

19 March 1970

Dear Jonathan:

Thank you for your note of March 16th. As I said in my first Collection, I could not rule out the possibility that at some point I would conclude that the conduct of the College was being substantially disrupted, in which case I would have to take whatever action I deemed most appropriate. Since that point was not reached in the SASS vigil, I did not have to make that determination, and no court order was obtained. In that sense your information is somewhat incorrect.

There are real problems in differential perception, and I am trying to learn how best to recognize the signs of alienation and disaffection at the earliest possible moment. I had thought that we were making good progress on all three fronts that SASS was most conspicuously concerned about apparently. Patently SASS people saw it differently. I do think that some kind of a College Council would be most desirable, among other things to provide a place where differential perceptions can be easily identified by more than one person, for I am certainly ready to admit my less than infallible ability to sense how other people are feeling. I do not think that SASS was getting the run around. But I guess the most important question was that many SASS members did think just that.

With all best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Robert D. Cross,
President

Mr. Jonathan R. Zall
College Mail

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE
SWARTHMORE, PENNA. 19081

Dr. Robert Cross, President
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, PA 19081

March 16, 1970

Dear Robert Cross,

I should like to thank you for positively resolving the question of whether Swarthmore College is truly committed to having a "viable black community", in the now-trite phrase. I also recognize that you had already acknowledged the need for a Black Cultural Center here, and thus that the idea of setting up this center may be considered at least in part yours. You reacted well to SASS's demands, not seeing them as a violently militant attack upon you personally but as an attempt to spark some action on a faster, more inclusive timetable than that which you proposed.

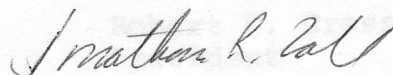
But two things still bother me. I have heard what I consider strongly-confirmed reports that you had obtained a court order declaring SASS's sit-in illegal to be served this morning, if the sit-in had continued. Was SASS's sit-in actually blocking College functions? I don't believe it was, either by design or in fact. My friends in SASS have told me that the idea of the sit-in was a very Quakerly one: to bear witness in support of their demands. They might not have been silent, as Quakers would be, but their general method would have been the same. Having participated in over fifty Quaker silent demonstrations, I feel qualified to comment in this way. So why the order?

Why did this sit-in ever have to take place? Was SASS merely being intransigent, or were they not given enough assurance that their proposals were being seriously considered? I think that SASS was tired of being given "the run-around" they had gotten in the last ten months, as they detailed in the first "Meeting for Truth and Understanding". So why did this run-around take place? Perhaps something is wrong with the committee method of getting things done.

To end on a positive note, I think that your memorandum of March 14 proposed an adequate short term solution. Let us hope that SASS will help us by furnishing us its ideas on long-range goals for the establishment and maintenance of a black community here. With these ideas, we could work out a long-range plan to accomplish these goals, with a definite timetable to stick to. But let's have no "benign neglect" of the black community here.

Yours sincerely,

In Peace and Brotherhood,



Jonathan R. Zall '72