

# Struggles at Medgar Evers College

In April, 1982, students at Medgar Evers College (MEC) in Brooklyn, N.Y., began a 110-day sit-in which culminated in the removal of MEC president Richard Trent. The students had substantial support from faculty members and community groups. They sparked a movement which continues at MEC and has had an effect throughout the

City University of New York (CUNY) of which MEC is a part. Because MEC is 95% Black and 73% female, the MEC struggle has been one of women and of Blacks. As such, it has generated support across groups whose ability to coalesce in the past had been hampered by the societal divisions of White and Black, of men and women.

## The Struggles

### *STILL SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL*

Medgar Evers College opened as part of the response to the educational demands in New York City, in Brooklyn in particular, of Blacks and Latinos, in the 1960's. People of color fought for access to improved education, expressed in the movement for community control of public schools and in demands for increased access to CUNY. CUNY operates both four-year (Senior) and two-year (Community) colleges for undergraduates. In response to Third World pressure, CUNY first instituted the SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation, Knowledge) program for Senior Colleges and the College Discovery program for Community Colleges, which increased non-White participation, but not enough to meet the demands. In 1970, CUNY instituted open admissions and, to meet the enrollment explosion, expanded old campuses and opened new campuses.

Central Brooklyn, the largest Black community in the Western Hemisphere, needed a college. MEC opened in 1971 as a Senior College. Various community groups were involved in the initial effort to select the president, a position which by CUNY procedure is particularly powerful in the first five years of a college's life. According to Job Mashariki, now president of the Black Veterans for Social Justice (an organization associated with the Brooklyn Black United Front), who was involved in the selection process, the community representatives selected one candidate; the Board of Trustees of CUNY (Board) chose another who they thought would be loyal to them. In the ensuing struggle, the Board declared that the community groups did not represent the community, and then created a "puppet community organization" who approved a new Board selection, Richard Trent. As a result, said Mashariki, although MEC was located in the community, under Trent

"the college never really represented the interests of the community." (1)

Trent began his administration under fire. In 1973, an effort by faculty members to remove Trent failed. Trent responded with a purge of many faculty. As a result, observed faculty member Safiya Bendele, while the faculty of 1982 was "international" with "a lot of Third World members and a lot of women" (55% women), they did not have power and many had "a colonial mentality." When the student strike erupted on March 16, 1982, many faculty held classes and even penalized the strikers. However, among the faculty were "pockets of creativity," usually people who had been active in the sixties, had a collective consciousness and were particularly supportive of students.

The 2800-member student-body, largely Black and female, drawn mainly from central Brooklyn, has an average age of 29. Nearly two-thirds of the women are mothers. Many, as is common in CUNY generally, are also waged-workers. Thus many students have, in effect, three jobs: mother, student and wage-earner.

The conditions under which the students attend MEC are difficult. First, finances are tight. The "fiscal crisis" of the late 70's ended such programs as SEEK, which provided living money to attend college, and led to the imposition of tuition, all at a time in which most sectors of the U.S. working class, and particularly the poor, and therefore non-Whites, were having their real incomes sharply reduced. (2)

Second, MEC is now housed in two overcrowded old buildings, a rented-out former factory and a 100-year-old high school; when it opened, MEC had seven buildings. After years of agitation, the state has allocated \$22 million to build one new structure. This is only half the amount

being spent on a science building at mostly-White Queens College. (3) The estimated completion for the new building keeps being pushed back, from 1980 to 1984 and now to 1987. Though it is called the "new campus" it will house only one-third of the current MEC population.

Third, the college provided no day-care facilities although nearly half the students and much of the faculty and staff are mothers. A 1974 commission concluded that MEC "could not thrive without day care." (4) CUNY generally has been unresponsive. While 20% of CUNY students have young children, the 1982 CUNY budget requested no funds for child care.

For those students who, despite overwork, poverty, poor campus facilities and no day-care, do enroll in MEC, the quality of education itself has been under attack. In 1976, "for alleged budgetary reasons," the Board changed MEC from a Senior to a Community College, though most students were and are enrolled in four-year programs (80% in 1982-83). The change in status was the "reason" to provide fewer funds: two-year colleges receive less money for programs, are not eligible for certain curriculum funding, faculty work loads are higher, and many students in four-year programs have to take courses on other campuses to meet graduation requirements. The most recent cutbacks have enlarged class sizes to 40-45 and cut the curriculum 15%. In a period in which computers are becoming omni-present, training in their use has lagged at MEC. Since 1976, two other colleges have been upgraded to Senior status, despite the "budgetary problems", but MEC remains at community college level.

#### FOR BLACK, COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Through the struggle, a number of inter-related issues have emerged over the manner in which education serves the Central Brooklyn community. Black Studies, Women's Studies and college patronage of Central Brooklyn resources are particularly representative of this.

MEC students have long demanded a Black Studies program. Although CUNY has claimed that interest in the field has waned, Job Mashariki maintains that the administration feared that Black Studies would become predominant at CUNY, rendering many of the tenured faculty obsolete, and so has actively structured college curricula to keep Black students from taking Black Studies. For example, at N.Y. Technical College, there are more Black students in Black Studies than in all other departments combined, yet Black Studies has fewer staff than any

other department. At MEC, Black Studies is a program registered into via electives--not a department. The mandatory Core Curriculum for "liberal arts" effectively blocks out Black Studies except as electives, and places it under other departments, such as sociology. In short, Mashariki calls the claim of falling interest in Black Studies "racist propaganda."

The Black Studies concept proposed by students and faculty would make Black Studies the focus of the college, not simply another department. They say that because MEC is a world college in its faculty and student composition, it should be Afro-centered, focussing on the Black people of Africa, the U.S. and the Caribbean; today, two-thirds of Central Brooklyn and of the student body are Caribbean-born. According to this concept, other programs, such as computer studies, business or nursing, would be integrated into Black Studies--and not the other way around. Donald Turner, editor of the school paper *Adafi*, said the program would therefore relate to "being Black in America, in this world, being of African descent." When opponents of Black Studies say it will not aid economic development, Mashariki replies, "'White Studies' has not helped."



Medgar Evers students protest appointment of Dr. Paul.

Supporters say a Black Studies program that includes a variety of academic disciplines focused around what it means to be of African descent would bring the college into a new relationship with the larger community. Turner noted that though MEC was born out of community struggles and was supposed to be controlled by the community and responsible to its self-defined needs, MEC has not devised programs to deal with community problems such as high (50%) unemployment and poverty--particularly the chronic poverty of female-headed households.

The immediate and long-term needs of community women are finally being addressed by the MEC Center for Women's Development, opened on student and faculty initiative in April, 1983. It is directed by Safiya Bendele of MEC who is also head of the women's section of the Black United Front. The Center will provide counseling services around educational, work and personal needs. "It will also develop a Black Women's Studies curriculum to initiate 'new theoretical and methodological study' of 'all aspects of Black Women's past and present condition and position,' and to 'expand the content and direction of all other disciplines and courses--particularly that of Black Studies and of historically white-defined Women's Studies.'" (5)

Another area of contention has been around where MEC spent its money. When MEC opened, a number of community groups expected a large portion of MEC's budget to be spent in the Central Brooklyn community by contracting for services, supplies, books, etc. However, these funds were directed toward White-run businesses outside the community.

Thus, while students, faculty and community groups sought to make MEC serve the community through Black Studies, Women's Studies and the use of its resources, MEC policy, especially under Trent, has not reflected this. Donald Turner termed the Board "colonialists" in their view of MEC's role in the community. Students have charged that the mission of the college became, in fact, to watch and to manipulate its surrounding community. As we shall see, the struggle has brought the community into the college in new ways as elements in MEC have moved to bring the college into the community to serve the community.

#### *MET AND UNMET DEMANDS*

The demands of the strike, then, rose readily out of concrete situations and experiences. The first demand was the removal of Trent. He left, but the Board, without consulting MEC, appointed Dennis Paul as Acting President and suspended the Governance Plan of the college for the first time in CUNY history, giving Paul dictatorial power. Paul's first major move was to deny re-hiring to four activist faculty and tenure to three of the four who were up for tenure. The four, Dr. Zala Chandler, Safiya Bendele, Linda de Jesus and Delridge Hunter, fought for their jobs with strong MEC and community support. The four were re-hired and the three given tenure.

A second demand has been partially met. During the 1982, 110-day occupation, stu-

dents set up a drop-in child care center in the president's office. Since then, on student impetus, the center has won a Head Start contract to serve children of a certain age-group. Students continued to fund a drop-in program for those ineligible for the Head Start program. This spring, the child care center has obtained additional federal funds.

A third demand, for the women's center, has also been met, as noted above. Through the 1983-84 school year, the college only funded one staff member for the Center for Women's Development, despite thorough demonstration of the need for counseling, office facilities, library resources and programming. The new president has promised increased financial and staff support for the Center. (6)



1982, students march on Supreme Court (Adafi).

The Coalition to Save Medgar Evers College made as primary the demand for a Black woman president. They did not win this demand. The three finalists for the job did include one black woman. A group of Black and White male faculty, who dominate the faculty organization, clearly opposed a woman president, although the faculty committee agreed that all three candidates were highly qualified. This committee recommended Jay Carrington Chunn, who was selected by the Board and took office March 1, 1984.

Chunn has openly acknowledged that he obtained his position due to the power of the Coalition. He has supported child care and the Women's Center. He has appointed Black women, including Coalition member Zala Chandler, to important administration positions. He is negotiating a return to Senior College status, which he has said will be restored within a year. Safiya Bendele says the Coalition views the gains under Chunn as demonstration of the Coalition's strength, and thinks that while Chunn is necessarily responsible to the Board, he will take a stand on behalf of MEC, with the support of the Coalition.

Many Coalition demands remains unfulfilled. Although some repairs have been made, the buildings are in poor shape and equipment is in short supply. Ground-breaking for the new building occurred this year, but that building remains no less inadequate. However, MEC has obtained a \$7.5 million grant to design a new campus. Chunn agrees with the Coalition on the need for a complete campus for an expanded student body. The computer program remains under discussion. Funds for support services and tutoring have not been allocated. Class sizes remain huge.

The demand for a Black Studies focus remains in negotiation. While the Coalition sees the need for a specific department to focus on Africa and the diaspora, Chunn thinks Black Studies simply should be integrated throughout the curriculum. The Coalition believes this will be inadequate. To integrate Black Studies into the curriculum will take time; much of the progress will depend on in-service training for faculty, some of whom will certainly oppose it. While all aspects of curriculum should relate to Black Studies, the specific Africana approach must be used both to push the specific knowledge of Africa and the diaspora and to be a base from which to push integration of Black Studies into the curriculum as a whole. Without a base area, integration can too easily become disconnected, passing references with, on the other hand, a few scattered courses which concentrate on the Black experience.

The demand for a Black women's curriculum has met concerted opposition from the same male clique who opposed hiring a

woman president. Women designed one course which has not been implemented because new courses must progress through five levels of committee (virtually unheard of in U.S. academia) and the committees have slowed the progress of the course. Nonetheless, while continuing to push for the one course, the women have been designing a full curriculum for Black Women's Studies.

This male clique dominates the faculty despite not being a majority. In December 1983, Paul decided not to re-hire three activists, even though the faculty as a whole had voted to re-appoint everyone as Paul was known to be leaving. Behind the scenes, members of this clique worked to ensure the non-reappointments of the activists. However, with Coalition support, Chunn overturned Paul's decision. This clique also denied promotions to two Coalition members, Andree McLaughlin and Zala Chandler. The Coalition has confronted the sexism openly and directly, but has not yet developed the power to stop the reactionary group. (7)

The remaining unaddressed demands will be responded to on the basis of college and community pressure on the CUNY Board. The Coalition, though its form has changed with the arrival of the more cooperative Chunn, remains strong and active. They remain willing to return to direct action should Chunn or the Board block continued progress. And the effects of the struggles at MEC have generalized, raising university-wide issues. It has moreover provided a material basis for increasing practical unity between Whites, particularly White women's groups, and Blacks, particularly, as at MEC, Black women.

## The Organizations

### THE COALITION

The progressive organization of struggle at MEC is the Student-Faculty-Community-Alumni Coalition to Save Medgar Evers College. As such, it includes both people from MEC and from the wider Brooklyn community. According to a number of Coalition activists, crucial support has come from established Black political figures and groups involved in previous New York City Black community struggles, particularly around education. As the students largely come from Central Brooklyn, contacts with community groups have always been strong.

When the 1982 sit-in began, the City responded with a show of police force--cruisers, armed plainclothes police on campus, rumors of SWAT team assaults, etc. So, as Job Mashariki explained, "The

call went out to the Black community to support the Black institution and Black students." One group which responded in numbers was the Black Veterans for Social Justice. The City then decided not to deal with the situation with police force because of a "hard core element" present in the school. Thus, community support was crucial in preventing the City from physically crushing the strike, as it was later that fall when it prevented Acting President Paul from firing the four faculty members.

While there is certainly no guarantee that a victory such as Trent's ouster will lead to further victories, or even further struggles, the ouster of Trent was only one among a set of demands aimed at profound reorganization of MEC. The removal of Trent, the establishment of

day care and women's centers, helped students and faculty see that struggles could be won and could produce change. "After Trent was forced to resign, people realized that something can actually be done if you really try," said student Lillian Brewster. "Now most students are at least interested in what's going on."(8)

The struggle to oust Trent also opened the college to the community in new ways. Events were held almost nightly to which the community was invited. Classes were used to plan those events, thus bringing students and faculty together to build programs with and for the community. In the midst of strike and sit-in, more students and parents came to the 1982 graduation than had come to any previous one. The college remains open to the community, another tangible gain from the movement. The Coalition continues to be active in the Black community around issues such as homelessness and hunger, working with groups such as the Black Veterans, the United Front and Black Single Mothers.

The fact that MEC students are residents of the immediate community has also helped to prevent the graduation of one class from becoming the "graduation of the struggle." Activists at MEC are concerned that incoming students remain involved and informed about the college's history. Through Adafi, the college newspaper, open meetings, classes and special events such as a celebration of the second anniversary of the struggle held April 20, 1984, students and community are reminded of the story, the gains and the continuing needs. Interest in the events has been widely demonstrated by CUNY students from other campuses.

Participants see the process as one in which the struggle can be institutionalized in the child care center, the Women's Center, a Black Studies program. The goal, as one participant explained, is that "the consciousness of the struggle will become the consciousness of the institution itself."

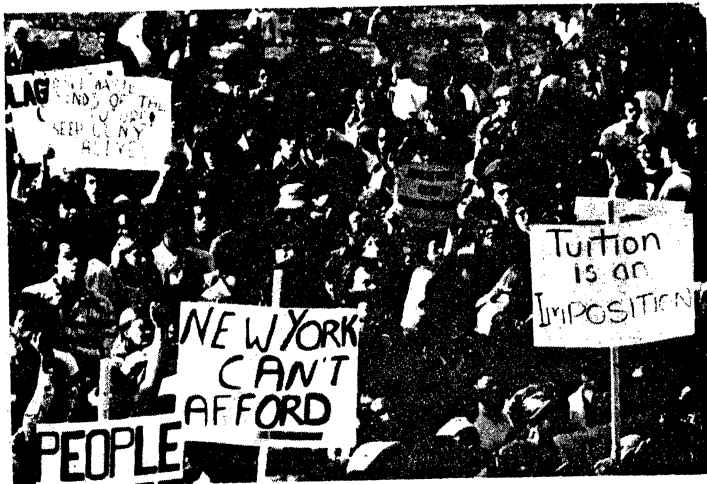
With Chunn as president, this goal has taken a new form. For nearly two years the main aspect of the Coalition was confrontation, direct action, demands. With an apparently sympathetic president, the Coalition has re-shaped itself to meet the challenge of rebuilding the college. Persons and groups have focused energy on areas such as Women's Studies and Black Studies, in designing and implementing new programs to meet community needs.

Certainly not all has proceeded smoothly within the ranks of the Coalition. For example, as Safiya Bendele pointed out, male support for the struggle dwined

in reaction to the demand for a Black woman president, as this demand was not seen by some men as "serious." However, one male student said he thought that most male students supported the demand. The external opposition to women's demands has been seen in the actions of some male faculty.

Men's reaction, in the coalition, to the active role of women and the prominence of women's demands has often been positive, as indicated in comments made at the forum on MEC. One man explained that during the sit-in there were conflicts around sex roles. He said that, for example, one man who refused to do the dishes was told he would not eat and, by the end, was both cooking and cleaning.

(Adafi)



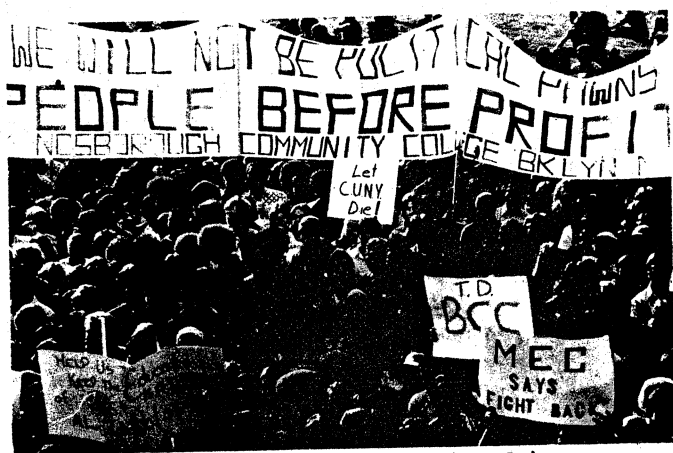
A second man stated that it was "healthy" that the struggle was largely led by women, while another observed that "we have mothers, so taking leadership from Black women is nothing new," although he acknowledged that men "get acculturated to other things." Another man stated that it would "be a male chauvinist, sexist assumption" to say that women need men to lead them. A man referred back to the strong leadership of women in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville struggles for community control of schools in the late 1960's.

While dialog initiated by the Coalition has not ended sexism at MEC, what is important is that women's issues were and remain central issues, not "side issues" to be negotiated away for more "important" things. Women have increased their power through the struggle, as have men who support the women. The message is that women's demands are vital to Black women and that Black women will not compromise them.

Another important dialog opened up by

the struggle concerns class conflict within the Black community. As MEC struggles revealed, knowledge about Blacks who do the bidding of the White power structure was certainly present, but the cases of Trent and Paul, both Black, have apparently deepened this understanding. One MEC graduate described Trent as the representative of the Black petit-bourgeois.

These kinds of experiences shed light on confusing historical events and trends, such as the Miami rebellion of 1980 when Black rioters refused to listen to "established" Black leadership, and the current renewed emphasis on mass Black participation in elections which has seen Black, cross-class victories in Chicago and elsewhere in the past year, as well as the Jackson campaign.



(Adafi)

#### THE SUPPORT COMMITTEE

Widening support for the MEC struggle will be important in winning more of their demands. And a basis for widening the support by expanding the number of fronts and areas of terrain in the struggle apparently does exist.

"The issues being fought at Medgar Evers are problems relevant to every CUNY campus," explained Nancy Roemer, a professor at Brooklyn College. (9) Among the issues are those of racial, sex and sexual-preference discrimination in hiring, tenure and promotion; sexual harassment of women faculty and students; unequal distribution of funds throughout CUNY, support for Black and Women's studies; and day care. For example, while over 20% of CUNY students have young children, no child care funds were requested by the Board in its 1982 budget.

The MEC struggle and the potential for expansion across CUNY helped to encourage the development of yet another alliance, the Women's Committee to Support MEC. This alliance has brought together women

of diverse political histories, straight and Lesbian, mostly White, to develop support for MEC with explicit regard for the self-defined needs of Black women. While some early indications of such an alliance between Black and White women could be seen in struggles around the SEEK program and in struggles at CUNY's Hostos College in the late 1970's, nothing has lasted or generalized across CUNY.

As Barbara Omolade of the Coalition observed, "Five, even three years ago we wouldn't have been able to get such a group of people together. There would have been resistance to characterizing Medgar Evers College as a 'feminist' issue. This inability made a real division in the world-wide struggle against the oppression of women and people of color... There is a deepening awareness. White women are beginning to hear and see the perspectives of women of color around their own oppression and their own feminist definitions." (10)

"The issues (at MEC) are common to all women...and have helped us to see we do have common causes just as women, regardless of color," explained Rhonda Vanzant, MEC student president in 1982-83. (11) Andrea Doremus, a member of the support committee, commented that MEC "offers a concrete chance to take action...a unique experience for Black and White women to work together and to raise issues of race and sex simultaneously," a comment echoed by other activists in both the Coalition and the support committee. (12)

From this alliance, Black and White women have articulated some basic understandings about feminism. They assert every woman's right to control both her body and her social relations in such areas as reproductive and lesbian rights, fighting violence against women, and community demands around education, housing, job discrimination, child care, welfare rights and racism.

Importantly, these issues are largely, in practice, poor people's demands--class demands. Thus, concretely, MEC activism catalyzes the inter-relation of sex, race and class. Those at the bottom of the U.S. social hierarchy (women of color) are asserting their needs under their own leadership and making alliances to attain their goals.

The Women's Committee to Support MEC started in the fall of 1982 in response to Coalition requests for support from feminist activists. It has been an organization mostly of White women, with some Blacks involved around specific issues and men involved in short-term work. The Committee sees itself as involved in combat-

ting racism, which they consider a responsibility of progressive and feminist Whites, by helping to publicize the college's plight and efforts to save it, and to raise certain issues throughout CUNY and New York City.

One effort to generalize MEC battles has centered on demands for child care. This past year, students at City College of CUNY occupied their administration offices to demand day care. They were joined by students from MEC.

A second focus has been to directly link instances of racism and sexism at CUNY. The support committee sponsored a forum in June, 1983 which featured as speakers Pat Oldham, a woman denied tenure at Hostos College in the Bronx (95% Black and Latino, 70% women); Dr. Andree McLaughlin, a Black female associate professor at MEC who has been active in the Coalition; Lilia Melani, an assistant professor at Brooklyn College who had recently won part of an important class action sex-discrimination suit (Melani v. the Board of Higher Education) after a ten-year court battle with CUNY; and a "representative from the community struggle for a qualified Chancellor of the N.Y. City Schools."

MEC women themselves have pushed CUNY to hire more women and people of color as the percentages at most CUNY units are very low: 78% of all faculty in the system are white males, and women and people of color are predominantly on the lower levels. (13) Simultaneously, they have critically examined women's studies in CUNY and uncovered racism in most of the current curricula which has resulted in not much attention being paid to women of color and their perspectives.



With the change in focus at MEC from confrontation to institution building, the support committee has ceased formal operation, although a large network of people remain who can act to support MEC should the need arise again. Perhaps more important than even the valuable immediate support for MEC has been the political example set by the support committee. In an interview, Safiya Bendelee viewed the support as "a positive example" which is "all too rare" of White women actively supporting Black women on issues defined and shaped by the Black women themselves. The Coalition hopes that in future struggles, such as those around day care, racism and sexism at CUNY, such forms of coalition and support can expand.

## Political Conclusions

In this period in the U.S., even the most pressing struggles seem to have difficulty continuing, never mind expanding. It is still too early to know if the case of MEC will remain largely isolated or whether, as it is beginning to appear, the demands at MEC, representative in large part of demands by women and Blacks throughout CUNY and beyond, will generalize and erupt elsewhere.

Even if the struggle does not manage to expand in a major way, we can point to several important aspects of the struggle to consider in the future. For one, unity between MEC and the Brooklyn Black community, as expressed in the Coalition, means both community support for the struggle at MEC and efforts to make

MEC a college of and for the community, thus to erase old boundaries and to create a different kind of a college. Second, the MEC activists have proposed conceptions of Black Studies and Women's Studies which seek to re-define the content of those areas, in practice and in theory, and use them in the struggle for third world self-determination and women's self-determination. These efforts challenge the nature and structure of academics in the U.S.

Third, as one male student put it, "The practice of struggle as a process of overcoming sexism," emerged as a central element in Black campus and community struggles and indicates a deeper level

in combatting sexism in the Black movement. Fourth, the ability of Black and White women, including White lesbians, to find a means to join together pushes the women's movement into new terrain. The concreteness of the tasks has provided a basis for unity and a vehicle for discussion. The Black movement of the 1960's was in many ways the central impetus to the subsequent college, cultural, left and women's movements among Whites, and many Whites first entered the struggle as activists by supporting Blacks. Years of experience, of gains and defeats, is now enabling support not simply from "guilt" but from a clearer understanding of the need for unity and the basis for such unity.

The struggles at MEC should also have powerful meaning for the left. Job Mashariki has observed that, with Reagan, the "whole left moved right." As we discussed in Lemming Notes in this issue, we agree this rightward motion has been true of many, from the "left" of the Democratic Party through the social democrats/democratic socialists to self-described Leninists and progressive community groups. Often this has been true of Black leaders and organizations as well as White. This rightward motion has been rejected by at least some people, and the struggle at MEC has been part of that rejection.

Consider the Freeze "movement". In the same period as the June 12, 1982 Anti-War rally was building in a method which revealed entrenched racism by a large part of that coalition, the smaller, far less heralded Women's Committee to Support MEC took the initiative to support the demands of Black, working class women because they understood them as central to their own demands as women in the U.S.

June 12, whatever else it might have been, represented a massive act of class collaboration and, as such occasions always have been in the U.S., a tendency to capitulate to racism. Only when Third World activists, supported by a minority of Whites, indicated they would leave the June 12 coalition and hold a separate rally did the "mainstream" left and peace groups stop opposing significant Third World participation. The "mainstream" White organizers--"Whites who did not want to deal with the issue of social justice in New York City," as Job Mashariki phrased it--wanted N.Y. Mayor Koch to speak at the rally. He was blocked from appearing on stage by the Black United Front and the Black Veterans. Wanting Koch to speak flagrantly indicates the racism and class collaboration of much of the left. (14)

The MEC Coalition, rather than practice collaboration, attacked the agents of collaboration, Trent and Paul. Rather than call for unity with anyone in the hopes of survival-as-usual, the Coalition unleashed a struggle which has made significant gains, gains which we see as more substantial and lasting than the Chimerical wisps of meaningless Congressional resolutions or a few slightly more liberal pigs eating in a Washington trough. A real struggle may risk more, but only a real struggle can win anything. And the Support Committee, rather than ignore racism, actively took on the tasks of combatting racism and building alliances between White women and Blacks, particularly Black women, by supporting their demands in practice.

The struggle at MEC, small as it so far may be, has importance beyond its size, because in a period of retreat and collaboration the Coalition and its supporters have mounted an offensive. Rather than suppress a variety of demands, the MEC struggle has been a process in which the combination of autonomous self-definition of needs and struggles can be the basis for building coalitions which support the self-definition and enable a unity of action which can produce both gains against the enemy and deepened understanding and trust within the working class as a whole.

## Notes

1. A major source of information for this piece was a Forum on Medgar Evers College, held at the N.Y. Marxist School, March 18, 1983. Quotations, unless otherwise attributed, are from statements made at the forum.
2. For analysis of the fiscal crisis of N.Y. City which understands that crisis as a response to working class struggle, see Donna Demac and Philip Mattera, "Developing and Underdeveloping New York: The 'Fiscal Crisis' and the Imposition of Austerity" in Zerowork 2, Fall, 1977.
3. During the fiscal crisis, as part of the "bailout" of NYC, the state assumed control over CUNY. Queens College was one of the four old, main Senior Colleges, along with City, Brooklyn and Hunter. Because Queens is in a White area and is not easy to reach by public transportation, Queens alone has remained substantially White in student population.
4. Guardian, N.Y., N.Y., Dec. 22, 1982
5. Womanews, N.Y., N.Y., June, 1983, Sally Chew, "Medgar Evers Keeps Fighting"
6. Interview with Safiya Bendele, June 5, 1984.
7. Adafi, Student Newspaper at Medgar Evers College, January/February 1984, May/June 1984, (1150 Carroll St., Brooklyn, NY 11225); and interview with Safiya Bendele, op. cit.
8. Womanews, December/January 1983, Andrea Doremus, "Administration Tightens Grip on Medgar Evers"
9. CARASA News, January/February 1983, Sally Bermanzohn, "Support for Medgar Evers in Women's Movement"
10. Ibid.
11. Guardian, op. cit.
12. Womanews, November 1982, Andrea Doremus, "Medgar Evers Struggle Snowballs"
13. Adafi, May/June 1984, p.12
14. "Freezing the Movement" in Posthumous Notes: Midnight Notes Vol. IV, #1.