

**KEEP MEERITT  
OPEN**



**The Fight**

**for**

**COMMUNITY**

**CONTROL**

**UNITY**

**Coalition  
for  
Community Control**

In 1965, a \$4.7 million bond issue was passed by the district, supported largely because of the stipulation that four colleges would be constructed including one in the North Oakland-Berkeley-Albany area. Five years later we are faced with the realization that since the priority was given to the planning and construction of Alameda, Laney and the hill site and since building costs overran estimates, there is no flatlands campus.

We find that the hill site, which is supposed to replace Merritt on Grove St., is entirely unable to meet our needs. First, how can a community college, situated many miles away, in a white community, serve the interests of the Third World community of No. Oakland? Secondly, the new campus was built for 5,000 full and part-time students. Merritt College presently offers over 9,000 students an opportunity to attend school. To insure that the 4,000 displaced students would have a campus, the fight to keep Merritt open in the flatlands began.

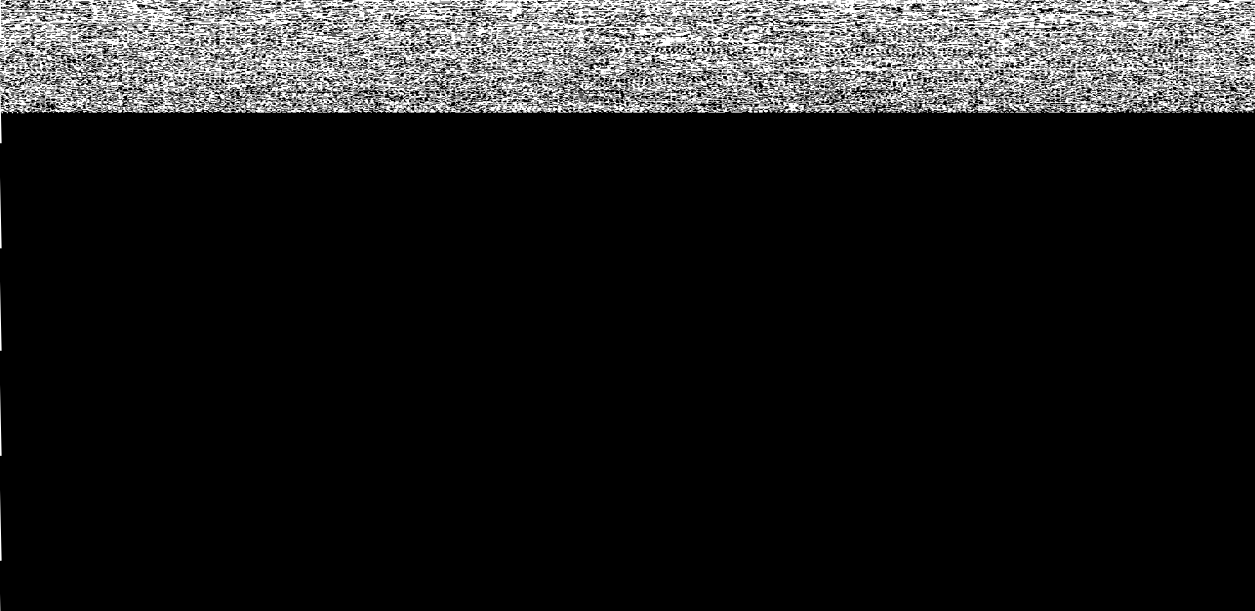
Ever since Merritt College students found out that their campus was going to be closed in the flatlands and opened up in the hill, there has been increasing opposition to the move. At the beginning of the fall quarter there was widespread organization by students, faculty and community to prevent the closing of our campus at the present site. This concern was initially demonstrated at a convocation held in the Merritt Auditorium.

Members of the Merritt Community share a common interest in the 17-year old college campus on Grove St. Our Community College was scheduled to close on December 10, 1970. We went before the Peralta Junior College District Board of Trustees in an attempt to demonstrate a need for a campus in our community. The result of this was that Merritt remains open. However, we must realize that through their actions the Board is trying to deprive the No. Oakland community of a college and we must remain vigilant to prevent their proposed plans from being instituted at a later date. Why are we so insistent that the Board does not have our interests in mind? Their actions since 1965 and especially since November 2, 1970 have destroyed our faith in their ability to meet our needs.

We understand that the Peralta Bd. made extensive plans for the hill site, Laney and Alameda before any initiative was even taken on replacing Merritt in its own community. We understand that projections of inflationary building costs were grossly inaccurate and that there was an inexcusable error in the gap between design and enrollment estimates. We understand that Supt. John Dunn felt that we students deserved much more than the 8.2 acres afforded by the Grove St. campus.

We are not so foolish that we can ignore the political realities of the situation. In 1965 no more than 10% of Merritt students were black.

Today the majority are of the Third World. The Merritt Community prides itself on providing its children and working adults with easy access to a wide variety of relevant programs. Merritt College innovated Afro-American studies, Latin-American studies, a free book and meal program, day-care, work-study and free movies. The great majority of students live right here in the community. It is utterly



We can see that the Peralta Board of Trustees has had a vital stake in keeping those to whom it is responsible as uninformed as possible in regard to their own schools--their own tax money. We can see that the board can make empty promises knowing it will appease the community. Since November many promises have been made and then rescinded or ignored. These promises include: 1) Granting demands to keep Merritt fully open after December 10, 1970. (the fact is that Dr. Norvel Smith planned on reducing enrollment from the anticipated 4,000 to 1200--still leaving 2800 students out of school.); 2) Granting demands to keep Merritt fully operational (the fact is equipment such as science labs, portable classrooms and library books have been moved to the hill or dismantled and stored); 3) Granting demands for a pre-enrollment to determine where courses would be taught according to student wishes (the fact is Dr. John Carr, Dean of Instruction, is allowing courses whose students clearly want the class on Grove St. to be taken to the hill and offered on the hill only); 4) Granting demands that a negotiating committee be set up. This negotiating committee was to insure fair and adequate course offerings at both campuses. These last two demands were granted in response to the Feb. 1st office takeover and one day strike led by the BSU, and action which also resulted in a coalition of Third World and White groups to direct the struggle to keep Merritt in the flatlands, with community control. (the fact is that the students elected their representatives and the faculty theirs, but the Board, which was to set up the elections for the community representa-

tives has not allowed this to happen. In fact 2 meetings in the East and West Oakland communities that were scheduled to select their reps. March 8, 1971 were cancelled by the Board 1 hour before they were to start. No explanation for the cancellation was made public. Could it be that the Board deliberately tries to keep the community from taking part in what is happening to its college?

We entrusted The Board of Trustees to take our \$47 million and build us a campus. We entrusted the Board of Trustees to listen to our needs and respond to them. What have they done? While we were silent, they neglected us, mismanaged our money and destroyed the possibility of the Third World communities to have invaluable educational centers right in the community. Is the hill site within walking distance from the black and chicano neighborhoods it is purported to serve? NO! Is a new campus for the No. Oakland community being planned by the Board? NO! When we voiced loud and long our concerns to protect our school, the Board agreed to all of our demands-- were they honored? NO!

It is out of these realizations that we in the community knew that we must take back the power given to the administrators and the concept of community control of Merritt College was developed.

On October 24, 1970, community people, students, and faculty met to outline what community control meant and to define the rationale behind it. The outcome of this meeting was the following: I Rationale:

It is the democratic right of people to control the educational institutions within their own communities. Although locally elected boards of education run school districts throughout the country, that same right of democratic control through elected boards is generally denied to Third World communities, where education is controlled by white people. The contrary is never the case. There are no Third World People controlling the education of entire white communities. When we demand Community Control, we are merely insisting that we in the Third World Communities be able to exercise that same democratic right that is guaranteed to the white community.

Community control is the most democratic way of running a school. Within community control the interests of those most affected by the education that is offered are represented in the decisions that are made about that education. The concept of Community Colleges is valid only if those colleges are controlled by the communities they serve.

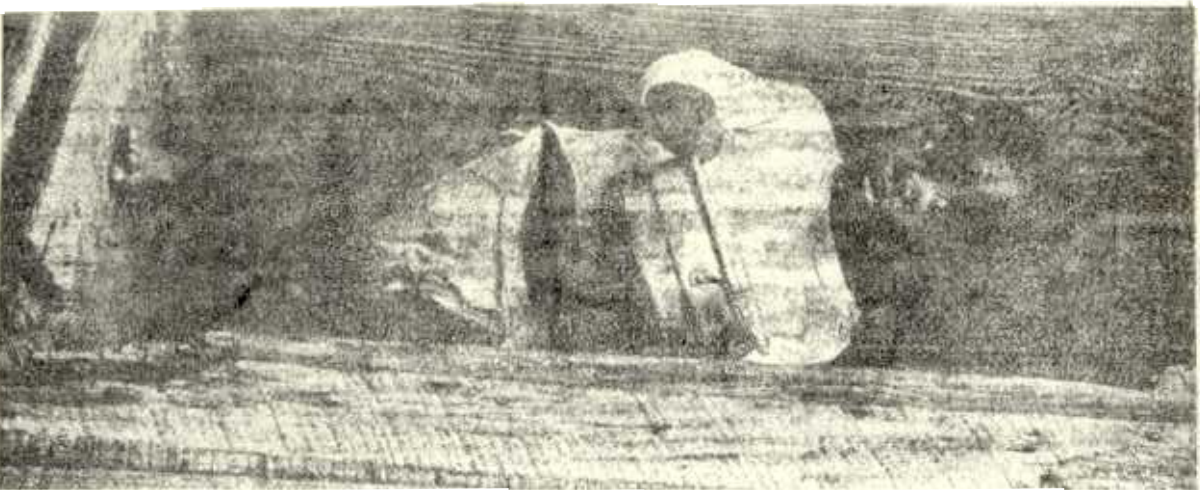
## II STRUCTURE

### COMMUNITY -AT-LARGE

#### COUNCIL

#### ADMINISTRATIVE BODY-----STAFF

# **MERRITT COLLEGE BLACK STUDENT UNION**



**IS STARTING  
A FREE BREAKFAST  
FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM  
AT THE BLACK CHURCH  
ON 42nd and GROVE  
ON TUESDAY OCT. 13  
EVERY MORNING  
FROM 7 to 9  
MONDAY THRU FRIDAY**

**WE NEED  
DONATIONS OF EGGS,  
MILK, MEAT AND MONEY**

**ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE**