



## WHAT THE STRUGGLE'S ABOUT

**TIGER PAPER:** Why did you feel that the struggle over who should direct the Black Studies Program was so important that you were ready to risk getting arrested and going to jail?

**JOHN BARLOW:** The direction that Black Studies takes depends in large part on the nature of its leadership, and for that reason it is essential that Black students have equal input when major decisions are made.

Professor Nwambeze has academic credentials that are unquestionable. But his relationship with students, and his understanding of the needs and problems of the Black community are void. Nwambeze has refused to consult with students on any issue. But at the same time he capitalizes on their struggles for his own personal advancement.

Student struggle created Black Studies, but he refuses to join the struggle. As a faculty member in Black Studies, in no way has he contributed to the many meetings and confrontations with the administration or the Board of Higher Education around the issue of autonomy for Black and for Puerto Rican Studies.

**LORNA KELLY:** Black Studies is about Black understanding of Black people. Professor Nwambeze (the present Director of Black Studies--T.P.) has a European understanding of Black People because of his background and education. He only deals with students on a superficial level. He sits in his office. He isolates himself from his stu-

dents.

Sonia Sanchez pioneered Black Studies when there were no Black Studies programs in the country. Not only is she academically qualified, but she knows what students academic and personal needs are and she deals with those needs on a person-to-person basis.

**RAFAEL DUMONT:** As a Puerto Rican student, I know that Black and Puerto Rican Studies go hand-in-hand. We started together, we struggled together, we can only win together. We are the right and the left hand of the same thing. If Black Studies is made more relevant to the needs of Black People, Puerto Rican Studies will become more relevant to our needs.

**WILLIE TERRY:** Consciousness of Black students is higher than ever and the struggle also must move to a higher level. Lackeys and Uncle Toms must move on out.

We understand the need for worldwide Black unity. Sister Sonia understands that need. She takes a stand. She can't be manipulated. She has the interests of the mass of Black and Puerto Rican students always in mind. As an originator of Black Studies in this country she is qualified and she is needed.

**ALBA SANCHEZ:** Both Blacks and Puerto Ricans are oppressed, and to end oppression we must struggle together. Black and Puerto Rican Studies depend on each other. Without one, there wouldn't be the other.

Black Studies and Puerto Rican

Studies are not just about books, but about living and struggling to change our lives. We must learn what we can do with our history and our culture.

**JOHN GLENN:** A change in leadership would have important ramifications for the quality of education for Black and Puerto Rican students

Presently, the Department is run by an African scholar, a brother, who does a good job as a teacher. But the Department has important extra-academic purposes. Students come from the Black community with all the problems associated with living in that community: unemployment, inadequate housing, inferior health care--the whole thing. We feel that Black Studies has got to address itself to these problems in some useful way.

Black Studies is not 9-5. If you deal 9-5 you're not qualified. The problems don't disappear at 5 PM. The twenty-four hour-a-day racism of the system must be dealt with.

Inside of school we have got to be involved in remediation and tutorial and courses for the community. We are close enough to the sources of the problem and the experiences that produce it, that I know we could do a better job of planning and running these programs than is now being done.

Without the creative energy of people like Sonia Sanchez, Black Studies cannot be anything but a failure. Sonia has the knowledge, the experience and the outside support to make a truly creative Black Studies program a reality.

## interview with sonia sanchez—see page 2

# SONIA SANCHEZ



Professor Sonia Sanchez: "Being responsible to the community--this is true education. You have to lead out of darkness."

THE RECENT STRUGGLES over Black Studies at Manhattan Community College are not over the different personalities of Professor Sanchez and Professor Nwabueze. They are not frivolous power plays. They are over the very real differences concerning the substance and content of Black Studies courses.

As one student said, "It seems we have no direction in Black Studies--we have courses but no direction."

That needed direction is what's at issue. Professor Sanchez has expressed willingness to work with Professor Nwabueze. But he has categorically refused to work with her. As an appointee of the administration, it is his job to keep control: to attempt to make the courses dry and tame, to squeeze out any real content that would help Black people fight for their liberation and self-determination.

Nwabueze is Draper's man. Draper is Rockefeller's man. Rockefeller and Nixon and others like them want to strangle Third World communities in order to prevent the fight of Black and Latin people for self-determination--for control over their own housing, health care, jobs and education.

Sonia Sanchez is a fighter for the self-determination of Black people. Her ideas for the direction of Black Studies, ideas which are shared by many students, reflect this.

On February 22nd the Tiger Paper interviewed Sonia Sanchez about her vision of Black Studies and the kind of educational direction needed.

First she discussed the events of the last few months, and mentioned that President Draper told her several weeks ago: "I'm with you 100% in your quest for the Chair of Black Studies." (He has obviously

changed his mind!) "But the point is," Professor Sanchez said, "I was not out 'questing for the Chair'. The students needed changes in Black Studies and they found me."

She told Tiger Paper she believes in a rotation system for department chairpersons--two-year terms of office with co-chairpersons prepared to take over. "We should all work together--with innovative, communalistic leadership. None of this 'I am the chairman!' stuff."

"This is a community college," Professor Sanchez continued. "Unless you engage students in what's happening in the community--and all over the world--you're only offering dry intellectual courses, like any other courses, that don't mean anything to the community in Harlem or in all the other Harlems in New York City.

"We have to have term papers as part of courses. Yes. But more than this we need projects to connect Black intellect with the Black community. We have to be responsible to the people in the community who haven't been able to come to college. We need courses that are also meaningful and helpful to them.

"In the course I teach on Black Writing, the students write plays." But it doesn't stop there. "I ask them to perform these plays in three or four day care centers for children in Harlem.

"Performances, surveys, work in men's and women's prisons, seminars during the summer for students coming to Manhattan Community College for the first time, tutorial programs--we need these as part of the syllabi for Black Studies courses to help all the people who can't get here.

"We have to get rid of elitism--people have to stop being snobs, stop thinking that college makes them much better than other people.

"Being professors has to mean more than professing in a classroom. We're talking about professing outside the classroom!

"Being responsible to the community--this is true education. You have to lead out of darkness."

## CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT

ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, more than two hundred Black and Puerto Rican students and faculty went to the office of President Draper to express their discontent over the poor quality of the Black Studies Program under Draper's appointee, Chingolu Nwabueze.

They presented a constructive alternative: the appointment of Sonia Sanchez, a founder of the first Black Studies Program in the country (San Francisco State), and a teacher in Black Studies at MCC who has won the confidence of students.

After a brief exchange, the President refused to discuss the matter further and left. The students and faculty remained in the waiting room of the President's office until Saturday afternoon when the police were called to arrest them. At that point they decided to leave.

The following Tuesday students and faculty went back to the President's office and asked to speak to him again about the Black and Puerto Rican Studies Program. He refused to see them.

The students and faculty were orderly and did not block any passages or obstruct access to any room. They asked the office staff in the waiting room if they felt uncomfortable or were intimidated by their presence. The office staff assured them that they were quite comfortable in the situation. The students and faculty sat down and prepared to wait.

President Draper never came out from behind the locked door of his office. The Administration called the police and more than forty Black and Puerto Rican students and faculty were arrested and taken to jail where they were detained until well after midnight. They were booked

on the charge of "criminal trespass" (how can you trespass in your own school?).

Not content with this degree of harrassment and punishment, the following week the Administration suspended these students from the college. Draper wants to keep the students off campus and to bully the rest of us into silence and inaction.

The suspended students are now caught in the following situation: they must either stay out of classes and receive automatic failures, according to the new compulsory attendance rule (the only one in CUNY), or attend classes and risk being arrested on a second "criminal trespass" charge.

An arrest and a suspension constitute double jeopardy; another arrest would mean triple jeopardy--being punished three times for one alleged offence. This is cruel and unusual punishment.

FOUR SHORT MONTHS ago, Edgar Draper resorted to a court injunction to head off a faculty vote of no-confidence against him. The rights and interests of the faculty meant nothing to him then, and they still don't. Yet all of a sudden Draper is casting himself as the faculty's friend and protector, in an effort to make teachers his shield against demands for the appointment of Sonia Sanchez as head of Black Studies, and for independent Black and Puerto Rican Studies departments.

In a full-page, single-space letter to the faculty, written after he had called in police to arrest 42 people, Draper never once mentions that three of the people arrested were faculty members--Sonia Sanchez, John Glenn, and Jim Blake.

Three untenured Black faculty members choose to be arrested in a struggle side by side with Black and Puerto Rican students--and Draper writes his letter as if it had never happened!

Why did he suppress that important fact? Because by not mentioning it he could pretend that the main issue is "faculty integrity", instead of the quality and independence of Black and Puerto Rican Studies at MCC.

The one who has most consistently attacked the interests and integrity of the faculty on this campus is Edgar Draper himself. He has arbitrarily fired faculty members, like Edith Robbins and David Kahn. He has refused to grant promotions recommended by both departmental and college-wide personnel and budget committees, as in the case of Mike Rosenbaum in the Math department. He gave Dean Sample Pittman early tenure despite the unanimous recom-

# MCC FACULTY: which side are you on?

mendation by Pittman's department that he was incompetent and should be let go. He has appointed chairmen against the express wishes of department members, as he did twice within the last three years in the English Department.



These outrages, and a host of others, were fresh in faculty minds four months ago. When the faculty union, the Professional Staff Congress, sampled opinion about Draper's governance of the school to see if it should call for a no-confidence ballot, it concluded that Draper would surely be condemned when a vote

was taken. Draper only saved himself from that humiliation by getting an injunction against the ballot.

Is the faculty now going to unite behind Draper against three of their fellow faculty members and against the interests of the Black and Puerto Rican students?

The three untenured faculty who were arrested have shown their courage and commitment. The Black Faculty Association has also made its choice: it voted to support the student demands for Nwabueze's resignation and the appointment of Sonia Sanchez, and last week sent a delegation to Draper informing him of their opposition to his policies.

We think the time has come for the rest of us to make a choice. The faculty can't continue to run from pillar to post, alternately outraged by Draper and his administration, and fearful that students will take away some of their limited power.

The faculty can choose to be isolated in the middle. Or we can unite with students who have shown in the past that they can be strong allies (in their support of Edith Robbins, David Kahn, Jose Antonio Irizarry, for example).

Only by uniting with students around concerns we all share can we move forward.

## sonia censored— who's next?

Ever since Sonia Sanchez came to Manhattan Community College with fresh ideas and outspoken views on education, she has been subjected to continual administrative harassment and attempts at intimidation.

The administration's efforts to censor, punish, and terrorize Professor Sanchez have serious implications for all teachers at MCC.

For example, if one teacher is told to "recall" her syllabus--and the rest of us sit silently without a word of protest--the administration with the help of those department chairmen who are "yes men" will not hesitate in the future to recall the syllabus of any course they don't approve of, and make further inroads against academic freedom.

The following are some of the ways in which the administration at MCC has harassed Professor Sanchez:

■ Last year the College-Wide Committee on Personnel and Budget attempted to fire her.

■ Professor Nwabueze refused to let her teach "The Black Woman", a course she created, and has taught at City College, Rutgers, and the University of Pittsburg.

■ Recently Dean Pollack has been collecting a dossier on her, writing to all the places where she has worked, gathering material about her.

■ On February 22nd, a policeman was stationed outside her classroom door.

■ An attempt has been made to interfere with the content of the syllabus and examinations in her "Black Writers" course this semester. One (out of four) of her midterm questions reads:

Examine one insurrection here in this country (Watts, Newark, Harlem, etc.). In essay form:

- Explore causes for insurrections
- Explain why they have "failed"
- Discuss why it's impossible to begin and conclude one successfully in 1973

In response to her midterm and to her syllabus, Professor Nwabueze sent the following memorandum to Professor Sanchez:

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
Intradepartmental Memorandum

TO: Prof. S. Sanchez

DATE: February 20, 1973

FROM: Prof. Nwabueze

SUBJECT: Revising Of Syllabus  
BLK 233 - Contemporary Blk Writers

This confirms our conversation of this afternoon February 20, 1973, on the subject of deleting items 1, 2, and 3 assigned to the class as part of the midterm examination. It was also recommended that the copies of the syllabus already distributed to the class be recalled for these reasons:

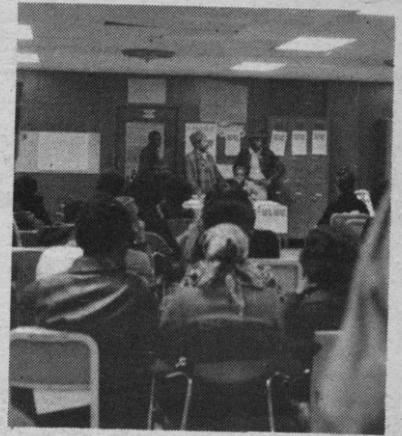
- The subject of "Insurrection" as a writing assignment conflicts with the educational goals of the course, as approved by the appropriate Committees of the College.
- This assignment is also subject to various political and legal interpretations.

I support your decision to clarify this issue in a memo to the Deans of Liberal Art and Faculty.

Thank you.

cc: Dean Courevitch  
Dean Pollack

# FOUR YEARS OF STRUGGLE



THE STRUGGLE OVER Black and Puerto Rican Studies has been going on for four years.

In the spring of 1969, after President Murray H. Block had refused to establish any kind of program, students occupied the "B" building and demanded that the administration set up a department. The students left the building when Block, backed up by a faculty resolution, promised to go to Albany to get permission from the state regents to create a department. In the interim, he appointed a student-faculty committee to coordinate an inter-departmental program of Third World Studies.

Block was stalling when he said that he needed the regents' okay. Students quickly realized that the program he established was a farce because the student-faculty coordinating committee did not have the power to hire teachers or supervise course content.

A year later, in May 1970, Block resigned when over 1,000 students, in a tremendous show of solidarity, occupied the college for several weeks after the administration had tried to stop their movement by closing the school. Students, and their supporters among faculty and staff, organized around many issues--Black and Puerto Rican Studies; a child care center; the Jackson and Kent State murders; the U.S. invasion of Cambodia; and programs to serve the community. The administration regained control of the buildings only after it brought in the police to arrest 54 students and two faculty on charges that were later thrown out of court.

The new president, Edgar Draper, tried to silence student discontent with promises, and limited autonomy for the Black and Puerto Rican Studies Program which for the first time had partial control over its curriculum and staff. (Continued pressure, however, was mounted against Draper so that he had to grant one of the most important demands--a child care center.)

In the Spring of 1970 the faculty, in support of the students, passed a resolution calling for a department of Black and Puerto Rican Studies. Draper, like Block before him, claimed that it was impossible because the higher authorities had tied his hands.

The following school year (1970-71) Draper tried to assert administrative control over the existing program by firing the coordinator of Puerto Rican Studies,

Migdalia de Jesus Torres de Garcia, and replacing the coordinator of Black Studies, Onwuchekwa Jemie with Chingolu Nwabueze. The two coordinators he removed were strong, independent people--like Sonia Sanchez.

At the same time, the president moved to divert student support for the programs by postponing student government elections for six months, cutting off funds for the student newspaper, and in the Spring (1971) arresting and suspending scores of students on phony charges. As long as students were busy defending themselves against the administration's repressive policies Draper had a relatively free hand to manipulate the programs.

The students, however, regrouped, and last Spring, when the administration fired Jose Antonio Irizarry of the Puerto Rican Studies Program, they confronted Draper with a mass show of strength and forced him to reverse the decision. It was an important victory, particularly after the setbacks of the previous spring, because it showed students that they could win and provided a stepping stone upon which future victories could be built. It led to the present struggle.

The history of the fight for Black and Puerto Rican Studies clearly shows that no matter who is president, the administration will turn if necessary to police force to control the program. The real issue is not just Black and Puerto Rican Studies, but rather who will control the program: the administration and its yes men or the faculty and students.

In every progressive struggle at this school, the administration has emerged as the enemy. Every one of these struggles is important, because if the administration must fight on many fronts (childcare, cutbacks in financial aid, faculty rights, etc.) its ability to resist on any one of them is weakened. That is why we cannot allow the administration to pit faculty against students, race against race, or group against group. We must support the progressive struggles of all groups. At this particular moment, the most important of these is the fight for truly independent departments of Black and Puerto Rican Studies, under the leadership of people like Sonia Sanchez who are ready to fight for real autonomy.

MEMBERS OF THE TIGER PAPER collective attended last Friday's rally in the "A" lounge to offer our full support for student demands: the establishment of autonomous Black and Puerto Rican Studies departments and the appointment of Sonia Sanchez as Chairwoman of Black Studies.

However, we feel that one position put forward at the rally does not clearly reveal the nature of the enemy we should all be fighting.

To isolate one group--the Jews--as the enemy of the Blacks is to make a muddle of who is really oppressing us, and to misdirect anger into group hatred. Just as Draper is an enemy because he is an agent of the Board of Higher Education, so

landlords are enemies because they exploit people, not because some of them happen to be Jews. The Jews in the educational system are enemies if they line up with the BHE and the racist policies of the system. They are not enemies when they support students by taking strong anti-racist stands.

As long as people are confused about who the biggest enemies are, Rockefeller and all those like him can laugh at us all the way home from the bank.

The enemy in America is not the Jews but the system of imperialism which uses and abuses masses of people to make huge profits for a small handful.

## ARE JEWS THE ENEMY?