

THE PAPER

MEDIUM FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

"So We Stand Here On The Edge Of Hell In Harlem And Look Out On The World
And Wonder What We're Gonna Do In The Face Of What We Remember" - Langston Hughes

February 2010

Volume 129 - Issue Number 1

REVIVE BLACK HISTORY



Special Presentation!

Lecture and discussion with author Dr. Joy DeGruy, moderated by City College of NY Black Studies professor Herb Boyd on Tuesday, February 16th, at 12:30pm. Event will be in the Aronow Theatre. More details on page 7.

Feeling For Haiti

Sophia Vilceus

The earthquake that shook the small Caribbean island of Haiti on Tuesday January 12th, 2010, also shook hearts around the world. It is said to be the most powerful the small country has felt in over 200 years.

On January 1st, 1804, Haiti became the first free republic of the world. Ironically, since this part of her history, it seems as though Haiti has still been searching for her authentic "independence"—independence from poorly fashioned government, and independence from extreme poverty, amongst a multitude of other entities. Even more paradoxical is the fact that it seems as though she will need to be heavily dependent on other countries until she can get back on her feet.

The earthquake that rocked the self-sufficient island left countless babies in orphanages, mothers with buried children, as well as the Haitian community in other parts of the world frantically calling their island to get word on the fate of their loved ones. The word tragedy does not even begin to adequately portray the grave "natural" disaster that has hit these people of resiliency. Although precise statistics are almost impossible at this point, it is predicted that thousands upon thousands of Haitians will be dead. The safest statement has been that "there has been a serious loss of life."

We watched for days as the heroes and heroines of Haiti used their bare hands to pull out loved ones as well as complete strangers out of the rubble of broken cemented homes and buildings because of the lack of machinery they had at the time. We watched faithful people pray their way through this horrid situation and cling on to hope for days while the situation seemed absolutely hopeless. We saw triumphant miraculous stories of people walking out of buildings, some without even a scratch, after being trapped under rubble for

days. We also witnessed absolute devastation as we saw dead bodies on the street as though they were subhuman. We've seen it all, yet we are all assured that the agony we witnessed on CNN and other venues do not even compare to the agony the people in Haiti face and will continue to face.

Times of tragedy seem to always simultaneously become a time of reflection; we ponder, we question, we rationalize... we reflect.

These past few days, as a Haitian-American young woman, I have been attempting to take slow and steady sips of water, trying to swallow this tough pill of seeing a people, MY people in a state of anguish, panic, and unimaginable pain and fear. As we all watch the news, read the papers, go online, and converse with one another we all feel something, and that in itself is an art that we have lost somewhere along the line... truly feeling.

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the
City College
of New York

FEELING FOR HAITI CONT.

During this time of reflection for me, the corridors of my mind took me back to my childhood, particularly Sunday mornings when both my parents who emigrated from Haiti decades ago, would go to church, grab some patties on the way back from church from the local Haitian bakery, and grab the Haitian Paper and read it as we munched on beef, chicken, or fish patties in the early afternoon.

I now realize the significance of them and many other Haitian Americans doing that on Sunday mornings. They did not pick up the "Times" or the "Daily News"...they picked up papers like the "Haitian Observer", for one imperative reason, to stay connected to home. As significant as that was, I realized just now as I am writing this piece something even more stark; those kinds of Sunday mornings ended at some point over the years and I did not even realize it. This brings me to a main point—we as people (not only Haitian Americans in particular, but people in general) have lost touch with Haiti, lost that sense of connection and it took this tremendous calamity for us to pick back up a Haitian newspaper.

Realizing the scope of how Haiti has been neglected over the years, the world feels as though they just cannot be idle any longer. For the first time in a long time, I feel as though the world is actually feeling again.

As my wise Haitian grandmother always says to me when trying to get me through a tough time or occurrence: "Le dommage est déjà fait" translated: The damage is already done. In other words, now that this catastrophe has hit, it is time to react. We are all trying to find the most effective ways to help the survivors and rebuild Haiti. As students, as many of you may also feel, I feel as though I am able to do so much, yet so little. The reality is, at this point, even a little bit goes a long way. Look at how texting has dramatically given to this cause. Who would have thought? With all the negative backlash young people get for texting, we certainly did something revolutionary with our smart phones, and ought to be proud.

We know about the more mainstream foundations such as the Red Cross and Wyclef's "Yele" who are doing amazing things for the people of Haiti, however, it is important to understand that here on the Campus of CCNY, we are extremely active. There is no reason for the student body to feel as though they do not have ample means to make a contribution. Countless organizations at CCNY like the newly formed Black Student Union and the Haitian Student Organization are a part of the cause. On the college's homepage, under "News and Events" there are links that can direct you to even more resources—use them! We need students to donate to blood banks and organize food and clothing drives for the people in Haiti. We cannot allow Haiti to become old news once again; even after the stories of Haiti on the news station diminish, the people still will need our help in surviving, rebuilding, and sustaining life.

Whether it's sending another text message, donating supplies or money, walking a fellow Haitian American friend to our Wellness and Counseling Center for some consoling, or simply lifting up a prayer, Haiti needs all the help she can get at this point. She needs for us to ponder, question, rationalize and reflect, but above all, she needs us to feel for her again. We've been out of touch for far too long and it's time to pick up that Sunday newspaper once again.



Letter to the Editors

Governor Paterson has proposed that CUNY and SUNY be permitted to raise tuition without the State Legislature's approval. This is a huge new step. The CUNY Board of Trustees will give its blessing to any tuition hike the chancellor asks for, and any brake the legislature might apply will be gone. Within a few years, many students could find that tuition has grown so high that they can't afford to go to college.

To be sure, the tuition hikes would be limited to 2 and 1/2 times the rolling 5-year average of the Higher Education Index. This index has averaged 4% over the last 5 years. Assuming the index remains about the same, CUNY could raise tuition about 10% a year. How can low-income students keep up with that? I don't expect TAP to keep pace, and any student whomust attend part-time (and therefore receives no TAP) is really going to be hurt.

The governor's plan also would allow the universities to charge differential tuition for different programs. This policy also would raise tuition for many students.

Students, faculty, and staff tend to focus on each year's tuition increase as a single, isolated event. This approach has occasionally enabled us to prevent the worst tuition hikes. But we also need to address general policies like this new proposal to allow CUNY and SUNY to set their own tuition.

Officially, the tuition proposal is part of the "Higher Education Empowerment and Innovation Act." I urge everyone who wants to keep CUNY open to low-income students to oppose it. Please write your local state assembly person or state senator.

Bill Crain
Professor of Psychology
ext. 5650

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OUR MISSION

For over forty years, *The Paper* has served as a medium through which students, faculty, and members of the local community can communicate.

As a publication for people of African descent, *The Paper* focuses on pertinent issues facing the Black and Latino community as well as issues that are of relevance to people of all races and ethnicities.

In addition, this publication is a valuable resource for CCNY students and faculty for information on everything from scholarships to job opportunities. With increased membership and support from the student body, *The Paper* will continue to serve CCNY and the surrounding community.

Honoring Percy E. Sutton

To the College and the Community:

On behalf of our faculty, students and staff, I would like to express our sincerest condolences on the passing of a true friend of The City College of New York, Percy E. Sutton. Though he hailed from Texas, where he was the youngest of 15 children, he embodied the City College experience, rising from a modest background to achieve prominence in both public service and business. In 1995, The College honored him for his service to The City of New York and, especially, the Harlem community, by awarding him the degree Doctorate of Law, honoris causa.

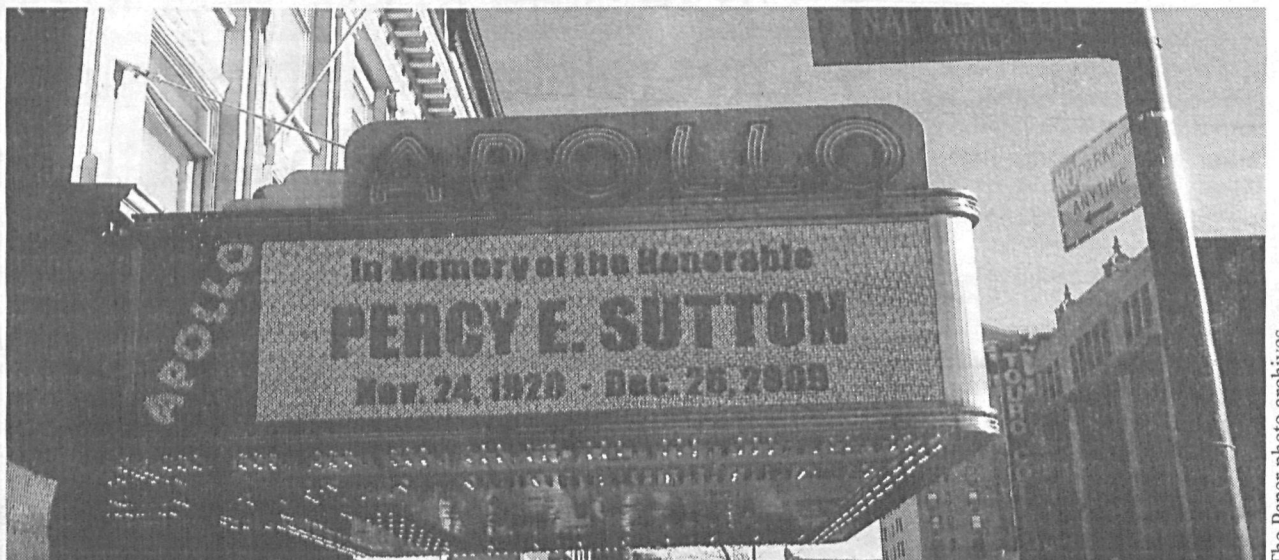
Over the years, Mr. Sutton was a constant supporter of The College and a champion of our mission of providing access to excellence for New York's diverse populations. As a State Assemblyman in the 1960s, Mr. Sutton played a pivotal role in enacting legislation which established the SEEK program at City College. In 2003, he was inducted into the City College chapter of Chi Alpha Epsilon, a National Honor Society for SEEK students.

We at City College valued his counsel and his efforts to strengthen bonds between the College and Harlem community. His generosity extended to sharing his personal recollections to help the College produce documentaries on the Tuskegee Airmen, with whom he served during World War II, and on the Harlem Renaissance. Harlem, New York and America have lost a true leader, a figure whose determination and generosity of spirit will always inspire us.

President Paaswell



http://photos.essence.com/galleries



The Paper photo archives

A Student's Homage to Howard Zinn

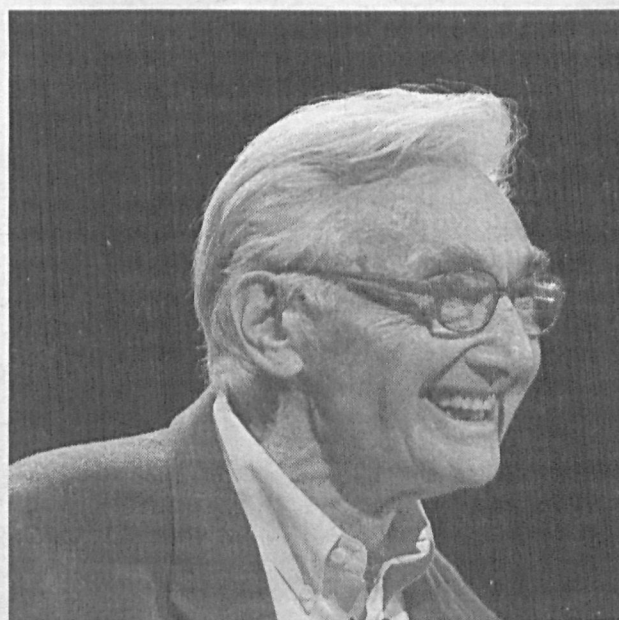
- Conor Tomás Reed

The movement for social justice in the United States lost one of its most spectacularly inspiring voices with the death of the historian, playwright, and activist Howard Zinn on January 27, 2010. In the words of left-wing writer Dave Zirin, "With his death, we lose a man who did nothing less than rewrite the narrative of the United States. We lose a historian who also made history."

Zinn is best known as the author of *The People's History of the United States*, the two million-sold and now-classic text that illustrates how the actions of ordinary people—not politicians and the upper class—have been the motors of positive change in history. This book, which was one of my first (and best) introductions to a radical interpretation of this country's history, chose to take the side of the oppressed, the exploited, the overworked and underfed. It was the Harriet Tubmans and John Browns who abolished slavery, the Haymarket martyrs who died for the 8-hour workday, the students sitting in at lunch-counters who eventually smashed segregation.

I hugely admired this historian who refused to claim an "objective" stance in his life and work. Indeed, Zinn's autobiography, entitled *You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train*, encapsulates his clear position as a political writer and his urging for us citizens to directly lead the improvement of our lives. He, like his readership, was of a working-class background. He worked on shipyards after high school, was a pilot in World War II and came out of it a tireless organizer against war. He was like all of us, and remembered that in his analyses and efforts.

After college, Zinn's first teaching position was in the historically Black women's college in Georgia, Spelman College, where he influenced the novelist Alice Walker among many other students to join the Civil Rights struggle. He supported the newly formed Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee by writing the book *SNCC: The New Abolitionists*, and by joining his students for sit-ins and marches for racial equality. In fact, Zinn was fired from his position in 1963 because he sought to show his students that history should not be relegated to the dusty page, but shaped by our participation in it.



Decades later, I too was exhilarated by Zinn's continued active role in movements. This exciting historian seemed to have written a book for each step in my own political development. When I began to seriously critique the police, courts, and prisons in society, I discovered his edited anthol-

ogy *Justice in Everyday Life: The Way It Really Works*. His *Artists in Times of War* showed me that art can be its most compelling when it takes radical social stands. His *Disobedience and Democracy: Nine Fallacies on Law and Order* convinced me that poor people who are jailed for protesting can ultimately be mightier than the laws that seek to keep them down and out. His *Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal* instructed me on how to make arguments for the U.S. to immediately withdraw from Iraq and Afghanistan so these countries' people can determine their own futures.

But most significantly, I thank Howard Zinn for being a key inspiration why I'm a socialist. Speaking at the Campaign to End the Death Penalty's 2009 national convention in Chicago before he died (one of the hundreds of speeches he gave in his lifetime, and always to packed audiences), he commented:

"I think it's very important to bring back the idea of socialism into the national discussion to where it was at the turn of the [last] century before the Soviet Union gave it a bad name. Socialism had a good name in this country. ... It had several million people reading socialist newspapers around the country. ... Socialism basically said, hey, let's have a kinder, gentler society. Let's share things. Let's have an economic system that produces things not because they're profitable for some corporation, but produce things that people need. People should not be retreating from the word socialism, because you have to go beyond capitalism."

Howard Zinn has transformed the lives of countless people around the world, and will always be an esteemed elder in the left who has shaped our social self-narratives. In his honor and with the direction of his historical legacy, we are poised for making strides at great fundamental change if we as a people can organize it to achieve it.

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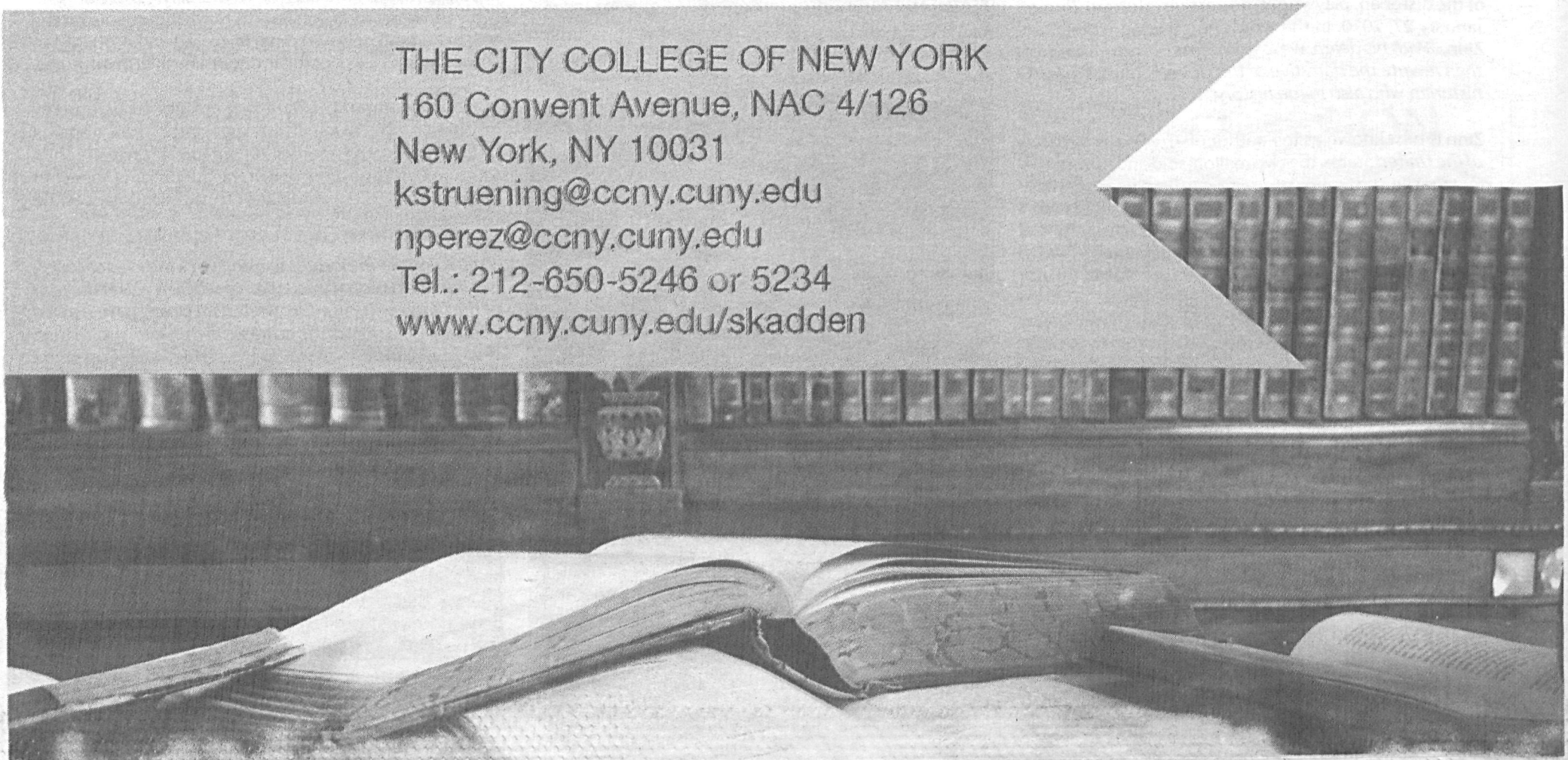
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FASHION: THE COLUMN

Fun, Eclectic and Useful Tips From the Fashion Python

THE FINALE: SHOES!

Welcome Back City College!



This is my 3rd issue and I'm very excited! I moved to NYC from California almost 6 years ago to attend a New York Performing Arts High School (PPAS) to get the acting training I had always sought. When I got accepted I never looked back! Ever since I've been acting, modeling, designing, fashion interning and doing everything New York City has to offer! My style is old school Hollywood glamour meets hair metal groupie lol. I love taking fashion risks and I'm not afraid to experiment and try new things no matter how extreme or outlandish. My ultimate goal for this column is to help people better or find their own unique personal style.

FashionPython here again, taking center stage in this major winter fashion production called New York City!

ACT I: WINTER WHITE.

The "All black everything" was fun but now it's time to shake things up a bit! Lately, I've really been into the Winter White. White pea coats, white trench coats, hounds tooth, pearls, white lace gloves, white scarves, white knee high stockings, white sweaters and sweater dresses, white ankle boots, and white blazers! White is an astounding color in that it gives you both the opportunity to easily transition from day wear and evening wear and it goes with absolutely everything! Something as simple as a white Uniqlo (\$5) V-neck when paired with accessories and heels can be a chic look for day wear or a Lounge on the lower east side. An all white suit, white faux fur, white cardigan or a white hat and scarf set will brighten up any dulled-for-winter look! In 15 minutes my mediocre hair transformed into a 1920s red carpet masterpiece just by bobby pinning pearls into it! It's that simple! White evening dresses can be perceived as too formal, bridal even, but in a fabric such as leather or cashmere it may be just the head-turning ensemble you were looking for. Men, try Ralph Lauren's White sweater and throw in an off white cashmere jumbo scarf the next time you're looking to spice up your black coat. Men be sure to visit vintage shops such as Trash & Vaudeville to pick up a leather bomber jacket and riding boots. You won't regret this risky fashion trend when you see the ladies breaking their necks to watch you walk away in it!

Speaking of head-turning. Ladies, nothing catches the eye like a red vintage trench coat, white socks, and grey ankle booties! Winter White is not the end my fellow fashionists! It's only the gateway to amazing looks and trends that will turn you away from the usual "It's winter and cold, who cares what I wear!" and turn you towards "It's freezing, Yay! Now I can wear even MORE clothes!" lol

ACT II: LAYERS!

Layers are both an essential part of the winter season as well as keeping warm. For both male and female, a single tee-shirt, jeans and sneakers for winter in NYC just won't do, but with multi-colored layered tees, layered accessories, layered socks, leg warmers, and jackets you can bring a simple yet edgy boom to your winter wardrobe. Bright winter coats, vibrant leather gloves and socks are the trend this winter. Honey mustard and butter leather are flooding the streets of New York City. As are Funky feather scarves, polka dots and costume jewelry. Mix and match hat and scarf sets; just because it comes together doesn't mean you have to wear it together. Blend old with the new. Gents, pair those new Polo boots you love so much with a vintage tweed blazer. And a silk Ivy-league scarf. Ladies, pile on all of your favorite necklaces together over a pin-striped turtle neck and wear a fuchsia lip stick as opposed to a bare lip. Just be sure your eye make-up is bare or natural (no heavy eye liner or shadow) when you do because no one wants to look like a clown. Unfortunately, Rihanna and Cher are the only ones that can pull that look off. As for hair; Men, don't be afraid to miss a hair cut or two. Women actually don't mind the neo-soul look. Check out

John Legend's hair, very sexy, confident and natural. When you got the style, you can work the hair. Ladies, by now you probably already know what works for your face and individual style but if your bored and a cut is too drastic add in hair accessories! Pinning in a jeweled brooch or feather to one side of your hair is all you need to look runway chic! And the best part about this fashion tip is that it's endless, inexpensive, and works for all types of hair and events! It's practically universal!

For both male and female, a single tee-shirt, jeans and sneakers for winter in NYC just won't do...

If you are anything like me when it comes to shoes you cannot live without them! And why should you? Shoes are pivotal and in some cases the only thing you need to make an outfit. With the right shoe the rest of the outfit doesn't even matter! For the ladies I speak from personal experience; it is hard to say goodbye to those favorite peep toe platforms you sported during the spring and summer almost every day! But you don't have to! With a jazzy pair of socks, knee-highs, or stockings you can turn your favorite sling back into your most prized winter partner in crime! My father bought me a pair of suede royal blue platform pumps over the summer and I am head over HEELS *wink* in love with them! Just the idea of not being able to wear them was unfathomable! So I went down to Soho and hit up Anna Sui, Urban Outfitters, and Uniqlo and gathered the world's most intricately designed socks and stockings I could find. Now I'm wearing my favorite pumps almost every other day!

Men don't toss aside your oxfords just yet. J Crew, Prada, Uniqlo and Topman have unbelievable socks you won't mind showing all season long! So cuff those corduroy skinnies and let it show, let it show, let it show! Also, Men cuff your slacks, wear a pair of argyle socks and fold your vintage Doc Martins down and expose

an amazing vintage-modern look. A very sexy one if I should say so myself. Well this concludes this month's performance.

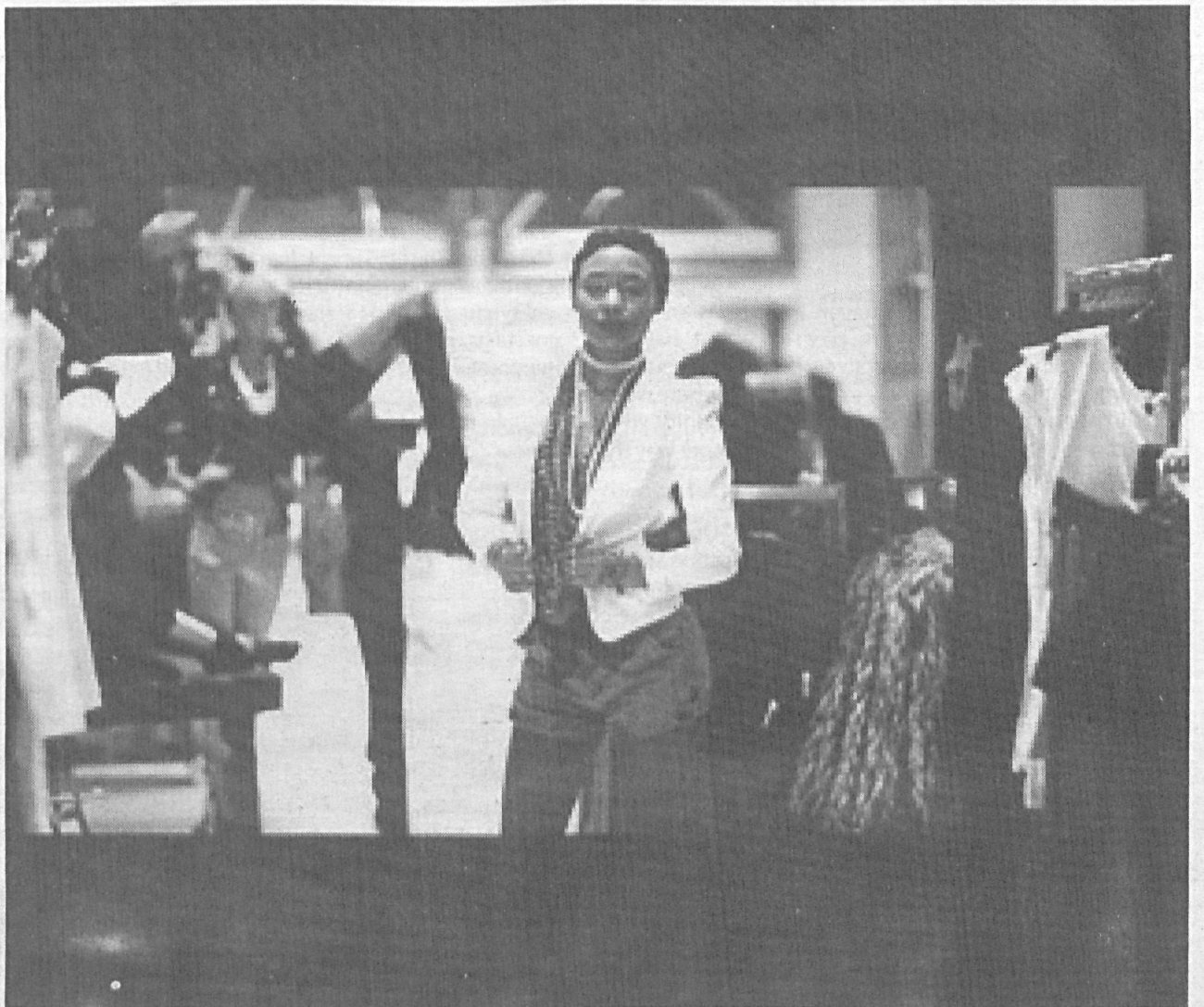
Until next time, XoXo the Fashion Python!

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WITH THE CENSUS, THERE ARE WORST THINGS THAN BEING CALLED A "NEGRO"

9. What is Person 1's race? Mark one or more boxes.

White

Black, African Am., or Negro

American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or

Asian Indian

Chinese

Filipino

Other Asian — Print example, Hm

Japanese

Korean

Vietnamese

Native Hawaiian

Gu

Spanish origin — Print name of enrolled or

Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniar

By: R. L'Heureux Lewis

Originally published on thegrio.com

Have you heard the census is still calling us Negroes? This sentence popped up on my Gchat window from a concerned colleague. While for many this would set off a firestorm of concern, as a sociologist, I was not surprised, confused, nor concerned. I know the census has the word Negro on it and it has for many years now. It was even on the 2000 census form, so why the big deal now?

I believe we have bigger fish to fry with the census than the use of Negro. "Like what?" you ask. How about 478 billion dollars and political representation. Yes, you read that right, large amounts of federal dollars directed at commu-

nity services and boundaries for political representation are determined by the person knocking on your door asking for information about who you are and who lives with you.

The census, a constitutionally mandated enumeration of the population, is collected in en masse ever ten years with smaller surveys occurring in the years between.

The collection of data around race has always been controversial. The 2000 census represented a watershed in data collection in regards to race, largely because people were able to "check all that apply" allowing more accurate count of the multiracial population, but the decisions of the past still matter today.

Office of Management and Budget Policy Directive 15

breaks down which racial and ethnic groups will be used on the census and their respective definitions. Under the category of black it states, "A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa. Terms such as "Haitian" or "Negro" can be used in addition to "Black or African American." The actual form you receive will ask, "What is person 1's race? Mark one or more races to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be." One response is "Black, African Am., or Negro."

While I agree that Negro is antiquated and passé, I must also acknowledge some of our older brothers and sisters still identify with the term, which is why it has been kept on and was on the 2000 Census. The matter of label choice is a complicated one among all people, and this is particularly the case for black people. There has never been a consensus on nomenclature, though we all have preferences. While some are ready to raise the protest signs to get Negro taken off the form, time would be more wisely spent advocating for the counting of imprisoned people among their home communities and assuring we do not continue to be undercounted.

The census currently counts prisoners in the area in which they are imprisoned rather than their home communities. The central issue is that this serves to inflate the number of residents in predominantly rural white counties, where many prisons are increasingly located. Alternatively, the home communities of prisoners receive lower than actual estimates. This situation has been discussed as a contemporary version of the Three Fifth's Compromise utilized in the antebellum South. In 2006, it was estimated that approximately 41 percent of the adult American prison population were black. Having these members counted in their home communities could serve to increase political power and resources. This power could eventually serve to curb the pathway to prison.

Every ten years when the census rolls around there is controversy about the undercounting of communities of color, youth and the poor as well as the overcounting of the affluent. Few recognize these under and over estimations continue to empower some communities and disempower others. While there is a long-standing tension around the census and race, we owe it to ourselves to concentrate our attention on the things that will encourage political power, not political appropriateness. Now that is something worth fighting to change.

Re-Introducing City College's Black Student Union

"Because It's Just BS without U!"

Sophia Vilceus

Everyone needs a haven and we as an African American student body are pleased about having a platform where we can collectively discuss concerns that are imperative and extremely relevant to us; where we can uplift our own while having a sense of community, where we can educate ourselves and others in a deeper way than merely reading out of a text book.

By definition, a Black Student Union is an organization that provides an umbrella of education, support and empowerment for students of color. There is no denying that at The City College, located in Harlem, there is a need and desire for such a group. After taking a Black Studies course here at CCNY students are naturally left wanting more, because the reality remains that a mere four months of a semester is not ample time to adequately learn and truly understand our history and our development as a people and culture. City College's Black Students Union will offer a means and venue for students to get what they rightfully deserve. One of our ultimate goals is that the Black Studies Program will become a full fledged Department once again, as it was in the past—that is.

Although the Black Student Union would like to formally introduce ourselves to The City College, the term introduction is not the most appropriate because we have in fact been established here at City College in the past, commencing in the sixties. However, due to unfortunate circumstances the

BSU at CCNY was eradicated.

In 2010, we are ready to bring City College's BSU back in full force to promote education amongst our community, uplift our people, and to bring those of African Descent together for a common purpose, the betterment of ourselves, this college, and our larger community. This fundamental organization will not be just another club throwing parties in the rotunda every club hour, but rather an entity based on substance; we are looking forward to enlightening meetings, productive fundraisers, thought provoking forums, purposeful events, meaningful charities and more.



All that we do as a people of color needs to be purposeful; it needs to be meaningful in advancing ourselves both mentally and physically in our quest to forward movement in the society and world. Our Union will provide grounds for meaning, purpose, as well as the unification of our people. We are deeper, more beautiful, and absolutely more brilliant than we know—it is time to show that depth, remind ourselves of our beauty, and reinstate our brilliancy.

The current BSU members are eager for this new endeavor and encourage you to be part of this promising legacy that we are bringing back to City College, hence the sole reason our slogan is "Because it's just BS without U." We understand that for this vision to be productive, functional, and brought to fruition; we need the students to be actively involved and more importantly passionate about our goals and deeds. CCNY's Black Student Union welcomes you, and looks forward to an amazing semester.

You may join our Facebook Group by searching: Black Student Union of CCNY.

You may also email us at: bsu.ccny@gmail.com.

Our meetings are conveniently located in the Morales Shakur Center; NAC building room 3/201.

Stop in and ask about our free club brochure that further explains our goals and upcoming events.

Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome

Book Review

By Marc W. Polite

Every February, as Black America celebrates its achievements, many issues come to the forefront. The age-old subjects of progress, race relations, and the standing of Black people in America as a group are often discussed alongside the myriad contemporary issues that affect our community. One aspect of this assessment that is not often discussed at length is the effect of the various stressors particular to the Black community in this country.

Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing by Dr. Joy DeGruy is a work that deals with these matters. Originally published in 2005, this book is about coming to terms with the very real issues faced by Black America. Many books that deal with these concerns approach them solely in terms of policy and what reforms can be made. Historical trauma suffered by an oppressed group—with few notable exceptions—is not often seen as a legitimate concern, especially in the eyes of the wider society.

Many view the “peculiar institution” of American slavery as blight on American history, and something to be spoken of only in passing, having no lingering effects on the current conditions of Black America. The analysis of Dr. DeGruy does much to disprove this notion. She argues that there is a continuity of damage to the mental, social, and economic wellbeing of African-Americans through the end of slavery, to the Jim Crow era, up to the present day.

The convict leasing system is one example among others cited in PTSS. In the aftermath of the Civil War and the abolishment of slavery, Southern plantation owners would use criminals to work the fields. So prevalent was this practice that in states such as Alabama and South Carolina, convict leasing lasted up until the 1920's. This is the precedent for the chain gang that would come later, and its contemporary parallel—skilled prison labor. How different is this from the past?

In addition, Dr. DeGruy addresses the internal issues within the Black community resulting from the continued negative impact of slavery, Jim Crow and post-Civil Rights era structural inequality. Using 15 years of research, PTSS tackles such concerns as colorism within the Black community, child-rearing practices, urban conspicuous consumption, and anti-intellectualism. Instead of viewing these as particularly “Black” problems, there is a more honest and total appraisal of these realities with the point of origin at the heart of the analysis. Far from being clinical and distant from these symptoms, the book is written in an accessible style. Many of the recounted stories hit home and will force you to question why we often relate to one another as we do.

A Conversation with Dr. Joy DeGruy
Moderated by Noted Journalist and Author
Herb Boyd of the Amsterdam News
The City College of New York - Aronow Theatre
Tuesday February 16th 12:30 - Free admission

POST
TRAUMATIC
SLAVE
SYNDROME

It is a book that is ultimately about healing, and addressing our concerns in better ways. It is a great work, and challenges us all to rethink our attitudes and interactions. It is part of an ongoing conversation about the direction of our community and its future.

Re-discovering the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: Anti-Imperialist, Anti-War Activist, and Social Justice Martyr!

By Olga Sanjurjo

The face of Black History Month has been of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The iconic images of his speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963 are used to mark a turning point in American History. In fact, this speech has been used to represent a summation of Dr. King's work—his legacy—when in fact it was merely the beginning.

Many remain unaware that Dr. King lived until 1968 and worked tirelessly as an anti-imperialist and anti-war activist, and led the Poor People's Campaign. Beyond speeches, sit-ins, and marches, Dr. King further challenged the Civil Rights movement itself and American society as a whole by questioning the Vietnam War and poverty in the United States. He consistently supported the Labor movement, often speaking to striking workers, day laborers, and even describing himself as a union organizer.

Often portrayed, even by contemporaries, as the chosen leader of the de-segregation movement, Dr. King was feared and seen as a threat to national security by the government. J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI at the time, centralized great efforts in targeting Dr. King. Hoover had his phones tapped, his actions followed by agents, and even had drugs and women sent to Dr. King in an effort to discredit him. Prior to Dr. King receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, Hoover had letters sent to his camp imploring him to commit suicide or face public humiliation.

Under Hoover, the F.B.I. created a task force known as COMINFIL, set up to investigate civil rights groups with the goal of discrediting and neutralizing Dr. King. Despite constant surveillance, infiltration by COINTELPRO agents, death threats, and harassment, Dr. King continued and even challenged the government with his radical position against the Vietnam War and U.S. imperialism itself.

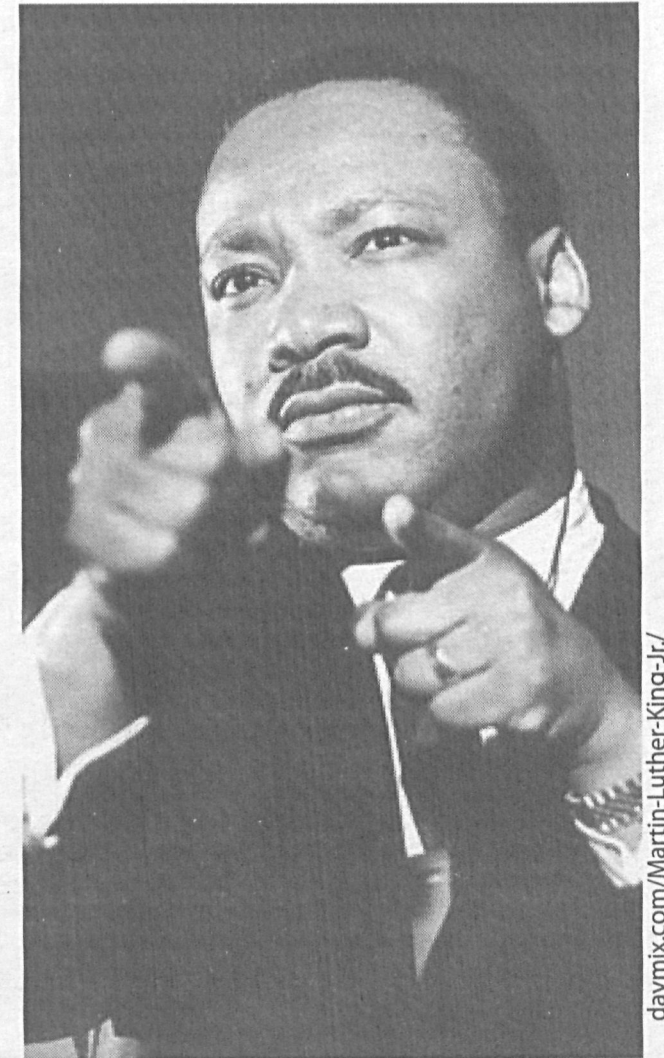
Much of Dr. King's work often goes unmentioned during his holiday and Black History Month. Well-known as an amazing orator, Dr. King was an organizer with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which he helped found. Dr. King led and supported such actions throughout the nation as boycotts, sit-ins, civil disobedience, mass mobilizations, and direct actions. He believed greatly in non-violence, even though he was attacked many times—hit with rocks and bricks, beaten by police, and even stabbed. He never deterred from this basic tenet, fearing that a violent response would unleash more violence and death to African Americans.

In 1966, Dr. King and his family relocated to live in a Chicago ghetto with other key leaders working to establish a Northern base for the movement. His experiences in the urban North provided a greater perspective on racism and inequality for Black people. His stance on non-violence was challenged, and he often commented that the racism and hatred he received in Northern cities were much more pronounced and violent than what he lived through in the South.

He challenged his contemporaries to examine the Vietnam War and its implications for poor communities in the U.S. Many of his speeches against the war are as relevant today as when he spoke them. The fact that his legacy has been distorted to control our understanding of the Civil Rights struggle and Dr. King himself only proves the profound and revolutionary nature of his work.

In his 1967 speech at Riverside Church in Harlem, Dr. King explained his imperative that as a religious man and leader for Civil Rights and economic justice, he must be against the War. His speech's analysis included a history of the Vietnamese people, the role of American militarism, and the dehumanizing process of imperialism:

“I am as deeply concerned about our own troops there as anything else. For it occurs to me that what we are submitting to them in Vietnam is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war, where armies face each other and seek to destroy. We are adding cynicism to the process of death, for they must know after a short period there that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy and the secure while we create a hell for the poor.”



daymix.com/Martin-Luther-King-Jr./

The speech was received with apprehension by the movement, and with shock and disbelief by President Johnson's administration. In fact, many felt Dr. King was betraying the movement. Critical of Dr. King, Time magazine called the speech “demagogic slander that sounded like a script for Radio Hanoi.” The Washington Post said King “diminished his usefulness to his cause, his country, his people.” However, history proved him correct and perhaps that is why little is mentioned of these later years of his life.

Dr. King's life and work fervently reflect the necessity to address and impact change on racial inequality, economic injustice, and militarism. His ability to offer analysis and solutions within the context of Black empowerment and integrity, as well as unity and internationalism, defined the radical leadership that effected significant change felt even today. The challenge we face is in continuing his work and critically understanding his legacy—not as the speaker of famous words, but as a revolutionary figure who lived within the struggle and uplifted a nation.

“The hottest place in Hell is reserved for those who remain neutral in times of great moral conflict.” Martin Luther King Jr.

DATE Fri. Feb 19–Sat. Feb 20
 TIME 6:00 PM–5:00 PM
 ADDRESS 25 Broadway 7th Floor
 Phone 212.925.6625
 ADMISSION \$5 per day
 URL www.ccnycuny.edu/cwe

A two-day conference discussing the current viability of hip-hop and its growing presence in academia. Begins with performance by Lifted and keynote by Ralph McDaniels, Hot 97. This event is part of a hip hop educational program being offered for the first time to Center for Worker Education students, which also consists of a class entitled "History, Culture and Politics of Hip Hop." The conference begins Friday (2/19) with a (6pm). Keynote speaker (7 pm) legendary veejay . Saturday (10am): Keynote address by Mark Anthony Neal, author and Professor of Black Popular Culture in the Department of African and African American Studies at Duke University. A frequent commentator for National Public Radio Neal also contributes to several on-line media outlets, including SeeingBlack.com, The Root.com and theGrio.com. Several panel discussions to be conducted Saturday on topics including hip hop media, race, class and gender, and the commercialization of hip hop.

2010 Alumni Service Awards

The Alumni Association of the City College is seeking nominations for the 2010 Faculty Service Award, and the 2010 Administrative Staff Service Award. We welcome recommendations from faculty, staff, individual students, student organizations and alumni. The award will be given in the Great Hall at the Alumni Association Annual Meeting on June 10, 2010.

Visit the CCNY website to download the Faculty Service or Administrative Staff Service nomination form. Please return the completed form(s) to the Alumni Association Office, Shepard Hall, Room #162 on or before March 1, 2010.

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7:30PM THURS, 2/25
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 116TH ST. & AMSTERDAM AVE.
 SUBWAY: 1 TO 116TH/COLUMBIA U
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FEBRUARY 1, 1960 — When four students from A&T College sat down at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, they had no idea that their action would initiate the largest mass movement for civil rights in the twentieth century. The sit-in movement kicked off a wave of civil rights actions that led to the destruction of Jim Crow segregation. In doing so, young people challenged not only white racists, but also established civil rights leaders and organizations.

SPEAKER: BRIAN JONES is a teacher, actor, and activist. He is a columnist for SocialistWorker.org and is the author of a number of articles on the Civil Rights Movement, including:

When the walls of segregation toppled: <http://zz.gd/3c7f8c>
 Martin Luther King's last fight: <http://zz.gd/d24bcc>
 The King they won't celebrate: <http://zz.gd/3a0e26>

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