



City police arrest
58 BMCC'ers in May, 1970

2 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ STRIKE!





STRIKE!
STRIKE!
STRIKE!

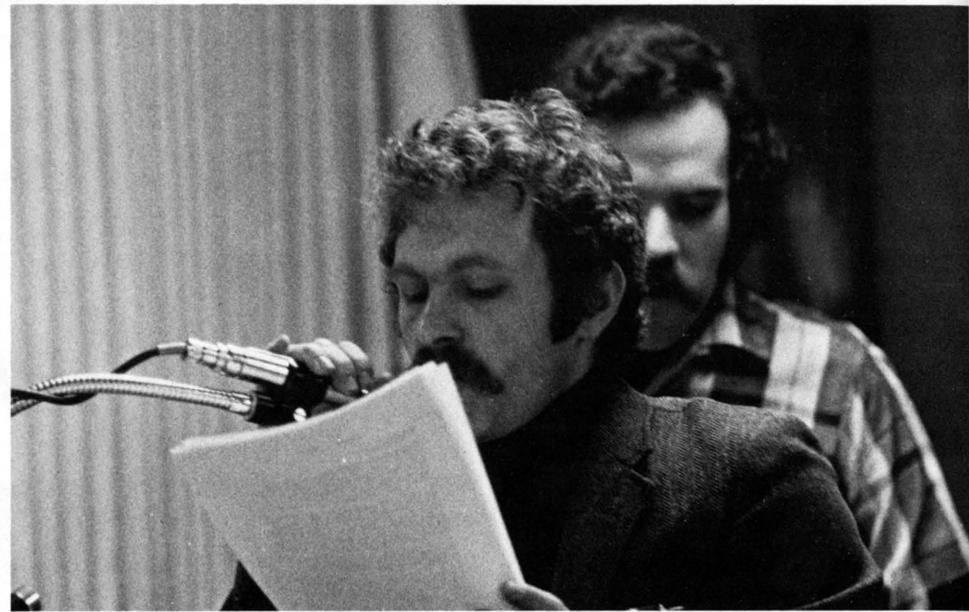
Ho. No. 151 has got to go!
RIGHT ON!
STRIKE
STRIKE!
Shut it down
STRIKE
RIGHT ON!



Ralph Hudgins

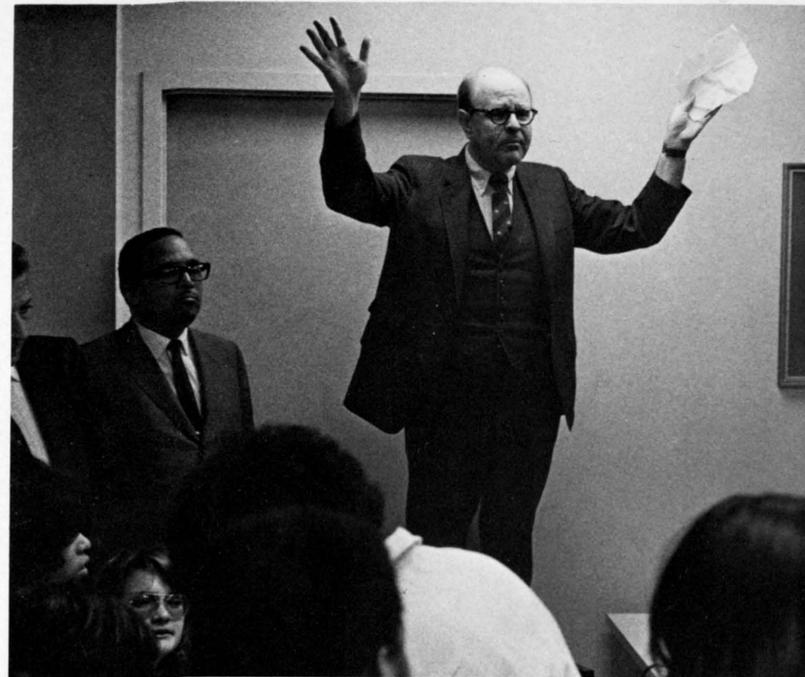


Prof. Jim Perlstein



(below) Louis Chessimard and Prof. Bill Freidheim at mike.





At 1:30, May 5, an official letter from the office of Pres. Block was read to a regrouped rally of students who had just closed down the school. The letter gave the President's official comment on the action: "The school will be closed for the rest of the day."

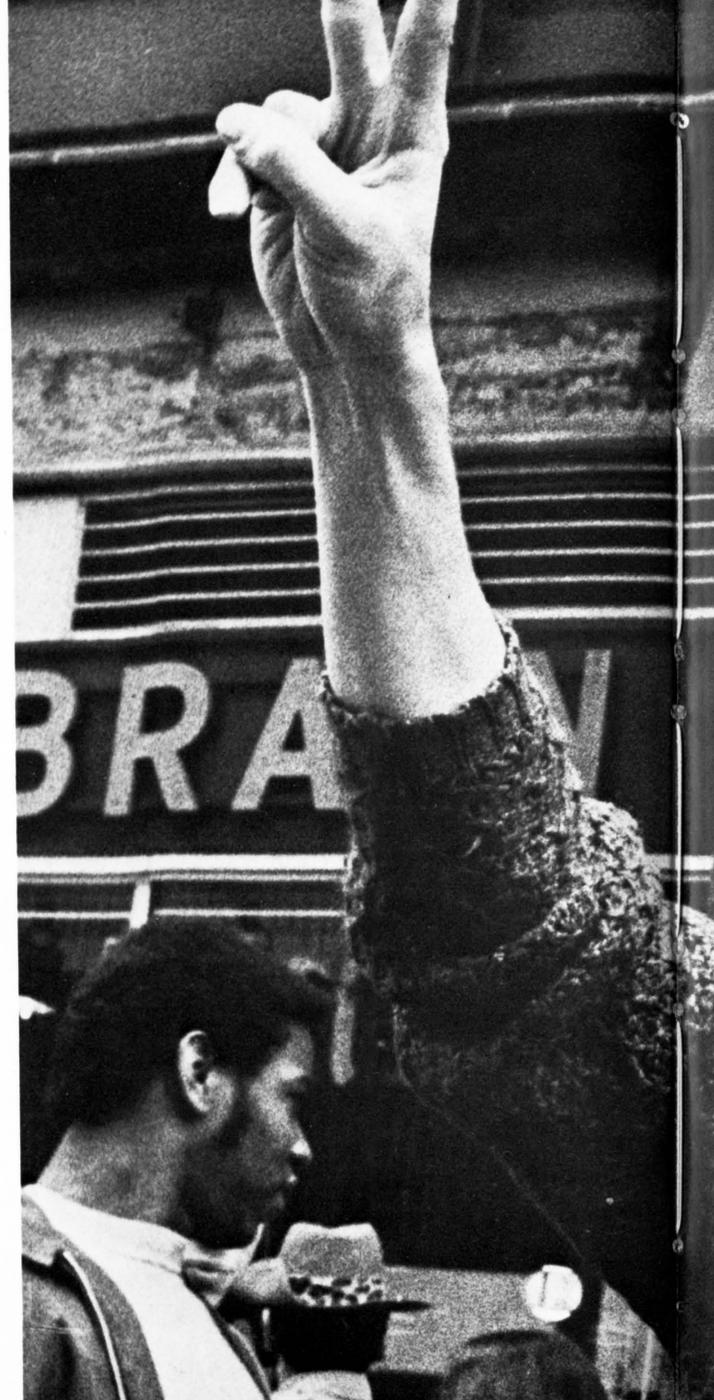
The reading met with a unanimous cheer from the students who had opened up the 230 block of rooms in the "A" building and turned it into an auditorium. The only dissenting voice was that of Ralph Hudgins who remarked that the President didn't close the school down but "We closed the school."

It was the climax of a relatively short action which began around 12:00 noon in the auditorium. Louis Chessimard spoke to the crowd of about 125 people about the demands of the students and the actions that should be taken. His speech revolved around the effort to keep the school closed and the classes empty until the demands were met. Miss Woronov and Mr. Perlstein of the English department spoke to the crowd about the "movement" and what had come to pass in light of the killings at Kent U. and Nixon's new military strategy in S. E. Asia. Prof. Perlstein pointed out that we should applaud the efforts of Presidents Block and Nixon in finally "opening our eyes."

Louis Chessimard continued on that point until the group broke down into a debate and a vote on what actions should be taken. The vote was nearly unanimous to close down the school and the crowd began leaving for the "B" building.

By-passing the elevators, the strikers moved up the staircase directly to the top floors, the strategy being to work their way down. They met very little resistance since most of the classrooms had been empty all day long. At the Bio Lab in room 301 some students locked themselves in at the approach of the demonstrators and did not leave until everyone had crowded outside the door, pounding and shouting for them to get out. The demonstration proceeded out of the building to the sound of the fire alarms, apparently satisfied that they had cleared out the building.

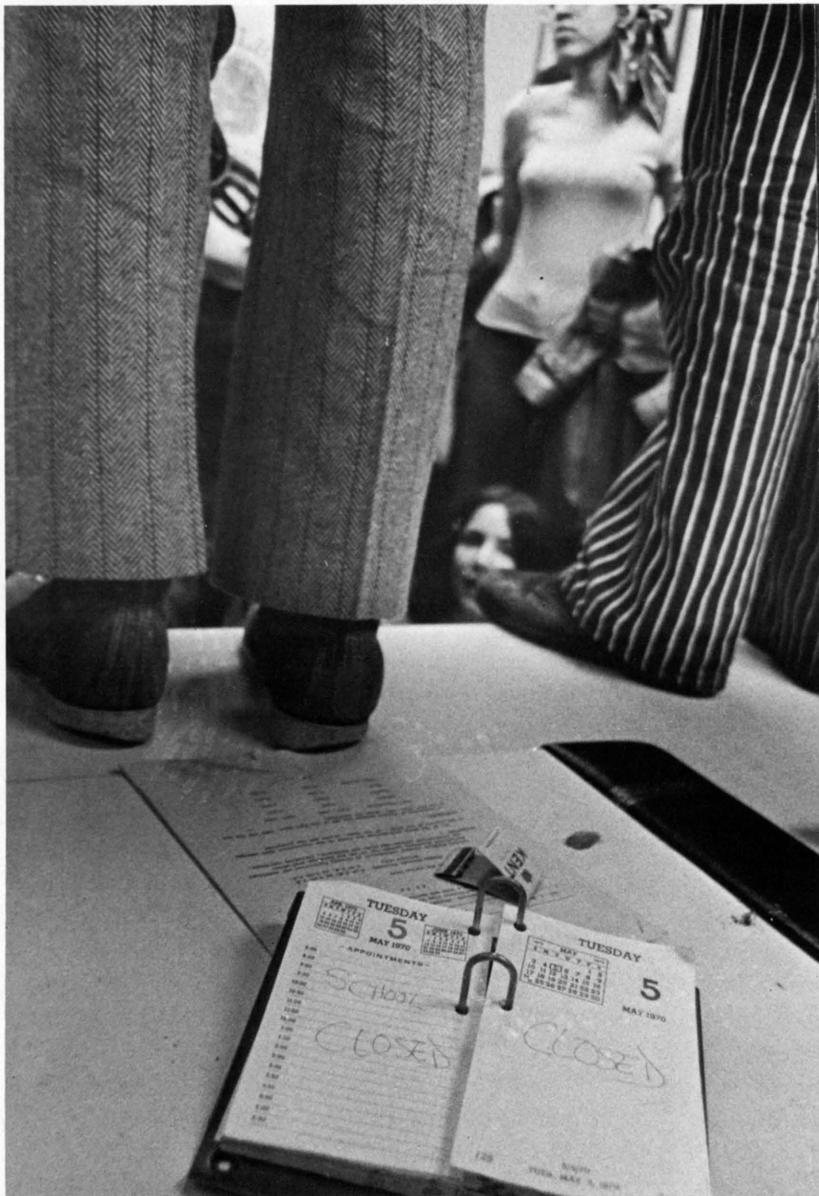
In three major groups, they returned chanting to the "A" building and proceeded directly to the third floor where they ended up storming the Registrar's offices. The workers locked themselves inside because as Pres. Block stated later, "they felt threatened." It was at this point that the President decided to call a conference to close down the school.



A BMCC student wearing a plastic President Nixon mask paraded in front of the "B-bldg." at the height of the 1970 Spring disorders.

BOROUGH OF
MANHATTAN
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE





(l. to r.) Dean Draper, President Block, Dean Leon Cohen.

Chanting "Strike!" and "Shut it down," over 70 student demonstrators marched from the "B" gym to the office of President Block and confronted him with a list of demands and a series of arguments revolving around the present economic crisis in the City University.

Along with the "regular demands" (withdraw all troops from Southeast Asia, free all political prisoners, cut all ties with the United States' "war machine," which seem to top everyone's list nowadays), there were more demands which seemed closer to home and at least more relevant to BMCC's situation today.

The two major issues — the founding of a child day-care center in the college and an expected increase in tuition fees — were argued back and forth for more than an hour with many sided discussions on a planned moratorium on the Cambodian affair and the BMCC bookstore. The demands of the college workers and the issue of non-representation of their union were also discussed.

Speaking about a day care center, Dean Leon Cohen said that he "was willing to work with a committee" and to do "everything in his power" to get a day care center for BMCC's use. Later President Block remarked that the Administration had had the idea for a day care center two years ago, but ran into too many difficulties with the City's strict regulations. One regulation states that a day care center must be on the ground floor of the building being used, and BMCC's facilities fall short of this requirement.

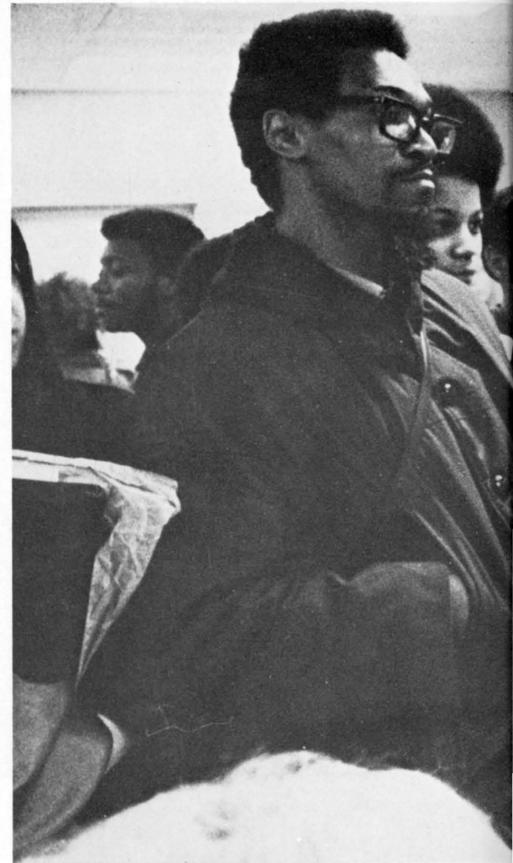
But the case of an expected rise in tuition costs carried, without a doubt, the majority of emotional appeal. According to Pres. Block,

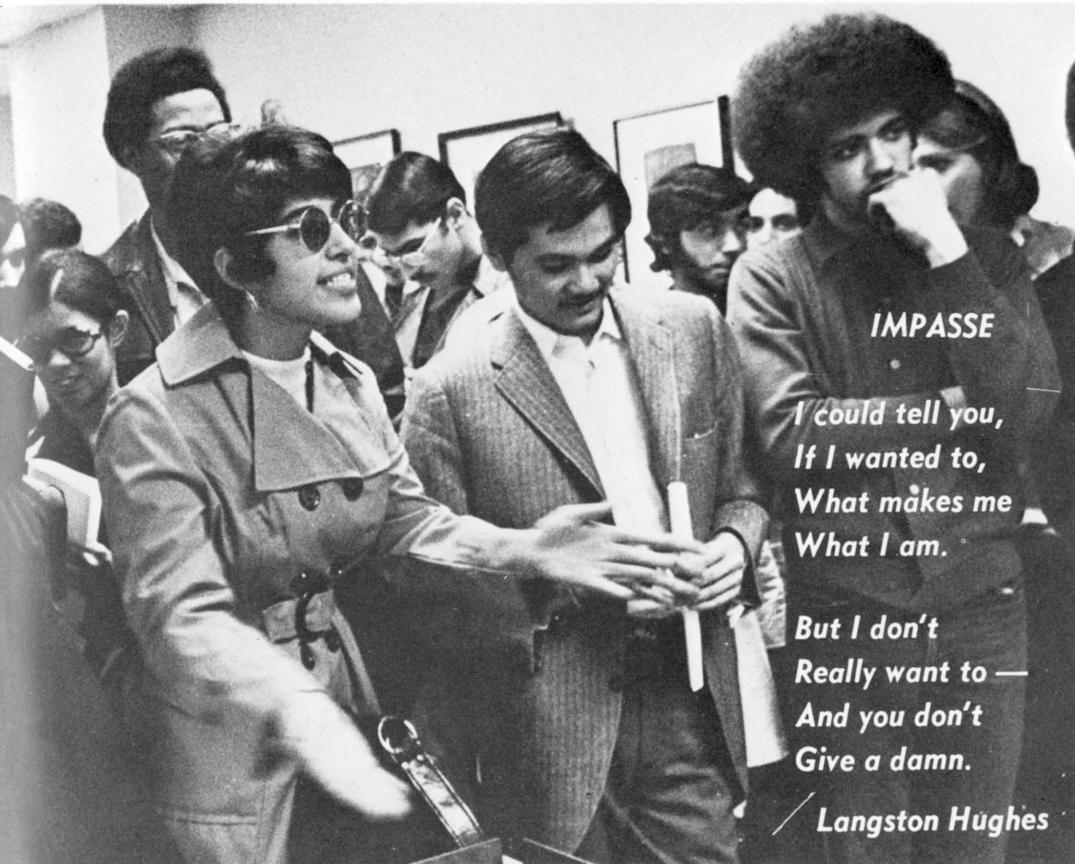
there has, as yet, not been any increase in the fees. The matter will be resolved by the Board of Higher Education on May 15. The administration says that they are trying to bring the Mayor into the discussion. Pres. Block stressed that there are alternatives to any increase which our picket signs tell us will bring the fees up to \$151. One alternative would be to cut the proposed budget, formed with the new "Open Admissions" policy in mind. The President's own opinion of an increase was that "any increase in rates is abominable."

The group obviously wasn't satisfied with Block's opinion. He was asked not to collect any fees at registration, but his reply maintained a position that this was a problem involving the entire University system in the City and that he does not have the power to take such independent action. His answer was the same to an appeal to close down the school to protest the increase. President Block emphasized that he was against the increase but that "I must fight my own way." He gave his support to the group "But it has to be done my way." Amid squeals of approval, President Block was asked to put his job on the line by taking these independent actions.

Aside from the President and two Deans, the most vocal participants in the group included Maria Ramos, President of the Student Government. (TWC) Ralph Hudgins, and Louis Chessimard; candidate for SG Pres., (TWC).

Chessimard ended the meeting by calling for a 9 a.m. demonstration at 100 Centre Street (seat of the City gov't) the following morning and made clear the group's desire to keep the college closed indefinitely.





IMPASSE

*I could tell you,
If I wanted to,
What makes me
What I am.*

*But I don't
Really want to —
And you don't
Give a damn.*

Langston Hughes

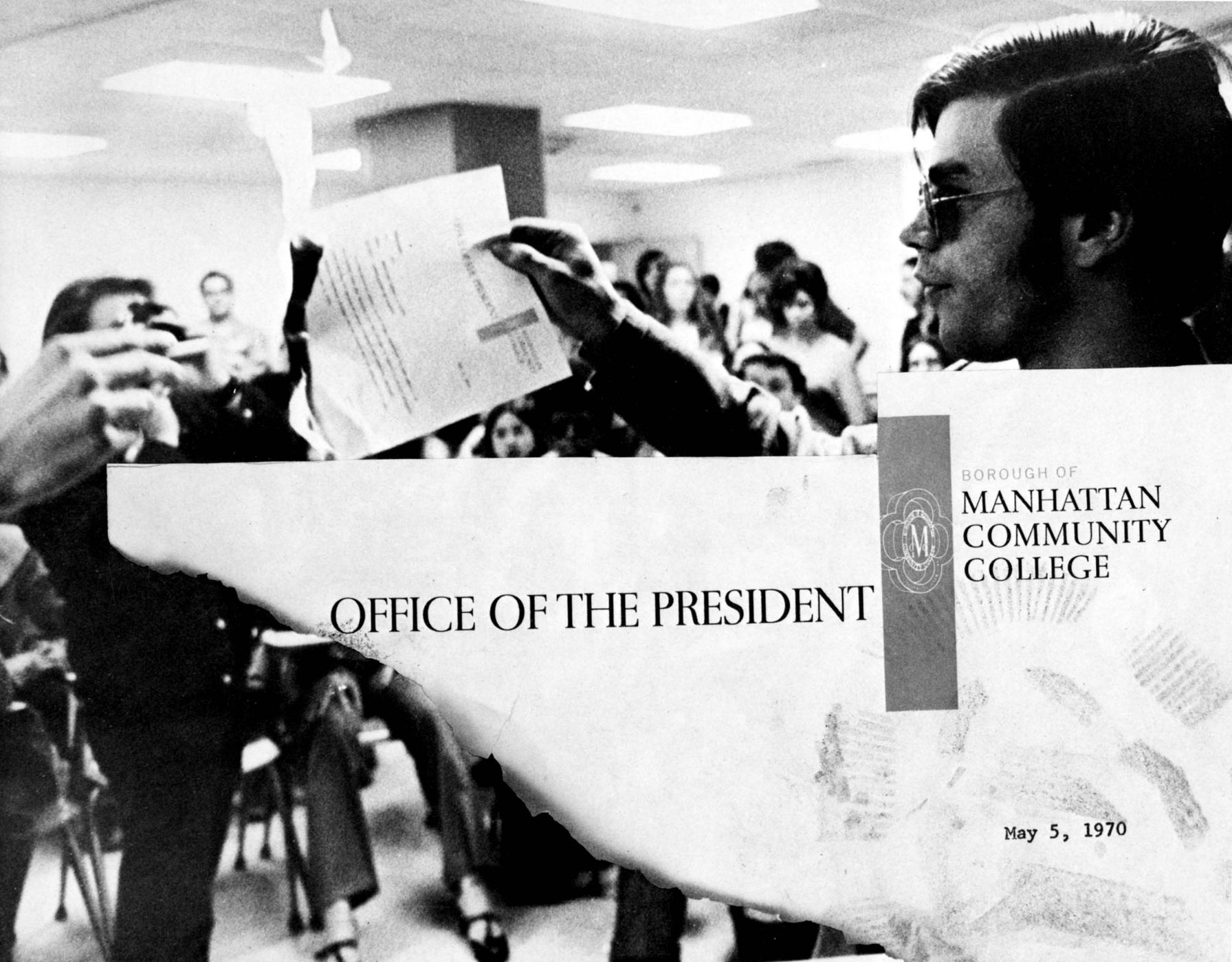






Louis Chessimard outlines grievances



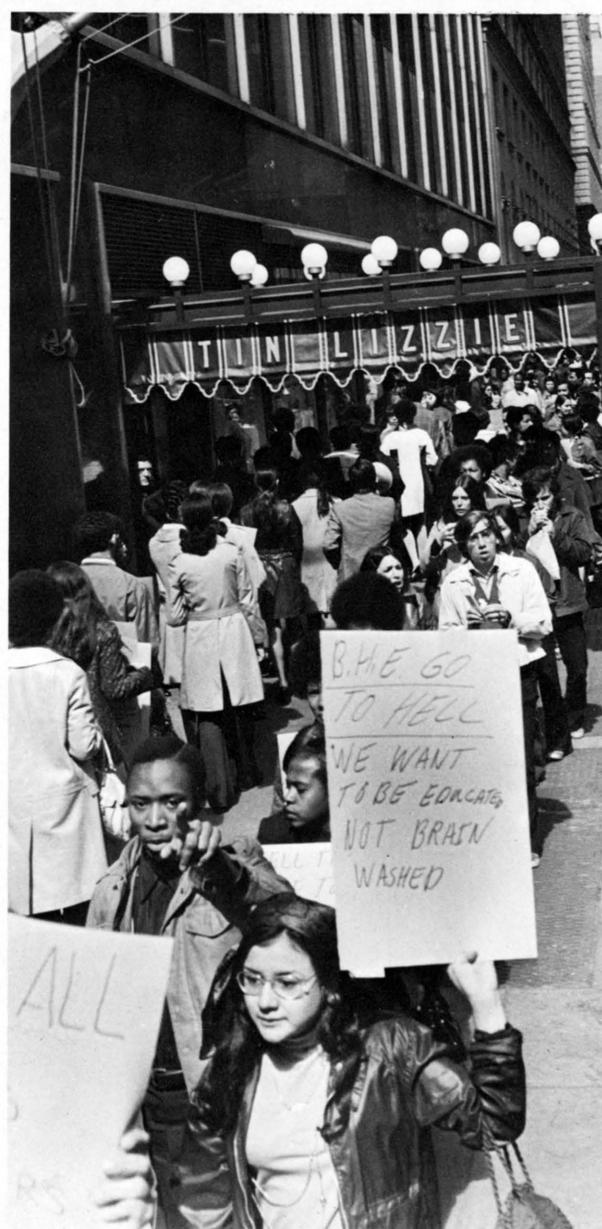


OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



BOROUGH OF
MANHATTAN
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

May 5, 1970



1968 - \$37
1969 - \$47
1970 - \$151
1971 - ?
WHO ARE THEY
KIDDING?!

BOROUGH OF
MANHATTAN
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE





An unknown number of people slept-in at BMCC on May 6-7 in order to keep the school building open for use in Thursday's protest rallies and meetings. No one knew for sure just how many people did sleep in because they were spread throughout the "A" building, taking any room they could find. About thirty people slept in the "A" lounge. There was no violence and no news of police action.

A similar sleep-in was cancelled at the South campus of CCNY because a police action was threatened if the campus wasn't cleared by 11 p.m. The only report of police at BMCC came about 7:30 a.m., when word spread that three policemen were in the hall. At eight, police were seen standing outside of the building.

At dawn everyone pitched in to clean-up and get ready for the day's action. A TV set was pulled out of the closet in the "A" lounge and whoever was around watched the Little Rascals and cartoons — after the news!



MAY 12 — Last night two busloads of TPF police (approx. 125 men) unloaded at the doors of BMCC's "A" building and were joined by the administration and they then ejected about 30 students who were sleeping-in in order to keep the building open. The doors were locked once everyone was cleared out of the building.

This morning more than 100 students marched into President Block's office. Proclaiming that BMCC was now "a people's college," they demanded that Block and the five deans leave the premises. The president and the five deans left the building shortly thereafter and entered a taxicab, destination unknown.

At the latest report, about 200 students were milling around inside the "A" building, undecided as to what to do. Twenty patrolmen were stationed outside of the building, also undecided as to what their next action will be. Most of the doors in the building remain locked and the students are the official power now.