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**Graduate Center
Students Vote
to Boycott Israeli
Academic
Institutions
pg. 3**

**Combating
the Neoliberal
University With a Strike
pg. 18**

Editor in Chief

Dadland
Maye

Managing Editor

Bhargav
Rani

Layout Editor

Alessandro
Zammataro

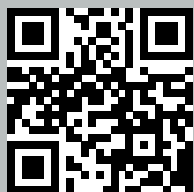
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Contents

EDITOR'S NOTE

Editorial by Bhargav Rani
pg. 3

CUNY NEWS

Inside the CUNY Pipeline
pg. 5
State of Your Public-School Education
pg. 7

DEBATE

Elitism in Supreme Court and Presidential Politics
pg. 9
Harmony and Mayhem in Somalia
pg. 14

FEATURES

Combating the Neoliberal University With a Strike
pg. 18

REVIEW

Stokely: A Life Through the Lens of Kwame Ture's Autobiography
pg. 26

The DSC votes to boycott Israeli academic institutions

Bhargav Rani

The Doctoral Students Council, at its plenary meeting on 15 April, passed a resolution calling for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions. The resolution is in response to a global call for a Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement issued by Palestinian civil society, and it binds the DSC, as a body, from establishing any official affiliations with Israeli academic universities or their official subsets. It reflects an organizational stand of solidarity on the part of the DSC against the Israeli state's occupation of Palestine and the violations of the rights of its people, and does not in any way endorse the boycott of individual Israeli students or scholars nor does it prohibit collaboration between GC students and Israeli individuals.

This is not the first time that such a resolution was put to vote at the DSC, and the debate at the plenary was as contentious as its first iteration. In October 2014, a BDS resolution against Israeli institutions failed to pass at the DSC plenary due to the lack of a quorate. The vote reflected the polarization of the DSC body on the issue with thirty-one voting yes, twenty-five no and ten abstentions. The latest resolution is significantly different from the old one in that it only calls for boycott and not divestments and sanctions, and secondly, it narrows its scope to specifically academic institutions. These changes proved effective in addressing some of the criticisms leveled against its earlier version, and the resolution passed with forty-two voting yes, nineteen no and nine abstentions.

This revisit to the resolution in its modified form in the last DSC plenary was largely precipitated by a recent letter to CUNY Chancellor James Milliken by two Jewish New York state assemblymen, Dov Hikind and David Weprin, both Democrats, demanding an immediate suspension of the group, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), from CUNY campuses. SJP is a pro-

Palestine student group with 126 chapters at various universities in the United States, and is the primary organizer of anti-Israel events on US college campuses. The letter, which has been endorsed by thirty-three other elected officials, Republicans and Democrats, described the group as a "toxic" organization that calls for "nothing short of the total destruction and elimination of the State of Israel."

Leading up to the much anticipated resolution, proponents of both factions of the debate were mobilizing support on social media platforms and in the student community. The advocates of the resolution have been operating a Wordpress page, <https://cunyboycott.wordpress.com>, detailing the context and implications of the resolution, providing links to relevant resources on the debate, and addressing some of the common criticisms. In the "FAQ" section, they note that, "academic boycott, nor BDS at large, does not imply an end to the Israeli state." To the allegations of anti-Semitism that are being leveled against the resolution, the advocates assert that the academic boycott is not anti-Semitic as it "has no ethnic or religious component because it targets the Israeli state and not individual people." Meanwhile, its opponents were mobilizing support for a petition (<http://cunydocsfordialogue.com>) calling for the DSC members to reject the proposed resolution again on the grounds that it would "violate long-established academic principles defending the free exchange of ideas, and will make our CUNY campuses divisive and uncomfortable for many of our Jewish and pro-Israel students and faculty."

At the beginning of the plenary on Friday, the opposing faction employed its now usual strategy of deferral by proposing a motion to table the resolution on the specious grounds that there "wasn't enough time

to deliberate,” despite the weeks of mobilizations. While the motion did not pass and the resolution was put to vote in the plenary, a particular disambiguation of this argument persisted throughout the debate with certain DSC representatives claiming there isn’t enough awareness of the resolution in the student community, particularly in the various programs. Such facile arguments seemed to garner some traction till Dominique Nisperos, one of the authors of the resolution, asserted that “it is the job of the DSC reps to generate awareness of the issues under discussion throughout the year,” and “a failure to do their job” cannot be presented as an excuse to defer the vote on the resolution.

The debate on the resolution at the Friday plenary, in its general contours, was substantially different from one triggered by its previous version in October 2014, which was inordinately preoccupied with the question of whether the DSC should even be involving itself in “political” issues instead of focusing on “issues that affect students.” While some traces of this misguided argument found its way into the Friday plenary, the debate on the revised resolution, for the most part, concerned itself with the efficacy and implications of academic boycott. The terms of the debate traversed a particularly slippery ground on the allied question of academic freedom, with both factions claiming to stand for the right to academic freedom even in their greatly divergent stands on the resolution.

But this muddled understanding of academic freedom that evinced in the debate begs the essential question – Whose academic freedom is in question here? The authors and proponents of the resolution read out statements in the plenary from Palestinian academics and scholars both at the GC and in the West Bank that invoke a very specific seventy-year history of violation of Palestinian people’s right to education. In addition, they pointed towards the complicity of Israeli academic institutions in “developing military hardware, weapons, drones, and surveillance technologies; offering military training courses and posts for high-ranking military officers; declaring, via their leaders and other surrogates, their support for Israeli military offensives; discrimi-

nating against Palestinian students; and repressing voices in support of Palestinians and their struggle for self-determination.”

As opposed to that, its opponents, even as they ignored this real, material history of violations of human rights and academic freedom in Palestine, mounted a defense of a largely abstract idea of academic freedom, exemplified by such blanket statements as “there can be no such thing as academic freedom with academic boycott.” Not only do such statements misrepresent the actual terms of the resolution, which reflects an organizational stand of solidarity and does not prohibit individuals from establishing linkages with Israeli academics and students, but they also fail to realize that academic freedom means nothing when deployed as a universal abstraction, divested from the social and political conditions of its existence. The question of academic freedom is brought into sharp focus precisely in instances of its encroachment and violation, and to stand in its defense is to necessarily stand for the rights of those who are marginalized and oppressed. That is, to stand for academic freedom is to necessarily stand for Palestinian people’s right to education, it is not to stand in defense of institutions that are complicit in the violation of these very rights.

This resolution comes at a crucial time. Recently, the New York State Senate passed a resolution approving Governor Andrew Cuomo’s proposed budget cuts of \$485 million USD from the CUNY system on the basis of anti-Semitism allegations leveled against the university. These allegations are largely baseless, as Gordon Barnes notes in this month’s feature article, and “while there are surely individual anti-Semites on CUNY campuses, there exists no organized or concerted effort to espouse anti-Semitic politics or propaganda.” The DSC’s successful adoption of the resolution at its last plenary denotes not just solidarity with Palestinian people but also signifies an unequivocal stand against the CUNY administration’s subservience to state interests at the expense of its student community.

INSIDE THE CUNY PIPELINE

Makeba Lavan

The CUNY Pipeline's website, www.diversiphd.com, highlights the difficulties faced in bridging undergraduate and graduate education, especially by members of underrepresented groups like myself – a black woman and a first generation college student. No one in my family knew the process behind graduate education. CUNY Pipeline demystifies the process while providing multiple levels of support. The \$5000 stipend support, for instance, allowed me to focus intensively on the application process over the summer of 2011. It also supported the mandatory participation in the Summer Institute, the research conference, and the completion of a thesis. Overall, the pipeline program prepares students to submit strong applications to graduate programs while educating them about the tools that create success in higher education.

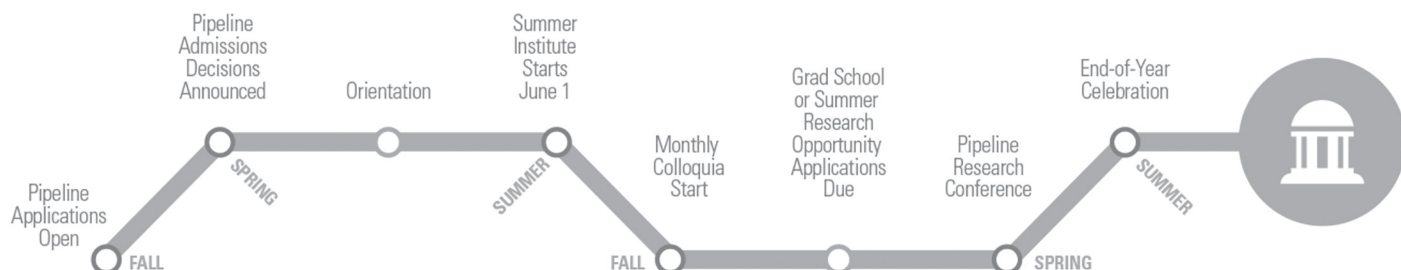
When I seriously began to consider applying to grad-

uate school as a junior at John Jay, I did not really know what that meant, but I knew that I wanted to teach. I also enjoy the idea of being a professional student. While many people shy away from this label, there is nothing derogatory about the label for me. The newfound enthusiasm for teaching and need for a deeper learning experience spurred me to become a McNair Scholar. The process was the most typical of CUNY processes. Very shortly into it, I learned that I needed a program that catered more to my goal of working in the humanities. As luck or providence would have it, I signed up to represent McNair at a program fair.

There, I first heard Dr. Donald Robotham discuss the CUNY Pipeline Program. This is what I'd been looking for. As soon as his speech was over, I approached Dr. Robotham about applying for the Pipeline program. Thereafter I spent a short intense time working on my



Getting to Grad School



Source: <http://www.diversiphd.com/about/>

application and was accepted. The rigor of Pipeline cannot be overstated. Every action is geared toward creating a strong, unique and thoughtful graduate application. To apply successfully, one's application must include research questions anticipate graduate work. This process should be accompanied by a mentor who can guide the work, which culminates into a thesis. Ideally, this thesis should be used as a writing sample.

The Pipeline Summer Institute (PSI) is a six-week summer research institute held at the CUNY Graduate Center. There, we are split into two seminar groups: either the social sciences or the humanities. The summer institute ran Monday through Thursday 9am-5pm. I was not ready! The classes required all of my brain power. At the height of summer, I spent most days moving between the graduate level seminars, Grad School

101, and GRE prep. In the seminars, we practiced critical thinking and worked to bring our writing to something approaching the graduate level.

The camaraderie helped us most when we felt overwhelmed. We would meet in the cafeteria and gripe about the amount of work that goes into applying for graduate school. I greatly appreciated the seminar style of the courses because it forced me to think critically about everything I read. The mentors in Grad School 101 guided us through the entire graduate school process. We could ask them any questions we had along the way. Everyone was accessible. In terms of the GRE prep, I've never been a good test-taker. I know many of those tests are supposedly logic based, but in my case, they proved that logic is not universal. Taking regular tests provided me with a level of access that

I would not have had outside the program. Because of this, I grew quite comfortable with the format and knew what to expect on my test date. And happily, my score was literally the same as my higher practice test scores.

After the summer institute, I created a spreadsheet for all of my application information. The Pipeline mentors, two in particular, continued to help me fine-tune my writing sample and statement of purpose. I don't actually remember the Fall of 2012, because it was such a blur of writing/revising and applying. My theory is that the amount of stress I sustained during that time led me to blur out the details of those four months. I truly admire those who apply to graduate school on their own. Thankfully, because of Pipeline, I did not have to.

State of Your Public-School Education

Carlos Camacho and Cecilia M. Salvi



The Graduate Center isn't Columbia. Or NYU. You learn that the hard way. The first time your paycheck is late so you can't pay rent. Or you're running around the five boroughs dropping off adjunct applications. You also experience one of the thousand other ways CUNY reminds you that you are at a public institution. The phrase "lack of funds" is part of the common register that issues reminders of its public-school status. It is especially present in conversations when the administration explains why there are no new faculty lines or tuition remissions after the fifth year. And at a school whose strategic plan consistently boasts of "a reputation for world-class research," even dissertation fellowships aren't safe. They were cut from ninety offers last year to forty this academic year though subsequently restored in March. The obstacles graduate students face are compounded by the reality that many are unfunded or underfunded. This means we eventually end up adjuncting in the CUNY system. And while we might enjoy teaching, it's difficult to get through a doctoral program carrying a heavy financial burden

and being poorly compensated. Time-to-degree has become an indicator of student success even as programs and services necessary for that completion are diminishing. This academic year, CUNY schools faced three percent cuts across the board, which at the Graduate Center amounted to over USD \$3.5 million dollar reduction. Economic emergencies such as these are the perfect excuse for increasing tuition, and CUNY's Board of Trustees was ready to move forward with such a plan at

the senior colleges. Additionally, CUNY administration has started implementing other measures to increase its funding, all of which dig deeper into students' pockets. Last May, the Board approved "excellence" and "academic" fees all across the system that increased the overall cost of attendance. Some of these are seemingly modest, but the most recent one will cost some students at the CUNY School of Medicine \$1,600 more a year. Our increasing dependence on student-generated income –





over the last few decades, tuition has come to account for almost fifty percent of CUNY's income – is often overlooked in media coverage and CUNY press releases. In fact, students are told paying for an education is beneficial. As one Board of Trustee member told University Student Senate delegates in a December 2015 meeting, paying tuition was “investing in yourself” (because CUNY won't). And most recently at the Graduate Council meeting in March 2016, President Robinson informed members that the extra income generated by the Master's degree programs helped pay for the dissertation year fel-

lowships, and an increase in M.A. students is the (only) way to financially secure the Graduate Center's future (translation: you're cash cows!). As adjuncts and student workers, we have more in common with the students we teach than we usually think. They too work multiple jobs, have family members to care for, and struggle to make ends meet. For many working-class students and students of color, affordability is the key to success or failure. With continual tuition and fee increases, the students this system should be serving, will be priced out in the same way that communities are priced out through gentrification. But before you think to yourself that these are tough economic times and maybe asking students to pay more isn't such a bad idea, remember that Chancellor Milliken's monthly rent (which we pay for) is what an adjunct makes a year teaching six classes. What seems like small cuts or increases are salt rubs on already hemorrhaging wounds. There's an undeniable disconnect between the mission of CUNY as a public institution and the administration's policies. You see the “CUNY Value” ads on subways and buses, which boast that two-third of CUNY undergraduates graduate debt free, as you go to teach a class for under \$3,000 (and you sure as hell aren't graduating debt free). Even as the word “diversity” slips effortlessly from the lips of our President, the Dean K. Harrison awards for students from underrepresented groups which were abruptly withdrawn in 2014 are still not fully restored, faculty lines remain vacant, and a very

small number of students of color benefit from the funding packages designed for diversity candidates. In this context, the “CUNY Value” has come to mean undervaluing our collective labor, undermining us as legitimate researchers, and under-serving the communities of color and working-class communities of New York.

Given that public higher education is the principal way historically marginalized communities have achieved success and economic independence in this country, this administration is complicit in perpetuating economic and racial inequality through policies that directly impact access to higher education. (Another interesting tid-bit of information: members of the Board of Trustees recently defended former Chancellor Matt Goldstein's “golden parachute” retirement package, valued at just under \$550,000 a year, by claiming that he had been underpaid as a chancellor. We cannot let the continuous pricing-out of students while paying lip-service to diversity (as the “CUNY Value” ads do) become a reality. We also cannot continue to emulate the elite institutions with which we share a city, since they do not have the same responsibility to historically underrepresented communities nor the same history. The diversity of the students and faculty of the Graduate Center should reflect the diversity of the New York City community whose mission it is to serve. The Graduate Center isn't Columbia. Or NYU. And it should never be.

Elitism in Supreme Court and Presidential Politics

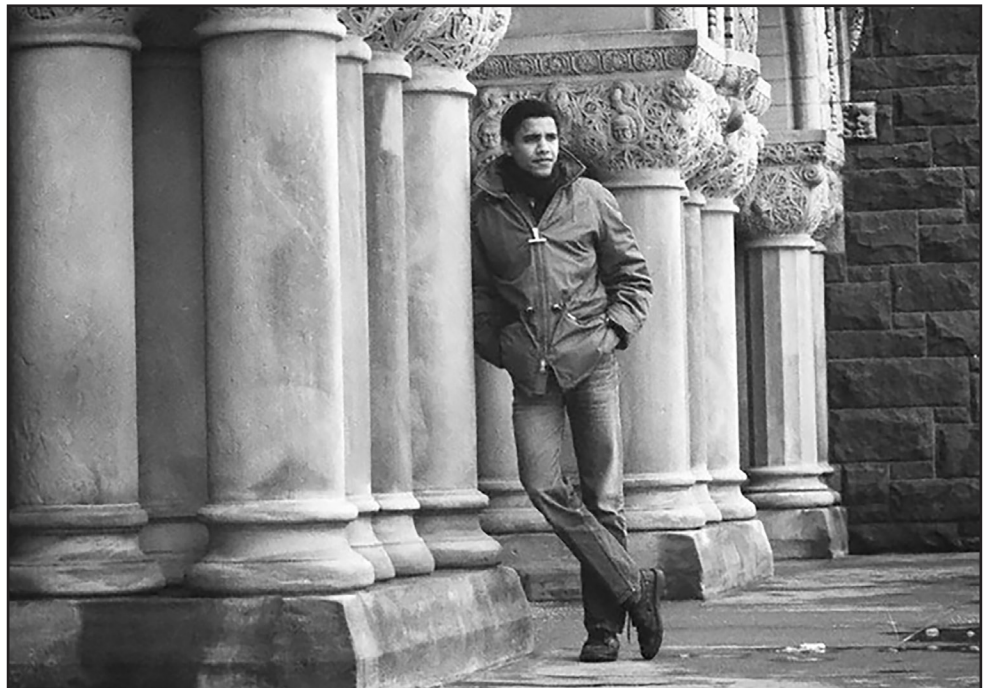
Shawn Simpson

We now have an African-American president. And if current trends are any indication, it seems that this November we might have our first female president. Perhaps soon enough we'll also have our first Latino, Native American, or gay president (if that hasn't happened already that is – see the recent historical debate on Buchanan's sexuality). In all, this is a welcome change in the face of our nation's highest office and in the attitudes of the American electorate. But in the modern era, another change has yet to come. The last eight American presidents, besides being White, straight, and male, share another common feature: each of them is the beneficiary of a so-called "elite" education. You can even make the list eleven if you count Lyndon B. Johnson's brief stint at Georgetown University Law Center. Since Truman – who didn't even have a college degree – each president has attended at least one private educational institution. Obama attended Harvard Law School, Columbia University, and before that Occidental College, and he

was a student at the most prestigious private high school in Hawaii. His opponent in the last election also shared a privileged past; Romney too was Harvard educated, attaining both a JD and MBA from the school and attending Stanford and BYU before that.

Take a look at the rest of our post WWII presidents, and the pattern becomes obvious. Both

Bushs went to Yale and one of the most elite private high schools in the nation, Phillips Academy. Clinton went to George Washington University and Yale Law School. Before them, Reagan attended the private Eureka College. Carter went to the highly selective United States Naval Academy. Gerald Ford is a Yale Law School alumnus. Nixon attended a private college and



Obama as president of the Harvard Law Review. Credit: Harvard University News Office

Duke's law program. Yes, Lyndon Johnson didn't graduate from Georgetown, and he attended the modest Southwest Texas State Teachers College (now Texas State University), but he also wasn't elected to office the first time around. And his predecessor Kennedy? Well, we all know he went to Harvard. In fact, the two Democratic front-runners in this year's election also hold elite credentials: Hillary having attended Yale and Wesleyan University and Bernie Sanders having attended the University of Chicago.

Some questions are worth asking at this point. Why do we see this trend? Why are there so few public school presidents? Would Obama have gotten as far in politics if he had attended, say, the University of Hawaii and Berkeley's law school? The answer to this last question is probably not. And the answer

would likely be the same if we asked whether America today would consider electing a modern-day Lincoln, a man with no formal education at all, and yet Lincoln is often ranked as one of the nation's greatest presidents.

Sadly, a similar trend holds true for our Supreme Court as well. Although we now have three female justices, one Black, one Hispanic, three Catholic, and two Jewish justices, each of the eight justices attended the law schools of Harvard, Columbia, or Yale – no public school justices, and no one outside even the Ivy League. In fact, the last Supreme Court justice without any private school credentials was Charles Evans Whittaker (University of Missouri, Kansas), nominated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower back in 1957.

This status quo has had a sort of trickle down effect. Most Su-

preme Court clerkships now go to students from the Harvard-Stanford-Yale bubble. From 2005-2015, Harvard, Stanford, Yale, and the University of Virginia contributed the most clerks to the Supreme Court. In 2011, twenty-six of the thirty-six Supreme Court clerks came from private law schools, eighteen were from Ivy League schools, and twelve were Harvard graduates. In 2012, Yale Law School had, by a large margin, the highest percentage of graduates in federal clerkships, followed by Stanford and Harvard. Our newest Justice, Elena Kagan, has, in her entire time at the Court, had just one clerk from outside Harvard, Stanford, and Yale, a student from Berkeley.

There is even a bit of feedback going on here as getting a Supreme Court clerkship and an elite education are seen as al-



An interior view of the courtroom of the U.S. Supreme Court Credit: Alex Wong / Getty Images

most necessary credentials for a future Supreme Court nomination. It seems that to get ahead you have to be ahead. Unfortunately, Clarence Thomas and the late Antonin Scalia appear to be the only justices openly vocal about this problem. Thomas is also one of the few justices who actively seeks out Supreme Court Clerk candidates from outside the Ivy-league circle – examples in recent years include students from the University of Virginia, Duke, and BYU.

Here's another set of questions. What has gone on in American life to allow this situation? And what does allowing it to continue tell young Americans?

There are undoubtedly a number of reasons for the current state of things. The Halo effect, a cognitive bias in which an individual's overall impression of a person, the company

they work for, the brand of their degree, etc. influences their feelings and thoughts about that person's character or qualities, is probably one of them. Consider how when you hear someone is from Australia you might be more likely to think of him or her as probably the sort of person who is adventurous or tough. But probably other things play a role too such as educational nepotism and the misguided belief that if you didn't go to one of the "top" schools, then you just must not be good enough, and conversely that if you did go, then you must be.

Why do I say misguided? A few moments reflection should make this obvious. It's well known that getting into an elite law program, for example, all but requires the right scores on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) and the right grades in undergraduate, and that com-

ing from an elite undergraduate institution with letter writers from such a school brings an extra advantage. But getting the right score on the LSAT is easier if you have the money for expensive LSAT prep classes and the time to take those classes – things students who don't come from well-off families and who have to work their way through college are often without. Noah Baron makes a similar argument in an article for the Huffington Post.

An analogous situation seems to hold for the elite undergraduate education that helps increase an applicant's odds and helps the student garner the right connections. Getting into an elite undergraduate school is a lot easier if you went to an elite private high school and could afford SAT prep courses and tutors. These in turn are much easier to obtain if you

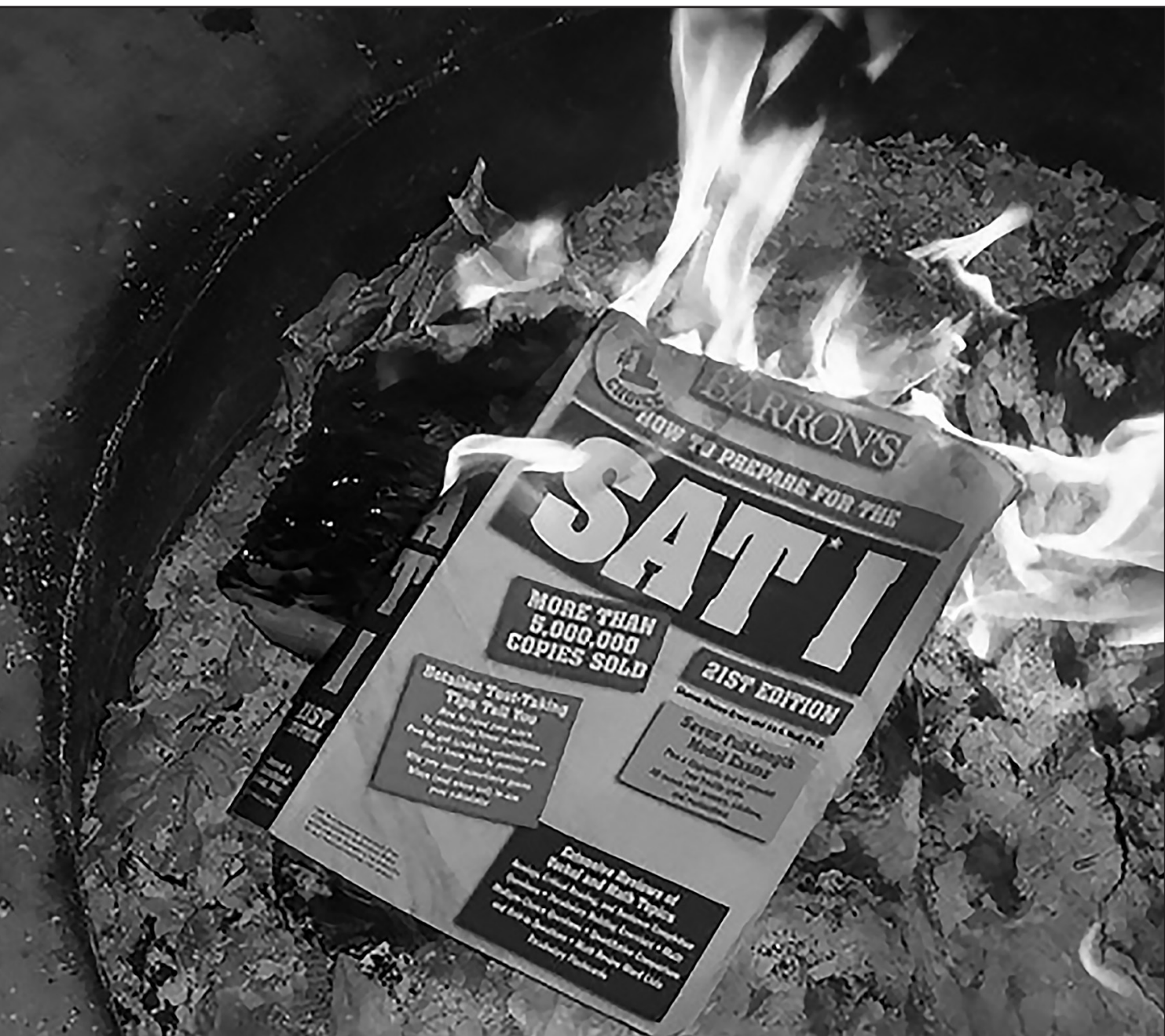


come from a wealthy background. Again, to get ahead it appears you have to be ahead – or at least that, in the beginning, your parents need to be. Privilege perpetuates privilege.

A troubling aspect of this current fact of American politics is that it means that the people who are elected to rep-

resent the citizens are often those from the upper and upper-middle classes, people who are not actually representative of the majority of Americans at all, people who haven't lived the experience of the average American economically and socially. No wonder so many politicians just don't seem to get it.

One might suggest that my very point about test scores inadvertently makes the case that the most qualified persons get into the Ivy Leagues. This, however, is to make an assumption regarding what counts as being the most qualified. I think most of us would agree that good scores, in part thanks to privi-



Credit: MARLITH'S / FLICKR

lege, shouldn't be the mark. We need to look elsewhere for what makes a student the right fit; we need to take more than scores, schools, and grades, into consideration; we need to look also at their backgrounds.

Getting back to a question I asked earlier, what does the broader situation say to young Americans, those who will inherit our political system and its problems? It appears to tell them that to have a real chance in politics, to make a difference in that way, the odds are they'll need to go to one of these so-called "elite" institutions. For those in the working and lower-classes, this means taking out massive loans – something much riskier for someone of that economic background – to attend schools with a majority upper-class student body – a student body around which there's a good chance these students will feel out of place, especially if their parents also didn't graduate from a four-year institution. It also tells many of our young people that politics is still a game mostly for the rich and well-connected. It tells them that their opinion doesn't really matter, and that perhaps they shouldn't get involved – after all, who will listen to them if they don't have the right credentials? In the real world, Mr. Smith usually doesn't go to Washington.

Adding to the problem, the status quo is good for the "prestigious" private schools as it attracts more students to them and helps to cement their power and influence. For them,

there is no incentive for change here. It is also bad for the public schools – the ones we're supposed to care about – as the best and the brightest tend to be drawn away from them, and the parents who want the best for their children and who can afford it tend to, if they can, forgo keeping their children in the public school systems – a move that would likely decrease public school quality – and instead push their children into expensive private educational institutions that they perceive as better. Overall this isn't good for the country, and especially for the average American. There are many kinds of diversity. Educational diversity would likely strengthen the presidency and the nation's highest court, rather than weaken it, as has racial, ethnic, gender and religious diversity. That said, what could we do about it? Here are just a few suggestions.

First, we as a people can educate ourselves about this trend and its implications. We can educate ourselves about things like the Halo effect, and about this hidden-in-plain-sight leg-up that many of our candidates – Black, white, gay or straight, may have. But more importantly, we can look at the candidates as a whole and look past how they look just on paper. After a talk at the American University Washington College of Law, Justice Antonin Scalia once admitted to a student how he chose his court clerks: "From the law schools that basically are the hardest to get into. They admit the best and the brightest, and

they may not teach very well, but you can't make a sow's ear out of a silk purse. If they come in the best and the brightest, they're probably going to leave the best and the brightest." The assumption backing Scalia's remark is that only the best and brightest get into those schools, and yet we know that's not true. He's also assuming that it's not worth looking for those who are the best and brightest but still choose not to attend these elite schools, or that something like this could even have occurred. What would be better is if he and the people took the underlying attitude in his quote – about sow's ears and silk purses – more seriously. It's not the school that makes the student, it's the student who makes the student. We shouldn't look at the school; we should look at the individual. Lincoln didn't need a college education. And we all know George W. Bush had one of the best. Bright student into a state university, bright student out. Privileged but no brighter into Yale, privileged but no brighter out.

Harmony and Mayhem in Somalia

Denise Rivera

Political stability presents itself as a question of privilege for a country like Somalia, which has been incessantly plagued by internal conflicts and terrorist activities of the notorious Al-Shabaab. On 5 March, 2016, the United States launched a series of drone airstrikes on an Al-Shabaab training camp in Raso, a town north of Mogadishu. The camp came under attack as it was purportedly recruiting and training fighters against the military forces of both the United States and the African Union (AU). The assault led to 150 casualties, none of them civilians. There have been twelve drone strikes in Somalia since 2003, but the recent strike stands out to be the most effective counterterrorist engagement yet. These drone strikes are used to eliminate al-Shabaab as a threat in order to assist Somalia in hopefully being one step closer to political stability. However, these actions can also be viewed as an opportunity for the United States in redeeming itself in demonstrating to the world that it has the strength and capability to restore order within a failed state.

The drone strikes conduct-

ed by the United States continues to generate controversy and harsh public scrutiny. Last month, the Stimson Task Force finished investigating the U.S. Drone Policy, which received an “F” grade for failing to meet and improve the following criteria: releasing information on drone strikes; establishing a proper legal basis under both domestic and international law for using the drone program; and better oversight and accountability for targeted strikes that do not occur within battlefields. The Stimson Task Force criticized the Obama administration for not being transparent in giving more details about drone attacks (i.e. location, death tolls, agency conducting the drone strikes, number and identities of civilians who were killed by drone strikes), and for the lack of official government documents that could provide the details of court orders that sanction the use of the U.S. lethal drone program and its activities. Although the usage of drone strikes has always been up to debate, the views of Somalis themselves do not seem to be heard in expressing their views on how counterterrorist strategies against Al-Shabaab

are really effective.

Establishing transparent alliances and maintaining good relations with strong allies remains an essential ingredient to creating the perfect recipe for counterterrorist strategy. Last summer, U.S. President Obama paid a visit to Kenya and discussed the collaboration between the United States and Kenya in organizing counterterrorism efforts in Somalia through training and funding of security forces. Since there is no U.S. embassy in Somalia, the position of U.S. Special Representative for Somalia has been created to operate from the U.S. embassy in Kenya. We never truly recovered from the disastrous outcome of Operation Gothic Serpent, so this diplomatic maneuver is necessary to have some legitimate space for being involved in Somali affairs. Kenyan President Kenyatta agrees with U.S. President Obama and acknowledges the need to reduce the risk of Al-Shabaab’s activities.

In April 2013, Al-Shabaab attacked the campus of Garissa University College in Kenya, resulting in 148 casualties, and in September 2013, sieged the Westgate shopping mall in

Nairobi for several days, resulting in sixty-seven casualties. Kenya currently has approximately 4,000 troops in Somalia to support AU forces fighting in the region. Combatting terrorism rooted in militant Islamic ideology has proven to be a top priority for both Kenya and the United States. The terror attacks of the Islamic State (ISIS) and the prominent threat that it poses has caused the other African nations to be under the microscope of U.S. counterterrorist policies. Al-Shabaab is indifferent towards ISIS and only focuses on the domestic objective of establishing an Islamic state in Somalia. Although no partnership between ISIS and Al-Shabaab has been recognized, such an alliance would definitely prove to be very wor-

risome in terms of international security.

Al-Shabaab, which means “the youth” in Arabic, is Al Qaeda’s affiliate in Somalia and operates primarily out of the country’s southern and central regions. It has remained susceptible to clan politics, internal divisions, and shifting alliances. It has been argued that Al-Shabaab is the product of the lack of a stable, central Somali government when former President Barre was exiled in 1991, supporting the notion that strong institutions and a central government is essential to combat the space of extremism and anarchy caused by constant battles amongst several warring clan factions. In addition, the high unemployment rates and the region’s suscepti-

bility to droughts and famines provide some form of steady income and access to food and other forms of aid (sometimes stolen from humanitarian organizations) to Al-Shabaab’s supporters.

Al-Shabaab does not recognize the Somali Federal Government, and maintains a hostile position towards the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeepers and other Western forces for supporting this government. AMISOM has also been affiliated with Ethiopian troops against whom Al-Shabaab still harbors strong resentment due to their constant territorial disputes and interventions. In June 2013, it succeeded in attacking a United Nations compound in Mogadishu, killing twenty-two



Al-shabaab recruits in the Somalian capital, Mogadishu, following their graduation. Credit by Faith Karimi, CNN

people. This demonstrates that Al-Shabaab doesn't formally recognize international organizations, even if their intents are solely for humanitarian assistance. In February 2014, it claimed responsibility for an attack on Somalia's presidential palace with a car bomb and armed assailants that killed twelve people. This terrorist group has proven to be a relentless non-state actor in undermining Somali President

Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud and has no qualms in attacking international organizations.

Since 2007, AU troops (from Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Djibouti and other African nations) have been in the country to assist various UN-backed governments to fight Al-Shabaab. This force falls under the AMISOM mandate, which was set up by the United Nations to provide security for the Somali government and reduce Al-Shabaab's

terrorist activities. The funds to support AMISOM's activities have been paid for mostly by Western governments. Although the role of AMISOM and its intentions are solely for the benefit of Somalia, one cannot help but wonder if these funds provided to them come with strings attached.

Furthermore, there seems to be a constant shift in control of Somali regions between Al-Shabaab and AMISOM. AMISOM



has been successful in winning territory originally under Al-Shabaab control and providing support for the Somali government. Yet there have been some instances where Al-Shabaab regained control of certain towns once AU forces pulled out. This seems to reveal that AMISOM lacks the necessary resources to provide proper law enforcement to protect Somali citizens. Nevertheless, AMISOM has been able to put pressure and reduce the threat of Al-Shabaab as a terrorist group, which also succumbs to internal fractures due to grievances over clan politics. The demise of al-Shabaab due to the combination of clan rivalries and external actors is an optimistic proposition that remains to be seen.

On 24 March, 2016, the Security Council voted in favor of extending the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) until March 2017. Some of the objectives of UNSOM are to be more connected with Somali civil society, establish secure and fair electoral procedures, and review UN presence in Somalia for a smoother transition into the next phase of state-building by the end of January 2017. This proposal sounds lovely and enthusiastic as it sets to create a strong sovereignty within Somalia, but the future will determine whether this mandate will be successful or another failed agenda. This mandate also outlines a comprehensive approach to reduce Al-Shabaab's threat in accordance with international human rights law, international

refugee law and international humanitarian law. But given the recent drone strikes and the lack of transparency as to whether the strikes were legal, it remains to be seen to what extent the mandate holds the United States accountable. Other non-state domestic actors to consider in their relationship towards Al-Shabaab are Somaliland and Puntland. Due to the collapse of former President Barre's regime, certain clans united themselves and declared an independent Republic of Somaliland (located in northern Somalia) in May 1991. Although not recognized by any government, Somaliland has maintained stability and has established a constitutional democracy. To the east is the neighboring state of Puntland, which declared itself an autonomous state in 1998. It has also made strides in reconstructing a legitimate, representative government. While Somaliland seeks international recognition as an independent sovereignty and Puntland doesn't, they both seek international support in their secessionist aspirations and resolving border disputes.

In response to the growing threat of Al-Shabaab's presence within its territory, Puntland launched the Galgala campaign in 2014, which sought to regain some territory that was under Al-Shabaab control and was eventually successful. Although Somaliland denied supporting Al-Shabaab, it was reported that Puntland security officials found Somaliland banknotes in the pockets of Al-Shabaab members. Whether this is true or

not, it is vital for the Somali Federal Government to collaborate with both states in order to gain more support in eradicating Al-Shabaab and to prevent further civil disputes in the future.

One solution to resolving this crisis of terror in Somalia may be through a proper reconciliation process. By meeting with both the leaders and members of Al-Shabaab, the Somali government and international actors could gain a deeper insight into the mindset of what makes Al-Shabaab so appealing. The actions of Al-Shabaab and the self-declared states of Somaliland and Puntland demonstrate the strong disconnect between the Somali Federal Government and Somali citizens. Kenneth Menkhaus, a political science professor at Davidson College, provides a great synopsis the situation in Somalia: "the Horn of Africa presents extraordinarily complex political and security dilemmas, for which there's no obvious answer. The question really is which is the least bad choice, and how can you kick open doors which, down the road, could present opportunities for conflict resolution." Fighting terror with terror seems to provoke aggressive military reactions and further failures in establishing peace in Somalia. Given the history of its past military interventions and further uncertainty as to how to create Somalia a peaceful nation, stability seems like an idea of a perfect utopia that will never be accomplished.

FEATURES

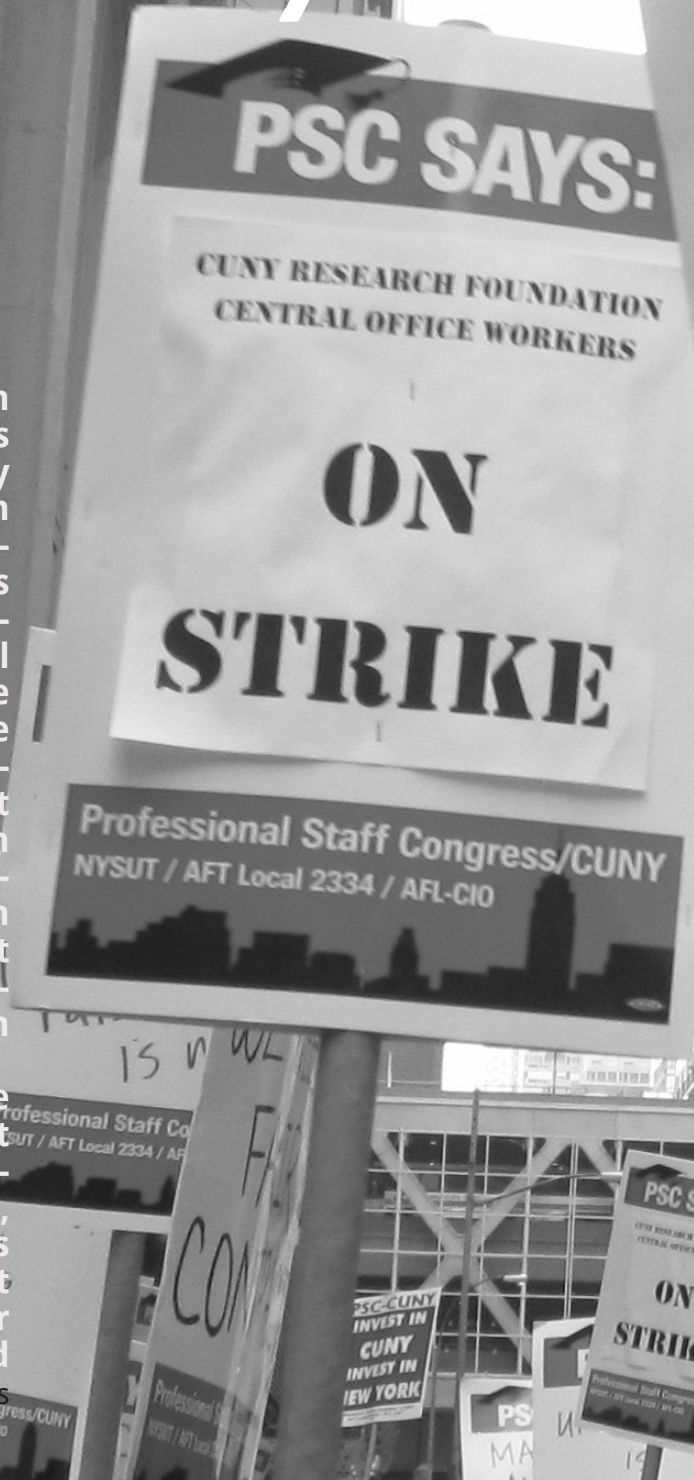
Combating the Neoliberal University With a Strike

Gordon Barnes

Capitalism and the University

In a capitalist society, tertiary education serves two essential purposes, with universities functioning as their quintessential vehicle - they reproduce social relations prevalent in a given society, and they produce knowledge that perpetuates dominant ideologies. The first occurs through knowledge transmission from professor to student in conjunction with the cultural conventions inherent in a capitalist society. The second results from research agendas that serve ruling class interests. Though there has been productive pushback against these agendas, it is not enough to transform higher education into an emancipatory social endeavor. Moreover, the increasing neoliberalization of higher education in the U.S. since the 1970s is an additional rampart that must be destroyed if post-secondary education is to produce human social emancipation rather than capitalist mores and ideologies.

Neoliberalization is in full swing at CUNY where the management has not offered a viable contract to workers for nearly a decade. The Professional Staff Congress which represents professors, adjuncts, HEOs and graduate students but, has been without a contract for six years. The District Council 37 represents over 10,000 myriad other workers at CUNY, maintenance, janitorial, and a variety of other public sector workers, but has



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been one for seven. At the same time, CUNY has employed some of the most repugnant socio-political forces advocating U.S. imperialism, including David Petraeus as an “adjunct” at Macaulay Honors College. And, arguably, there is still collusion between CUNY administration and the NYPD in a domestic spying program aimed at Muslim students. Exemplifying this neoliberal character is the seizure of Morales/Shakur Center by CUNY administration in October of 2013, the brutal attack on student protestors

initiated by CUNY security and the NYPD at Baruch College in 2011, and the proposed ban and curtailment of the democratic right to protest on CUNY campuses. These developments are truly a litany of moves and maneuvers by CUNY administration and government officials to further the neoliberalization of a university once known as the “Harvard of the proletariat.”

How then do we combat the university’s neoliberal turn in the immediate moment? And what strategies can transform and re-

tool the capitalist university in the long term to serve the socio-economic interests of the working classes and the oppressed? Given the multiple crises at CUNY, we are on the cusp of being able to adequately address the problem of neoliberalization in order to reconstitute the institution. There have, of course, been various struggles to this end; yet, none have been able to fundamentally reverse the neoliberal trends. The potentiality of a strike by the PSC, DC 37, and other unions in conjunction with broader support from labor and student activist movements can begin to assuage the current crises in addition to lay the foundation for future struggles.

The Crisis at CUNY

In *The Advocate’s* last issue, Conor Tomás Reed’s “CUNY’s Largest Crisis in Forty Years,” succinctly lays out the catastrophe at CUNY and how the neoliberal turn continually exploits adjuncts, students of color, and the wider strata of CUNY workers. The problems inherent with university education under capitalism, including but not limited to the aforementioned issues, have been plaguing tertiary education in this country generally, and CUNY quite acutely. The most pressing issue at hand is the impasse CUNY management has claimed in response to the ongoing negotiations with the PSC. The PSC has called for a strike authorization



Source: <https://cunycontingents.wordpress.com/>

vote, and though this vote would be to prepare for a potential strike, not for an actual strike, it is an escalation which should be viewed as progressive and necessary.

CUNY's administrators have cited the planned strike authorization vote as the cause of turning labor arbitration over to the Public Employees Relation Board (PERB), a gubernatorially appointed body that also enforces the Taylor Law. The Taylor Law is a New York State statute, which makes strikes by public employees illegal, to be penalized with docked pay, fines, and imprisonment (the most recent imprisonment of a labor activist was during the 2005 MTA strike). This anti-democratic law is held as a looming threat over public employees and offers management a significant advantage during labor negotiations. More confounding is that the governmental organization which implements this law, the PERB, is also the agency, which oversees negotiations when such an "impasse" arises.

The case of CUNY and the PSC is no different. Simply put, in turning over arbitration to the PERB, CUNY management sees no viable path to negotiating a "fair" or "equitable" labor contract. Moreover, CUNY management has not so tacitly alluded to the potentiality of "serious negative consequences" if the PSC does go on strike. This should convince anyone who maintains the view that continued dialogue with CUNY administrators is necessary to achieving radical transfor-

mations at the university, or even broadly defined progressive labor relations, that such engagement is predicated on a tremendous dichotomy of power. Bargaining in "good faith" wasn't and won't be on the table. If anything, the latest assaults on the rights of workers at CUNY beyond the issues of the contract negotiation "impasse" and the nearly decade long period without a contract only prove this.

In recent memory, Andrew Cuomo, the Democratic Governor of New York acquiesced to the popular demand of a \$15 USD minimum wage at the State University of New York. This galvanized substantial protests at CUNY, and while the workers of the City University have ostensibly won the minimum in the aftermath of the protests, the timetable for its implementation is lamentable. In all actuality, by the time CUNY workers (and other workers, both public and private sector) receive the increase to \$15 USD per hour (between 2018 and 2022), it will be the proverbial "too little, too late." This paltry remuneration, when one considers inflation projections (1.6-2.4% increase in consumer price inflation over the next five years), means nothing. It is in fact a tactic being used by Democratic politicians to preempt and quell any potential labor unrest.

Another recent affront to the wider body of CUNY faculty, staff, and students has been the proposed \$485 million USD budget cut. Linked to purported anti-Se-

mitic activities, speech, and agitation, the NYS Senate voted to slash this funding to senior colleges. The allegations of anti-Semitism are largely baseless. While there are surely individual anti-Semites on CUNY campuses, there exists no organized or concerted effort to espouse anti-Semitic politics or propaganda. In spite of their problematic political and tactical positions, Students for Justice in Palestine are correct in their assertion that there exists a conflation between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. And for good measure, SJP is also quite correct to agitate against the scourge of Zionism. This conflation, willful or otherwise, has led the state government to enact such draconian measures. In effect, the CUNY administration is at the beck and call of the government (both Republican and Democrat) in instances such as this, and at others, in apparent collusion—as was the case with the NYPD spying program. Again, this relation to capitalist politics is not an anathema, but rather how the capitalist university is supposed to function, particularly so under the auspices of an unsavory agenda of neoliberal restructuring.

As Reed rightly pointed out in his article, the path which CUNY is traversing is not solely due to Chancellor James Milliken, the Board of Trustees, or the plethora of administrative cogs at CUNY Central and across the twenty-four campuses. The Democratic Party represented by Cuomo and New York City May-

or Bill de Blasio, and variegated private business concerns also have vested interests in maintaining the general course the university is currently on. Therefore, the struggle against the neoliberalization of CUNY as well as the larger struggle to transform higher education under capitalism cannot be provincial in nature. Put another way, the object of our collective ire must not be simply CUNY administration or the Board of Trustees, if we are to effectively challenge the status quo. Rather, combating the structures of capitalist education in addition to winning internal battles at CUNY is the only viable way to transform the university. In order to gain any lasting social or economic improvements at CUNY, and in order to avoid ephemeral and piecemeal reforms (which will be invariably whittled away once won), the rank-and-file (adjuncts, students, HEO's, professors, and other campus workers) must be able to wield its social power. It remains that the most efficacious way of mobilizing the social power of those who have only a modicum is the strike. Only through a strike, in the short-term, will the neoliberal variant of the capitalist university be effectively challenged.

A Question of Social Power: CUNY Struggle

CUNY workers, as they relate to management, have very limited power individually and in small groups. However, collective ac-

tion opens up an avenue for real, tangible changes. A smattering of different groups with varied political agendas and philosophies have continuously been engaged in agitating and propagandizing in an effort to foment some sort of collective resistance to the recent neoliberal trends evident at CUNY. The most recent manifestation of this was the formation of CUNY Struggle, an amorphous grouping of leftists, primarily students and adjunct professors. Its inaugural meeting on 12 March at the Graduate Center resulted in the adoption of sixteen "demands." While some of the demands are necessary and even radical—the abolition of the Board of Trustees, an end to the two-tier labor system, an open admission and tuition free university, as opposed to a conciliatory call of a tuition freeze as advocated by the University Student Senate—there was little concrete discussion on tactical or strategic aims beyond the formation of these ostensibly democratic bodies.

While well-intentioned, these bodies, if they do end up constituting something beyond the politically infinitesimal, seemingly offer little in the course of finding tangible solutions to the socio-economic problems currently encumbering CUNY. The demands were borne out of grievances discussed in smaller groups, removed from the larger body. These grievances, as well as quite a few of the demands, have been well documented and respectively advanced over

the preceding years by various other groups including but not limited to Class Struggle Education Workers, CUNY Contingents Unite, and the Adjunct Project. Such meetings are often ones of consensus and, in fact, have the potentiality to be



Source: <https://cunycontingents.wordpress.com/>

detrimental as they belie the sharp political, tactical, and strategic differences of the various forces which are involved. In lieu of debating differences, CUNY Struggle has attempted, quite successfully, to engage in the stereotypical and



self-defeating strategy of social-democratic “lowest common denominator” politics.

While this tactic of popular frontism is apropos at times, it does nothing in regards to the present crisis at CUNY except have purported leftists patting each other on the back for “being on the right side of history.” Discussion of the PSC’s strike authorization vote as well as discussion of a potential strike – and what this would mean and could materially accomplish at CUNY – was barely part of the program. The majority of the tactical and strategic portion of the discussion (everyone at the meeting was already largely aware of the grievances and the demands going in) centered upon organizing students and to a lesser extent, adjuncts. And while this is important, critical even, in combating the neoliberalization of CUNY, any successful campaign must tap into the the broader labor base at CUNY, many of whom are disaffected with both the management and the bureaucratic PSC leadership. All this is not to say that CUNY Struggle has surreptitiously attempted to derail any practicable pathways in combating the neoliberal university. However, the lack of focus on the question of labor and the power of collective labor actions has already attenuated the professedly radical impulse of the fledgling organization.

To be clear, this isn’t to say that student activism is not imperative to successfully combating the

neoliberal university. On the contrary, it is. Nevertheless, students are too imprecise a category of people to singularly focus upon. Furthermore, students, as a body, do not have the requisite social power in and of themselves to take on CUNY management. The workers of CUNY do. This includes the PSC rank-and-file, members of DC 37, UNITE HERE, and other unions, which have significant representation amongst CUNY workers. It is only through the combined struggle of workers and students that anything will be won. And again, to beat the proverbial dead horse, it is through the strike that any such victory would have the potential to be lasting rather than temporary.

Adjuncts, the PSC, and the Question of a Strike

If we are to challenge the neoliberalization of CUNY in the short-term, and its role within the wider apparatuses of finance capitalism in the long-term, then social power must be mobilized. As has consistently been advocated throughout this article, the immediate strategic concern to this end is the strike. Reed’s article outlines five tactics of immediate political action: pledging to support a potential strike, which centers on adjunct as well as student demands; creating a strike fund that protects the most economically vulnerable; compiling and disseminating propaganda highlighting the crisis at CUNY; putting pressure on Graduate Cen-

ter central-line faculty to advocate for the strike; and developing solidarities with other union workers at the Graduate Center. Of the five areas that Reed suggests for concerted action, let us focus on the first. In particular, the secondary clause regarding centering a potential strike in line with adjunct and student demands.

It is unclear whether or not Reed supports a strike pledge and potential strike only if the PSC will center its demands around students and adjuncts. This is an important distinction as there are certain elements within the PSC and CUNY, which have actively and tacitly voiced opposition to the strike based on the failure of the union to adequately represent the rights of adjuncts. This critique is not only valid; it is quite accurate. The PSC and its bureaucratic and often conciliatory leadership – represented by Barbara Bowen and Steve London, President and First Vice President of the union respectively – do not, and will not advance the cause of adjuncts in the foreseeable future. In fact, the union bureaucracy is very much complicit in CUNY's continual and expanding reliance on adjunct labor. The PSC's abject failure to bargain on behalf of all of its membership, particularly for those who are most oppressed, plays into the management's neoliberal designs of bolstering the two-tier system of labor.

Those who are wary of a po-

tential strike are rightful to be so given the deleterious relationship between the union's rank-and-file and the leadership. However, and despite the problems in the PSC, the calls for a separate "adjunct strike," as some have made, only serve to segment the union, and by default, weaken collective social power. An adjunct only strike would indeed play into the hands of CUNY management if an actual strike by the PSC is to go through. Furthermore, such division within the union could actually result in adjuncts being utilized as scab labor in the course of a strike. For example, let us say the PSC strike authorization vote passes and a subsequent strike ensues, if contingents of adjuncts reject the strike due to the failure of the PSC to represent their interests, the strike will inevitably be defeated, and resoundingly so. A struggle must be waged within the PSC to oust the bureaucrats in order to have leadership representative of the rank-and-file, and thus in a more advantageous as well as the desirous position of advocating on behalf of adjunct laborers.

The struggles within the PSC to either reconstitute the leadership or to push them in the direction of actually advocating on behalf of both adjuncts and full-time professors are ones which must be waged continuously and in conjunction with the drive for a "Yes" vote in regards to the strike authorization vote and during a potential strike.

Any organizing outside of the PSC – as it relates to the strike question – can, and likely will, lead to the evisceration of the union by CUNY administration and state government. Therefore, the calls for separate strike pledges, "strike authorizations" outside of official PSC channels will consign the most effective method of struggle against the neoliberalization of CUNY to defeat. All this is to say that in spite of the PSC's deficiencies, which are many, it is only through the union that any significant measure of social pressure will be exerted in counteracting the neoliberal agendas of CUNY management in particular, and the role of CUNY in U.S. capitalism more generally.

Agitate for a Strike, Smash the Taylor Law

The PSC has never been on strike in its history. We have a historic duty to agitate for both the passage of the strike authorization vote at hand and an actual strike. The existence and likely implementation of the anti-democratic and draconian Taylor Law should give us pause, but it should not shutter our resolve. The law needs to be smashed, destroyed. A strike has the potential to do this, if properly prepared and organized. Given the PSC's problematic bureaucracy, it is not sufficient that such a strike be localized to the constituency of the PSC. In other words, solidarity and cohesion is imperative to any

potential strike. The workers of DC 37 should also be propagandized to go on strike simultaneously. Furthermore, linkages with the broader labor movement in NYC invariably add weight to the wielding of social power.

Any pretense that the PSC can't advocate for the broader membership must be shed. Any moves to impinge upon the strike authorization vote or a potential strike both from within and from outside the union must be quashed. CUNY management and state government will deploy political subterfuge and more coercive measures if necessary. Yet we mustn't give in to the machinations of those who

currently have stewardship over CUNY. The time to go on strike is nigh. Preparedness, both within the PSC and across unions and other labor advocacy groups in New York, is essential. The neoliberalization of CUNY will not be willed away, rather it will be forced away. And any "progressive" aims emerging out of these struggles are most effectively achieved by wielding social power, particularly collective working class power. Open admissions and free tuition, a cessation of racist campus policing, ending reliance on the two-tiered labor system, the abolition of CUNY administration and the Board of Trustees, and a plethora of other

virtuous transformations at CUNY will only come once collective social power is mobilized and deployed in such a fashion so as to reconstitute the university – not as simply non-neoliberal for neoliberalism is merely a symptom of the disease – but as an anti-capitalist institution founded upon equitable labor practices and formulated in the interest of the working classes and all oppressed and marginalized social groups.

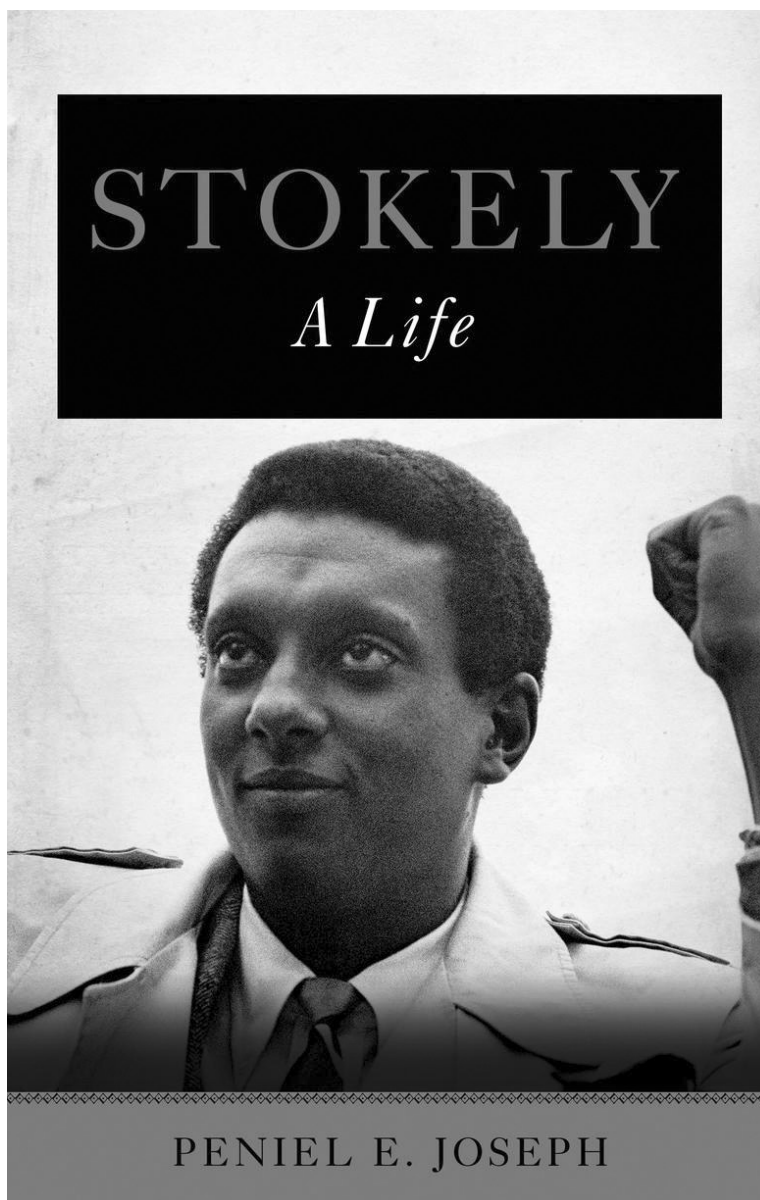


Source: <https://cunycontingents.wordpress.com/>

Review of *Stokely: A Life* Through the Lens of Kwame Ture's Autobiography *Ready For Revolution*

Rhone Fraser

In Kwame Ture's 2004 autobiography, transcribed by Ekwueme Michael Thelwell, entitled *Ready for Revolution*, he wrote that "all African-descended people living in 113 countries on the continent and in the diaspora are at the bottom the same people...we share history, culture, and common enemies racism, imperialism, neocolonialism, and capitalist exploitation. At present, we suffer from disunity, disorganization and ideological confusion." The 2014 biography by Peniel Joseph of Kwame Ture's life entitled *Stokely: A Life* promotes what Ture calls "disunity, disorganization, and ideological confusion" because it looks at Ture's life through a liberal imperialist lens that ultimately discourages militant and revolutionary responses to capitalist exploitation. A "liberal imperialist" lens is a lens that endorses the racist ideology of wealthy U.S. imperialists seeking to gain power and influence through capitalist exploitation. It is capitalists such as Rockefeller that the work of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover ultimately serves. The narrative choices that Peniel Joseph makes in *Stokely: A Life* are in line with the goals of J. Edgar Hoover's COINTELPRO



program, which were to “neutralize Black nationalist hate type organizations.” This biography distorts Kwame Ture’s life and ultimately endorses capitalist exploitation.

The first prominent effort by this biography to endorse “ideological confusion” is the title that the author and his publisher, Lara Heimert of Basic Civitas, chose for this biography, *Stokely: A Life*, drawing on the birth name of its subject, Stokely Carmichael. By choosing this title, Joseph essentially ignores or dismisses the political development behind Kwame Ture strategically shedding his birth name and re-naming himself after two revolutionary nationalists on the African continent, Kwame Nkrumah and Sekou Toure, who were actively fighting European and U.S. colonialism in order to

practice and co-operate within a system of African socialism. Joseph spends more time problematizing Ture’s choices to sympathize with the causes of these revolutionaries and spends no time discussing Ture’s work helping to fight colonialism in both Ghana and Guinea. This review will focus on the parts of the biography that most clearly promote this “ideological confusion.”

His tenth chapter called “A New Society Must Be Born” reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of what true social revolution means, especially the type that Ture endorses. According to Joseph, the work that Ture conducted in Lowndes County, Alabama, showed that “the drive for self-determination through the ballot was unleashed nationally.” A serious examination of world history will show



Above: A scene during the revolt in Baltimore.

Source: <http://www.versobooks.com/authors/1991-stokely-carmichael>

that self-determination since European colonialism has never been achieved through the ballot – the self-determination accomplished by the Haitian revolution was not achieved through the ballot; nor was the one accomplished by the Cuban revolution. Assata Shakur said that “nobody in history, has ever gotten their freedom by appealing to the moral sense of the people who were oppressing them.” Joseph’s incomplete understanding or “self-determination” is akin to his self-proclaimed mentor Henry Louis Gates’ incomplete understanding of “revolution.” In his film *Many Rivers to Cross*, Gates says in his narration that “our revolutionary act would be to integrate the White power elite.” Revolution in the way Kwame Ture understood and fought for did not by any means involve integrating oneself into the economic system. Revolution is more akin to destroying the colonial relationship that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) perpetuates with its lendees, including Jamaica; the way that Cuba during its 1959 socialist revolution destroyed this relationship. While the severing of this relationship did not deter the U.S. from imposing severe economic embargoes on Cuba, it allowed a greater path for self-determination, which was impossible for African Americans to accomplish by voting.

Joseph makes his fundamental difference in worldview from Ture very clear when, in Stokely, he calls Castro’s initial 1953 attack on the Moncada barracks “ill-fated.” However, Ture, in his twenty-fourth chapter, celebrated

the Cuban revolution: “the government and people of Cuba were busy, busy trying to liberate their society from the inherited historical distortions and injustices coming from slavery, the racism of a plantation economy, capitalist exploitation and a colonial relationship with los imperialismos yanquis. The United States. A process I very much wanted to see for myself.” There is nothing that Ture found “ill-fated” about Castro’s initial attack of the Moncada barracks, and by this chapter, Joseph establishes himself as an absolutely unreliable narrator of Kwame Ture’s life. Joseph also disparages the Garvey movement when he writes, “Carmichael’s promise that a return [to Africa] remains the ultimate goal expressed more of a personal desire than a collective sentiment.” Joseph, like J. Edgar Hoover, tries to downplay the “collective sentiment” that Garvey inspired in 1920 among Black people. Ture mentions Marcus Garvey as part of an honor roll of influential Black thinkers who were either imprisoned or sent into exile. Equally questionable are Joseph’s claims that Ture called African leaders “worthless” since his sources for these claims in his thirteenth chapter, “Africa on the World Stage,” are *Washington Post* articles. Ture writes about how the *Washington Post* was a paper that was hostile to his views and revolutionary aims, and that a *Washington Post* writer had even accused him and other SNCC members of setting up Andrew Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman to be murdered.

In his fourteenth chapter called “Black Panther,” Joseph writes, “Stokely’s relationship with the Black Panther Party grew serious, offering a chance to regroup and channel political energies in a manner that resembled his early days in SNCC,” even though Kwame Ture makes clear in his autobiography that he wanted to play an advisory role in the Black Panther Party and not be a full-fledged member. He was asked to be an officer, declined the offer, and was designated an honorary member. He notes that “from an SNCC perspective, the organization seemed to me entirely too hierarchical.” Later in this chapter, Joseph attributes the role of Ture in the demise of the Black United Front (BUF), which was a coalition of Black organizations in the Washington DC area, to that of a “seasoned politician” instead of the role that Ture saw himself in, which was as a coalition builder. Both Joseph and Ture write that a key factor in the demise of the BUF was Whitney Young’s comments that “if Stokely wants to run this, we won’t hold still for it.” Joseph suggests that Ture’s erratic, autocratic leadership led to the demise of the BUF rather than investigating how Young could, in fact, be following the dictates of his Wall Street funders by abandoning the BUF. Ture writes that “it was also clear that those in our community who nurtured fantasies of wielding “insider” influence with the Democratic administration—the usual suspects and we know who they were—did not wish the United Front to succeed, with or without

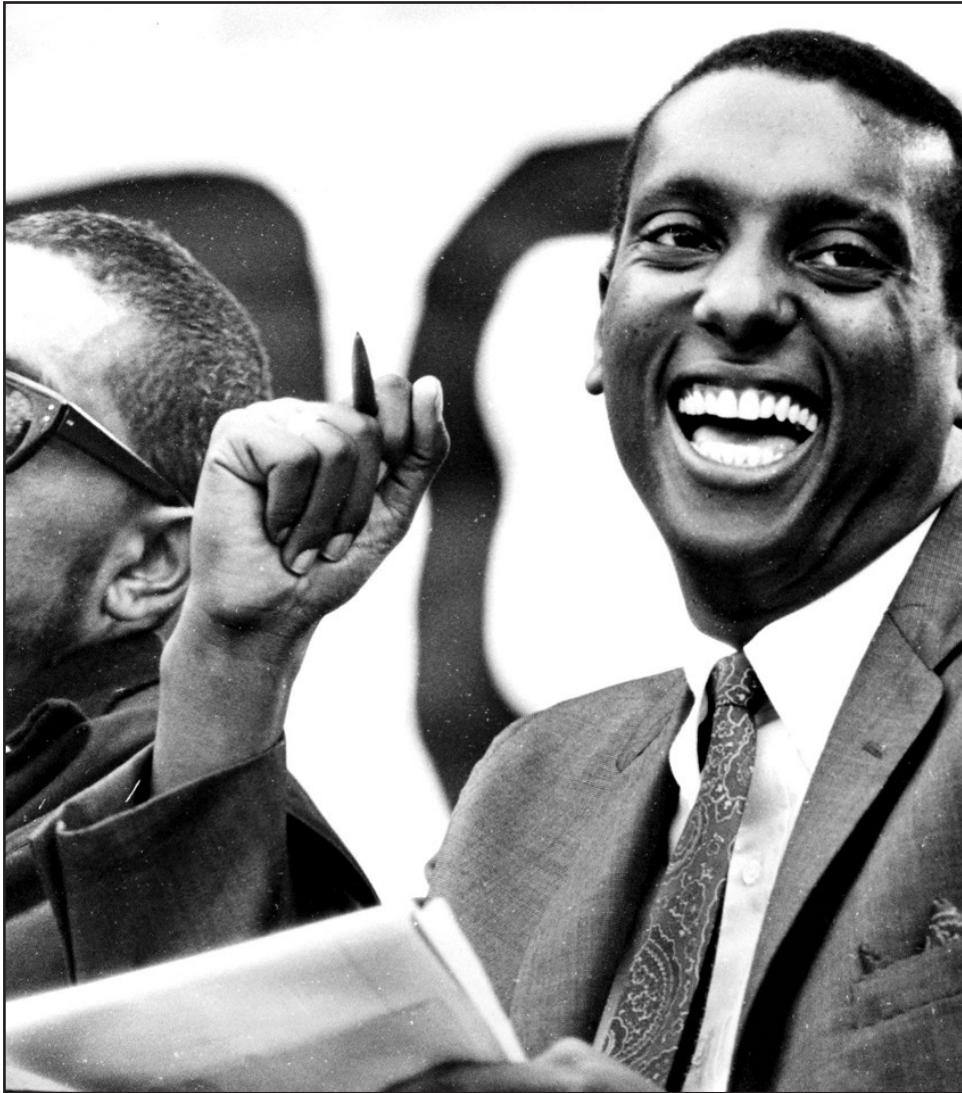
my involvement. Very sad. And, as an entity, the Washington United Front did not long survive.” Joseph’s most egregious misrepresentations of Ture’s life are also articulated in the latter half of this chapter when he writes that, in a speech, Ture “rebuked socialism and communism as ill suited to combat racial oppression.” He later claims that more than socialism and communism, Ture supported “Pan-Africanism,” even though he never defines this concept. Joseph promotes “ideological confusion” by drawing

a false dichotomy between Pan-Africanism and communism which, Henry Winston argues, was a strategy designed to ultimately support U.S. imperialism on the African continent.

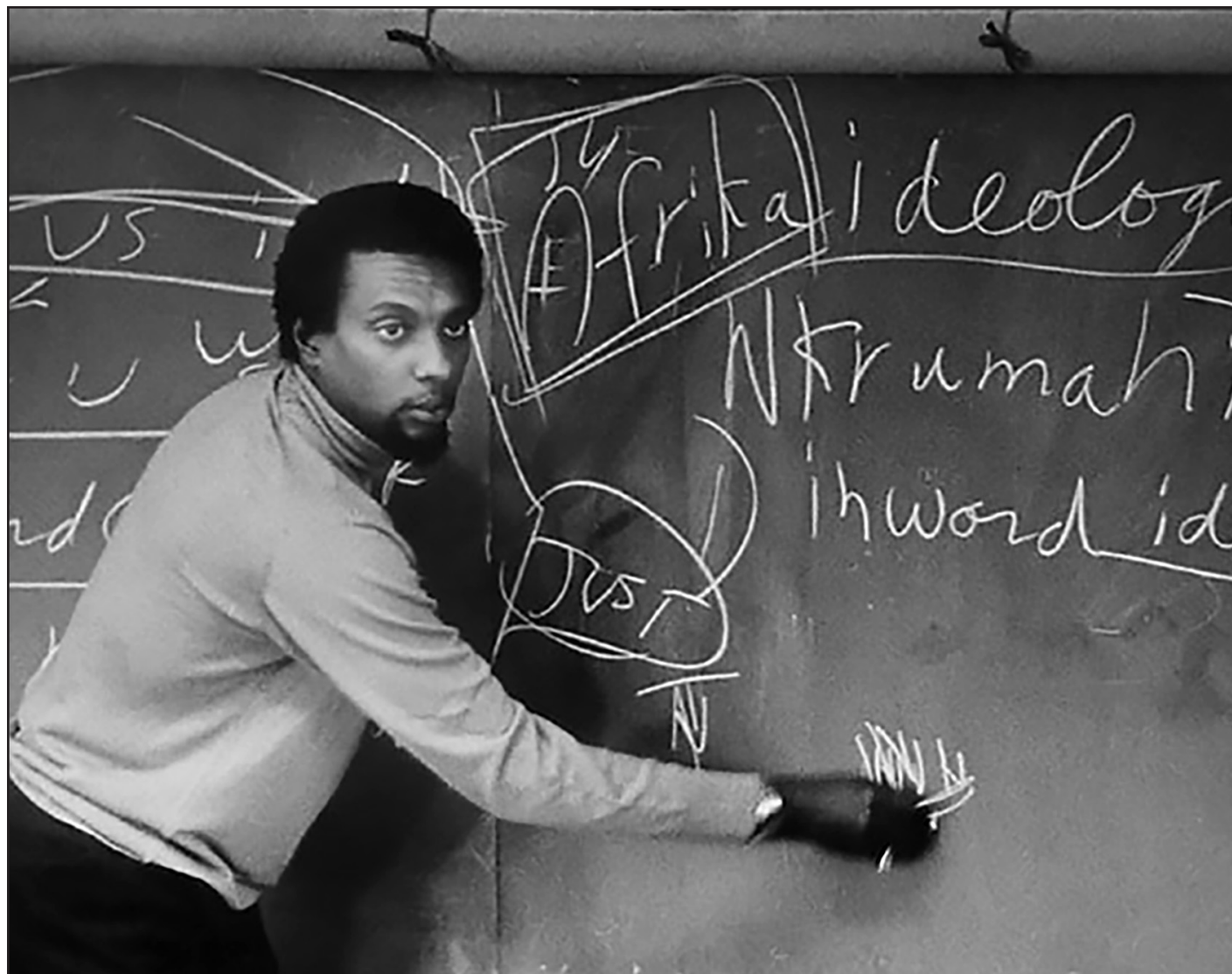
In Joseph’s final and sixteenth chapter, he makes a caricature of Ture: “whatever doubts, insecurities and shortcomings, Carmichael freely admitted would be virtually erased by Kwame Ture, who projected superhuman confidence. Ture’s defiant revolutionary proclamations replaced Carmichael’s

more poetic and yearningly unfulfilled descriptions of Black political transformation that would be led by sharecroppers and the urban poor.” Joseph creates a false division that assumes that Ture’s political development caused him to abandon the working masses. His biography, moreover, follows a strict Zionist narrative when he charges Ture with anti-Semitism, a term, as Columbia Professor Joseph Massad explains, that is increasingly deployed to protect supporters of the Israeli occupation of Palestine from principled criticism. Joseph captures Ture’s philosophy in this final chapter when he writes that Ture “discussed the virtues of scientific socialism as the key to a global revolution,” but fails to outline what scientific socialism is or how Ture sought its implementation in Ghana or in Guinea.

Joseph ends his biography with a glaring misunderstanding of Ture’s life when he describes all of Carmichael’s personas – “Black Power icon, Civil Rights organizer, Black Panther, Revolutionary Pan-Africanist—perhaps the least recognized is that of public intellectual.” A close reading of Ture’s autobiography will reveal that in two instances Ture did not want to be seen as a public intellectual. The first instance was his May 1967 trip to London at the “Dialectics of Liberation” conference, which he called “very Eurocentric. Business as usual among White bourgeois intellectuals even when they call themselves revolutionary.” In response to the Black middle-class who decried the White corporate power structure’s unwillingness to



Source: <https://kpfa.org/episode/letters-and-politics-september-17-2015/com/authors/1991-stokely-carmichael>



Source: <http://trggradio.org/trggr-radio-6-20-2014-get-right-show/>

hire more minorities in Ellis Cose's book *The Rage of A Privileged Class*, Ture notes in his autobiography: "Nowhere in the book was there the slightest recognition of the wasteful and destructive consequences of multinational corporate rapacity on the poor of the world. Nowhere the slightest recognition that the opportunities they were misusing were won out of the blood their people shed in the struggle. And certainly no sense of personal obligation to that struggle." Ture did not want his legacy to be that of a public intellectual. He did not want to be included within a public intellectual circle that upheld the sin of corporate rapacity. Of the four roles Joseph men-

tioned, Kwame Ture's autobiography itself reveals first and foremost that he was a Pan-African revolutionary. The contrast between these books recalls the importance of what Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote about telling our story "through the lens of our struggle." While Joseph fails painfully in this endeavor, Kwame Ture tells his own story best through the lens of our struggle.

Contributors to this issue

Gordon Barnes Gordon Barnes is a PhD student in the History Program. He researches elite ideology and subaltern violence as well as the transition from slavery to freedom in the 19th century British Empire

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

Shawn Simpson is a PhD student in the Philosophy Program. He is also a teaching fellow at Brooklyn College

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

Makeba Lavan is a Ph.D. candidate in the English department where she focuses on African American Studies, Speculative Fiction, and Popular Culture. She also teaches literature and composition at Lehman College.

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.

Carlos M. Camacho is a fifth year sociology PhD student and an adjunct at several CUNY campuses.

Cecilia M. Salvi is a student in the Anthropology Program and the DSC's delegate to the University Student Senate (USS).

LET'S PLAY ANSWER

Check out the puzzle column on our Back Page.

Correct answer in bold:

1. Miley Cyrus (1992), **Business** (1991), Ariana Grande (1992)
2. **Classics** (1991), Daisy Ridley (1992), John Boyegan (1992)
3. Calvin Johnson (1985), Michael Phelps (1985), **Criminal Justice** (1984)
4. **MALS** (1983), Adele (1988), Mark Zuckerberg (1984)
5. Leo DiCaprio (1974), Idris Elba (Sept. 1972), **Sociology** (Jan. 1972)
6. It's anybody's guess! The only one whose birth year we know is Nostradamus (1503).]

WHAT IS A PROGRAM GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT?

Basically, a program governance document makes explicit how the program should run and how students and faculty should participate in the operations, policies and decisions of the program and its committees. It holds the program's EO and faculty accountable to a clear and open process on making decisions about the program.

Every program at the Graduate Center operates under a governance document. For some programs this document may be from as far back as the 1980s, and other programs may have a more updated document. This document needs to be reviewed and updated every 3 years in order to be compliant with current GC policies.

LET'S PLAY

THE GC GOVERNANCE GAME!

INSTRUCTIONS

Circle whichever selection is oldest.

Then flip page 31 upside down to see the correct answers.

1. Singer/Actor Miley Cyrus	Business Governance Document	Singer/Actor Selena Gomez
2. Classics Governance Document	Star Wars actor Daisy Ridley	Star Wars actor John Boyega
3. Retired NFL star Calvin Johnson	Out-of-retirement swimmer Michael Phelps	Criminal Justice Governance
4. MALS Governance Document	Mark Zuckerberg	10-time Grammy Award winner
5. Actor Leonardo DiCaprio	Actor Idris Elba	Sociology Governance Document
6. Social Welfare Governance Document	Nostradamus	Charlemagne

