

Dear Friends,

The teachers of Puerto Rico need your help! In February 2008, FMPR (Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico--Puerto Rico Teachers Union)—the island's largest union—endured a ten day strike after working without a contract for over two years. The anti-labor governor of the island, Anibal Acevedo Vila, responded by decertifying the union and suspending its dues check off. Meanwhile, Dennis Hickey Rivera, VP of SEIU (Service Employees International Union), entered into discussions with Acevedo Vila with the intention of securing for SEIU exclusive representation of the island's teachers. **Rather than stand in solidarity with the teachers of Puerto Rico in their hour of crisis, SEIU broke ranks and initiated a management-supported campaign to raid their union.**

To continue to service members and fight for their rights and the improvement of education in Puerto Rico, FMPR has reconstituted itself as a “bona fide” organization under Puerto Rican law and is challenging the governor's decertification in court. But legal and other fees are mounting and SEIU's well-financed campaign to raid and destroy the union promises to be long and brutal. Elections for exclusive representation of the teachers may be called at any moment. **Monetary donations from people like you are critical NOW!**

Juan Gonzalez of the NY Daily News describes SEIU's raid as “a shameful betrayal of solidarity.” The UFT (United Federation of Teachers) the PSC (Professional Staff Congress), teachers unions in New York, and the AFT (the national teachers union) have all approved resolutions in solidarity with the striking teachers of Puerto Rico.

Ironically, SEIU is a strong critic of raiding – when it is the target of such raids. Union raids distract workers from the overarching issues that unite them. The battle gets redefined in terms of who can offer the “best deal.” Instead, FMPR offers an extremely democratic structure in which members determine the union's direction on numerous levels. It has been on the forefront of every major education battle on the island for forty years and has played a leading role in the broader political struggles in Puerto Rico. FMPR has fought:

- for the right of public sector workers to strike
- to eliminate lead, toxic substances and rodents from school buildings and areas
- to obtain quality learning materials, improvements in the physical plant and to reduce class size
- for successful implementation of evidence-based pedagogy, emphasizing critical thinking instead of No Child Left Behind mandates which are destructive to real learning (such as over-testing)
- against the privatization of education and its manifestation: Charter Schools
- against military recruitment in schools instead of college recruitment
- for teacher/student/parent councils to collaborate on school issues
- to improve conditions for teachers whose base salaries cannot even sustain their own families

But FMPR will only be able to continue working for parents, students, and teachers with your help. Can you contribute \$25 today to support FMPR as it fights for labor solidarity and union democracy?

Together we can stop the raids of union against union and bring about a more democratic labor movement that empowers workers.

Support quality public education and the teachers of Puerto Rico!

In Solidarity,
FMPR Support Committee-NY

PLEASE SEND YOUR DONATION NOW TO:

FMPR

Urb. El Caribe

1572 Ave. Ponce de León

San Juan, Puerto Rico 00926-2710

Check or money order payable to “FMPR”—indicate “donation” on check

For more information: **FMPR SUPPORT COMMITTEE-NY:**

<http://mysite.verizon.net/vze2kxcd/fmprsupportcommitteenewyork/>

FMPR IN PUERTO RICO: <http://fmprlucha.org/>

