Oppose the reactionary smear campaign against Harvard Professor John Comaroff!

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The right-wing cabal of #MeToo witch-hunters, middle-class careerists in UAW Local 5118 and ambitious, unscrupulous *Harvard Crimson* editorial writers has stepped up its campaign to drive out Harvard anthropology professor John Comaroff.

On the basis of entirely concocted allegations, which were twice thoroughly investigated by Harvard and thrown out for all intents and purposes, Comaroff has become the victim of relentless persecution.

Should these vicious witch-hunters succeed it will be a major blow to academic freedom, democratic rights and serious scholarship.

The editorial posted September 13 by the *Crimson*, Harvard's student newspaper ("The Welcome Back We Didn't Ask For"), plumbs new depths of malice and dishonesty. The column absurdly claims that Harvard's campus has now become unsafe for students because of the presence of "an alleged serial assaulter," i.e., Professor Comaroff.

The September 13 piece further asserts that "the University's lack of transparency surrounding any rehabilitative requirements for Comaroff's return reflects only a superficial understanding of restorative justice."

"Rehabilitative requirements"? Have these people taken leave of their senses? In fact, the *Crimson* editorialists admit that they are ignorant of the legal issues raised by the attack on Professor Comaroff. Referring to the Biden administration's extraordinary intervention in support of the witch-hunt, they write: "While we are not equipped to comment on the legal nuances of the amicus brief, as students, we are concerned by Comaroff's return to campus and what this may mean for our community."

If they were "not equipped" to deal with the legal issues, the editorial's authors should have refrained from commenting on the case. Or to put the matter somewhat more bluntly, they should have kept their mouths shut.

But, as this astonishing admission makes all too clear, the *Crimson* undergraduates could not care less about the law and the facts of the case. So young and already so corrupt!

For the record, the case against Comaroff is without substance. He is not guilty of "serial [sexual] assault," nor has he ever been accused of it. Comaroff's vindictive accuser, Lilia Kilburn, was properly warned by Comaroff about the dangers of traveling with her gay partner to parts of Africa where homosexuals faced persecution.

In his capacity as a faculty adviser, Comaroff was making Kilburn aware of the possible consequences of her actions, not only for herself, but for others. But Comaroff's comments cut across Kilburn's self-absorption, and she has never forgiven him.

As there is absolutely no verifiable evidence to support her claim, the circumstances strongly indicate that Kilburn, for reasons best known to herself, concocted a story about two or three "unwanted" kisses, a claim that even Harvard's investigators, predisposed to believe accusers, felt obliged to dismiss.

The claim that a distinguished 77-year-old scholar represents a "danger" to Harvard students defies all reason. Comaroff is not only an accomplished academic. He is a socially conscious individual who has a lengthy record of struggle against oppression.

Comaroff grew up in South Africa as a leftist, opposing the apartheid regime. In such circumstances, opposition had serious consequences. Opponents of the regime were regularly suppressed, banned or liquidated. Comaroff has written and lectured extensively on global capitalism, inequality and colonialism. In the course of his decades of teaching, he has mentored thousands of students from many countries.

The *Crimson* editorialists return repeatedly to the "unsafe" conditions Comaroff's presence supposedly creates. "It cannot be overstated how troubling it is that students, especially women, may not feel safe and comfortable within the classroom or even Harvard as a whole now that Comaroff has returned. No student should have to split their attention in the classroom between pursuits to satiate intellectual curiosity and fears for their physical and emotional safety."

What a pack of scoundrels these writers are. What is really "troubling" is that such baseless and unsubstantiated trash can appear in a daily student newspaper without evoking an outcry from faculty and students.

As for the "danger" posed by Professor Comaroff, readers should keep in mind that Harvard is a massively endowed institution where past or present CIA agents, generals, war criminals and former heads of state with blood on their hands are more likely than not to bump into one another on their way to and from the lecture hall.

Henry Kissinger—counterrevolutionary mastermind, architect of a genocidal war against the Vietnamese people, assassin of the Chilean and South American working class and socialists—taught at Harvard for well over a decade before becoming Richard Nixon's national security adviser and, later, secretary of state. The university's Center for Middle Eastern Studies was exposed as a tool of CIA and Israeli intelligence in the mid-1980s.

Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government is infamous as an international center for imperialist conspiracy against the colonial populations and against the American working class itself.

Its officials hardly bother to conceal the fact. On September 16, the Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, a wing of the US military-intelligence apparatus, is holding an event to celebrate the establishment of the CIA in 1947, "Marking the

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CIA's 75th Anniversary: Reflections on the Past, Visions of the Future."

"The event," explains the Belfer Center, "will feature an illustrious group of intelligence authors, scholars, and retired high-ranking practitioners discussing the past 75 years of the agency, including both well-known and little-known aspects of the agency's evolution and its current activities to further the nation's national security." The assembled, with "lunch provided," will mark the birth and evolution of the US government's own Murder Inc. How many plots, deaths and acts of torture are these people responsible for?

In 2016, when Michael Sulmeyer, former Director for Plans and Operations for Cyber Policy at the Department of Defense, joined the Belfer Center's new Cyber Security Project, the Center's press release boasted that the project's Steering Group now included "former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff James Cartwright, former CIA Director and General David Petraeus, former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy James Miller, and recently retired Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff James 'Sandy' Winnefeld."

Present and former Harvard faculty include David Barron, who as acting assistant attorney general in the Obama administration authored the memo justifying the use of lethal drone strikes against US citizens without judicial process; former Mexican president Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa, responsible for mass repression and poverty; former Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter; Richard Clarke, "Counterterrorism Czar" as National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Counter-Terrorism under Bill Clinton and George W. Bush; Michael Ignatieff, Canadian politician best known for his defense of torture; economist Lawrence Summers, former Secretary of the Treasury devoted to foisting the crisis of American capitalism on the back of the working class. The list of right-wing geopoliticians, economists and military officials is endless.

Harvard, in sum, has been and remains a critical pillar of the American establishment, its faculty a virtual who's who of ruling class policymakers.

None of this bothers the *Crimson* editorial board, Harvard Graduate Students Union (HGSU)-UAW Local 5118 officials or Comaroff's accusers and their various apologists.

On the contrary, the intervention of the Biden administration on the side of Comaroff's accusers has made even clearer the line-up of social and political forces. In regard to the three graduate students' baseless lawsuit against Harvard, filed in February, charging that the university failed to protect them against Comaroff's "harassment," the Justice Department has asserted that Harvard might be liable if Comaroff retaliated against the accusers. By "retaliation," the students' legal complaint refers to the public efforts by the veteran professor and his wife (and colleague) to defend themselves against the witch-hunt.

The administration's action underscores the politically driven character of the campaign against Comaroff. Here we see the intersection of Democratic Party politics, rooted in the interests of its upper-middle-class constituency, and the selfish drive for career advancement and personal wealth. Comaroff's accusers feel free to lie and slander, confident they have the backing of the American state.

As for the involvement of UAW Local 5118, it is run by middle-class careerists who have no genuine association with the struggles of the working class. Indifferent to an obvious conflict of interest, its leadership includes two of Comaroff's accusers. The union structure is being used to further the personal interests of its officers.

The local filed a grievance in August claiming that by allowing the anthropology professor to teach this fall, Harvard had failed to live up to its contractual agreement to maintain "a safe and healthy work and educational Environment." The union grievance, no doubt written or vetted by Comaroff's tormentors, lyingly claims that he has a "well-documented history of harassing women and queer students."

Meanwhile, Comaroff's three accusers, along with six others, addressed a letter this week to Harvard's president Lawrence S. Bacow demanding the university "reform" its Title IX and Office of Dispute Resolution procedures and, according to the *Crimson*, "include victims' input in improving its procedures for reporting and investigating misconduct." In other words, the complaining graduate students want to do everything in their power to ensure that future investigations will be rigged in favor of the accusers.

The witch-hunt against Professor Comaroff must be opposed and stopped. It is high time that Harvard students and faculty take a stand against this filthy campaign. Thirty-eight professors initially spoke out against the Comaroff witch-hunt in February. But the campaign of intimidation had its effect.

Thirty-five of the 38 rapidly caved in to a score of angry tweets, revealing the degree of fear that prevails at Harvard and other universities and colleges.

But although that protest was suppressed by a campaign of intimidation, one can be certain that there are many faculty members and students disgusted by the foul campaign against Professor Comaroff. Those involved in this sordid operation have nothing to do with "left" or "progressive" politics. Their actions bear much more resemblance to those of ultra-right student groups in Germany, which frequently targeted left-wing academics in the late 1920s and 1930s.

The only guilty parties here are the instigators of this witch-hunt. Students and faculty members should denounce the campaign against Professor Comaroff and come to the defense of this unjustly persecuted scholar.

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