

April 16, 1964

Dear Friend,

As I indicated in my wire to the chapter chairmen, the Brooklyn CORE chapter has been suspended by the Steering Committee of the NAC pending action on disaffiliation at the May 1st meeting of the National Action Council. Some chapters have been disaffiliated in the past. Brooklyn CORE was suspended at the time it was proposing the "stall-in" on the opening day of the World's Fair and because of their continued defiance of the NAC.

The suspension does not stem from the stall-in alone, but from a background of persistent violation of the CORE Rules for Action. On a number of occasions \* during the past six months, I and other members of the staff have met with the leaders and members of the chapter in attempts to iron out their problems. On at least two occasions chapter leaders promised to take specific steps to alleviate the situation and to enter into training in CORE procedure, techniques and nonviolence. In both cases the chapter officers failed to keep their agreements with us.

The violation of CORE Rules for Action by Brooklyn CORE occurred primarily around a project at the John Jay High School, an incident in which they charged wrongly that a small child had died of rat bites; and a public attack and slander of a Negro judge.

We have made repeated attempts to bring the Brooklyn chapter into conformity with CORE procedure. The World's Fair stall-in was finally rejected by the New York chapter chairmen by a vote of 12½ to 2½. In spite of this and in spite of an agreement that no public statements would be made, the chapter continued to publicly pursue the project.

It was at this point (April 8) that the NAC voted by telephone to suspend Brooklyn CORE until the April 11 Steering Committee. The vote for suspension was 19 in favor none against and one abstention. The chapter was informed of the suspension and directed to cease making any statements in the name of CORE.

The next morning the chapter held a press conference in which they announced details of the stall-in. It was following their press conference that I was compelled to authorize an announcement of their suspension to the press.

This then is the history against which the Steering Committee continued the suspension until May 1. I am sorry to be so lengthy, but it is important that each chapter understand the issues. This is especially so in light of the efforts on the part of Brooklyn CORE, and the Bronx and Manhattan chapters which support them, to communicate with the chapters and the NAC.

Other CORE chapters have embarked on a rational project in conjunction with the World's Fair opening. Southern chapters as well as New York chapters and others will be participating in picketing and other direct action at specific pavilions within the fair. Projects should be directed against specific targets which are responsible for discrimination. Brooklyn CORE made no demands of the World's Fair, but plans to direct its action against the Fair and against the thousands of commuters, black and white, who will be tied up in the immense traffic jam on the parkways that day.

The Steering Committee felt that the stall-in could do great harm to the cause of freedom. In light of the national project scheduled for that same day, it felt compelled to restrain the Brooklyn chapter and other chapters from engaging in blocking the New York parkways.

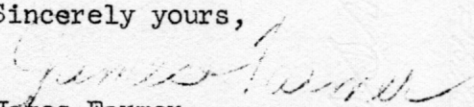
Brooklyn CORE still intends to proceed with their plans. They continue to defy the suspension order. Two other chapters have announced their intention to also participate.

It is with great reluctance that we have had to oppose this stall-in. I trust that you have already read the minutes of the April 11th Steering Committee. You should particularly note that the National Chairman was authorized to poll the NAC by telephone on disciplinary action against any other chapters which might choose to participate in the stall-in in violation of the directions of the NAC.

We should have disagreements within CORE. Those disagreements should not have to be aired in the press, however. CORE projects should be aimed against the enemy and should be engineered to end segregation, not simply to harrass.

While we believe in individual initiative by the chapters, we must also have discipline within the organization. Each chapter of CORE cannot go in a different direction or we will fly apart at the seams. The demands of the times call for militant unity. I know that we shall have it, so that we can continue on the road of aggressive, nonviolent direct action against Jim Crow and discrimination in all its forms.

Sincerely yours,

  
James Farmer  
National Director

JF:kb

P.S. This letter should be brought to the attention of your members, but should not, of course, be used outside of CORE.