



Volume 27 Fall no. 2, 2015



A GENEALOGY of VIOLENCE

Understanding the Massacre in Ankara

pg.23



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advocate

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dadland Maye

In the last editorial, I questioned President Chase Robinson's and the English department's commitment to resisting institutional and careerist strategies that profit from trafficking in blackness. I mentioned the names of the Doctoral Student Council (DSC) members in order that our community recognize and appreciate the student laborers in the CUNY field. I introduced myself by referring to the baggage and beauties that cultivate my diverse identities and their relationship to my editorial approach. I referred to a featured article that discussed attitudes to sexual harassment on campus. I encouraged the submission of articles rather than support judgmental and non-proactive practices. Certainly, I would like to more deeply address some of those issues. Yet the future has to reflect a diversity of issues out of awareness that it appears inequitable to solely vocalize concerns around a select number of issues.

Indeed I struggle with the questions of what diverse themes, voice/s, and writing structure should occupy this privileged space. No doubt, the editorial's third-page position in the *Advocate's* print copy and its marked placement on the website's menu bar denote efforts to prioritize its significance. Like most other publications, the *Advocate* understands that the editorial, as a substantive analytic genre, is also a one-stop information shop for some readers who rely on the publication's expertise, credibility, and integrity to present them with an astute, informed discourse. Bearing this amazing burden that ensures that this small space provides for the needs of diverse readers, I worry whether the editorial choices involved in such an endeavor truly align with the paper's goals. Specifically, this concern emerges out of the need to reassure certain readers of the consciousness and care woven into this textual production—particularly those who might

speculate that the editorial does not prioritize their issues or that it is not consistent in returning to issues previously addressed. For this issue, therefore, the limited space sheds light on a variety of concerns, such as the need to participate in pressing political conversations in order to locate the Graduate Center's successes and struggles within a global framework.

Importantly, it is the paper's goal to regularly feature transnational conversations that usually occupy the peripheries of US media discourse. In deference to that need, this issue features Eylül Fidan Akinci's "A Genealogy of Violence in Turkey," a report on the ongoing struggles against an oppressive regime in Turkey. The problematic political framework the article exposes reminds us to never grow overly comfortable with those we empower to serve us because histories have shown how the entrusted often erect the greatest barriers to success. In consideration of this recurrent subjugation of the

EDITOR'S NOTE

people's interests by the empowered, I leave it you to contemplate on the reasonableness of drawing contrasts to the events of 4 November, which led to the unfair arrest of several dozen faculty members. The protest responded to the demands of the Professional Staff Congress' (PSC's) 27,000 membership that has been denied a contract since 2010. Several hundred faculty and staff members gathered outside 205 East 42nd Street, CUNY central office. PSC President Barbara Bowen stood among those arrested with signs demanding, "Stop the War on CUNY," "CUNY Needs a Raise," and "No More Excuses, Chancellor Milliken."


Further addressing university concerns that need the chancellor's attention, Todd Fine's letter to Chancellor James Milliken condemns the surveillance practices of the New York Police Department targeting Muslim students in CUNY. The current and past chancellors have tacitly endorsed these troubling practices. To date, more than one hundred CUNY faculty members have supported Fine's letter as signatories. While considering Fine's letter, the Chancellor should also take note of Jennifer Tang's letter, which calls attention to the learning-access disparities between disabled and able-bodied students.

Sustaining the focus on the inner-workings of the university, it is necessary to return to the highlights of the last DSC meeting

and reflect on the concerns raised by its Executive Committee in discussions with the administration. These include a space for student prayer and meditation and more gender-neutral bathrooms, consequences of the budget shortfall on academic affairs and non-academic services, possible tuition remissions, exploring whether to increase the number of Master's students or the tuition for out-of-state students, instituting a disability services office, and funding issues that affect the Dean K. Harrison awards, GTFs, and undocumented students.

In addition to the focus on the role of the administration in enabling and disabling student lives, it is also imperative that we foreground the increasing student concerns about a critical institutional problem – the general inaccessibility of many faculty members. From engaging students' emails and private conversations, it has become clearer that faculty inaccessibility is one of the most serious issues confronting students. This is also true of many research universities, but it doesn't mean it should be accepted at the Graduate Center. Students complain that certain faculty members rarely return emails, they do not thoroughly read dissertation chapters, and they are inaccessible during office hours. Their failure to effectively mentor students has so often disrupted students' graduation goals and emotional wellbeing. Yet, any discussion on the students' failure to graduate

within a certain time frame has narrowly focused on the administration's ineffectiveness in securing economic opportunities. The bulk of concerns point towards what is widely known but rarely noted in open forums, that students, in many cases, face more roadblocks from the faculty mentoring process than from the administration itself.

Yet, while the problem of faculty inaccessibility is a critical one, many students accept that it is too risky to engage with integrity—that is, with the same strategies used to confront the administration. This is particularly the case when considering that the faculty names most floated around are among the most distinguished at the Graduate Center. At the same time, one should bear in mind that some of these faculty laborers secure their prominent status from working like mules for a system that penalizes those who prioritize student-service duties. In other words, names mentioned of some of the most appreciated advisors and mentors included faculty members who do not boast of the most distinguished departmental profiles. As I close, I wish to encourage you to submit articles that further examine the problem. While the paper doesn't glorify anonymity, it will consider publishing anonymous writers in this case. However, such writers—whether Graduate Center students, faculty, or staff—must identify themselves to the editorial team. 

PSC calls for Disruptive Action and Strike Authorization Vote

The Professional Staff Congress, the union that represents over 27,000 CUNY faculty and staff, has called for a disruptive mass action rally at CUNY's central office on 42nd street on 4 November to support the PSC team as it sits down for another round of negotiations with the CUNY management. This rally is one of a series of mass actions planned by the PSC in its "escalation" of the campaign to push for a fair settlement of a contract that has been long overdue.


On 1 October, the morning of the first CUNY board meeting of the year, hundreds of PSC members gathered outside Chancellor Milliken's apartment for a "wake-up call" protest. Many professors turned up dressed in academic robes and sounded off alarm clocks, pots and pans. The protestors held up picket signs that read "No more excuses, Chancellor Milliken" and "6 years

without a raise," as they chanted, "No contract, no peace," and "Education is a Right! Fight, Fight, Fight!"

In addition, the PSC also held a series of teach-ins at its various chapters over this month to raise awareness of the state of CUNY funding, the increases in student tuition, and the larger impact of these austerity measures on the quality of education. These teach-in sessions are a means to encourage faculty across the various CUNY colleges to find pedagogically suitable ways to discuss the funding crisis and the need for a fair contract in classrooms.

The Graduate Center chapter of the PSC, in a meeting on 20 October, seriously discussed the possibility of a strike authorization vote. A strike authorization vote is not a vote to strike, which is illegal and penalized in New York state under the Taylor Law. It is rather a vote to authorize

the union's Executive Council to call a strike if necessary. Barbara Bowen, the President of the PSC, in a letter from 15 October, asserts that, "A strike authorization vote is not a step the union leadership takes lightly, even though it is many steps away from actually calling a strike." This issue, along with the details of the Taylor Law, will be tabled for discussion in the next PSC mass meeting on 19 November.

The disruptive action scheduled for 4 November, which itself is legal, will be executed solely by PSC members who have been training in practices of "non-violent disruptive protest," and will risk arrest with their participation. The PSC, however, encourages people to attend the rally in solidarity, to be witness to the protest, which in itself does not entail a risk of arrest. 



WAKE UP CHANCELLOR MILLIKEN!


By Andrew Caringi

PSC Union President Barbara Bowen leads CUNY faculty and staff at a protest this past month as they call for an end to the contract dispute that has left them without raises for six years.

After six years of no raises, CUNY professors and staff delivered a wake-up call to university chancellor James B. Milliken, protesting in the early hours of 1 October 2015 in front of his \$18,000 per month apartment, paid for by the university.

Over the past year CUNY professors and staff have been out in the streets protesting their five-year contract dispute with the university. With 83 percent of the city's unions under contract, PSC-CUNY is left as the largest union without a contract, leaving 5,846 employees without scheduled raises.

In a recent email to CUNY professors and staff, PSC President Barbara Bowen told union members that they are prepared to strike if CUNY management fails to put a reasonable offer on the bargaining table.

"We're prepared to escalate, and escalate and escalate," says Bowen, whose next protest was planned for 4 November 2015. "At this point we feel we are going to have to take an action that is more disruptive, even unpermitted, to produce an offer." 

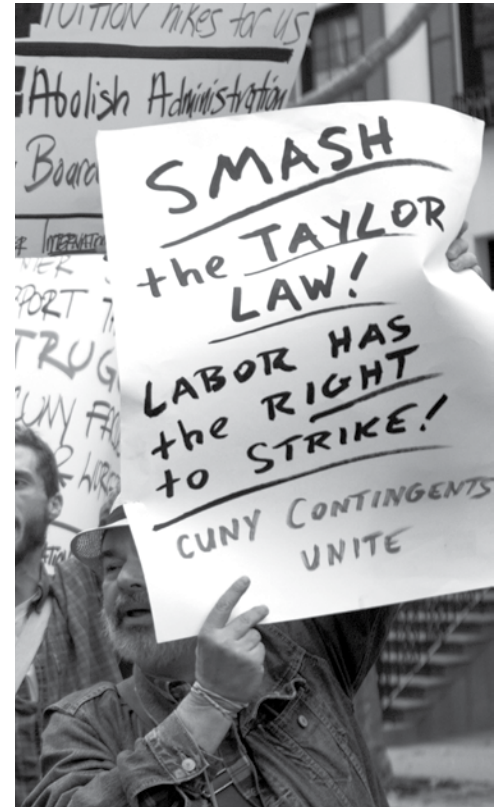


CUNY professors and staff hold union-made signs calling for a resolution to the five-year contract dispute



LEFT, protestors take a photo with their union-made signs and alarm clocks, telling the Chancellor to wake up and end the five-year contract dispute.

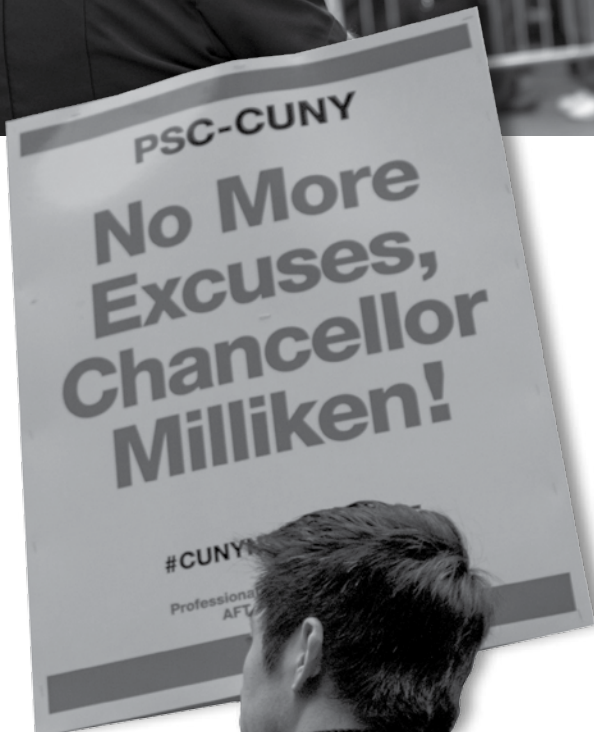
BELOW, PSC Union members want an end to the Taylor Law, which makes strikes and work stoppages illegal in New York State.



BELOW, CUNY professors and staff protest in front of Chancellor Milliken's \$18,000 per month apartment, which is paid for by the university.



ABOVE, NYPD officers maintain a perimeter around the entrance to Chancellor Milliken's apartment.



What the Union Wants:

PSC CUNY's Contract Demands

Competitive Compensation

Salary Increases: All members shall receive per annum across-the-board salary increases, compounded.

Movement in Steps: For full-time employees, the five-year and seven-year steps shall be converted to one-year steps. For adjunct and hourly employees, movement from the penultimate and antepenultimate steps will take place after one year.

Movement toward Adjunct Salary Parity: The University shall make substantial, measurable progress toward pay parity for part-time teaching adjuncts, based on proportional parity with the full-time Lecturer title, through one or a combination of the following measures: increased hourly pay, longevity increments, an initiative for conversion of teaching adjuncts who have met appropriate eligibility requirements to full-time positions.

Regularize Salary Schedules: A schedule of salary steps shall be introduced for Research Associates, CUNY Law School full-time and part-time faculty (with the exception of Distinguished Lecturer-Law School); full-time Medical professor title employees (with the exception of Distinguished Lecturer, Medical Series), and for the Medical Lecturer position.

Salary Differential for College Laboratory Technicians and Assistants to HEO: The salary differential for College Laboratory Technician series employees and Assistants to HEO who have earned Master's or doctoral degrees from an accredited institution in a field related to their job duties shall be increased.

Nighttime, Weekend and "Stand By" Differentials: Employees in the Higher Education Officer series, the College Laboratory Technician series and the Registrar series who are assigned, as part of their scheduled workweek, to work on Saturday or Sunday or to work later than 5:00 p.m. on a weekday shall receive a pay differential for the hours assigned outside of normal business hours. Employees in the titles above who are required to remain on standby or on-call status for hours in addition to their normal workweek shall receive appropriate additional compensation.

New Full-Time Faculty: New full-time faculty members whose initial appointment is on September 1 of any given year shall be placed on payroll on August 1 of that year in order to enable them to complete the advance preparation required for assuming a new faculty position. New full-time faculty whose teaching appointment begins on February 1 of any given year shall be placed on payroll on January 1 of that year.

Welfare Fund Enhancements and Equity in Adjunct Health Insurance: There shall be a substantial increase in contributions to the PSC/CUNY Welfare Fund for all active and retired members of the bargaining unit. Eligible part-time instructional staff members shall be included in the New York City Health Benefits Program.

Educational Opportunity Centers: Salary parity with the other units of the City University in comparable positions shall be maintained. The Supplemental Agreement on Educational Opportunity Centers shall be amended to improve certain working conditions and benefits.

Hunter Campus Schools: Improvements shall be made in the terms and conditions of the employees in the bargaining unit at the Hunter Campus Schools, including through enhancing the salary for Assistant Teachers.

Pension Equity: The University shall provide part-time instructional staff with the option to participate in the Optional Retirement Programs.

CLIP Instructors: Teachers in the CUNY Language Immersion Program shall be placed in full-time positions, on the appropriate salary schedule, with all the rights and benefits of full-time employees.

Workloads that Support Quality Education

Full-Time Faculty Workload: The maximum teaching load for full-time faculty at all colleges shall be reduced by three teaching contact hour credits annually.

Class Size: When the University violates departmental class size limits without written consent of the instructor and the department chair, full-time instructors shall be credited equivalent to the number of teaching contact hours of the course; part-time instructors shall receive equivalent compensation.

Support for Student Mentoring: Full-time faculty who participate in a student-mentoring program shall receive contact hour credits for mentoring five students per semester.

Library Faculty: All Library faculty shall have the same number of annual leave days as other full-time faculty.

Additional Support for Department Chairs: Department chairs and, where appropriate, their deputies, shall receive additional support through provision of one or a combination of the following: additional reassigned time, additional financial compensation, and additional access to support personnel.

Educational Technology and Distance Learning: Instructional staff shall receive compensation for the professional development, course development and additional instructional time that is required by the use of Educational Technology and Distance Learning. Instructional staff shall have the right to: Ownership of their work, Control of the rebroadcast of their work, Adequate support to deliver course content, Selection of the teaching platform for their work. Continued and expanded use of University resources to create and support the CUNY Academic Commons and other faculty driven endeavors.

Equity in Teaching Load at New York City College of Technology: The parties shall complete their negotiations to identify funding to reduce the full-time professorial teaching load at New York City College of Technology to parity with other four-year CUNY colleges: 21 hours.

**Approved by
the PSC Delegate Assembly**

Demands most likely to affect students at the Graduate Center are highlighted in black.

Workforce Stability and Advancement

System of Advancement for HEO Series

Employees: A system enabling advancement for HEO-series employees shall be introduced.

HEO Classification and Appointment: The reclassification procedures shall be improved, to create greater fairness and transparency. A Certificate of Continual Administrative Service shall be granted to HEO-series employees after the fifth year of service; the first appointment for HEO-series employees shall be a one-year appointment, and the second and third reappointments shall be two-year appointments.

Adjunct Workforce Stability: A system of job stability for teaching adjuncts shall be introduced, such that adjuncts earn a Certificate of Continuous Employment after teaching an average of twelve contact teaching hours a year in the same department in any five of the previous seven years, and successfully undergoing a review by the department. An adjunct who has achieved a CCE shall be entitled to teach a minimum of six contact teaching hours per semester and would not be subject to non-reappointment, except for just cause.

Support for an Academic Community

Tuition Waivers: Children and stepchildren of full-time members of the instructional staff shall be granted tuition waivers for undergraduate courses at CUNY. The eligibility requirement for tuition waivers for teaching adjuncts shall be reduced from ten semesters to six, and may be established through service CUNY-wide. Non-teaching adjuncts who have worked at least six hours per week at the same college for six consecutive semesters (not including the summer session), and who have been appointed to work at least six hours per week in a fall or spring semester shall be granted tuition waivers for up to one course that semester.

Paid Parental Leave: The pilot program for paid parental leave shall be established as a permanent program and enhanced.

PSC-CUNY Awards: The contribution to the PSC-CUNY Awards program shall be increased by at least \$500,000.

Increasing Racial, Ethnic and Gender

Diversity: A Diverse Faculty Recruitment and Retention Fund of \$500,000 shall be established to assist academic departments in recruiting and retaining full-time faculty from under-represented groups, bringing candidates from such groups to campus, and undertaking other initiatives to increase diversity.

Improved Access to Childcare and Housing:

A labor/management task force shall be formed to address the urgent need to provide improved access to affordable housing in the New York City area, especially for new members of the faculty and staff, and access to high-quality, affordable childcare for all relevant members of the bargaining unit.

Adjunct Professional Development Fund: The Adjunct Professional Development Fund shall be made permanent, supported by recurring funds; and non-teaching adjuncts who meet eligibility requirements agreed to by the parties shall be entitled to apply for grants from the Fund.

Health and Safety: The City University shall meet the following requirements: furnish each employee a place of employment free conditions that interfere with teaching and learning or with the ability to perform assigned duties; and require that new construction and large renovation projects conform to ASHRAE standards. Further the City University shall be required to establish campus health and safety committees at each college, and to establish the requirement that the college president or highest college official with responsibility for health and safety meet twice each semester with the campus committee.

Bereavement Leave: All full-time instructional staff members shall be entitled to five days of paid bereavement leave for a death in the immediate family (defined as spouse, domestic partner, parent, stepparent, child, stepchild, sibling, grandparent or grandchild). In the case of bereavement leave for a death in the immediate family, the leave provided for part-time instructional staff named in Article 14.8 shall be available without the need for a request.

Contract demands continued...

Equity, Enhancements, Grievance and Discipline

Graduate Employees: The University shall support the Union's effort to achieve improvements in the benefits available to graduate employees under NYSSHIP. Graduate Assistants shall receive appropriate University-wide credit toward movement in salary schedule when they are appointed to adjunct positions. A labor/management committee shall be formed to explore ways of enhancing opportunities for full-time faculty appointments for recipients of the Ph.D. degree from CUNY, especially for Ph.D. recipients from underrepresented racial, ethnic and gender groups.

Part-Time Instructional Staff: Teaching adjuncts who have taught for at least five of the preceding seven semesters, and non-teaching adjuncts who have been appointed for at least six hours per week during five of the preceding seven semesters, shall accrue sick leave. An employee currently serving in a Substitute title who is subsequently appointed to an adjunct title shall receive written notice of appointment on the same schedule as an employee currently serving in an adjunct title. The University shall provide the first paycheck of the semester for part-time instructional staff no later than three weeks after the first day of the semester; employees for whom a paycheck is not provided by the paycheck date shall receive an immediate advance of 80 percent of the gross salary due on the paycheck date and a similar advance for any subsequent period or periods for which paychecks are not provided. The balance due to the employee for each pay period shall be included in the first regular paycheck.

Continuing Education Teachers: The Supplemental Agreement on Continuing Education shall be amended to include: provisions for regular observations and evaluations of Continuing Education faculty, consistent with Articles 18 and 19 of the Agreement; provisions for a grievance/arbitration procedure consistent with Article 20 of the Agreement.

Increased Reassigned Time for Union Work:

The PSC shall be granted reassigned time for negotiation of successor agreements, in addition to the reassigned time for handling of grievances and implementation of this Agreement.

Appointment, Evaluation, Grievance and Discipline:

Appointment and Non-Reappointment: The following shall be added to both Article 9.9 and Article 9.10: "If after ten (10) calendar days, as above, the written statement of reasons has not been furnished to the affected employee, the employee shall be deemed reappointed for one year." The time bar to complaint regarding non-compliance under 18.2(b)2.b) or c) and 18.3 shall be removed by deleting the third sentence of Article 18.2(b)2.d) and the third sentence of Article 18.3(d). Article 20.4 shall be amended to allow 60 working days to file a grievance. If the University fails to render a Step One or Step Two grievance decision within the contractual time limit, the grievance shall be deemed sustained. A new section, 20.9, shall be added: "In all investigative circumstances and any situations that could reasonably lead to future discipline, employees must be told of their rights to union representation." The following shall be deleted from Article 21: "staff in HEO series titles shall be subject to discharge as provided in Article 21.9," and all of 21.9 shall be deleted. The following shall be added, either to 21.1, or as a new section, 21.14: "Any and all actions resulting from any and all internal investigations pursuant to any University policy must proceed through Article 21, and, in all investigative circumstances and any situations that could reasonably lead to future discipline, employees must be told of their rights to union representation." **a**

Not a Woman's Issue

Catherine Roberts

I am tired of being told to act like a man.

Last month, I attended a panel at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism about women in media. The event was billed as "Power, Pay and Parity: Women Leaders Discuss Instituting Equality." This is a welcome topic indeed. Studies show that women are underrepresented in newsrooms and media leadership, despite making up a majority of journalism and communications college students. This is true of CUNY as well — my class, which will graduate in 2015, is 58 percent female. As a woman nearing graduation from

journalism school, this is one of many worries that plague me as I do my work and search for jobs.

The panel consisted of three women who've worked for some of the most venerable newsrooms in the country: *National Geographic*, *Bloomberg*, *The Miami Herald*, *People*, *NPR*, and *the Takeaway*, to name only a few. I hoped to be inspired. And at moments, I was. The panelists spent time discussing how to hire diverse talent, and the importance of a diverse staff. Their stance was unequivocal: Diverse newsrooms produce better journalism. It was also heartening to hear these women talking

"The message to women seeking equal treatment with (and by) their male colleagues [is] consistent: Be more aggressive ... 'Act like you're a guy.'"

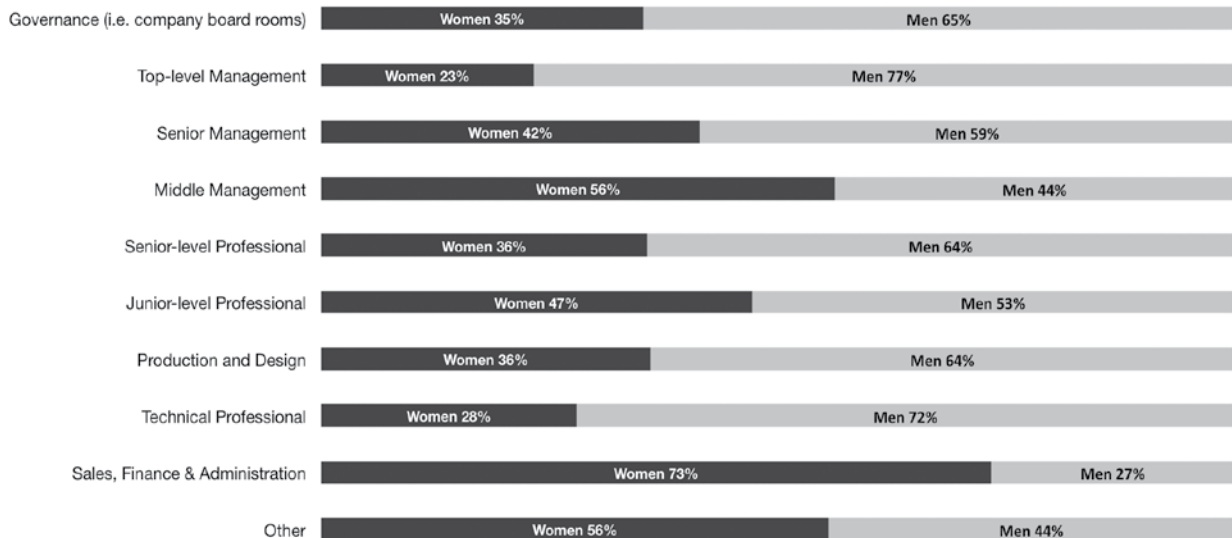
about doing away with unpaid internships. Offering an internship without pay limits the applicant pool to only those who can afford to live without an income in a city like New York. To nurture a generation of journalists who come from all different races, ethnicities, genders and orientations, we must ensure that entry-level experience is available to all. That means paying interns.

Despite these moments, I was disappointed by the overall tone of the event. While there was discussion of institutional sexism and racism and the ways in which employers react differently to women asking for raises, little was said about how

to address these systemic problems. Instead, the majority of the conversation focused on the confidence gap that exists between men and women in the workplace. The panelists offered a lot of advice, but it mainly fell into one category. The message to women seeking equal treatment with (and by) their male colleagues was consistent: Be more aggressive. Demand more. You don't know how to negotiate; that's why you get paid less. One of the panelists said, "Act like you are a guy."

This is frustrating on a number of levels. Let's begin with two. First, professional women face a catch-22 between being

passive and accepting less compensation or success in order to be perceived as "likeable," and being aggressive or demanding, and thus be perceived as a bitch. The Internet offers no shortage of think-pieces on the subject. To be fair to the panelists, the confidence gap certainly exists. I feel it in myself all the time. I recognize the need to grow tough skin and to set less store by what others say about you. But this ought not be the end of the discussion. People who work in an environment in which women face the nice-or-bitchy paradigm should work to change it. It cannot be only women doing that work. It cannot be only women




Source: *Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media*, published by the International Women's Media Foundation in 2011. The study includes data from 10 newspapers, 3 television stations, and 1 radio station, for a total of around 3000 employees (1,703 men and 1,232 women).

having this discussion. Therein lies my second frustration. At this event, it was almost entirely women who showed up to listen. In a room of probably more than fifty people, fewer than five were men. I saw none of my classmates and none of my professors. These problems are not unique to media. Glass ceilings and the gender pay gap exist in many fields, including academia. I would be surprised if the same types of gender differences did not exist among attendees of other Graduate Center events.

There are ways to address this, at an institutional level, or at least at the level of the classroom. During my first semester, one of our professors required us to attend an evening panel, and to write a short article based on the ideas discussed. I suggest that professors, journalism or otherwise, do something similar for these events, whether they're about gender, race, sexual orientation, or any other underrepresented group or justice issue. To my fellow classmates who did not attend the panel: I get it. Some of

you were actually in class at the time. Outside of class time, we are incredibly busy. That's why in the journalism school, our professors, especially in the first semester Craft of Reporting class, should replace one of their usual assignments with this. Make us go to the event. Make us write a story about it. There's an extra advantage to this plan for journalists. When you report on an event, you engage with it more deeply than when you're just an attendee. You must pay attention the entire time and be on the lookout for the most critical tidbits to synthesize into an article. Reporting is a job in which a primary side effect is that you are forced to learn and absorb a lot of fascinating information.

To be fair to my professors, this event was ticketed, and so only a limited number of people could attend. As one of my professors pointed out to me, if this had been assigned to fifteen students of the journalism school, it might have prevented others from attending, people who wanted and needed to hear

this discussion. Still, I have to ask myself why so few men felt that this was an important message that they should be in the room to hear. As a white woman, I realize I am not exempt from these responsibilities. I should certainly attend more of the school's functions that have a racial focus. I also think the school should require anti-racism training, but that is a subject for another article. As I commit to better educating myself about the challenges of other marginalized groups and how I can fight systemic oppression, I hope that my colleagues, and my school, will do the same. 

Get in **TOUCH** with Alumni

The Alumni-Engagement & Fundraising Commission (AFC) works to increase outreach with GC alumni and generate fundraising opportunities for student-led activities and initiatives.

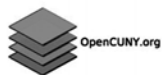
Contact email: afc.cunydscc@gmail.com



"I believe in open access, open data, and open knowledge, and OpenCUNY makes all of these practices possible."

Jen Jack Gieseeking
PhD, Environmental Psychology
Postdoctoral Fellow, Bowdoin College

Why Do *you* Love
OpenCUNY?



Chancellor James B. Milliken
205 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

c/o Jennifer Tang
Psychology Program
The Graduate Center
365 Fifth Avenue, Room 5111
New York, NY 10016

3 November 2015

Dear Chancellor Milliken,

It was wonderful to meet you on Friday at the University Student Senate awards dinner and have the opportunity to bring up an issue that I have been advocating for a couple of years. I am a PhD candidate in the Environmental Psychology program at the Graduate Center. I am also a student with a disability.

When I matriculated at the Graduate Center, Sharon Lerner at the Student Affairs office was able to connect me with other students who showed me how to use some of the technologies available at the Graduate Center. While this has been very helpful, the technology can only be accessed and utilized on the computers at the Graduate Center. Students with disabilities, especially those with mobility issues, at times find it difficult to get out of bed, let alone to get to Midtown Manhattan. When the tools that we need to do our work are anchored to the Graduate Center, this slows down our work.

I have requested and advocated for personal, home-use versions of these technologies so that students with disabilities have the tools they need to complete their degrees as an accommodation to the challenges they face in getting to the Graduate Center. When I brought this issue up to Ms. Lerner, she explained to me that there is not enough funding to be able to provide home-use versions to students, that "if we buy it for one student we would have to buy it for all students." I do not know how many students are requesting assistive technology to be used away from the Graduate Center, as this is confidential information, but this is auxiliary to the matter at hand.

Accommodations, such as assistive technology, are a matter of equity of opportunity and social justice. We encourage students to progress diligently through their programs, and support all students with due regard to their capacities. Providing students with disabilities the tools that they need without hedging on whether they are able to get to the Graduate Center conforms with the spirit of supporting student success without discrimination. I ask that you look into the matter of financial resources for meeting the needs of students with disabilities, specifically at the matter of assistive technology funding for off-campus use, and see to it that the necessary funds are made available so that students with disabilities will be accommodated.

Best regards,

Jennifer Tang

Jennifer Tang, M.A., M.Phil.

c/o Todd Fine
History Program
The Graduate Center
365 Fifth Avenue, Room 5111
New York, NY 10016

Chancellor James B. Milliken
205 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

November 4, 2015

Dear Chancellor James B. Milliken,

As faculty, staff, and students of the City University of New York, we demand that you work to end the New York Police Department's apparent practice of sending spies to monitor Muslims at CUNY institutions. An investigative report by the Gothamist of October 29, 2015 reveals that this practice may be continuing under the administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio. CUNY alumni have discovered that an undercover officer known as "Melike Ser" frequently attended activities of the Islamic Society student organization at Brooklyn College over several years – staging a false conversion to Islam, becoming intimate with the group's membership, and attempting to elicit incriminating statements of support for terrorism. They report seeing her at other events connected to Islam in the city (including at John Jay College) as recently as December 2014.

In 1992, CUNY Chancellor W. Ann Richards signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the NYPD that allowed the police to enter CUNY campuses in non-emergency circumstances only with the permission of CUNY officials. The NYPD's apparent practice of sending undercover agents to gain the trust of students makes a mockery of this agreement. Such surveillance chills the atmosphere of free speech and open dialogue that educational institutions require, and it violates constitutional protections that require specific search warrants.

You must formally state your opposition to these operations and work actively to stop them. Their continuation will be a great stain on the university.

Sincerely,

Todd Fine

[Full list of signatories is available on the Advocate's website]

Raising the Flag of Palestine

Denise Rivera

You can see it during the World Cup games and Independence Day parades—events that feature people's smiles: colors wrapped around bodies; eyes and smiles carrying the sweetness of nostalgia; excitement reflecting the pride of history as captured in the insignias of a symbol—a Flag. So imagine one with horizontal white and blue stripes with the Star of David in the middle, a representation of the sovereignty and nation of Israel. This flag also serves as an emblem for other nations to identify Israel. Now imagine another beautiful flag with horizontal black, white, and green stripes with a red triangle based at the hoist. At first glance, one might think it is the flag of Jordan. But this flag is missing the seven-pointed white star. It is the Palestinian flag. And like Palestine itself, this flag is controversial.

On 10 September, 2015, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution permitting the hoisting of the Palestinian flag at the UN Headquarters, with 119 countries voting in favor, eight countries against, and forty-five abstentions. Australia, Canada, Israel, and the United States were among the countries that voted against this initiative. Although Palestine does not have an official statehood, it received non-member observer status at the UN General Assembly and has been recently inducted as a voting member of the International Criminal Court. Membership in this international organization and court gives Palestine a stronger platform to address international disputes. Expectedly, hoisting the Palestinian flag at the UN Headquarters has produced mixed reactions. To some, this was a good way to

demonstrate to the Palestinians that their plight was not invisible, and that the international community supported their demand for independence and statehood. To others, this incentive was a meager substitute for the more pressing Palestinian demands for a resolution of the rampant human rights violations and crippling economic conditions.

The Palestinian flag was raised for the first time at the UN Headquarters on 30 September, 2015. This event was broadcasted and shown at the Yasser Arafat Square in Ramallah. The image of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas kissing the flag prior to putting it onto the flagpole captured a significant moment. Palestinians cheered and waved flags of their own in celebration. The responding Palestinian excitement captured the strong love and pride in

The Palestinian flag was raised for the first time at the UN Headquarters on 30 September, 2015. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, in New York, kissed the flag prior to putting it onto the flagpole. This event was broadcast and shown at the Yasser Arafat Square in Ramallah.





their national identity. President Abbas professed his hopes of one day raising the Palestinian flag in Jerusalem—"the capital of our Palestinian state," he emphasized. This statement provoked uproar from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as well as many Israelis. Given that the event took place at the United Nations' Rose Garden, is it naïve to wonder if we will ever see Israel's Prime Minister and Palestine's President embracing and gracefully exchanging each other's flags as the US president witnesses this exchange at the White House Rose Garden?

Although much of the international community supported the hoisting of Palestine's flag at the UN Headquarters, some skeptics felt that this action was overestimated in the hopes of establishing peaceful relations between Israel and Palestine. The Vatican, one of Palestine's advocates, showed support by sending Pope Francis' envoy to the ceremony. Like Palestine, the Vatican is a non-member observer state in the United Nations. Nevertheless, the Vatican's supportive action did not provoke wide controversy in the same way the hoisting of the Palestinian flag had. European nations were divided on whether to vote yea

or nay on raising Palestine's flag at the UN Headquarters. While France and Sweden voted in favor, other countries such as Austria, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands abstained. The abstention votes reflect a calculated strategy on the part of UN members worried about keeping the peace and angering allies. Although the abstention of forty-five countries might seem insignificant, keep in mind that it accounts for almost a quarter of the number of member states in the United Nations. This reveals that the issue of the hoisted Palestinian flag signified a crucial juncture in the irrevocable assertion of political allegiances in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Thus, it made the international community apprehensive and fearful of igniting another conflict that could explode into global warfare.

Right to self-determination and sovereignty is a pressing issue in many parts of the world. This is evident from Argentina's and England's claim over Las Malvinas/Falkland Islands, China's and Japan's assertion over the Senkaku Islands/Diaoyu Islands, Somaliland's independence from Somalia, and the Western Sahara's independence from Morocco, among others.

Although all these sovereignty histories require urgent resolutions, the Israeli-Palestinian sovereignty conflict has continually attracted the attention of the international community. President Abbas had declared the Oslo Accords of 1993 null and void, criticizing Israel for refusing Palestinians the right to self-determination. The Oslo Accords led to the creation of the Palestinian Authority, which has some jurisdiction in governing parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Without the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority might be dissolved, and President Abbas' right to be in office as well. It will also affect the legitimate standing of the Palestinian Football Association as a Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) member, and may prevent the Palestinian football team from participating in the FIFA World Cup Qualifier games. Then again, FIFA has enough scandals and issues of its own to handle.

Reports from Jerusalem indicate that roadblocks and checkpoints have been installed in the Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem in response to recent outbreaks of violence. Security guards have been patrolling public transportation. More soldiers have been sent to support the police in preventing further attacks from Palestinians. In light of these developments, the idea that the hoisting of the Palestinian flag might pave the way for peaceful measures in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict now seems like just naïve, wishful thinking. 

How to Fly High *Without Moving Forward*

Ashoka Jegroo

Earlier this month, a young woman woke up one morning, grabbed her schoolbag, and made her way to Wall Street on a day that felt like any other. At around 8:30am, as she walked through the Manhattan streets, she plugged in her headphones and lit a joint. It was early. She was probably tired. Besides, no one really cares about a little weed. She stopped at a red light,

waiting to cross the street. Just as she blew out another cloud of smoke, someone tapped on her shoulder. Standing behind her was the leader of New York City's largest gang - NYPD Commissioner William Bratton - accompanied by one of his armed goons.

As she turned her head, she instantly recognized Bratton. But this was a new day. Bratton didn't throw this young woman against the wall and slap a pair of cuffs on her, as has been the norm with so many stoners of color in the past. With a heart brimming with magnanimity, Bratton ordered his goon to "politely remove the marijuana" and throw it into the sewer. How

progressive! This is all, of course, according to Bill Bratton himself. "We no longer seek to arrest for possession of the drug," he told the crowd at a New York Law School breakfast. "If you're smoking it in public, we will potentially arrest you, although we're encouraging officers to use the scale that they are authorized to use of warning, admonition, summons, arrest if necessary." But Bratton's tales of cop compassion obscure the fact that the drug war is still alive in New York City. Small victories made on the marijuana legalization front have hidden the fact that the prohibitionists are still winning and taking many prisoners.



The War on Weed

The progress made in New York on the issue of marijuana has been superficial. Governor Andrew Cuomo's "legalization" of medical marijuana was a typical liberal reform. Dispensaries are few; licenses difficult to get. Really, not much has changed except that Cuomo can call himself "progressive" on the issue. Bratton announced in November 2014 that the NYPD would take a new approach to weed, issuing more summonses and making fewer arrests. There has indeed been an increase in summonses and a decrease in arrests, but only in relation to Rudy Giuliani's and Michael Bloomberg's terms, when pot arrests were sky high and cops were given free reign to ruthlessly wage the drug war. By the end of 2015, more than 10,000 people in New York City will have been arrested for weed.

Throughout the eighties and early nineties, the number of marijuana arrests for any given year never exceeded even 6,000. Bratton and Mayor Bill de Blasio's police, it turns out, aren't progressive at all. They're merely less reactionary than his two mayoral predecessors. As is Bratton's trademark Broken Windows style, people of color are still disproportionately arrested for weed, and Bratton even raised the specter of reefer madness when he suggested in March of this year that ganja was causing an increase in murders. Police, despite making fewer arrests, still use the threat of imprisonment to impose fear on weed-smokers throughout the city. And sadly, this substance is where the most progress has been made in the drug war.

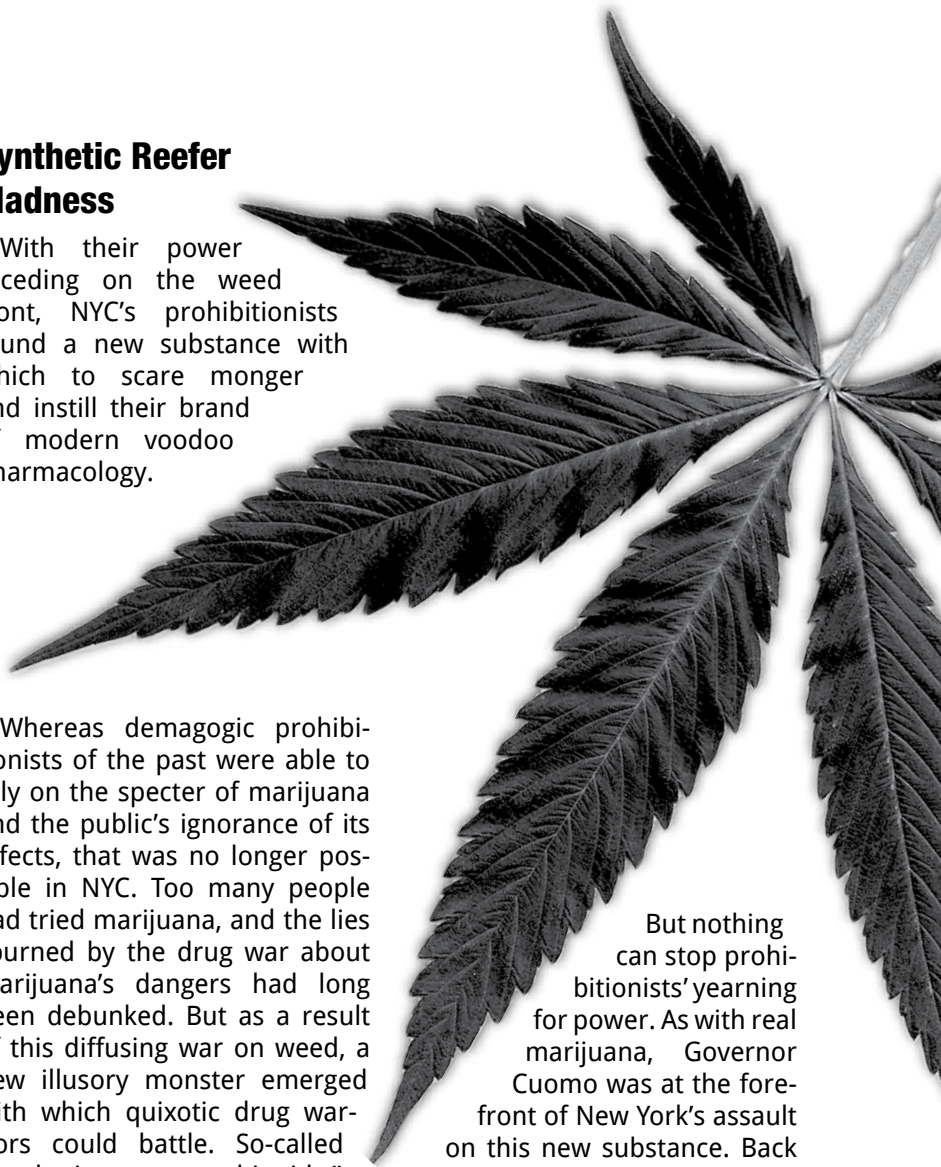
Synthetic Reefer Madness

With their power receding on the weed front, NYC's prohibitionists found a new substance with which to scare monger and instill their brand of modern voodoo pharmacology.

Whereas demagogic prohibitionists of the past were able to rely on the specter of marijuana and the public's ignorance of its effects, that was no longer possible in NYC. Too many people had tried marijuana, and the lies spurned by the drug war about marijuana's dangers had long been debunked. But as a result of this diffusing war on weed, a new illusory monster emerged with which quixotic drug warriors could battle. So-called "synthetic cannabinoids," which often go under names like "Spice" and "K2," have become widespread in recent years due to their cheap price and the legal risks associated with actual marijuana. The label, "synthetic cannabinoids," is inaccurate though. Different brands of the drug consist of smokeable herbs sprayed with an ever-changing variety of obscure, psychoactive substances. Sometimes they are, in fact, substances that mimic cannabinoids. Manufacturers producing these drugs were specifically working towards circumventing laws criminalizing cannabis.

But nothing can stop prohibitionists' yearning for power. As with real marijuana, Governor Cuomo was at the forefront of New York's assault on this new substance. Back in 2012, he pushed for Health Department regulations that would ban the sale and possession of "synthetic marijuana" in New York State, even associating it with bath salts, yet another relatively new drug which has been unjustly demonized in the media. "Synthetic drugs are anything but harmless, and this rash of severe health emergencies across the state is direct proof," he said. "We banned synthetic marijuana, bath salts and similar substances to avoid the disastrous results that occur."

The "progressive" mayor and City Council recently followed the lead of our "progressive"




that seems to have changed is that dealers have found new ways to ship large quantities of cocaine, kids' birthday gifts and frozen shrimp being some of the more innovative receptacles for smuggling cocaine in recent months.

Call to Arms

The status of psychedelics like psilocybin mushrooms, mescaline, and LSD has also not changed at all, with the general public just as ignorant of them as they were when they first became illegal. In all, despite prevailing narratives that liberal New York City has made great advances in the way it treats drugs and their users, the drug war has not changed all that much. And though the legalization of recreational marijuana may be just a matter of time, what then after that? One shudders at the thought of what anti-prohibitionists will have to go through when it's time to teach people why we have to legalize LSD, mushrooms, heroin, or cocaine. Mere discussion of their normalization is still taboo in mainstream political discourse.

But something must be done. The drug war has too long been another excuse for the mass incarceration of the poor and people of color. The lives of so many New Yorkers have been taken and destroyed due to this war on people's bodily autonomy. Cops have stolen too much and murdered too many under the ruse of drug enforcement. Too many politicians have made their careers on throwing Black

and Brown people in cages for victimless crimes. Enough with laughing off discussions of drug legalization with references to Cheech and Chong. Enough with scare tactics from officials with little knowledge of pharmacology. Enough with cops invading our privacy and inflicting violence on us for daring to determine what goes on in our own bodies and our own minds.

Instead, let's make this an issue again in New York City. Let's confront these modern day Puritans with power. Whether they call themselves "liberals," "progressives," or "compassionate," those placating labels only hide their support for a ruthless status quo, an ongoing drug war that continues to stack up casualties. Let's call them out publicly at meetings, speeches, marches, and all their little PR stunts throughout the city. No prohibitionist propagandist should be allowed to utter a word of their pseudoscience in public without challenge. Let's stop the relative stasis that this issue has faced for so long and finally start fighting back in this war. We have nothing to lose but our sobriety. We have a world of freedom and intoxication to win. 

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have a world of freedom and intoxication to win. @

CRC-3206 (2-15)

Criminal Court Appearance Ticket

Name (Last, First, MI) _____ Date of Birth (mm dd yy) _____

Cell Phone Number (where court may contact you) _____ Home Phone Number (where court may contact you) _____

Show up to court on: _____ at: 9:30 a.m.

Court Appearance Date (mm dd yy): _____

Your court appearance location:

☐ Bronx Criminal Court ☐ Kings & New York Criminal Court ☐ Midtown Community Court ☐ Redhook Community Justice Center ☐ Queens Criminal Court ☐ Richmond Criminal Court

****To avoid a warrant for your arrest, you must show up to court.****

At court, you may plead guilty or not guilty.

Please see back for exceptions for Public Urination and Public Consumption of Alcohol offe

Court Locations: You must appear at the court location identified above.

Bronx Criminal Court 215 E 161 Street, Bronx, NY
Kings & New York Criminal Court 346 Broadway, New York, NY
Redhook Community Justice Center 88-94 Visitation Place, Brooklyn, S
Midtown Community Court 314 W 54 Street, New York,
Queens Criminal Court 120-55 Queens Boulevard, Kew Gardens
Richmond Criminal Court 26 Central Avenue, Staten Island

You are Charged as Follows:

Title of Offense: _____ Date of Offense (mm dd yy) _____

Time 24 Hour (hh:mm) _____

Subsection ☐ VII ☐ Admin Code ☐ Penal Law ☐ Part Rules ☐

of Occurrence _____

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A GENEALOGY *of* VIOLENCE

Understanding the Massacre in Ankara

Eylul Fidan Akinci

Turkey saw its largest mass murder by two synchronized suicide bombings at the large-scale “Labour, Peace and Democracy” rally held in the capital city Ankara on 10 October. As of this writing, there have been 102 fatalities and more than four hundred injured. While the international media has reported the horrifying assault, the crisis needs a deeper examination to reveal its wider impact on the peoples of Turkey. Beginning with a discussion on the immediate context around the attack, I will move on to the larger scene of violence going back to the recent national elections and build up to the current devastation.

The mass meeting in Ankara sought to condemn the attacks and curfews that the Turkish military and special security forces have been inflicting in Kurdistan

over the last couple of months. It also hoped to call for dialogue between the Turkish state and Kurdish militants before the elections, for which the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), a militant organization fighting for Kurdish liberation and self-governance, was prepared to announce cease-fire on 11 October. The pro-Kurdish and the radical democrat Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP), which represents a new turn in Kurdish politics with their insistence on dialogue and end to violence, was amongst the major figures in the rally’s organization. Other supporters included the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions, the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects, the Turkish Medical Association, Confederation of Public Workers’ Unions, the social-democrat

Republican People’s Party (CHP), other left-leaning parties, political organizations, civil society groups, students, feminists, anarchists, and socialists.

It was a nation-wide open call to oppose the Justice and Development Party’s (AKP) “war against terrorism” and the party leaders’ actions that had politically polarized the society. The movement was not merely to condemn the state’s infringements of law, authority, and human rights in the southeastern part of the country, but was also aimed to stand in support of labor rights and democracy, and push for a reconsideration of official peace negotiations between the state and PKK. These negotiation issues have been recently swept aside by President Erdoğan and the AKP on account of their overwhelming defeat,

after a thirteen-year tenure, in the recent national elections on 7 June.

The peace rally represented the coming together of almost all segments of the population that the AKP's policies and police practices have marginalized for over a decade now. The bomb attack sought to rupture this consolidation of oppositional voices, which consisted of figures frequently targeted by AKP's and Erdoğan's aggression. At the very outset, it must be noted that the significant threat this congealing solidarity posed to the state constitutes the obvious motive that implicates the AKP regime in the massacre, thus rendering its investigations into the bombings untrustworthy. Nevertheless, there is more to it. Here are some terrifying details adding to the whole outrage of this attack:

1. Right before the explosions, a convicted mafia leader held a rally in support of the President and declared, "there will be blood and no mercy." Nine hours before the explosions, a tweet on the Internet read, "the bomb will explode in Ankara."
2. Immediately after the explosions, the police entered the area and attacked hundreds of injured people with teargas. In addition to destroying the evidence, they not only hindered the administration of first aid to the injured but also prevented the ambulances from reaching the area.
3. Immediately after the explosions, the Radio and Television Supreme Council, the state's media censor, announced a ban on news coverage of the attack.
4. Immediately after the explosions, several AKP members and AKP-sponsored opinion leaders speculated on how this would benefit some in new elections and how it might be a tactic of self-victimization for political gain by the Kurdish leaders.
5. Immediately after the explosions, the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Minister of Justice announced that there was no security weakness or mismanagement on their part. They scoffed when a journalist asked if they would consider resignation.
6. Immediately after the explosions, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu stated that the bombers could be related to terrorist organizations, including the PKK, DAESH (his way of saying ISIS), and the DHKP-C (a militant-socialist group). That is to say, he ridiculously implied that the "Kurds bombed themselves,"



LEFT, Ahmet Davutoğlu at an AK Party rally on 9 May 2015.

and that they “might be collaborating with ISIS.” No other statement condemning the ISIS terror was released. Yet, Davutoğlu explained his refusal to pay a visit to the HDP’s co-chair Selahattin Demirtaş with the excuse that Demirtaş accused the state of having blood on its hands: for not providing security of the rally; for not investigating other recent bomb attacks; and for silently encouraging ISIS activities within the borders.

7. As people were still looking for their relatives and friends in the hospitals and morgues, social media and the AKP’s media were full of defamatory comments, almost relishing the murders of those “damned Kurds and leftists.” An anchor for the official television channel of the state claimed, “There might be a few passer-by innocents amongst those who died.” (Regarding the media comments, I wanted to believe the majority of these commentators were Internet trolls. But even if they were, they contributed to the event’s trauma as written, posted, and circulated content.)
8. The identities of the suicide bombers were established, only to reveal that they were part of a group from the southeastern town, Adıyaman, known and supposedly tracked by the security forces. Furthermore, it was understood that they crossed to Syria, trained in ISIS camps, and returned to organize suicide attacks. In fact, one of the attackers, Yunus Emre Alagöz, had earlier been caught by the police and released despite security intelligence from months earlier. It was Alagöz’s brother who perpetrated a previous suicide attack in Suruç, which I further discuss below.
9. A confidentiality order on the judicial proceedings on the massacre was issued. This means that lawyers, journalists, and the public have no access to the files and legal process.
10. When asked about the lack of security measures, Davutoğlu explained that they couldn’t arrest someone before they do the criminal deed in a democratic society. Three days prior to his words, eleven people were arrested for dancing halay, a circle dance associated with political resistance. Thousands of people have been detained and arrested by the police without evidence of crime or criminal intent. Some were accused of allegedly “insulting the president” on twitter.
11. Overshadowing tactics such as Angela Merkel’s visit manipulated the course of events and the news. In the meantime, AKP leaders, members, or the media issued no explanation, correction, apology, or message of unconditional sympathy and solidarity.

State officials’ reluctance to point to the actual suspects with precision, and their reciprocal haste in insinuating and in some cases outrightly blaming the involvement of the HDP and the Kurdish resistance movement might tell you how these suicide attacks cannot solely be seen as an extension of ISIS brutality to Turkey. ISIS is only part of a larger onslaught that has escalated in intensity since the June election. Let’s roll back a bit to have a better sense of the violence leading up to this carnage.

The 7 June elections was the first time the HDP entered the race as an official party instead of contesting through its members as independent candidates. Since there is a ten percent threshold of the vote count the parties need to pass to have parliamentary representation, the HDP took the risk and implemented a grassroots campaign to coalesce Kurdish votes as well as those of leftists, activists, workers, and ethnic and religious minorities beyond Kurdistan. Some of these Kurdish votes were previously AKP voters, especially during the cease-fire and peace negotiations between the PKK and the government. Their campaign was a huge success, proving the party’s immunity to the threshold threat with a constant vote of thirteen percent. This consisted of an overwhelming majority in Kurdistan, high support in larger cities in the west, and fairly equal distribution in the rest of the country. The quick interpretation of this result was that the HDP succeeded in drawing some of the AKP votes into their party as well as fulfilled their statement to represent not only Kurdistan but all peoples of Turkey.

In the interim period from the HDP's announcement to contest the election as a party to the day of election, AKP leaders, President Erdoğan, and the news agencies "affiliated" to the government constantly attacked the HDP, trying to portray them as the supporters of terror and a foil for the PKK, hoping to pigeonhole the party to the Kurdish region. Considering the HDP's success in entering the parliament and barring the AKP from gaining the overwhelming majority to hold the government, it is safe to say that the AKP's paranoid attacks were aimed to prevent this result at all costs. Hence, the anti-Kurd rhetoric of the 1990s, when the Turkish State's dirty war against the Kurdish population was at its height, was re-circulated in AKP's political rallies, especially in regions with more right-wing, Turkish-nationalist demographics.

These "political" assaults did not have to wait long to translate into physical violence; HDP's province and county representatives and political rallies were attacked by anonymous groups with stones, guns, and arson, with no investigations on the attackers or arrests to follow. Two days before the election, HDP's final and biggest rally in the largest Kurdish city, Diyarbakır/Amed, was attacked by a bomb explosion, killing four people and injuring more than a hundred. The Human Rights Foundation in Turkey announced that there have been 114 incidents of violence against the HDP and its voters in the pre-election period in total. HDP leaders and Selahattin Demirtaş showed incredible effort and equanimity to not let these overshadow the election



Photo of Ankara bombing, courtesy of Associated Press /Burhan Ozbilici

process. The support emerged despite what immediately followed the attack.

In claiming that the HDP perpetrated this to garner victim-sympathy that would translate into more votes, the AKP's news agencies and opinion leaders were ready to spread incredible speculations as to the identity of the bomber(s), who later turned out to be a member of the same ISIS-associated group mentioned above. But things got even more terrifying and violent following the elections. After the "surprising" election result for the AKP, Erdoğan assigned Davutoğlu the task of presiding over coalition meetings. Deliberately delayed by the AKP and further staggered by the ultra-nationalist (and ultra-anti-Kurd) Nationalist Movement Party's (MHP's) unwillingness to negotiate and consider the HDP's presence in the parliament with eighty members, Davutoğlu announced the impossibility of a coalition and called for a re-election.

It was in the midst of this political stagnation that a suicide bomber affiliated with ISIS attacked a group of young socialist students at the border town, Suruç, killing thirty-four people. In an effort to help the recuperation of the town and the children from the war, the group was on its way to Kobane. Without interrogating why an ISIS militant would do such a thing, the Davutoğlu-led temporary government that the AKP had literally seized agreed to join US operations against ISIS. But the Turkish air forces instead reignited the battle with the PKK. And Davutoğlu justified the heavy air strike by grouping ISIS and the PKK as terrorist threats to Turkish State security. The PKK retaliated. Violence escalated, leading to curfews and combats in Kurdish towns in the southeast.

In early September, the town of Cizre-Şırnak was amongst the brutal scenes of state violence. Over the period of a nine-day curfew and blockade, the "security forces" killed twenty of its


civilians including infants, women, and elderly. While Davutoğlu announced there were no civilian casualties, the people of Cizre were keeping the bodies of their dead in refrigerators until they were allowed to get out of their confinement to bury them. Bear in mind that the Cizre population was completely disconnected from the world from having no continuous electricity, water, provisional needs, or healthcare access. A couple of weeks later, another traumatizing image and subsequent video was circulated by an anonymous twitter account, using the alias "JITEM," Turkish counter-guerilla force that unofficially combat- ted with the Kurds from late 1980s onwards. The media content showed the dead body of Hacı Lokman Birlik, the brother-in-law of an HDP PM, tied to a police vehicle that dragged him along on the streets. The people faced more terrorism after the military bombed the graveyards of Kurdish militants and demolished the mosque and *cemevi*, which is the Alevi believers' house of worship in the Kurdish-Alevi town of Varto.

In a few months after the elections and the Süruç massacre, the Turkish State, led by Erdoğan and Davutoğlu's AKP, returned to its well-known tactics to violate the bodies and minds of the Kurdish population. Davutoğlu himself declared at a recent AKP rally in Van that, in the event of the AKP losing the government, the streets will be taken over by terrorist mobs or the "white Toros cars" associated with the counter-guerilla that "disappeared" the Kurdish population

in the 1990s. The majority of the victims of the Ankara massacre feel that the AKP uses the rhetoric of ISIS terrorism to cloak its expanding state violence against challengers of its aggressive, capitalist, neo-Ottomanist, sunni-Turco, machismo engineering of the country. 694 persons have been killed since 7 June during Turkey's re-instigated war with the PKK and at the three bombing attacks.

Although some international media commentators attribute the AKP's brutality to the aftermath of the Gezi protests in June 2013, this extreme assumption and execution of state power can only come out of a longer investment in it. The AKP's plan to shape Turkey into a state heavily controlled by neoliberal interests has been in effect since the very beginning of their reign. One only needs to look at legislations around private investments, labor rights, privatizations, social rights and services from their first term. Yet, this shift towards a more aggressive management of any dissention in society might be in anticipation of a threat due to the changing political climate in Egypt, Syria and the larger Kurdish geography.

It is challenging to interpret and critically intervene on the intricate web of relations and power dynamics in the Middle East. What is quite obvious, however, are the AKP's efforts to demonize leftists and the Kurdish political movement even as they downplay ISIS, refrain from openly identifying them as a threat, and in fact, allowing them inside the borders to recruit volunteers and obtain hospital.

Speculations remain about Turkey's undercover ammunition transfers to ISIS and other dissident groups in Syria, but it takes no investigation to notice Davutoğlu's general sympathy towards ISIS, summed up in his explanation of the group's emergence as the "result of a natural reaction to religious oppression." According to their calculations, ISIS' fight with the YPG (mainly the Kurdish "People's Protection Units," in alliance with the PKK) in Syria would weaken the PKK and Kurdish politics in Turkey. Turning a blind eye to the suicide bombers in Süruç and Ankara, and un-marking them under the "terrorist" umbrella involves such agendas that pawn citizens' lives to the AKP's fear of losing its overbearing power. Surely the links between the AKP and ISIS must be much more complicated than this. But at the heart of it, this is what "we" see and feel: we, the peoples that resist the AKP's increasing fascism, the peoples that demand peace and democracy in solidarity, the peoples that get killed, arrested, traumatized, targeted, reviled. In a nauseating current of hatred and assault that does not even allow the space and silence for proper mourning, and in country ripped apart mentally and emotionally, we cannot make do with simplistic accusations that solely resort to the rhetoric of ISIS "terrorism." Time has already shown us what the "war against terrorism" signifies. The peoples of the Middle East now live the consequences of it. We know who the murderers of those 102 people are. Now, do you? 

Listening to Iraqis

Review of Ali Issa's *Against All Odds: Voices of Popular Struggle in Iraq*

Tristan K. Husby

"There are actual people in Iraq... [Iraq] is not just a term used to describe a larger imperialist or geopolitical project." So says Ahmed Habib in his interview with Ali Issa, author of *Against all Odds: Voices of Popular Struggle in Iraq*. Habib worries that in America, "Iraq" has become a verb, a synonym for "stuck in a quagmire that costs a lot of money and lives," and this usage informs a particular American perspective. It is a perspective that prefers non-intervention for all things military out of a humanitarianism, but a humanitarianism that is ignorant of the histories of

other countries and is unwilling to listen to people on the other side of American borders. Habib points to the problems with the bumper sticker "Don't Iraq Iran": only a self-centered American voice can endorse that slogan, rather than a voice that has incorporated the desires and hopes of those the American military threatens. This kind of international American perspective is not impossible, and it is desperately needed. In Issa's book, Iraqis in Iraq and in the diaspora tell how they are struggling to make Iraq democratic, peaceful and equal. If those who opposed the US invasion of Iraq listen to

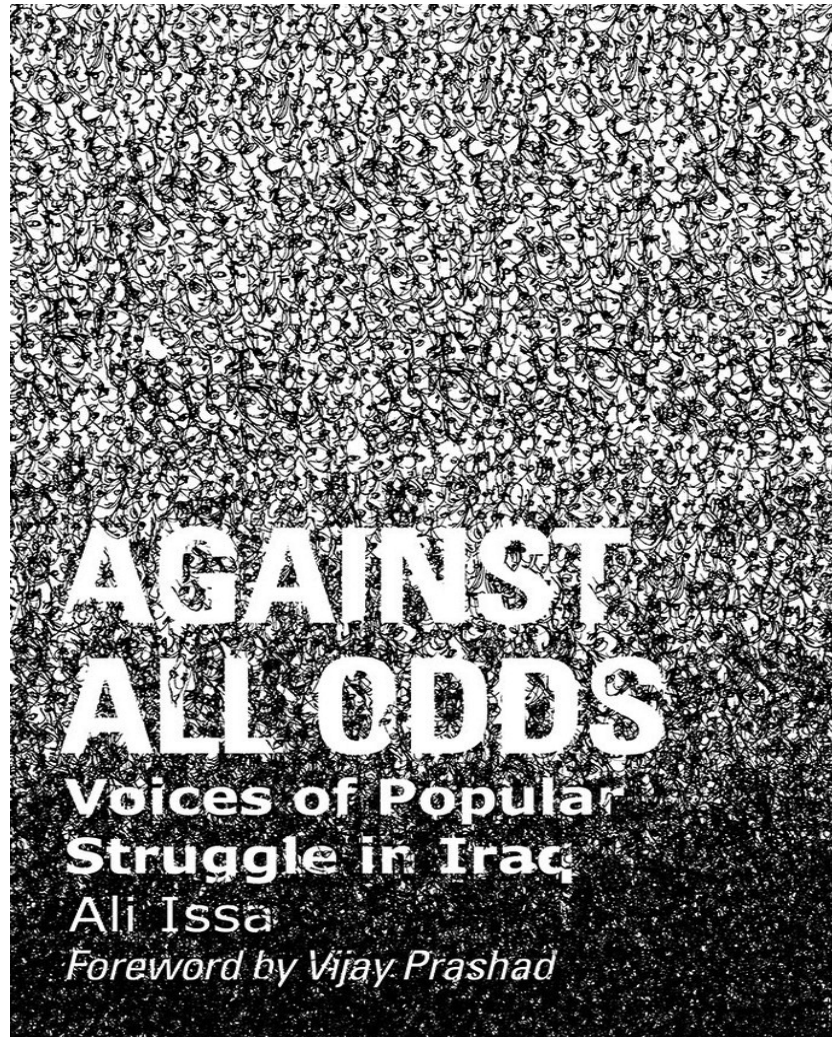
these stories, they will notice a number of similarities in the kind of struggles that Iraqis face from the government and the problems that arise in working together. In addition, the voices in the book emphatically assert that the distinctive history of Iraq demands that any estimation of the challenges it faces must be rooted in the particularities and politics of its location. Any truly informed American perspective must listen to such voices.

While reporters frequently put Iraq in the headlines and pictures of Baghdad on television, this informational barrage is not the same as listening to the people

of Iraq. Furthermore, ignorance about Iraq is not limited to those for whom the voting booth is the beginning and end of their political engagement: how many people who came to Zuccotti Park to take part in Occupy Wall Street knew that the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) had written a letter of solidarity to the American movement? How many even knew that the Arab Spring had reached Baghdad?

For Issa, these questions of awareness and cross-border connections are of personal and political significance. Born in Texas to a father from Baghdad, Issa describes his summers flying from the US to visit his family that had fled from Iraq to Jordan. Informed by these frequent journeys as well as a political education that included frequenting anarchist book stores and agitating for workers' rights, Issa first wrote a blog titled, *Iraq Left: On Iraqi Organizing and Movement Building Now*, and then became a national field organizer for the War Resisters League (I should note that I volunteer with the War Resisters League). This book contains some work that Issa had previously written for his blog, but much of the content is here in print for the first time.

Against All Odds begins with twelve documents that range from articles to press releases to Facebook posts to comic strips to open letters, such as the one from the OWFI to Occupy Wall Street. These sources provide glimpses into how Iraqis, like



Americans, struggle to challenge patriarchal traditions and laws, to protect their water and oil supplies, to conserve their environment and to hold the Iraqi government accountable for providing electricity, safety and democratic control over their own fate.

The documents primarily focus on what could be called the Iraqi Spring. That phrase refers

to the period from March 2011 to December 2011, when Iraqi opposition to a number of injustices, ranging from the imprisonment of activists to the unwritten quota system, was both acute and persistent. This quota system reinforces the division of Iraqi society by marking separate, but unstated, offices and powers for the Shi'a, Sunnis and Kurds. Uday al-Zaidi points to the

most explicit form of the quota system, the unstated requirements that the “prime minister must be Shi’i, the president must be Kurdish, and [the] speaker of the parliament must be Sunni.” Issa interviewed al-Zaidi in June of 2011, directly after the then Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki was desperately negotiating with the Iraqi parliament for reforms that would both keep him in power and placate the mass protests that had begun in February of that year. By the end of 2011, Maliki’s power was clearly weakened, and in 2014, the Iraqis elected Haider al-Abadi, a Sunni, as president.

Americans know that such unwritten systems do not disappear so easily, and just as Obama’s election did not herald the end of American racism, the quota system in Iraq continues

even after Abadi’s election. Nadia al-Baghdadi, who works on the Save the Tigris and Marshes Campaign, explains in her interview with Issa that because of the quota system, when her organization was attempting to find space for their offices, the same governmental agency first approved their space and then rejected it. Two different blocs in that agency were competing with each other, a consequence of the nepotism that shapes much of the government and business in Iraq.

Despite the quota system obstructing people like al-Baghdadi, Iraq is still the location of great transformations. Among Issa’s interviews, the most powerful story is that of Jannat Algehezzi, now the Media Director of OWFI. Algehezzi first came to OWFI in order to flee her family. After staying in a OWFI safe

house, where she learned about politics and feminism, she began to volunteer with the program and ultimately joined their staff. Algehezzi tells how OWFI confronts the traditions that harm Iraqi women, such as honor killings, but also takes a stand on governmental policy. OWFI was a leading opponent against the Jaafari Law proposed in 2014, which threatened to make it harder for women to claim property through either inheritance or divorce.

Issa conducted most of his interviews, such as with al-Baghdadi and Algehezzi, in 2014, three years after most of the collected documents. Out of the twenty combined interviews and documents, there are only four pieces that are from 2012 or 2013. While there may be many reasons for why he clumped the documents and interviews the way he did,

“... just as Obama’s election did not herald the end of American racism, the quota system in Iraq continues even after Abadi’s election.”



Jannat Algehezzi, now the Media Director of the Organization of Women’s Freedom in Iraq, speaking with Ali Issa. Photo Courtesy of the War Resisters League


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Issa only briefly notes the three-year gap in his introduction. He more explicitly addresses how there is only one entry from Iraqi Kurdistan: an interview with Akram Nadir, an active member of a number of worker organizations. While Issa does not claim that the book represents anything more than a tiny portion of Iraqi voices, it is hard not to imagine him following up on the stories mentioned only in passing, such as the prison revolt in Tikrit of March 2011.

Sometimes these stories might sound very familiar to activists in America: at a sit-in in Mosul in April 2011, a poet got a round of

applause for insulting George W. Bush. Those who attended the last days of Occupy Wall Street, when the police “guarded” the entryway of Zuccotti Park, will sympathize with the Iraqi protestors of July 2011, who were prohibited from entering Baghdad’s Tahrir Square with posters, markers, pens or even water bottles. The prevalent debates among Iraqi activists might also sound familiar for Iraqis also struggle over the effectiveness of non-violence and the precise implications of certain words. In his interview, Falah Alwan discusses how even describing the Sunni and Shi’i as working towards

“unity” can be problematic, as it reinforces the idea that the two groups are normally separate and only work together under unusual circumstances.

However, Iraq is indeed on the other side of the world, and details about the frequent black-outs and kidnappings make clear that Iraqis face everyday frustrations and dangers that people in America are oblivious to. A number of Facebook posts describe how, during the summer of 2011, an anonymous group kidnapped Thurgham al-Zaidi, a prominent critic of the American occupation. After enduring almost a week of torture, he was suddenly released. Undeterred, he headed to the next anti-occupation protest with his son Haydar. That these protests of the Iraqi Spring were directed against the American occupation is why there was so little coverage in the American press. It is only through the efforts of incredibly dedicated people like Thurgham, along with his brothers Uday (mentioned above) and Muntadhar (famous for throwing his shoes at George W. Bush) that such protests were possible. Issa’s book celebrates such resistance while pushing for a future solidarity that is truly international, one that is present on the streets as well as on Facebook. 



Policemen and officials inspect the central prison for Salahuddin province a day after a riot within the prison in Tikrit. Courtesy of Reuters.

Biography of a Reformist

Review of Sonja D. Williams' *Word Warrior: Richard Durham, Radio and Freedom*

Rhone Fraser

In her biography of Richard Durham called *Word Warrior: Richard Durham, Radio and Freedom*, Sonja D. Williams accomplishes her stated goal of "a book-length account about the totality of Durham's contributions and advocacy." Richard Durham (1917-1984) was an extraordinary journalist, dramatist, and speech writer who used his skill of writing to challenge the racist assumptions of the U.S. hegemony controlling the film, radio, and television industries of the twentieth century. Durham's writing reflects a reverence for historically-based research like none other. He was

a paperboy for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, a writer for the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and the top investigative reporter for the *Chicago Defender*. In 1948, he produced the legendary radio drama series, *Destination Freedom*; was a writer for the NOI's national newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks*; a collaborator with Muhammad Ali on his popular autobiography for Random House that Toni Morrison edited; and a speech writer for the pioneering Chicago mayor, Harold Washington. His writing incorporates history in a creative way that appeals to mass audiences. Williams'

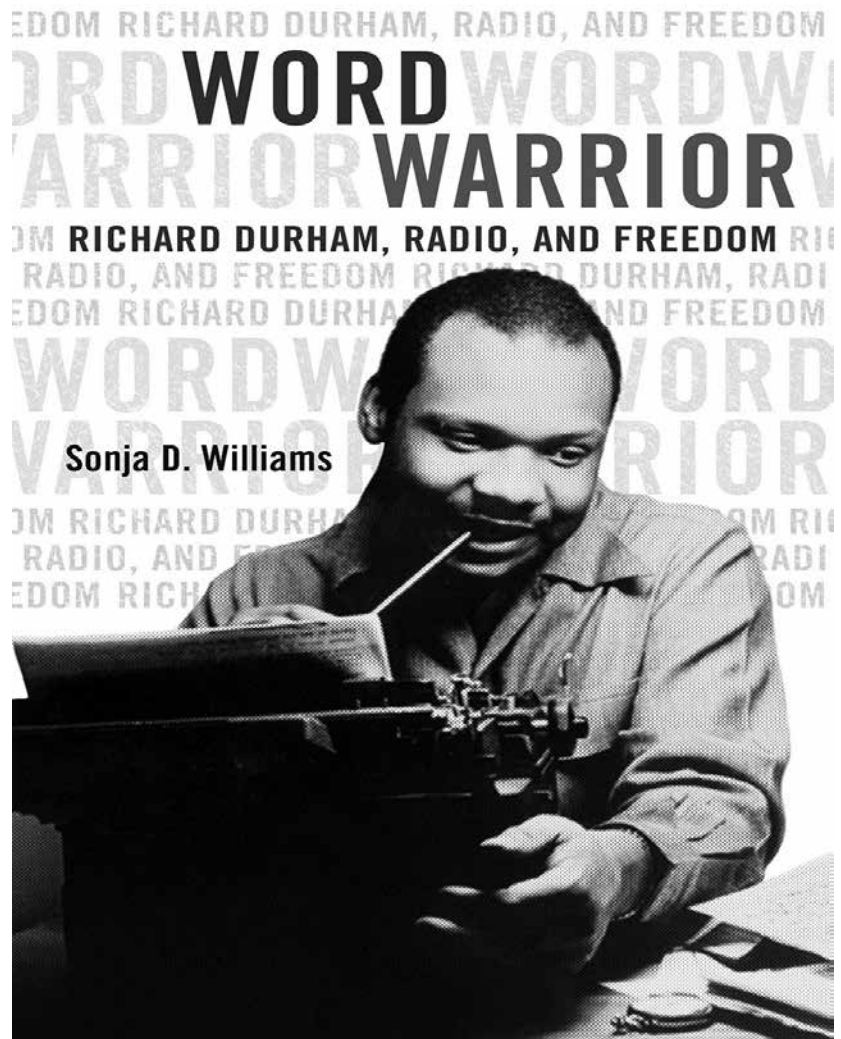
primary sources include in-depth interviews with artists like Oscar Brown Jr. In referring to Durham, Brown observes he "had been a leftist" and "Communist, who explained the intricacies of Marxism and Leninism to him." Williams writes that for Durham, "Communist philosophy was more in line with the liberation of Negroes and other oppressed people than capitalism." Throughout his life, it is clear that Durham sought to liberate Negroes by using historical fiction to translate their heroic stories. According to his brother Earl, Durham firmly believed that "if you want to fight injustice, you

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have to organize people to do it.”

In 1923, when he turned six, Durham’s family migrated from Mississippi to the Bronzeville, Chicago. To supplement their income, he worked as a paper-boy for the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Part of his literary diet included editorials written by W.E.B. Du Bois. Also fundamental was the story of Richard I, England’s twelfth century monarch to whom Durham took such a liking, so much that he started calling himself Richard in his teenage years despite his birth name being Isadore. King Richard was a brilliant military strategist, best known for his exploits during the so-called “Third Crusade.” This battle aimed to recapture the city of Jerusalem from Muslim control during the late 1100s. According to Williams, by the age of eighteen, Durham had access to Bronzeville’s first public library, and it became his “personal resource bank.” His brother Caldwell said that Durham read everything in the fiction section.

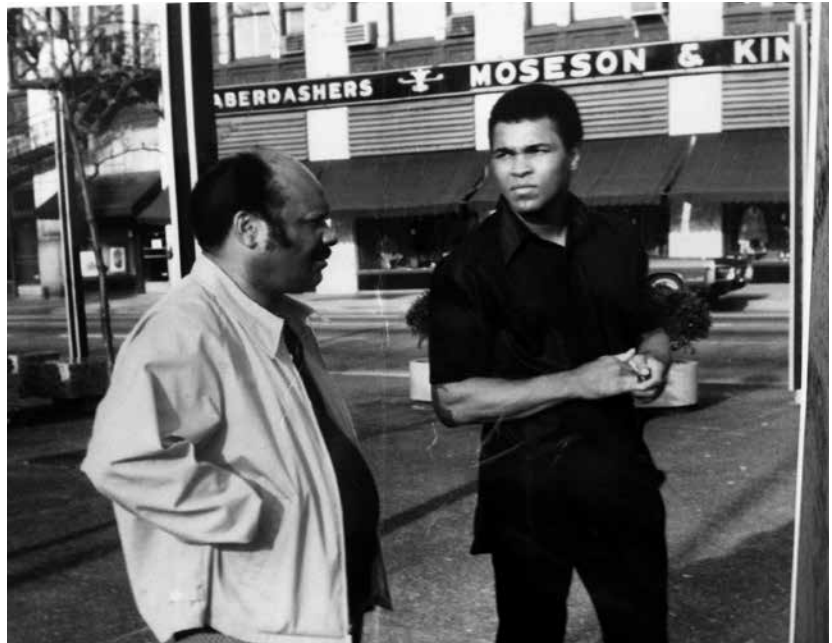
Williams presents Durham as supportive of the militant exploits he writes of in his interpretations of stories. Durham’s early review of Dale Carnegie’s book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, asserted that no “how-to” book could solve our social and business problems. He resisted the vision of industrialists like Carnegie throughout his life. He advocated for “Negro liberation” through his promotion of such “realistic paradigms.” He expressed these themes in



poems that were published by the Chicago Defender and the New Masses periodicals. The publications included “Death in a Kitchenette,” which features a black, working protagonist, who was “cheated” out of two weeks’ rent by “pneumonia” and “death.” This captures Durham’s dramatization of the struggle to survive in an environment where jobs became increasingly

scarce. At twenty-three, the Works Progress Administration’s (WPA’s) Illinois Writer’s Project hired him under bibliophile Arna Bontemps on a 1939 study called The Negro Press in Chicago. The small study examined thirty-four Black newspapers and eleven magazines from the city’s past and present. In this experience, Durham became critical not only of the living conditions of Black

working people but also of the Black bourgeoisie's support of it. While Negro presses, then, like the Chicago Bee praised Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal policies such as the WPA that hired Durham, once in these positions, Durham didn't fulfill their expectations. He critiqued the process that saw overwhelming masses of Negro people denied gainful employment despite the tokenism of the industrialists and their supporters. "The economic position into which [Negroes] are forced makes a mockery of American democracy," Durham insists. This job exposed Durham to radio writing. Once exposed to this genre and opportunity, Durham never left. He freelanced for the NBC radio drama series called *The Lone Ranger*. The series presented the story of a former Texas ranger who protected his countrymen in the untamed West of the late nineteenth century. Durham noticed the racist and sexist storylines in these scripts. Industrialists such as William Randolph Hearst, General Electric, RKO, Marconi Wireless and Telegraph, and Westinghouse heavily protected the scripts as they opposed original ideas threatening their rule. He probably learned from this experience how to convince industrialists and their functionaries to support his own original series that celebrated radical thinkers. He also freelanced for another NBC show called *Art For Our Sake* that profiled artists featured in Chicago's Art Institute.



By 1944, he was offered a full-time reporter position for the Chicago Defender where he "had a knack for getting interviewees to speak their minds, even if their opinions were totally counter to his." By the next year, he was honored with a "Page One Award" by the local chapter of the American Newspaper Guild (ANG). Williams writes that Durham was offered a "script analyst" position at MGM studios, but figured out soon enough that the "analyst" part of that position would be done not by him but by industrialist functionaries who only welcomed work supportive of their White supremacist capitalist vision. She points out that "no matter how tempting the opportunity to get into the film industry may have been, Durham would never cross a union picket line." This is in

Durham and Muhammad Ali. They collaborated on Ali's autobiography.

"[Durham] critiqued the process that saw overwhelming masses of Negro people denied gainful employment despite the tokenism of the industrialist supporters."

stark contrast to the writer John Ridley, whose actions in crossing the union picket line for work led him to winning an Oscar for Best Screenplay for *Twelve Years A Slave*, ultimately catered to the film industry. Williams shows the price that Durham's bold bravery cost him. What was worth more to Durham than a job in the film industry was the example he was setting to his son, and his fidelity to the same Marxist-Leninist principles Oscar Brown Jr. said he championed.

A promotions manager at the *Chicago Defender*, Charles Browning, came up with the idea of a fifteen-minute drama series called *Democracy USA* that would feature men and women who exemplified the principles of democracy through their lives and accomplishments. Williams focuses on one of his *Democracy USA* scripts, "Dr. Dailey and the Living Human Heart." It explored the life of the distinguished Negro surgeon Ulysses Grant Dailey. President Truman praised CBS Radio's Chicago affiliate-WBBM with a certificate of merit for its show *Democracy USA* written in part by Durham and produced by the Chicago Defender. This is the same Truman, who two years earlier, had the support of industrialists as he murdered hundreds of thousands of Japanese. After bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Truman's certificate praised WBBM for "inspiring the youth to follow a path of citizenship" that follows the agenda of US industrialists who discouraged Black writers from encouraging a

collective consciousness in their work. This agenda destroyed the path of self-determining peoples in the Jim Crow US South and abroad: in Japan in 1945, Palestine in 1948, Korea in 1950. Durham's work is a testament to the growing number of Black workers that were becoming Communist because of Truman's atomic bomb; people like Augusta Strong and Esther Cooper Jackson.

Unlike Truman and the industrialists, Durham's scripts privileged values of collective struggle and liberation over the kind of individual success within the capitalist economy that industrialists like Truman wanted all Blacks to focus on. Durham's script that best represents his commitment to Negro liberation is his *Destination Freedom* episode on Harriet Tubman, whose goal was collective struggle and liberation of all Black people in the Confederate South. Scripts on popular television and film by Black writers like Shonda Rhimes, Tyler Perry, Mara Brock-Akil are welcomed and propagated by industrialists because they privilege individual success over collective struggle and liberation. Durham's work on *Destination Freedom* focused on the latter over the former and entered obscurity because of it.

Durham also worked with Irna Phillips, who wrote and created several lucrative radio dramas now popularly known as "soap operas." Phillips' stories dealt with postwar conditions like amnesia, alcoholism, or psychosomatic

"Durham's scripts privileged values of collective struggle and liberation... within the capitalist economy"

paralysis that Durham later used in his own series. He co-founded the Du Bois Theater Guild and conceived of a soap opera called *Here Comes Tomorrow*, which Durham called "the first authentic radio serial of an American Negro family." In 1948, NBC and its affiliate WMAQ agreed to air a radio series. Conceived by Durham, *Destination Freedom* was to run weekly for half an hour. It featured "the lives and contributions of prominent Negro history makers." The series showed the personal and political struggles of those Blacks who believed in radical change. Williams writes that Black leaders like Harriet Tubman, Benjamin Banneker, Katherine Dunham spoke to Richard Durham, hour after hour, as he sifted through the mounds of materials that Vivian G. Harsh, head of the Hall

Malcolm X holds a copy of *Muhammad Speaks*, edited by Durham.



Branch Library, and her staff provided, and wrote for *Destination Freedom*. In her appendix, she also included a radio log of each episode from July 1948 to August 1950. His series included episodes about Harriet Tubman, Toussaint L'Ouverture, and William Lloyd Garrison, among others. Williams quotes J. Fred MacDonald as saying *Destination Freedom* was "one of the most damning critiques of racial abuse ever heard on U.S. radio." The series received awards from the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, the National Negro Museum and Historical Foundation, and the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Williams identified one of the series' abiding philosophies as "universalism," which apparently seemed to justify Zionism. In interviews identified a

connection between the "Negro's sharecropping experience" and "the Jewish people struggling to create the new nation of Israel in 1948." However, the 2014 reinstatement of a previously-fired Palestinian Professor Steven Salaita by the board of trustees of the University of Illinois, which published Williams' book, underscores a stronger connection not "with the Jewish people" but with the Palestinians. Durham's stories show a Negro people under racist persecution that is more similar in 2015 to the struggle of Palestinians against the Jewish people. Williams raises the question of why the WMAQ and NBC allowed *Destination Freedom's* progressive sentiments and rebellious Negro characters on the air, and suggests that it could be because the program was aired only in Chicago. NBC also

rejected several of Durham's script ideas, including ones on Paul Robeson, and another about the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

While Durham was pioneering, Williams notes that his scripts revealed the philosophy not of a revolutionary but of an optimistic reformer. When the radio station hired a new director who "massacred" Durham's scripts, he decided to end the series. However, he started a legal battle with NBC because they revived the series without his consent or input, even though he owned the copyright to the series. Williams writes that records documenting the final outcome of the lawsuit were conspicuously missing from Durham's files. He later landed a two-month contract with the United Packinghouse Workers of America in which he prepared

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a twenty-one page brochure called Action Against Jim Crow: UPWA's Fight For Equal Rights. He was fired after he tried to pull together a caucus of all the key Black figures within the UPWA and set up the election of several Black officials to the merged leadership.

By the next decade, Durham's reputation landed him an offer to work as editor of the newspaper of the then rapidly growing Nation of Islam called *Muhammad Speaks*. He developed a close relationship with Elijah Muhammad and successfully convinced him that "the Muslim's best interests were served by keeping the Nation of Islam's progress sectionalized from the rest of the paper." This was based on Durham's strict journalistic policy of maintaining a strong "separation of church and state reportage between *Muhammad Speaks* and the Nation of Islam." He required *Muhammad Speaks* reporters to research their stories comprehensively to avoid the impression that the paper might be "mouthing off conspiratorial theories." According to Durham's brother Earl, Richard Durham worked to "get the Nation off King's back." When the NOI placed its printing press under the supervision of the Fruit of Islam (FOI), Durham happily left, but was soon offered a job writing for a WTTW TV series called *Bird of the Iron Feather*, about a detective who died in a crossfire "between black rebels and the police during a race riot on Chicago's West Side." By

February 1970, national news magazines *Time* and *Newsweek* reported that the TV series' half-million viewers made it the highest rated local production in WTTW's history.

Despite this, after only twenty-one episodes within two months, the station terminated the series for a number of reasons, including Durham's decision to defy the station management's request that he change his concluding series storyline that had "police assassinating other police officers." Here again, like the demands of the second director of the *Destination Freedom* series, he refused to cater to the White supremacist demands that should sanitize militant messages directed at Black audiences. Williams describes Durham's collaboration with Muhammad Ali for his autobiography that was published by Random House, from his defeat of Sonny Liston to his defeat of George Foreman in then Zaire. Random House editor Toni Morrison said that Durham had "a theatrical eye," enabling him to determine "what to throw out and what to include...what was interesting and what was not and how to make a scene...I found working with him very interesting." For many reasons, Williams writes that the autobiography Durham collaborated on was "uneven... the tensions between the Nation of Islam's restrictions, Random House's deadlines, as well as Ali and Durham's storytelling choices kept the book from being a cohesive whole." In Ishmael

Reed's biography of Muhammad Ali, Durham's longtime friend Bennett Johnson tells Reed that Ali agreed to the autobiography because Durham was collaborating with him. Johnson also provides more insight than Williams into Durham's late 70s business foray with the NOI—of which Williams observes was "painful" for Durham's wife Clarice. The venture ended unsuccessfully and consequently reinforced Durham's 1938 review of Carnegie's book that no "how-to" book can solve our social and business problems. Williams' last chapter, "Black Political Power," describes Durham's last years as a screenwriter for the pioneering Black mayor of Chicago, Harold Washington. Williams stretches the definition of revolutionary when she writes that Washington becoming the mayor of Chicago was "nothing short of revolutionary." Durham, in this capacity, was purely reformist. He worked within the electoral system funded by the same industrialists like Carnegie whose self-help philosophy he excoriated in 1938. His screenplay on Harriet Tubman portrays her as a revolutionary against chattel slavery, and additional scholarly research could shed needed light on how Durham's work opposes wage slavery.


Like the historian Macdonald, Durham might have educated Black masses about revolutionary thinkers, but he functioned primarily as an optimistic reformer. Durham's work is a living example of Addison Gayle

Jr.'s 1977 article, "Blueprint for Black Criticism":

"Black people must demand realistic paradigms from Black artists: they must demand that characters be modeled upon such men and women as Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, and Martin Delany; H. Rap Brown, Fannie Lou Hamer, and those countless mothers and fathers who sacrificed dignity and manhood in order to prepare their young to deal with a nation which ranks among the tyrannical in history."

Richard Durham's body of fictional work came closest to fulfilling this paradigm, perhaps more than any other writer in the twentieth century. Williams succeeds in her book-length account of the totality of Durham's contributions and advocacy; however, her study underestimates the repression of the McCarthyist climate in the United States that persecuted Communists and Communist sympathizers like Durham. Oscar Brown Jr. said that Durham believed that Communist philosophy was

more in line with the liberation of Negroes. However the opportunity to practice this was erased when Durham sought employment by local radio stations that wanted the theme of his work to celebrate democracy. This book did not elaborate on the way Black writers like Durham had to hide their belief and appreciation for Communism during McCarthyism. Durham's life story is in one way a story about the success of McCarthyism in successfully silencing Communist sympathy except for faithful Chicago listeners of Durham's work. What would enhance Williams' study is a look at Durham within a theoretical framework that celebrates collective struggle over individual capitalist achievement.

Special thanks to Ian Rocksborough-Smith for introducing me to the work of Richard Durham in 2007. 

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Racializing the American Revolution

Review of the Broadway Musical *Hamilton*

Donatella Galella

The new musical *Hamilton* by composer-writer-star, Lin-Manuel Miranda, received rapturous raves as the savior of the musical art form with cross-over potential. Based on Ron Chernow's biography, *Hamilton* is a hip-hop, multiracial musical of the founding of the United States, specifically about its first Secretary of Treasury, Alexander Hamilton. The musical opened at the Public Theater in February 2015. It moved to the Richard Rodgers Theatre on Broadway this past summer. The current production is sold out for months. President Barack Obama saw the production,

which will host a fundraiser for the Democratic Party on 2 November. But the musical also attracted positive attention from the right. That Lynne Cheney and Rupert Murdoch love *Hamilton*, we should pause and wonder why.

Artistically brilliant and apparently progressive, *Hamilton* largely upholds conservative political projects. I found myself profoundly moved by the hip-hop score, well-knit dramaturgy, dynamic staging, and cast that resembled me (Phillipa Soo!), New York City, and the United States. However, the musical also deeply troubled me. The

multiracial cast paradoxically flattens difference as the story exaggerates the significance of abolitionism in the American Revolution. At the core, the musical tells a bootstrap narrative insisting that if immigrants and their descendents work hard and are worthy, they will succeed, much like Alexander Hamilton, or Lin-Manuel Miranda had. But allow me to rhapsodize upon Hamilton. The hip-hop-centered score draws from Tin Pan Alley, 60s British pop, R&B, and megamusicals. References range from Rodgers and Hammerstein to Biggie Smalls. Miranda's fluency with an array of popular musical



A scene from *Hamilton*, courtesy of the Public Theater.

**“The
multiracial
cast
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abolitionism in
the American
Revolution.”**

genres and repeated motifs produces a compelling, complex, and refreshing score. His previous Broadway musicals, *In the Heights* and *Bring It On*, similarly incorporated popular musical styles with musical theatre construction. Miranda is one of few composers on Broadway whose work sounds like what one might hear on pop radio stations.

But *In the Heights* is by no means the first hip-hop musical. There are predecessors such as the short-lived Tupac-inspired musical, *Holler If Ya Hear Me*, and the ground-breaking musicalization of the violent histories of African-Americans, *Bring in 'da Noise/Bring in 'da Funk*. Still, Miranda's score, with its cabinet meeting rap battles, *Les Misérables*-like drinking songs, and show-stopping numbers like “The Room Where It Happens,”

that seamlessly integrate rap and musical composition while driving the story forward, is without question the most accomplished hip-hop musical ever written.

The storytelling of a tour de force scene early in the musical when the two central women fall madly in love with Hamilton at first sight emblemizes the best of Miranda's dramaturgy, director Thomas Kail's stage craftsmanship, and choreographer Andy Blankenbuehler's narrative dance. In the first song, “Helpless,” Phillipa Soo as a deeply sympathetic Elizabeth Schuyler sings of feeling “Helpless” upon meeting Hamilton one night and their subsequent courtship. Soo's repetitive “I do”'s in the pop song foreshadows their wedding. In the second song, “Satisfied,” Renée Elise Goldsberry as her assertive, clever sister Angelica

Schuyler raps and remixes “Helpless,” revealing how she too has fallen in love with Hamilton but chose to support his romantic relationship with Elizabeth. The staging replays yet readjusts the previous courtship scenes. It uses backwards movement and sampling to reveal Angelica's perspective. The rotating stage quickens the pace and suggests a circular structure to the musical, as the characters revisit history, how it is told, and by whom. The beauty of these scenes left me in tears.

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Hamilton is shaped by the themes of “who lives, who dies, who tells your story.” Deeply concerned with his legacy, Hamilton ponders upon death so much “it feels more like a memory.” Aaron Burr, played with charm and gusto by Leslie Odom Jr., serves as the narrator consumed by Hamilton’s success and death by his hand. By having three duels structure the musical, Miranda builds in repetition and momentum for the ultimate fight between Hamilton and Burr, the chief way we tend to remember these founding fathers. One of Miranda’s chief projects with this musical is to expand upon that limited memory. He does so by honoring Hamilton and educating popular audiences about his history, especially to make the point that Hamilton was an immigrant of mixed-race background from the Caribbean. Furthermore, Miranda challenges

whitened understandings of the history of the United States though he tells a top-down narrative that celebrates hard work and an innate ability to achieve success. Additionally, that approach obscures indigenous and enslaved people who did not triumph as Hamilton did. In some of the opening lyrics, we learn:

*The ten-dollar founding father
without a father/
Got a lot farther by working a
lot harder/
By being a lot smarter/
By being a self-starter/
By fourteen, they placed him
in charge of a trading
charter.*

It is no great mystery then that this is a story that speaks to the Cheneys and Murdochs of the world. The musical repeatedly encourages entrepreneurship,

diligence, and the acts of writing and fighting in wars to “rise up” without acknowledging very real, material obstacles. I worry how this message justifies those with power as deserving, and those without as lazy. I am particularly concerned about how these justifications rationalize the oppression of immigrants, people-of-color, poor and working-class people, and women.

Many people in the United States and likely in the audience of Hamilton truly believe that the “American dream” may be easily obtained through hard work and savvy, and the musical endorses this belief.

The multiracial cast paradoxically demonstrates fought-for progress and discourages further radical action. The performers are totally amazing, and I want to single out Daveed Diggs who portrays Lafayette and Jefferson with incredible charisma and hilarious repartees. Moreover, seeing people of color in leading and leadership roles is inspiring and life-affirming. Considering that artists of color occupy only twenty percent of roles on and off Broadway, and that those roles tend to be small and/or stereotypical, the creative team of Hamilton should be applauded. At the same time, given that Black, Latina/o, Asian, and mixed-race actors are playing almost exclusively elite White characters, the casting somewhat asks spectators to forget the salience of race and racism to the actual founding of the United States. The actors do not play slaves or




A scene from Hamilton, courtesy of the Public Theater.

indigenous people. Neither do they discuss settler colonialism. In *Hamilton*, the founding of the United States is the feat of great men.

The cast also includes a couple of White actors whose whiteness tends to go unremarked in reviews. The characters that we are supposed to dislike for their opposition to the colonists' agitation are Samuel Seabury and King George, both played by white actors. On the one hand, this casting decision progressively overturns the typical move of racializing villains as being of color. On the other, it simplifies—even reverses—the racial politics of rebels versus the English crown and Tory sympathizers. The casting enables a sense of feel-good diversity and pride in the United States.

This troubles me because *Hamilton* goes to great lengths to portray Hamilton and the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson aside, as passionate abolitionists who failed to free the slaves only due to bad luck. The musical implies that slavery continued post-Revolutionary War largely because John Laurens, a genuine radical abolitionist, died. Although *Hamilton* was indeed part of the New York Manumission Society, he had also traded in slaves. Okieriete Onaodowan plays Hercules Mulligan with machismo verve, eliding that his undercover

intelligence came largely from one of his slaves. Finally, it was the English who promised freedom (though circumscribed) to Black slaves fighting on their side against the colonists.

I feel compelled to enumerate these points because *Hamilton* demands that we rejoice in the revolution as a multiracial triumph. This demand resonates with the ways people-of-color are interpolated into the United States national project upon certain conditions of assimilation, celebration, and exploitation. I would argue that we can indeed take pleasure in the seductive score, talented creative team, and virtuosic performers, though we must also critique the contours of this revolution. Let me be clear: the artistry and multiracial cast of *Hamilton* brilliantly stage an intricate, inclusive history of the founding fathers. At the same time, that artistry cannot be disconnected from the musical's conservative political messages. Inclusion rests on not only the erasure of dispossessed and enslaved people-of-color as well as the fathers' implication in institutionalizing slavery but also the celebration of bootstraps success and national patriotism. When *Hamilton* sings emphatically, "I am not throwing away my shot," the musical makes it easy for us to forget who never had a shot to throw away. 

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From Trash to Gold

Juan Hinojosa and Transitional Consumerism

Abigail Lapin Dardashti

Born and raised in Queens, New York, Juan Hinojosa is a multimedia artist specializing in collage—an artistic practice popularized by the major avant-garde movements, Cubism and Dada, that incorporates found objects, usually print forms including newspapers and photographs. Through this technique, Hinojosa explores the multi-faceted constructions of our contemporary entertainment: fashion, pop culture, TV, cinema, and advertisements of make-up, jewelry, and perfume. He merges highly circulated imagery with objects of our daily lives as New Yorkers: metro

cards, food wrappers, dry-cleaning labels, flattened cans, and various brands of soft drinks, alcohol, household goods, and frozen foods. Around the collages, Hinojosa oftentimes incorporates hand-made plastic and ink cartoonish globular forms that resemble eyes or flattened breasts.

Hinojosa's sleek and attractive work entails a complex repurposing of distributed and popular images. While these quotidian images are commonly imagined in commercial spaces, the artist often finds them in the same place: the New York trash. Hinojosa's process for finding

art material can be summarized through an anecdote. I remember once walking down the street with him near his apartment in Sunnyside. It was a hot day in August, and each time we passed a large pile of garbage, we momentarily held our breath to avoid the stench. While we walked past a pile of trash bags and discarded items in front of a red-brick apartment building, Juan stopped to inspect the waste. I started to get annoyed as the overwhelming odor enveloped us. He picked up a three-foot tall flat box that once contained some kind of sci-fi sword game, judging from the cover.



ART REVIEW

"Great!" he said. "I'll used this for my next collage."

In addition to finding items among trash, Hinojosa also "steals" objects; for example, he takes tags from clothing stores. Additionally, he now finds objects at Materials for the Arts (MFTA), where he is currently an artist-in-residence. He told me that at MFTA, he "feels like a diabetic in a candy store," but one who would nonetheless eat the candy. MFTA is a not-for-profit organization that makes donated materials available to art teachers and organizations with similar missions. It is located in an enormous warehouse space in Long Island City, which includes the organization's offices, classrooms, and

storage for materials. The available objects are very diverse, and range from furniture to strips of fur. The accumulated donations are arranged in endless rows of plastic and cardboard boxes. I think that it would probably take over a day to go through all the available materials.

In his work, Hinojosa does not segregate the objects found in the street from those collected at MFTA. Because of the vastness of the space and diversity of materials at MFTA, Hinojosa uses the same "hunting and gathering" techniques that he employs in his street searches. He once said to me, "I like to think that whatever I find, wherever I find it, the items, once they become part of my collage, are given a second chance to become something else. In a strange way, the discarded item is having a Cinderella moment."

This transformation of the image's purpose and meaning is at the center of Hinojosa's

work. Ranging from installation to framed altarpieces, his collages simultaneously embrace and critique consumerism and commodity distribution. In addition to food networks, Hinojosa explores the implications of religion and sexuality in our daily lives. The carefully chosen found objects transformed into artwork links Hinojosa's work to Dada, particularly Marcel Duchamp's display of readymades, which consisted of mundane objects such as a urinal displayed as a work of art. The bright colors and repetitions of commodities recall Pop artworks, most famously Andy Warhol's Campbell soup cans. Through a variety of items, Hinojosa critiques the consumption of art and the superficiality of the art market. With his address of serious issues comes a degree of humor, found in the caricaturesque forms and medley of images that would otherwise not be imagined together. Hinojosa's



oeuvre to date includes three major methodological transitions: installations, shaped frames, and altar-frames.


Hinojosa's early works are environmental installations that incorporate found objects connected by globular forms of different sizes and shapes. From afar, the visitor is engulfed by an imagined world consisting of everyday images inspiring hope or greed. Through close analysis, different superheroes, advertisements, and inconspicuous drawn lines are discerned. Hinojosa's 2010 *Battle for Gucci* installation at Taller Boricua, New York, extended over two walls, the floor and the ceiling—where a cut-out of Spiderman hung gently. The lines of globular forms stretched out in different directions telling different stories, sometimes through obvious phallic symbols such as daggers and secretions of consecutive small plastic paper clips.

Hinojosa's environments mirror the central strategies promoting consumerism: to immerse the buyer in a world of fantasy, desire, and hope. As Hinojosa elaborates through his body of work, the superficiality of consumerism conceals its consequences of oppression and inequality. The reiterated images in his work, such as the superheroes and make-up products, hide people and faces that are closer to our everyday existence. His work, in essence, represents the things we use to hide our humanity, which, like garbage, is gritty and full of inconsistencies.

The artist's organic transition from installation to shaped frames combined both methods in works such as *Men in Spandex (Part 2)*, 2011, which includes a collage on a white gesso canvas surrounded by lines and clusters of globular forms and more collages, with dripping paint and escaping paper clips. In his 2012 solo exhibition, *Ready for Their Stones*, at Allegra LaViola Gallery (now known as Sargent's Daughters), New York, Hinojosa created collages on seven-foot tall frames shaped as symmetrical triangles with another triangular indent at the top. Each work was placed in front of its own bright-colored velvet prayer kneelers.

While *Ready for Stones* obviously critiques the obsessive and devout consumption of clothing, celebrity gossip, food, and pop culture in general, it also mirrors the hypocritical piety historically employed by the Catholic Church to convert and maintain people in the faith. This history resonates highly in colonized places such as the Americas, where images of the crucifixion and the Virgin became as widespread as Prada logos today. Like the production processes of contemporary pop culture and fast food, widespread Christian images too concealed pervasive inequalities and oppression, such as the killing of indigenous people during the early conquest.

Interestingly, Hinojosa equates pop culture to religion in his work. For him, they are empires that employ strategies

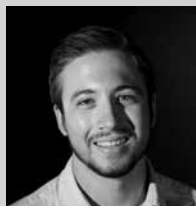
to elicit constant devotion, creating system of followers that benefit hegemonic structures. He explained, "As someone who was raised Catholic, I understand devotion; this generation (more than others) seem absolutely devoted to pop culture. I wouldn't be surprised if someday soon we started worshipping a fictional character as a deity." Maybe, in some form, this has already happened, as narrated in Hinojosa's recent work, which brings the collage back to traditional rectangular canvases. Three-dimensional objects including little dolls surround some of these works. This heightened and diversified visualization of commodities translates into an altar to pop culture. The current artworks also include objects collected during recent trips to Berlin and Zurich, such as subway tickets. While Hinojosa's oeuvre always incorporated globalized symbols of pop culture, through this new integration, he now internationalizes the commodities of everyday life. 

Hinojosa's work can be viewed on his website: <http://juanhinojosa.com/>

Hinojosa's MFTA residency will culminate in *Blonde Ambition*, a solo show on display from 15 December to 1 April, 2016.



Eylul Fidan Akinci is a PhD student in the Theatre Program. Her interests are dance and poetry. She strives to resist learned helplessness through her work.



Andrew Caringi is an MA student in the Journalism Program. His first film, Super Bronx Boys: Next Generation of Game Innovators, will debut this December. He currently resides in New York City.



Abigail Lapin Dardashti is a Ph.D. student in the Art History Program. Her research focuses on formations of ethno-religious and racial identity in the Americas.



Donatella Galella is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at the University of California, Riverside. Her research on racial politics in musical theatre has been published in Theatre Journal and Continuum.



Tristan K. Husby is a PhD student in the Classics Program. He currently lives in New Hampshire and is writing a dissertation on Greek and Roman slavery.



Ashoka Jegroo is a journalist born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. He has written for the Santiago Times and the New York Times' "The Local" blog. He has covered protests in Santiago, Chile and New York City.



Dadland Maye is a political asylee from Jamaica, a queer activist, unpublished novelist, and a PhD student in the English Program focusing on queer postcolonial movements of the Caribbean and African Diaspora.



Bhargav Rani is a PhD student in the Theatre Program, a teaching fellow at Hunter College, and the Managing Editor of the Advocate.



Denise Rivera is a MA student in the Liberal Studies program, International Studies track.



Catherine Roberts is an MA student in the Journalism Program. She likes to talk about gender, health and the environment.



Jen Tang is a PhD Candidate in the Psychology Program. She feels in colors, thinks through speech, and emotes through dance. She enjoys well-facilitated meetings, progressive Doodle polls, and "participatory process as outcome-innovation-revolution."

also:

Rhone Fraser is a lecturer at Howard University. His 2012 Temple University dissertation was a literary and historical analysis of periodical editors Pauline Hopkins, A. Philip Randolph and Paul Robeson.

Todd Fine is a PhD student in the History Program. He is the President of the Washington Street Historical Society, an organization dedicated to "Little Syria" and the Arab-American heritage of Downtown Manhattan.

LIFE-HACK

Congratulations — you've successfully defended your Ph.D. But before we can rightly call you "doctor," you still have to complete one more task (and I don't mean going on the job market). I'm referring to the process of proofing, binding, and eating your dissertation.

For many students toiling away at their dissertations, preparing to eat the dissertation is an afterthought. But in all the time that one spends combing through archives, collecting data, interviewing subjects, drafting, presenting at conferences, or whatever else, it can never hurt to have the delicious end result in mind.

Faculty advisers rarely have the pedagogical expertise to help students turn their tomes into a delectable meal. To be sure, most of them have successfully eaten their dissertations, but largely before the academic jobs crisis and new media turned the profession on its head. Being able to eat one's dissertation and being able to support another's eating are different things.

Too often, I've seen the common-sensical wisdom bandied about that a dissertation needs nothing more than simple additions: an heirloom tomato, a good olive oil, and a sprinkle of Maldon finishing salt. Sure, this is one way to prepare a dissertation, but it hardly scratches the surface of culinary possibility and, further, it trades in old-fashioned, Spartan idealisms. We must keep in mind two things: the dissertation is not a monograph, nor are all dissertations finished products waiting to be served. Most require some tinkering.

For an overly thick dissertation riddled with fat and sinew, a slow braise followed by a char finish can whittle the dissertation down and bring out its gamey goodness. For a thin dissertation, one might boil it into stock with root vegetables. Even still, slicing a finished dissertation thinly can yield any number of usages: pizza toppings, charcuterie, even sashimi. I'm

personally a big fan of preparations that yield leftovers — try dry roasting the dissertation with a spicy rub and finishing it on the grill.

I would be loathe to stop at preparation; frankly, many of us perform the eating itself wrong. As Michael Berube writes, "A dissertation should not be consumed haphazardly as though one is chowing down on a lengthy seminar paper. This is a meal to be consumed with attention and care, but also with an outlook on the future."

The most egregious misconception about eating the dissertation comes from those who still claim you must read it. Dissertations, delicious though they are, are not an elitist foodstuff. When I see people flipping through a dissertation, studying it like a well-researched book, I can't help but think it's going to waste. Perhaps foodie culture is to blame. Dissertations are much like short ribs or brussel sprouts — time-honored, and chef-centric, they have suffered from overblown pretension.

The most important kernel I can offer about eating your dissertation is have fun with it. There is no formula on how to consume and celebrate your freshly defended diss. There are as many dissertation preparations as there are tastes. Just remember: prepare with love and care, celebrate the occasion, consume mindfully, and most importantly, don't read it.

*You've been
eating your
dissertation
all wrong.*

