



BROOKLYN CONNECTIONS

CIVIL RIGHTS IN BROOKLYN

PRIMARY SOURCE PACKET

Student Name

INTRODUCTORY READING

Murphy, Brendan. "Civil Rights Professional Development Packet for Teachers." Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

The Civil Rights Movement in Brooklyn

The Civil Rights Movement is typically associated with the Black Freedom Movement from the mid-1950s through the 1960s. However, the movement started much earlier than that. In the early twentieth century, African Americans organized groups such as the Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Though these groups were incredibly important, it was the experiences of African American men and women during World War II that reshaped how they viewed their opportunities and rights. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Black Panthers were among the important civil rights organizations born from that experience. CORE played a major role in transforming what began as a movement for racial equality just in the military into a broader social movement for racial equality.

CORE was a national, interracial organization with a commitment to nonviolent direct action, which became a major force in the struggle to end discrimination in the United States from 1942 through the 1960s. While the group raised awareness of civil rights campaigns in the south to end segregation, CORE also made clear that the problem of discrimination was equally a northern problem. Chapters of CORE were established in New York including: Bronx CORE, Harlem CORE, Lower East Side CORE, Queens CORE, and Brooklyn CORE. Ministers from black churches and local Brooklynites also joined the effort.

Ebinger Bakery

The Ebinger Baking Company was founded in 1898 in Brooklyn and had a reputation for delicious pastries and cakes. Although the company was an important part of neighborhood life, it failed to keep up with the diversifying Brooklyn's communities, refusing to hire African American, Jewish and Latino workers. In 1962, Brooklyn CORE took action and encouraged Ebinger management to hire African American and Latino sales clerks, bakers and drivers. After months of unsuccessful negotiations, Brooklyn CORE took its cause to the streets and began to picket outside of stores. When picketing and boycotting the stores failed to bring enough attention, members staged a sit-in in front of bakery delivery trucks, temporarily shutting down operations and forcing the company to re-think its hiring practices.

Operation Cleansweep

Brooklyn CORE's "Operation Cleansweep" was an effort to raise awareness about neighborhood discrimination: specifically, how the population of the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood greatly increased from the 1940s to the 1960s, but public services, such as garbage removal, were not changed in response to this growth. Bedford-Stuyvesant received garbage pick-up three times each week, while other less crowded neighborhoods, such as Bensonhurst and Sheepshead Bay, received five days of garbage removal per week. For more than a decade, residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant complained to the DOS and the Mayor about garbage collection but received no help.

So, Brooklyn CORE initiated “Operation Cleansweep” on September 15, 1962. Participants gathered garbage directly from the streets of Bedford-Stuyvesant and placed it on the steps of Brooklyn’s Borough Hall. During the demonstration, police gave out court summonses and tickets for littering. Picketers outside Borough Hall distributed materials that highlighted the differences in city services in white neighborhoods and the same services in African American neighborhoods.

The Bibuld Family And The Board Of Education

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, it was well-known across Brooklyn that schools in largely African American and Puerto Rican areas were inferior to those in white neighborhoods. Brooklyn CORE researched the difference in reading and math scores and compared the number and quality of text books in schools in white neighborhoods and schools in minority neighborhoods. The results showed a huge difference. Years of useless negotiations inspired CORE to consider school boycotts, picketing and sit-ins at the Board of Education. At the center of CORE’s education initiatives was the Bibuld family.

In 1962, the Bibuld children were assigned to PS 282, a school that their parents thought was below standards. They believed that PS 200, located in a mostly white neighborhood, was a more promising option for their children. However, the Board of Education denied their application. With support from CORE, Mr. and Mrs. Bibuld took their children to PS 200, despite the fact that the children had been refused admission. The Bibuld children were not allowed to officially enroll, but the principal of PS 200 did allow them to stay as guests. The Bibuld family and Brooklyn CORE called this action a school “sit-in.” To support the Bibuld children, Brooklyn CORE also organized protests and sit-ins at the Board of Education. Nearly 300 CORE members participated in these activities.

Downstate Medical Center

By 1963, the Civil Rights Movement had become a major fixture in American society. Protests and demonstrations in the name of racial equality were being held across the country. In New York, one of the greatest areas for discrimination was employment, and Brooklyn CORE took this issue seriously.

The construction at Brooklyn’s Downstate Medical Center in 1963 was supposed to be a major boost for Brooklyn’s economy, providing years of employment for laborers and construction workers. Unfortunately, the majority of the jobs were given to unions that were “unavailable” to black workers.

In response, CORE joined with the Black Ministers Coalition and other organizations to stage a major sit-in at the construction site. On July 15, 1963, fourteen of Brooklyn’s African American ministers arrived at Downstate with over 75 parishioners to picket. In the weeks that followed, several hundred people, many of whom were members of Brooklyn CORE, were arrested for picketing. Demonstrators made human chains in front of wrecking balls, lay down in front bulldozers and climbed on top of cranes. The actions severely slowed work on the building and garnered significant public and media attention.

The March On Washington

As a major player in the Civil Rights Movement, Brooklyn CORE participated fully in the March on Washington, sending several busloads of demonstrators, as well as organizing a literal “march” from Brooklyn to the Lincoln Memorial. Brooklyn CORE also sent a small contingent to Washington on foot. The young group of CORE members walked 237 miles from Downtown Brooklyn to Washington, DC.

A CALL TO ACTION !!

C.O.R.E. CHAPTERS & CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS URGED TO SUPPORT BROOKLYN C.O.R.E.

AFTER MANY, MANY MONTHS OF PICKETING, BOYCOTTING AND UNSUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS, ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 4, FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M., BROOKLYN C.O.R.E. WILL STAGE A MASS DEMONSTRATION AGAINST 39 OF THE EBINGER BAKING CORPORATION'S RETAIL STORES.

EBINGER BAKING CORPORATION HAS A LONG HISTORY OF BIGOTRY AND UNFAIR HIRING PRACTICES IN BROOKLYN, WHERE MANY OF THEIR STORES ARE LOCATED IN GHETTO AREAS. THIS COMPANY ALSO HAS A LONG HISTORY OF DEFYING ANY AND ALL CIVIL RIGHTS AGENCIES - AND AFTER MUCH PRESSURE, ESPECIALLY FROM THE MINISTER'S ALLIANCE OF BEDFORD-STUYVESANT, HAS RESORTED TO TOKENISM AND HIRED 2 "LIGHT-SKINNED" NEGRO SALES CLERKS.

EBINGER'S HAS REFUSED TO LIVE UP TO AN AGREEMENT MADE BETWEEN THEM, S.O.R.E. AND THE URBAN LEAGUE STATING THEREIN THAT 3 OUT OF 5 PERSONS HIRED WOULD BE NEGROES.

SINCE IT HAS BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TO COME TO ANY REASONABLE AND WORKING TERMS WITH THE FIRM'S REPRESENTATIVES, WE ASK YOU TO JOIN US IN THIS MASS EFFORT TO ONCE AND FOR ALL END THE DISCRIMINATORY HIRING PRACTICES OF A FIRM EARNING THE BULK OF ITS PROFITS FROM MINORITY GROUPS, WHILE REFUSING RECOGNITION OF THEIR RIGHTS TO EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

PLEASE CONTACT MR. MAURICE FREDERICKS, PR 3-3641, OR YOUR LOCAL C.O.R.E. CHAPTER, PLEDGING YOUR TIME AND ENERGY TO BROOKLYN C.O.R.E. FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M. ON AUGUST 4.

YOURS FOR FREEDOM NOW,

BROOKLYN CONGRESS OF RACIAL EQUALITY

1. What is Document 1 trying to persuade its readers to do? Why?

2. What is *tokenism*? Use context clues to make an educated guess.

3. Name four tactics listed in Document 1 that CORE used to fight Ebinger's Bakery.

4. Document 1 was created in 1962. Imagine how this notice would be distributed to the general public. Name three possible ways here:

Document 1 - "A Call to Action." *Brooklyn Congress on Racial Equality*. Aug 1962.
Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



Document 2 - Adelman, Bob. *Barbara Weeks and Claire Toombs Sit in Ebinger Drive.* 1962. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library

1. Who are the two women sitting down in DOCUMENT 2? How do you know?

2. Why did they choose this location for their protest?

3. Imagine you are a bystander walking by this scene. What do you hear?

4. List two suggestions for how these women might have increased the effectiveness of their protest.

Document 2 - Adelman, Bob. *Barbara Weeks and Claire Toombs Sit in Ebinger Drive*. 1962.
Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library

Dear Mr. Ebinger:

I have pledged not to buy at any of the Ebinger stores until you agree to hire without discrimination.

My family enjoys your products and we would like to resume our patronage of your stores as soon as possible - so please let me know when you have come to an agreement with the Ministers' Movement and with C.O.R.E.

Very truly yours,

Name:

Address:

Document 3 - *Pledge Card*. August 1962. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

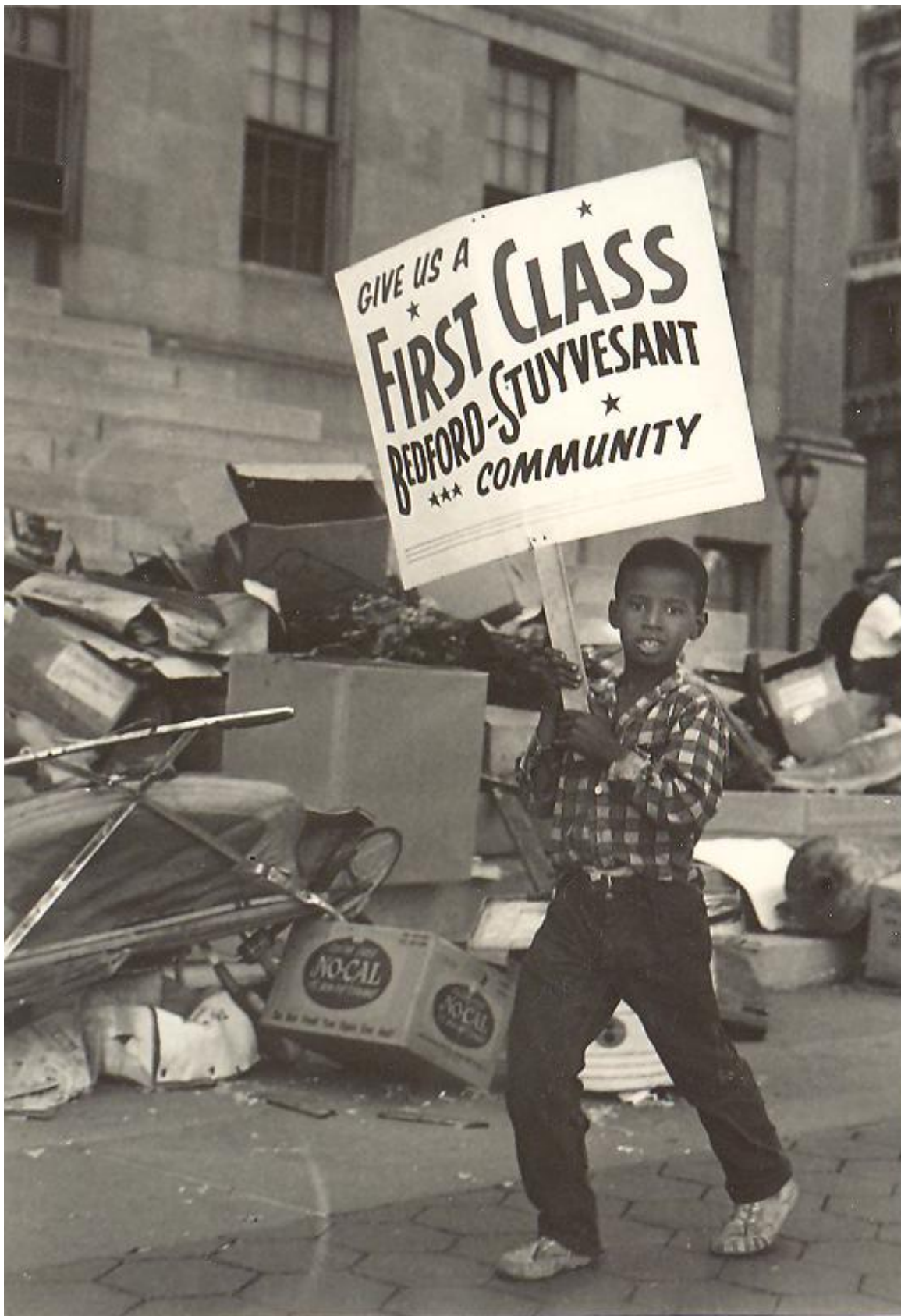
1. What is a pledge? Use context clues to make an educated guess.

2. What is the pledge made in DOCUMENT 3?

3. Why is there no name signed at the bottom of DOCUMENT 3?

4. How do you think DOCUMENT 3 was used? Do you think it was effective?

Document 3 - *Pledge Card*. August 1962. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



Document 4 - Adelman, Bob. *Bernard Hall: Telling It Like It Is. Operation Cleansweep. 1962.*
Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. Who is the boy pictured in DOCUMENT 4? How do you know? Provide two clues.

2. Observe three things in the background of this photograph:

3. What do you think it means to have a “First Class” community?

4. Do you think this young boy’s protest was effective? Why or why not?

Document 4 - Adelman, Bob. *Bernard Hall: Telling It Like It Is. Operation Cleansweep. 1962.* Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

September 26, 1962

The Editor,
New York World-Telegram
and The Sun
125 Barclay Street
New York 15, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

Your columnist, Mr. Richard Starnes, takes the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to task (Sept. 20) for dumping uncollected garbage it found in Bedford-Stuyvesant on the Boro Hall steps, as part of its "Operation Cleansweep" campaign.

We of course, have no quarrel with his right to criticize CORE techniques anytime he wishes. It is the inaccuracies and undemocratic views expressed that we must take issue with.

"Operation Cleansweep" was sponsored by the Brooklyn Chapter of CORE. It is an interracial group. And at least in this part of the country, all of our actions are with Negro and white followers.

After investigations, discussions with Sanitation officials and with the Boro President, and getting nowhere, we charged that the failure to give 5 day garbage collection service to the Bedford-Stuyvesant community was racial discrimination - Harlem notwithstanding.

This view was confirmed by an actual examination of the Sanitation Dept. map of the Boro which shows where 3 and 5 day pickup schedules are in effect. The areas which receive 5 days happen to be predominantly white, while those with 3 days overwhelmingly Negro. This fact was not denied by Sanitation Dept. officials.

Mr. Starnes does not state why this community is on 3 day garbage collection service. Has he bothered to find out why? The official reason given Brooklyn CORE was that the budget doesn't provide for 5 days. Is it a responsible city administration to apportion the least garbage collection to congested areas which have the most garbage to collect?

Your columnist says "The American Negro must take up the difficult task of proving to the white community that he deserves the co-equal citizenship he is demanding". Years ago Negroes were denied their constitutional rights because it was believed that God created them biologically inferior. Then the Bible was used to "prove" that they should be separated. Later, it was discovered that they were uneducated. Hence unable to exercise rights normally accorded to any white man.

The current "reason" for denying Negroes their rights is that since at least "some Negroes" are "irresponsible", the whites must get "proof". Yet the meanest, the dirtiest, the most unlettered white person can vote anywhere in the land. He can live where he wishes and he can eat in any restaurant on Route 40. A Ralph Bunche cannot.

These specious arguments are clearly retreats in the long history of promoting racist notions. White citizens are not required to prove that they are deserving of their inalienable rights. Why Negroes - if these rights are guaranteed to all Americans by the Constitution. When such proof is required of all citizens - only then could they possibly apply to the Negro.

To have it otherwise, is not democratic. Nor is it equality. It is racism.

Mr. Starnes says "An estimated 200 followers of CORE descended on Brooklyn's Borough Hall". We wish it were so. According to our own count and that of the World*Telegram and other newspapers this figure is exactly 5 times the number who actually participated. When Brooklyn CORE gets that many followers out for one project - a Bedford-Stuyvesant will be cleaned a good deal faster.

Finally, we are happy to announce that Brooklyn CORE's alleged irresponsibility has accomplished the responsible act of securing daily garbage collection on Gates Avenue in that community.

Roghan M. Kirchner

Document 5 - Kirchner, Roghan. *Letter to the Editor*. New York World Telegram. 26 Sept 1962. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. What type of document is DOCUMENT 5? Be specific.

2. What does the author of DOCUMENT 5 believe the newspaper columnist Mr. Richard Starnes did incorrectly?

3. According to DOCUMENT 5, what does the columnist Mr. Richard Starnes believe the Bed-Stuy community must do about the trash collection problem?

4. What is the *tone* of the author in DOCUMENT 5? List three examples to back up your claim.

Document 5 - Kirchner, Rioghan. *Letter to the Editor*. New York World Telegram. 26 Sept 1962. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

FELLOW FREEDOM FIGHTERS

A NEGRO FAMILY WILL GO TO

JAIL

Just as Mississippi is trying to kick James Meredith out of a "white" school, The City of New York is trying to keep the Bibuld children out of a "white" school. It also threatens to TAKE THE CHILDREN AWAY FROM THEIR PARENTS, AND THROW BOTH MOTHER AND FATHER INTO JAIL.

YOU CAN

HELP

MASS DEMONSTRATION

MONDAY — FEBRUARY 4th 8⁰⁰_{a.m.} — 4³⁰_{p.m.}

BOARD OF EDUCATION -- 110 LIVINGSTON STREET
BROOKLYN, BOROUGH HALL STATION -- ALL TRAINS

SIT INS 24 HOURS A DAY CONTINUOUS SINCE

JANUARY, '27 ROOM 1012

Brooklyn CORE 272 Van Buren St GL 3-2731

1. To who is DOCUMENT 6 addressed?

2. Imagine where you might find this flyer hanging up. Name three possible locations:

3. Name two tactics DOCUMENT 6 uses to capture its reader's attention:

4. Compare DOCUMENT 6 with DOCUMENT 5. List two ways in which the strategies of the authors are different:

Document 6 - "Fellow Freedom Fighters." *Brooklyn CORE*. 4 Feb 196-. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



Document 7 - *All Together Now, Kneel for Freedom*. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. Who are the people on their knees in DOCUMENT 7? Use observations as evidence to back your inference.

2. Who are the people standing up in the background of DOCUMENT 7? Use observations as evidence to back your inference.

3. Why do you think the protestors would “Kneel for Freedom?”

4. Observe the people attending the protest. Who do you see in the crowd? Who don't you see in the crowd?

Document 7 - *All Together Now, Kneel for Freedom*. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



Document 8 - Assorted Buttons. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. Read the messages on each button in DOCUMENT 8. List two questions you have:

2. Name two reasons why buttons might be an effective way of communicating a message:

3. Imagine one person during the 1960's who might own all of these buttons. Where do you think he or she would have collected these buttons?

4. Imagine what protest buttons from the present day might say on them. Write two slogans here:

Document 8 - Assorted Buttons. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



RELAX AND RESIST

Policewomen spent hours last week bearing limp white and Negro women demonstrators from truck entrances at Brooklyn's Downstate Medical Center to paddy wagons (far left). Pickets—representing CORE, the Urban League and the N.A.A.C.P.—continued singing in the wagons, and one (left) insisted on remaining relaxed. When at one point police, shorthanded, resorted to dragging unresisting demonstrators (above), they were immediately charged with brutality. From then on all were carried, regardless of bulk. Some pickets made things even tougher by binding themselves together with steel chains, forcing police to separate them with bolt cutters.

Document 9 - *Downstate: What a Drag.* Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. Describe what is happening in DOCUMENT 9:

2. What does the tactic “Relax and Resist” mean in the caption for this photograph?

3. Why would a protestor want to go limp, as depicted in the photograph?

4. Do you think this strategy would be effective today? Why or why not?

Document 9 - *Downstate: What a Drag*. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

CORE SPLIT GROWS OVER PLAN TO JAM TRAFFIC AT FAIR

**National Body Warns It Will
Cut Off Any Units That
Join in April 22 Tie-Up**

STORMY MEETING HELD

**Brooklyn Group Assailed—
Farmer Announces Own
Picketing Program**

By **JOSEPH LELYVELD**

The national leadership of the Congress of Racial Equality broke with three chapters here last night in announcing plans for demonstrations at the World's Fair that specifically exclude the tactic of tying up traffic.

The traffic tactic—called a "stall-in"—had been proposed for the fair's opening on April 22 by the young and militant Brooklyn chapter of CORE.

The group was suspended by the national organization on Friday for refusing to give up the idea. James Farmer, CORE national director, charged that such a flamboyant demonstration would conflict with other protests that were planned.

At a heated meeting here of national and local leaders, which began yesterday afternoon and continued into the night, it appeared likely that the suspension would become permanent. It also seemed likely that two other local chapters—those from the Bronx and New York—would leave the national organization.

Farmer States Position

Mr. Farmer made it clear that the parent organization was prepared to cut off any chapters that joined the Brooklyn unit in the effort to tie up fair-bound traffic. The Bronx and New York chapters showed no signs of being impressed by the warning.

The organization's position was stated by Mr. Farmer yesterday after six hours of argument with representatives of the three chapters.

The "stall-in" was ruled out, Mr. Farmer said, because it was "not a relevant confrontation with the power structure." He added that this decision of the organization's steering committee had been unanimous.

The Brooklyn chapter's proposal, Mr. Farmer said, exemplified the "frustration and anger" of the Negro community. "The only thing that should surprise American citizens is that it has not come sooner," he declared.

Mr. Farmer named five state pavilions as targets for civil rights demonstrators: Florida, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi and New York. Later, he added the New York City pavilion to the list.

The pavilions selected for demonstrations are those of states where there are active CORE chapters. The protests,

Continued on Page 60, Column 3

CORE SPLIT GROWS ON POLICY AT FAIR

Continued From Page 1, Col. 1

to be conducted by those chapters, will be against racial discrimination in general as well as particular local grievances.

Under CORE's plans, the pavilion of no state will be immune from such demonstrations, and Mr. Farmer indicated the demonstrations might be extended beyond the opening day.

However, a number of states are not participating in the fair. A search of the most recent maps of the World's Fair revealed no sign of a Mississippi pavilion.

The city's pavilion was included to protest "continued de facto segregation in the schools, discrimination in hiring and

housing conditions," Mr. Farmer said.

The demonstrators, he said, would be coming from all over the country in large numbers and would march as well before exhibits of industrial concerns that discriminate.

Mr. Farmer said that there were about six such companies with shows at the fair. He refused to name them but said they would be warned "immediately" and given the chance to forestall the demonstrations by signing equal opportunity pacts with CORE.

Posing for photographers with a cattle prod in his hand, Mr. Farmer said that he himself planned to put the instrument on exhibit at the Louisiana pavilion. Last summer, he said, he felt its sting while leading a demonstration in Plaquemine, La. He said it was "fierce."

The prod carried a label that read: "Heavy-Duty, Super-Matic, Hot Shot."

In the afternoon, the closed meeting was held at the offices of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees at 68 Trinity Place. Later, it shifted several blocks to the less spacious CORE headquarters at 38 Park Row.

Representatives of the Bronx and New York chapters were present as invited guests of the steering committee. They had no vote. The representatives of the Brooklyn chapter had been summoned to the meeting to defend their position.

In their defense, which received the support of the two other chapters, they accused the national leaders of bowing to pressures from the "power" structure.

"You're ignoring the three active chapters in this area representing at least 1,000 people," one young woman shouted at Mr. Farmer and his colleagues.

He replied that they were

prepared to face the consequence of their decision—that it was necessary for the survival of CORE as "a viable organization."

Another member of the steering committee described the idea of snarling traffic as "nonviolent hell-raising."

"It won't end segregation," he said. "But it might end CORE."

The youthful members of the three chapters seemed to be nonchalant as they waited outside the meeting room for the steering committee's vote. They acted as if the committee was passing judgment on itself rather than on them.

It appeared likely that the groups would move closer to the Citywide Committee for Integrated Schools if their ties were finally severed with the national organization. The committee is headed by the Rev. Dr. Milton A. Galamison, the Brooklyn minister who called the two school boycotts here.

1. According to DOCUMENT 10, what does Brooklyn CORE want?

2. According to DOCUMENT 10, how did National CORE respond to Brooklyn CORE's plan?

3. Search the document. Find two reasons why Brooklyn CORE and National CORE could not agree on a plan and list them here:

4. Imagine you are in Mr. James Farmer, director of the National CORE. How would you react to the Brooklyn CORE "stall-in" plan?

Document 10 - Lelyveld, Joseph. "CORE Split Grows Over Plan to Jam Traffic at Fair." *The New York Times*. 12 Apr. 1964: 1+.

GLOSSARY

Black Freedom Movement: the larger movement for equality for blacks in all areas of society, not just legal rights

Black Panthers: a major organization during the Black Power movement

Borough Hall: Brooklyn's City Hall located in Downtown Brooklyn

Congress of Racial Equality (CORE): a large, non-violent, non-partisan civil rights organization very active across the country, including the boroughs of NYC

Contingent: a group of people that have something in common

Decade: a period of ten years

Discriminate: treating some people better than others

Diversify: To make different, not all the same

Effective: successful

Enroll: to sign up

Fixture: something that is permanent or fixed

Garner: to gain or earn

Inferior: low or lower in position

Interracial: of, involving, or for members of different racial groups

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP): formed in 1909, the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization

Sit-in: a form of protest in which demonstrators occupy a place, refusing to leave until their demands are met

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC): a student-run protest that organized in both the north and south

Urban League: a non-partisan, interracial civil rights organization working to improve conditions for African Americans in urban areas

World War II: also known as the Second World War, WWII was a global conflict lasting from 1939 – 1945