

# Unmasking Union Antisemitism

David Rubinstein  
Cornell University

United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Education and Workforce  
Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions

September 9, 2025

Chairman Allen, Ranking Member DeSaulnier, and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is David Rubinstein and I am a doctoral candidate in history at Cornell University.

I came to Cornell to pursue a PhD as a student. Until recently, I viewed campus activism as a distraction from my research.

This all changed in fall 2023. That September, the Cornell Graduate Student Union (CGSU) filed for an election to install itself as graduate students' "exclusive bargaining agent." CGSU chose to affiliate with the United Electrical Workers (UE), a union that seeks the destruction of Israel – where I have family members living.

Soon afterwards came October 7. When I voiced concern about celebrations of Hamas terrorism on campus, a union organizer emailed my entire department calling me an "apartheid apologist" whose words should not be dignified (p. 8). When a Cornell professor described atrocities inflicted on Israeli civilians as "energizing" and "exhilarating", another union organizer organized a petition to support him (p. 12). Despite mounting harassment of Jewish students including online death threats, CGSU leaders claimed complaints of antisemitism were the concoction of wealthy donors, and the union purged many Jewish members from its email list.

That November, CGSU won its unionization election, and decided that bullying Jewish students was "protected union activity." An Israeli-American doctoral candidate was forced to seek help from police, while another PhD student's cubicle was repeatedly littered with pictures of himself with an X drawn across his face. Instead of defending the Jewish graduate students it purports to represent, CGSU backed the assailants and stated that Cornell needed its consent to discipline them (p. 13).

When Cornell belatedly objected to pro-Hamas building occupations that impeded teaching and research, CGSU claimed that "changes to our working conditions must go through a bargaining process" (p. 17.) And when Cornell brought disciplinary charges against two graduate students who led a disruptive encampment calling for "intifada revolution", CGSU accused Cornell of "ableism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia", and organized a protest to demand their reinstatement (p. 20).

When contract negotiations began, CGSU demanded that all PhD students be forced to pay union dues. I and others lobbied the university to reject this contractual provision, that runs counter to free speech and association. We circulated petitions, published op-eds, and met with Cornell administrators (p. 21).

Cornell promised to protect our rights. President Michael Kotlikoff stated publicly that forced association would be “contrary to our university’s core values” (p. 25). He added that mandatory payments would be “deeply unfair to our students [and] incompatible with our commitment to academic freedom” (p. 26). When I emailed President Kotlikoff directly, he replied that Cornell “will continue to defend the fundamental principle that graduate students should have the right to choose whether or not to affiliate with the union” (p. 28).

This commitment turned out to be meaningless. When the union threatened to strike, Cornell reneged on its promises and agreed to force PhD students to pay dues (pp. 29-30). The sole exception included what federal law largely provided already – that religious objectors and a narrowly defined group with ethical and moral objections could pay their forced dues to a charity instead of the union.

Despite this capitulation, Cornell assured us that students’ assertion of their religious, moral, and ethical objections would not be challenged. When I wrote President Kotlikoff to voice dismay about draft contract language, he responded that “this is most definitely not a union shop agreement” – implying that students could freely choose whether to support the union (p. 31). Though all evidence suggested otherwise, the Dean of the Graduate School similarly claimed that “the union will not challenge the religious, moral or ethical objections” (p. 33).

Despite such reassurances, the university simultaneously refused to insist on contractual protections for student objectors. Before the contract was ratified, Cornell was informed of the UE’s pattern of rejecting religious objections at other universities (p. 34). Inexplicably, university administrators chose to ignore concerns that CGSU and UE would similarly challenge charitable contribution elections at Cornell.

That is exactly what followed. When I and others submitted clear religious objection letters, the unions refused to process them – despite the letters providing all the information they needed to know (pp. 35-36). Instead, UE subjected us to an invasive and burdensome application process designed to frustrate and deter our clearly communicated need for accommodation (p. 37).

After the contract was ratified, Cornell promised that religiously objecting would be easy – requiring no more than checking a box (pp. 38-40). University officials stated the contract “does not contemplate, or permit, the Union to institute an application and approval process” for religious objectors (p. 45). Yet when CGSU and UE proceeded to do just that, Cornell caved again and agreed that students must allow the union to “evaluate” whether to exempt them from forced dues payments (p. 47).

As it stands today, Cornell’s Jewish Ph.D. students must now beg unions engaged in antisemitic activity for permission not to fund their pro-Hamas and pro-BDS activism. When CGSU and the UE refused to process my objection and sent me an invasive questionnaire insisting that I

disclose irrelevant personal information, Cornell left me no other option but to file discrimination charges at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission with free legal aid from the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation (pp. 49-54).

After legal action was filed, CGSU belatedly recognized my objection. Yet other students' objections are still being stonewalled by the union – while the students receive no support from Cornell. When objectors implored Cornell to exercise its independent obligations under Title VII and grant accommodations, their emails were ignored by university bureaucrats (p. 55).

CGSU has since proceeded to deny the existence of even narrow exemptions from forced dues payments. This summer the union launched a campaign targeting student objectors, claiming we would be fired from our positions if we do not pay them. Using contact information supplied by Cornell, the union claimed we must leave our PhD programs if we refuse to fund UE (p. 56).

Initially, Cornell administrators pledged to withhold dues from CGSU until the union ceased threatening students (pp. 57-60). Yet six weeks later, university leadership capitulated yet again. Despite no change in the union's behavior, Cornell resumed payments to CGSU – and even consented in writing to its use of dilatory questionnaires (p. 62). As I speak, I am aware of multiple students being threatened with termination for not paying CGSU (p. 64) – and Cornell refuses to act to end this harassment, presumably because it signed a collective bargaining agreement with the union allowing this behavior.

Today, Cornell still claims to protect its students from involuntary association since we may religiously object to funding the union. Such claims are meaningless since the university has granted the union absolute authority to deny, obstruct, or ignore our objections, which it has consistently done.

Nearly two years after October 7, the situation is not dying down – it is only getting worse. At Cornell, the union uses its power to shield people engaged in hateful antisemitic conduct from the consequences for their conduct. Recently, CGSU has organized rallies in support of a self-declared Hamas backer with a long record of harassing behavior (pp. 65-73). When he and other union members forced their way past a police barricade to shut down a campus career fair, CGSU absurdly claimed that employers pose “the actual threats to health and safety” (p. 74). Though Cornell belatedly expelled him, the university reversed course after union intervention (p. 75-77).

When this individual's visa was finally revoked after urging the destruction of America, CGSU supported his lawsuit against the administration and defended his conduct (p. 78-80). CGSU never misses an opportunity to protect people engaged in antisemitic conduct, while threatening to fire those who refuse to fund them. And the union seeks cover for its antisemitic actions by calling them “protected concerted activity” under the National Labor Relations Act.

I am a registered Democrat. Protecting students from forced association and union antisemitism should not be a partisan issue – it is wrong to make support of any ideological organization a condition of earning a PhD. As the steward of taxpayer dollars, Congress should hold Cornell accountable to its obligations under Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. When the

university allows CGSU and UE to create a hostile environment for Jewish students, it must face consequences.

Most importantly, Congress should clarify that PhD students are students – not workers subject to forced union dues. This was settled law until 2016, when the National Labor Relations Board erroneously classified us as employees. Congress should promptly fill vacancies on the NLRB so this can be rectified. By ensuring degree seekers are rightly defined as students, Congress can end the harassment and intimidation I and others have experienced from CGSU and UE. And – especially at universities supposedly committed to intellectual freedom – the payment of union dues should be strictly voluntary.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



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## Teach-In on Gaza + Petition

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**Jean-Michel Mutore**

Wed, Oct 25, 2023 at 6:07 AM

Reply-To: Graduate History Association

To: Graduate History Association

Note: Clicking "reply" to this message will send it to the entire GHA listserv.

Thank you, Claire, for sharing the information about these events as well as the link to the petition. There is no need to dignify David's ahistorical, Nakba denialist, apartheid apologia with a polite response.

I would also like to inform everyone about another teach-in that is taking place **today at 3pm in front of Sibley Hall**:

"Dr. Paul Kohlby is going to deliver a mini teach-in on land dispossession, agrarian change, armed resistance, and other related themes in the context of Palestine. Kohlby has worked extensively on land sovereignty in rural Palestine. The teach-in will be on **Wednesday 3-4:30pm outside Sibley Hall**."

Kohlby's teach-in will directly follow **a student demonstration of Palestinian solidarity outside Day Hall today at 2pm**. I'm attaching a flyer for this demonstration to this email.

I hope to see you all at some of these events.

Take care,  
JM



El El mar, oct. 24, 2023 a la(s) 9:11 p.m., Claire Cororaton escribió:

Note: Clicking "reply" to this message will send it to the entire GHA listserv.

Dear David,

Thank you for your comments on the petition. I appreciate hearing from you, as someone who is more intimately connected with these issues.

I'm not Muslim nor Jewish (I'm Catholic), nor am I from the Middle East (I'm Filipino), but I shared the petition as someone who is part of communities where people have also expressed hesitancy and fear in speaking out. I sent it out to the department listserv in case people are interested in signing it. I leave it to folks to read the petition, and your comments, and decide whether they want to sign.

I just found out about another teach-In, and so in the spirit of open conversation, I would like to share the information with everyone.

Below are details and links for both teach-ins.

**“Understanding Events in Israel – Palestine”**

Thursday, October 26, 5-6:30 PM,

Goldwin Smith Hall, Room G22

<https://as.cornell.edu/news/oct-26-panel-focuses-israel-palestine-conflict>

Hosted by Near Eastern Studies; Sponsored by Jewish Studies Program, Co+Pos (Critical Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Studies), Comparative Muslim Societies, Peace and Conflict Studies, the Department of Government, the College of Arts & Sciences and the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies.

**“Gaza, Settler Colonialism, and the Global War Against Indigenous People.”**

Friday, October 27 at 12:30PM

Goldwin Smith Hall, G64

<https://cals.cornell.edu/gaza-settler-colonialism-and-global-war-against-indigenous-people>

Facilitated by Professor Eric Cheyfitz, Ernest I. White Professor of American Studies and Humane Letters, American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program

Hosted by the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program

Best wishes,  
Claire

On Tue, Oct 24, 2023 at 12:59 PM David Rubinstein wrote:

Note: Clicking "reply" to this message will send it to the entire GHA listserv.

Claire,

As a Jew and fellow History Ph.D. Candidate, I am compelled to respond to this frightening and dangerous petition posed to the humanities graduate student body.

Jews are indigenous to Israel, having continuously lived there for 3800 years. Israelis have no other homeland, and if one were to perform land acknowledgements Jews would be the Native Americans.

None of this negates the legitimacy of Palestinians' aspirations for self-determination. But to promote dehumanizing rhetoric painting Israeli Jews as settler colonialists does nothing to advance peace. Additionally, projecting "whiteness" to Jews entails erasing the inconvenience of the myriad of Jewish identities -- all of which are seen in Israel's population.

This petition does little more than emotionally alleviate American guilt. Cornell sits on the stolen, un-decolonized land of the Cayuga Nation. While writing from the comfort of a genuinely settler-colonial country, its authors make no effort to return land to its own native tribes. Instead, they project North American realities onto a context of which they know nothing, and where they will never need to live with the consequences of their words.

As historians, we have a duty to be exacting with our words. The term genocide designates the deliberate mass murder of members of a particular national or ethnic group, with the aim of destroying that group. If Israel genuinely sought to exterminate the people of Gaza, it would be capable of doing so in 10 minutes. Instead, the IDF has gone to great lengths to avoid civilian casualties, while Hamas uses its own population as human shields. Needless to say, every civilian death is a tragedy. But that does not make Israel guilty of genocide by any reasonable standard.

Likewise, there has been no Israeli occupation of Gaza since 2005, when Israel unilaterally withdrew. Or do you consider that the Jewish state -- alone of all countries in the world -- has no legitimate right to exist in any boundaries at all?

As this petition notes, as educators we have the responsibility to honor the unbiased reality of world events. That reality is that Hamas does not want peace between Israelis and Palestinians. It has rejected every offer of a two-state solution, which could have ended the conflict decades ago. Rather, it seeks the destruction of Israel and the murder of all seven million Jews living there. By failing to note this, one whitewashes the reality of a racist, antisemitic, and homophobic terror group that holds its own people hostage to its goal of carrying out another Holocaust. Gazans deserve far better from their supporters in the West.

While advocating the boycott of a state defending its citizens -- as any country would -- this petition strikingly fails to call for the release of the 220 human lives -- Israelis, Americans, and citizens of other countries -- held hostage by Hamas, some as young as nine months old. Nor does it condemn the mass murder, rape, and torture of Israeli civilians in the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust. Both the Geneva Convention and ICC Statute explicitly

define hostage-taking as a war crime. But it seems that Jewish lives do not bear the same weight for these self-proclaimed champions of social justice.

Similarly, while accusing Cornell of complicity in anti-Muslim sentiment, the petition's authors make no mention of the dramatic increase in anti-Semitic hate crimes over the last weeks. I have personally heard from Jewish students at Cornell who feel afraid and unsafe in the current campus climate. In this context, your silence speaks volumes. One cannot claim to cultivate a community of belonging while demonizing Israel as the Jew among nations and denying the Jewish people the right to self-determination.

The past weeks have been difficult for those who have family and loved ones in the region – Jews, Arabs, Israelis, and Palestinians alike. A fair observer would recognize that Hamas could instantly end the bloodletting by releasing all hostages and laying down its weapons. Then, one can begin charting a political path forward.

Israelis and Palestinians both deserve better than to be used as metaphorical props in service of ideological fantasies that will forever remain dreams in the United States.

David

On Tue, Oct 24, 2023 at 2:54AM Claire Cororaton wrote:

Note: Clicking "reply" to this message will send it to the entire GHA listserv.

Hi all,

On Friday, October 27 at 12:30 pm in Goldwin Smith G64, The American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program (AIISP) will be sponsoring a teach-in titled “**Gaza, Settler Colonialism, and the Global War Against Indigenous People.**” Ithaca community welcome.

<https://cals.cornell.edu/gaza-settler-colonialism-and-global-war-against-indigenous-people>

Additionally, I realize that there are a number of petitions going around but here is another one coming from Humanities graduate students: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe2OsBP3lpMcgUKTbLTZ9bMZ0ho0uTYM8pkCsToHgCMaDUTMw/viewform>

Please share these widely with your networks.

Best,  
Claire

--

Ph.D. Candidate, History  
Cornell University

This message has been sent through the Graduate History Association e-list.

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David Rubinstein  
Ph.D. Candidate, History  
Cornell University

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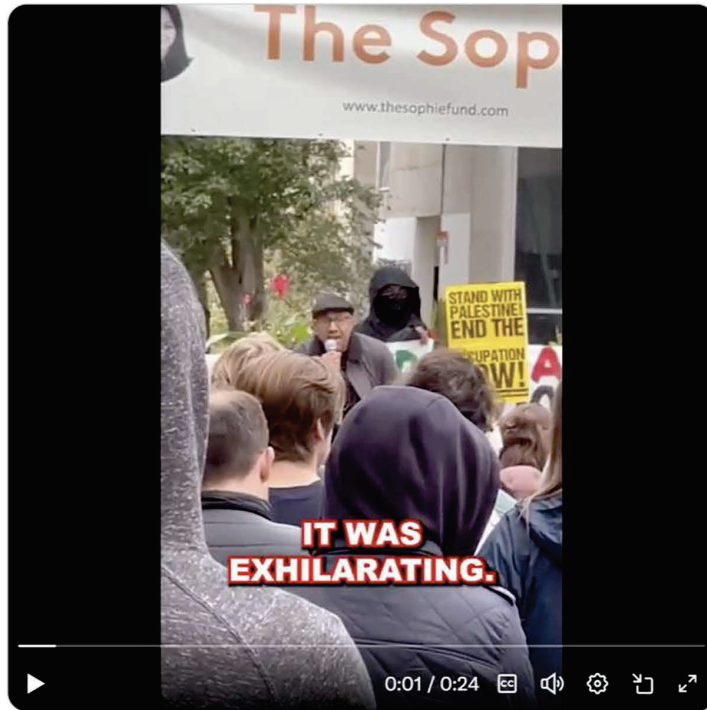




Sam Aberman  
@samaberman

Cornell University Professor Russell Rickford speaking about Hamas terrorist attacks. Shameful @Cornell.

[Translate with DeepL](#)



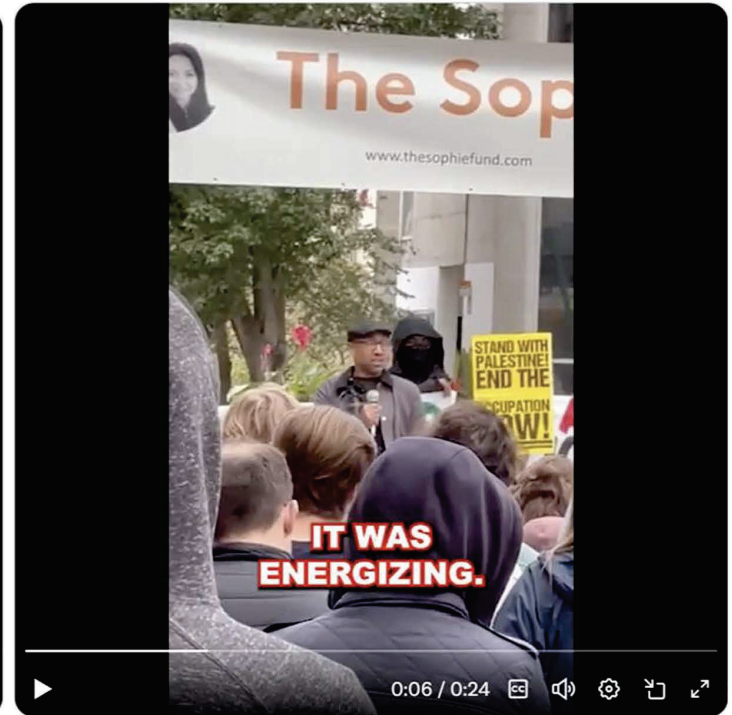
6:45 PM · Oct 15, 2023 · 13.7M Views



Sam Aberman  
@samaberman

Cornell University Professor Russell Rickford speaking about Hamas terrorist attacks. Shameful @Cornell.

[Translate with DeepL](#)



6:45 PM · Oct 15, 2023 · 13.7M Views

## URGENT ACTION NEEDED TODAY (OCT 19): Statement in Support of Russell Rickford

1 message

Jacob Walters

Thu, Oct 19, 2023 at 11:12 AM

Hi all,

In light of recent events, there has been a very strong backlash against Professor Russell Rickford. As he is a professor in our department, I think it is important for us as graduate students (current and former) to show support for him. Please take a moment to read and sign this petition and share to your networks.

<https://forms.gle/Zu7epWooQNM7eyVaA>

Thanks for your support,  
Jake



cmlcornell 7h

...



How it's going!

# PERSONAL DISPLAY ITEM

STEPS FOR REMOVAL:

1. BARGAIN WITH MY UNION



**Cornell grad students are  
unionized, so this is how they  
responded 🤝**

# Statement on disruption of library and academic spaces

*Feb. 8, 2024*

Earlier today, a group of students disrupted university business by holding a demonstration inside library and academic spaces. Cornell University Police were called to the site and worked to quickly remove the students and to gather identification from students to refer for disciplinary action. While Cornell values and protects students' right to free expression, including the right to protest, those protests must comply with our time, place, and manner guidelines to ensure the ability of our faculty and students to teach and learn without disruption.

The initial library space was cleared in a little over 10 minutes, but the students then went on to other libraries, where again the police were called to intervene. Identified students have been referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for disciplinary action.

Disruptions of this type are not permissible. The university must and will continue to take action when activity is in violation of our policies.

Joel M. Malina

Vice President for University Relations

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# Statement on disruption in Duffield Hall

*Feb. 22, 2024*

Earlier today, a group of students held a demonstration in academic spaces including Duffield Hall, where amplified sound was used and university business was disrupted. Individuals were referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for conduct action. Sanctions will be imposed where there are violations of policy; repeat violations will result in more significant sanctions. Cornell values and protects students' right to protest, however, all protests must comply with Cornell's time, place, and manner guidelines to ensure the ability of our faculty and students to teach and learn without disruption. As previously stated, these types of disruptions are not permissible, and the university will continue to take action when our policies are violated.

Rebecca Valli

Senior Director of Media Relations

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# Statement on disruption in Klarman Hall

*March 6, 2024*

We are disappointed that again today there was a disruptive protest held using amplified sound in Klarman Hall, in violation of our policies. Although the protestors were only there for a very short period of time before they dispersed, this type of disruption will not be tolerated at Cornell. Participants were referred for disciplinary action and violators will be sanctioned. Repeat violators will be subject to increasingly severe sanctions.

While Cornell values the right to free expression, including the right to protest, we cannot and will not tolerate disruptions to the work of our university. Our students and faculty must be able to teach and to learn.

The university will continue to take disciplinary action when activity is in violation of our policies.

Joel M. Malina

Vice President for University Relations

# Statement on student and employee arrests at Day Hall

*March 21, 2024*

This afternoon, student and employee demonstrators engaged in peaceful expressive activity inside and outside of Day Hall, Cornell's main administrative building. The demonstrators demanded that Cornell Trustees vote during their meetings today and tomorrow to divest from ten named companies.

Cornell Trustees Stephen Robinson and Martin Scheinman came to Day Hall and listened to the group's demands. The Trustees explained that while the demands would not be met, they were willing to share the demonstrators' concerns with their fellow board members. Consistent with other recent Day Hall sit-ins, the Trustees told demonstrators that while they were permitted to be in the public lobby of Day Hall during workday hours, remaining after hours would lead to arrest and referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (OSCCS) for students, and to Human Resources for employees.

Demonstrators remained in Day Hall despite repeated warnings from campus staff and Cornell Police that the building was closed. Twenty-two students were referred to OSCCS for violating the Student Code of Conduct and two employees were referred to Human Resources for violating university policy. All 24 were charged with trespassing and referred to the Ithaca City Court.

Cornell values and protects our community members' right to free expression. Citing campus community members is only used as a last resort when they refuse to comply with policies or to demonstrate a willingness to engage constructively about their concerns. Protests must comply with time, place, and manner guidelines, and the university cannot permit expressive activity by campus community members that violates campus policies. Trespassing after-hours in buildings that are closed to the public poses a public safety risk that cannot be tolerated.

Joel M. Malina

Vice President for University Relations

# Protecting the rights of our community to teach and learn without disruption

March 27, 2024

*This letter first appeared in The Cornell Daily Sun on March 26, 2024.*

In light of ongoing protests by the Coalition of Mutual Liberation — a group that has stated its intention to repeatedly disrupt the activities of the University — *The Cornell Daily Sun* has published several [letters](#) from our faculty colleagues that support the rights of these students, staff and faculty to violate expressive activity policies at Cornell, both the Interim Expressive Activity Policy and pre-existing policies, particularly rules preventing the disruption of classroom teaching, studying in the library and other university activities.

While we understand and respect the passion underlying this support, and deeply respect the faculty who have written, we feel compelled to publicly express a different position. By calling for the administration of Cornell to ignore disruptive protests and disregard enforcement of rules that govern expressive conduct, our colleagues neglect our collective responsibility to protect the rights of all community members to teach and learn in a non-disruptive environment. Protecting these rights is not just required by federal law: It is also our obligation, consistent with our core values, to foster a community that is welcoming and caring, [“where students, faculty and staff with different perspectives, abilities and experiences can learn, innovate and work in an environment of respect.”](#) Disruptive protests by some trample on the rights of others to enjoy that environment of respectful learning and work.

We can and should have a robust campus discussion about what “disruptive” means: how much is tolerated in support of free expression and where the line is drawn. But the notion that some protestors can violate the rights of others because they [“have disrupted business as usual to protest the University’s conduct amid the horrifying, ongoing assault on Palestinian populations,”](#) or because “... [the purpose of protest is precisely to disrupt](#)” and [“a non-disruptive protest is no protest at all.”](#) is one that privileges some in our community with more rights than others. We would ask our colleagues: If the rules governing expressive activity are not content-neutral, who makes the decision about which causes are sufficient to accept disruption of the rights of others? And in all cases, how much infringement on the rights of others is acceptable?

If we are to foster a community of belonging, we need to respect and balance everyone’s rights. That is not always easy, and it does not mean that disruptive protests should be met with sanctions that are so severe that they chill free expression by subjecting protestors to draconian punishments. But it does mean that actions that infringe on the rights of others must have consequences. We have stated and are moving forward with our plan to convene a group of faculty, staff and students that includes members of our shared governance bodies, to consider how we can continue to evolve thoughtful principles of conduct that value and respect the rights of our community to freely and vigorously express their views, while also establishing the points at which that expressive activity infringes on the rights of others.

Martha E. Pollack

President

Michael I. Kotlikoff

Provost



## CGSU-UE Community Petition: Retract the Interim Expressive Activity Policy

1 message

**CGSU Communications** <info+cornell-graduate-students-united-info@email.actionnetwork.org>  
Reply-To: cgsu.communications@gmail.com

Tue, Apr 23, 2024 at 10:00 AM



Dear CGSU-UE Members,

As a union, we are deeply dedicated to our fellow workers being able to freely express themselves on campus and have academic freedom while performing teaching and research duties. These themes are present in the entirety of our bargaining proposals, and especially in our [Academic Freedom Article](#).

Since January, Provost Michael Kotlikoff has seen fit to make changes to our working conditions in the form of unilateral policy changes, such as the [Interim Expressive Activity Policy](#), without bargaining with our union. This policy has already been used to threaten undergraduates, graduate workers, faculty, and staff with discipline simply for exercising their right to free speech on campus and professional judgment in the classroom.

Now that we have a union, changes to our working conditions must go through a bargaining process. If administrators believe they can make changes to our working conditions without bargaining with us, this risks every subject of bargaining, from workplace health and safety improvements to non-discrimination protections. In light of this unacceptable behavior, we are demanding Cornell administrators immediately retract the Interim Expressive Activity Policy and bargain with CGSU-UE over this and other changes which are detrimental to working conditions.

**We are launching a community petition to show Cornell that members of this campus demand the Interim Expressive Activity Policy be retracted immediately.**

**[SIGN HERE](#)**

Please share this petition with Cornell undergraduate students, graduate workers, faculty, and staff that may be interested.

Solidarity,

CGSU-UE Bargaining Committee

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Sent via [ActionNetwork.org](https://act.network.org). To update your email address, change your name or address, or to stop receiving emails from Cornell Graduate Students United, please [click here](#).





## CGSU-UE: Update on Suspended Graduate Workers

1 message

**CGSU Communications** <info+cornell-graduate-students-united-info@email.actionnetwork.org>

Tue, Apr 30, 2024 at 6:32 PM

Reply-To: cgsu.communications@gmail.com



Dear CGSU-UE Members,

On Friday, two undergraduate students and two graduate workers, Bianca Waked and Momodou Taal, were arbitrarily suspended for their participation in a peaceful protest on the Arts Quad. Bianca Waked's and Momodou Taal's suspensions constitute a change in their working conditions. The National Labor Relations Law (NLRA) mandates that Cornell University cannot implement these changes without bargaining with CGSU-UE.

**Today, we issued a demand to bargain with Cornell administration over the disciplinary suspensions of Bianca and Momodou.** The National Labor Relations Law mandates for Cornell administration to immediately rescind the suspensions, reinstate Bianca and Momodou to their previous status, and bargain any changes in their working conditions with CGSU-UE.

Should the University proceed with these suspensions without complying with its obligations under the NLRA to bargain with CGSU-UE, **Cornell administration will be violating Federal Law. We demand that Cornell administration follow the law!**

**Bianca and Momodou are international graduate workers and the suspensions have affected their visa statuses, which can result in deportation.** Reinstatement of Bianca's and Momodou's statuses would allow them to remain in the country.

CGSU-UE strongly condemns these suspensions, as well as the continued threats of discipline, suspension, and arrest made by Cornell Administration and CUPD against students, staff, faculty, and graduate workers protesting in the Arts Quad Liberated Zone. The continued enforcement of the IEAP threatens the free expression that is essential to healthy educational and research environments.

**Sign our community petition** to show Cornell administration that members of this campus stand united to demand that the illegal Interim Expressive Activity Policy be retracted immediately.

We also want to stress that **the subjective enforcement of the IEAP against Momodou and Bianca reek of ableism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia**. CGSU-UE has written [strong articles](#) addressing discipline and discharge and non-discrimination - including on the grounds of disability - for this reason! Cornell administration's continued stonewalling of our union in order to target marginalized graduate workers is unacceptable and breaks federal law.

To additionally highlight and contextualize the danger of the IEAP and these suspensions to the Cornell community, CGSU-UE has invited members of the media to a press conference held tomorrow on the Arts Quad. Both graduate workers and faculty will be speaking about how free expression is necessary to a healthy educational and research environment, and how Cornell's ill-considered, illegally enforced, and arbitrary policy eliminates that healthy environment.

Solidarity,

CGSU-UE Bargaining Committee

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Sent via [ActionNetwork.org](#). To update your email address, change your name or address, or to stop receiving emails from Cornell Graduate Students United, please [click here](#).



# Cornell United Against Union Shop

"Any person, any study... if you swear a loyalty oath to the union!"

## Cornell grad students, ask yourselves the following:

Do you know [what union shop means](#) or how it will affect you?

Do you know why the [Cornell graduate student union is demanding union shop?](#)

Do you know your union dues necessarily [contribute to political activity](#)?

Have you ever heard of [UE](#) or know [why they receive the majority of your dues](#)?

If union shop is so important, why did [the union only mention it after the election](#)?

If you can't answer these questions, you are not alone. See [who we are](#) and learn more about our concerns with CGSU-UE's [union shop](#) proposal. You should also check out [our letter to grad students in the Cornell Daily Sun](#) and the related letter to the editor [Union Shop isn't Academic Freedom](#).

## What can we do about this?

If you are concerned by the union shop proposal, please join us in ensuring the union remains accountable to all graduate students and tell Cornell administrators not to sacrifice our academic freedom for their own convenience.

[Read and sign the letter below](#) (you can sign anonymously):

We are writing on behalf of graduate students who are not members of CGSU, as well as CGSU members disappointed with the organization's conduct, in order to ask that you do not grant them union shop or agency shop. We believe that it is unjust and unethical to require graduate students to be members of or pay fees to an organization that opposes our values.

Public sector union shops have already been completely banned on First Amendment grounds. As a private university, however, Cornell has the unilateral power to reject a union shop clause in our contract. As a consequence of certifying CGSU as our representative, it is now illegal for any graduate student to negotiate with the administration about this issue. As a result our only recourse is to make our position clear and demand protection for our freedom not to join the union.

There are many reasons that we object to the CGSU. In particular, we object to the pressure tactics employed by the CGSU to push students to vote in favor of unionizing. We object to the lack of anonymous voting within the union. We object to the union's false claims to represent the interests of all graduate students. We object to the union's lack of transparency.

Many of us have concerns with CGSU's sudden and unexplained decision to affiliate with UE. We are concerned that UE is financially irresponsible and unable to support graduate student workers. We suspect that UE is interested in Cornell for monetary gain instead of helping us improve working conditions. They stand to make around \$1.5 million annually off the backs of Cornell's graduate students, compared with their usual annual income of around \$5 million.

We are also concerned with various radical political positions of UE, which do not represent the student body and could even harm some students' research. This type of radicalization threatens Cornell's free and open environment, where all can voice their opinions in public dialogue, or choose to remain silent. Adopting a union shop policy would necessitate that graduate students support the political stances of UE, which are not representative of the views of all or even most of the students. This seems to us to be at odds with Cornell's strict policy preventing any employee, in their official capacity, from supporting any political cause or candidate.

We are interested in peace among the graduate student body. We want to focus on our research and not divisive politics. UE, on the other hand, is interested in aggressive political advocacy. Granting this union power over the student body will be detrimental to the long-term success of the graduate school.

We believe it is self-evidently immoral and unjust to require graduate students to pay money to an organization involved in radical political activism which we do not support. Some of us are so deeply opposed that we would rather leave Cornell than be required to fund UE. CGSU must prove themselves capable of protecting and representing us if they want us to give them money.

Please remember as you negotiate with CGSU: They do not represent the whole student body.

Signed,

1. Bailey Gong (food science department)
2. Baran Zadeoğlu (Mathematics)
3. Benjamin Gregory (Physics)
4. Briana Frank (Johnson Graduate School of Business)
5. Caroline Thompson (Biomedical Engineering)
6. Chad Pennington (physics department)
7. Cyrus Habas (Molecular Biology and Genetics)
8. Daniel Sabey (Economics)
9. Danielle Markovich (Applied and Engineering Physics)
10. Derek A. Berman (Geological Sciences)
11. Elliot McGinnity Schneider (Plant Pathology & Plant Microbe Biology)
12. Louie Gold (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology)
13. Gonzalo Gonzalez (Computer Science)
14. Grace Genszler (Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering)
15. Isaac Broudy (math department)
16. Jason Manning (Engineering)
17. Jena Tools (Humanities)
18. Keri D'Angelo (Cornell Bowers CIS)
19. Majo Flor Ágreda (Sociology )
20. Mark Dalthorp (math department)
21. Michael Kaemingk (Physics)
22. Peihong Liu (Nolan)
23. Russell Burgett
24. Shira Mingelgrin (statistics department)
25. Tomer Markovich (molecular biology and genetics)
26. Virginia McGhee (chemistry and chemical biology)
27. Willow Groundwater-Schuldt (German Studies)
28. Yael Eisenberg (math department)

29. Zhenzhong Xing (ECE)
30. Anonymous (Arts and Sciences)
31. Anonymous (Biomedical engineering)
32. Anonymous (Business)
33. Anonymous (Business)
34. Anonymous (CALS)
35. Anonymous (CAM)
36. Anonymous (center for applied mathematics)
37. Anonymous (Chemical Engineering)
38. Anonymous (College of Agriculture and Life Sciences)
39. Anonymous (College of arts and sciences)
40. Anonymous (college of arts and sciences)
41. Anonymous (College of Business)
42. Anonymous (Communication)
43. Anonymous (Computer Science Department)
44. Anonymous (Computer Science)
45. Anonymous (Computer Science)
46. Anonymous (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology)
47. Anonymous (Electrical and Computer Engineering )
48. Anonymous (Engineering)
49. Anonymous (Johnson)
50. Anonymous (law)
51. Anonymous (Law)
52. Anonymous (Materials Science and Engineering)
53. Anonymous (math department)
54. Anonymous (math department)
55. Anonymous (math department)
56. Anonymous (math department)
57. Anonymous (mathematics department)
58. Anonymous (MBA)
59. Anonymous (mechanical and aerospace engineering)
60. Anonymous (mechanical and aerospace engineering)
61. Anonymous (Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering)
62. Anonymous (Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering)
63. Anonymous (Microbiology)
64. Anonymous (Physics)

- 65. Anonymous (Plant Sciences)
- 66. Anonymous (Psychology)
- 67. Anonymous (SIPS, Horticulture)
- 68. Anonymous (SIPS, Horticulture)
- 69. Anonymous (Social Sciences)
- 70. Anonymous, Humanities
- 71. Anonymous, Humanities (or Arts and Sciences)
- 72. Anonymous

# CGSU-UE negotiations

*Jan. 23, 2025*

Dear Cornellians,

For the past several months, Cornell has engaged in productive contract negotiations with CGSU-UE, the union representing graduate students holding assistantship appointments at Cornell. As voted upon by graduate students last fall, Cornell Graduate Students United (CGSU) is a local chapter of UE, the nationwide United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America.

This week, our negotiating teams engaged on the key question of “union security.” CGSU-UE is demanding a “union shop” arrangement, under which **union membership would be required, as a condition of employment, of all graduate student workers.** In Wednesday’s negotiating session, Cornell made clear that it would not accept such an arrangement, which would be contrary to our university’s core values and would have grave consequences for many of our current and future graduate students. Unfortunately, union negotiators have chosen to respond to this considered position with hyperbolic rhetoric, likening the university and its bargaining team to union-busting fascists, racists, and Nazis. We would like to make clear to the entire community what is at stake here, and why the university has taken this position and is unwilling to agree to the union’s proposal as written.

The CGSU-UE has stated that a union shop is important to its membership and necessary to ensure the security of the union. We respectfully disagree on both counts.

Many graduate students and faculty have shared their concerns about CGSU-UE activities and the impact of a union shop arrangement, and asked that Cornell not agree to a



collective bargaining agreement that would effectively compel graduate student workers to choose between joining UE and leaving their degree program. While representing the rights of Cornell graduate student workers, CGSU-UE also represents, advances, and supports UE's political action on a range of consequential domestic and international issues including, most recently, the U.S. election and U.S. military aid to Israel. Accepting a union shop provision would mean requiring every one of our graduate student workers to affiliate with, and financially support, this advocacy. Typically, union dues support both representational activities and political advocacy.

Cornell's proposal allows graduate students to make their own decision. For those students who elect to become members of the union, Cornell has offered to promptly carry out union dues deductions from graduate student workers' stipends, beginning with the first full pay period following receipt of the student's written authorization. This would facilitate the union's ability to collect dues for those students who wish to authorize this deduction from their stipends on their behalf. Students who chose not to become members of the union would not be required to do so.

We want to be clear that Cornell is not opposing unionization of graduate student workers, and we are open to considering proposals other than the union shop that has been proposed. However, if the university were to agree to the union shop stipulation the CGSU-UE is now demanding, **students who decline to join the union could be dismissed from their appointments and prohibited from holding future appointments. These students would no longer have a viable path to a degree at Cornell. Under the proposed union shop agreement, there is no option for students to remain graduate assistants if they object to joining the union.** This would be deeply unfair to our students, incompatible with our commitment to academic freedom, and detrimental to our future ability to attract the most promising students to Cornell.

We look forward to continued productive conversations at the bargaining table and a

contract in the best interests of all graduate students.

Sincerely,

Michael I. Kotlikoff

Interim President

Kavita Bala

Provost



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## Thank you

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**Office of the President** <president@cornell.edu>

Mon, Feb 3, 2025 at 10:49 AM

To: David Philippe Rubinstein, Office of the Provost <provost@cornell.edu>

Dear David,

Thank you for your email. We will continue to defend the fundamental principle that graduate students should have the right to choose whether or not to affiliate with the union.

Sincerely,

Michael Kotlikoff

Michael Kotlikoff, V.M.D., Ph.D., Sc.D. (h.c.)

*Interim President and Professor of Molecular Physiology*

*Cornell University*

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**From:** David Rubinstein

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 11:38 AM

**To:** Office of the President <president@cornell.edu>; Kavita Bala <kavitabala@cornell.edu>

**Subject:** Thank you

Dear President Kotlikoff and Provost Bala,

I am a History Ph.D. Candidate and want to thank you for your recent statement opposing a union shop. I have family in Israel and have been on the receiving end of antisemitic rhetoric from members of CGSU's bargaining committee. I do not want to be forced to contribute to their cause and appreciate you taking a principled stand.

Best,

David Rubinstein

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## **ARTICLE X UNION SECURITY**

### **A. Membership**

1. Subject to applicable law, all Graduate Student Workers of the University covered by this Agreement who are members of the Union in good standing on the effective date of this Agreement or who become members of the Union in good standing following the effective date of this Agreement shall as a condition of employment remain members of the Union in good standing insofar as the payment of periodic dues and initiation fees ("Membership Dues"), uniformly required, is concerned, or in lieu of such membership, pay to the Union an agency fee ("Agency Fees").
2. Subject to applicable law, all present Graduate Student Workers who are not members of the Union and individuals hired after the effective date of this Agreement shall as a condition of employment, beginning on the thirtieth (30th) day following the effective date of this agreement or the thirtieth (30th) day following employment, whichever is later, become and remain members of the Union in good standing insofar as the payment of periodic Membership Dues, uniformly required, is concerned, or in lieu of such membership, pay to the Union Agency Fees. The amount of such agency fee shall be established by the Union in accordance with applicable law, but in no event shall such fee exceed full union dues.
3. This Article shall only apply to the status of Graduate Student Workers covered by this Agreement. This Article will not affect a graduate student's status as a student.

### **B. Check-Off Authorization**

1. The University shall provide the Union payroll deduction for Membership Dues or Agency Fees for Graduate Student Workers who authorize the deductions in the amount designated in writing by the financial officer of UE Local 300. The deductions shall be made provided the deduction request is submitted to Cornell's payroll office on a form authorized by the Union. The deductions shall be made from Graduate Student Workers' paychecks for each pay period. The authorizations may be submitted to the payroll office at any time, and the deductions will commence on the following payday as practicable. Cornell will remit the amounts deducted to the financial officer of UE Local 300 on a monthly basis, no later than the fifth (5th) of each month. Cornell will include with each remittance an editable spreadsheet that lists each Graduate Student Workers name, Empl ID, NetID, the pay period, the check date, the amount of the deduction and rate of pay (consistent with Section 1 of the Agreement's Bargaining Unit Information Article).
2. The University shall provide to the Union the University email address for each Graduate Student Worker prior to the Graduate Student Worker's receipt of their

first paycheck so that the Union shall be able to communicate with each Graduate Student Worker about the process of complying with this Article.

**C. Indemnity**

The University assumes no obligation, financial or otherwise, as a result of complying with the terms of this Article, and the Union agrees that it will indemnify and hold the University harmless from any claim, action, omission, or proceeding by any Graduate Student Worker arising from deductions made by the University under this Article. Once the funds are transmitted to the Union, their disposition thereafter shall be the sole and exclusive obligation and responsibility of the Union.

**D. Payment in Lieu of Membership Dues / Agency Fees**

If a Graduate Student Worker has a sincerely held religious belief, as defined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), that prohibits them from joining and maintaining membership in a union, they may elect to pay the amount equivalent to initiation fees and monthly dues to charity in lieu of payments to the Union by advising the Union in writing of their religious objection and making monthly donations in an amount equivalent to union service fees to one or more of the following charities: American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, or the United Way. The Graduate Student Worker must show proof to the Union of having made the contributions to charity in the amount of membership dues on a monthly basis.




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## Union Shop Agreement

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**Office of the President** <president@cornell.edu>

Fri, Apr 4, 2025 at 2:10 PM

To: David Philippe Rubinstein, "Kathryn J. Boor" <kjb4@cornell.edu>, Kavita Bala <kavitabala@cornell.edu>, Arts and Sciences Dean's Office <as\_dean@cornell.edu>

Dear David,

Thank you for reaching out with your concerns about the Union Security article in the tentative agreement.

If the tentative agreement is ratified, the university and the union will be legally bound by the terms of the contract. This includes ensuring students have the right to opt out of joining and/or financially supporting the union. This is most definitely not a union shop agreement.

Thank you again for reaching out. I wish you all the best in your doctoral program.

Sincerely,

Mike Kotlikoff

Michael Kotlikoff, V.M.D., Ph.D., Sc.D. (h.c.)

*President and Professor of Molecular Physiology*

*Cornell University*

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**From:** David Rubinstein

**Sent:** Thursday, March 20, 2025 11:53 AM

**To:** Kathryn J. Boor <kjb4@cornell.edu>; Kavita Bala <kavitabala@cornell.edu>; Office of the President <president@cornell.edu>; Arts and Sciences Dean's Office <as\_dean@cornell.edu>

**Subject:** Union Shop Agreement

Dear President Kotlikoff, Provost Bala, and Deans Boor and Loewen,

I was shocked and disappointed to learn the university has consented to CGSU's demand for a union shop.

Graduate students should not be forced to subsidize an antisemitic group that seeks to disrupt our research, ban defense fellowships, and harm our job prospects. President Kotlikoff has rightly stated that union shop contradicts the university's core values. It is inexplicable that the university has backed out of such a seemingly strong commitment.

Assurances regarding a religious exemption are meaningless if the union has ultimate authority to determine whether or not to grant them. As you are likely aware, UE denied all such requests after being granted a union shop at MIT. That resulted in successful legal action by affected graduate students.

I am Jewish, have family in Israel, and have been on the receiving end of antisemitic rhetoric from members of CGSU's bargaining committee. It is obscene to suggest that antisemites should be able to determine the sincerity of my Jewish faith.

I strongly urge you to reconsider granting CGSU-UE such coercive authority. Many of my fellow graduate students feel similarly, and we will do whatever is necessary to defend our rights.

Sincerely,

David Rubinstein

--

David Rubinstein

Ph.D. Candidate, History

Cornell University





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## Union Shop Agreement

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**Kathryn J. Boor** <kjb4@cornell.edu>  
To: David Philippe Rubinstein

Thu, Mar 20, 2025 at 3:35 PM

Dear David,

Messaging regarding the tentative contract agreements that were reached yesterday has been very confusing. In fact, our tentative agreement enables 3 options for students.

*The article provides for three options students can choose from:*

- 1. Join the union, and pay dues to the union; or*
- 2. Not join the union, and pay an agency fee to the union, which is an amount that is to be paid for representational activity by the union, but does not include union membership dues; or*
- 3. Assert a religious, moral or ethical objection, and as a result not join the union, and not pay any dues or fees to the union, but instead make an equivalent charitable contribution.*

*Under either option 2 or 3, the student would not join the union.*

*Under option 3, the student would not join the union, and would provide no financial support to the union.*

My understanding is that the union will not challenge the religious, moral or ethical objections, and that setting up a monthly charitable donation on your credit card (for example), and keeping access to your monthly statements will meet the terms of #3.

You should receive a confirming message from the President's office in the next day or two.

Sincerely,  
Kathryn

[Quoted text hidden]



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## Union Shop Agreement

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David Rubinstein

Tue, Mar 25, 2025 at 8:01 PM

To: "Kathryn J. Boor" <kjb4@cornell.edu>

Dear Kathryn,

I am following up on our previous exchange regarding negotiations between the university and CGSU.

After today's tentative contract agreement, CGSU released the attached email.

In the union security section, CGSU misleadingly states that all bargaining unit members will be required to financially support the union - omitting the existence of a religious exemption. I have attached a screenshot of that section.

Given the union's troubling misrepresentation of contract provisions, I am concerned that CGSU will seek to challenge my right to exercise an objection (and donate to charity instead.) UE rejected all religious exemption requests at MIT, forcing students to take legal action. I very much hope to avoid that outcome.

I would like to request a short meeting with Cornell's legal representatives to discuss the practicalities of ensuring my objection will be respected. I think it would be beneficial to iron out these details before any contract is ratified to avoid issues thereafter. If other students have similar concerns, we could meet as a group.

Finally, I think the university should inform graduate students of our rights on this matter.

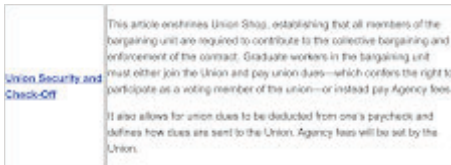
Let me know what you think and thanks again for your time.

Sincerely,  
David

[Quoted text hidden]

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### 2 attachments



Screenshot 2025-03-25 at 6.54.46 PM.png  
105K



Cornell Mail - Bargaining Update #27\_ We Recommend Ratification on our Tentative Agreement on April 8-10.pdf  
662K

June 2, 2025

Andrew Dinkelaker, General Secretary-Treasurer

Religious Objections

United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE)

4 Smithfield Street, 9th Floor

Pittsburgh, PA 15222

By U.S. Mail and e-mail

objections@ueunion.org

and

communications@cornellgradunion.org

and

Christine Lovely, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer

130 Day Hall

Cornell University

Ithaca, NY 14853

By U.S. Mail and e-mail

vp\_of\_hr@cornell.edu

and

Kathryn Boor, Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education

350 Caldwell Hall

Cornell University

Ithaca, NY 14853

By U.S. Mail and e-mail

kjb4@cornell.edu

Dear UE and Cornell administrators:

In accordance with Article X (D) of the Cornell-UE collective bargaining agreement, I am writing to inform you of my need for a religious accommodation to the requirement that I pay dues or otherwise support the UE unions.

I am Jewish. Israel is inherently connected to Jewish religious practice, featuring in holidays and prayer services for over two millennia. Every Shabbat, Jews recite prayers such as Musaf, which includes “G-d of our ancestors, who

restores their descendants to their land... lead us in joy back to our land and plant us within our borders.” Every Passover Seder since the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE concludes with “next year in Jerusalem”, symbolizing the Jewish people’s connection to Israel and desire to return. Holidays such as Sukkot revolve around the harvest calendar of the Land of Israel, while others (such as Hanukah) commemorate events that took place there. My religious commitment to Israel’s existence is in direct opposition to UE’s support for BDS. BDS supports the eradication of the Jewish homeland, whose existence is a core tenant of my faith. I cannot support this.

Being Jewish is central to who I am. I attend synagogue services each Shabbat, participate in a weekly Torah class, and am on the leadership board of a Jewish organization at Cornell. My wife and I are members of a local synagogue and volunteer for our Jewish Federation. I also have extensive family ties in Israel.

For all these reasons I require a religious accommodation. I await your prompt response.

Sincerely,

David Rubinstein

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



## David Rubinstein Religious/Moral/Ethical Objection

**Objections Processing** <objections@ueunion.org>

Tue, Jun 3, 2025 at 9:32 AM

To: David Rubinstein

Cc: communications@cornellgradunion.org, CGSU Data <CGSU.data@gmail.com>

Good morning David,

Requests to be a religious objector are evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the UE national union. Please send a written request specifying your objection, with details regarding the nature of your religious belief and why you assert it prevents you from paying union dues/fees, including answers to the following questions:

1. Please describe your religious belief in detail and why you assert it prevents you from paying union dues/fees.
2. Are you a member of a particular religious denomination or faith group? If so, has this group historically held conscientious objections to joining or financially supporting labor organizations? Please describe.
3. Do you observe any specific religious tenets and practices which relate to your objection to paying union dues/fees?
4. Do you attend religious services? If so, please include the name and address of the organization sponsoring the services you attend and the name of the faith leader(s).
5. How long have you held your religious belief?

Please include your name, address, telephone number, and email address, and send your request via email to [objections@ueunion.org](mailto:objections@ueunion.org) or mail to:

Religious Objections  
United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE)  
[4 Smithfield Street, 9th Floor](#)  
[Pittsburgh, PA 15222](#)

The UE national union will review your religious objection upon receipt and may have follow-up questions. After the review is completed, you will receive a written response.

On Mon, Jun 2, 2025 at 4:25 PM David Rubinstein wrote:

Dear Mr. Dinkelaker, Ms. Lovely, and Dean Boor,

Please see attached.

Thank you,  
David Rubinstein

--

David Rubinstein  
Ph.D. Candidate, History  
Cornell University

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Jordan Romanus  
Membership Coordinator  
United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE)  
[4 Smithfield Street, 9th Floor](#)  
[Pittsburgh, PA 15222](#)



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## Update on Union Contract Implementation

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**The Graduate School** <graduateunionupdate@gradschool.cornell.edu>  
Reply-To: graduateunionupdate@cornell.edu

Fri, Apr 18, 2025 at 11:25 AM



### Graduate School

Dear doctoral students,

I am writing to share information about the processes that will be used to implement the Union Security article in the collective bargaining agreement and in response to questions we have received on this topic from a number of graduate students. The implementation process for the newly-ratified collective bargaining agreement is now underway, but none of the parts of the Union Security article have been implemented yet.

The Union Security article states that students may choose between three options: join the union and pay dues, elect to not join the union and pay an agency fee, or make a charitable contribution in lieu of dues or an agency fee, based upon the student's religious objection, which includes moral or ethical objection. Students will need to complete a form to elect their choice among these options, and they will not be auto-enrolled in any option until that process is complete.

The university's labor management committee and the implementation phase of the agreement are described in the [tentative agreement package](#), on page 8. Section 3 provides that on ratification, the labor management committee will oversee the implementation of the agreement, a gradual process that could last until July 1. Members of the labor management committee include Laurie Johnston, senior director of Staff and Labor Relations; Mimi Townsend, project manager for Staff and Labor Relations; and Jason Kahabka, associate dean in the Graduate School.

The labor management committee is holding its first meeting with the union on Monday, April 21, at which point the topic of the implementation of the union security language will be discussed. After that meeting, we anticipate that we will have more information to share about the timing of implementation and how students can signal their choice with respect to union membership and payment of dues, fees, or a charitable contribution.

Sincerely,  
Kathryn J. Boor  
Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education

Cornell University Graduate School | Cornell University 350 Caldwell Hall | Ithaca, NY 14853 US

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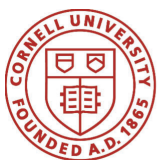
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## Update on Union Contract Implementation

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**The Graduate School** <graduateunionupdate@gradschool.cornell.edu>  
Reply-To: graduateunionupdate@cornell.edu

Wed, Apr 23, 2025 at 2:33 PM



### Graduate School

Last week, we provided a message to our community about the Union Security article in the CGSU-UE contract. The message explained that this contract article allows students to choose between three options: join the union and pay dues, elect to not join the union and pay an agency fee, or make a charitable contribution in lieu of dues or an agency fee, based upon the student's religious objection, which includes moral or ethical objection.

We also emphasized that students will need to complete a form to elect their choice among these options. Consistent with New York state law and university practice, deductions from wages must be authorized in advance by the recipient of the wages. No one will be auto-enrolled in an option.

On Monday, April 21, the university's labor management committee met with representatives of CGSU-UE and discussed the contract implementation. The University reported that the ratification bonus will be paid in the April 30 check, parental leave has been increased to 12 weeks, graduate student workers are now eligible for a OmniRide bus pass from the Transportation Office and the time off provisions in the contract are now in effect.

We asked the union for information on their roll-out of the dues deductions, agency fees and provisions for charitable contributions in the contract. The union reported that this process is still being developed. We mentioned that students have brought their questions about this process to us and they asked that graduate student workers reach out to the union directly at [communications@cornellgradunion.org](mailto:communications@cornellgradunion.org).

Cornell University Graduate School | Cornell University 350 Caldwell Hall | Ithaca, NY 14853 US

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## Laurie Margaret Johnston

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**From:** Jenna Marvin <jm2449@cornell.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 14, 2025 1:00 PM  
**To:** Laurie Margaret Johnston  
**Cc:** Ben Keller; Emmy Marra; Jason Kahabka; Mimi Townsend; cgsu-bc@googlegroups.com; bc@cornellgradunion.org  
**Subject:** Re: CGSU-UE Local 300/ Union Security Clause/ Charitable Contribution Option

Hi Laurie,

As Ben noted above, all objectors who demonstrate a sincerely held religious belief will be granted a reasonable accommodation to pay the equivalent of dues to a charity in accordance with the CBA and applicable law. Stipulating that religious objectors register their objection in writing via a standardized form is not a violation of the CBA or applicable law. We do not believe it is necessary to devote a Labor Management Committee meeting to this matter.

We will follow up on the second agenda point related to dues infrastructure about setting up a meeting.

Best,  
Jenna

Jenna Marvin  
PhD student, Cornell University  
History of Art & Visual Studies  
(she/her/hers)

On Wed, May 14, 2025 at 10:43 AM Laurie Margaret Johnston <lmj6@cornell.edu> wrote:

Hi Ben:

Would you and your team be willing to schedule a labor-management committee meeting? Our agenda items would be to address

1. the charitable giving option we have been discussing and the form we proposed last week, and
2. implementing the dues/ agency fees process with Payroll and Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS).

We believe that it will take about 30 days to implement the process. For instance, if CGSU-UE wanted the dues deduction process to begin on July 1, the University would need information from CGSU-UE by June 1.

Please let me know some dates and times that work for your team, or if you prefer, I can propose some dates and times, either by Zoom or in person. Thanks. Laurie

**From:** Laurie Margaret Johnston

**Sent:** Thursday, May 8, 2025 12:20 PM

**To:** Ben Keller <[bdk54@cornell.edu](mailto:bdk54@cornell.edu)>; Emmy Marra <[eam432@cornell.edu](mailto:eam432@cornell.edu)>; Jenna Marvin <[jm2449@cornell.edu](mailto:jm2449@cornell.edu)>

**Cc:** Jason Kahabka <[jek15@cornell.edu](mailto:jek15@cornell.edu)>; Mimi Townsend <[mt879@cornell.edu](mailto:mt879@cornell.edu)>; [cgsu-bc@googlegroups.com](mailto:cgsu-bc@googlegroups.com); [bc@cornellgradunion.org](mailto:bc@cornellgradunion.org)

**Subject:** RE: CGSU-UE Local 300/ Union Security Clause/ Charitable Contribution Option

Hi Ben: thanks for your response. My concern is that the questions posed by the UE seem geared to the statutory exemption in the Section 19 of National Labor Relations Act for religious objectors. The language in our Union Security clause is broader than the statutory exemption as we incorporated the EEOC definition ([EEOC Regulations, Sec. 1605.1](#)) which recognizes sincerely held religious, ethical and moral beliefs, and is clear that no particular religious group needs to espouse the individual's sincere religious, ethical, or moral belief. Therefore, the questions directed toward "religious" services, "religious" denominations and belief in "religious" tenets and practices are too narrow to encompass the definition adopted by CGSU-UE and the University in our agreement.

We do think this is an issue that can be addressed through our implementation discussions, and we would still like to meet and address this issue in our labor-management committee. If you prefer that we to speak to someone in the UE national office, such as in the counsel's office at the UE, please provide me with the contact information and I will ask Paul or Yoni to give them a call.

At labor-management, we would like to discuss a process that incorporates the language of our Union Security clause and are open to some form that confirms that the unit member holds a sincerely held religious, moral or ethical belief, as defined by the EEOC. I have drafted the attached form that addresses the requirements of our negotiated option of payment in lieu of membership dues/ agency fees to charity. Given that this clause is unique to our agreement, we think that a process unique to the language is appropriate.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed. I look forward to hearing from you. Thanks. Laurie

**From:** Ben Keller <[bdk54@cornell.edu](mailto:bdk54@cornell.edu)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 6, 2025 12:30 PM

**To:** Laurie Margaret Johnston <lmj6@cornell.edu>; Emmy Marra <eam432@cornell.edu>; Jenna Marvin <jm2449@cornell.edu>  
**Cc:** Jason Kahabka <jek15@cornell.edu>; Mimi Townsend <mt879@cornell.edu>; cgsu-bc@googlegroups.com; bc@cornellgradunion.org  
**Subject:** Re: CGSU-UE Local 300/ Union Security Clause/ Charitable Contribution Option

Hi Laurie,

Religious objections to paying union dues are evaluated by the UE National Union. The questions you referenced are used to help the Union determine whether the objector has a sincerely held religious belief as defined by the EEOC and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and therefore qualifies for a reasonable accommodation. All objectors who demonstrate a sincerely held religious belief will be granted a reasonable accommodation to pay the equivalent of dues to a charity in accordance with the CBA and applicable law.

Thanks,  
Ben

**From:** Laurie Margaret Johnston <lmj6@cornell.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 28, 2025 2:04 PM  
**To:** Ben Keller <bdk54@cornell.edu>; Emmy Marra <eam432@cornell.edu>; Jenna Marvin <jm2449@cornell.edu>  
**Cc:** Jason Kahabka <jek15@cornell.edu>; Mimi Townsend <mt879@cornell.edu>  
**Subject:** CGSU-UE Local 300/ Union Security Clause/ Charitable Contribution Option

Dear Ben, Emma and Jenna:

I am writing to you to request a meeting to confirm the process that graduate student workers will use to advise the Union of their election to make a charitable donation in lieu of payments to the Union under our Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Paragraph D of the Union Security clause provides:

If a Graduate Student Worker has a **sincerely held religious belief, as defined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)**, that prohibits them from joining and maintaining membership in a union, they **may elect** to pay the amount equivalent to initiation fees and monthly dues to charity in lieu of payments to the Union **by advising the Union in writing** of their religious objection and making monthly donations in an amount

equivalent to union service fees to one or more of the following charities: American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, or the United Way. The Graduate Student Worker must show proof to the Union of having made the contributions to charity in the amount of membership dues on a monthly basis.(Emphasis supplied)

During negotiations, the Parties agreed to use the definition of “sincerely held religious belief defined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).” As recognized at the bargaining table, this was in part because the EEOC’s definition also covers “moral or ethical beliefs....” See EEOC Regulations, Sec. 1605.1. . The Parties also agreed to bargained-for language that a graduate student worker “may elect” this option and must only “advise the Union in writing of their religious objection.” During a discussion while bargaining this section, Paul Salvatore and Valentina Luketa, with Yoni Grossman-Boder and Jawuanna McAllister present, discussed how this article would be administered, and Valentina represented that the UE “would not look under the hood” once a graduate student worker elected to make a payment to charity in lieu of payments to the Union. Valentina further stated that the Union would not want to take on the potential risks associated with that vetting process.

As the Parties have begun to implement the Agreement, we learned that certain graduate student workers who elected to make a charitable contribution in lieu of payments to the Union have been told that they have to submit an application for approval by the national UE office in Pittsburgh. We understand that the graduate student workers are required to provide the following information:

*Requests to be a religious objector are evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the UE national union. Please send a written request specifying your objection, with details regarding the nature of your religious belief and why you assert it prevents you from paying union dues/fees, including answers to the following questions:*

- 1. Please describe your religious belief in detail and why you assert it prevents you from paying union dues/fees.*
- 2. Are you a member of a particular religious denomination or faith group? If so, has this group historically held conscientious objections to joining or financially supporting labor organizations? Please describe.*
- 3. Do you observe any specific religious tenets and practices which relate to your objection to paying union dues/fees?*
- 4. Do you attend religious services? If so, please include the name and address of the organization sponsoring the services you attend and the name of the faith leader(s).*
- 5. How long have you held your religious belief?*

*Please include your name, address, telephone number, and email address, and send your request via email to [objections@ueunion.org](mailto:objections@ueunion.org) or mail to:*

*Religious Objections  
United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE)  
4 Smithfield Street, 9th Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222*

*The UE national union will review your religious objection upon receipt and may have follow-up questions. After the review is completed, you will receive a written response.*

This process does not reflect our negotiated language allowing a graduate student worker to “elect” to pay a charity upon “advising” the Union, in writing, of their sincerely held religious belief (including moral or ethical beliefs). The questions instead seem tailored to the religious exemption in the National Labor Relations Act, Section 19, which is distinct from the compromise the Parties struck here. The process fails in three specific ways:

*First*, question one requires the graduate student worker to “describe [their] religious belief in detail,” along with other requirements. However, the Agreement simply requires a graduate student worker to “advise the Union in writing of their religious objection,” prohibiting the Union from further requiring a detailed description of their beliefs.

*Second*, questions two through five appear potentially related to the narrow religious exemption found in Section 19 of the National Labor Relations Act. However, the Parties here agreed to permit graduate student workers to elect to pay an equivalent amount to charity in lieu of payments to the Union so long as they had a sincerely held religious belief, as defined by the EEOC. Notably, the EEOC’s definition covers “moral or ethical beliefs as to what is right and wrong...” and goes on to explain that “[t]he fact that no religious group espouses such beliefs or the fact that the religious group to which the individual professes to belong may not accept such belief will not determine whether the belief is a religious belief” held by the graduate student worker. Questions two through five are therefore inconsistent with the Parties’ Agreement.

*Finally*, the questionnaire asserts that the UE national office will evaluate “requests” on a case-by-case basis. The Parties’ Agreement does not contemplate, or permit, the Union to institute an application and approval process. Instead, the Agreement allows any graduate student worker to “elect” to pay the amount equivalent to service fees in lieu of payments to the Union upon advising the Union of their objection in writing.

In short, this process is a far cry from the Parties’ Agreement and Valentina’s representation that the union would not question a graduate student worker’s sincerely held religious (including moral or ethical) beliefs.

Contrary to the procedure implemented by the Union, the Parties’ Agreement states that all a graduate student worker must do in order to elect to make a payment to charity in lieu of a payment to the Union is: (1) hold a “sincerely held religious belief” as defined by the EEOC, which includes moral or ethical beliefs, and (2) “advise the Union in writing of their religious objection....” No more is required. The graduate student worker also must, of course, make the donations to one of the defined charities.

This procedure enshrined in the Union Security Article was one of the key compromises that allowed the Parties to break the logjam in bargaining and reach a “win-win” Agreement that both sides are rightfully proud of.

I understand that there are many complexities to work through when implementing any Agreement for the first time, particularly one for such a large and diverse unit. I trust that through discussions we can work together to implement a procedure consistent with the Parties' Agreement.

Therefore, I would like to schedule a labor management meeting so we can discuss a process consistent with our negotiated contract language. Please let me know some dates and times you are available to meet. Thanks.  
Laurie

Laurie M. Johnston

Sr. Director, Staff and Labor Relations

Division of Human Resources

Cornell University

391 Pine Tree Road

Ithaca, NY 14850

(o) 607-255-6866

(c) 607-279-8670



## GRIEVANCE SETTLEMENT - Grievance 2025 019

WHEREAS, on June 12, 2025, Cornell Graduate Students United – United Electrical Local 300 (the “Union”) filed a grievance (the “Grievance”) against Cornell University (the “University”) alleging that the University was violating the Union Security Article of the Parties’ Collective Bargaining Agreement (“CBA”);

WHEREAS, the Union’s Grievance was filed in response to allegations from the University that the Union failed to implement the charitable contribution option in accordance with the CBA’s Union Security Article (“University’s Claim”);

NOW, THEREFORE, in order to fully resolve the Union’s Grievance and the University’s Claims, the Parties agree that:

1. The University will deduct and remit to the Union all authorized Initiation Fees, Membership Dues and Agency Fees (collectively, “Dues and Fees”) pursuant to the Union Security article of the CBA, beginning with the July 31, 2025, payroll.
2. The Parties agree that the Union Security Article of the CBA provides Graduate Student Workers with the right to elect to make a charitable contribution in lieu of Membership Dues or Agency Fees, provided they hold a sincerely held religious belief, as defined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which may include moral or ethical beliefs, that prohibits them from joining and maintaining membership in the Union. Eligible Graduate Student Workers must advise the Union in writing of their religious objection, consistent with Section 4 below, in order to elect this option.
3. The Parties agree that Graduate Student Workers may advise the Union of their religious objection by email or mail at the following addresses:

Email: [objections@ueunion.org](mailto:objections@ueunion.org)

Mail:

Religious Objections

United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE)  
4 Smithfield Street, 9th Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

4. The Parties agree that eligible Graduate Student Workers are neither prohibited from using nor required to use any particular form to elect payment of a charitable contribution in lieu of Membership Dues or Agency Fees provided the election advises the Union of their religious objection and, in order to comply with the EEOC Guidelines on Religious Discrimination, if the Union has an objective basis for questioning the belief, provides sufficient information for the Union to evaluate whether the objection meets the EEOC definition.

5. Any eligible Graduate Student Worker with a sincerely held religious belief who elected and authorized the payment of Membership Dues or Agency Fees is eligible to elect to make payments to charity in lieu of payments to the Union consistent with the requirements of Section D (Payment in Lieu of Membership Dues / Agency Fees) of the Union Security Article.
6. The Union's June 12, 2025, Grievance shall be withdrawn with prejudice upon the execution of this Agreement.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

By: *Lucas M. Mancini*  
Date: 7/22/2025

CORNELL GRADUATE STUDENTS UNITED-  
UNITED ELECTRICAL LOCAL 300

By: *Jim M...*  
Date: July 23, 2025



<b>CHARGE OF DISCRIMINATION</b> This form is affected by the Privacy Act of 1974. See enclosed Privacy Act Statement and other information before completing this form.		Charge Presented To: <b>Agency(ies) Charge No(s):</b>  <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">EEOC</div>	
<b>New York State Division of Human Rights</b> and EEOC <small>State or local Agency, if any</small>			
Name (indicate Mr., Ms., Mrs., Miss, Mx., Dr., Hon., Rev., etc.)  <b>Mr. David Rubinstein c/o Alexander Ioannidis</b>		Home Phone  <b>703-321-8510</b>	Year of Birth
Street Address, City State and ZIP Code  <b>8001 Braddock Road, Suite 600 Springfield, VA 22160</b>			
Named is the Employer, Labor Organization, Employment Agency, Apprenticeship Committee, or State or Local Government Agency That I Believe Discriminated Against Me or Others. (If more than two, list under PARTICULARS below.)			
Name <b>Cornell Graduate Students Union-UE Local 300 a/w United Electrical Workers</b>		No. Employees, Members <b>Unknown # of Employees; Appx 1,400 Members</b>	Phone No.
Street Address, City State and ZIP Code  <b>909 Tioga Street Ithaca, NY 14850 communications@cornellgradunion.org</b>			
Name		No. Employees, Members	Phone No.
Street Address, City, State and ZIP Code			
DISCRIMINATION BASED ON  <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">Religion</div>		DATE(S) DISCRIMINATION TOOK PLACE <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>           Earliest   <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">6/3/2025</div> </div> <div>           Latest   <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">Continuing</div> </div> </div>	
THE PARTICULARS ARE (If additional paper is needed, attach extra sheet(s)):  <div style="font-size: 1.5em; margin-top: 20px;">See Attached</div>			
I want this charge filed with both the EEOC and the State or local Agency, if any. I will advise the agencies if I change my address or phone number and I will cooperate fully with them in the processing of my charge in accordance with their procedures.		NOTARY - When necessary for State and Local Agency Requirements <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-family: cursive;">NYS - Onondaga County</div>	
I declare under penalty of perjury that the above is true and correct.		I swear or affirm that I have read the above charge and that it is true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive;">06/18/2025</div> <div style="font-size: 0.8em;">Date</div> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive;">[Signature]</div> <div style="font-size: 0.8em;">Charging Party Signature</div> </div> </div>		<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive;">[Signature]</div> <div style="font-size: 0.8em;">SIGNATURE OF COMPLAINANT</div> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive;">[Signature]</div> <div style="font-size: 0.8em;">SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME THIS DATE (month, day, year)</div> </div> </div>	

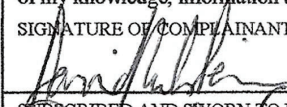

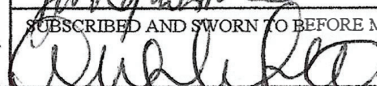
ANGELAK . EPOLITO  
 Notary Public, State of New York  
 Qualified in Onon. Co. No. 01EP6214945  
 My Commission Expires February 2, 2026

1. I am a PhD graduate student and instructor of history at Cornell University (“Cornell”), placed within a bargaining unit represented by United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (“UE”) and its affiliate, CGSU-Local 300 (“CGSU”).
2. I am Jewish and believe that Israel is the biblical and historical homeland of the Jewish people. My sincerely held religious beliefs require me not to join or fund organizations, including the UE and CGSU, that oppose the existence of Israel as a Jewish nation. Nor does my faith allow me to take actions that undermine the Jewish state’s security, prosperity, and independence. Both nationwide and on the Cornell campus, the UE, CGSU, and their other campus affiliates have been at the forefront of demonizing Israel, seeking its destruction, and supporting Hamas’s violent and barbaric terrorism against Israel and its inhabitants. These stances are profoundly antisemitic, evidencing an obsessive hatred for the Jewish religion, the Jewish people, and their nation-state of Israel.
3. In 2025, Cornell entered into a collective-bargaining agreement with the UE and the CGSU (collectively “unions”), which essentially required all covered employees, including me, to pay money to these unions as a condition of employment.
4. On June 2, 2025, I sent a detailed letter to UE General Secretary-Treasurer Andrew Dinkelaker, to CGSU, and to Cornell, stating my religious beliefs, observances, and practices, and explaining my religious objections to affiliating with the unions or paying them any money. As noted in the letter, my religious objections were based on the unions’ history of antisemitism and their anti-Israel stances and activities, all of which violate my sincerely held religious beliefs, observances, and practices.
5. The unions had no objective or bona-fide reasons to doubt the basis for my accommodation request or to question my sincerely held religious beliefs, observances, and practices. But, on or about June 3, 2025, the UE issued a response that ignored the substance of the letter that I had sent. My letter clearly communicated that my religious beliefs, observances, and practices were in direct conflict with the unions’ positions. In effect, the UE’s response rejected my clearly-communicated need for an accommodation.
6. Instead of granting my requested accommodation, the UE demanded—in bad faith—that I complete a “questionnaire” consisting solely of dilatory questions that were immaterial to accommodating my religious beliefs, observances, and practices. This “questionnaire” also demanded that I repeat information I had already provided in my original accommodation letter. The UE’s demand that I complete this bad-faith questionnaire and comply with dilatory demands to provide immaterial information, after I provided the information necessary for my accommodation, is designed to avoid the unions’ affirmative duty to accommodate me, restrain my need for accommodation, and discriminate against my sincerely held religious beliefs, observances, and practices as a Jewish person.

7. Neither union made a good-faith attempt to accommodate my religious beliefs, observances and practices after I communicated them in my letter and put them on notice of my need for an accommodation. Through the questionnaire, the unions frustrated, deterred, unnecessarily complicated, obstructed, and restrained me, and others, from seeking and securing an accommodation.

8. The unions' use of often-unnecessary questionnaires—after religious objectors have already provided sufficient information to support an accommodation—is part of a nationwide pattern and practice to avoid their affirmative legal duties to accommodate religious objectors. The questionnaires unnecessarily impede and deter religious objectors from seeking religious accommodations. The UE and its affiliates have engaged in similar unlawful conduct against religious objectors at other campuses, including MIT and Stanford.

9. By these acts, both unions avoided my need for a religious accommodation, failed to comply with their affirmative legal duties to accommodate me, and discriminated against my religious beliefs, observances, and practices in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and under parallel state laws.

<b>CHARGE OF DISCRIMINATION</b> This form is affected by the Privacy Act of 1974. See enclosed Privacy Act Statement and other information before completing this form.		Charge Presented To: _____ Agency(ies) Charge No(s): _____  <b>EEOC</b>	
<b>New York State Division of Human Rights</b> and EEOC <i>State or local Agency, if any</i>			
Name (indicate Mr., Ms., Mrs., Miss, Mx., Dr., Hon., Rev., etc.)  <b>Mr. David Rubinstein c/o Alexander Ioannidis</b>		Home Phone  <b>703-321-8510</b>	Year of Birth  
Street Address, City State and ZIP Code  <b>8001 Braddock Road, Suite 600 Springfield, VA 22160</b>			
Named is the Employer, Labor Organization, Employment Agency, Apprenticeship Committee, or State or Local Government Agency That I Believe Discriminated Against Me or Others. (If more than two, list under PARTICULARS below.)			
Name  <b>United Electrical, Radio &amp; Machine Workers of America</b>	No. Employees, Members  <b>Thousands</b>	Phone No.  <b>412-471-8919</b>	
Street Address, City State and ZIP Code  <b>4 Smithfield Street, 9th Floor Pittsburgh, PA 15222</b>		<b>gst@ueunion.org objections@ueunion.org</b>	
Name  	No. Employees, Members  	Phone No.  	
Street Address, City, State and ZIP Code  			
DISCRIMINATION BASED ON  <b>Religion</b>		DATE(S) DISCRIMINATION TOOK PLACE Earliest <b>6/3/2025</b>	
Latest <b>Continuing</b>			
THE PARTICULARS ARE (If additional paper is needed, attach extra sheet(s)):  <b>See Attached</b>			
I want this charge filed with both the EEOC and the State or local Agency, if any. I will advise the agencies if I change my address or phone number and I will cooperate fully with them in the processing of my charge in accordance with their procedures.		NOTARY – When necessary for State and Local Agency Requirements <b>NY State, Onondaga County</b>	
I declare under penalty of perjury that the above is true and correct.		I swear or affirm that I have read the above charge and that it is true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.	
Date <b>06/18/2025</b>		SIGNATURE OF COMPLAINANT 	
Charging Party Signature 		SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME THIS DATE (month, day, year) 	
		<b>06/18/2025</b>	

**ANGELA K. EPOLITO**  
 Notary Public, State of New York  
 Qualified in Onon. Co. No. 01EP6214945  
 My Commission Expires February 2, 2026



1. I am a PhD graduate student and instructor of history at Cornell University (“Cornell”), placed within a bargaining unit represented by United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (“UE”) and its affiliate, CGSU-Local 300 (“CGSU”).
2. I am Jewish and believe that Israel is the biblical and historical homeland of the Jewish people. My sincerely held religious beliefs require me not to join or fund organizations, including the UE and CGSU, that oppose the existence of Israel as a Jewish nation. Nor does my faith allow me to take actions that undermine the Jewish state’s security, prosperity, and independence. Both nationwide and on the Cornell campus, the UE, CGSU, and their other campus affiliates have been at the forefront of demonizing Israel, seeking its destruction, and supporting Hamas’s violent and barbaric terrorism against Israel and its inhabitants. These stances are profoundly antisemitic, evidencing an obsessive hatred for the Jewish religion, the Jewish people, and their nation-state of Israel.
3. In 2025, Cornell entered into a collective-bargaining agreement with the UE and the CGSU (collectively “unions”), which essentially required all covered employees, including me, to pay money to these unions as a condition of employment.
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5. The unions had no objective or bona-fide reasons to doubt the basis for my accommodation request or to question my sincerely held religious beliefs, observances, and practices. But, on or about June 3, 2025, the UE issued a response that ignored the substance of the letter that I had sent. My letter clearly communicated that my religious beliefs, observances, and practices were in direct conflict with the unions’ positions. In effect, the UE’s response rejected my clearly-communicated need for an accommodation.
6. Instead of granting my requested accommodation, the UE demanded—in bad faith—that I complete a “questionnaire” consisting solely of dilatory questions that were immaterial to accommodating my religious beliefs, observances, and practices. This “questionnaire” also demanded that I repeat information I had already provided in my original accommodation letter. The UE’s demand that I complete this bad-faith questionnaire and comply with dilatory demands to provide immaterial information, after I provided the information necessary for my accommodation, is designed to avoid the unions’ affirmative duty to accommodate me, restrain my need for accommodation, and discriminate against my sincerely held religious beliefs, observances, and practices as a Jewish person.

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8. The unions' use of often-unnecessary questionnaires—after religious objectors have already provided sufficient information to support an accommodation—is part of a nationwide pattern and practice to avoid their affirmative legal duties to accommodate religious objectors. The questionnaires unnecessarily impede and deter religious objectors from seeking religious accommodations. The UE and its affiliates have engaged in similar unlawful conduct against religious objectors at other campuses, including MIT and Stanford.

9. By these acts, both unions avoided my need for a religious accommodation, failed to comply with their affirmative legal duties to accommodate me, and discriminated against my religious beliefs, observances, and practices in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and under parallel state laws.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Graduate Student Union - Religious Objection  
**Date:** July 16, 2025 at 11:41  
**To:** Laurie Margaret Johnston lmj6@cornell.edu, Caroline Vazquez Wolkoff graduateunionupdate@gradschool.cornell.edu  
**Cc:** Kathryn Jean Boor kjb4@cornell.edu, Office of the President president@cornell.edu, Office of the Provost provost@cornell.edu, Jason Kahabka , Shannon K. Buffum, Merry Riley Buckley, Objections Processing objections@ueunion.org, communications@cornellgradunion.org

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Dear all,

In the recent email concerning grad students and the union security clause options it says, "Since the Step 3 grievance meeting, we understand that charitable contribution elections from some graduate student workers that had previously been denied or not processed have been granted in response to objection letters from graduate student workers." However, this has not been the case for me.

On June 23rd, I submitted an accommodation request to Cornell and the union. My letter has been reattached here for convenience. Later that day, UE responded, saying I needed to fill out their questionnaire. I replied soon after asking the union to please re-read my letter, as it contains all the necessary information. The union has not processed my letter and they have not granted me an accommodation.

In light of the union's lack of a response, I am now asking Cornell to exercise its own independent obligation under Title VII to please grant my accommodation, regardless of the union's position.

Best,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]\_ObjectionLetter  
.pdf



Today 3:11 PM

Waddup big dog - this is me nudging that you need to sign ur union or agency card asap before we start having to send the scary you are fired email

If I get fired do I get a severance package

Delivered

Hello! This Finn from the anthropology department. I'm just sending the CGSU-UE links for the membership card and the agency fee (non-membership card) elections. Feel free to message or call me if you have any questions or concerns about memberships, dues, or anything else union related! If you are on a TA/RA/ GRA/GA in the Fall you will need to make an election, as it is a condition of employment per our Collective Bargaining Agreement with Cornell.

Membership card link: [https://crm.broadstripes.com/ctf/x0o6kh?link\\_id=1&can\\_id=d6d3eaa79f54ae21898cead30bc9a5d1&source=email-constitution-ratification-vote-opens-june-2-62-at-9-am-town-hall-today-6-pm-2&email\\_referrer=email\\_2754207&email\\_subject=deadline-approaching-to-sign-your-union-card&&](https://crm.broadstripes.com/ctf/x0o6kh?link_id=1&can_id=d6d3eaa79f54ae21898cead30bc9a5d1&source=email-constitution-ratification-vote-opens-june-2-62-at-9-am-town-hall-today-6-pm-2&email_referrer=email_2754207&email_subject=deadline-approaching-to-sign-your-union-card&&)

Agency fee/non-membership card link: [https://crm.broadstripes.com/ctf/eyqilb?link\\_id=2&can\\_id=d6d3eaa79f54ae21898cead30bc9a5d1&source=email-constitution-ratification-vote-opens-june-2-62-at-9-am-town-hall-](https://crm.broadstripes.com/ctf/eyqilb?link_id=2&can_id=d6d3eaa79f54ae21898cead30bc9a5d1&source=email-constitution-ratification-vote-opens-june-2-62-at-9-am-town-hall-)



**From:** Laurie Margaret Johnston <[lmj6@cornell.edu](mailto:lmj6@cornell.edu)>

**Sent:** Monday, June 2, 2025 2:46:11 PM

**Subject:** CGSU-UE Blocking University's Proper Implementation of Union Security Clause

Dear Arnav, Jenna and Maggie, as Union members of the Labor Management Committee (LMC):

Our LMC is empowered to oversee the implementation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. (Labor Management Committee Article, Section 3). As you know from our collective bargaining negotiations and subsequent LMC discussions, the Union Security Article is one of the most important in our contract. It mandates that Graduate Student Workers can make one of three choices:

1. Join the Union and pay **union dues** on a monthly basis;
2. Do not join the Union and pay the Union an **agency fee**, which will be an amount set by the Union in accordance with applicable law up to the equivalent of union dues; or
3. If they have a sincerely held religious belief (which includes moral and ethical beliefs) that prevents them from joining and maintaining membership in CGSU-UE, **they may elect to make monthly donations in an amount equivalent to union service fees to certain designated charities.**

Unfortunately, as outlined in detail below, the Union is preventing the University from properly implementing the Union Security Article's charitable contribution option. Indeed, the Union has not taken the steps required to provide Graduate Student Workers with the ability to exercise their right to elect the charitable contribution option despite representing it has done so at the LMC. Therefore, because of the Union's actions, at this time, the University cannot properly implement the Union Security Article. Namely, as all Unit Members have not been given the opportunity to freely elect the charitable contribution option, the University is not now in a position to collect and remit membership dues, initiation fees, and agency fees.

As background, during our recent LMC meeting on May 29, 2025, you assured us that all requests for the charitable giving option under our Union Security clause would be granted consistent with law and our contract. We shared the University's concerns with the process proposed by the Union, as we explained in our [emails on dated April 28, May 8 and May 14](#). The Union took the position that the charitable giving option was an internal union matter. We disagree given the plain language of the Union Security clause; indeed, it is a contractual matter as negotiated by the Parties in the Union Security Article of the CBA.

To be clear, our Union Security clause provides the following option for eligible Unit Members in lieu of paying Union membership dues or agency fees:

#### **D. Payment in Lieu of Membership Dues / Agency Fees**

If a Graduate Student Worker has a sincerely held religious belief, as defined by the U.S. Equal

Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), that prohibits them from joining and maintaining membership in a union, they may elect to pay the amount equivalent to initiation fees and monthly dues to charity in lieu of payments to the Union by advising the Union in writing of their religious objection and making monthly donations in an amount equivalent to union service fees to one or more of the following charities: American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, or the United Way. The Graduate Student Worker must show proof to the Union of having made the contributions to charity in the amount of membership dues on a monthly basis.

Based on assurances from the union at the May 29 meeting that all requests to make a charitable contribution in lieu of dues or fees would be granted consistent with law and our contract, we moved to other agenda items at that time.

But soon after that meeting, we independently learned that CGSU-UE sent an email to the bargaining unit regarding the collection of dues or agency fees. This message purported to unilaterally implement a dues collection regime at odds with the Parties' negotiated Union Security article. The Union's email **does not** mention the negotiated option for a charitable contribution in lieu of union dues / agency fees and incorrectly states that all members of the bargaining unit have to pay the union when the parties specifically negotiated an option for eligible Graduate Student Workers to elect charitable deductions in lieu of union dues or agency fees.

The Union's email states:

Dear CGSU-UE Members,

On **May 30**, we will turn in our first batch of membership cards to Cornell. Cornell has indicated to us that it will require 30 days to begin collecting dues from all members who have signed membership cards and agency fee cards. Dues and agency fees allow us to start building funds for the future, including potential arbitration to enforce our contract. **Since all GAs, TAs, GRAs, and RAs are covered by our contract, everyone must pay their fair share for its enforcement.**

**If you are covered by our contract, you can either [become a member of CGSU-UE Local 300 and pay dues](#) or, if you choose not to become a member, [pay an agency fee to the Union](#). Only union members are eligible to attend general membership meetings and vote on all union matters, including our upcoming constitution ratification and e-board elections.** Graduate workers eligible for membership include those employed by the University to provide research or instructional services. Specific exclusions are listed at the end of the CGSU-UE Local 300 Membership and Dues FAQ.

#### **[SIGN YOUR UNION CARD HERE](#)**

If you have already signed a membership card or agency card, no further action is needed. If you have any questions, please contact us at [communications@cornellgradunion.org](mailto:communications@cornellgradunion.org).

In solidarity,  
CGSU-UE Interim Grievance Committee

We also subsequently learned that the Union doubled down on its messaging by sending a misleading text to at least some Unit Members' personal cell phones on May 30, 2025. The text

informs Unit Members they “need to make an election” between a “membership card and [] agency fee” because it is a “condition of employment per our Collective Bargaining Agreement with Cornell.” The information in the Union’s text is simply misleading.

For the sake of clarity, the Parties’ Agreement does *not* merely enshrine a unit member’s right under *Beck* to object to mandatory union membership, which Maggie seemed to imply in her email on May 30, 2025. Nor does the Parties’ Agreement merely track the narrow religious protections in Section 19 of the National Labor Relations Act. Instead, the Parties agreed to a different, broader formulation – permitting Graduate Student Workers to elect to pay an equivalent amount to charity in lieu of payments to the Union so long as they have a sincerely held religious belief, as defined by the EEOC. Notably, the EEOC’s definition covers “moral or ethical beliefs as to what is right and wrong...” and *does not* require that a specific religious group espouse the individual’s religious, moral or ethical belief. See [EEOC Regulations, Sec. 1605.1](#).

**Frankly, the University is shocked and dismayed at the Union’s decision to provide clearly erroneous and misleading information to its bargaining unit members.**

Through the LMC over the last several weeks, we have tried to engage in meaningful discussions with the Union on this very important topic: that is, the right for Graduate Student Workers with eligible religious objections (including moral or ethical objections) to elect to make monthly donations to designated charity rather than payments to the Union. We have sent the Union thoughtful correspondence ([April 28, May 8 and May 14](#)), asking the Union to engage with the University to address this charitable contribution option. We even proposed a sample form, attached to this email, that captures the Collective Bargaining Agreement’s language regarding the charitable contribution option. We requested additional LMC meetings to discuss this issue – which you refused. We tried to engage in a discussion at the May 29 labor management meeting only to be stone-walled (*e.g.*, “we will not talk about this anymore,” “this is an internal union matter”).

It is now very clear that – despite agreeing to the charitable contribution option in bargaining and including it in the now ratified Collective Bargaining Agreement – the Union is unilaterally implementing a dues and fees collection regime that is blatantly at odds with the Parties’ Agreement by omitting *the contractual right* for Graduate Students with religious (including moral or ethical) objections to elect to make charitable contributions, and is actively obstructing every attempt by the University to implement a proper procedure through the LMC.

Despite best efforts by the University, the Union has prevented the University from properly implementing the Union Security Article, and is preventing Graduate Student Workers with religious, moral or ethical objections from exercising their rights under the Collective Bargaining Agreement. As I previously offered, if the Union wishes to stop blocking the proper implementation of the Union Security clause, the University is prepared to meet to see if resolution of this dispute is possible. If so, please contact me at your earliest convenience. Thanks. Laurie

Laurie M. Johnston  
Sr. Director, Staff and Labor Relations  
Division of Human Resources

Cornell University  
391 Pine Tree Road  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
(o) 607-255-6866  
(c) 607-279-8670

**From:** Bargaining Committee CGSU-UE Local 300 <[bc@cornellgradunion.org](mailto:bc@cornellgradunion.org)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 16, 2025 8:00 AM  
**To:** Laurie Margaret Johnston <[lmj6@cornell.edu](mailto:lmj6@cornell.edu)>; Sean Patrick Moeller <[moeller@cornell.edu](mailto:moeller@cornell.edu)>  
**Cc:** Jenna Marvin <[jm2449@cornell.edu](mailto:jm2449@cornell.edu)>; mark.meinster@ueunion.org; CGSU-UE Local 300 Stewards <[grievances@cornellgradunion.org](mailto:grievances@cornellgradunion.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: University Response to Settle the Grievance 2025\_019

Dear Laurie and Sean,

The Union accepts your July 9 resolution proposal (attached) to begin dues collection on July 31.

Best,  
Jenna

## GRIEVANCE SETTLEMENT - Grievance 2025 019

WHEREAS, on June 12, 2025, Cornell Graduate Students United – United Electrical Local 300 (the “Union”) filed a grievance (the “Grievance”) against Cornell University (the “University”) alleging that the University was violating the Union Security Article of the Parties’ Collective Bargaining Agreement (“CBA”);

WHEREAS, the Union’s Grievance was filed in response to allegations from the University that the Union failed to implement the charitable contribution option in accordance with the CBA’s Union Security Article (“University’s Claim”);

NOW, THEREFORE, in order to fully resolve the Union’s Grievance and the University’s Claims, the Parties agree that:

1. The University will deduct and remit to the Union all authorized Initiation Fees, Membership Dues and Agency Fees (collectively, “Dues and Fees”) pursuant to the Union Security article of the CBA, beginning with the July 31, 2025, payroll.
2. The Parties agree that the Union Security Article of the CBA provides Graduate Student Workers with the right to elect to make a charitable contribution in lieu of Membership Dues or Agency Fees, provided they hold a sincerely held religious belief, as defined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which may include moral or ethical beliefs, that prohibits them from joining and maintaining membership in the Union. Eligible Graduate Student Workers must advise the Union in writing of their religious objection, consistent with Section 4 below, in order to elect this option.
3. The Parties agree that Graduate Student Workers may advise the Union of their religious objection by email or mail at the following addresses:

Email: [objections@ueunion.org](mailto:objections@ueunion.org)

Mail:

Religious Objections  
United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE)  
4 Smithfield Street, 9th Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

4. The Parties agree that eligible Graduate Student Workers are neither prohibited from using nor required to use any particular form to elect payment of a charitable contribution in lieu of Membership Dues or Agency Fees provided the election advises the Union of their religious objection and, in order to comply with the EEOC Guidelines on Religious Discrimination, if the Union has an objective basis for questioning the belief, provides sufficient information for the Union to evaluate whether the objection meets the EEOC definition.

5. Any eligible Graduate Student Worker with a sincerely held religious belief who elected and authorized the payment of Membership Dues or Agency Fees is eligible to elect to make payments to charity in lieu of payments to the Union consistent with the requirements of Section D (Payment in Lieu of Membership Dues / Agency Fees) of the Union Security Article.
6. The Union's June 12, 2025, Grievance shall be withdrawn with prejudice upon the execution of this Agreement.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

CORNELL GRADUATE STUDENTS UNITED–  
UNITED ELECTRICAL LOCAL 300

By: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2025

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2025

Thursday, Jul 31 • 8:18 PM

RCS chat with

Hey [REDACTED], this is Joe from Biomedical Engineering, texting about CGSU-UE. I wanted to follow up on my call and voicemail! I was reaching out because it looks like you still haven't paid dues or agency fees yet. Paying dues or paying agency fees is a condition of employment. The easiest way to do this is to sign up for payroll deduction of dues or agency fees, so please sign a card as soon as you can!



CGSU-UE Local 300 Ayer

para mí ▾



Parece que este mensaje está en inglés




Traducir al español

Dear [REDACTED]

You are receiving this email because you are a graduate worker eligible to join the union but have not yet signed a card. **Under our new contract, if you are employed as an RA, TA, GA, or GRA for the Fall semester you are required to either join CGSU-UE Local 300 and pay union dues, or to pay an equivalent non-member agency fee. Paying dues or agency fees is a condition of current and future employment in any research or teaching position as a graduate student. These dues help us run our union, enforce our contract, and contribute to our future strike fund.**



# Cornell Graduate Students United Demands University Bargain with Union Over Pro-Palestine International Student's Suspension

 [cornellsun.com/article/2024/10/cornell-graduate-students-united-demands-university-bargain-with-union-over-pro-palestine-international-students-suspension](https://cornellsun.com/article/2024/10/cornell-graduate-students-united-demands-university-bargain-with-union-over-pro-palestine-international-students-suspension)

By Gabriel Munoz Oct 2, 2024 11:45 pm · Updated Oct 3, 2024 10:45 am



READING TIME: ABOUT 5 MINUTES

Approximately 180 Cornell Graduate Students United members and supporters gathered in front of Bailey Hall at noon on Wednesday to protest for the University to bargain with CGSU over international graduate student Momodou Taal's suspension.

CGSU — the graduate student union [established](#) in November 2023 — is demanding the University bargain Taal's suspension under a [Memorandum of Agreement](#) reached in July 2024. CGSU successfully bargained for the MOA following [advocating](#) for Taal and Bianca Waked grad who were temporarily [suspended](#) for organizing a pro-Palestine [encampment](#) last spring.

The agreement gives CGSU the right to bargain over the effects of academic discipline of graduate students as long as it affects their working conditions.

The union is arguing Taal's suspension is included within the terms of the MOA since he was an instructor for "What is Blackness? Race and Processes of Racialization," a First-Year Writing Seminar under the Africana Studies and Research Center.



Participants in the Cornell Graduate Students United rally hold signs as they brave the rain outside Bailey Hall. (Stephan Menasche/Sun Staff Photographer)

The University suspended Taal for his [involvement](#) in a career fair disruption in Statler Hall on Sept. 18 attended by defense contractors L3Harris and Boeing. If Taal is withdrawn from the University, he will be in violation of his [F-1 visa status](#), likely leading to his deportation. According to a report by Cornell University Police Department Lieutenant Scott Grantz '99, Taal and other protesters entered Statler Hall after explicitly being told that they were not permitted to do so by officers and participated in "unreasonably loud" chants.

Interim University President Michael Kotlikoff [claimed](#) protesters pushed through police at the ground-floor and second-floor entrances.

Sun reporters on the scene did not witness violence against law enforcement.

According to BSU leadership's recollection of a Monday meeting with Interim President Michael Kotlikoff and Vice President of Student and Campus Life Ryan Lombardi, the administrators [said](#) they are using interim measures instead of the MOA to manage the case since they are "prioritizing the safety and the health of the community."



CGSU is among several campus organizations [arguing](#) for the University to rescind the suspension.

Jawuanna McAllister grad, a member of the CGSU-UE Bargaining Committee, told The Sun the union hoped the University would respond to their request to bargain.

“We know that Cornell has a pattern of unjustly disciplining workers without due process,” McAllister said. “And so what we need is for Cornell to, right now, hold up their fair end of the bargain with this Memorandum of Agreement, and actually bargain with us over the things that affect our employment.”

A masked speaker delivered a speech written by Taal, who is currently [barred](#) from campus due to his suspension. Taal’s speech alleged that the University was infringing on his freedom of speech rights.

“My actions fell squarely within the ground of free speech and people protest. I have not engaged in any form of violence, nor have I called for such action,” the speaker read from Taal’s speech. “Instead, my advocacy has been rooted in the principles of social justice and equality, principles that are fundamental to the Africana studies.”

At around 12:35 p.m., protesters marched from Bailey Hall to Day Hall to continue demonstrating.



The CGSU rally parades from Bailey Hall to Day Hall. (Ming DeMers/Sun Photography Editor)

Outside Day Hall, Alderperson Kayla Matos (D-First Ward) addressed the crowd supporting Taal.

Matos is an [advocate](#) for just cause legislation — an effort to end employment at will practices in Ithaca. Employment at will laws allow for employers to fire employees without any notice or reasoning. She said graduate students should be included in just cause legislation, which would only allow employers to fire workers without notice for “egregious misconduct.”

“What you are fighting for is something that matters to your elected officials and the entire Ithaca community,” Matos said. “It matters to us because every worker should be entitled to due process and just cause protections — you are not alone here.”



Alderperson Kayla Matos (D-First Ward) addresses protesters outside of Day Hall. (Ming DeMers/Sun Photography Editor)

Prof. Risa Lieberwitz, industrial and labor relations, the president of the Cornell University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, said the organization stood in solidarity with CGSU and asked the University to bargain with the union.

“We must have each other’s backs, we must be in alliance collectively, we must be in alliance individually, we must come together,” Lieberwitz said. “We are against the infringement on our academic freedom and our freedom of speech.”





Prof. Risa Lieberwitz, industrial and labor relations, stands at the CGSU rally outside Day Hall.  
(Ming DeMers/Sun Photography Editor)

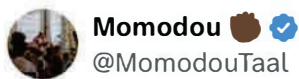
A University spokesperson sent a statement claiming that the administration has cooperated with the Union over the course of the past few months.

“Cornell University and the CGSU-UE have met regularly since April to negotiate a first collective bargaining agreement. Bargaining sessions have been productive and led to tentative agreements on several articles,” the statement read. “Cornell continues to negotiate in good faith to ensure a contract that supports the needs of graduate workers.”

***Correction, Oct. 3, 10:44 a.m.:*** A previous version of this article incorrectly transcribed a few words from Prof. Risa Lieberwitz, industrial and labor relations.

### **Gabriel Munoz**

*Gabriel Muñoz is a member of the class of 2026 at the College of Arts and Sciences. He serves as city editor for the 143rd editorial board. He previously served as city editor for the 142nd Editorial Board and news editor for the 141st Editorial Board. He can be contacted at [gmunoz@cornellsun.com](mailto:gmunoz@cornellsun.com).*



**Momodou**   
@MomodouTaal

Follow

Today has shown us what is possible when you are organised. An illegitimate nation that is backed and armed the most powerful illegitimate nation has been left stumped and wondering how they were caught so off guard. It's not about the numbers. But how you organise and execute.

5:08 AM · Oct 7, 2023 from Ithaca, NY · 18.3K Views



**Momodou**   
@MomodouTaal

Follow



"The enemy of your enemy isn't your friend, have some nuance"

When the enemy is US imperialism, then absolutely anyone the US calls an enemy is my friend.

10:54 AM · Jul 29, 2024 · 2,606 Views



**Momodou**   
@MomodouTaal · 50m

Zionists are indeed the chosen people... Chosen for hell.



2



33



134



6K



**Momodou**   
@MomodouTaal

Axis of Evil: Israel, USA and United Kingdom.

8:36 PM · Jan 13, 2024 · 23K Views



**Momodou** 10/6/23  
@MomodouTaal

The dialect demands: That wherever you have oppression, you will find those who fighting against it.

Glory to the **resistance!**



67



269



9.2K



**Momodou**   
@MomodouTaal

Follow

The USA represents the most extreme forms of white supremacist racist capitalist violence. It is a settler colony that continues to dispossess the indigenous. Its institutions are established to maintain and reproduce this. So yeah, I don't believe Islamic values align.

4:09 PM · Jun 24, 2023 from Senegal · 793 Views



**Momodou**   
@MomodouTaal

Follow

And as always... the real villains are yt women.

3:49 PM · Nov 6, 2024 · 6,430 Views



**Momodou**   
@MomodouTaal

GLOBALIZE THE INTIFADA!

10:44 PM · 12/11/23 from Earth · 3.1K Views



**Momodou**   
@MomodouTaal

Follow

Ya Allah, I ask that you keep breaking her heart until she picks me

Happy Valentine's Day ya'll!

2:54 PM · Feb 14, 2024 · 7,347 Views



**Momodou** 16h  
@MomodouTaal

"Iran's ability to withstand US and Zionist aggression for these many years is nothing short of a miracle" - @Helyeh\_Doutaghi



**Momodou**   
@MomodouTaal

The end of the US empire in our lifetime in sha Allah

9:33 AM · Feb 16, 2022



**Momodou**   
@MomodouTaal

My hatred of the US empire knows no bound. Wallahi.



Momodou  
@MomodouTaal

Follow

We are actually living in a fucking alternative reality. Zionists living comfortably in the US and Zionist-Jewish students at Ivy League institutions are claiming to be unsafe, scared and somehow everyone is calling for their genocide? Whilst in 4K, we are witnessing a genocide of the Palestinian people, and many of these same folks who claim to feel scared are cheering on the actions of the IOF. BFFR. Every single Zionist is a sick sick individual. And there can be no path forward except for the complete eradication of Zionism; materially and mentally.

10:02 PM · 12/11/23 from Earth · 11K Views



Momodou  
@MomodouTaal



I never dealt with Zionists up close before moving to the States. But I now know them to be a moral less, soulless, cowardly, inhumane bunch. A group characterised by “a death of heart” that only allows a rendering of their suffering as legible. Never have I wanted to see the end of zionism as I do now.



Dan Cohen  
@dancohen3000 · Nov 11, 2023

Have your views shifted on Israel and Zionism over the last month? If so, how?

6:25 PM · Nov 11, 2023 · 8,275 Views



Momodou  
@MomodouTaal

Follow



My hatred for US imperialism and the global system it reproduces knows no bounds. At this point; any movement, nation, people who are working to decrease the impact and effects of US imperialism on the world has my support. And that is a position I'm not moving from. Idc idc.

7:21 AM · Jun 9, 2024 · 6,990 Views



Momodou  
@MomodouTaal

Follow

If you think tighter gun control is the answer within the racist white supremacist settler colonial project that is the USA. You need to get off the symbolic crack pipe. These acts of violence are not coincidental but a feature of. It's irresponsible.

12:06 PM · May 15, 2022



Momodou  
@MomodouTaal

Follow



ABOLISH THE WHITE WOMAN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX [x.com/JamieBolton/st...](https://x.com/JamieBolton/st...)

You're unable to view this Post because this account owner limits who can view their Posts. [Learn more](#)

7:10 AM · Mar 8, 2021



Momodou  
@MomodouTaal

And they wonder why folks chant “Death to America”

5:23 PM · Jun 21, 2025 · 240.1K Views



Momodou  
@MomodouTaal

Follow



Student Visa issued. We going to America baby! Alhamdulillah! Let's get this PhD

9:11 AM · Aug 5, 2022





# Protesters Praise Mideast Militants in Divestment Rally

By Kate Sanders

Feb 3, 2024 6:12 pm · Updated Feb 3, 2024 11:13 pm



READING TIME: ABOUT 5 MINUTES

About 70 demonstrators gathered outside of Day Hall on Friday afternoon to protest the Student Assembly's 16-4 rejection of Resolution 51, which called on Cornell to end partnerships with and suspected investments in arms companies — such as Boeing and Raytheon — that provide weapons to Israel.

“We don’t take our cue from some bullsh\*t Student Assembly at Cornell,” said Momodou Taal, grad, who led chants throughout the event. “We take our cue from the armed resistance in Palestine. We are in solidarity with the armed resistance in Palestine from the river to the sea,” he continued, garnering some cheers from the crowd.

At time of publication, Taal did not respond to repeated requests to elaborate on his remarks. Taal has previously described himself as the liaison representative for Cornell’s Coalition for Mutual Liberation, an activist collective that organized Friday’s protest.

Taal’s statement was not the only apparent praise of militant groups at the event. At one point, the crowd chanted, “Yemen, Yemen, make us proud. Turn another ship around.” Yemen’s Houthi rebels, a group the Biden administration recently labeled a terrorist organization, have fired at Red Sea ships, including commercial vessels and a U.S. warship.

Cornell’s Media Relations Office did not respond to a request for comment on how, if at all, it would respond to instances of students expressing support for militant groups.





cornell\_gsu and thegambian  
Cornell University

...



**Today, CGSU-UE held a press conference on the unjust suspension of Momodou Taal.**

**READ SOME HIGHLIGHTS >>>**



cornell\_gsu

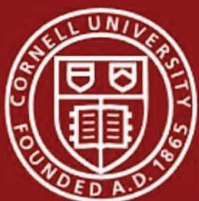
...

## ***ALERT: Worker Under Attack***

Cornell University is unjustly disciplining Momodou Taal by skirting due process, including refusing to bargain with CGSU-UE per our MOA.

**This will result in his deportation!**

**We are rallying at Bailey Hall at 12PM  
Just Cause! Due process! No exceptions!**



*to do the greatest injustice*



## Myth

## CGSU-UE:

vs.

## Fact



The administration claims that its disciplinary measures are enacted for the health and safety of the community.

"Masked students forcefully and violently entered and disrupted an ILR Career Fair at the Statler Hotel..."

-Cornell Interim President Kotlikoff

Sriram is a **beloved and active member** of the Cornell community, especially within the School of Integrative Plant Sciences (SIPS).

The **actual threats** to health and safety include **Boeing** and **L3Harris**, which actively **arm a genocide and war**.



The Union for Everyone | Members Run This Union

## Local 300-CGSU Fights Suspension, Prevents Deportation of Member



*Momodou Taal speaking at a peaceful protest demanding a ceasefire in Gaza.*

October 11, 2024

**Ithaca, New York**

**BY MARGUERITE PACHECO, UE LOCAL 300-CGSU**

UE Local 300-Cornell Graduate Students United (CGSU-UE), which represents graduate workers at Cornell University, are currently fighting against the unjust discipline of one of our members. On September 23, Cornell's administration suspended international graduate worker Momodou Taal, citing his alleged participation in protest activity. This suspension fired Taal from his job and de-enrolled him as a student. He would have had to leave the country immediately once the University notified the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) of their choice to de-enroll him. Cornell said that they would not give Taal their customary grace period of twenty-one days before reporting to DHS.



This came after a tumultuous spring semester during which three graduate workers were suspended for protesting against repressive policies and the University's refusal to honor their divest guidelines (<https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2016/02/trustees-approve-new-standard-consider-divestment>), which require a review to “divest its endowment assets from a company ... when the company's actions or inactions [constitute] apartheid, genocide, human trafficking, slavery or systemic cruelty to children.” After membership picketed a bargaining session for hours, CGSU-UE secured a Memorandum of Agreement ([https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wi72Qj1fLU1I5wbERVJMU2LpgL4FtIOW/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wi72Qj1fLU1I5wbERVJMU2LpgL4FtIOW/view?usp=drive_link)) with Cornell in July that gave the Union the right to bargain over the effects of discipline of a worker. Importantly, the list of effects enumerated in this MOA includes de-enrollment!

“I believe that my presence as a Black Muslim and an advocate for Palestine places an extra target on my back,” said Taal. “The university wishes to make an example out of me by subverting due process as a means to intimidate others.”

Pursuant to the MOA, CGSU-UE issued a demand to bargain with Cornell Administration over the effects of Taal's recent suspension. Cornell not only refused to bargain, but disagreed that suspension and being banned from his job site constitutes discipline.

This particularly egregious instance of unfair discipline highlights the very fights that are currently playing out at the bargaining table. We are bargaining our first contract after having won our election last November, and the big articles

([https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/162fHH1BNkKPdkt0KS8o5WrE2SM6tUYg5peN\\_u4nDI3M/edit?gid=521772788#gid=521772788](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/162fHH1BNkKPdkt0KS8o5WrE2SM6tUYg5peN_u4nDI3M/edit?gid=521772788#gid=521772788)) that Cornell refuses to move on are nondiscrimination, discipline and discharge, appointment security (which enumerates due process for performance evaluations), and academic freedom. We want just cause protections for all forms of discipline — including the “non-appointment related” discipline that Taal is receiving. We need nondiscrimination protections on a campus whose leadership openly stated that they would invite the KKK to campus if requested. We want due process in our evaluations to protect against discriminatory progress reviews. And on a university campus, we want strong academic freedom protections because our work is academic — we are teaching about controversial subjects — and we must be protected as workers while doing this labor!

In response, CGSU-UE has launched both a solidarity petition and a solidarity statement for other unions to sign on to, held a press conference, and engaged with local elected officials.

Most importantly, we held two mass actions. On October 2 we held a rally with over 300 workers and marched to the administrative building that houses the Cornell bosses who are

disrespecting our members. At this rally, people marched, chanted, and heard speeches from graduate workers including Momodou Taal, elected officials, and university faculty who are against academic repression. Then, on October 9, CGSU-UE held an open bargaining session and packed the bargaining room with over 110 union members, and over fifteen sibling unions who joined virtually. The disciplined graduate workers, sibling unions, and CGSU-UE bargaining committee members gave statements demanding just cause and nondiscrimination protections. At around 3 PM, word came through that Cornell had taken de-enrollment, and thus deportation, off of the table and agreed to bargain over the remaining effects of Taal's discipline! CGSU-UE met with Cornell on Friday October 11 for effects bargaining.

This is a huge success for unions in higher education, and a testament to the strength of CGSU-UE members!

Our sibling unions, both in UE and other graduate worker shops, are joining us in fighting against academic bosses who are trying to maintain unilateral disciplinary power via "academic" discipline. This is a long fight, and together we are standing firm for just cause protections against bosses who will tank workers' rights to appease a political donor class.

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# CGSU UE LOCAL 300

## DEFEND MOMODOU TAAL

**March 23, 2025** – Federal agents are currently on the campus of Cornell University in Ithaca, NY attempting to detain UE Local 300–Cornell Graduate Students United member Momodou Taal. Taal is **an international graduate worker and visa holder** who was terminated from his employment and threatened with deportation by Cornell administrators last September without just cause.

Taal's termination from Cornell last fall represents a disturbing pattern of university administrators' acquiescence to pressures from the federal government to repress dissent and free speech on university campuses. At Cornell, like dozens of other universities, this manifests through the use of "interim" disciplinary measures that arbitrarily target marginalized workers. These disciplinary measures serve as a warning to others: those who express views that run contrary to universities' financial interests will be punished – without due process or just cause.

Workers across the country mobilized to prevent Taal's deportation and demand just cause protections for graduate workers, with the understanding that Cornell's unjust discipline was part of a broader pattern to unilaterally silence constitutionally-protected speech. **Taal was never found responsible for any charge because his charges were never actually investigated. And yet, Taal was nearly deported by Cornell University's own hand.**



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speaking out on any issue. While the current attacks on universities are primarily targeting pro-Palestinian activists, recent cuts in funding to federal agencies and universities make clear that suppression of free speech will not stop there.

If the federal government is allowed to come for Taal, they will be further emboldened to come for anyone else who threatens their agenda, **including those who speak up for sane climate policies, women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, racial justice, a fair economy, and workers' rights.**

As unions representing tens of thousands of higher education workers, we demand that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) immediately cease its persecution of Momodou Taal. We call on all workers in higher education to close ranks to defend our right to teach, research, and speak up on any issue without being targeted by the government.

Taal recently sued President Trump, challenging the constitutionality of his executive orders targeting students for exercising their First and Fifth Amendment rights. A court hearing on the lawsuit is scheduled for 2pm on Tuesday, March 25th in Syracuse, NY. We encourage supporters to attend the hearing to stand up for free speech and due process. Please contact [bc@cornellgradunion.org](mailto:bc@cornellgradunion.org) for additional details.

## Signatories

United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE)

UE Local 300 – Cornell Graduate Students United Bargaining Committee

UE Local 1043 – Stanford Graduate Workers Union Executive Board

UE Local 1103 – Graduate Students United at the University of Chicago Executive Board

UE Local 1105 – University of Minnesota Graduate Labor Union Executive Board

UE Local 1122 – Northwestern University Graduate Workers Executive Board



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UE Local 150 – The Workers Union at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

UE Local 150 – The Workers Union at North Carolina State University

UE Local 197 – Teachers and Researchers United at Johns Hopkins University  
Elected Custodians

UE Local 256 – Massachusetts Institute of Technology Graduate Student Union

UE Local 261 – Graduate Organized Laborers of Dartmouth

UE Local 896 – Campaign to Organize Graduate Students at the University of Iowa

UAW Local 4811 – Academic Workers at the University of California Santa Cruz

UAW Local 2710 – Student Workers of Columbia

UAW Local 2110 – Graduate Student Organizing Committee at New York University

Local 33-UNITE HERE – The Union of Graduate Teachers and Researchers at Yale  
Executive Board

UE Local 696 – The Unionized Workers of Planned Parenthood of Western  
Pennsylvania

UE Local 667 – Unionized Workers of the East End Food Co-Op

UE Local 1186 – The Union for Co-Op Workers

SEIU Local 925 – Washington State Public Sector Workers Retiree Chapter

ACT-UAW Local 7902 – The Union for NYU Adjuncts, New School Part-Time Faculty,  
Student Workers, and Healthcare Workers Executive Board

