upstage and even threaten censure on administrators who move in on our turf. We can unroll and show off that turf.

"For faculty, this evening is a chance to find out what has been going on at sister campuses. About two years ago, John Jay College and Mt. Sinai captured Robert Jay Lifton and appointed him Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology. Barely was he installed in his office in the South Hall of John Jay when it was clear that a new presence had arrived. Bob Lifton, a whirl of inspirational energy, unpacked his cartons from Yale and opened a new center for the study of violence. From the start, this Center was infused with an innovative and--to some--controversial vision. Participants in the conferences, seminars and plain old conversations organized around guest speakers are invited to deal with the nature of violence as a phenomenon which moves on a continuum that starts in the self and the household, and flows to international cabinets of strategic planners who plot forms of planetary annihilation. Those who do not grasp the similarities among forms of violence and those for whom the social sciences must be packaged strictly in positivistic parameters would only benefit from a Lifton seminar. Faculty from CUNY and elsewhere who have come to share in the work of the Center bring multi-disciplinary perspectives to an open-minded exploration of the problems of force and violence permeating groups, sexes, cultures, nations and histories. There is no doubt that CUNY has already benefited significantly from the energies liberated with Bob Lifton's arrival.

"A psychiatrist by training, Bob Lifton served in the Air Force in Japan and Korea during the Korean War. Then, back in civilian life, he went to Harvard as a Research Associate in Psychiatry where he launched one of the more productive careers in contemporary American higher education. In the last generation, Bob Lifton has become one of the best known scholars in the western world. In 1969 his now famous work--Death in Life, Survivors of Hiroshima--won the National Book Award. It contributed to slicing through the loud silence which had concealed the long term effects of the uses of the atomic bomb in August, 1945. More than any other book, this work tore away the veils befogging the American conscience and consciousness regarding the use of nuclear weapons. Lifton was among the first to force us to deal with the processes of psychic numbing that permit us to live under the shadow of nuclear annihilation.

"During the 1970's, this prolific and thoughtful writer produced shelves of scholarship. The range of his interests normally embrace areas addressed by two or three different university departments. There is a work on Mao Tse-Tung and the cultural revolution; there are several books and anthologies on war and peace issues as well as discussions of the possible utility of nuclear weapons as a usable form of defense; there is a recent study on the probable medical results of nuclear war. In the 60's, before it was fashionable, Bob Lifton even published a work on the American woman. Amid all this scholarship, he has even put out two books of cartoons with birds as central characters. Throughout this compendium of achievements lay a

unitary vision which has helped to fashion a brand new sub-section of history-- the creation of psychohistory, an area now attracting talented practitioners around this country. Bob Lifton has been one of its most successful pioneers.

"Most recently, you read reviews of his latest work, a provocative and important study of the Nazi doctors who created a new form of medical research that most of us would call torture. Tonight we have the pleasure of hearing Bob Lifton on the subject of Nazi doctors in the Holocaust. You will find that despite his generation-long specialization in forms of evil, he is one of the most sociable and affable personalities in the extended CUNY community. Let us welcome our new colleague, Robert Jay Lifton."

Professor Lifton acknowledged the "lovely, if excessive, introduction" and indicated that it reminded him of his bird cartoons that he drew to remain sane doing all the grim things that he did because he thought one needed mechanisms to avoid believing such introductions. He further indicated that this was a return for him in a personal sense because his father had graduated from City College with the class of 1918 and it had been his salvation and rescue from poverty and into knowledge and all sorts of possibilities. Therefore, although he had himself spent a quarter of a century touring the Ivy League, this was a return.

Professor Lifton then spoke on his subject, Nazi doctors, psychology, and evil, and explained the relationship among them based on the conclusions he had reached as a result of numerous case studies derived from practitioners, survivors, and observers of the war time Auschwitz. Following his presentation, he responded to many questions from Senators, Alternate Senators, and Guests. [A transcript of Professor Lifton's presentation and the discussion that followed will be circulated in January following the Holiday recess. Since the transcript may not be available in time for Senate review prior to the January meeting, the other items on the agenda precede the lecturer. Executive Director, University Faculty Senate.]

Chair Wedeen thanked Professor Lifton for his thought-provoking lecture and expressed the hope that he continue to enliven the intellectual climate of the City University.

VI. New Business: There was no new business.

Noting that there was no new business, Chair Wedeen wished all a good holiday and called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was duly made and the session adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ellis
Executive Director