



The Black Revolution on Campus

By Martha Biondi

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The Black Revolution on Campus is the definitive account of an extraordinary but forgotten chapter of the black freedom struggle. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Black students organized hundreds of protests that sparked a period of crackdown, negotiation, and reform that profoundly transformed college life. At stake was the very mission of higher education. Black students demanded that public universities serve their communities; that private universities rethink the mission of elite education; and that black colleges embrace self-determination and resist the threat of integration. Most crucially, black students demanded a role in the definition of scholarly knowledge.

Martha Biondi masterfully combines impressive research with a wealth of interviews from participants to tell the story of how students turned the slogan “black power” into a social movement. Vividly demonstrating the critical linkage between the student movement and changes in university culture, Biondi illustrates how victories in establishing Black Studies ultimately produced important intellectual innovations that have had a lasting impact on academic research and university curricula over the past 40 years. This book makes a major contribution to the current debate on Ethnic Studies, access to higher education, and opportunity for all.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Biondi reexamines the national cultural revolution of the 1960s with the actions of black college students at the core. A confluence of circumstances placed a substantial increase of working middle-class black students at many public and private universities as well as historically black colleges. Biondi exposes the inverted emphasis of American media coverage, for the perceptively white student antiwar uprising at Columbia was preceded by a black student demonstration against racism. Similarly, the student deaths at Kent State were preceded by substantial numbers of deaths and arrests at black colleges as students protested racial discrimination and segregation. Biondi argues that this population of black students had an outsize impact on changing social conditions, an impact that has often been overlooked. A major legacy of the black student protests was the creation of black studies departments, followed by others of other ethnic, as well as gender, studies. Those academic programs have continued for more than 40 years, not without controversy centered on their origins, with compelling ideological and political priorities. Biondi's work offers a fresh perspective on the student protest era, acknowledging the major and overlooked contributions of black students. --
Vernon Ford

Review

"Thoroughly researched, beautifully written, and a fascinating piece of history . . . an exceptional piece of scholarship, and a book greatly worth reading."

(Simon Balto *Washington Spectator* 2012-12-11)

"Biondi's work offers a fresh perspective on the student protest era, acknowledging the major and overlooked contributions of black students."

(Vernon Ford *Booklist* 2012-09-15)

"Biondi's book is a very powerful chronicle of the struggle and strategizing that moved seemingly immovable institutions toward change."

(*Souls* 2013-03-13)

"Enriches our understanding of the vital, if often undervalued and understudied, role of black students in linking campus radicalism to broader struggles for racial and economic justice and in calling public attention to issues of diversity in higher education. . . . *The Black Revolution on Campus* is a valuable addition to our understanding of the modern black freedom movement, student activism, and the institutionalization of black studies as an agent of change in higher education."

(Daniel McClure *Academe* 2013-10-01)

"The most comprehensive account of black studies founding generations. . . . [A] nuanced telling of the creation of black studies programs."

(Derrick E. White *The Journal of American History* 2013-09-01)

"Deep and interesting. . . . [Biondi] provides a sweeping view of the birth of black studies."

(*American Historical Review* 2013-10-01)

From the Inside Flap

“Martha Biondi's superb book is a pioneering treatment of the integral role of courageous black students in the turbulent 60s. In our age of the Occupy Movement, we badly need this wonderful work!”

—Cornel West, author of *Race Matters*

“*The Black Revolution on Campus* is a passionate and powerful piece of scholarship about a dramatic moment in the evolution of American universities: the period in the 1960s and 1970s when the Black Power Movement clashed with the liberal sensibilities of Western cultural empire building. Biondi carefully demonstrates why this era of intellectual insurgency, led by Black students and their white allies, was significant. It allowed those whose stories had been left out of the curriculum to begin to speak truth to power. But it also made space for other movements (such as feminism and gay rights) to become important parts of the contemporary academic curriculum. Biondi invites the reader to do more than bear witness to an important scholarly debate about the role of black studies on college campuses in the 1960s and 1970s. Her probing analysis illuminates enduring yet evolving truths about our larger culture and its myths of American life.”

—Lani Guinier, Bennett Boskey Professor of Law, Harvard Law School

“The Black Revolution on Campus is the first comprehensive account detailing the struggles for black studies within institutions of higher education in the United States. It suggests the enduring salience, and at times bitter consequences, of black struggles for inclusion, representation, and autonomy on college campuses and within university curricula. I know of no other work of its kind, and certainly no work as definitive.”

—Nikhil Pal Singh, author of *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy*

“Martha Biondi's *The Black Revolution on Campus* is a judicious and empathetic history of the Black student movement. Reading the book reminds us of the forgotten stories and remarkable individuals who forged the organizations that moved history along. It makes us recognize how much the good side of the contemporary American academy is indebted to the courage and commitment of the people who put themselves on the line to bring justice into institutions that are often smug about their values and their own history. The promise of the Black Revolution is unfinished. Biondi's book is a reminder of those tasks that remain.”

—Vijay Prashad, author of *Uncle Swami: South Asians in America Today*

Users Review

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Becky Pope:

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