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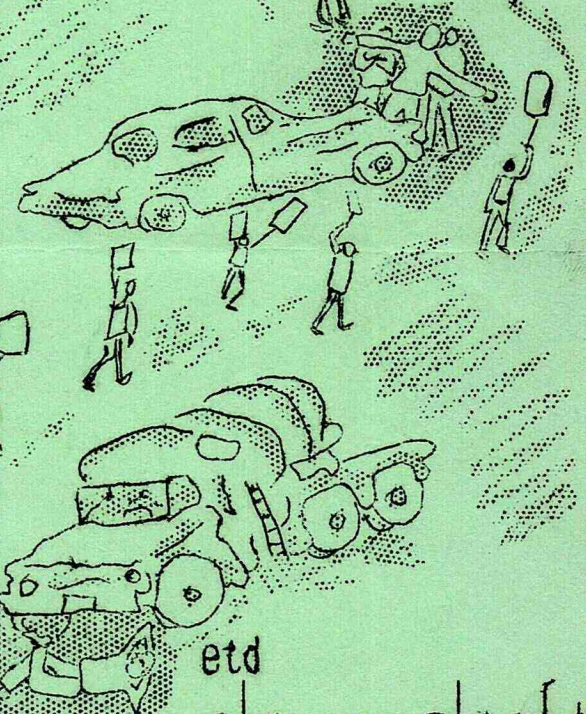
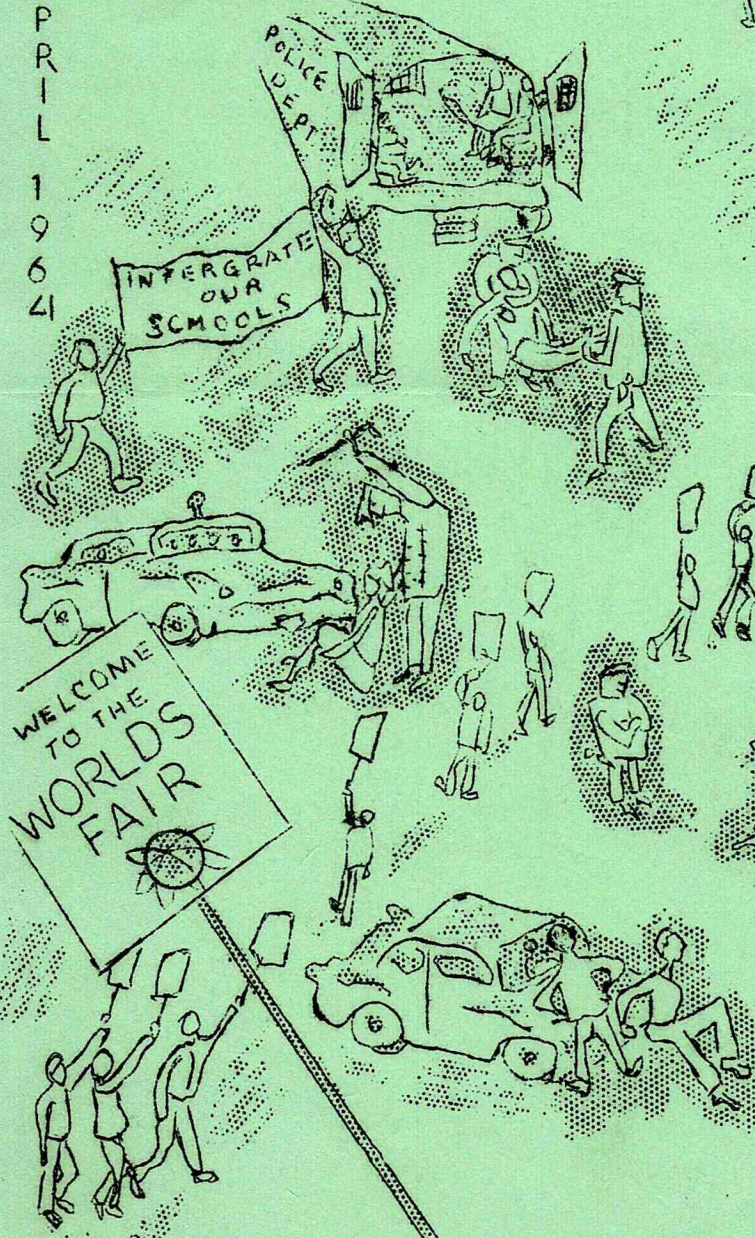
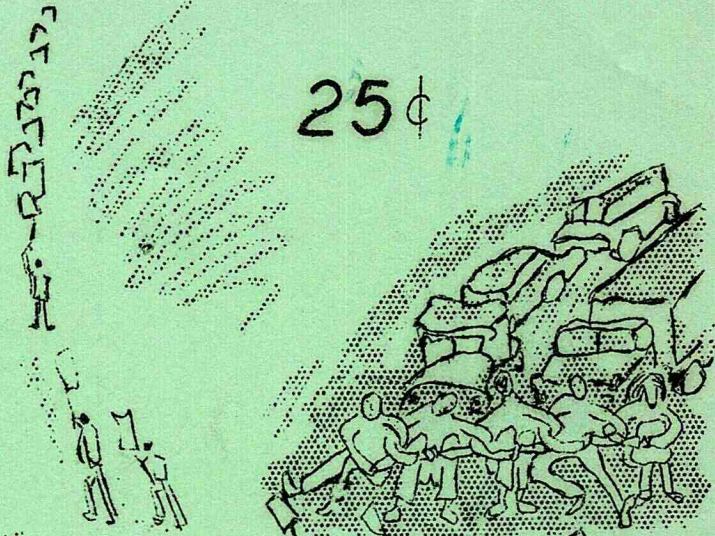
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BROOKLYN CORE RENT-STRIKE
PROGRESS REPORT



etd down draft

contents

DEMONSTRATIONS
TO END THE DRAFT

DEMONSTRATIONS TO END
U.S. INTERVENTION IN VIETNAM

A W O L

THE STALL-IN WORKED

--by Earl Price

/During the recent civil rights demonstrations at the World's Fair, the CPO worked with Brooklyn CORE and Rev. Galamison's City Wide Committee. /

Many people, for and against us, have decided that the stall-in failed. This is untrue because our idea was to make the opposition begin to yield by locating and applying pressure to the most sensitive and most exposed financial nerve in N.Y.C. We decided that this was the World's Fair, a target available for extended periods of experimentation this year and next. We were telling the supporters of discrimination: "This is not one of those one-shot deals (a one-day school boycott, a march on Washington, etc.) that you take in your stride without reacting; this will be an extended ordeal in which we will keep increasing pressure where it hurts--where it loses millions of dollars for you."

It was very important for the Fair to open with a polished look; instead it opened with a rash--dirt, garbage and incomplete exhibits. The blocking of vehicles entering the Fair with construction materials on Sat., 4/4/64 caught the police off guard and was very successful. It was the symbol of what was to come, lending credibility to claims for the stall-in. The picket line of Sat., 4/18/64 kept the police jumpy in anticipation of the stall-in.

Because the threatened stall-in was believed, great numbers stayed away from the Fair. The 1939 Fair opened with 3600,000. This Fair played it safe and predicted only 250,000. It claimed an attendance of 90,000. The real figure is probably closer to 50,000, but even the official figure indicates a serious loss of millions of dollars in one day. The normally heavy traffic on the arteries surrounding the Fair disappeared for another reason also: the publicity for the stall-in was so effective that most people who drive to work in Manhattan used other transportation. Also, it was known generally that Moses had goofed on his promises of a finished Fair--"so why waste your money before the show starts." To top it off, it was a rainy day. The net result--as admitted and photographed by all the papers--was that there was very little traffic to stall. We would have been devotedly stupid to go ahead with an abstract stall-in--stalling no one but our ourselves. This holds whether we would have stalled with few or many cars.

We can understand how the papers, happy to ignore the disastrous drop in attendance, concentrated on the absence of the stall-in. It's harder to understand why people on our side knocked the stall-in. Could it be that they watched the method so hard that they forgot to count the score...the attendance? If we could continue to interfere with attendance this well, we could force concrete improvements.

The attendance drop was due to the very thing we hate--the tendency of mediocre, oblivious people to take the course of least resistance. People stayed away to avoid trouble. In other words, they stayed away from the Fair for the same reason that they stay away from civil rights demonstrations. A few people help us openly; a few fight us openly; the great majority AVOID TROUBLE! We suggest concentration on the Fair. All civil rights groups, regardless of their specialized inhibitions, can find some creative inspiration in Moses' architectural circus. For this reason, we suggest a directory of World's Fair Projects. This will indicate the exposed nerves of exhibits which merit trouble. The most sensitive point remains transportation. Here we need a change of pace. When the papers decide we're bluffing, we'll really stop traffic; when we're expected, we'll fail to show. We will try to produce a chronic impassability, both real and psychological.

We hope that we progress to an organized boycott of the Fair. The mere thought should send shudders up the backs of millions of greenbacks.

NEW YORK'S SEGREGATED SCHOOLS
AND DESEGREGATION EFFORTS

by Martin Boksenbaum

Like the overcoat in Gogol's short story, the New York City school system has been patched up until there just isn't enough substance left to patch onto. The system is bursting at the seams, and no matter how much hemming and whoring the Board of Education will attempt, nothing but a new system will work. This article is affirmation and support for the militant attempts of New York civil rights groups to get the much needed new system -- one that replaces Jim Crow with integrated quality education for the children of this city.

We supported both of Rev. Galamison's school boycotts; those efforts were headed due north. We support the focus on the World's Fair, for that is the Achilles Heel of New York's power structure. In particular, we support Brooklyn CORE's "stall in" scheduled for the April 22 opening of the Fair. Only these direct confrontations with the powers behind the Jim Crow system can effect change.

We were out there with Rev. Galamison, Brooklyn and Bronx CORE, et al, on April 4th, when the City-Wide Committee for Integrated Schools made their first hit on the Fair. The surprise attack caught the Fair and the city's finest flat-footed. People who were angered by that protest learned that integrationists mean business. When blocked by demonstrators, some people working on the Fair demanded that the protesters go. On the contrary, -- Jim Crow must go.

The national civil rights organizations have been busy turning themselves around as local New York groups have been using the tactics that can bring about integration. While everybody -- from the U.S. Supreme Court to PAT¹ -- admits that segregation must go, everybody is still living in a segregated system. The point is the people who want desegregation must use the force of boycotts, strikes, and stall ins to get it.

Since 1954 In December 1954, the New York City Board of Education backed the U.S. Supreme Court's famous decision banning school segregation when it pledged to "devise and put into operation a plan which will prevent the further development of such schools and integrate the existing ones as quickly as practicable." At that time there were 51 schools where the percentage of Negro and Puerto Rican children exceeded 90% on the elementary school level and 85% on the junior high level. Today, after nine years, there are 165 such schools-- and none of the original have been desegregated. During those years, the white community "minded its own business" as the minority groups suffered for the whole city.

The December 14, 1956 New York Times reported that "a master plan to end segregation in the city's public schools has been proposed, to take effect in September. It would drastically change the present zoning regulations that determine the schools to which the pupils must go. Provisions are made in the plan to obtain better racial balance in all the city's schools. The recommendations are contained in a report of the Subcommittee on Zoning. This is part of the Board of Education's Commission on Integration..." The report recommended establishing (cont'd p. 5)

1 -- PAT "is an organization of Parents and Taxpayers in New York City dedicated to the preservation of the neighborhood school," i.e., the segregated school.

Segregated Schools and Desegregation Efforts (cont'd)

racial integration as a cardinal objective of zoning, as opposed to a neighborhood school concept in which schools reflect the ethnic composition of the school district. "The report emphasizes the preparation of a master plan. It would be formulated by Dr. Jansen and be put into effect at the opening of the new school year. A timetable to bring about integration in the schools would be set up. The Central Zoning Unit would re-draw boundary lines, select bus transportation, re-arrange feeder patterns and introduce permissive zoning to promote integration." That was back in December 1956, seven years ago.

While the reports were being reported, local groups -- including the Parents' Workshop, Harlem Parents, local CORE chapters, the Northern Student Movement -- worked in the ghettos to improve the situation. Also, different official agencies came in to combat juvenile delinquency and illiteracy -- Mobilization for Youth (MFY), Associated Community Teams (ACT) of a domestic peace corps experiment, etc. But the ghetto schools themselves experienced the Board of Education's 1954 pledge through programs in name only. As a teacher in a school endowed with both a Higher Horizons title and a Special Service classification, I have yet to see anything that resembles a "special" or "helpful" program for the vast majority of the students.

The local groups came to the conclusion that their special services -- including tutoring programs and workshops -- could not make a dent in the muck created by the school system itself. They had to tackle the system.

Pressure on the Board of Education brought a "plan" on August 23, 1963. This plan, far from a "master" plan, called for free transfer beginning in February 1964 and the rezoning of one pair of Junior High Schools. Another piece of patchwork on the whole rotten system was not acceptable, so the City-Wide Committee for Integrated Schools, then consisting of 8 branches of the NAACP, 5 branches of CORE, Parents' Workshop, Harlem Parents Committee and PACE, called for a boycott -- to coincide with the threatened teachers' strike opening day of school.

The boycott was called off when the Board agreed to: make a Tentative Report on Dec. 1, 1963 and a Final Report on Feb. 1 which would include a timetable and which would provide for a substantial, realistic and working program of integration in every school district by September 1964; consult with community and civil rights groups in formulation of tentative and final plans.

Two meetings were held between Sept. 5 and Dec. 1. At the first meeting representatives of the NAACP asked for discussion of the basic design for city-wide desegregation that had been submitted at Dr. Gross' request by Dr. Max Wolff, Research Director for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in New York. Not only was there no discussion of this plan, it was even denied that such a design for city-wide desegregation existed.²

Other plans for integrating the schools have been submitted by various groups, e.g. American Jewish Congress, the Mayor's Commission on Human Rights, the Parents' Workshop. Despite the numerous master plans, including that '56 report of the Board of Education's own sub-committee, the New York Times implied in an editorial of Oct. 13, 1963 that the Board of Education would not, could not, or should not present a desegregation plan with timetable: "The Board played irresponsibly (cont'd)

2 -- This material, on the 1963 dealings with the Board of Education, is based on "Timetable of the Board's Bad Faith," a fact sheet by Teachers for Integrated Quality Education (TIQUE).

Segregated Schools and Desegregation Efforts (cont'd)

with fire when, earlier this year, it promised that the next report would include a specific 'timetable' for integration. It made the promise as a bribe to stave off the threat of boycott, probably in the hope that the day of crisis might be indefinitely postponed. There was no excuse for the Board's failure to discuss candidly with civil rights and community representatives..."

On December 9, the Board did not present a master plan with timetable. Instead, when the Board announced its Interim Report, the "plan" was basically the same as the one rejected in August. It suggested further that at some unspecified time there might be a possibility of desegregating 16 schools for the entire city.

Protests became more militant. On Dec. 16 there were sit-in arrests. The New York Times of the 17th headlined on p. 1: "25 ARRESTED HERE IN SCHOOL PROTEST: 3 Clergymen Among Those Prevented From Staging Racial Sit-In at Board" and they chose Rev. Galamison for their "Man in the News." From that point on, things kept right on moving toward the February 3 boycott, when almost half the school children of New York's public schools stayed out -- when almost half a million students had their first lesson in democracy.

The bribes continued also. The last, just before the Feb. 3 boycott, was another plan. This plan would have allowed the construction of more segregated schools than it would attempt to desegregate. The City-Wide Committee answered the bribe in detail. In a joint statement they explained why they were going ahead with that first boycott (reprint of that statement on p.10). However, since that plan has just about been withdrawn, it is doubtful that it was intended as anything but a bribe.

The first boycott was heralded with as much fan-fare as the March on Washington. It too was expected to be a one-shot affair -- more in the nature of celebration than confrontation. Indeed, just like the March on Washington, Bayard Rustin was Director. Everything seemed to be under control.

But things weren't under control. Right outside the Board of Education, James Farmer, National CORE head, said, in answer to Board President Donovan's "it's a fizzle" comment, that we needed more of these fizzles! The crowd of demonstrators responded with a roar of approval. People wanted to push on to success.

That's when everything took on a different aura. All sorts of "splits" were rumored in the papers, then became open stories. Chapters of PAT began staging "anti" demonstrations, holding meetings, giving out leaflets. The press began printing stories of violence in the schools with daily scorecards of attacks on teachers by students. Splinter groups started their own "safe" organizations with their own "safe" activities: the Puerto Rican "prayerful" March on Sunday March 1; the March on Albany, March 10, of civil rights and labor organizations,

Galamison went ahead with plans for the second boycott -- he lost the support of national civil rights organizations -- but gained the support of local groups and unaffiliated people. Started by the Brooklyn and Bronx chapters, 8 chapters of CORE broke with National CORE's position and backed the second boycott all the way. Members of East River CORE staged a sit-down on the Triborough Bridge, blocking rush-hour traffic. And on the day of the second boycott, March 16th, some out-of-town boycott leaders joined Galamison, Robinson, Leeds, Brunson, et al, on the platform: Lawrence Landry, leader of Chicago's 2 school boycotts; Stanley Branche, boycott

(cont'd)

Segregated Schools and Desegregation Efforts (cont'd)

leader of Chester, Pa.; Gloria Richardson of Cambridge, Md., who led a vote boycott on un-votable civil rights. Jesse Gray, Harlem rent-strike leader was also on that platform, as were Malcolm X and Rep. Adam Clayton Powell.

Then Galamison led the attack on the World's Fair. The local CORE chapters have come up with tactics to turn attention to what's un-Fair. Together they head doggedly towards confrontation with the whole Jim Crow system.

A New Yorker can trace his tensions back to about Feb. 3 when the scene became a test of strength between two opposing camps -- when one wondered whether the Negro would break out of the ghetto or whether he would be contained.

Desegregation In discussing the problems of the schools, the obvious point is overlooked: segregation is designed to exclude and confine the minority children. A mis-educated, ill-housed, unemployed ghetto system saps the desire to learn or achieve and gets one accustomed to defeat and "inferiority." Getting equal education means getting out of the ghetto system. The answer to those who say, "you mean to tell me that a Negro child is going to learn more sitting next to a white child?" is yes, not because something is going to rub off from the white child, but because the ghetto system will have been broken -- in the schools, to begin with.

It is educationally and morally necessary to integrate schools: 1-- children can develop into healthy, functioning, disciplined human beings in a system designed to include and nurture them; 2-- integration is an education -- it teaches that every human being is of value and provides interpersonal relations necessary for exposing the Jim Crow lie; 3-- "The omission of any child in terms of home background, race, and socio-economic status from any classroom sets up a pattern of segregation of one kind or another. Academic, racial or social segregation is destructive to all groups."³

Of course integration means more than racial mixing in our inadequate school system. Integration is necessary for changing the quality of the system in all respects. "In spite of the battle of semantics it is evident that we are all interested in achieving the same kind of school system; smaller classes, academic freedom, challenging curriculum, professional dignity for the teaching profession and an equal education for every child."⁴

The semantic confusion is a cover-up for an emotional reaction. It becomes especially muddled on the bussing issue. To clear it up, here are some facts about bussing: 80% of the buses built in the U.S. are school buses; tens of thousands of children are bussed every day in New York City (parochial and private schools, open enrollment); children in rural areas must be bussed long distances to get to any school at all. People bus their children if they are convinced that their children will be getting a better education. The educational and moral necessity for school desegregation far outweighs any immediate loss in achievement, let alone any inconveniences due to bussing. For reluctant whites and for reluctant Negroes and Puerto Ricans, however, such necessity does not outweigh the fears, hurts, and

3 -- "Classroom Grouping and Integration," by A. Lipton, principal of the R.J. Bailey School in Hartsdale, N.Y. In Integrated Education, Vol. II, No. 1.

4 -- Letter from Rev. Galamison to UFT chapter chairmen prior to March 16th boycott.

Segregated Schools and Desegregation Efforts (cont'd)

hates of a direct confrontation with prejudice and discrimination.

The job of the Board of Education is to see that the children of this city get the education that can help them develop into healthy, functioning, mature adults. It is in this light that the placement of students, utilizing bussing, zoning, etc., is not only completely justified, but required. On the other hand, there is no justification for the Board of Education to wait for the adult population to want bussing, for attitudes are the last things to change. The Board must do what is necessary to make sure that there is no harvest of the bitter fruits of prejudice in the next generation.

Those who think Negro children have to prove their "worth" in the present situation first, are forgetting that they are "worthy" now. Children are going to be defensive and "undisciplined" so long as we pile the sickness of our world on their backs. There is something wrong with the reasoning that Negro or Puerto Rican children would be showing pride in themselves by doing the best they can in the present situation, i.e. by accepting a system which rejects them. All this smells of the separate-but-equal contradiction: that segregation can cure what segregation causes.

Checking history, separate educational facilities have somehow just never gotten to be equal -- whether in the north or in the south. The schools of Harlem, for example:

"After the riot of March 19, 1935, the Frazier report, called for by the Mayor's Commission on Conditions in Harlem, pointed to discrimination against Harlem children. The report called attention to a high proportion of double sessions and over-crowded classes, high teacher-turn-over, and lack of equipment in shops, laboratories, libraries and gymnasiums. The report cited cases where the school discriminated by failing to encourage Negro students toward commercial or academic training to which they were entitled and for which they were equipped.

"In July, 1935, a committee of the Board of Education made forty-five general recommendations to cover the needs of Harlem schools.

"In January 1939, a committee of principals made a great number of recommendations.

"In 1945, on the basis of two years of experimentation, the Harlem Project made a report with thirty-two recommendations.

"And yet --

"In 1950, the Harlem Council on Education warned that the children of Harlem were faced with mass illiteracy unless drastic action were taken immediately. They pointed to a study of several junior high schools. Of the students, 90% were retarded one year or more in reading and arithmetic and 60% were retarded three years or more! (This latter figure is almost three times the scandalously high city-wide retardation rate of 23%.)

"Conditions had actually deteriorated since 1945."⁵

What about conditions since 1950?

"The Public Education Association in their 1956 study found that the arithmetic and reading achievement levels of minority group sixth graders were two years behind their white contemporaries; eighth graders were three years behind. (cont'd)

5 -- "Searchlight: An Expose of New York City Schools" by David Alison. Published in 1951 by Teachers Center Press.

Segregated Schools and Desegregation Efforts (cont'd)

"More recent studies by Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, the Brooklyn Parents Workshop for Equality in New York City Schools, and the Urban League of Greater New York found that the achievement gap has widened."⁶

The separate schools have not become equal -- for many reasons which add up to Jim Crow. For example, are any teachers trained to teach in the ghetto schools, in which they undoubtedly will begin their teaching careers? How many teachers are taught the following?

"The Harlem Project / report, made in 1945 / discovered many things about the children of the Harlem schools.

"In studying the background of truancy, invariably they found poverty; they found overworked mothers who lacked time for their children; poor housing that gave neither peace, comfort nor privacy; poor health; rural background of parents; family instability.

"The study showed that these boys were capable of becoming good citizens--but only if they received added services from school and community. It concluded that the Bureau of Attendance used routine methods in handling truancy-- methods completely ineffective. The Bureau treated truancy as police officers do a breaking of the law instead of as a symptom of many deep problems which the school could help solve.

"In the Harlem Project's work, the relations of health, family and community services to school adjustment became evident. The school had to become the center from which not only learning but social community services emanated. The school had to become a wholesome core of good living and friendly, helpful service for the children and the community of which they are a part. There was need for all-day community schools and educational and recreational activities for the boys and girls during the afternoons and evenings. There was need for clubs, an all-day summer program for children, a program for parents.

"The need was found for new teaching techniques, better and richer curricula. Individual treatment was necessary in many cases to overcome special barriers to learning. It was necessary to scrap a program which demanded that the child fit the school and conform to mass standards even where these standards were rigid and inappropriate."

Now, the information derived from this study and made public almost 20 years ago, is not part of the city's approach to education, let alone taught to teachers in the city's teacher education programs. Despite the numerous studies and recommendations since 1935 to improve the quality of the ghetto schools, the education of minority group children is at least as bad now, if not worse. The fact is, the studies and proposals are immediately "forgotten." A discussion of reasons for the city's forgetfulness would make a very interesting article. The "Searchlight" book (cited in the foot-notes) makes many points in this connection. But wouldn't any explanation for maintaining schools that are directed at mirroring the conditions of the ghetto include, as a primary point, the economic value of exploiting a poorly educated, poorly trained segment of the population?

The UFT (United Federation of Teachers) newspaper of Feb. 6, 1964 had an editorial by President Charles Cogen, which began: "Effective schools and integration are fundamentally two sides of a single coin. While the need for better (cont'd)

6 -- Statement by New York CORE Chapters on School Integration, January 16, 1964.

7 -- The "Searchlight" book previously cited.

Segregated Schools and Desegregation Efforts (cont'd)

schools is a universal problem, its impact is greatest in the same schools where de facto segregation prevails." He then proceeded to announce that the UFT had not taken a position on the Feb. 3 boycott, because it was steering a "moderate and reasonable course in the midst of the turbulence surrounding these two issues." He has missed the point of the civil rights efforts: moderation is unreasonable.

More and more people are beginning to realize that integration is not going to be handed anybody on a silver platter. It's a fight in which sides have to be taken. Whatever else is wrong, we know we're on the right side. Which side are you on?

/ Statement of the groups in the City-Wide Committee for Integrated Schools prior to the Feb. 3rd boycott, in response to the Board of Education's last proposal./

WHY WE BOYCOTT

The four civil rights groups--NAACP, CORE, Harlem Parents' Committee, and the Parents' Workshop for Equality--which issued the Call for the one-day school boycott have carefully considered the Board of Education's proposals. We are in full agreement that the proposals completely fail to provide for substantial and meaningful school desegregation throughout the city. Our plans for the February 3rd boycott, therefore, remain unchanged.

We have repeatedly insisted upon a plan of desegregation for the elementary schools that is city-wide in scope. The proposals fall far short of this objective.

The Board has proposed to desegregate over a two-and-one-half year period no more than 20 of the 134 segregated Negro and Puerto Rican schools, leaving 114 segregated schools untouched. Their proposal leaves intact 85% of these segregated elementary schools.

The proposals say absolutely nothing about segregated schools that have less than 90% minority concentration.

The Board has established criteria for Princeton Plans which can only affect isolated pairs of schools, rather than area pairings for large groups of schools in contiguous Negro, changing, and white area on a city-wide basis.

We have urged the complete desegregation of all Junior High Schools by September 1964. The Board proposes to desegregate only 10 segregated Negro-Puerto Rican Junior Highs, leaving all the others still segregated-in-fact.

We have urged desegregation of all High Schools. The Board proposes to close one high school, study another, and think about the remainder.

The proposals to send additional children from overcrowded to underutilized schools continues to place the heaviest burden for desegregation on the Negro and Puerto Rican child.

We have urged that the planning for all new schools provided for in the 128 million dollar construction budget be temporarily halted until they can be judged in relationship to a city-wide desegregation plan for existing schools. The Board makes no provision for such a step.

Under the present construction budget, the Board will build more segregated white and Negro schools than it proposes to desegregate in the plan released today.

There is no provision in the plan for special problems affecting the Puerto Rican student population of the city.

In summary, the Board's proposals completely fail to meet the problem of extensive and rigid segregation in the schools.

Rev. Milton A. Galamison, Parents' Workshop; Frederick Jones, NAACP; Mary Pfifer, CORE; Isaiah Robinson, Harlem Parents' Committee. The National Association for Puerto Rican Civil Rights, through its representative, Gilberto Valentin, concurs.

MARCH FOR BETTER HOUSING!

SATURDAY

MAY 2 - 1PM

(START FROM NOSTRAND & LEXINGTON AVES.)

- * LEGALIZE RENT STRIKES! NO REPAIRS - NO RENT!
- * RUN THE SLUMLORDS OUT OF NEW YORK CITY! THE CITY TO REPAIR AND RUN THEIR BUILDINGS DECENTLY!
- * DEMAND LARGE-SCALE FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR LOW-COST PUBLIC HOUSING!
- * GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES TO SMALL HOMEOWNERS FOR REHABILITATION!
- * END DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSING - INTEGRATE ALL COMMUNITIES TO MAKE NEW YORK AN "OPEN CITY"!

JOIN THE WAR ON SLUMS!

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Church

Brooklyn CORE Rent-Strike Committee

Progress Report

by Major Owens, Chairman
Rent-Strike Committee

Jan. 18, 1964

After five months of aiding tenants in poor housing the Brooklyn CORE Rent-Strike Committee reports not only important immediate gains for tenants in Bedford Stuyvesant and Brownsville, but of greater significance, the formation of a community-wide organization with a growing base of grass-roots tenants committees. Representatives from sixty tenant committees with approximately 400 members met on January 16 to form the CORE Community Tenants Council. The Council in cooperation with the Rent-Strike Committee will continue the fight for better housing by pressing for basic changes in the policies and laws governing housing and landlord-tenant relations in New York City. Most of the member tenants committees have already benefited from their organized efforts. Nearly 300 families have received substantial rent reductions. About 75 other families have gotten improvements in service and facilities as a result of fighting with the aid of CORE. To force the slumlords to make major repairs, eight buildings are now on rent-strike and at least 40 others have voted to strike on February 1.

Many of these tenants live within walking distance from the CORE office and a short bus-ride from the site of the mass demonstrations at the Downstate Medical Center, yet for most this is their first involvement in a civil rights project.

HISTORY

Brooklyn CORE began considering a project to aid tenants as early as the Spring of 1963. At about the same time interest in slum housing and the possible use of rent-strike to break the grip of the slumlords was developing among the national leadership of CORE. The National CORE office gave financial support for a "task force" which, although working primarily on the employment crisis at Downstate Medical Center, did lay a foundation for the chapter Rent-Strike Committee to build on in September. One principle firmly established by the "task force" was that the only fruitful approach to tenants was the house to house and door to door method.

About eight determined people went to work with the following simple procedure. Teams of two (usually integrated) entered obviously neglected houses and moved from apartment to apartment with an introductory leaflet. They discussed conditions and informed the tenants that Brooklyn CORE wanted to work with them to get improvements. In the beginning it was always necessary to talk at great length in order to convince tenants that something could be done. In at least fifty percent of the cases, tenants had made some effort within the last two years to get a city agency to help improve conditions. The fact that their efforts were in vain and the bureaus had done nothing led the tenants to conclude that nothing could be done. In many instances, notably the 100 Jefferson Avenue block, the Building Department had several months before completed a cyclical inspection and found thousands of violations. But there were no results.

In houses where at least half of the tenants were convinced that something could be done, a date was set for a meeting at an apartment within the house. At this meeting, a tenants committee was formed and a spokesman was elected. The committee, in cooperation with the CORE organizer, drafted a letter to the landlord

stating its grievances and requesting that he come to a meeting to discuss a timetable for improvements. At the same time applications for rent reductions were filed with the Rent Administration and letters were sent to the building and the health department.

When a landlord refused to answer the letter and attend a meeting (none would attend a meeting), he was informed that the next step would be direct action, the most frequently employed direct action being picketing at the residence of the landlord. All of this (attempts to achieve code enforcement and rent reductions, as well as picketing) was done in the hope that some results would be achieved and also that CORE would thus gain the confidence of the tenants. Having gained the confidence of the tenants, the next step proposed was to be rent-strike.

FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR ORGANIZATION

When the concerted fight for better housing began several favorable conditions existed which facilitated successful organization. First and of vital importance was the existence of a rent control law in New York City. Without this law the project to aid tenants would have been thwarted immediately; landlords would have either evicted tenants for complaining, or raised the rent to an absurd level and thus forced them to move. (CORE efforts in Newark had to be ended for this very reason.) The Rent Administration's policy of using rent reductions to force rehabilitation also makes it the city agency most feared by slumlords. It is for this reason that it was decided that the first step of each tenants' committee would be to file for rent reductions.

Another favorable condition was the existence of a body of multiple dwelling and health laws which although not adequate could be costly to the landlord when enforced. Early in the project, the Rent-Strike Committee Chairman established contact with the heads of the Building and Health Department and informed them the committee would insist that they do the job they are required to do. No threats were made but the Brooklyn Chapter of CORE has a well-known reputation for taking direct action against city agencies, the most dramatic of which was the dumping of garbage on the steps of Borough Hall, which resulted in a change from four to six day garbage collection for Bedford-Stuyvesant. As a result of the direct contact between the Rent-Strike Committee Chairman and the heads of these agencies, greater cooperation was achieved and the process of enforcement for the cases initiated by CORE was speeded up, although still not as much as is necessary.

PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZATION

On the unfavorable side, there were many conditions and circumstances blocking the committee's work with tenants. Most formidable among these obstacles was the myth of the landlord's invincibility. There were innumerable cases where the feeble efforts of tenants against slumlords had only led to greater loss and injury. Landlords boasted of their ability to "take care of" inspectors from city agencies; in the courts their well-paid lawyers easily out-manuevered simple tenants; the complaining tenant often found himself facing eviction without due process. Another source of difficulty was the widespread practice whereby landlords hold tenants under a "bondage of back rent" system closely akin to the sharecropping debt system of the South. Tenants are deliberately permitted to get behind in their rent and the threat of a sudden demand for payment is used to silence all complaints. The red tape and excessive forms of the rent offices, the long period of waiting between the initiation of an action and the results, the final ineffectualness of city agencies after entering a case and the general pro-landlord atmosphere within the

agencies administering laws designed to protect tenants, all of these were factors in the slow pace of tenant response.

But success in the form of rent reductions and major repairs undertaken by landlords under pressure coupled with the publicity received by the wide-spread Harlem rent-strikes has led to a marked change in the attitude of Brooklyn tenants. Tenants have seen the fruits of organization and action; they have seen city agencies shaken to the point of carrying out their appointed tasks and politicians forced to at least speak of plans for action. Most important they have seen the courts uphold the rent-strike and support the principle that tenants like other consumers should not have to pay for facilities and services they do not have.

RENT STRIKE

The first rent-strike called by Brooklyn CORE was not laboriously prepared in accordance with the procedure indicated above. It was begun at the very first meeting of the tenants committee. Conditions at 104, 106, 110 and 112 Rochester Avenue were such that it was felt that it would be criminal to ask tenants to continue paying rent for another day. At the same time that it was decided to withhold rents, letters demanding immediate inspections went out to the building and health departments and to the rent administration. By the time of the Court hearing on December 13 the rents had already been reduced to a dollar. The records of the building department were subpoenaed, and when confronted with this well-organized case against him the landlord yielded, and the judge ordered that the rents be paid to the court until the violations were corrected. This case was decided on December 13. Owners of other buildings now on rent-strike have refused to serve "dispossess" notices. We are waiting for the opportunity to have a court hearing.

Rent-strike is now firmly established as a method of curbing greedy slumlords. The courts have upheld the use of rent-strikes and the state legislature is presently discussing the possibility of legislation to make strikes legal. Judge Fred G. Morrill of the Brooklyn Landlord-Tenant Court has ruled that tenants should be allowed to live rent-free until violations are corrected. Judge Morrill gave official sanction to the philosophy of the CORE Rent-Strike committee which insists that tenants are consumers who should not have to pay for what they are not receiving.

The fight will go on until thousands of buildings are on rent-strike. It is our intent to drive the slumlords out of Bedford-Stuyvesant and Brownsville. The greedy speculators have concentrated on Negro-Puerto Rican neighborhoods because their racist leanings rule out all considerations of conscience and they have expert knowledge of how to exploit the low incomes and poor education of minority residents. It is our duty to destroy their high investment returns of 30-50 per cent on slum properties. We must not allow ourselves to be distracted from our goal by becoming involved with the intricacies of financial arrangements between landlords and banks or the problems of landlords who can't afford to repair. It is obvious that this country has the resources to supply everyone with decent housing once we decide we want to do this. Buildings which have paid for themselves several times over should not continue to be the instruments by which vitally needed subsistence funds are squeezed from the tenants. Rentals should not be dependent on how many successive tenants have occupied the apartments (a vicious system which encourages landlords to harass tenants and further neglect needed repairs) but should be determined by a more equitable relationship between cost of maintenance and tenant's incomes.

As a long range solution to the problem, we would like to see Bedford-Stuyvesant and Brownsville declared disaster areas, and large-scale city, state and federal government programs for rehabilitation and improvement initiated at once. An attempt should be made to produce a comprehensive blue-print for these two communities. Better health facilities, a junior-college, several small amusement and cultural parks with space for educational exhibits; all of these and more must be considered at the same time as planning for massive amounts of low income and middle income housing with more concern for optimum living conditions than currently exists.

Brooklyn CORE is dedicated to the achievement of a more beautiful and better community in all respects. The major aim of the Rent-Strike Committee is to teach people to fight for themselves. On the specific problem of living conditions and, in the future, on civil rights problems concerning the human condition, we expect each building organized by CORE to serve as a fighting unit. The people will never again become victims if they themselves lead the fight.

CORE COMMUNITY
TENANTS-COUNCIL

The CORE Community Tenants Council is made up of members of the various tenants committees organized by the Brooklyn CORE Rent-Strike Committee and any individual tenants who wish to join. The Council is run by the tenants who constitute its membership. The Council is advised by and works in direct cooperation with Brooklyn CORE Rent-Strike Committee. The Council has the power to undertake any program of action it desires as long as such a program is not in conflict with the constitution and policy of Brooklyn CORE.

For Peace,
Civil Rights,
Civil Liberties.

ergo
Vol. IV
No. 3-4

March-April 1964

Committee for Peace Organization

c/o Aileen Cox
1060 Union St.
Brooklyn
N.Y. 11225

Members of the Council have the right to call upon the Council for help with any problem connected with living conditions within their building and within the community.

P.O. Box 8344
Station E.
Louisville
Ky. 40208

Members of the Council have the duty to support the Council with work and action!

There is a yearly membership fee of \$2.00.

Subscription price:
\$2.00 for 12 issues.
Make checks payable
to Aileen Cox.

Brooklyn CORE
319 Nostrand Avenue
Brooklyn, New York

CORRESPONDENCE

from: Paul Burke
Omaha, Nebraska
March 25, 1964

The Motorized Filibuster

A filibuster is a parliamentary maneuver by which a minority prevents legislative action by delaying tactics. They go through the motions of making laws but they do not.

Does this suggest a line of tactics by which the civil rights advocates in 1964 can protest the U.S. Senate's civil rights filibuster? I think it does.

The weakest link in our economic system is in transportation. Millions of people depend on private passenger cars to get from place to place for work, business, education, shopping, recreation, etc., over city streets long since inadequate for the traffic they carry. You need only look at what happens to traffic when a minor accident or a flat tire or a dead motor occurs during the rush. The traffic backs up for blocks or miles.

Because of this situation what I propose in the way of a civil rights protest demonstration is a drive in. The demonstrators will simply drive to a suitable spot just before the rush hour and drive slowly about as though looking for a spot to park. This strategy allows great flexibility as to the time, the place and the tactics. It could be with banners and signs or without. It could be with civil disobedience or without. An announcement in advance might draw sightseers to add to the confusion. People without cars could come by taxi. Other people without cars might rent them or buy junk cars for the occasion.

The whole effect would be a filibuster against the filibuster. People going through the motions of travel to prevent others from traveling.

from: Merle L. Hovland
Santa Barbara, Calif.
March 10, 1964

Once again I must commend you and say thanks also for your continuing interest in me in sending issues of "downdraft" and "ergo." These are extremely well chosen titles for these publications. Were I to publish them or similar ones, I think I would call them the same thing -- or how about "Ikonomoclast" -- or "Snide" -- or "harpoon"? Not meant in reflection upon you -- but upon social conditions and/or economic despotism so prevalent here today. I would call the Freedom Now Party the Dichotomy Party; advocating integration and separatism in one breath is about the most profound dichotomy I've run into for a long time!

These poor people who strive so desperately for--not only equality--but the regaining of true self respect and confidence, coupled with the erasure, total and complete, of the "slavery complex" with which they--generation after generation, have been saddled with for over a century now--as I said--these poor people need the alliance and encouragement of every decent right thinking human being on this earth--to aid them in their struggle! The moral issues are crystal clear! It is the solution(s) to these issues that is so complex as to defy description. If I were a Negro--I'd hate the white race--everything white--with a burning passion. By a strange metamorphosis--though my skin be white--I can and do (I've even been told this by several colored friends!) think and feel as a Negro--from their standpoint
(cont'd)

CORRESPONDENCE

from: Hovland (cont'd)

100%. I find little or nothing decent or upright or honest or just in my own race in his (its) collective dealings with all the non-white races of the world down through centuries of recorded history.

I have often wished I could have had the honor to have been born an Oriental, an American Indian, or a member of the Negroid race. No I'm not suffering from what has been classified in some quarters as a "collective guilt complex" of the white race. My feelings are compounded of: (1) hatred of injustice wherever found; (2) rage at my own race for the despicable things it has been guilty of against other non-white races of the world; -- and (3) supreme acid contempt for the pious hypocrisy double standard mouthings of: -- especially -- this Christian "God-fearing" (HA! in loud derision!) nation and people -- and especially the G.D.--6*!!##* (too horrible to write!) Southern white phonies of the "bible-belt U.S.A." Now that I've gotten this off my chest--I feel better! Pardon my vehemence, -- but this issue is a raw tooth NERVE to me -- and I cannot help myself; I go overboard!

Thanks again--ever so much and keep up the good work.

from: Janet N. Neuman
Washington Women Strike for Peace
1822 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.
Washington 36, D.C.

Dear Editor

Nuclear war or the threat of it is so dangerous that every effort must be made to prevent it! Our nation must never place itself in the position of aiding the spread of nuclear weapons.

For this reason, Women Strike for Peace is protesting the proposed Multilateral Force (MLF). This MLF, it seems to us, is a dangerous proposal, since it calls for a nuclear armada to be manned by men of many nations which do not already have nuclear power. Women Strike for Peace is against the proliferation of nuclear weapons by any country to any country, in or out of NATO.

We believe that the spread of nuclear weapons will greatly increase international tension. Germany's (40% or even less) is likely to prove an insurmountable barrier to negotiations for disarmament with the Soviet Union.

A program is now under way to build a COUNTERFORCE OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. Women of all NATO countries are invited to join a Women's Multinational Peace Rally, in The Hague, May 12-14. This coincides with the meeting of NATO delegates, to whom we will attempt to present our deep concern.

Participation, inquiries, and support are solicited from all who believe with us, that the Security of Americans as well as all people lies in the reduction of arms under international control -- not in their spread.

MLF Demonstration -- May 9

The Student Peace Union and Women Strike for Peace will co-sponsor a demonstration against

MLF on Saturday, May 9. The groups will assemble at 2pm at the corner of Brighton Beach Ave. & Coney Island Ave. (in Brooklyn), then walk down the Boardwalk.

downdraft

e.t.d. c/o Mitchell
1010 President Street
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11225

Vol. I, No. 2 -- April 1964

End The Draft

Counsel: Conrad Lynn

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A number of demonstrations are scheduled for May -- in protest of the militaristic posture and criminal activity of the United States. We have outlined, in the following pages, the protests seeking to end the draft and to end the war in Vietnam, both of which are, to us, logically inseparable. We would like to see those fighting the draft and those fighting the war in Vietnam, uniting to fight the U.S. cold war posture.

Demonstrations to End the Draft

Armed forces week is May 9th through 17th. There are several peace actions to oppose the "Power for Peace" theme.

May 11-15 Noon to 2PM and 4 to 6 PM

There will be daily leafleting of the Power for Peace exhibit at Union Square - site of the Armed Forces major outdoor exhibit.

May 16 1 to 3PM

A major demonstration calling for an end to the draft will be held that Saturday in Union Square. There will be an opportunity for those who wish to do so to burn their draft cards publicly.

Sponsors include the Wars Resisters League (WRL)
Committee for Nonviolent Action (CNVA)
Catholic Worker
Student Peace Union (SPU)

For further information call

WRL -- CO 7-4592 CNVA -- WA 5-9415

A "forum" series sponsored by War Resisters League has scheduled discussions on conscientious objection.

April 29 8PM

Dan Seeger, Dave Dellinger, Ralph Digia to speak on "G.I. or C.O." at Textile Workers Union Hall - 34 E. 12 St. Contribution 50¢.

Demonstration to End U.S. Intervention in Vietnam

May 2 1PM

Protest to demand withdrawal of U.S. troops. Sponsored by the May 2nd Committee, the demonstration is to be held at 110 St. and 8th Avenue. Officers of the May 2nd Committee are Russ Stetler (Haverford SPU), Levi Laub (Progressive Labor), and Peter Camejo (Young Socialist Alliance). The Committee will prepare a leaflet and provide a speaker. There will be no restriction on slogans. However, no organizational identification except that of the May 2nd Committee will appear on the line. It is intended that the demonstration be considerably militant. Tentative plans call for the demonstration to evolve into a walk to Times Square

For the past year, Youth Against War and Fascism has been the only New York group to demonstrate against the war in Vietnam. The most recent was an April 4th demonstration. Below is a press release re their March 14 protest.

NEW YORKERS STAGE MILITANT DEMONSTRATION AGAINST
U.S. AGGRESSION IN VIETNAM

New York, March 14, 1964 -- Over 150 New Yorkers demonstrated their opposition to the war that the U.S. government is waging against the people of South Vietnam and called for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops in that area.

The demonstration, called by Youth Against War & Fascism, took place in the heart of a busy shopping district in midtown New York at 14th Street near Fifth Avenue in front of the U.S. Army & Air Force Exchange Center and was witnessed by over 20,000 people. Many of the passersby expressed their support of the demonstration. The group passed out over 5,000 leaflets opposing the war of extermination being waged by the U.S. government against the Vietnamese people. The leaflet said in part: "Don't Let Vietnam Become Another Korea." "...In Korea, 157,000 Americans and a million Koreans were killed and wounded... In Vietnam the toll would be even greater... The Vietnamese will not fight for the Pentagon, the State Dept., the C.I.A., or the White House... U.S. youth will be asked to die in Vietnam -- while Generals and the Bankers grow fat... Only a mass protest can stop the war in Vietnam."

A considerable number of people joined the demonstrators who carried placards and chanted slogans such as: "No More Koreas, Bring the Troops Home," "Stop the War in Vietnam," "Withdraw all U.S. Troops from Vietnam," "No War in Vietnam, North or South."

This was the sixth and largest demonstration that the youth group has held in opposition to the U.S. government's aggressive activities in Vietnam. The increasing friendliness and shouts of encouragement given to the demonstrators is indicative of a growing opposition among the masses of American people to this brutal and vicious war which is going on in South Vietnam. The American people and especially the youth are slowly becoming aware of the sinister role that first the Kennedy Administration, and now the Johnson Administration is playing in South East Asia.

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A W O L

/ excerpt from a letter
dated August 1, 1963./

So much has happened to us since I wrote that I hardly know where to begin. I don't know if I have ever mentioned this to you or not, but A_____ is highly emotional, has his own ideas on war and the draft and this whole army service has been a torture to him. He is a CO, you know, but the COs are given the same indoctrination and training, except for arms, of any other soldier. A_____ has a bad back, a fact which the army doctors ignored, and it has given him no end of trouble in PT. He has also protested time and again on his being drafted under threats of fines and imprisonment, and for indoctrination, such as that the US will never sign an agreement with any country outlawing germ warfare! Since he has been at Fort B_____ he has approached the Commanding Officer, chaplains of both religions, the non-commissioned officers, mental hygiene, the medics and anyone else he could get to and continually dinned in their ears just what he thought of the whole mess. He was completely ignored until the 4th of July when he declared an independence of his own and went AWOL and came home. I knew he was going to do it, and I did nothing to stop him. Maybe you have heard the old story about the farmer who had a mule he could not train, so he hired a professional mule trainer. The mule trainer came, picked up a board and hit the mule over the head a few times. The farmer, aghast, said, "Hey, what's the idea of that?" "Well," replied the mule trainer, "first, I have to get his attention!"

So, we got their attention, A_____ stayed home four days and we visited an attorney who is also a friend of Senator D_____, whom I had already written to. The attorney advised him to go back, take the article 15, which he would probably get and he and D_____ would try to see what they could do.

When I saw A_____ I knew that he had to do what he did: he was on the verge of a complete breakdown. He had lost a great deal of weight and had not slept for weeks, he said. When he finally got to sleep here he slept for fourteen hours.

He went back after he had rested up and all that happened was the Colonel chewed him out, he was fined 15 dollars a month for two months and given two hours a day extra duty for 30 days. D_____ had his investigation going by the time A_____ arrived back, the attorney wrote eight letters to various people down there and hell broke loose. There was a big pow wow the 26th ... and we think he is going to get out before too long. The psychiatrist said he thought he was never going to change his mind, A_____ 's three buddies stuck with him, the two non-coms did the same and Captain F_____ was the only one who held out that he might yet be converted.

We are still awaiting the results of this meeting, which like any other government affair has to go through a hundred miles of red tape and four hundred carbon copies before the result is known. He was being recycled, anyway, because of his physical condition, but he called me Monday night and said the Captain had ... said he was promoting him four weeks and he can come home on leave at the end of that (14 days). It looks to us like they were buttering him up, but A_____ says, no butter will work. He is going to get out if he has to be court martialed.

We are in touch with the CCCO in Philadelphia and the NSBRO in Washington. They have a representative... a Rev. X, who is a real right guy and A_____ is in touch with him. Rev. X advised him to either go AWOL again or stage a sit down, if they refuse to let him out any other way. I will let you know as soon as we hear for sure. I have all his letters giving the real, lowdown, stinking dope on the army, and brother, it really stinks...

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