

ACCOUNTABILITY: A REPLY TO THE DEANS' LETTER

A document has been circulated to the faculty of MCC in which a letter written a year and a half ago by Chancellor Kibbee is used to attack the PSC-CUNY ad hoc Committee to Boycott the President's Dinner. It accuses the members of this committee of indulging in "character assassination by snipers, by faceless and gutless individuals, who seek disruption without accountability."

To answer these charges, we will start with the facts of the testimonial dinner itself.

Draper and his administration, coincidentally with the appointment of a new Board of Higher Education, have planned a testimonial for the President. They claim it is sponsored by faculty and staff of MCC. At no time did faculty or staff vote to sponsor such an event. Draper and his administration alone initiated and defined the terms of a situation which has disrupted the school's operation, and created a polarization among members of the faculty.

Faculty members, as individuals, were pressured by the administration's policies concerning the testimonial. As individuals, they felt vulnerable in the face of this pressure.

This is the situation which was brought to the full union meeting on Feb. 20. The union, as an open, democratic body responsible to the faculty of MCC, held a discussion of the issues involved in responding to the situation created by Draper and his administration. All of the "charges" (which the document claims to discredit by the use of "facts") are expressions of conditions with which everyone at MCC is familiar. All of the "charges" were outlined in a union resolution which was discussed at length by the entire union body, and approved overwhelmingly. This resolution stated our opposition to the dinner, and empowered an ad hoc committee to plan what forms this opposition would take. The ad hoc committee was then chosen at the union meeting.

The literature distributed by the ad hoc committee (on its own time, and at union expense) was to inform the general faculty and MCC community of the union decision, and to elaborate on the same arguments which were presented, and voted on, at the union meeting.

We may add, the same procedures--of open discussion and voting--were used in the Fall of 1972 to draw up the original Bill of Particulars. The same procedures, which are called "cowardly and perverse", were used during the "events" to which Chancellor Kibbee is referring in his letter of Dec. 6, 1972.

If "the primary work of the College [] is going to be carried forward", and if we are to rise above "distrust and suspicion", decisions must be made with the full participation of the faculty, and our differences must be resolved through open, democratic forms. While the PSC has made mistakes, it has operated openly and democratically through regularly scheduled chapter meetings.

Contrast this with the March 13 faculty meeting. After refusing a request for a recount to determine whether there was a quorum, President Draper walked out of the hall when he was asked to reconvene the meeting as a committee of the whole. This is a perfectly proper parliamentary procedure which would have allowed us to discuss the important issues before us.

Our commitment to academic democracy and accountability is more than rhetorical. This means that the ad hoc Committee must do more than simply issue a statement indicating that WE STAND BEHIND ALL OF THE ORIGINAL CHARGES THAT WE MADE. We are not "faceless", "gutless" people who hide from the responsibility of our actions. That is why we invite the five deans who made these charges to meet us face to face at an open forum, where in the true spirit of scholarly investigation we can sift fact from fiction in the charges and counter-charges that have been made.

For our part, we will bring reports from the 1972 College Safety Committee on fire violations in the "M" building. We will call on "M" building students to testify on present conditions. We will ask faculty teaching remedial courses in the "M" building to assess the effect of the physical plant on the success of these programs so vital to open admissions. And we will submit detailed evidence to back every charge we made, whether it be the replacement of elected chairmen, or cutbacks in financial aid.

We assume that the five deans on their part will not only help us to set up such a meeting, but having properly stressed the importance of accountability, will bring the books of the Dinner Committee so that we can determine (1) how many reams of promotional literature were sent out through the mailroom and at what cost, (2) how much money has been raised through the sale of tickets, and (3) how "all promotional expenses" are being met "out of the monies paid for tickets."

Our concern, however, goes deeper than the unauthorized use of college mailroom facilities for partisan purposes. A testimonial dinner for a college president who has final say on one's tenure and promotion is in and of itself intimidation. As individuals, we are vulnerable to such intimidation, but in numbers and organized opposition we have protection. The logical form of that opposition is a boycott and a picket line.

The purpose of the line is not counter-intimidation, but rather, information. Draper is using the dinner to tell people that he has the support of faculty, staff and students. We are picketing to make it clear that there is opposition to the testimonial and to Draper's policies.

The issues are clear. If you feel with us that Draper's policies do not merit confidence, boycott the dinner--or, better yet--join us on the picket line.

WE WILL PICKET FROM 6-7p.m.
MEET IN FRONT OF THE "B" BUILDING--
5:30 p.m., FRIDAY, MARCH 29th.

ad hoc Committee of the BMCC-PSC
to Boycott the President's Dinner

PICKET LINE — MEET AT B BLDG — 5:30 PM

