

Free City!

The Fight for San Francisco's City College and Education for All

Marcy Rein, Mickey Ellinger, and Vicki Legion
Foreword by Pauline Lipman

Free City! The Fight for San Francisco's City College and Education for All tells the story of the five years of organizing that turned a seemingly hopeless defensive fight into a victory for the most progressive free college measure in the US. In 2012, the accreditor sanctioned City College of San Francisco, one of the biggest and best community colleges in the country, and a year later proposed terminating its accreditation, leading to a state takeover. *Free City!* follows the multipronged strategies of the campaign and the diverse characters that carried them out. Teachers, students, labor unions, community groups, public officials, and concerned individuals saved a treasured public institution as San Francisco's working-class communities of color battled the gentrification that was forcing them out of the city. And they pushed back against the national "reform" agenda of corporate workforce training that drives students towards debt and sidelines lifelong learning and community service programs. Combining analysis with narrative, *Free City!* offers a case study in the power of positive vision and solution-oriented organizing and a reflection on what education can and should be.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Marcy Rein is a writer, editor, and organizer who has engaged with a wide range of social movements and organizational forms. With her husband Clifton Ross she edited *Until the Rulers Obey: Voices from Latin American Social Movements* (PM Press, 2014).

Mickey Ellinger writes regularly for *News from Native California* and other California-based publications. She wrote *Allensworth, the Freedom Colony: A California African American Township* (Heyday Books, 2007).

Vicki Legion was on faculty at City College of San Francisco from 1994–2019 and is part of the longstanding network of social justice organizers in public education. She was a core activist of the Save City College Coalition, and convened its Research Committee.

Pauline Lipman is a professor in the Educational Policy Studies Department at the College of Education, University of Illinois–Chicago and the author of *The New Political Economy of Urban Education*.

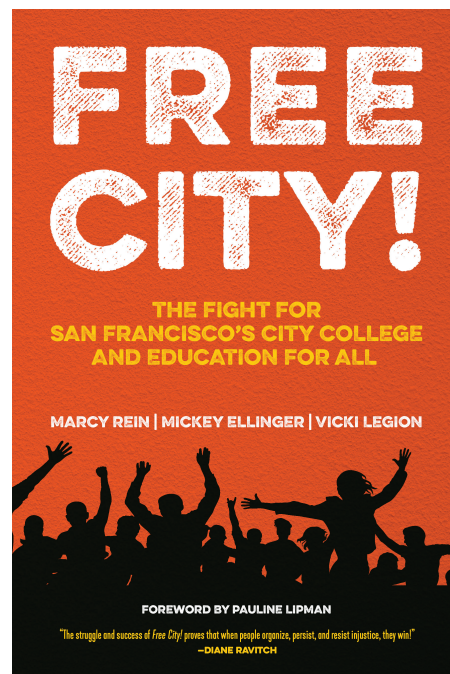
ACCOLADES

"The struggle and success of *Free City* proves that when people organize, persist, and resist injustice, they win!"

—Diane Ravitch, author of *The Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools*

"*Free City!* is a timely and urgently-needed saga of successful resistance to the corporate forces threatening the very existence of public higher education in California. It is a meticulously documented history, a breathless narrative, and a comprehensive guide to action all in one.

—Justin Akers Chacón, professor of Chicana/o Studies at San Diego City College, co-author, with Mike Davis, of *No One is Illegal: Fighting Racism and State Violence on the U.S.-Mexico Border*



SUBJECT CATEGORY

History-California / Education-History

PRICE

\$20.00

ISBN

978-1-62963-829-4

PAGE COUNT

272

SIZE

6x9

FORMAT

Paperback

PUBLICATION DATE

5/21

DISTRIBUTED BY

Publishers Group West
(510) 809-3700
www.pgw.com

DISTRIBUTED IN THE UK/EUROPE BY

Turnaround Publisher Services Ltd
t: 020 8829 3000
orders@turnaround-uk.com

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P.O. Box 23912 • Oakland, CA 94623
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