

**Still We Speak**  
**Committee for First Amendment Rights in New York City**

www.stillwespeak.org

email: info@stillwespeak.org

For Immediate Release  
Tuesday, May 24, 2005

Contact: Judy Ross 917-405-1544

***Rally to Protect Free Speech and Decry First Amendment Abuses  
in New York City***

*What: Speak out to for 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment rights in New York City.*

*When: Friday, May 27, 2005, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.*

*Where: Union Square Park, South Plaza, 14<sup>th</sup> St. and Broadway, Manhattan*

**New York, NY** - New Yorkers are concerned that their ability to exercise their 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment freedoms is subject to increasing control, and in some cases, unprecedented suppression. The NYPD continues to harass and arrest cyclists during group rides like Critical Mass and has recently denied and even revoked permits for peaceful rallies, such as those for anti-war events. Now the city is proposing stringent limits on the number of politically-oriented parades on Fifth Ave and gatherings in Central Park.

The ad hoc committee for the Still We Speak rally will address these issues at its second speak out on Friday, May 27, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at the south side of Union Square, 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway.

Speakers include, among others, New York City Councilmember Hon. Gail Brewer, civil rights attorney Norman Siegel and Democratic state committeewoman Trudy Mason. Performers include Reverend Billy and the Stop Shopping Gospel Choir and the Rude Mechanical Orchestra.

At the end of the rally, marchers will hit the sidewalks and head out of Union Square as they begin their peaceful "ride" through Manhattan. It will be a festive celebration of freedom to assemble complete with symbolic "art" bicycles created by local artists of the Not an Alternative Production Company.

Barbara Ross, a 41-year-old human resources manager, is one of the many New Yorkers who plan to cheer on the start of the Critical Mass ride. "The NYPD has arrested me twice and confiscated my bicycle three times for the so-called-crime of bicycling without a permit. Will the NYPD now arrest me for walking with a cardboard bicycle?"

Madeline Nelson, a corporate communications director, is also concerned about New York City's infringement on the people's right to dissent as well as the vast amount of resources spent by the NYPD to harass activities protected by the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment. "The last Friday of every month, the NYPD turns Union Square

Park into a prison yard," Nelson said. "They line the park and surrounding streets with scores of police vehicles and hundreds of uniformed and undercover cops waiting to scoop up anyone who happens to be there. Who is authorizing the use of these taxpayer resources to suppress a public gathering?"

For more information, please visit [www.stillwespeak.org](http://www.stillwespeak.org).

**###**