Advocate

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advocate@cunydsc.org

Editor in Chief Bhargav Rani

Managing Editor Nandini Ramachandran

Layout Editor Alessandro Zammataro

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Front Cover: 1931 propaganda poster that was found in the collection of the Russian State Library in Moscow – Photo by Fine Art Images/Heritage Images/Getty Images

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"To Revolution, or not to Revolution"

Bhargav Rani

"Has not the "world revolution" been reduced to an empty formula which can be appropriated pragmatically by the most diverse groups of countries and flogged to death?"

Reinhart Koselleck, Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time (1985)

Revolution is not an easy idea to profess in our time. Once the utopian promise of freedom and a call to arms that animated the struggles and aspirations of peoples for over two centuries of modernity, revolution is now the catchword of capitalism that sells everything from Che Guevara t-shirts to toilet cleaners on Kickstarter. Hollowed of its vigor and vitality, it now hangs suspended between possibility and powerlessness, between hope and despair. But the romance of revolution is not completely lost. As the precarity of the present and the overwhelming sense of political impotence that it reproduces press us for a need to rethink the modalities of resistance available to us, the promise of revolution resurfaces as a comforting and inviting proposition to lead us out of the darkness of our times. But the circumstances of its resurgence hardly make it auspicious, for revolution is an immensely fraught concept. And this was exemplified by the theme chosen for the 2017-2018 seminar series of the Columbia Center of Contemporary Critical Thought (CCCCT) at Columbia University – "Uprising 13/13."

"Uprising." Not "Revolution." The seminar series comprises of 13 seminars held over the year investigating 13 forms of uprisings, and aims to understand the possibilities of collective action and individual political engagement in this supposedly post-revolutionary age we live in. Bernard E. Harcourt and Jesûs R. Velasco, the organizers of the seminar series and both professors at Columbia University, initially proposed "Revolution 13/13," and planned to revisit the gamut of usual suspects—from the French and American Revolutions, to the Bolshevik Revolution on its centennial. As Harcourt notes in his prefatory blog post to the first seminar,

> "We had them all, and yet, we were unable to get past the very word "revolution." Why? Because of the historians, perhaps. The historians who have spoiled revolution for us in conceptualizing it, in historicizing it, in somehow raising it above all its illegitimate children—resistance, revolt, insurgency, disobedience, hacktivism, standing ground. Those peripheral, those ancillary, those sometimes aborted struggles for social change."

Harcourt touches here on the crucial historiographic problem with the very term "revolution." That is, what are the parameters that impel the categorization of certain events in history as "revolution" as opposed to any of its subsidiary cognates like "uprising," "insurrection," "rebellion" etc.? And what are the implications of such a categorization

October Revolution, 1917, Soviet-poster – Source: http://gh2u.tumblr.com/post/53438774055/soviet-posters-october-revolution-1917

to both our understanding of past events and our visions for the future? The barrels of ink spilt in the historiographic glorification of the English, French and Russian Revolutions, by virtue of their classification as "Revolutions" with a capital R, come at the expense of our understanding of various other critical moments in history that for some reason or the other don't make the cut. It is for this reason that the organizers at CCCCT chose to turn their heads to these "bastards" of history, these "illegitimate children," in the hope that it would throw new light on the modalities of political engagement and action in this age.

Moreover, what really is the point of a category like "revolution"? "Revolution" signifies an epochal, systemic shift in social and political structures that bleeds into the fabric of everyday life. While it might be useful in understanding past ruptures in history, the future is always unpredictable, and especially so in the liminal and effervescent moments of revolutionary time. If we can't designate a state of affairs as revolutionary until the ground palpably shifts beneath our feet, then what use is the category in understanding and informing our present struggles? If "revolution" is nothing but a historiographic operation that can only be performed *a posteriori*, if it is but a term applied to events only in hindsight once the weight of their consequences have been measured, then why even bother with it? And if "revolution," in the moment of its occurrence, phenomenologically feels no different than an "uprising," "revolt," "insurrection," or "rebellion," is there perhaps some merit in replacing this rather overbearing category with any of the latter ones in thinking through our present modes of collective action?

But these problems at the level of historiography are only a prologue to deep contradictions in the content of revolution itself. The first seminar of the series, held on 14 September was devoted to unpacking these contradictions, and featured a panel discussion between Étienne Balibar, Simona Forti, and Gayatri Spivak. While each differed in their articulation of the concept and their estimation of its potential in our times, what evinced as a common thread in all their theorizations was the immense inertia that the concept itself had amassed over time. Haunted by the specters of its past iterations in history and congealed in all the blood and wreckage wrought in its name, revolution does not easily yield itself up to our aspirations for the present.

Harcourt, the moderator of the panel, lays out the central questions that underpin their interrogations of the modern concept of revolution in his prefatory blog post. First, are revolutions necessarily doomed to fail? Are revolutions by their very nature so volatile and explosive that they inevitably devolve and disintegrate under the weight of their own contradictions? Even the ones that have been privileged in history as "successful" revolutions, such as the Bolshevik Revolution or the Chinese Cultural Revolution, to what extent have they been but divergent paths to the eventual globalization of capital? Second, do revolutions have within them a structural tendency towards more repressive social formations? That is, as Forti frames it, does revolution "hosts in its genetic code the mark of terror and totalitarianism?" Even as a conceptual category, does the radicality of the critique that revolution embodies, in its unconditional rejection of the status quo, produce a discourse that is so totalizing as to preclude any negotiation or even room for discussion? And third, as Balibar argues, do revolutions only serve to establish a more powerful "preventive counter-revolution," one that continuously anticipates revolution in order to neutralize it, rendering it virtually impossible to manifest? The various dimensions of revolution are often so fraught that Harcourt wonders "whether our engagement with revolution is not an impediment to social action."

While not all scholars on the panel shared Harcourt's utter disenchantment with revolu-

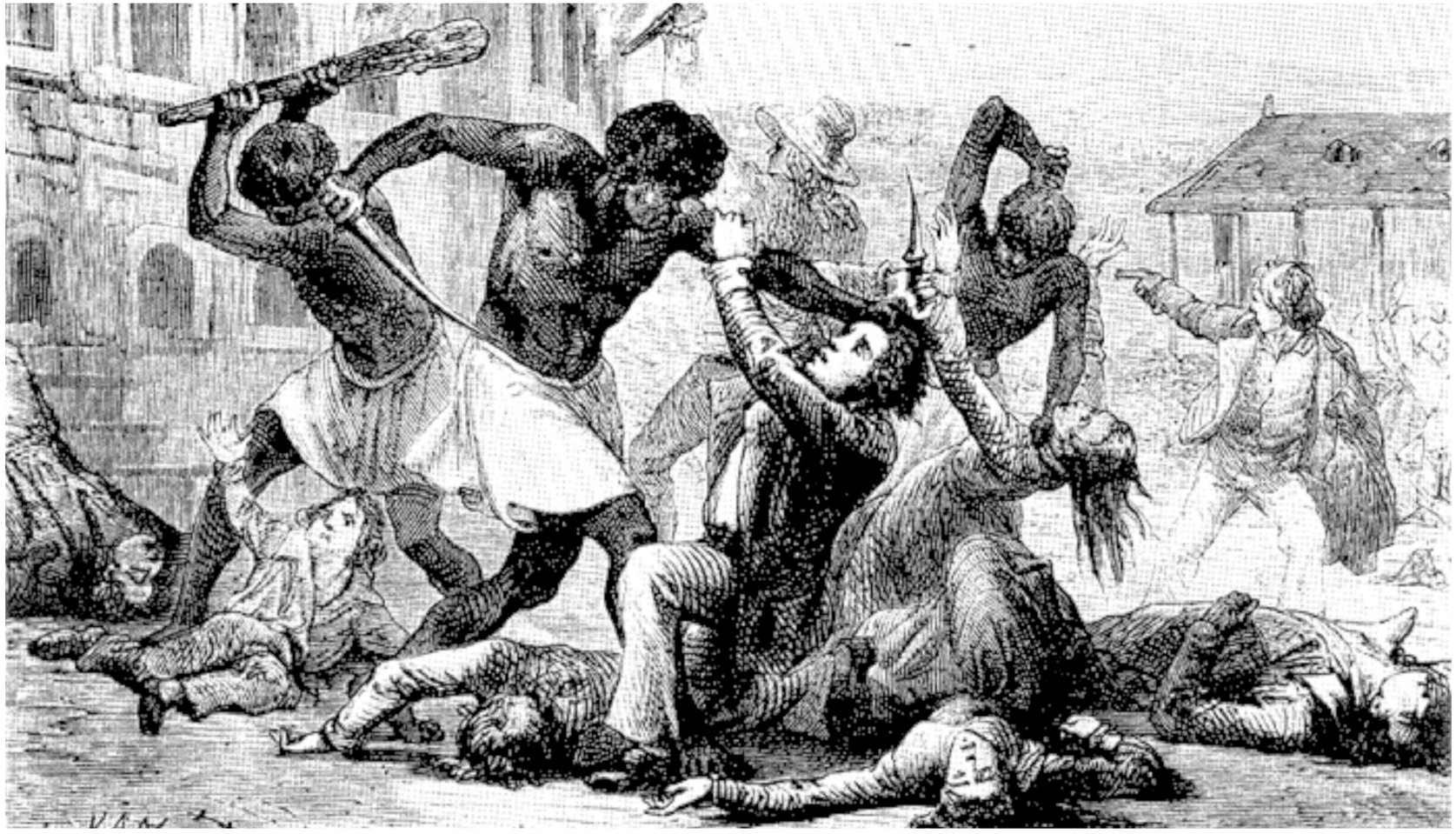
tion, these critical contradictions weighed heavy on their appraisal of the modern concept of revolution. This sense of disillusionment if not outright disappointment with revolution was also reflected in the two texts chosen by the panel. The first was Reinhart Koselleck's "Historical Criteria of the Modern Concept of Revolution," first published in German in 1979. Koselleck, a German historian-philosopher who until recently was little explored in the US, writing in the aftermath of the Second World War and the numerous bloody civil wars fought across the world in the years after, nourished a deep cynicism towards the modern concept of revolution.

Against its original meaning of "circulation," derived from the ancient Greek political doctrine of *anakyklosis* which conceived of history as an indefinite cyclical repetition of limited constitutional forms (monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy, ochlocracy or mass rule), Koselleck charts the conceptual trajectory of revolution since the French Revolution in order to underline the fundamental semantic ambiguity that offers it up as justification for the most diverse of political configurations and even the bloodiest modes of action. To quote from Forti's reading of Koselleck, "The revolution becomes a constant state of exception…From Robespierre to Lenin, everything is explained and legitimated in the name of the revolutionary process and its ultimate goal: from war to summary executions, from to [*sic*] guillotine to concentration camps."

The second text that the panelists were responding to was *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx's essay from 1852, reflecting on what he perceived as the "grotesque mediocrity" of the revolution that inaugurated the dictatorship of Louis Bonaparte in 1851. Marx, disillusioned with the outcome of this revolution, famously characterized it as a farcical iteration of the tragedy that the French Revolution was, with Louis Bonaparte emerging in history as a caricature of the tragic hero that Napoleon was. While this text was, in small part, apparently included to, in Balibar's words, make the program more "sexy," it nonetheless entered into productive conversations with Koselleck's essay in the panelists' reflections on them. The bitter disappointment with revolution that informs Marx's essay, when taken in conjunction with the deep cynicism that saturates the subtext of Koselleck's essay, provides an effective tension to interrogate the post-revolutionary pretensions of our own age.

Implicit to the problem of revolution is the equally fraught problem of universalism. Steeped in the principles of eighteenth-century bourgeois Enlightenment thought, universalism as a political doctrine found a performative articulation in the very potentiality latent in revolutionary action, with "The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" during the French Revolution. This bourgeois universalism of the French Revolution was transformed, "revolutionized," by Marx in the nineteenth century into the universalism that underpins the universalizing drive of capital and its insatiable exploitation of the proletariat. At the same time, the model of the bourgeois revolution became both the historical prelude and the point of departure for Marx's own propositions for a proletarian revolution, whose universalist aspirations are exemplified in the immensely performative rallying cry derived from *The Communist Manifesto* – "Workers of the *world*, unite!" For over a century, Marxisms around the world provided this universalism and the utopia of revolution with content.

The birth of postcolonial theory in the wake of the decolonization movements of the 1960s and 1970s shed light on the immanent dark side of universalism—Eurocentricism—and revolution too was caught in the crosshairs of its critique. To return to the example of the French Revolution, the universalism inaugurated by the Declaration of Rights—of liberty, equality, fraternity—sustained itself only through its delimitation to propertied citizens (which excluded women) and its refusal to accord legitimacy to the subse-



Haitian slaves massacre owners and burn the North Plain plantations, 1804 – Source: http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/haiti/revolution-1.gif

quent Haitian Revolution, the most successful slave rebellion in history. Even at the level of historiography, while the former has been constituted and celebrated as the archetype of revolutions that all other revolutions must emulate, the latter was kept willfully obscured from public and scholarly memory and denied consecration as "Revolution" with a capital R for two centuries. This historical amnesia about the Haitian Revolution was only the first of what became a general precept throughout the colonial era, with the colonial metropoles constituting themselves as the only legitimate sites for revolution, while the colonies were only capable of "resistances," "guerillas," "mutinies" and "rebellions." But, for Balibar, the decolonization movements turned this dynamic over its head by adopting the language of revolution to define national liberation movements, where the colonial powers were cast no longer in the role of *subjects* of revolutionary change but rather as *objects*, as the establishment that needs dismantling. Balibar understands this inversion in the semantics of revolution as, paradoxically, "a full "Europeanization" of the world" and "a complete universalization of its political categories."

While Balibar strives to incorporate the dynamics of the national liberation movements of the twentieth century into his conceptualization of revolution, Spivak on the other hand is emphatic in her refusal to characterize national liberations as revolutions. Insofar as revolutions signify systemic change, for her, national liberations are not revolutions because they are generally brought about by the progressive bourgeoisie based on an "orientalist model of the nation being liberated" and do not reflect the interests and aspirations of the national populations. This is important. While Balibar's definition of the concept of revolution leads him to the bleak conclusion that the preventive counter-revolutionary forces constantly anticipate and prevent the possibility of revolution, Spivak's insistence on the difference between revolution and national liberation leaves room for an idea of revolution that could still offer hope for radical politics. For Spivak, the central problematic of revolution is whether it can take root in and be impelled by the "revolutionary consciousness" of the subaltern subject, particularly the gendered subaltern.

Postcolonial theory and post-structural thought, which these decolonization movements nourished, have been vital to a critical unpacking of the Eurocentric presuppositions that inform theory and knowledge. They have, however, made for bad politics. Their insistence on *difference* and their rejection of the structural discourses of Marxism as totalizing and Eurocentric have translated in the public sphere into a politics of identity and ethnicity. Identity politics has been crucial for highlighting and addressing the atrocities suffered by racial and ethnic minorities around the world, but its insistence on the singularity of their struggles and their mutual incommunicability fails to implicate the structures of global capitalist relations of production that reproduce these structural inequalities in the relations of life in the first place. Such a definition of politics saps revolution of its potency, reducing political action to a mostly reformist pursuit of justice for the benefit of one's own identity group. Postcolonial theory and identity politics were gravely mistaken in their assumption that the universalizing and "homogenizing" drive of capitalism could be resisted through a galvanization of the local and an insistence on difference, as the innumerable failures of movements against globalization over the last thirty years testify. Neoliberal capital is not only unperturbed by cultural and ethnic differences as long as it can establish market dependence, but it in fact thrives on a manipulation and exploitation of these differences among the working classes. Perhaps, in this context, it behooves us to think why the Black Lives Matter movement, despite its strong grassroots activism, has not only failed to assume a revolutionary character but has further emboldened and empowered the racist and white supremacists in this country. Must we concede Balibar's bleak vision

for the future?

Standing in the debris of social movements that identity politics produced, as we find ourselves impelled to radically rethink the modes of revolt and resistance available to us, revolution yet again resurfaces on the horizon of our collective desire. Faced with the behemoth of globalized capital—the long-prophesized universalization of capitalism realized—and the unprecedented scale of social, economic and ecological disaster that it marches towards, the profound totality of change implicit in the universalism of revolution seems like the only way out. But this idea of revolution can no longer be fueled by the kind of Eurocentric universalism that had animated the struggles of modernity. Nor can the idea be reduced to a multiplicity of localized struggles across the world that remain fundamentally incommunicable and unconnected. To heed Spivak's proposition, the universal "we" that can form the agents of this revolution must be posited by "claiming the subject of Marxism through the affirmative sabotage of 'universalism,'" but at the same time, they cannot simply be "fantasmatic counter-universals with the global South as center." The idea of revolution must aspire for a universality if it is to stand any chance against the universality of capital, and the content of this universality must be forged anew from the dialectical relation between the utopian force of Marxism's universalism and its dynamic deconstruction by postcolonial theory.

Situated in the Graduate Center, even as we strive to build a movement that can galvanize its most marginalized and exploited, it becomes imperative to attend to these debates and reflect on what value

A protest on Saturday by the students of Banaras Hindu University against the molestation of a student inside the campus, in Varanasi. (PTI) – Source: http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/mr-vice-chancellor-mind-your-language-it-was-molestation-at-bhu-not-eve-teasing/story-XETe4qCGDQnHiURoRfvJFM.html

the idea of revolution can hold for us in a neoliberal university. As Balibar notes, identifying revolutionary situations is not the difficult part, insofar as these situations are often moments of acute crisis. Rather, what is difficult is "identifying *in the present* collective agents who can become active in such situations and "resolve" the contradiction." The crises of the neoliberal university are most acutely felt in a public university like CUNY, where contractual, adjunct labor shoulders most of the teaching load at a third of the pay that full-time faculty receives and with little job security, where tuition fees for students have been steadily rising over the past four decades, and where an expanding class of bureaucratic managers and administrators continually siphon off funds that could benefit the students and faculty—the main stakeholders of the university—to pay for their six-figure salaries. Yet, the very real, material conditions of scholarship and pedagogy under neoliberalism and the immense labor of everyday life that it demands, when conjoined with its ideologies that spell out in bold letters that "There is No Alternative," work to prevent the "*becoming subject* of groups or "forces" that are virtually revolutionary" (Balibar).

Perhaps the greatest virtue still of the idea of revolution in thinking about our present struggles and modes of collective action is precisely its most difficult endeavor – the becoming subject of virtually revolutionary groups. This is not so much a question of who will *lead* the revolution as it is a question of who will *be* the revolution. While the neoliberal university continually produces legions of disgruntled, overworked, underpaid graduate workers and students who can comfortably occupy this space of virtuality, their becoming subject demands the counter-production of a "revolutionary consciousness" at the level of the everyday. We are, unfortunately, still a long way from that.

Finally, if the idea of revolution is to hold any meaning and force, then our struggles in the here and now must aspire for a universality. Even as the US Education Secretary Betsy DeVos prepares to rescind Title IX provisions on campus sexual assault, threatening the hard-won victories of decades of feminist organizing in the country, in Delhi, the Jawaharlal Nehru University administration has, in a patriarchal regression, dissolved its democratically elected gender sensitization committee. In Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, students protesting the victim-shaming of a woman who was sexually harassed on campus and decrying the general lack of women's safety were brutally beaten and teargassed by the police. For these struggles and resistances to achieve a revolutionary character, they must learn to communicate beyond the immediacy of their own contexts. This is not to say that the material realities in the diverse contexts or the struggles of these peoples are the same. What it means is that insofar as the patriarchal relations of life in these various contexts are systemically reproduced by capitalist relations of production that have now reached a global magnitude, these struggles, even if different and enacted locally, must be bound by a revolutionary consciousness that is universal, a consciousness that nurtures a devastating critique of not just one's own exploitation in the here and now but of the entire system of relations that enslaves the majority of people in the world today. Without this consciousness, revolution, in any affirmative sense of the term, will remain a far cry.

This editorial is not meant to be a theory of revolution. It is meant as a broad preface to a conversation that the *Advocate* hopes to sustain in its pages over this semester. The current issue offers articles on the October Revolution on its centennial and on the idea of revolution in relation to indigenous rights, Standing Rock and Columbus Day. We invite our readers to contribute to this conversation in the coming issues, and we welcome articles or art/performance/film reviews from a range of perspectives on revolution. We particularly invite the various activist organizations in the Graduate Center that are fighting for the democratic rights of its students and workers to write on the meaning and relevance of the idea of revolution to our present condition, as a way to reflect on their own political visions and practices.

NEVER SUBMIT, CONTRIBUTE!

This fall, the Advocate would like to invite everyone to think about a history of the past century that is bracketed by the Russian Revolution and Standing Rock. Our attempt isn't merely to destabilize historical periodization; it is a call to revisit the related questions of revolution and sovereignty.

It is time we accept that we live in radical times, and to ask what sorts of revolutions we can not only imagine but also plan. CUNY occupies a unique position in New York City's cultural and academic landscape, and we believe we can provide a platform that can harness that potential and build a real conversation about sustainable and radical change. It is far too easy to lead with despair these days, and our only effective option is to work together, and think together, as we never have before. We request that you write for us and talk to the vast political community this university can cultivate, and that you encourage your undergraduates to do so as well.

We're interested in essays that historicize and criticize our understanding of revolutionary transfor-mations of all kinds, whether by that you mean revolutionary polities or revolutionary bodies. How do they shape the ways in which we map and organize the world we inhabit? Talk to us about hurri-canes, about civil rights, about quantum physics, about Audre Lorde and Agha Shahid Ali— about what it means for revolution to simultaneously be a temporal ritual, an aesthetic epiphany, a shift in scientific paradigms, and a political desire baked deep into our collective psyche.

This is a conversation we would like to sustain across all three issues this term. We have open and rolling submissions, and our deadlines for the remaining two issues are October 25 and November 25.

Please do send your impressions, your thoughts, and your ideas to our Editor-in-Chief, Bhargav Ra-ni, at brani@gradcenter.cuny.edu Also 'cc' to advocate@cunydsc.org

AND YES, WE PAY FOR ARTICLES!

The Advocate pays $100-$120 for articles that are around 1500-2000 words, and about $150-$200 for longer essays that entail more research and labor. Other contributions like reviews and photo es-says will also be compensated for at competitive rates. And of course, we promise enthusiastic edito-rial support and love from our team!

We look forward to some excellent contributions from you!

Why De Blasio's Commission Reviewing NYC's Monuments Matters

Anthony Ramos

I still remember the first time I walked up the steps from the 59th street subway station and the uncanny sense of disorientation as the glass buildings extended upwards with every step. Just behind me, a silvery globe depicting the world stood in front of the Trump Tower. Beneath the office buildings and shopping center is a monumental column shooting up from the swirling crowds. Atop this monument is a sculpture of a Christopher Columbus: his posture is stern as his eyes gaze keenly into the distance, his mouth twisted in a sort of wry contempt; it is the look of a resolute man with a ton of unpleasant work before him, though this is difficult to discern from the ground. More easily legible are two scenes carved in oxidized copper at the base of the column, which depict Columbus in almost messianic tones. First sailing on a dinghy, with the three famous ships behind him, and then his having made landfall. The scenes portray his arrival in a revelatory motif made clear through the exuberant gestures of each figure towards the heavens.

These are the events and the man memorialized throughout the Americas—the great "discovery" of the Americas. The stark hypocrisy of what this monumental statue aims to signify is felt by those familiar with the history of its location. It sits on Broadway, which was overlaid on the Wickquasgeck Trail, initially carved into Manhattan's wild forest by its indigenous inhabitants. They were eventually displaced by English settler colonials who ransacked their homes and lands, extracting profit from their labor, and even death.

The statue, at Columbus Circle, may seem devoid of meaning and value for the multitude who encounter the monument with indifference, passing it on the way to more important endeavors, but this is precisely the pernicious quality of monumentalism in public spaces. This is how monuments work ideologically to cement dominant narratives, literally and figuratively, into the unquestioned and naturalized background of the built environment and its symbolic landscape. The reiteration of a (visual) narrative draws from a system of representation that cites genocide as manifest destiny, enslavement as a moral misstep, and the killing of indigenous gods in the name of Christian reason, and it is nested deeply within a cultural hegemony that wants also to remain unquestioned and naturalistic.

We now find ourselves in a moment when these monuments now being excavated from what Stuart Hall calls their "naturalistic illusion." This was particularly evident in the series of statue topplings that followed the counter-protests at the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville. The violent rally was held by white supremacists to "defend" a statue of Robert E. Lee that resides in the town's Emancipation Park, and it ended with a young woman losing her life at the hands of a white supremacist who plowed into a crowd of counter-protestors with his car. The tragic events in Charlottesville and the statute topplings following them have brought the question of public monuments and what they signify to the foreground of many people's consciousness.

On the Monday after Charlottesville, another troubling statue of General Lee, which was welcoming visitors to the chapel on Duke University's campus, was brought down amidst a chorus of chants: "No Trump, no KKK, no Fascist USA." A week later, the Hollywood Forever Cemetery removed a statue commemorating the lives of Confederate soldiers, followed by the city of Los Angeles removing Columbus Day from its list of recognized holidays and renaming it Indigenous People's Day. In Baltimore, statues of General Lee and Stonewall Jackson were removed that week, while in Yonkers a statue of Columbus was reportedly beheaded. Newspapers have since hastily tried to place these events within a larger historical narrative. *The New York Times* ran a story on the "visual history" of toppled monuments with pictures of fallen statues that included Stalin, George III, Saddam Hussein, Hosni Mubarak, and Vladimir Lenin. They inserted the events of statue toppling within a sequence of the neoliberal imaginary, from the Declaration of Independence to the Arab Spring. Their story implies a chain of historical sequence that explains the statue removals as another birth pang of modernity, with its old ideologies metaphorically toppled with the removal of the Confederacy's remnants. What has been glossed over are the histories behind the construction of the many Confederate monuments that were built during the era of Jim Crow.

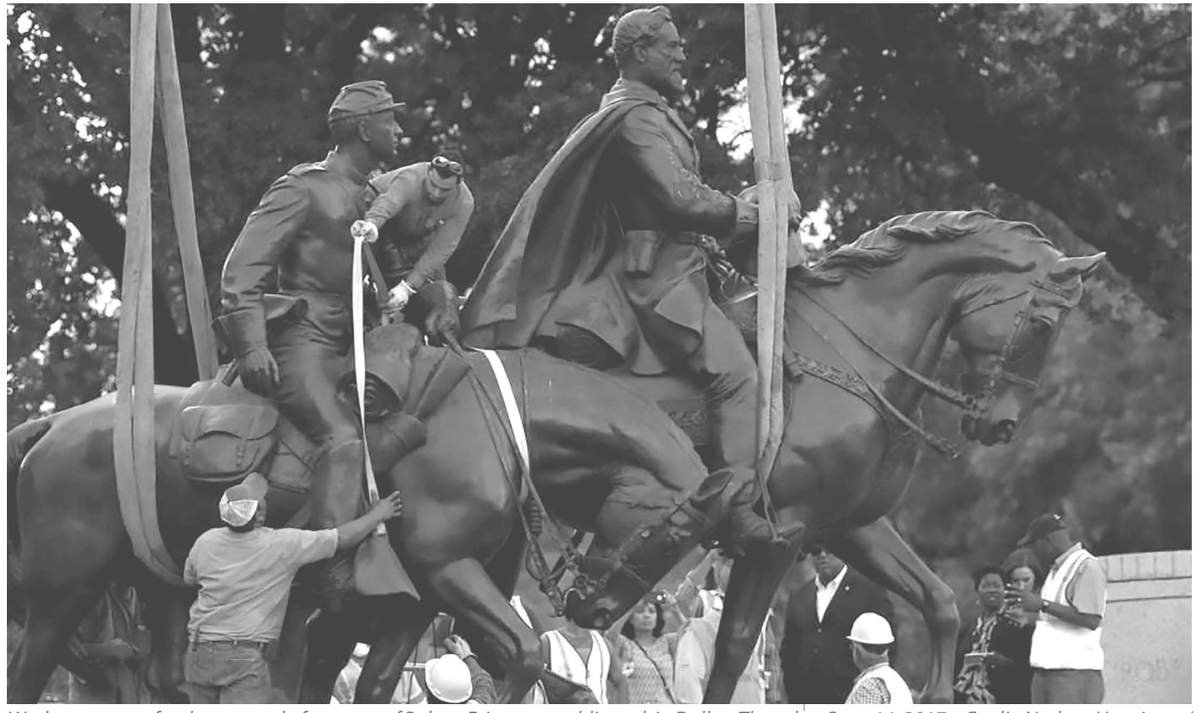
These are monuments central to the formation and maintenance of white supremacist identity. The General Lee statue, the focal point of Emancipation Park, was built in 1924, almost sixty years after the US civil war but right in the middle of Jim Crow period that stretched between Reconstruction and the Civil Rights movements. The park has been the site of rallies of confederate pride and the KKK. The man responsible for the statue also commissioned, as historian Grace Hall notes, a park for Stonewall Jackson,

Columbus statue in Columbus Circle, Manhattan. Credit: NYCParks.gov

also in Charlottesville, that was used to push out its black neighborhood, which once kept black labor close to the houses of white elites, but was no longer considered necessary or favorable to white society.

What has been toppled, then, are not vestiges of the confederate ideology seemingly defeated during the Civil War; what is being unsettled are the undercurrents of white supremacy, which has been the foundational logic of settler colonialism, and on which subsequent slavocracies were built. A logic pointing back to the arrival of—you guessed it—Columbus. What Du Bois called the "psychological wages" that Whites accept in compensation for their labor alienation or what Cedric Robinson suggests is the racial form capital took because of its roots in the internal rationalizations of domination, in Europe, as it shifted from feudal to capitalist society. These black radical scholars highlight what has been lost in media narratives: the intimate interrelationship between white supremacy and labor alienation cemented in and through these statues and their histories.

The novelty of statue toppling further erodes once we place the events in historical narratives outside the myopia of US popular thought. The #RhodesMustFall social movement, which has roared through South Africa and England over the past couple of years, has made it a point to remove statues of Cecil Rhodes from university campuses. Rhodes was the British businessman who founded the De Beers diamond firm and was largely responsible for establishing the economic imperialism that plagues South African society to this day. They also have a larger goal: to rewrite South African history after apartheid. A quite different story has unfolded in Estonia, between 2004 and 2007, in which the right-wing government commissioned the removal of several statues commemorating the Red Army's liberating of Estonia from Nazi occupation. The presence of Soviet-era statues stands in the way of its nationalistic rhetoric espousing the small nation-state as the epitome of neoliberalism gone right. We must not forget the "hippopotamus" in the room, which is what the ridiculously large statue of Alexander III that presided in St. Petersburg square was called. It stood there unmarred by even the Bolshevik Revolution, except for a poem etched into its base, mocking the statue: "I stand here as the cast-iron scarecrow for the country." It was eventually moved, in 1937, to the interior courtyard of a Russian museum, where it has stayed. What these events show is the manner in which (visual) narratives have been pulled apart by social movements, because of the depth (or height) at which certain monuments stand-in as metaphors for the nation-state and shape our historical memory.



Workers prepare for the removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee at a public park in Dallas, Thursday, Sept. 14, 2017 – Credit: Nathan Hunsinger/ The Dallas Morning News via AP

These are the stakes of Mayor de Blasio's statues commission, also known as the Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments and Markers. Their report is expected by the end of this year and the Columbus Circle statue will most certainly be a focal point. Recently, a protest was held in defense of the Columbus statue by Italian-American identity groups closely associated with the Columbus Day Parade. They would rather the statue recede, again, to the backdrop in the name of identity politics. The city will always be a contested space, where its denizens must struggle, as Harvey explains, "to accumulate marks of distinction and collective symbolic capital in a highly competitive world. But this brings in its wake all of the localized questions about whose collective memory, whose aesthetics, and whose benefits are to be prioritized." If we have learned anything from the past few weeks, it is that contesting the presence of statues means backstreaming: to swim against the currents of history in which white supremacy has been naturalized, in an effort "to reinvigorate and conserve culture and identities deemed necessary in the political present," as Audra Simpson argues. These social movements are counter-hegemonic struggles assailing the material effects of capitalism and its symbolic landscape.

When Takiyah Thompson stated, on *Democracy Now!*, "Charlottesville is America. The sentiment [of white supremacy] that was expressed in Charlottesville is part and parcel of what built this country. And I know that Charlottesville can erupt anywhere," we can understand her as outlining the overarching hegemony that has shaped this nation-state's foundation, as well as highlighting the constant struggles erupting between those who want to maintain the status quo and those who want to rewrite history. We must ask then, will DeBlasio's statue commission reflect the sentiments, orientation, and aim of the anti-racist movement that inspired its formation?

However, I also want to offer a critique, a loving critique, of the statue topplings which have erupted this past month. They are, in some ways, missing the mark. When a statue is removed, certainly a strong statement is made, and one that speaks directly to power. Still, what it leaves is a void of signification and, in many ways, what has occurred was not a rewriting of history but a silencing of the past. Let's say, for instance, the Columbus Circle statue is removed, what will be the rationale for doing so? And to what consequence? Will it be removed so that local developers—Donald Trump included—can outbid each for the opportunity to put their stamp on the city or will the park itself be removed to make way for a more convenient intersection to expediently transport labor and capital around the city?

What protestors may want to consider is what will replace these statues. In Paraguay, people were similarly faced with what to do with the vestiges of the troubling past: a statue of the dictator Alfredo Stroessner, who provided a haven to Nazis, committed numerous human rights violations, and intimidated political rivals. His statue could not be allowed to stand following his ouster in 1989. Their solution was to give the statue to artist Carlos Colombino who had long resisted the dictator's cultural wars with irony and corrosive humor. He took the general's statue, smashed it down, put it between to two cement blocks, and placed it back on its foundation. Just a thought.

Boycott the NFL! Shame on them!

Jeff Suttles

In a capitalist society, we are all working to create living conditions that support positive socio-economic growth. Issues such as police brutality, equal opportunity employment, and sustainable living conditions continue to challenge what many of us consider important elements in achieving the "American Dream." For many of us in the academic world, sports amount to entertainment or a simple break from our daily grind. To many others, however, sports represent an escape from the ups and downs that life continues to present. The spirit displayed in social settings when the Yankees hit a home run, or the Knicks complete a fast break, can be contagious and irresistible. Unfortunately, some of our favorite teams continue to exploit the athletes that work for them. The recent issues that the National Football League (NFL) seems to be encountering is a wake-up call for many of us who are committed to raising our voices for justice.

Whether you're a sports fan or not, it's no longer acceptable to support lack luster attempts to achieve equality in professional sports. It's certainly true that the world I come from would benefit greatly from kids striving to excel in pedagogy — rather than striving to be the next hero to catch a touchdown pass in Super Bowl LI — but if the kids in my neighborhood naturally gravitate to sports, it remains our obligation create a level playing field for

Kaepernick playing with the kids at Camp Taylor – Source: https://i.pinimg.com/originals/e1/f5/ab/e1f5abcac4bb45a4d04cfb1c78215fde.jpg

the future. The NFL continues to benefit from the blood, sweat, and tears of many young athletes from urban communities. The time has come for them to take responsibility for the role that they play in our communities. Until we begin to hold them accountable, ethically and socially, we run the risk of positioning these young people for failure, not just in sports, but also in life.

Growing up as a Dallas Cowboys fan, I could never have imagined that one day I would disassociate myself from a league that once represented hard work, diligence, and excellence. With last year's Super Bowl demanding $5.5 million for a thirty second ad, we know that this sport is generating serious currency. In the mist of all this revenue generation, minorities still lack head coach representation. The policies, although necessary, have become inconsistent, sending mixed messages to fans and organizations. Not to mention the lack of support many of these athletes experience once they retire and suffer from serious health afflictions such as dementia.

These issues weigh heavy as you take a look at the future of this sport. Especially when we put the spotlight on young athletes from urban communities, striving to become one of the 32 individuals drafted in the first round of the NFL draft. Don't get me wrong, if someone offered me $30,400,000 with a $20,500,000 signing bonus at the age of 23 to play sports, I would probably say, "Where do I sign?" But when we take a look at the career of, let's say Colin Kaepernick, who signed a deal worth $5,124,296 as a rookie in 2011, it's clear that some of what the league is selling is an illusion.

Kaepernick decided to take a knee during the national anthem because he was fed up with injustice in our communities. This 29-year-old quarterback opted out of his contract with the San Francisco 49ers in March. He threw for 2,241 yards and 16 touchdowns in 12 games last season, which places him in good standing among NFL starting quarterbacks. That being said, he is still a reliable asset to many teams in the NFL. It seems that as he took a stand for equality and justice, he lost marketability in the NFL. What does that say about this league? Is fame and glory contingent on turning your back on the issues in our urban communities? Will Colin's decision to raise his voice leave him ostracized? I'm challenging our community to address this scenario with urgency. Urban communities provide this league with athletes who have become icons in urban culture. If we continue to allow this nonsense to persist, we lend our support to a deteriorating system that is detrimental to the growth of our communities and indirectly destroy lives.

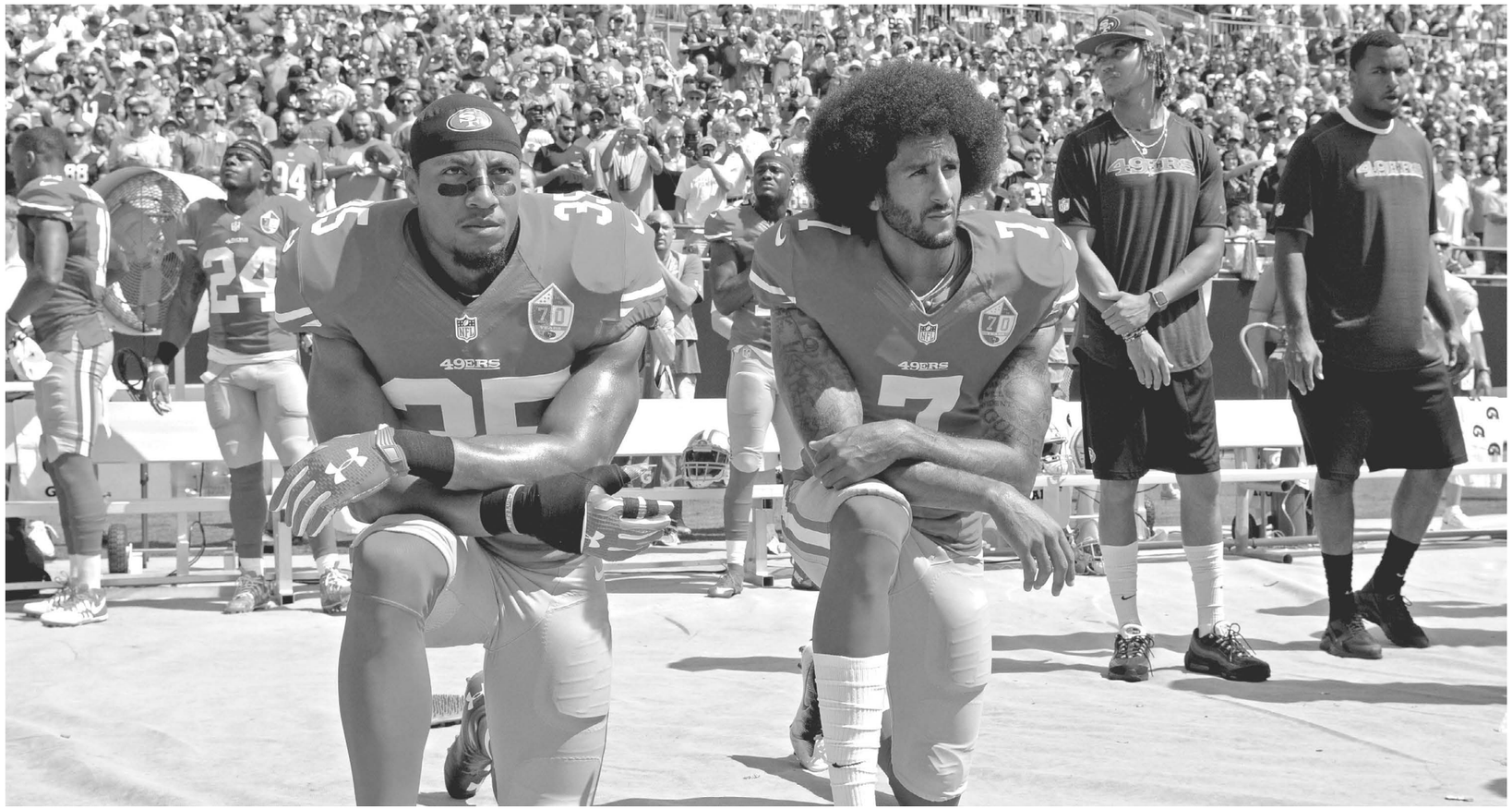
Studies indicate that sports have a positive effect on our economy, increase employment rates, promote community pride, and enhance overall health. As of 2012, 177,559 scholarships were distributed in the United States to youth who showed the ability to perform at a collegiate level. In 2015, college athletics generated $9.15 billion in revenue.

With that being said, it looks like it will take a lot more than a protest to stop what many of our young athletes consider their ticket to a better way of life. Playing sports as a young person helped me to make friends, took me away from the television, and inspired me to reach beyond the status quo to achieve success. As an adult, I still have a positive bond with many of the guys that I played with and against in middle school and high school. It would be preposterous to say that I didn't learn the power of teamwork as I participated with my teammates. But after high school, my sports career was over, and it's safe to say that many of the guys I played with experienced the same reality. Kaepernick was one of the few who found a way to establish a career in professional sports. He should never have been denied his opportunity to play when all he did was take a stand for justice and equality.

Colin Kaepernick embodies a great example of how athletes

should embrace their communities. Kaepernick hosts Camp Taylor, a community based organization that focuses on helping children suffering from heart disease. He has donated over a million dollars to various charitable organizations. Earlier this year, this NFL quarterback delivered several boxes of outfits to New York parole through the "100 Suits for 100 Men" campaign, an organization that focuses on assisting men and women who are on parole looking for employment. Recently, Kaepernick pledged $25,000 in aid to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA). It's safe to say that this athlete is using his voice and finances to address the issues that continue to plague our urban communities. Instead of questioning his motives for taking a knee during the national anthem, the NFL should be celebrating his work off the field.

I believe that our urban communities should, with the right pedagogical tools, take the lead to share this information with our young athletes. Let's encourage our young people to reach for the sky through work in the community as well as work on the field. Colin Kaepernick is one of the many athletes who has fallen out of grace with the NFL, and he deserves to express his frustration with a system that continues to reward silence. It's essential that urban communities and pedagogy take the lead, as we initiate constructive ways to educate young athletes about the importance of justice and equality. We have to reiterate the fact that running and passing the ball well is only half the battle. The truth lies in what



community you coexist in, this is where you harvest your soul, and what gives you the potential to shine with or without the NFL.

As hundreds of people gathered in front of the NFL headquarters on Park Avenue last month, the frustration of the community became apparent. Community leaders, organizers, and clergy spoke to the hundreds that gathered in protest of the NFL's treatment of Kapernick, and it was evident that many fans shared my anger. Tameka Mallory of The Justice League proclaimed to the crowd, "This is bigger than one individual!" I agree with Ms. Mallory, we have to begin to think about the long-term implications this will have on our culture.

How do we explain this situation to aspiring professional athletes? What role do we play as activists and supporters of equality? Is this a sign that we should be preparing for more discrimination as we build for the future? These questions must be answered immediately; these answers will provide direction for the future of college athletes from urban communities. As the speakers addressed the crowd, it became obvious that many believe that our first step should be to boycott the NFL. That means not watching the games, not wearing or buying their apparel, and most importantly, continuing to rally and express our concerns about the treatment of athletes from urban communities. The voice that we have as one-time supporters of the league should be very important to the league. They will have to reexamine what just happened to Kaepernick, and how they should be working to avoid another situation of this magnitude.

This situation comes down to an individual's right to express how he/she feels about life as a minority in America. Police killed over a thousand black people in 2016; Kaepernick has every right to express his displeasure with what is going on in our country. To end his career over this would be insane. This should be a sign to our urban communities and its gatekeepers. It seems that no matter how much our athletes generate for organizations, when they become socially invested in issues that relate to our communities, they run the risk of being barred from the team. I urge you all to care and to take a stand. Do what is right in your heart. Let the NFL know that it's unethical to treat players in this manner. We are all invested in our communities; the fact that athletes have become a big part of American culture is real. We must educate and embrace them by letting them know that we got their back. Not because they are great at sports, but because they are a part of our communities. Ultimately, if we stand for equality in the NFL, we take a stand for the systemic issues that continue to infect our communities. The time is now, let's work together; let's create the solution.

Source: http://www.mercurynews.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/49erspanthersfootball-4.jpg

Free the Media!
Campaign to Rehire Marisa Holmes

Conor Tomás Reed

A crisis is brewing at the CUNY Television headquarters at the Graduate Center. After a series of scandals were uncovered by its workers over the last few years — improper paychecks for hours worked, racist and sexist discrimination in hiring and promotions, and the creeping privatization of the 32-year old educational access station — a sudden blowback was the illegal firing this summer of the long-time CUNY and NYC organizer Marisa Holmes from her CUNY TV job. As a result, the new city-wide campaign Resist CUNY TV, an ad-hoc group of District Council (DC) 37 and Professional Staff Congress (PSC) members, community organizers, and independent media advocates, has been launched to reclaim not only Holmes' job, but the soul of independent media at CUNY TV and beyond.

Source: https://www.glassdoor.com/Photos/CUNY-TV-Office-Photos-IMG1207504.htm

Resistance and Retaliation

Holmes began working at CUNY TV in Fall 2013 as a Broadcast Associate with a regular 32 hours/week shift. Holmes co-produced *Canapé*, a French-speaking cultural show with an anti-colonial lens. The Emmy-nominated show featured wide-ranging short documentaries, from Tunisian rappers standing up to dictatorship, and refugees searching for better lives in Europe, to a segment on J'Ouvert, the Brooklyn street carnival celebrating anti-slavery and anti-colonial uprisings. Holmes produced, shot, and edited video content for the show's television and web distribution.

While working on *Canapé*, Holmes was faced with the realities of her own labor situation at CUNY TV. In summer 2015, then-CUNY TV Director Bob Isaacson informed the station that sweeping budget cuts and layoffs were forthcoming, in violation of the workers' union collective bargaining rights. Holmes and co-workers agreed that they couldn't create political content and not address the structure of CUNY TV, so they began to speak out and organize. A rapid rank-and-file pressure campaign urged DC 37 to file a cease-and-desist letter within 24 hours, thus halting the layoffs.

In response to the cease-and-desist, Isaacson cut all of the

Photo by Erik McGregor

PSC lines, which negatively affected 57 people (about half the CUNY TV staff), resulting in a 30-40% pay reduction for some. This prompted union members to look into how they were getting paid. Holmes explains, "we discovered that most people had been getting paid on separate lines for the same work. This effectively meant that people on part-time lines were doing full-time work, but not being compensated properly or having the full benefits accorded to a full-time employee, while those on full-time lines were being paid extra for extra hours worked, but at regular hourly rates instead of overtime. Basically, CUNY TV was getting around paying out benefits and overtime, by offering some staff additional PSC lines."

CUNY TV workers urgently held meetings to restore these hours, sending petitions and letters to Human Resources and CUNY TV management. DC 37 filed an improper practice suit, and in summer 2016, they won. Holmes recalls, "we stopped the layoffs and cuts to hours by building a cross-union strategy between DC 37 and the PSC that exposed the mismanagement and bad labor practices at the station." Through these organizing efforts, dozens of CUNY TV workers received increases to their base pay, changes of title, expansion of benefits, and support for pay equity. DC 37 was so impressed by these efforts

that they featured Holmes on the cover of their newspaper, the *Public Employee Press.*

The CUNY TV settlement victory was short-lived. Holmes was suddenly informed that *Canapé*, was to be canceled, and she was effectively demoted from senior producer/editor to associate producer. Meanwhile, as DC 37 and the PSC simultaneously negotiated contract demands with a CUNY administration that insisted there was no money for adjunct faculty pay equity (while raising tuition fees and their own salaries), City College of New York was rocked with a financial corruption scandal and federal investigation involving a $600,000 City College Foundation fund that had been diverted to the college president's personal expenses. CUNY's former Vice President and behind-the-scenes chief operator, Jay Hershenson, and CUNY TV's former Director, Isaacson (who Hershenson had appointed to run CUNY TV), were suddenly implicated. The CUNY TV Foundation, which they treated as a slush fund for pet projects and personal favors, also came under scrutiny. By the end of 2016, Hershenson quietly stepped down as CUNY VP and was relocated to the Queens College administration. Shortly thereafter, Isaacson announced his retirement and his close CUNY TV affiliates also relocated elsewhere.

From this moment, CUNY's Deputy Vice Chancellor for Operations, Burton Sacks, took over Hershenson's old position and oversaw the transition at CUNY TV. Gail Yancosek, a former DC 37 union member and beneficiary of the workers' settlement who also runs a consulting firm, was appointed by Sacks to be the new CUNY TV Interim Director. Holmes explains, "they have made sweeping changes in the transition, which include appointing all the people from Gail's consulting company to management positions." Yancosek was accompanied by a new team of Human Resources and financial officers who, under the guise of cleaning up financial corruption, targeted Holmes and co-workers who had drawn attention to it. In this new management position, with full knowledge of Holmes' union activity, Yancosek worked with Sacks and CUNY Central's Human Resources Director Sonia Pearson to abruptly fire Holmes in June 2017 without notice or cause for termination. Since then, Yancosek has overseen the station's further privatization and crackdown on workplace dissent, in part by closely surveilling workers, seizing their laptops to inspect data, and threatening the TV shows of those who had spoken out.

CUNY TV:
Canaries in the Coal Mine

As Holmes is the first to admit, this campaign at CUNY TV is being fought in a broader context that exceeds her specific situation, however precarious it is. Across NYC, several incidents have recently emerged where independent media women workers at Paper Tiger, the A.J. Muste Institute, and StoryCorps are being harassed and fired for labor organizing. With the *Village Voice* and *Daily News* also shutting down print editions and being sold to a conglomerate (respectively), we're seeing that media workers and platforms are generally being targeted right now. Together with the situation at CUNY TV, these attacks on public broadcasting are "canaries in the coal mine" of public sector attacks that may only worsen in a wider assault on unions by government and business interests.

To support Holmes over the summer, the Resist CUNY TV campaign held three solidarity rallies (one in which we marched from the Graduate Center to CUNY's headquarters), and we launched a petition and phone/email blast actions to Burton Sacks and Sonia Pearson. CUNY management has repeatedly ignored DC 37 and PSC leaders' requests to meet with them about Holmes' situation. Holmes has now filed a retaliation claim with the NY State Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) to argue the following:

- **She was doing protected union activity on the job,** such as organizing discussions and meetings between unions, signing people up to be members, going to union actions, initiating claims, going to delegate meetings etc. which she would always do in her capacity as a DC 37 member (while wearing the union's green hat, no less).

- **Management was aware she was organizing on the job:** The current director Yancosek was on all the email threads, and was a beneficiary of the settlement the union won. HR also received petitions and letters from Holmes and co-workers, so CUNY TV and CUNY Central Offices knew of her union-protected efforts.

- **There was nexus between the organizing and the retaliatory action:** i.e. the same summer that they won the hours settlement dispute and got a new DC 37 contract, *Canapé* was canceled and Holmes was demoted, and then, a year later, fired.

The first of several PERB hearings happened on September 12, despite the reluctance of the CUNY administration. Reflected in the claim are Holmes' demands:

1) Bring the show *Canapé* back on the air
2) Reinstate Marisa Holmes
3) Cover retroactive pay for Holmes' time away from the job

Here at the Graduate Center, students, faculty, and staff regularly voice the need for cross-union solidarity with workplace concerns, and for single grievances to connect to larger struggles. The fight to re-hire Holmes could have wider repercussions for DC37 and PSC members (whose contracts expire this November) against a Graduate Center and CUNY administration whose record on labor relations is already objectionable. If this move is tolerated, it sets a precedent for how CUNY can threaten and fire those who speak out. On a personal note, I'm saddened that the consistent radical presence of my friend and comrade in the building could so easily be disappeared.

With Resist CUNY TV, I urge readers to join the campaign to re-hire Marisa Holmes, as we strive to reclaim the station for critical independent voices. In her words, "CUNY TV has the capacity to be a critical and engaged platform for communities across New York City. We have a choice between the path toward privatization and a media for the people." This battle is being fought in the courtroom, in our campus building, and in the streets. CUNY is a place for radical discourse, but it must also be a place for action. To challenge the nepotistic political structure of CUNY (and its media apparatus) entails building a militant rank-and-file movement across and beyond our unions as we confront management's attacks upon them. We need to carry onward the work that Marisa Holmes has always been doing, as we support her in this critical moment.

What you can do to help

1. Contact these administrators to demand that Marisa Holmes be re-hired at CUNY TV:
   - Burton Sacks, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Operations: 646-664-2853
   - Sonia Pearson, Executive Director and Labor Designee of Human Resources: 646-664-3264
2. Sign the petition: Change.org/p/burton-sacks-re-hire-marisa-holmes-at-cuny-tv
3. Follow updates at: Facebook.com/ResistCUNYTV and @ReHire_Marisa on Twitter.

Dude, Where's my Cohort?

Sarah Hildebrand

As an undergraduate, I attended a small public liberal arts college where most students lived on campus. When your entire life takes place within the same 150-acre radius as 5,000 others, it is easy to meet people. Even if you don't make friends in class, you at least have a roommate or three, and your social circle slowly expands as eager freshmen are lured by the siren calls of upperclassmen parties. After my first few months teaching at Lehman College in the Bronx, I began to grow curious about the "college experience" of my students. Most days, I would walk into a silent classroom, my students glued to their cellphones. I began to poke fun at them, asking: "Can't you at least pretend to like each other?" And then, more seriously, "How do you all make friends here?"

Lehman College is almost entirely a commuter school. In terms of student housing, there's a residence hall that can accommodate up to nineteen students. With an undergraduate enrollment of over 10,000, this means that the other roughly 9, 981 of them are dispersed throughout the city and up into Westchester, many living with parents or families of their own. Even though Lehman has a rather large and scenic campus, especially compared to other schools within the CUNY system, it still doesn't appear to serve as a popular meeting ground.

When I ask my students how they make friends in college, many of them say they don't. They say everyone is so busy after class that most people disappear quickly, often to work the jobs they need to pay tuition. They say they are mostly just friends with the people they knew from high school, or spend most of their time with their families.

In order to reverse this trend, I try to foster a classroom environment where students are able to get to know each other. I make sure to go over names multiple times at the start of the semester (and sometimes in the middle of it). I force them to do group activities in class so that they *have* to interact, even if they might spend the majority of that time complaining about how horrible I am for making them do group work rather than doing the work itself. In some ways, I find this an equitably productive use of class-time because as my students become more comfortable with each other, they also become more comfortable expressing their ideas in our large course discussions. By the end of the semester, I often walk into classrooms filled with both whispered and raucous conversations.

I understand that some readers may wonder why this matters. If my job is to teach students a particular set of skills, why should I bother caring about their social lives?

But when people talk about the "college experience," they're rarely just talking about coursework. It's generally acknowledged that college is a space for both intellectual and personal growth. And I believe that having the right social support system is actually an essential part of making the most of even an academic experience. School can be stressful. Sometimes we need people to motivate us. And when course material becomes difficult, it's often way easier to work through with a friend.

And then again, perhaps my curiosity is more selfishly rooted, stemming from reflections on my own life as a doctoral candidate and the difficulty that often comes with attempting to strike a work-life balance. As an undergraduate, I had found it difficult *not* to be surrounded by other people. Conversely, as I now enter my fourth year at the Graduate Center, I wonder where all those people have gone.

In graduate school, students tend to go from being part of a "class" to part of a "cohort." A shift in terminology occurs even though the word represents the same idea: a group of individuals who will, theoretically, enter and complete the program together. But the term cohort is loaded with a bit more symbolic meaning. Its earliest usage dates back to the Roman Empire when it was

Lehman College Music Hall, Bronx, New York City. The tudor-gothic graystone building was completed in 1931 by the New York State WPA – Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/jag9889/3154184698/

used to describe divisions of infantry, and it held on to this militaristic connotation for quite some time. Given this etymology, it would appear that its usage in defining incoming groups of graduate students is meant to somehow bind them together and promote a sense of camaraderie, playing off on stereotypes of soldiers as a "band of brothers" (or sisters). There's an emphasis on togetherness that is less present in the signification of the word "class" and which suggests these people will remain together in the years ahead despite the obstacles.

In some ways, the Graduate Center is ahead of other institutions when it comes to forging this initial bond. Efforts have been made, at least in some departments, to limit the size of cohorts and to provide incoming students with equal funding. This helps decrease at least some of the competition for resources and encourages a more collaborative and friendly environment. At the start, we appear to have equal footing. This isn't the case at many other universities where funding is competitive and uneven, creating rifts within a cohort before it can even form. As one of the entirely *unfunded* students in my former MA/PhD program, I was never quite able to overcome my sense of insecurity and inferiority enough to enter social spaces within the institution. While some of this social hierarchy may have been imagined, I can assure you that some of it was most definitely real, materializing both with and without intention. Some funded students really did seem to think that being unfunded was a contagious condition that should be carefully avoided, while in other ways it was only natural that those with funding (such as teaching fellowships) would forge stronger bonds with each other through that shared experience.

While the Graduate Center has taken steps, at least within the English department, to eliminate this initial hurdle, the sense of community promised at orientation rarely seems to last. People who enter with Master's degrees often speed through coursework, while others may move more slowly in the gathering of credits. Sometimes, life happens. People go on leave, get married, get jobs, move. Time-to-degree varies widely—anywhere from five to ten-plus years.

Source: http://i.huffpost.com/gen/1377546/images/o-GRADUATION-COLLEGE-facebook.jpg

And after coursework ends, it's hard to keep track of where everyone has landed. Some cohorts work harder than others to maintain their sense of unity and support each other through the program, while others are quickly split apart by the countless other distractions and obligations of living life as a graduate student.

Generally speaking, I believe graduate schools don't do nearly enough to foster a sense of community on their campuses, especially given the increasing amount of research being produced around issues of student suicides and mental health, along with the well-known fact that doctoral study is often an increasingly isolating pursuit. And I think this problem is especially exacerbated by the geography of New York City and the dispersed nature of CUNY's many campuses. As many of us begin teaching placements, we end up scattered across CUNY's undergraduate institutions, often sharing an office with numerous other Graduate Teaching Fellows or adjuncts, but rarely seeing them.

Once coursework ends, there's no longer a centralized meeting place for graduate cohorts. Many students will rarely visit the Graduate Center for more than the occasional committee meeting. The boroughs are so spread out that fostering friendship takes a concerted effort and allocation of time—enough so that many students feel too guilty to set it aside, or genuinely cannot due to financial or other circumstances. There are certainly people from my initial cohort who I care for and miss dearly, but sending a series of extemporaneous and inconsistent text messages feels like an empty form of communication. Our lives are too full to be boiled down to 140 characters.

The only solution I've found to help alleviate this loneliness is to make a cohort of my own. As it turns out, your entry point into the program, or pacing within it, need not have bearing on who you should or shouldn't associate with. While our original cohorts might appear like ready-made social circles, I've found it incredibly valuable to befriend people in the years ahead of me who have been amazingly supportive both personally and professionally, helping to both keep me sane and to guide me through the bureaucratic hoops. I've then tried to pay-it-forward to those in the cohorts after me, remembering in tortured detail my first year as a Graduate Teaching Fellow when it took months to acquire even the most basic of resources.

I've also found it helpful to create networks outside the university. While unfunded, I took up an off-campus job through which I gained an entirely different community from that encapsulated by graduate school. In some ways, this served as a relief. It offered me that greater sense of balance as I was able (albeit forced) to escape and detach from academia. It also helped diversify my friend group. Working positions in the field of manual labor, or even more traditional on-campus jobs like tutoring within other departments, I was able to meet people from outside my field of study. Our varying interests and backgrounds forced us to find a common language that would eventually evolve into one of friendship and intimacy.

In New York, I've worked to develop connections within my local community. While a lot of my hobbies could certainly also take place in isolation, I've forced myself to reinvest in more "social" activities. To me, there's nothing quite like the instant camaraderie formed by joining a team and, as a soccer player, having a literally common goal.

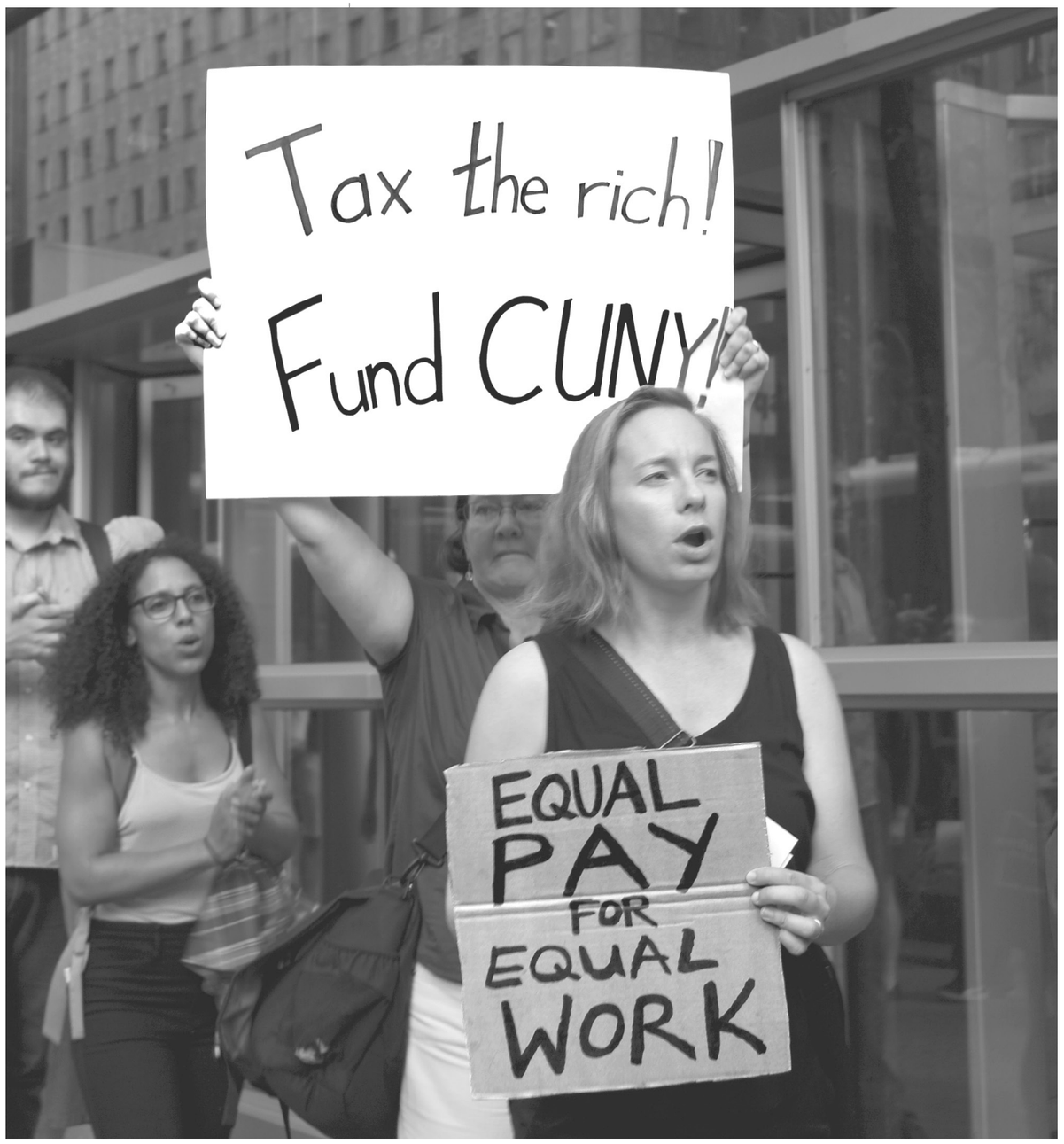
Higher education does not have to be an isolating pursuit. Certainly, there are ways that the institutions themselves could better facilitate a sense of community amongst their student populations by providing physical spaces where students can socialize or by fostering more collaborative and amicable atmospheres. But there are also steps that we ourselves can take to subvert a system that often leaves us sequestered. We can prioritize our friendships by viewing them not as guilty pleasures, but as healthy and productive relationships that might ultimately provide exactly the support we need to see the light at the end of the academic tunnel.

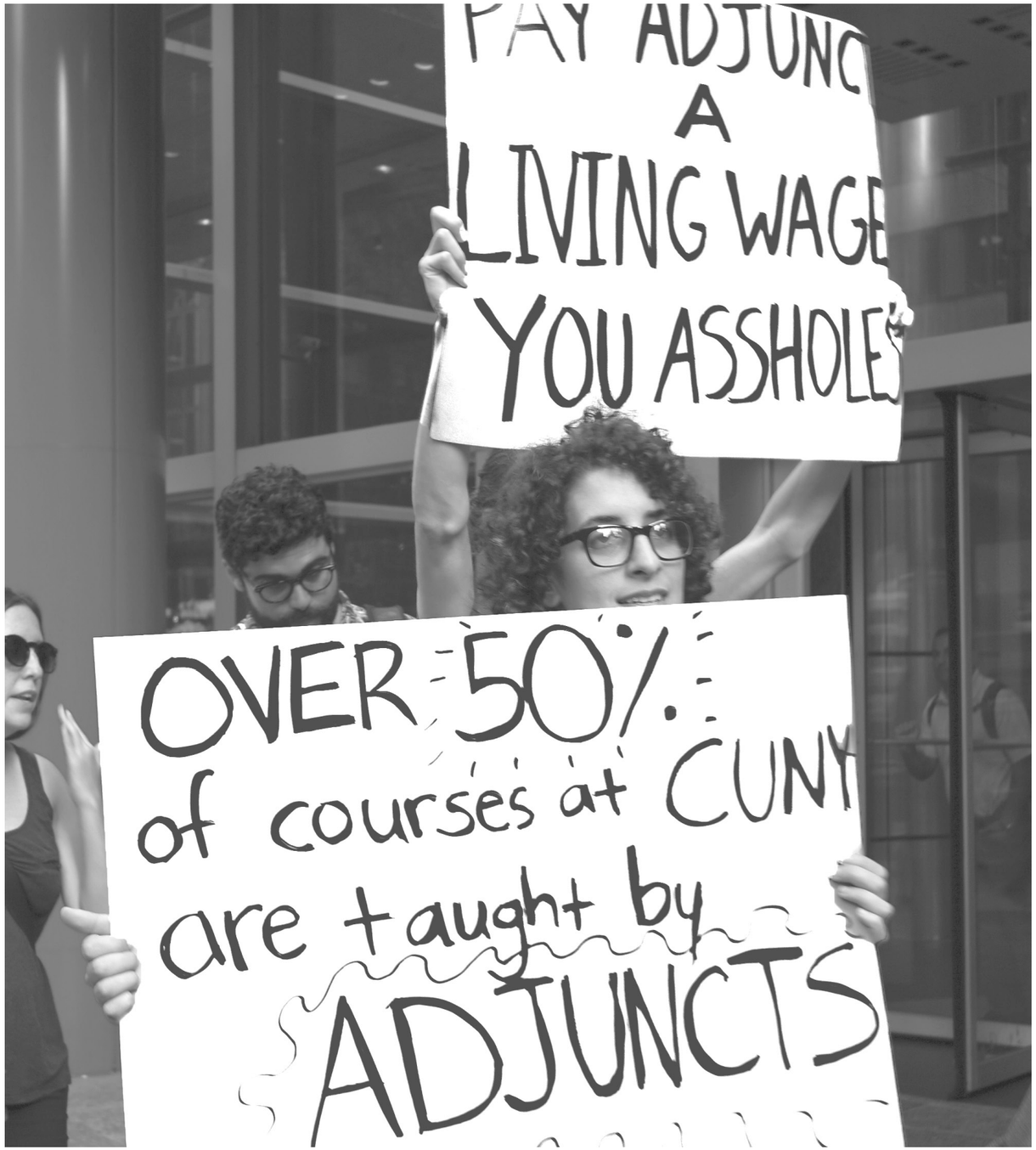
PSC Rank-and-File Take Independent Action for a $7k Adjunct Minimum Wage

CUNY Struggle

On 26 September, one hundred CUNY faculty, students, and comrades from all across the city picketed outside Governor Cuomo's Manhattan office, and marched to CUNY Central, the headquarters of CUNY management. We wanted to send a clear message to Cuomo and CUNY management that there will be no excuses this time: **we demand a $7k-per-course minimum wage and meaningful job security for adjuncts in the next PSC-CUNY contract!** The entire demonstration was organized by an independent coalition of PSC rank-and-filers and was co-sponsored by CUNY Struggle. Despite having done absolutely zero work to mobilize membership for the coming contract fight, PSC leadership refused to endorse this rally, attend, or even give us access to their communication apparatus to spread the word that it was going on. But apparently we still managed to get the word out! And whether Cuomo, the CUNY management, or PSC leadership likes it, we're just getting started.

All images are courtesy of Anh Tran





We refuse to let this contract be the latest chapter in 'A Tale of Two CUNYs'!

The contract for PSC-CUNY, the union for CUNY professors and many higher education staff, is set to expire in November. A majority of professors in the CUNY system are adjuncts, working for a mere $3,200 per course with no job security. CUNY contracts consistently distribute the vast majority of raises to the professors who already earn the most money, widening the gap between the haves and the have-nots in the CUNY system. It's time for CUNY to give its adjunct faculty a $7k-per-course minimum wage and real job security!

CUNY can afford $7k for adjuncts in the next PSC-CUNY contract

CUNY currently spends only 5% of its $5,000,000,000 annual revenue on adjuncts' wages – the workers who comprise over half the faculty and teach over half the classes. CUNY has the money. Raising the minimum wage for adjuncts to $7k would take only another 5% of CUNY's revenue. Time to cough it up!

Adjuncts deserve $7k and job security, both long overdue

Adjuncts are college professors and at CUNY teach college classes for sub-minimum wage. Across the country, adjuncts are rising and demanding the wages that they deserve. The contingent faculty unions at Tufts University and Barnard College both won minimum per-course rates of at least $7,000 for the coming academic year. CUNY sets the low watermark for adjunct pay in the entire City of New York. It's time to reverse this trend.

$7k and job security for adjuncts is amoral and practical issue for everyone

Across the country, universities are increasingly relying on adjuncts to lower the wages and job security of everyone, including tenured faculty. Only by taking a stand for the bottom tier of CUNY's workforce can we begin to buck this trend and turn the tide toward a living wage for all in the university, as well as optimal learning conditions for students.

Join our growing grassroots movement for $7k and job security… and accept no substitute!

Practicing Consent in the Classroom

Jenn Polish

I love participating in workshops that are actually workshops. Particularly when we're supposed to be teaching *about* teaching. It always strikes me as ironic when we do that by lecturing, by talking *at* instead of talking *with*, by reading endless, jargon-filled texts aloud instead of engaging in workshop methods that we can employ in our undergrad classrooms.

I love participating in workshops that are actually workshops, not just lectures by a different name.

I love it. But sometimes I don't. Sometimes I hate it. Actually, I hate it fairly often, and fairly passionately. This is because there are moments in which I am happy to participate in random classroom activities drawn from student-centered pedagogy. Some days, I am thrilled to write on post-its and post them on my own body; some days I am full to the brim with an odd combination of adrenaline and serenity during think-pair-share activities; some days, I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to write through my thoughts in a room full of people who are, also, writing through their thoughts.

But many days? Many days, many moments, I can barely stand the thoughts that bang around in my own head, let alone write any of them down just because someone told me to. But I feel like I have to, because if I don't, someone might ask me why not. Someone might ask me what I wrote, and I'll have to explain that my mind was full of ideas before we were asked to write them down; I'll have to explain that I left my anti-anxiety medication at home today, and anyway, it doesn't always help

So there are times when I hate "student-centered" pedagogy in action. All too often, the activities that we create to make our lesson plans conducive for students to shape the classroom, to have their voices heard. Such activities can feel absolutely terrible for those of us with anxiety, with depression, with an off-day, with any diagnosis, with none of them, and anything but "centered" around me (when I'm in the position of a student).

What, then, is a student-centered pedagogue to do? Do we never give activities, surrender to lectures or traditional class discussions? Do we forsake freewriting, do we cancel the activities we've come to call "low-stakes" even though, for many of us, they feel incredibly high-stakes?

Of course not. I believe that we need student-centered classroom structures like we need oxygen, especially when we're teaching within white supremacist systems that already work so hard to decentralize, marginalize, silence, erase our students of color, our students with dis/abilities, our students who are just learning [academic] English for the first time. I think a lot about this conundrum every term before classes begin, and I think about it constantly throughout every course I teach. But at the start of this term, I thought about it extra hard, because right before that, I got offered the opportunity to teach my first theatre class.

It's a 101 at LaGuardia Community College; it's "Art of Theatre", and yes, theatre majors have to take it, but it's also a course that fulfills general humanities curricular requirements. Not everyone coming into the course aspires to be an actress, nor necessarily do they aspire to be familiar with acting, with improvisation, with collaborative writing of the intense intimacy that theatre courses can foster. Besides, even theatre majors—perhaps *especially* the theatre majors, as theatre nerds often cope with our anxiety by diving so deeply into performances that we can, for a few shining hours, interact with human beings without being riddled with the weight of our own minds—have social anxiety, are on the autism spectrum, have depression.

So what is a student-centered pedagogue teaching theatre to do? For me, I didn't want it to be a matter of limiting the range of activities in the classroom; but I did want it to be, fundamentally, about *consent.* I try to foster as much consent as I can in my system of assessment through contract grading practices and doing temperature checks with my students at various points in each class.

Of course, consent — and thereby consent-based pedagogical practices — is muddied by differentials in power. As a white U.S.-born instructor teaching at a predominantly immigrant, POC institution, I can never get truly free consent for anything I do in the classroom. My body is inherently violent in that space. I know this. My students and I discuss this. I write to my students about it on my syllabus. When I say *consent-based pedagogy*, I say it with a grain of salt, with a heaping helping of, 'it is always an attempt, and the power dynamics involved must constantly be explicitly acknowledged and openly negoti-

Source: http://i.huffpost.com/gen/3136392/images/o-QUIET-REVOLUTION-6-facebook.jpg

ated.' Trying to think through how an *attempt* at consent-based pedagogy might operate in my day-to-day theatre classroom really had me re-evaluating the casual way we often deem certain tasks or assignments (like freewriting or informal group work) as "low-stakes." It's all well and good to fill our classrooms with "low-stakes" activities meant to centralize student experience and foster active engagement, but without the ability to opt-out and back in at any time without stigma or judgment, even the most "low-stakes" of activities can become high-stakes in a hammering heart trying to beat itself out of a quaking chest.

This term, then, I'm experimenting with a system that scholars and activists on the autism spectrum have developed for conferences: a system of wearable colors/symbols that broadcasts to people what kinds of social interactions you're available for, and what kinds of social interactions you'd like to avoid at any given moment. This wearable tech (wearable consent, one might say) communicates without making the individual wearing it communicate directly and since everyone wears them, it helps diminish stigma around less social feelings.

The way I've adopted this system to my theatre class this term is as follows:

Each class, you will be expected to bring with you the cards I give you in the beginning of term: these cards will be our Personal Traffic Lights, colored green, yellow, and red. Though we will discuss these extensively in class, I want to explain our Personal Traffic Lights here as well:

Green: When you are feeling up for anything, ready to take intellectual and emotional risks with the rest of the class—or, just when you're feeling ready to participate generally and speak out in class—please make the *green* Personal Traffic Light visible to myself and to your classmates.

Yellow: When you are feeling cautiously ready to participate—perhaps you're nervous (a little or a lot), or having an off-day/you're tired, but you're ready to take some risks and dive into theatre class activities—please make the *yellow* Personal Traffic Light visible to myself and to your classmates.

Red: When you are feeling unable to participate in a traditional way—when you're having a bad day, when it's enough of a challenge and risk to be present in class so you would rather learn by observing, listening, and taking notes instead of directly engaging

Colleges from Ohio State to Central Florida devise more programs to triage students – Source: https://www.wsj.com/articles/students-flood-college-mental-health-centers-1476120902

in the day's activities—please make the *red* Personal Traffic Light visible to myself and to your classmates.

You can always change your Light in the middle of the class, because of course, our feelings fluctuate all the time. You will never be penalized for how you're feeling, of course, but you might find that I'll check in with you privately if I'm noticing a lot of reds and yellows from you; this is to see if there's anything I can do to make the class a safer and more comfortable and accessible space for you to learn.

When we start doing projects and activities together, we will make sure we have roles for when you're feeling yellow and red. We will work as a team to find various ways for everyone to contribute to the class experience; perhaps the greatest thing about theatre is that there is always a role for everyone, from the most outgoing spotlight-seeker to the most introverted behind-the-scenes writer.

The biggest critique I've encountered—always from professors, never from students (at least, not that they've told me)—to this consent-based pedagogical practice is, "won't students just use this to work their way out of working?" I am of the firm belief that this question itself has tints of racialized ableism, digging at our most cherished beliefs that students, as a whole, aren't to be trusted. That when a student doesn't show up to class, it's because they're just "not trying hard enough" or they're "lazy." Depression, lack of MetroCard money, anxiety, different ways of learning: these things don't exist in this question, and if they do, they exist only on certain terms.

And when students *are* in fact checked out and *don't* want to do the work? Why not? Are we not making it seem relevant to their lives? Are we not letting our students recognize themselves in our course work? Has K-12 education depleted their faith that they can ever recognize themselves in our course work? Those things are *our* responsibilities to address, to change. To be transparent with students, to work with them, to meet them halfway.

But there is also a very practical, grounded response that I've developed to this question. As with the most important lessons I've ever learned, my students showed it to me. Yesterday, two of my students were displaying their red cards. Their *nope absolutely not, not today Satan* cards. But they still volunteered to give performances, in front of the entire class, that moved many of us to tears because their interpretations of the text they were working with (a spoken word piece by Jonathan Mendoza called "Brown Boy, White Boy", if you're interested) were so damn powerful.

One of the other students in the class (once we slowly emerged from their silent, tear-filled "wow" from one of the performances) ventured to commend the performer not only on his performance itself; he pointed out that the performer was wearing his red card, and he thought it was especially brave to give a stunning performance like that while he was feeling red. He thanked him for his performance, for his example, his bravery. The performing student responded that, in our class—as we had all discussed during our collaborative creation of our grading contract—he was making an effort to become comfortable with being uncomfortable.

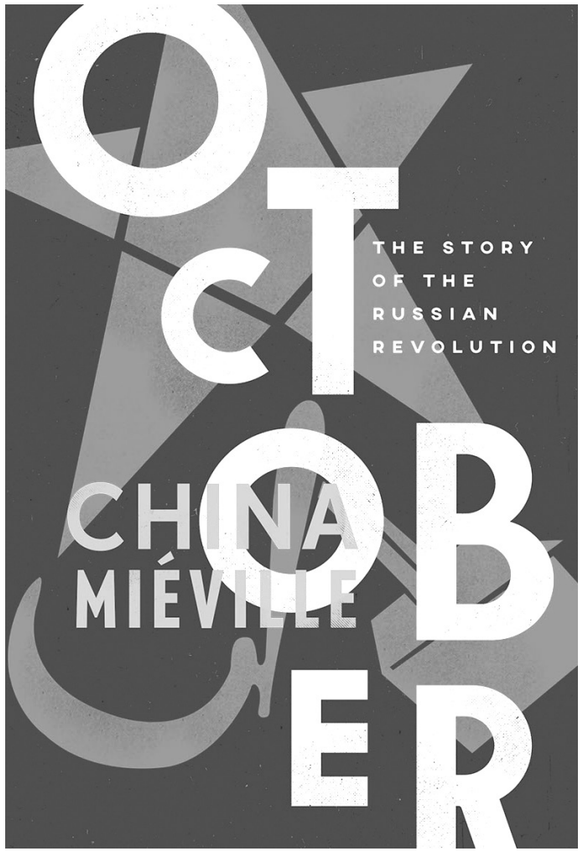
This, I should add, was the same student who, on the first day of class, nearly cried when I introduced the Personal Traffic Light system to them, bursting forth with a, "why has no one ever had this for us before?"

This did not happen because my pedagogy is great, or even good. It *is* because autistic self-advocates created an excellent system, and I was lucky enough to learn of it and try to integrate it into my own course. And it *is* because my students are brave, and powerful, and because we're all learning the strength of vulnerability in the classroom together. Consensually.

Up from Below

Review of China Mieville's *October: The Story of the Russian Revolution*

Erik Wallenberg



One can stand in the stairway at the Museum of the City of New York surrounded by quotes stenciled on the walls which pay homage to the metropolis. One quote that dominates the wall reads, "New York, city of prose and fantasy, of capitalist automation, its streets a triumph of cubism, its moral philosophy that of the dollar." Leon Trotsky wrote these words remembering his time in New York in the early days of 1917. He "only managed to catch the general life-rhythm of the monster known as New York" because he had to hurry back to Russia.

The events that unfolded in Russia over the course of the year 1917 had been anticipated and dismissed in equal measure over the previous decades. The feudal monarchy of the Romanovs was long past its prime while the socialist movement innovated new

Source: ask the author

forms of democracy as late as the crushed rebellion of 1905. The fall of the centuries-old tsarist regime in February as well as the socialist revolution that came in late October were followed around the world by supporters and detractors alike.

New York was home to a vibrant socialist and radical Left that welcomed the news of the October Revolution with open arms and big expectations. In January 1918, the socialist newspaper the *New York Evening Call* sent "heartiest greeting" to the new socialist government in Russia "who so valiantly uphold the principles of international Socialism." Concern over ending the slaughter of the World War while protecting weaker nations was foremost on the agenda. The *Evening Call* proclaimed to its readers, "We are highly gratified over the fact that the first Socialist government ever established has brought about the beginning of peace negotiations and was instrumental in forcing the imperialistic world powers and their capitalistic governments to pay homage, in words if not deeds, to the Socialist peace formula of: No annexations, no punitive indemnities and the self determination of nationalities." The orgy of death and mutilation that marked the trench warfare of World War I is central to understanding the history of 1917. Ordinary soldiers were essential to the war, as they are to all wars, and accordingly, China Miéville keeps them at the foreground of his history of the two revolutions in Russia that year.

The hated war and the soldiers fighting on the front, along with their families bearing the burden of scarcity, uncertainty, and fear at home, was the cauldron in which this revolution was forged. *October* is mostly the history of "the crucible of the revolutions," the city of Petrograd. It was a cosmopolitan city, one where a variety of languages, European and Asian, were heard in the streets. "Around its wealthy heart" Miéville writes, "it was a city of workers, swollen by the war to around 400,000, an unusual proportion of them relatively educated. And it was a city of soldiers, of whom 160,000 were stationed there in reserve, their morale poor and getting worse."

As a primer, Miéville takes us through a masterful sweep of 400 years of Russian history to get us to the Marxists who are "a gaggle of emigres, reprobates, scholars and workers, in a close weave of family, friendship and intellectual connections, political endeavor and polemic. They tangle in fractious snarl. Everyone knows everyone." Among this group we learn that belief in the possibility of a socialist revolution is muted, as one Marxist states, "There is not yet enough proletarian yeast in Russia's Peasant dough to make a socialist cake." Miéville shows the problems faced by those wanting to make a revolution in a country with a peasant majority and a bourgeoisie with little will to overthrow the monarchy. The best they can manage is, in Miéville's formulation, "Political activism through passive-aggressive dinner parties."

The revolutions don't, however, materialize from these corners of Petrograd. It all begins with the women who walked off their jobs on International Women's Day, demanding bread and peace, on a cold February morning. The women agitated for the men to come out too. Fraternizing with soldiers on duty, they attacked police who they referred to as 'Pharoah,' an identification that would stick. The revolutionaries struggled to catch up with this growing rebellion that quickly began to challenge the centuries' old system of rule. The women "stormed prisons and tore open doors and freed the bewildered inmates." Meanwhile the tsar and his ministers remained unconvinced of the seriousness of the rebellion.

Miéville paints the scene they missed: "In the boulevards of the insurgent city, revolutionary socialists jostled alongside angry liberals and all shades in between, and they were not calm. What they shared was a certainty that change, a revolution, was necessary…Under the darkening

REVIEW

sky, accompanied by breaking glass and in the guttering light of fires, groups of men and women drifted aimlessly together and apart, workers, freed criminals, radical agitators, soldiers, freelance hooligans, spies and drunkards. Armed with what they had found. Here, a figure in a greatcoat waving an officer's sabre and an empty revolver. There, a young teenager with a kitchen knife. A student with machine-gun bullets slung around his waist, a rifle in each hand. A man wielded a pole for cleaning tramlines as if it were a pike."

The Councils of Workers and Soldiers, the Soviets, were thrown up by the revolutionary actors themselves as locations for democratic decision making. An innovation of the working class from the last failed revolution of 1905, the Soviets became the central location and site of power to challenge the status quo. The tsar had offered a "concession" to the demand for democracy in the form of a powerless "representative body," the Duma.

In the midst of the revolution, Miéville tells us that the Mensheviks "made straight for the corridors of power," that is, for the Duma and new Provisional Government. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, headed to the workers' districts. It's this crucial difference in the orientation of the various socialists and their organizations that comes up time and again; some focus on established institutional bourgeoisie sites of power to make change, while others look to those who make the society function, the working class.

With the hard right in disarray and the Soviets tepid in their approach, keeping a "watchfulness" and "vigilant control" over the Provisional Government, Lenin argued the hard line of continual revolution. Most centrally, Lenin argued for fraternization at the front while everyone else seemed to call for a continuation of the war as "revolutionary defencism," that is support for the war as defense of the new revolution. Miéville notes that with this call for fraternization at the front Lenin was dismissed as 'a has-been' and his ideas as 'political excesses,' 'lunatic ideas,' and 'the ravings of a madman.' At points like this, which slip into the "great-man" view of history, I wonder how alone Lenin really was. Why do we never get voices of the other committee members who agreed with him? Or better yet, the Bolsheviks and others in the Soviets or the soldiers themselves, calling for an end to the war. Is there no record of anyone else? Did he argue all alone? Miéville mostly steers clear of sanctifying the players in his story, and Lenin does come up for plenty of criticism. And yet in moments like these, Lenin seems to be a singular miracle from above. Miéville hints at this when he describes few speakers taking Lenin's position in the formal debate, only to win the vote. Miéville says with a wink: Lenin "must have had a good deal of shy support."

The socialists were a motley crew. Those from the various factions and splits of previous organizations, including Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, and more still moved between groups and spoke for and voted for each other's resolutions. Miéville follows many of those known and familiar figures such as Maxim Gorky, Alexandra Kollontai, Vladimir Lenin, Julius Martov, and Leon Trotsky.

We are treated to a memorable cast of characters including "Shlema Asnin, a respected militant with the First Machine

The victory of communism is inevitable, says this 1969 propaganda poster by Konuhov – Photo by DeAgostini/Getty Images

Gun Regiment, a dark-bearded former thief who dressed like a gothic cowboy, wide-brimmed hat, guns and all." Unfortunately, we don't follow figures like Asnin, and instead trail a familiar coterie around Lenin. It can seem at times that all was lost without Lenin. To be sure Miéville never says these words, and in fact he notes that he doesn't think that's the case, but what he writes at times seems to suggest that still.

Miéville does show a broader Bolshevik Party in his book as well. In the back and forth of the July days, the Bolsheviks sponsor a concert to raise money for anti-war literature for soldiers to take with them to the front. The focus on turning the tide of the war, and the confidence with which it was carried out, were hallmarks of the Bolshevik rank-and-file.

The ruling class meanwhile put its trust in the military generals. Miéville sets the scene of General Kornilov's rise as "an ecstatic upper-class crowd" sends a "shower of petals" raining down on the hoped-for dictator's head. Backed by money, Kornilov's first meeting is with the Society for the Economic Rehabilitation of Russia, a right-wing business group, backed by individuals who "went so far as to offer funds specifically for an authoritarian regime."

But power lay with the organized working class of Petrograd. A committee of soviets made sure that 'suspicious telegrams' be held and troop movements be tracked while transport workers aided the work of the soviet and refused to carry those working against the revolution. When the head of the Provisional Government tried to shore up his authority by ordering the Sailors of the Baltic Fleet to disband their soviet, the sailor's response was "simply that his order was 'considered inoperative.'"

The book is set up with each chapter as a month of the revolutionary year, and the novelistic features of the book are especially strong in the final chapter, 'October.' One of Miéville's stated aims is to tell this oft-told history as a story, and early chapters have a literary quality that draws the reader into the action. In some cases Miéville matches and even exceeds this charge. His stories of a big-wigged Lenin buying a disguise and his befuddled wigmaker telling tales for a long time after "of the youngish client who had wanted to look old" are entertaining. And his writing is both rich and at times comic, as in his memorable joke about the hated monarch Nicholas and his "placid tsarry eyes." However, there are times, particularly in the middle months of summer, when Miéville gets bogged down moving us from one central committee meeting to another general membership meeting to another party meeting, with occasional street demonstrations thrown in. It feels at times like he's forgotten his compelling characters, the importance of capturing the mood of the many, and the physical setting. That said, his final chapter reminded me of John Reed's classic *Ten Days That Shook the World*, a book that captures the revolution in rich layers of complexity while giving it an atmospheric treatment that makes the reader feel like they're participating in the action.

For Russians, the final revolution was a kind of "social carnivalesque." Soldier's wives, previously beaten and broken, began to "flout laws and intimidate the authorities wherever they possibly could." "Rural communes began disputing with landlords over rent and rights to the commons. Gangs of peasants" took the firewood they wanted from the estates, used pasture as they saw fit, and decided they would pay "only the prices they reckoned were fair for seed." Miéville notes that "sense of 'fairness' was crucial" and "there were moments of crude class rage and cruelty. But the actions of village communes against landlords were often scrupulously articulated in terms of a moral economy." Soldiers sent letters to Soviets pleading for books. A group of peasants wrote, "We are sick and tired of living in debt and slavery…We want space and light."

At the beginning of his book, Miéville argues that the revolutions of 1917 "have long been prisms through which the politics of freedom are viewed." Many socialists certainly had high expectations at the dawn of the Bolshevik Revolution. Six years after the revolution, with the United States still refusing to recognize the socialist government, the American socialist Eugene Debs explained why in a speech he gave in Harlem. "The reason we do not recognize their Republic is because for the first time in history they have set up a government of the working class; and if that experiment succeeds, good-bye to capitalism throughout the world!" He continued, "We were not too proud to recognize the Tsar…when women were put under the lash…and brutalized and dehumanized…and our President could send congratulations on his birthday to the imperial Tsar of Russia."

We are in a strangely similar place a hundred years later, with successive US governments praising monarchies and dictatorships as the working class around the world struggles for freedoms gained both in February and in October 1917 in Russia. From Greece to Libya, from Afghanistan to Venezuela, freedom has not come from above. With monarchies ripe to tumble and new worlds to be built we'd do well to remember the crucial lesson from the Russian revolutions. What ended the hated monarchy, and what showed another way to live, came up from below.

Soviet leaders on November 7, 1919, in Red Square, Moscow, USSR, celebrating the second anniversary of the October Revolution. L.Y. Leonidov – Credit: Wikimedia

Resolution Against the Executive Decision to End DACA

(This resolution was unanimously adopted by the DSC Plenary at its September 15th, 2017 meeting.)

Whereas, the Doctoral Students' Council (DSC) comprises representatives from doctoral and master's programs at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY); and

Whereas, the DSC advocates for over 3,500 students at the Graduate Center in their roles as students, teachers, workers, family members, New Yorkers, activists, and academics; and

Whereas, the DSC shares CUNY's historic mission of providing access to higher education to low-income communities and communities of color in New York City and across the nation; and

Whereas, the earlier Executive Order 13768, titled "Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States" and issued on January 25th, 2017, endangers undocumented immigrants by implying they are more prone to criminality (via the establishment of VOICE, or Victims of Immigrant Crime Engagement, Office), by prioritizing the removal of any undocumented immigrant who has committed any "chargeable offense," and by increasing the number of ICE agents and the use of state and local police in enforcing immigration law; and

Whereas, the U.S.A has a longstanding history of upholding discrimination through its former and current immigration laws and policies; and

Whereas, the recent presidential pardon of Maricopa County Sheriff Joseph Arpaio, whose office violated the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act through racial profiling, is one of the many signs of this administration's commitment to the enforcement of white supremacy; and

Whereas, over 800,000 young people are currently studying and working in the United States under the Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program , many of them in the CUNY system, who have long been in a precarious position with regard to their immigration status and who are now at greater risk for sudden deportation;

Whereas, DACA has been regarded as a progressive legal action to protect children who immigrate to the U.S.A. with their families, due in part to economic, political, and other factors that are often a consequence of global racial-capitalism and uneven power relations between the U.S.A. and other nations; and

Whereas, the decision to rescind DACA will largely affect the legal status of people who identify as Hispanic or Latino, and is therefore motivated by racial animus; and

Whereas, childhood arrivals have come to view this country as their home, and deportation would likely result in the loss of income, property, and other material and immaterial assets, psychological pain, and violent upheaval of communities and families; and

Whereas, many other academic bodies around the U.S.A., including the Rutgers AAUP-AFT Executive Council, The University of Pittsburgh Student Government Board, The Metro Community College board, Peralta Community College Board of Trustees, University of Michigan Central Student Government, Florida Atlantic University Faculty Senate, Pennsylvania State University Undergraduate Association , and The University of Kansas Student Senate have passed similar resolutions in support of DACA and against this inhumane decision; therefore let it be

RESOLVED, that the DSC recognizes that geopolitical borders are often drawn and re-drawn arbitrarily in the effort to maintain political power and rejects any narrative that creates good-immigrant/bad-immigrant binaries and that demonizes the families of DACA recipients; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the DSC will continue to advocate on behalf of students regardless of immigration status through organizing workshops; distributing resources and services directly to students; providing spaces for students to gather and organize; and holding administrators accountable; and, be it still further

RESOLVED, that the DSC calls upon members of New York State Senate, other state legislatures, Congress, and other elected officials, to proceed with compassion and moral responsibility by passing meaningful immigration reform in the vein of the Dream Act in light of discriminatory immigration, detention, and deportation policies, in addition to the decision to rescind DACA; and, be it

FINALLY RESOLVED, that the DSC calls upon the Graduate Center and CUNY administration to pledge specific resources and protections to all those in the Graduate Center and CUNY community who are affected by the most recent executive decision and to strengthen its support of undocumented students.

AFFILIATES OF THE DOCTORAL STUDENTS' COUNCIL

Along with providing services to students, the DSC also charters and funds three affiliates:

Including the one in your very hand...

The Advocate (opencuny.org/gcadvocate) is the newspaper of the Graduate Center, CUNY. Published six times per academic year, it serves CUNY graduate students as a general forum and as a source of news and information pertaining to their rights as well as their educational, cultural, political, and professional interests. The Advocate aims to publish thought-provoking articles that are of interest not only to those in the academy, but to the public more generally.

In addition to...

The Adjunct Project (cunyadjunctproject.org) seeks to empower Graduate Center student workers by serving as a resource to raise consciousness about academic labor issues inside and outside CUNY, educate Graduate Center adjuncts about ways to address these issues, and activate Graduate Center student workers to improve their collective position as workers at CUNY. The Adjunct Project seeks to organize our resources for graduate students around two areas:

1) labor issues and concerns, and 2) teaching resources and pedagogy. Both of these elements are key dimensions of empowerment at the workplace for graduate student workers.

While the Adjunct Project seeks to help graduate students address their immediate labor issues, a long-term goal of the project is to create a new culture at the Graduate Center that challenges the individualistic, atomized, competitive atmosphere of academia. We are also acutely aware of the ways that workers are exploited based on their race, their gender identity and presentation, their ability, their sexuality, their immigration status and nationality, and the dispossession of their lands and neighborhoods through processes of settler colonialism and gentrification. We work diligently to center these contradictions, work against them, and to expose their invisibility in the larger labor movement in order to transform how our labor power is understood and used.

By working together to improve our collective position as adjuncts at CUNY we can promote a culture that emphasizes a different set of values, replacing the academic culture of competitive individualism with one of support and solidarity.

OpenCUNY (opencuny.org), a DSC-affiliate, is a free, open, participatory WordPress-based academic medium that offers free web space to students, and advocates for student access to free and open-source digital tools. Since 2008, students have used the platform to create professional portfolios, academic and personal blogs, sites for community organizations, student groups and chartered organizations, research projects and more! Want to learn more? OpenCUNY is showcasing a collection of their sites at our next event on Thursday, October 19th at 7pm (Rm 5414). Snacks, refreshments and good company will be provided. Visit OpenCUNY.org to RSVP!

DOCTORAL STUDENTS' COUNCIL
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