

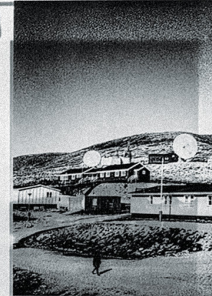
Our big debut! All our hard-hitting journalistic goings-on inside.

The Nassau Weekly

SL *Second* LOOK

Volume 48, Number 17
December 5, 2024

In Print since 1979
Online at nassauweekly.com



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This week, the *Nass* sheds its navel-gazing literary skin and reveals a journalistic underbelly.

We are thrilled to present to you the launch issue of *Second Look*, the *Nassau Weekly's* latest venture. The *Second Look* section brings the *Nass* longform, journalistic pieces focused on investigating power: the forms it takes, the ideas it harnesses, and the people who resist it.

The *Nassau Weekly* was founded in 1978 to be a space for creative nonfiction, covering stories left untold on Princeton's campus. The magazine has continued to be a creative and collaborative space in a wonderful range of genres. Through *Second Look*, we hope to reintroduce authentic and compelling journalistic pieces to that diversity of content.

Second Look writers tackle issues on and off campus with rigor, curiosity, and creativity, hoping to cover aspects of life in Princeton that may otherwise go unnoticed. Especially in this moment of entrenched polarization and democratic backsliding, we are mobilizing our obligations as reporters and writers to interrogate and inform. Stories written under *Second Look* will feature rigorous reporting backed up by diligent editing and fact-checking. This pilot issue is our first step forward.

Don't worry — we are still the *Nass*. Our journalism intends to keep you on your toes; our writers will continue to experiment in style. The pieces we write will continue to come out along with the *Nass's* regularly-scheduled programming; this issue, consisting exclusively of *Second Look* pieces, is a proof of concept of the material we plan to produce within the section.

Thank you for reading. More and more to come.

Sincerely,
Lucia Brown, Frankie Solinsky Duryea, and Alex Norbrook

Masthead

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This Week:

Fri	4:30p James Stewart Film Theater Conversation with Caitríona McLaughlin & Jen Coppinger from the Abbey Theatre	7:30p Wallace Theater LCA The Amish Project by Jessica Dickey (free tickets required)	Tues	11:00a McDonnell Hall, Brush Gallery Tranquil Tuesday	4:30p Simpson International Building, Room A71 PFAS in US Tapwater, Princeton Section of the American Chemical Society (PACS)
Sat	7:30a Wallace Theater LCA The Amish Project by Jessica Dickey (free tickets required)	7:30p Princeton University Chapel Princeton University Concerts presents Chanticleer Vocal Ensemble	Wed	5:00p Frist Campus Center, 212 Young Democratic Socialists of America - General Meeting	
Sun	2:30p Chapel A Yuletide Feast for Organ and Brass	3:00p Richardson Auditorium Sinfonia presents Sibelius, Borodin, Kundagrami '26	Thurs	7:00p Friend Center, 113 Convocation Room Swing Dance Club - Weekly Meeting	7:00p Fields Center MPR 104 ReMatch Meet and Greet. Connects first- and second-year researchers with grad students.
Mon	2:00p Lewis Arts complex Try on Theater Day	4:30p Robertson Hall, 016 No Colonies, Just Democracy: A Dinner, Dialogue, & Workshop	Got Events?	Email Emmett Souder at js0735@princeton.edu with your event and why it should be featured.	For advertisements, contact Isabelle Clayton at ic4953@princeton.edu

Verbatim:

Overheard at the Triangle Show

T.I.'s Southern Gentleman: "If I were given the opportunity to be Jewish, I would love it. I can't imagine having that taken away from me like that."

Overheard outside Butler

Returning from the Street: "What did she say about you?"
Perceived Aristocrat: "She said I don't seem like someone who would mingle with the poor."

Overheard in Charter Club

From a Central Asian dictatorship: "It was a bad month for democracy. I'm fleeing the country now."

Overheard near Dod

Traditional (mentally-shackled) woman: "I just feel bad after drinking. Alcohol makes me feel depressed the morning after."

Liberated (depressed) woman: "Sounds like a skill issue."

Overheard on the way to wine night

Sensorially sensitive: "My bottles are so loud, it's embarrassing."

Overheard in Firestone First Floor Bathroom

Honor Code Violator: "Yeah, ever since ChatGPT came out, I've been finding it so hard to write sentences."

Overheard at Charter Friday

Has their priorities straight: "I couldn't break up with him today. I had a COS project."

Overheard at a networking event

Woman in STEM: "I am going to go circulate around the brothers now."

Overheard in Choi Dining Hall

Bickered Ivy, joined Cap: "It's surprisingly rewarding when you fall into the current of normalcy."

Overheard in Campus Club

Dietetic dialectical diatribist: "I don't think a vegan framework gets us most directly to what I want to see in our society. On

the list of big picture issues, it is NOT making the top five..."

Overheard through Telegram

Just got ghosted on Hinge: "It doesn't matter, the life is ruined already."

Overheard in Terrace

Thinks in emotions: "I don't know if we're dating or anything..."

Thinks in numbers: "The amount of square footage you've covered does not say friendship."

Submit to Verbatim

Email thenassauweekly@gmail.com

The *Nassau Weekly* is Princeton University's weekly news magazine and features news, op-eds, reviews, fiction, poetry and art submitted by students. *There is no formal membership of the Nassau Weekly and all are encouraged to attend meetings and submit writing and art. To submit, email your work to thenassauweekly@gmail.com by 10 p.m. on Thursday. Include your name, netid, word count, and title. We hope to see you soon!*

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About us:

The Story and Legacy of Princeton's

Closest to the Solution:

A *Second Look* writer speaks with formerly incarcerated students, PTI educators, and Princeton administrators about the resilience of the program

By TEO GROSU

Can a pair of dice change someone's life? The ones Jill Knapp keeps above her desk in Peyton Hall might have. The dice, oversized and plush, are one of the objects Knapp, Emerita Professor of Astrophysical Sciences, has been using to teach math in prison for almost two decades. "Look around the room," she would tell students in her statistics class, "and tell me the probability this is a random sample"—the probability that, given the demographics of the United States, the people sitting in the education wing of a correctional facility have been brought there through a fair process—"It was ten to the power of negative ten," she said: one in ten thousand million.

Princeton's Prison Teaching Initiative (PTI), of which Knapp was a co-founder, has grown tremendously in size and scope since its beginnings in 2005. Once involving a handful of Astrophysics professors and graduate students who carpooled to teach algebra inside Garden State Youth Correctional Facility, PTI is now composed of more than 100 volunteers and offers between 30 and 40 courses a year in six correctional facilities across New Jersey, spearheading efforts to strengthen community college engagement. It has helped dozens of incarcerated people get associate's degrees from Raritan Valley College while incarcerated and has even given some the opportunity to conduct research on Princeton's

campus. But one thing has remained constant: the initiative's power to transform people through education, and education itself in the process.

The Early Days

PTI was founded in 2005, when a climate of urgency surrounded prison education. The expansion of the carceral system was spiking, following the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement law, the country's largest crime bill in history. The number of incarcerated people tripled in size in the decade following the passing of the bill, according to The Sentencing Project. This huge influx of people would have already overwhelmed existing prison teaching efforts. But the Clinton Crime Bill, as the 1994 law is known, also prohibited incarcerated people from accessing Pell grants, making attending college on the inside near impossible. Prisons were well-funded, but educational programs within them. By 2004, the only institution in New Jersey offering classes for incarcerated people was Mercer County Community College, and they could amount to, at most, a one-year certificate.

It was in this context that Mark Krumholz came to Princeton.

When Krumholz, a theoretical astrophysicist studying the formation of stars and galaxies, applied to join the Princeton Astrophysics department as a postdoctoral researcher, he did not just include application information about the science he wanted to do. He also expressed his intention to start an initiative to educate incarcerated people, after working with the Prison University Project, now Mount Tamalpais, while at UC Berkeley.

Jill Knapp, then-Director of Graduate

Studies, was the one to read his application. The fellowship he was to be awarded required that he spend a quarter of his time on innovative teaching in the sciences. Krumholz's vision for educating incarcerated people would have meant, inevitably, that prison teaching was to become associated with the Astrophysical Sciences department. On an antiquated, terminal-based email client called Pine, Knapp sent a blast to ask her colleagues whether they were on board with this outcome. It was met with a unanimous "Yes."

Once established, PTI was funded entirely out of pocket by Knapp, and contributions made by other faculty members and instructors. "It wasn't an official thing," Knapp said of the early days of the program. "We [only] needed books and pencils and paper for the students." One time, Knapp recounted, members of the department found out she was purchasing textbooks for students, and the next day, she found in her mailbox "four or five envelopes, stuffed with \$20s that people had just collected to give."

"What is beautiful is that we never had to recruit teachers," Knapp said. "I'd hear a knock on my door here, [and] some people put their head in the door and say, 'I hear you have this prison teaching thing, and I'd like to get involved.'" Professor Jenny Greene, a co-founder of PTI and now its Academic Director, said she "didn't spend more than about 10 seconds thinking about it."

An early goal was to ensure that incarcerated students could graduate with a two-year Associate's Degree through the program, so they could apply for a four-year diploma as a transfer student after their incarceration. They started with the basics: algebra, pre-calculus, and,

Prison Teaching Initiative

given the first home of PTI, Astronomy 101, which Knapp joked is “the gateway drug for getting people interested in science.” Within a few years, the program expanded to include Botany, Chemistry, and English composition; educators began to teach at several state prisons.

New Beginnings

In 2012, PTI began to expand. A new director was appointed: Jill Stockwell, a graduate student in Comparative Literature at the time. The organization joined with other prison education initiatives around the state, Drew University, Raritan Valley Community College and Rutgers, to found The New Jersey Scholarship and Transformative Education in Prisons (NJ-STEP) initiative. The merger made it easier to coordinate courses between institutions, to validate curricula, and ensure that students would be able to get either their Associate’s from Raritan Valley, or their Bachelor’s in Justice Studies from Rutgers. It also facilitated collaboration with the NJ Department of Corrections and the State Parole Board, secure funding for administrators, and counselors that would help students in their academic paths.

For many, the programming offered by NJ-STEP and, by extension, PTI, was a chance to attain the education they had always wanted to pursue. This is how Paul Boyd, now a senior studying Philosophy at Rutgers-Camden and a Truman scholar, felt when he started attending courses in 2014. “That’s when the real part of my college experience began,” he said. He felt that his life instantly improved, because he was “doing something [he] should

have done a long time ago.” Boyd, the first person in his family to go to college, had always wanted to go, having been a big reader throughout his life. “But,” he said, “I never had anyone who invested in my intelligence.”

Many of his peers, he recalls, took classes “just to have something to do.” Boyd would see moments “when the lightbulb turns on in a person” – when other students would realize their own potential and start seeking to apply it. Boyd said getting an education while being incarcerated reshapes one’s perspective. Inside, the image he remembers is “dark and meek and hopeless,” but he remembered the classrooms as being a safe place for everyone: “It was our time in the day to be normal.”

Research, Experiences

The PTI’s administration wanted to expand to allow its students to experience multiple facets of education and empower them to find careers after their sentence. In 2017, the National Science Foundation’s INCLUDES Initiative opened that door. INCLUDES aimed to support increasing diversity in STEM, such that the workforce reflected the diversity of the general population of the country. PTI secured a grant from the Foundation in 2017, allowing it to start the first Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program at Princeton targeted exclusively toward formerly incarcerated students. The aim, said Jill Stockwell, was “demystifying what a STEM field is, showing that people are using math and science regularly, intuitively, in real ways.”

“It was like 10 years’ worth of education,” said Ali Muslim, an REU alum who studied phonetic crystals

with Professor Andrej Košmrlj in the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering department. Muslim was incarcerated in 1985, when he was 16 years old, and returned to society in 2021. He completed the Emma Bloomberg Center’s Aspiring Scholars and Professionals program his first summer back, and returned to Princeton’s campus the following summer for an REU. “The program is not only about getting an assignment and completing it,” he said. “You meet and build relationships with individuals.”

The REUs also brought formerly incarcerated students on Princeton’s campus, and “honed and sharpened” their academic focus through Princeton’s curriculum, according to Chris Etienne, then-STEM Coordinator of the REU program hired using NSF’s grant money. “So we [were] like, it’d be awesome if our students on the inside had that opportunity to be here and learn as well,” he said.

“[My] first summer there, I used to sit out at night and just stare at the sky and enjoy the atmosphere. It was so good all night,” said Ali Muslim about his experience on Princeton’s campus.

People in STEM, and STEM for the People

PTI’s and NSF’s support for diversity in academia comes from a belief that science benefits from a diversity of voices. As Etienne put it, “diversity is the springboard to innovation.” Questions are shaped by whoever is asking them, and scientists do not ask questions in isolation. It is scientific communities that decide what is interesting to study within a discipline;

if the demographics of that community change, the conversation might change too. A study by Freeman and Huang published in *Nature*, for instance, analyzed the bibliometric data of more than 2.5 million papers and found that “papers with four or five authors of multiple ethnicities have, on average, one to two more citations than those written by authors all of the same ethnicity.” This in turn can amount to up to 10% more engagement – and therefore impact – of a publication. Environmental science, for example, has sought to prioritize justice in its scholarship, platforming diverse voices to ensure that its research aligns with the needs of marginalized communities. Diversifying who can call themselves a scientist matters for more than just the dynamism of the scientific project; it also is a way to disrupt the common understanding of who can be a scientist and open up the field to individuals to whom it has historically blocked access.

Boyd, who spent his summer in 2023 mutating intrinsically disordered genes and tracking how they fold, found it important for people with backgrounds similar to his own to interact with STEM, even if their degree is not in science. At the time of his internship, he was still on parole and was living in a halfway house. He didn’t have access to technology, and he commuted to campus for two hours every day. “[Formerly incarcerated] people come from marginalized communities, and they generally don’t have access to science” he said. “I didn’t grow up seeing doctors, engineers, astrophysicists.” To Boyd, coming from a disadvantaged background does not limit people’s potential, but it limits what people think they can

achieve. “Through these internships, I found what I have a gift in, and I found out what I’m talented in. For most of my life, I didn’t know what my gifts were,” he said.

Indeed, building self-confidence in students when it comes to academics is something at the forefront of PTI administrators and educators alike. Students who take non-traditional paths to education often have skewed perceptions of their own abilities, especially when it comes to science and math. Tejas Dethe, MAE graduate student and Pedagogy Fellow at PTI, has experienced this first-hand while teaching on the inside. “My students have been told very hurtful things about their abilities [in the past] and many come into the classroom thinking that they are going to do bad,” Dethe said. “So when they do well, they are surprised.”

Teaching on the inside invites students to unlearn certain patterns of thought about themselves and their ability to learn. Dethe believes that this learning process can have transformative impacts outside of the classroom. “If students can go from ‘I’m not cut out for this’ to ‘I can do this’ for math, they can do it for other things, too,” he said.

Etienne rejects the idea that some of his students are “dropouts,” stating that, in many cases, they are actually “pushouts”—a term coined by Vanderbilt professor Richard Milner to describe individuals who struggle academically because of structural inadequacies in their education. According to Milner, if a school lacks the instructors or materials necessary for a quality education, students respond by turning away from education and are more likely to blame themselves for their perceived failure. Therefore, PTI’s aim is twofold: it strives to give students equal access to education and to use the process of education to give students the space to think critically about who they are and the larger systemic issues that have

affected their life. In seeking to undo the damage of inadequate educational resources, PTI hopes to provide students with the tools, experience, and resources to in the words of Etienne, “have lofty goals.”

Following their experiences with PTI, some students make it their goal to help those around them. For example, Boyd is applying for a PhD in Social Work, and Muslim hopes to become a licensed therapist in the future. Muslim also noted that when he interned at PTI last summer, several of the interns expressed interest in using their education to help others. “They were going to take what they learned and take it back to the neighborhoods,” he said, citing the example of a friend who went to Rutgers-Camden at the same time as Muslim and is now planning to open a business to teach children how to code in Python.

The Future

PTI is now part of Princeton’s new Program for Community College Engagement (PCCE), a consortium of other educational programs at Princeton with the goals of “strengthening relationships with partner institutions and expanding pathways to a liberal arts-based college education,” said University Director of Media Relations Jennifer Morrill. But PTI has not always held a well-defined place within the University. PCCE came out of President Eisgruber’s declared commitment to “examining and uprooting systemic racism at Princeton,” following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, according to Morrill.

Even in 2012, when PTI became a more formal organization, and represented Princeton among the other institutions in New Jersey, the only funding it received from the University was for “half an administrator,” as Greene put it. For several years, PTI floated around education-related spaces within the University. It had a brief stint with the Pace Center,

and a partnership with Teacher Prep, and only in 2017 was it offered office space within McGraw. In 2019, its Administrator and Director both got promoted to full-time employees, and this year, PTI could hire two new instructional specialists to take on administrative duties that previously were performed by grad student volunteers. “The support for our program is very real. It’s not lip service,” Jill Stockwell said about the attention PTI has received from the University in recent years.

Now supported by University resources in PCCE, PTI hopes to take the next step in its mission to bring the highest quality of education to incarcerated students: offering Princeton credit for the classes Princeton instructors teach on the inside. Doing this would formalize the role Princeton plays in the education of incarcerated students, and would help prove to future employers and admission committees that they have successfully completed classes held at Princeton’s educational standards.

The University is not yet an accrediting partner in NJ-STEP, but PTI recently got approval from a University planning committee to do so in the future, according to Greene. She hopes that the astronomy class she will teach Princeton undergraduates in the spring might at the same time be offered to incarcerated students as well. The class, which will introduce students to research in astronomy by having astronomical data and interpret it, will be taught in this paired way because, as Greene put it, is “one of the mechanisms we know will work” to offer Princeton credit.

According to Morrill, this is part of a broader effort for the University to bring more non-traditional students to campus, especially during a nationwide decline in non-traditional school enrollment down to 6.3 million people, 21.2% decrease over the past decade, according to the Postsecondary National Policy

Institute. Administrators see the need to bring non-traditional, and formerly incarcerated students on Princeton’s campus. “The University recognized the strength of those populations,” said Jill Stockwell. “People who are the closest to problems are also the closest to the solution.”

Second Look is a way for Teo Grosu to disrupt the common understanding and open up the field.

After Trump's win, Princeton's Right Wing is Preparing to Take Charge

The Heritage Foundation, the Whig-Clio election watch party, and Princeton's place in the conservative orbit

by SIERRA SUN

On November 5th, inside the Senate room of Princeton's Whig-Clio, an election night watch party is in full swing. Three TV monitors flicker with live news, red and blue solo cups scatter across tables littered with pizza boxes, and students sit in rows, trying to focus amid the hubbub. A small circle of people watches the commotion from a corner, their satisfaction with the night's outcome growing. They wear scarlet blazers, red collared shirts, and burgundy sweaters. In this group are editors of the conservative campus publication, *The Princeton Tory*, affiliates of the right-wing Federalist Society and James Madison Program, and leaders of the College Republicans. Princeton's conservative leaders stand in discussion, as the political ascendancy of the country's right-wing movement becomes increasingly certain.

The pipeline from Princeton into conservative politics is well-established, with notable alumni like Texas Senator Ted Cruz '92, Fox News host and Defense Secretary nominee Pete Hegseth '03, and J.D. Vance's chief of staff Jacob Reses '13. As I meet more members of the conservative student circle, they describe their connection to one another as a part of this "orbit":

the minority conservative community on campus that follows the trail blazed by Princeton's Republican hall of fame.

Their voices grow louder as results start trickling in. The group's conversation shifts to Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign, critiquing her bold media strategies and her "horrible" choice of Tim Walz as her running mate, as one member notes. Soon after, their spirits rise as Donald Trump wins North Carolina. Sporting a bright red blazer and suede tote bag, another member smiles at her phone, turning the screen around to show others, hoping to make them laugh. When the phone makes its rounds to me, I see an image of Harris, defeated, sitting at a table next to a gargantuan mound of cocaine and a glass of wine the size of her head. Above it are the words, "Kamala rn."

Later that night, a decisive win for Trump heralds what will become a Republican-controlled government.

Two weeks after election night, on November 20th, the Cliosophic Society invites Kevin Roberts, President of the Heritage Foundation, to address young people, including conservatives, energized by the post-election momentum. The Heritage Foundation, an influential think tank and the creator of Project 2025, is at the forefront of shaping conservative policy and fostering the next generation of right-wing leaders – Trump has already started to appoint some of its leaders to positions

in his administration.

"Every generation of Americans delivered a majority of their votes to Trump because they understand the urgency of the moment," Roberts says to a packed room of students and faculty, and a livestream viewed by more attendees in an overflow room.

Roberts emphasizes the role of institutions like Princeton in shaping principled leaders for government. "Institutions are important for men and women to get great formation," Roberts says. Roberts underscores this mission, which he previously described as "institutionalizing Trumpism," as a way to cultivate a strong-minded government. "[Americans] understand that Trump gets it. He's authentic," Roberts declares. "That's what we are starving for in Washington." His vision resonates with many in the two lecture halls. Students lean forward intently, some scribbling notes as others nod along.

For conservative think tanks like Heritage, seeking to collect a crop of young conservatives that have gone through a robust "formation," right-wing groups within a prominent institution like Princeton provide an ideal recruitment ground. Heritage's line of communication with the Cliosophic Society, the organization that invited him, allows for the think tank's presence to manifest on Princeton's campus through speaker events, alumni networks, and faculty connections — one of the ways that conservative

institutions identify and prepare the leaders of its future.

As the younger generation of Princeton conservatives network within these institutions and with faculty or alumni, they are building a new movement, one that election night seems to provide with a mandate to help shape the nation's future. College Republicans member Santhosh Nadarajah '25 foresees a future of efficiency for the federal government, depending on "how much Republicans are able to get done in these next two years." With some Princeton conservatives like Nadarajah graduating just next year, their efforts will determine in part how much their Party can accomplish in this timeframe.

It's past midnight on election night. The watch party winds down, and most students pack up, tossing cups and pizza crusts into the bins. The group in red, though, lingers, glancing at their screens with growing smiles. To this "orbit," this election is more than a victory for the Right — it sets the stage for a future that they're ready to command.

As *Sierra Sun* researches and reports, she is building a new movement, one that seems to provide *Second Look* with a mandate to help shape the future.

Keeping Princeton Cemetery Alive

A portrait of the cemetery that holds Grover Cleveland, Aaron Burr, the Menendez parents, and other humans made equal in death.

by FAITH HO

SPRING

On one day, you may come across a trumpet fanfare heralding a US president; on another, a woman meditating cross-legged under a tree; and perhaps on Halloween, the touch of a phantom hand. Rows of neatly arranged headstones stand next to the boulevard of trees stretching softly into the sky. Now and then, you come across an alcove that holds statues saluting seemingly nothing; Chinese characters swoop through various headstones; flowers scattered in front of a memorial, and, your breath catching, toys on the grave of a child, just barely three.

In springtime, trees dig their roots into grass as their branches weep over graves. They are pink and green and wholly alive. In the distance, a white buggy circles the grounds.

Don Hoffman, Superintendent of The Princeton Cemetery of the Nassau Presbyterian Church, steps off the buggy. Tall and fit, he's more upright ginkgo tree than the gnarled trunks usually associated with cemeteries. With unwavering blue-green eyes and a straightforward manner, Hoffman immediately betrays the popular conception of a graveyard keeper.

"Yeah, [people always] ask me why I'm not some old creepy guy," Hoffman says. A laugh escapes. "I

always tell them, like, gimme time."

It is difficult to place Hoffman's age (he's forty), nondescript as the clothing he wears: gray cap, flannel over shirt, jeans. Growing up in Flemington, just twenty minutes away, Hoffman was introduced to the cemetery through his friend, the then-superintendent's son. Now, he's been working at the cemetery for sixteen consecutive years (minus three years in the middle).

Princeton Cemetery is a historical treasure, an active resting place, and a memorial to lives lived and died. It's the living's job to maintain the place of the dead.

It's not an easy job, but Hoffman says he can't see himself doing anything else. "Plus I have a spot out here too, so one day I'll be out here." He laughs wryly, "So [I'm] never getting away."

SUMMER

In the heart of Princeton town, next to the Public Library and the Paul Robeson Center for the Arts, the Princeton Cemetery occupies a spot as integral as it is historical. It was first established in 1757 with a plot of land bought by then-College of New Jersey (now Princeton University). The cemetery was later acquired by the Nassau Presbyterian Church as a burial ground after it was established in 1764 as the First Presbyterian Church.

The church expanded in 1801 with the bequeathment of a farm and gifts of more acres of land, adding up the now current nineteen acres.

"It's like a stamp of history," Hoffman says.

Notable figures buried in the non-denominational cemetery are numerous. The oldest memorial is to Aaron Burr, former vice president of the United States and also known for killing Alexander Hamilton. In a demarcated part of the cemetery sits the grave of 22nd and 24th US President Grover Cleveland, where an annual military procession commemorates his birthday. Also buried in the graveyard are Jose and Kitty Menendez, who were famously killed by their two sons in 1989.

In the area known as the Witherspoon Jackson Community, a nondescript black gate marks the entrance to the "Colored Cemetery", established in 1807 and containing generations of African American families and notable residents. One of them is Jimmy Johnson, who came to the US as a slave in 1890 and later started his own business selling peanuts and candy to Princeton University students. He was buried in an unmarked grave in 1809 until University students raised money for a tombstone. Other notables include jazz pianist Donald Lambert, and Christine Moore Howell, founder

of hair and cosmetics brand Christine Cosmetics.

The cemetery's records date back to the early 1900s. From a drawer, Hoffman pulls out an onion-skin parchment with maps of the cemetery marked with fine ink, looking like it could crumble at any moment. Another drawer holds a fragile book with beautiful calligraphy disguising grim contents: "died from accident". The cemetery has been slowly going digital. He points to a color-coded map of the cemetery hanging on the wall, a ten-year project led by Allen Olson, a Nassau Presbyterian church member and consultant, where he surveyed every grave—over 25,000 in total.

The cemetery continues to operate, despite concerns that it would run out of space. Not even counting cremation graves and families that sell back graves to the cemetery, there are hundreds of graves left for sale. Even a graveyard can become grounds for competition, as a few years back, a newer cemetery spread the rumor that the cemetery was full.

"No matter your line of work, somebody's out to get you," Hoffman says.

Through the Seasons

AUTUMN

On one day in November, the boulevard of ginkgo trees sheds its leaves all at once. At 6 A.M., the tiny, violently yellow fan-shaped leaves begin to rain onto the ground. By noon, the trees are bare and the ground is carpeted in gold.

No one can predict the day the leaves fall, but when they do, Hoffman contacts a whole little list of people he has who want to see the event. People drive down from nearby towns, even flying drones, just for the occasion.

Under fire-red trees, electric blowers whirr browned leaves into a pile. Sometime later, the motors of a lawn mower. Then the thrum of an excavator, digging another grave.

As superintendent, Hoffman does everything, from meeting with clients to picking up trash and fallen branches: “There’s no job too small.”

Much of the work in the cemetery is very manual, which makes it difficult to find employees. Usually, there are two full-timers; now, it is just Hoffman and a part-timer who just graduated from Rutgers. It’s also difficult to find contractors because it’s not as simple as mowing a lawn—hitting a stone could cost thousands of dollars. Even digging is tricky because you might accidentally touch a grave. “It’s not a job

you want a rookie to learn on. Because that’s somebody’s loved one.”

Working in the graveyard requires both sensitivity and thick-skin. Hoffman describes dealing with the whole spectrum of situations: people picking out their graves ahead of time, and others reeling from the fresh loss of a loved one. One couple jokingly lay down on their grave and asked for a picture. Another time, he stood by a couple in the pouring rain as they mourned the loss of their young daughter, killed in a tragic traffic accident.

He describes trying to find a balance between not being affected by people’s emotionality, but still guiding them through the process.

“I have a lot of walls up. Some of them—especially funerals of younger kids—really are painful. But I’ve been around for a while. Not many things throw me a loop.”

WINTER

Around Christmastime, some residents bring Hoffman a bottle of wine or some cookies. After almost two decades at the cemetery, he sees some of them more than his own family. “A lot of ‘em know that I go above and beyond to more than technically what I have to do,” Hoffman says unsentimentally.

Tucked into the corner of the graveyard, Hoffman’s office overlooks the over twenty-five thousand tombstones and 370 trees frosted in white. In the otherwise untouched snow are footprints that point towards graves, and then away. Soon the sun sets, the sky dusted in blue, and the cemetery’s gates close.

“Death is the great equalizer because it doesn’t matter what you have here. It’s the same for all of us. You know. Unless somebody finds the loophole,” Hoffman says, and laughs. “They better share it.” To him, a wealthy person may have more money and buy a bigger stone, but still, everyone dies.

Soon enough, winter tips spring. Against eternity, seasons are just time passing. Hoffman heads back into the cemetery to continue his work.

“I try to treat everybody the exact same regardless, you know; obviously I want grass to grow on their grave. We don’t give up until there’s grass growing.”

Faith Ho describes trying to find a balance between emotionality while still guiding people through *Second Look*.

Princeton Pro-Life on the 2024 United States Election

The political attachments and detachments of Princeton Pro-Life in the face of the general election

By CHARLIE MILBERG

On Sunday, November 10, five days after the presidential election, nine Princeton Pro-Life (PPL) club members sat on the floor of Princeton's Murray Dodge Hall. Catholics, dressed in Sunday best and returning from mass, sat alongside Jewish and atheist members, all knitting baby blankets. Their instructor walked around, helping each member learn how to knit and ensuring that each stitch was made correctly. Members shifted around as they worked, and their blankets slowly, but steadily, took shape. Chatter and laughter filled the room. This was the first event PPL held post-election, and Trump was not mentioned once.

According to Nadia Makuc '26, president of PPL, the club's goal is to promote a "culture of life" on campus and show people there are alternatives to abortion. The club meets semi-regularly and hosts guest speakers, discussions, and

other events aiming to raise awareness of the pro-life movement.

PPL is a non-religious club. "We have members that adhere to tons of different religions, or even no religion at all," PPL member Marianne Cheely '27 said. Although most board members are Catholic, the group also includes members of other faiths, including Protestants, Jews, Muslims, and agnostics.

Additionally, PPL does not get involved in political action. Earlier this year, during the Whig-Clio fair—an event for political campus groups to recruit new students—PPL decided not to show up. In the past, PPL protested outside Planned Parenthood but has since discontinued the practice after receiving negative feedback.

In efforts to engage with the broader pro-life cause, PPL has participated in the New Jersey March for Life outside of the New Jersey State House, "to protest the fact that in New Jersey, third-trimester abortions are legal," Makuc said. "In that way, the pro-life movement is political. But in so many more ways, Princeton Pro-Life and the pro-life movement in general is a social

movement."

According to Cheely, "Aside from the pro-life cause, politics really does not come into our meetings or our programming at all." Last year, PPL hosted Terrisa Bukovinac, a self-described vegan, leftist, atheist, pro-life presidential candidate. Like Bukovinac, many members of PPL hold diverse, and often conflicting, political beliefs.

According to Makuc, Bukovinac asked PPL if they would like to campaign on her behalf. In response to this request, Makuc replied, "Personally, I was like, this is a great thing, but it's just not really what we want to do."

For Makuc, abortion is a personal issue. She was born to a partially paraplegic mother. "When she was having us kids—I'm the youngest of five—doctors repeatedly told her that she should be sterilized and or she should abort," Makuc said. "But my mom, she obviously valued our life first." Makuc was raised Catholic and sees her pro-life positions as a service to God.

Makuc believes in protecting all life, regardless of political divides: she supports universal

healthcare, expanded childcare, gun control, and prays for peace in Gaza. "I really think now, so much of the abortion issue lies in the states and is kind of out of the hands of the president anyway, that I could almost be convinced. If Harris's presidency was gonna end the Israel-Palestine conflict, I would vote for her," Makuc said. "Maybe even if she were still super pro-choice."

But at the ballot box, Makuc did not vote for Harris. "My understanding is that part of the kind of different social campaigns she's done as vice president has been not just abortion is okay, but really promoting it and saying this is healthcare; this is something we really need to prioritize," said Makuc. "This is something that I would not feel comfortable voting for."

Weighing the other options pre-election, Makuc said, "I haven't actually decided whether I'll be voting for Trump or writing in." She continued, "I recognize that when you vote, you're both voting for policies, party, and the person. That's why there's a lot of different factors that go into this."

Makuc acknowledged the

importance of having a pro-life president but clarified that she does not necessarily support Trump. “It was a good thing that *Roe v. Wade* was overturned. He was able to promote the justices that got *Roe v. Wade* overturned,” said Makuc. “I guess lower court promotions could be a good thing. That’s more about getting a Republican in there at all, as opposed to, say, Harris.”

However, Makuc added, “I’m certainly not voting for him because he’s pro-life or he says that he will do things for the pro-life movement because I don’t think this is even true.” She added that most of Trump’s policies were detrimental to her goal of protecting and valuing human life.

“What really holds me back from voting for [Trump] are not really even policy questions per se, but really the persona and the way that he has treated women in the past,” Makuc said. “If I thought that the policy things outweighed that, then maybe, but my sense is that there’s nothing that I think that he can do that is going to be so good that I would actually put my vote in for him.”

Club member Roberto Lachner ‘26 expressed his views on the election candidly. “Abortion is the issue I most care about. That being said, I don’t really think abortion is on the ballot this election,” he said. “If Kamala Harris wins, she’s gonna have a really tough time, if not an impossible time, passing any federal abortion legislation.”

Lachner also noted that

Trump’s recent rhetoric has indicated he’s reluctant to go any further on the issue of abortion. “I don’t think the outcome of this election will change the status quo on abortion all that much, at least at the national level,” he said.

“I’d say the thing I am considering most strongly is that Trump has proven he can’t be trusted with our democratic institutions. All four years he was in office, he proved that, culminating in inciting an insurrection in Washington, D. C.,” Lachner said. “I fear what would happen if he’s elected again.”

“That for me is the biggest issue I’m most considering: democracy,” Lachner said.

Lachner, able to disassociate his abortion stances with his vote for Harris, is an uncommon stance, according to Makuc. “I think that there was maybe a disproportionate number [of pro-life voters who voted for Harris] on campus. But I think nationally, most pro-life people voted for Trump,” she said.

In addition to pro-life voters, many pro-choice voters cast their ballot for Trump. Data from VoteCast, a survey conducted by the Associated Press, suggests that roughly 33 percent of voters in Arizona, Missouri, and Nevada supported their state-wide pro-choice abortion measures while also voting for Trump. The data suggests that pro-choice voters have dissociated Trump from the pro-life movement at large.

No public data seemingly exists on the number of pro-life voters who supported Harris, but Lachner is not alone in this regard. Opinion

articles from Newsweek and the National Catholic Reporter highlight pro-life activists across the country who identified Harris as their candidate. Just as this election challenged the assumption that pro-choice voters are a Democratic voter bloc, it also showed that not all pro-life voters sided with the Republican Party.

Makuc holds a different perspective. “Even if there was some distancing of the Republicans and Trump from the pro-life movement, they’ve been our home before, and there’s a lot more hope with them and ability to put pressure and move forward with them than the Democrats,” explained Makuc.

For PPL members Abigail Readlinger ‘27 and Cheely, abortion remained an issue that could not be ignored. “I’d say abortion ranks extremely high on my list, if not number one,” said Readlinger. “It involves the life and death of human beings in a very real, very physical, very tangible way,” she continued. “It’s dealing with human lives and I know that human lives are irreplaceable and have inherent value, just in the fact that they are human beings.”

“I will be voting for the party that supports the pro-life movement more, that respects life more,” said Readlinger. “I have to ask myself, which of these parties better respects life,” Readlinger continued. “Looking at the policies... I choose from there.”

For Cheely and Readlinger, neither candidate was sufficiently pro-life. “I really feel like neither party

respects life or supports the pro-life movement as much as they could or as much as they ought to,” said Readlinger. “It really is a tough decision. Because both candidates just aren’t [respecting life] in their own ways,” said Cheely.

“To feel that my vote has an impact, I’m obviously just considering between the two main presidential parties, which I think is a flaw in our system,” said Readlinger. “Because of the society we live in, it’s obviously kind of ‘either or.’ But that being said, there’s never going to be one single party that every single thing I believe in, that party says.”

On Friday, November 8, two days after Trump’s win was announced, PPL held their own election for the club’s executive board. Cheely and Readlinger were elected president and vice-president of the club, respectively. Their terms will begin in January of 2025 and end in 2026.

When asked about the future of PPL, Makuc said, “We might see a shift towards working on the state level, and perhaps there’s an opportunity to especially think and talk about how the pro-life movement moves forward federally.”

“I think there is kind of this question of, okay, even if Trump’s in office, what exactly can we get him to do? What would pro-life policy on a federal level look like?” Makuc said.

“There’s definitely opportunity,” she added. “But it’s not so clear where exactly PPL fits into that.”

“ONLY THE PEOPLE

Resistencia and the future of organizing in Princeton

By ARIEL CHEN AND ALEX NORBROOK

Jorge Torres paces back and forth at the Hinds Plaza outside Princeton Public Library, stirring up the group of people gathered around him. “You guys got to scream,” he implores the crowd. “Like being mad. It’s not a church; it’s a rally!”

It’s November 6th, past sundown the night after Donald Trump won the Presidential Election, and people are shouting, chanting, waving their signs in fear and in hope. A fiery man with short, dark, curly hair and clad in all black, Torres fires up the crowd: “Hey hey! ho ho! Donald Trump has got to go!”

Around 70 people stand behind broad banners in Hinds Plaza, filling the space with energy. The crowd forms a U-shape around Torres, brandishing a collection of signs: “ICE Out of Princeton,” “Alto ICE,” and “Immigrants’ Rights are Human Rights.” They are here with Resistencia en Acción New Jersey, a local immigrants’ rights organization. Resistencia organized the rally, the first demonstration in Princeton to protest Trump’s victory. “We have

a president who is racist and [who] discriminates toward immigrants,” says Resistencia’s Executive Director Ana Paola Pazmiño. “We are gonna stand up and fight back.”

Resistencia is also fighting for a reason far closer to home: the organization wants Princeton’s leaders to protect the town’s migrant community against the anti-immigrant policies Trump champions. With so much to lose from a Trump presidency, Resistencia is working from the bottom up, starting from the local level to challenge systems of power, and calling on the broader community to join its efforts.

In Hinds Plaza, speeches from organizers and demonstrators recognize that this election dealt a death blow to the existing Democratic coalition, and provoke a fundamental question with which the left will have to contend over the next four years: what does building power look like in the shadow of the next Trump administration?

People come to the rally with fear about the future that Trump wants to create: a future with mass deportations, with increased policing, with violence against minorities and people in the LGBTQ+ community.

Reverend Erich Kussman, a pastor of St. Bartholomew Lutheran Church in the city of

Trenton, showed up to his office in the morning to find 20 scared people at his door. “They thought they were getting deported today because Trump got elected. People don’t understand how the policies work, but they’re seeing the tears and the fear,” Kussman says.

“It’s very traumatic for a lot of folks,” he adds.

“Siempre existe el miedo,” says Fernando, a resident from Mexico living on Clay Street, part of the immigrant community in Princeton’s Witherspoon-Jackson neighborhood. The fear always exists. “We are not going to feel comfortable here anymore,” he says in Spanish, voicing his fear to “go to the street, to shop or to work.”

When Pazmiño, a Hispanic woman with bright eyes and long dark hair, takes the mic, she shares a testimony of a girl who called her early that morning in tears over her undocumented parents. “It’s so hard to feel that fear your parents might be in danger,” she said, “even though she might know the language... was raised here, [and] has a bright future.”

Yet in the roar of assent that swells after each speech, in the raw chants that organizers lead throughout the evening, in the moments of quiet when friends console one another with arms on the shoulder, the rally allows for people to fear and to grieve as a collective. For Luisa, an Ecuadorian immigrant, the rally exists so she and her neighbors can “get together with people like us so we don’t feel lonely.”

(Fernando and Luisa both declined to provide their last names.)

Speakers seek to counter the fear weighing on the crowd with stories of empowerment. Early in the rally, a middle-aged man named Juan Regalado walks up to the microphone and recounts how he avoided being separated by ICE from his wife and daughters. Pazmiño stands next to him, translating: “I was stronger. I was stronger, and thanks to God, I’m here. I’m part of the Resistencia family. I’m part of you guys, who are my family, and we’re going to be united, and we’re not going to go anywhere.” The crowd erupts in cheers, affirming his words: “No somos uno, no somos cien, somos millones, cuéntanos bien!” We are not one, we are not a hundred: we are millions.



Count us right!

“From now on,” Pazmiño says as Regalado passes the mic to her, “things happen in the streets. With our community. And together.”

Although Resistencia’s rally was organized as a direct response to Trump’s win, it is in many ways as much a refutation of the Democratic Party as it is a mobilization against the Republican Party. After all, Harris, too, pledged to limit asylum opportunities for migrants, punish illegal border crossings with felony charges, and continue building Trump’s wall. Resistencia’s members have deep skepticism of the Democratic Party’s position on immigration even today. Under Biden’s presidency, they watched as ICE patrolled the town in July and detained one Princeton resident, causing shock and fear in the community.

“We can’t expect either party to protect migrants when we saw with our own eyes the callous crackdowns that were happening in Princeton under Democratic administrations at all levels of government,” says Bryce Springfield ’25, an organizer with Princeton Young Democratic Socialists of America.

Disaffected with either party and particularly apprehensive of a future under a Trump administration, speakers at the rally call immigrant communities and their allies to organize amongst themselves and push decision-makers to listen. “When we say the people save the people, what does that mean?” Torres says. “What does that mean? That we’re going to save ourselves, that no one is going to save ourselves, that no political party, not Republican, not Democrat, no one is going to save ourselves. Just us.”

“If ICE comes to this fucking town,” Torres adds, “We’re going to protect our community.”

Beyond working toward community protection, rally organizers envision building power by establishing a broad left-wing coalition in Princeton and beyond, one that bases its center of power outside of either major party. They stress the importance of mass mobilization across identities with a working-class agenda. “We cannot talk about true liberation until we talk about building a multiracial, bottom-up movement,” Springfield says.

“I’m fearful for a lot of our people



being misinformed,” Pazmiño says, referring to the uncertainty in the community about how Trump will execute his deportation plans. “But I’m most hopeful that perhaps the testimonies of others will help the whole community to see this as a way to agitate and get out on the streets to make sure that our rights are heard.”

The rally’s coalition of immigrant’s rights activists, democratic socialists, progressive advocates, and concerned locals present a vision of power that challenges the Democratic Party’s operating model from the left. Given the Democrats’ bruising loss and fracturing base, organizers hope that the Party seriously contends with this vision in the four years ahead.

After embarking on a looping march through Witherspoon St., Nassau St., and Palmer Square, the crowd gathers one last time in Hinds Plaza. Speakers lead the final cheers of the night, and the rally comes to a close. The bus that drove many of Resistencias members to the rally pulls away, students walk back to the University, and town members head home. The rally has run its course, and the Plaza falls into its usual rhythms once again. The chants, speeches, and high energy at the rally dissipate.

But Resistencia has amassed a community that’s not going anywhere. If anything, their efforts are just beginning. For now, Resistencia

is creating defense committees to prepare individuals for more ICE activity in the town, protect immigrants with temporary status, and host “know your rights” workshops.

“That’s our work right now,” Pazmiño says. “We’re strategizing on how to protect against what’s coming.”

As for the broader collection of organizers, some are preparing to realize the bottom-up coalition envisioned at the rally in order to mobilize changes on a larger scale. Springfield voices a will to “build working class power, build power against this racist system, this capitalist system, and all the oppressions that come out of it.”

What will come in the next four years and how far these coalitional efforts will go is uncertain. But who will be in the struggle to strengthen America’s left and launch a political challenge to Trump is clear.

“It’ll only be us,” says Vera Candiani, an Associate Professor of History and former labor union organizer. “It’ll only be us as immigrants, as workers, as women, as young people, as students, [who are] able to defend the rights that we have and advance our struggle to gain more power.”

Second Look allows for Ariel Chen and Alex Norbrook to fear and to grieve as a collective.

SAVE THE PEOPLE!”

Q&A

Eliza Griswold on Journalism in a New Trump Era

A Pulitzer-Prize-winning professor talks electoral reporting and the journalistic horizon

By **FRANKIE SOLINSKY DURYEA**
& **ALEX NORBROOK**

Post-election, one thing is clear: reporters from leading publications thought the race would be a lot closer than it actually was. Eliza Griswold '95, Pulitzer-prize winner, Director of Princeton's Journalism department, and contributing writer at the New Yorker, was one of them, anticipating a close Kamala Harris victory. Her inaccurate prediction wasn't for a lack of trying, though. Looking to "cross lines of difference," Griswold traveled to nearly every corner of Pennsylvania, speaking with voters from as many different constituencies as possible. She interviewed state officials defending against election interference; organizers canvassing in the white suburbs of Philadelphia; evangelicals turning out for Harris; and even rally goers who witnessed Trump get shot in the ear. Drawing from these conversations, she's now processing what happened and what we might be able to expect over the next four years.

During our conversation, which has been edited for length and clarity, we discussed her election reporting in Pennsylvania, the gains Trump made on Election Day that reporters did not foresee, and how journalism should adapt to prepare for Trump's second presidency.

Covering Pennsylvania this election season, what did your reporting look like? What did you see?

The first Pennsylvania piece that I wrote was to cover the assassination attempt of Trump in Butler County. I saw just no question that Trump was going to be elected in the sort of rush of outpouring after that assassination attempt. It seemed to all of us that it was done.

Then, attention around the assassination attempt faded pretty fast.

I set out to do the next story. I was working on this assignment before Harris became the nominee, which was, "Will Black men vote for Biden?" But then, two days before I started reporting, Harris became the candidate. I went out into Philadelphia with this awesome Working Families Party city councilman, Nick O'Rourke. We went to barbershops, and some of those conversations just blew my mind: they were deeply, deeply arresting. So many of the men we were talking to were going to vote for Trump, and many of them explained to me, in terms I hadn't really understood, how Trump had been a popular icon for Black men long before he was president. He had this kind of cult status, he had made all this money, he'd gotten one over on the man for a really long time. He was seen as an ultimate gangster, I had not known that.

Then I did the "doomsday scenarios" [piece]. I thought the most interesting way to do that would be to hang out with Al Schmidt, the Secretary of State in Pennsylvania,

and a Republican, so it got us beyond just party lines. I realized while doing that reporting that he and everybody else had been table topping, running these war games for six months about what could go wrong, and the most likely thing to go wrong would be the reelection of Trump.

For Schmidt, this was especially profound because he testified in front of the January 6th commission. Trump had said, "Go find Al Schmidt." And Al Schmidt had had to move with his family, he received death threats. There were very real stakes for Trump's reelection because Al Schmidt would definitely be an enemy of Trump. I think that was really sobering because it was seeing the stakes for election workers, but it was also like, this could be really bad. All of these signs were ominous, but I think I am proximate enough to the sort of bubble of media that I continued to assume [Harris] would narrowly win, mostly because I couldn't conceive of her loss.

So what happened on Election Day?

I went out with a lightning [canvassing] team on election day in Germantown, which is a heavily African American neighborhood in Philadelphia, and nobody was turning out. That was midday, and that was concerning. By late that afternoon, I was in Chester County, which reliably goes blue now. I just thought I would do a random "asking women in the parking lot who they were voting for." I pegged two voters as

Harris voters, and I was wrong on both counts.

One was this woman in yoga pants, wearing a sweatshirt that said “Kindness.” And I just was like, “Can I talk to you?” She’s like, “Yeah.” I was like, “What do you care most about?” I assumed I was going to hear a code for reproductive rights, democracy. Instead she’s like, “I care about the economy.” I was like, “What do you mean?” She’s like, “Well, my grocery bills are very expensive and I’m the one who does the shopping.” I could tell where that was going and it was certainly eye opening.

The next voter I talked to was an 18 year old girl, a first-time voter, with her dad: a high school senior in Chester County. Her dad was so proud of her and proud that the New Yorker would be talking to her. We got into it and I was like, “Which candidate do you think speaks more effectively to young people?” And she’s like, “Donald Trump definitely speaks more effectively to young people.” I was like, Wow, like this is just a kind of normalization, that the dad is okay with her talking this way to the New Yorker.

The loss of Pennsylvania was surprising to me. Logically, I understood that it was the likely scenario, but I really hadn’t internalized it. And I’m not sure that I have now.

What responsibility do you feel as a reporter when covering an election like this? Do you have a sense of what we missed?

I see it more in my classroom, to be honest. I have been talking a lot about how reporting requires crossing lines of difference for a few reasons. I didn’t want to continue the trope of the white working class Trump voter; I didn’t want to bring Southwestern Pennsylvania folks in on Zoom who would just reinforce stereotypes. That’s just not doing any good.

I heard a comment by Sherrilyn Ifill on Rachel Maddow. She said that we have too much reporting as

phase – that has gone away – where journalists felt they had to fact check in real time in an interview. That didn’t work very well.

I think that scene-based narrative nonfiction is really helpful with learning about people and how they think. And I could have done that more effectively in unusual places. I’m thinking of the Black men piece. Those were unlikely Trump voters. I could have spent more time with them maybe, been like, this is very real. I don’t know. But definitely speaking to people who felt differently and having the confidence to do that, and bringing them into the classroom, which I’m doing now.

You often mentioned the need to cross lines of difference. What do you think that looks like in the next four years?

One of the reasons I repeat that so often is because it is the ethic of journalism. We’ve gotten into this other ethical sense. I heard this a lot in my classrooms with my graduate students at NYU, where they would almost shame one another for talking to people outside of their political affiliation: “Why would you talk to them?” or “Don’t platform that person.”

I doubled down on the principle that our ethics are not about holding the right ideas. Insisting on that is insisting on what journalism does. Its ethics aren’t to believe the right things. Its ethics are to go talk to everybody, to gather information widely and accurately. That act reinforces the fabric of democracy, when done skillfully and authentically. When I show up and I give people extra time, and I’m really trying to understand what they’re saying, and the piece reflects that, I have walked away rebuilding somebody’s trust in the media. That is really important, and that is a teachable skill.

When I was a young reporter working in the Middle East and Africa, Ian Jack, this awesome Granta editor, asked me, “Why is it that Americans pretend that all the trouble in the world is elsewhere?” I was

like, “Woah.” I came home to look at America through the same lens, focusing on what’s important. My role here [in the Journalism department] feels as important as doing journalism in terms of asking these questions: how are we using these resources, how are we using our talent here to both prepare our students for the world, but also use them as a good?

We’re going to enter an era with a newly defined black box. The disinterest, the hostility in talking to the press is going to be at an all time high. Teaching against that and preparing students for that feels as much of a vocation as doing the work myself.

In your most recent article, you end with a quote by Al Schmidt that feels especially relevant: “If the will of the people is to dismantle their system of government, then in a democracy, they have that ability.” You wrote this before the results of the election were announced. What do you think about it now?

I think about it every day. I think about Al Schmidt saying that every day, because I think that’s what’s happened. I believe deeply in continuing to do reporting with the highest ethic and with everybody available. But I look down-ballot at who won the row offices in Pennsylvania, and it’s three MAGA candidates – two were incumbents, so it’s not a huge change. What does that mean four years from now? We need to look far beyond just Trump and into the very way in which the infrastructure of democracy is being taken apart.

On Campus, the Israel Divestment Struggle is in Limbo

By **SOFIA CIPRIANO**

On September 30, 2024, during a Council of the Princeton University Community (CPUC) meeting, two dozen pro-Palestine protesters gathered off to the side of the room, tape over their mouths. They held paper signs with slogans such as “Princeton your hands are red,” “Anti-Zionism ≠ antisemitism,” and “drop the charges”—the latter a reference to the ongoing legal proceedings against pro-Palestinian activists arrested last spring. In front of the protestors sat a few members of Tigers for Israel (TFI), a group that opposes University divestment from Israeli companies, clad in casual business attire. Throughout the meeting, the two groups of students did not visibly interact.

Both groups had been awaiting the CPUC Resources Committee’s announcement on Princeton Israeli Apartheid Divest’s (PIAD’s) proposal to divest and dissociate from companies involved in Israel’s alleged human rights violations. Jay Groves, Chair of the Resources Committee—an administrative body composed of faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate student representatives charged with examining endowment-related questions—ultimately announced that the Committee decided to open a new comment portal on its website “to assess mood on campus regarding

divestment proposal.” After waiting nearly three months for an update, PIAD members were less than happy with the meeting’s reveal. “It’s quite frustrating,” reflected Jessica Ng, a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the High Meadows Environmental Institute and member of PIAD’s admin-liaison committee.

After the Committee concluded its discussion of the divestment proposal, the protestors rose in unison. They walked out of the boardroom with coordination and purpose. Chants began immediately, echoing across Frist South Lawn as they exited the building: “Disclose, divest, we will not stop we will not rest;” “From the river to the sea;” “There is only one solution: Intifada; Revolution.” They drew stares as they marched to the East Pyne courtyard, where Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), in collaboration with other groups, hosted a protest and vigil following the meeting. When the protestors assembled, the mic was given to Ng. She condemned the University’s “fundamentally flawed and fatally slow” response to the divestment proposal.

Some see the University’s extended deliberation as wise. “They need to have time to go and figure all of this out themselves. There’s no shortcut,” said Chabad Rabbi Etian Webb. For pro-Palestine activists, however, the University appears to be stalling; SJP member Amber Rahman ’25 called the

opinion-gathering proposal a “process of distraction.”

At the time of writing, the CPUC has yet to decide on how to proceed with PIAD’s divestment and dissociation proposal; it is unclear when they will. Campus discourse surrounding current events in Palestine is fragmented — there appears to be no obvious resolution in sight.

Pro-Palestine activism has existed on Princeton’s campus since at least 2002; the movement intensified following Hamas’ October 7th attack on Israel and Israel’s subsequent response. (“Pro-Palestine” and “pro-Israel” are commonly used terms to describe two opposing coalitions. I use them here with the understanding that both coalitions are composed of groups with multiple beliefs and motivations.) In April 2024, Princeton students joined peers across the country by establishing an encampment on campus— first by McCosh Hall, and later on Cannon Green — to protest the University’s alleged complicity in Israel’s violence towards Palestinians. The encampment drew protests at sizes not seen since the movement for racial justice on campus spearheaded by the Black Justice League in 2015. Groups including SJP, PIAD, and Alliance of Jewish Progressives (AJP) coordinated programming: sit-ins and hunger strikes accompanied prayers and community-building activities.

In spring 2024, several pro-Palestine activists met with administration representatives to discuss the encampment’s demands, which included dissociation and divestment from Israeli companies, a commitment to forming ties with Palestinian organizations, and an academic boycott. Ng reflected that in the spring, University President Christopher Eisgruber ’83 “was pretty dismissive of our concerns.”

“First they expressed a serious interest in ending the hunger strike and reaching an agreement,” she said. “But then they turned around and made it clear at the next meeting that they were not there to negotiate on the encampment’s demands.”

Emanuelle Sippy ’25, a lead organizer at AJP—a group of Jewish-identifying students who support Palestinian liberation—agreed. She said that the University ignored even “low hanging fruit demands, like making a statement. The University acknowledged the horror of October 7— they refused to acknowledge the horror of Palestinian civilians being targeted.”

Following spring student protests, activists increasingly turned to official university channels; a PIAD working group crafted a proposal to pursue the encampment’s demand for dissociation and divestment. (Dissociation refers to the act of refusing financial

Awaiting a decision from the administration, Pro-Palestine and Pro-Israel activists continue to campaign amidst mutual distrust and polarization.

relationships with a certain company, and divestment to withdrawing endowment investments in a company. Princeton often pairs the two actions together when it deems them necessary.) The 66-page proposal, submitted to the Resources Committee in June, details the history of pro-Palestine activism at Princeton, outlines Israel's alleged human rights violations, and breaks down Princeton's divestment policy. The proposal recommends the University adopt a policy stating that "Princeton is committed to divesting" from entities that "enable or facilitate human rights violations" as a part of Israel's "apartheid practices."

The Resource Committee's 1997 guidelines stipulate that the University may consider disassociation from a company or group of companies represented in the University's investment portfolio when there is "considerable, thoughtful, and sustained campus interest in an issue" and a "central University value clearly at stake." The University has previously divested and dissociated from certain companies involved in South African apartheid in 1987 and in the Darfur genocide in 2006, as well as from fossil fuels companies—albeit partially—in 2022 (Princeton subsequently altered its fossil fuel dissociation policy to allow certain relationships to continue), in response to violations of its values of humanitarianism and "pursuit of truth and knowledge." Notably, Princeton's

Board of Trustees has final say on questions of divestment; the Committee is strictly an advisory body.

Almost every pro-Palestine activist I spoke to emphasized the urgency of divestment, pointing to the Israel-Palestine conflict's humanitarian toll. According to Gaza's ministry of health, between October 7th and November 10th, 2024, over 43,000 Palestinians died in Gaza and 780 in the West Bank, including more than 16,700 children. 1,139 Israelis died and almost 9,000 were injured. More than 125 journalists have been murdered; schools have been shut down or destroyed. In July 2024, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel is committing apartheid in Occupied Palestine Territory. On November 12, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Sippy, as well as other activists, see divestment as Princeton's moral duty. "It is our obligation to call out how deeply morally bankrupt it is for an institution that claims to be in the service of humanity to profit off the killing of children," Sippy said. "How is that in the service of humanity? How is it in the service of knowledge and truth and research?"

Multiple pro-Palestine activists expressed dissatisfaction with the CPUC meeting's outcome. Ng said that processes like the CPUC "are extremely

poorly defined and arbitrary." The University has not clarified how it will evaluate community feedback, causing many to question CPUC's decision to open the online portal; Rahman characterized the CPUC's plan as "disorganized," and Sippy noted its lack of precedent. Moreover, activists critique the University for lacking a timeline for making a divestment decision, and for failing to define what a "central University value" is and who can define one.

The CPUC's guidelines require that divestment is supported by "consensus" among the University community, a contested term among divestment advocates and opponents. PIAD's proposal states that "as past divestment from South Africa, Darfur, and fossil fuels demonstrates, 'consensus' is subjective and does not require unanimous support." Pro-Israel activists contend that there is no consensus on campus. The University has not made it clear what the threshold for "consensus" is in the case of PIAD's divestment proposal.

The committee's lack of clarity makes multiple interpretations of their procedures plausible; activists on both sides cite the CPUC's guidelines as evidence in their favor.

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In fall 2024, Max Meyer '27 revived Tigers for Israel (TFI), a student group dedicated to combating antisemitism and supporting the state of Israel. Meyer, who grew up in a “strong Jewish community,” said that following October 7, he “started to notice that there was a real hole in activism and advocacy on campus on this matter.” After the PIAD proposal was introduced, he worked with other students and faculty to combat what they thought was “an egregious mischaracterization and misrepresentation of the campus perspective.” The coalition emailed the resulting “No Consensus on Princeton BDS” letter to the University community in late August. The letter, which has garnered more than 1,300 signatures, refers to a broader movement to boycott, divest from, and place economic sanctions (BDS) on Israel; PIAD’s proposal only calls for divestment. The letter’s signature count “certainly rejects any even potential semblance of consensus at this university,” Meyer said.

The coalition challenges PIAD’s characterization of Israel’s actions. “Incredibly, the PIAD proposal fails to mention how the current war began—when Hamas and other terrorist groups invaded Israel,” its letter states. “In the PIAD proposal’s version of reality, Israel’s aggressors do not exist.” Pro-Israel activists often contextualize Israel’s current actions under the umbrella of self-defense.

Many who oppose divestment also dispute the extent of Israel’s reported human rights violations and question the International Court’s legitimacy and potential biases. Rabbi Webb pushed back against the narrative that Israel is committing apartheid in Gaza, saying “Even if there is discrimination,

discrimination and apartheid are not the same. There’s discrimination in the United States.”

Those opposing the PIAD proposal maintain that disassociation from Israel would not be conducive to Princeton’s values of humanitarian rights, truth and knowledge, and therefore those actions would not fit Princeton’s guidelines for divestment.

Meyer argued that Princeton institutional connections with the state of Israel are essential given their status as a democracy: “Israel is the only country in the Middle East that allows women equal rights, that allows religious, ethnic, racial minorities equal protection under the law.”

“A boycott from an academic institution,” said Rabbi Gil Steinlauf, the Rabbi of the Center for Jewish Life (CJL) at Princeton, while reflecting on the movement’s broader aims, “would be antithetical to the University’s stated academic culture of free speech.”

Many who oppose divestment also claim it would single out Israel in a problematic fashion. If PIAD’s proposal passed, Steinlauf fears “it could embolden some who are hostile against Israel on campus.” Steinlauf, who is a member of a working group collecting data on Jewish students’ experiences at Princeton, believes that this hostility may harm Princeton’s Jewish community. “By and large, Jewish students on Princeton’s campus report that they do not feel unsafe on Princeton’s campus,” said Steinlauf. But, he stated that there is still “a group of students in the Jewish community who are reporting feeling deeply concerned.”

For instance, some Jewish-identifying students reported feeling targeted by protestor’s actions. As Meyer mentioned, at the spring encampment, one protestor flew a

Hezbollah flag. (The flag was quickly removed when it was identified by encampment organizers, according to The Daily Princetonian.) Students have reported feeling targeted by slogans frequently heralded during SJP protests—including lines like “From the River to the Sea” and references to an “Intifada Revolution.” Responding to the former phrase, Steinlauf said, “While many students use the phrase and honestly believe it represents a call to justice, historically the phrase was meant to delegitimize Israel’s right to exist. Many in the Jewish community understand this phrase in its original context and therefore hear it as antisemitic.”

The definitions of antisemitism and anti-Zionism are highly politicized. The line between the two is contested: roughly, the former term refers to hatred and prejudice against Jewish people, while the latter refers to denying the legitimacy of the Israeli state’s existence. Many pro-Israel activists claim that anti-Zionism often bleeds into antisemitism, and use this act of definition to denounce pro-Palestine activities. “It is perfectly legitimate for anybody to complain about the policies of a modern democracy—that is not antisemitic,” Steinlauf said, adding that “to claim that only the Jewish state has no right to exist is, according to the majority of people within the Jewish community, is antisemitic.”

Meyer added that “weaponizing the term Zionist as almost a replacement for Jew, in many contexts, would be considered antisemitic,” since the term “represents the vast majority of Jewish people.”

Pro-Palestinian student organizers insist their movement rejects antisemitism. “Our movement stands for the liberation of the Palestinian people. We do not stand for antisemitism,” Rahman said, repeating a sentiment expressed by multiple other protestors. “In fact,

a common tactic to silence our movements is to accuse it of antisemitism.”

Progressive Jews who describe themselves as anti-Zionist, including many members of AJP, reject the assertion that anti-Zionism must always be antisemitic. Steinlauf suggests that this group is a “minority within the Jewish community.”

The CJL does not officially support AJP as an organization because it self-identifies as “anti-Zionist.” Despite this, Steinlauf said the CJL remains “deeply supportive of the Jewish students who might be affiliated with AJP.”

Although AJP officially endorsed the PIAD proposal, Sippy acknowledged that “It’s not uncomplicated for us.” The suffering of Israelis is “personal to many of us in AJP. We have family, friends who have been affected, held hostage, and killed,” she said. She reflected on the grievous human rights violations committed on both sides of the conflict: “We can acknowledge the terror and horror of the Hamas attack, and also acknowledge that it did not come out of a vacuum—it came out of years of Palestinians being violently subjugated and oppressed.”

“We don’t believe that one set of war crimes justifies another set of war crimes,” she continued. “Especially one that is disproportionate and that has killed this many children and civilians.”

Conversations between those with opposing views on the issue are rare; a lack of mutually acknowledged facts appears to stymie productive engagement. Meyer pointed out that PIAD’s proposal does not acknowledge the horror of October 7th; Sippy said that the “No Consensus On Princeton BDS” letter “doesn’t talk about the Palestinian death toll, the

scale of devastation in Gaza, the settler violence in the West Bank, or the last 80 years of Palestinians being oppressed, displaced, dispossessed and murdered.”

Moreover, multiple student leaders expressed the belief that those with opposing perspectives do not want to speak to them; many believe that conversation is unproductive altogether.

Rahman believes engagement with opposition is unhelpful given the issue’s moral weight. “People are opposed to BDS because they are not opposed to genocide. There are a lot of people who don’t want to stop genocide, and that’s the problem here,” she said. Ng similarly remarked that “a lot of those conversations are not really had in good faith, and so we’ve focused on building support where we see potential.”

“These are people who are not looking for a dialogue,” Meyer said, when asked whether he’s spoken with SJP members, “I would also argue it’s practically impossible to have a true dialogue with people who can’t come to a basic understanding of facts.”

In other spaces, however, there seems to be more discourse. “Particularly since many AJP members attend CJL for prayer services and communal gatherings,” Sippy said, “we have hard conversations with our friends and community members who disagree with us every single day not only on campus but with our families and communities at home.”

Most interactions between those who disagree vehemently occur at protests—venues which are not necessarily conducive to dialogue. Rabbi Webb reflected that he “attempted, on multiple occasions, to speak with [the protestors].” Many were standoffish: “If we started a conversation, within two

or three minutes, somebody from this group would come over and place themselves between us, or pull the person away. It felt very cultish.” Meyer had a similar experience when protesting against the encampment. “They would often chant ‘Ignore him, Ignore him,’” he said.

Protestors’ attempts to shut down counter-protestors can be contextualized by safety concerns. When I approached protestors at SJP events, most were reluctant to speak on the record. Many wore masks to protect their identities. Doxxing has become increasingly common at pro-Palestine protests. Projects like Canary Mission have created online databases of people they consider “antisemitic,” releasing their personal information without consent. Several Princeton graduate students and professors have “profiles” on the organization’s website.

Multiple activists, including Rahman and Urvi—a member of PIAD who asked to be identified only by first name due to safety concerns—were also concerned about University retribution. Urvi ambiguously referred to “a massive movement of repression taking place at Princeton and nationally.” SJP branches have been disbanded at multiple Universities, including Columbia, Rutgers, and Brown. At the time of publication, there is no concrete evidence that Princeton is taking such action.

Rahman suspects that the University is monitoring SJP’s social media. When asked about this practice, Director of Media Relations Jennifer Morrill stated via email, “We generally track mentions of Princeton on social media, just as we monitor references to the University in news media.”

It remains unclear when the CPUC will deliver a verdict on PIAD’s demands, but activists have remained busy.

In early November, SJP brought forward a Undergraduate Student Government (USG) referendum calling on the University to divest and disassociate from weapons manufacturing companies, starting with five such companies that have documented ties to Israel’s alleged human rights violations. (The official ballot question was sent to the school community via email by USG on November 17th.) Pro-Palestine activists hope that passing the referendum will build support for broader divestment from companies associated with Israel’s war crimes. As of the time of writing, the results of the referendum have not been released.

Activists intend to prioritize community building activities and educational events in the coming months. “Our group’s name is Tigers for Israel,” Meyer stated, “We’d like to host fun events where people can come together and have a good time while supporting Israel.” Dozens of emails for events like TFI speakers, SJP dance workshops, and AJP Rosh Hashana dinners are sent out to residential college list-servers each week.

“Movement building has been really gratifying to be a part of, and that’s going to continue moving forward, regardless of what the CPUC tries to do, and regardless of what the board tries to do,” Ng said. “This isn’t going away.”

On October 29th, Francesca Albanese, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, spoke at Princeton as part of the SPIA’s Dean Leadership series. Meyer rose to speak, reading off a piece of paper. “You denied today your antisemitism. But let me lay out a few examples. In a classic antisemitic trope of accusing Jews of being responsible for our own suffering, you mocked French President Emanuel Macron for identifying Judaism as a driving factor in the October 7th

Hamas-led attacks,” Meyer said. “You have consistently engaged in antisemitic Holocaust inversion, comparing—including today—Israel to the Third Reich and its pure race laws...”

“—So what’s the question? What’s the question?” Albanese eventually interrupted Meyer.

“Well, my question ultimately is: how dare you compare Jews to our oppressors, dismiss the antisemitic hatred that fuels violence against us, and deny us, unlike other oppressed groups, the right to define the parameters of our own oppression?”

Albanese responded with a growing impatience in her voice, asking Meyer: “Why are you speaking on behalf of all the Jews?” The audience burst into applause.

“It’s very disingenuous to try to force antisemitism on what happened on October 7,” she continued. “The hatred that killed Israelis on that day was not prompted by antisemitism. It was prompted by years and decades of dispossession, humiliation, subjugation, degradation. ...The fact that you don’t want to see the pain of the other, the trauma of the other, doesn’t speak to my alleged antisemitism. It speaks to your humanity.”

To a pro-Israel spectator, Meyer may have “won” this exchange; to a pro-Palestine activist, the opposite. Perhaps the answer is both and neither. Each coalition remains stuck—stuck with seemingly irreconcilable beliefs, and stuck waiting for the University to make a decision.

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