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Free Puerto Rico, Right Now!



TWENTY THOUSAND PEOPLE of all nationalities will fill Madison Square Garden on October 27th in support of Puerto Rican independence. It will be the largest demonstration around this issue in the history of the United States.

Puerto Rico's history is filled with struggle for self-determination and independence, from its earliest days as a colony of Spain. Spain was forced to grant autonomy to Puerto Rico in 1897, but this developing freedom came to a quick end with the invasion by U.S. troops 8 months later. Puerto Rico was again a colony—this time of the United States.

The U.S. has continually tried to disguise its colonial rule in Puerto Rico, and to deny the existence of the independence movement. It has used police attacks on demonstrators, as in Ponce in 1937 when 22 people were killed. And five Puerto Rican nationalists have been in jail in the U.S. for over 20 years. The media never cover pro-independence actions, and even ignored completely the U.N. resolution of 1973 which declared Puerto Rico to be a classic colony, in that its society, resources, and economy are based totally on the needs of North American business. The U.N. resolution also declared that Puerto Rico has the right to independence, and instructed the U.S. and U.S. corporations in Puerto Rico not to interfere—economically or otherwise—in the decolonization of the island.

Important as the U.N. resolution has been, independence for Puerto Rico will not come from words on paper. The people of Puerto Rico, supported by people of all nationalities, will free their nation as part of the struggle against U.S. imperialism around the world.

HARD TIMES AHEAD

WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION is busy issuing reams and reams of press releases about how well things are going at MCC, a disaster is looming for students and faculty.

So far, the administration has found a way to deal with only one-third of its \$1.4 million budget cut. The rest, nearly a million dollars, will be chopped away from spring semester costs.

The cuts that will be made won't hit the \$35,000-a-year deans—since the deans decide who gets cut! The cuts will come down on faculty and

staff.

Massive faculty firings will mean even larger, more crowded classes and less and less education going on. Heavy staff cuts will mean fewer and slower services essential to teachers and students, e.g. in the mail room, at registration, financial aid office, etc.

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AND WHILE MORE financial aid seems to be available this year, the funds that most MCC students rely on to go to school—the Basic Opportunity Grants (BOG)—are getting the hatchet in

the fall. Congress has voted less money for the grants.

Not only will there be less money, but it will be spread out among more and more people; the amount that a family can earn and still be eligible is higher, so once again poor and lower-middle-income people will be scrambling for less and less.

This means that a whole lot of people will simply be unable to go to school.

HARD TIMES AHEAD. PREPARE TO FIGHT.

WOULD YOU RENT THIS BUILDING??

One year after a massive resistance to the use of the M Building by Manhattan Community College, BMCC is still using the building, and most of the programs in it are still operating under the same inadequate conditions as last year. What happened, and why?

Last year faculty and students in the M Building focused on the following major problem areas:

- Elevators
- Toilets
- Lighting
- Health Hazards
- Ventilation
- Heating
- Fire Hazards

In a letter to President Draper they stated that the M Building prevented learning and was physically dangerous. They also attacked the administration for having allowed these conditions to exist for three years, and for its lack of concern and responsibility for Open Admissions students. (The majority of programs in the Building are for the development of skills crucial to all other college work: Reading, Math Remediation, and English as a Second Language.)

The college administration at first tried to ignore the issue and then finally, after more letters, petitions, TV coverage, and the threat of more militant action such as a strike, became sufficiently embarrassed to promise a move to a new building by Sept. '74. Many faculty and students accepted this promise "on good faith", and by the time it became clear that the move was not, in fact, going to take place it was already the beginning of summer vacation and too late to do anything.

The administration has made certain repairs on the M Building (for example the installation of a fire alarm system, which hopefully works, and repairs on the elevators so that none have broken yet). These changes were made ONLY because organized student and faculty action made it clear that the administration could no longer get by with last year's conditions.

But most conditions in the M Building can never be improved enough to make it a good building for classes. As one M Bldg. student told his teacher last week, "I can't work in this classroom for two hours --there's no air." It's true - there is no air in the M Building, and very little light either, because there are no windows in the entire building. And the ventilation system -if one exists- is terrible. In addition, the heating and cooling system makes it 80 on the sixth floor and freezing at the same time in the reading lab on the third floor. The lack of light and air also produces an extremely oppressive atmosphere, like that of a huge cave or a bomb shelter. Teachers who often

have to spend all day in the building without going out say that this is their major complaint. But the complaints could go on and on: the rooms all echo and are noisy, the elevator service is too slow, etc. etc.

And this year the administration had the nerve to announce "with pride" that it had found nice, clean, bright \$150,000/yr. space for additional offices.

The conditions in the M Building continue to look like insufficient attention to the basic skills needs of students, a negligent attitude towards the Department of Developmental Skills (many of whose teachers still do not have desks, much less offices), and an interest in undermining Open Admissions rather than supporting it.

Clearly students and faculty will have to fight again on this issue if they expect better conditions, because clearly the administration has no commitment to education at BMCC, and is not going to "give" them anything. But last year's effort will certainly provide a greater awareness of what has to be done to win a struggle when confronting an administration like that at BMCC.

Who Elected SBG?

OVER THE SUMMER, President Draper quietly returned control of student government to SBG - Students for Better Government.

Last Spring, the Honest Ballot Association threw out the results of the student government election because SBG and the administration violated a pre-election agreement by denying two opposing groups - Students for Unity and Democracy (SUD) and Third World Coalition (TWC) - access to duplicating machines, mail-room facilities and \$175 to run their campaigns. As a result, neither SUD or TWC could effectively publicize their candidates or platforms.

Only 22% of the student body voted in the election with less than 10% voting for the winning SBG ticket. Draper has refused to call a new election and has given SBG every seat on the student government.

Draper has not certified the results of some past elections because less than 30% of the student body voted. But his decision this summer was consistent with his administration's past support for SBG-- support to the point where in the Spring of 1973, the administration even helped to manage SBG's election campaign.

Tiger Paper is published whenever possible by an editorial collective of Manhattan Community College faculty.

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Untenured members: anonymous to protect them from administrative harassment.

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Which Side Is Draper On?

THE CONTINUING scandals of President Draper's administration have made it easier for state officials to justify budget cuts and for the media to present MCC and open admissions in a bad light.

Last May, the New York Times, in a front page story, used Draper's incredible mismanagement of the school as a cover for a slanderous attack against MCC students and open admissions. Then in July, the Times printed a piece about MCC's Urban Center, where the administration is mishandling a lot of money and lot of students are paying the consequences. The article reported that despite a 300% increase to \$1.3 million in its budget, the Urban Center had placed only 32 students in jobs as compared to 166 in 1968.

This summer, state officials slashed MCC's budget by \$1.4 million--a cut that students and faculty will feel the full force of next semester.

What Draper, the Times and those who slice community college budgets share in common is that their actions and policies undermine open admissions. With Draper, it is more than just mismanagement. His administration, like those before it, never really fought budget cuts, but rather enforced those cuts by laying-off faculty, packing classrooms and allowing bad facilities to get even worse.

MCC students have consistently opposed the policies of Draper's administration and fought budget cuts, and last May, led by nursing students and faculty, organized a militant demonstration in front of the Times to protest all of the lies that paper printed about the college and open admissions.

Open admissions at CUNY was won as a result of militant struggle by third world and working class students in 1969. Since then, it has been under continuing attack. But the actions of MCC students make clear that they are ready to defend with the same militancy what their brothers and sisters won in the 60's.

FORD'S PHONY UNITY - A NO-WIN PLAN



IT'S GOING ON 3 MONTHS since Gerald Ford took over at the White House with the claim that "the nightmare is over."

A lot of people at the time probably believed, or hoped, that Ford could turn things around, stop the cover-ups and scandals, and start dealing with the country's economic problems. But by now it's obvious that nothing has changed for the better.

In fact, things have gotten worse. On top of the Nixon pardon and the appointment of Rockefeller as V-P, there's a tremendous economic storm in the making. Prices are rising at a faster rate week by week, unemployment and underemployment are on the upswing, overall economic production is falling, and spending for public services like education and transportation is being cut.

Why are we facing these problems? What can we do about them? Neither Ford nor any of the "economic experts" are going to give us a good explanation or a real solution, because their first concern is saving the capitalist profit system. They may slice the pie in slightly different ways, but all of them give the biggest wedge to the owners of the corporations and the banks. Under capitalism, that's the way it has to be.

Consider this: even in the last year of sharp economic downturn, big business profits are up 18% over last year. How did the corporations manage it? In the tried-and-true capitalist way—by raising prices, laying off and firing workers, and speeding-up the ones who are still on the job. It's not their fault, they say; they have to do these things—to keep up their profit rates. And they're right. Under capitalism, that's the way it has to be.

This isn't just happening in the factories, it's happening in offices too. Last week a strike hit one of the biggest publishers, Macmillan, after it fired nearly 300 employees with no advance warning. Way before the mass firings, Macmillan workers had begun to unionize, realizing that working in an office, even in a semi-professional job, is no protection against what's coming down from the corporations as they try to keep their profits up.

It would be a big mistake, though, to see these attacks by the corporations as a sign of their strength. The fact is that they and the government that represents them is in a genuine crisis. Politically and economically, their system is falling apart.

Politically, on the home scene, Watergate, the Nixon pardon, the exposure of the CIA's role in Chile, and the new scandals about Rocky (\$2 million worth of gifts to friends who "happened" to hold political office, plus \$900,000 worth of tax dodging in just 5 years!) have crea-

ted such distrust that the ruling class is finding it harder and harder to maintain people's faith in the system.

Economically, the system is experiencing a new thing, "stagflation"—rising prices and economic stagnation (slowdown of production). The only way big business can get itself out of its bind without risking a Great Depression like the one in the 1930's is to keep prices up and wages down, while squeezing more labor out of every worker. The government is supposed to do its part by cutting back on non-military spending, giving tax benefits to the corporations, and gouging more tax-money out of the majority of the people.

This is just what Ford's anti-inflation plan tries to do. But the "economic experts" have warned that Ford's present plan isn't drastic enough to take care of the crisis. So we can eventually expect him to come up with a "better" one—better for the corporations, that is, and worse for the people.

But what if the American people refuse to be speeded-up, wage-controlled, taxed, and denied vital social services? Then big business is in a deeper hole. And they know it. Ford knows it too. So his main job as president is to put this program over on the people. That's why he's been going around preaching "national unity," "productivity," and "sacrifice" ever since he got into the White House.

The soft-sell isn't working. People just aren't falling for this unity-and-sacrifice rhetoric. The last 9 months have seen the biggest wave of strikes since World War II—strikes for higher wages to keep up

with inflation, strikes to gain unions as a protection against profit-hungry bosses. Protests have flared over cuts in educational programs, child care, and health services, too, and these protests will get bigger and more frequent as the cuts multiply. And while all this is happening, more and more people are questioning the very system itself, wondering if we have to live this way.

The resistance of people to attacks on their living standards is leading the pushers for the ruling class to use other tactics. Like trying to whip up a kind of wartime spirit of patriotism and solidarity (Ford's WIN buttons, WIN gardens, etc.). Like trying to incite "America First" feelings (listen to the latest Coca-Cola ads on radio and TV). Like trying to direct people's anger against "enemies" abroad (e.g., the oil-producing countries, which were considered our friends as long as they let U.S. corporations rip off their resources). Like trying to stir up racial conflicts and make people fight each other for crumbs instead of uniting to demand enough for everybody's needs.

These are hard and confusing times. A lot of people think that a "liberal" Democrat like Teddy Kennedy could restore the country to working order and remedy many of the economic and social injustices of our society. In our next issue we'll take up the question of why liberal politicians like Kennedy can't provide any better solution to our situation than Ford and Rocky can.

The system can't be reformed—but it can be changed.



