

soul force

"Redeeming the Soul of America"

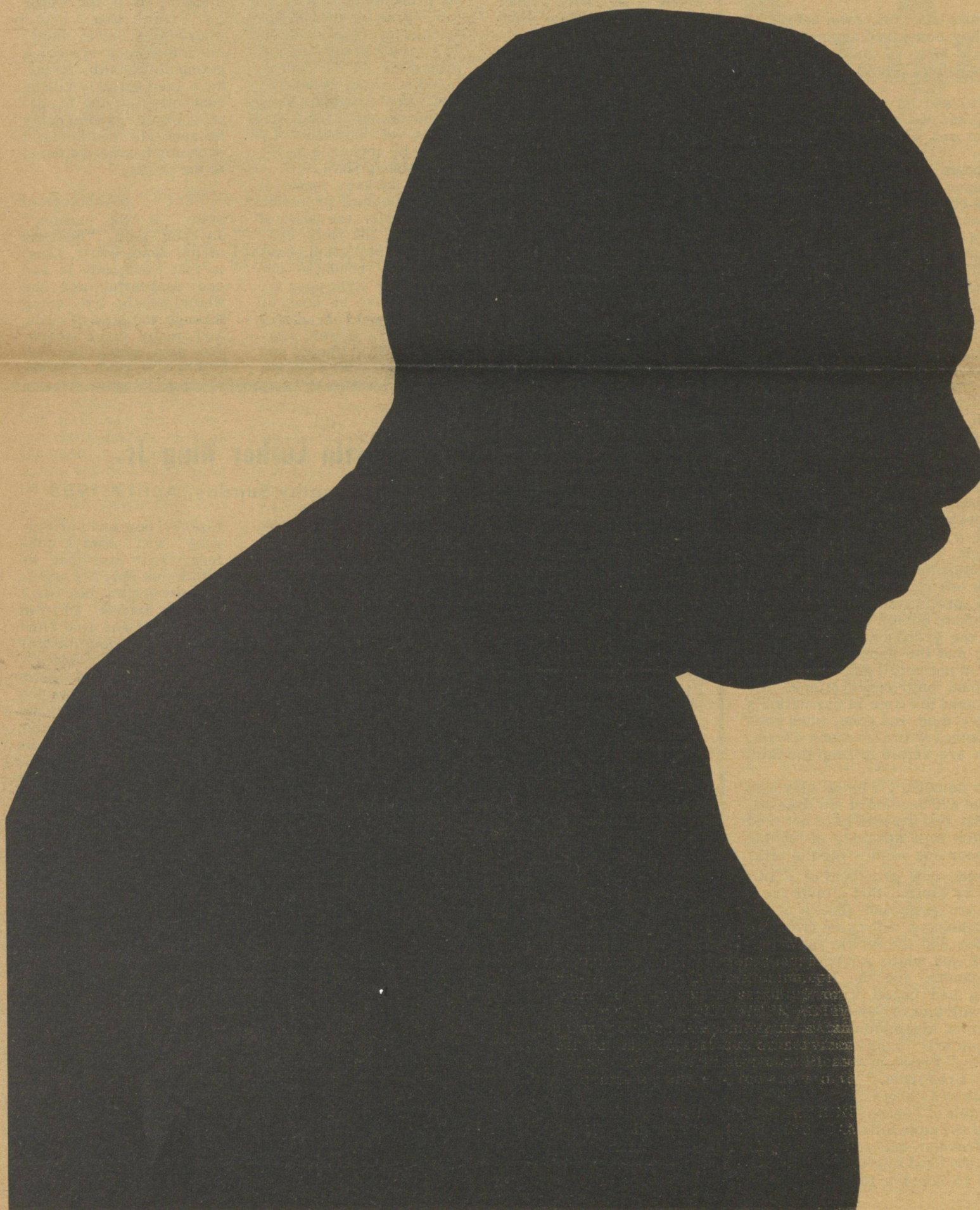
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Official Journal of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference

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**"Behold, this Dreamer cometh. ...let us slay him
...And we shall see what will become of his dreams..."**

Genesis 37:19-20



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"REDEEMING THE SOUL OF AMERICA"

Official Journal of

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference
Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, President
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BEHOLD THE DREAMER

"And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

"And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

"And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

"Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

This passage from Genesis 38, selected by Dr. Ralph David Abernathy Jr. to open his address at the SCLC staff retreat presented a challenge and answer at the same instance. The great challenge is that the most noble American dreams will become the major casualties of the racial conflict in this nation. The great challenge is that the difference between public myth and our most personal truths as a people will drive us all closer to madness. Some Americans, for example, believing the worse fears generated these days about Negroes--abused so long--have come true have been frightened in the halls of Congress into passing a repressive riots act and housewives have started arming themselves. But the danger is hardly Negro militancy (look at the death count of the riots) but rather that America will go forth in a predominantly colored world totally insane about the race question having killed of its dream.

This is a nation first dreamt of by debtors in the prisons of England, religious heretics running from the law, the poor masses huddled against the shores of Europe, built upon the backs of slaves and upon the land of Indians. This is a nation that now holds no compassion for such people. The nation now indicates that such people are loathsome by passing welfare laws with regulations that tell recipients that they are considered untrustworthy, promiscuous and lazy. Regular searches of recipients homes violate privacy. The sons of slaves and the grandsons of slaves are forced from the rurals and the south to the cities where they form ghettos of untrained and unemployed people. Indians are pushed onto reservations. The challenge is that we have come to a time in our nation's history when dreams have died and gone, when each of us is afraid to trust another with a common dream, when wives and children are afraid to keep the faith of their fathers living.

"Behold, this dreamer cometh. . . let us slay him . . . and we shall see what will become of his dreams. This is the challenge. But the dreams have not died for there are the disciples still speaking of feeding the hungry, clothing the poor and comforting the sick. Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, now president of SCLC, answered this challenge by stating that a mule train will advance from the corn rows and shacks of the Mississippi delta, that Chicanos will come from the arid plains of New Mexico and the fertile valleys of California and that black and white Americans will wind through the Alleghenies and the Shenandoah valley and as Dr. King had hoped, freedom will "ring from the prodigious hill tops of New Hampshire." Freedom will "ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania." Freedom will "ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado." Freedom will "ring from the curvacious peaks of California." Freedom will "ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia." Freedom will "ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee." Freedom will "ring from every hill and mole hill of Mississippi. From every mountain," freedom will ring.

In America an assassin's hand killed the dreamer. America's challenge is to nourish the dream and let it thrive.

The State Of The Nation

SCLC, moving swiftly after the assassination of their leader, the world leader of peace, retreated to the Georgia woods to pause and reappraise as they looked toward the Washington Campaign.

The retreat was sandwiched between two events which will be known in the future as certainly two of the most momentous events of this decade, if not this century: the crucifixion of Dr. M. L. King, Jr. and the resurrection of his ideas by his disciples in Washington, D.C. as thousands of poor people march on the city for "Jobs or Income."

Two inspired addresses to the staff of SCLC executive particularly eliminated any doubt as to what the organization is about. Dr. Ralph David Abernathy's closing speech and Rev. Jesse Jackson's opening "State of the Nation" address brought to the retreat the spirituality and analysis necessary to make it a success.

"Jesus said if the truth is not told from the proper places, that the rocks will cry out," Rev. Jackson said. "Things are just that bad in the nation

where you got rocks crying out and hurling themselves against themselves with no God to glorify." Rev. Jackson pointed out that the State of the Nation today is that the very rocks, indeed, are crying out for our people are challenging police headquarters with a brick and trying to build a new society with a broken bottle!

The staff was spellbound for over an hour by Rev. Jackson who presented and "made plain" a wealth of concepts; some new and some old but presented in new light. Rev. Jackson, who has developed a strong base in Chicago by practicing the principles he's popularizing, has since the staff conference spoken to the nation through the media of national TV where he appeared on the Joey Bishop Show.

Rev. Jackson spoke of our immediate problems as a people--the death of Dr. King, the riots, economic exploitation, psychological bondage--and then threw light upon the future where he sees us moving toward organizing consumer - power, realizing our selfhood and nationhood. He said we

must move from Gethsemane to Crucifixion and on to Resurrection and Pentecost. "Crucifixions are not second Sundays in April, Crucifixion and Easters are events." He said, "any relevant religion recognizes that crucifixion took place in Memphis."

Preaching about the economic state of the nation Rev. Jackson said "You have a 16th Century economy or what amounts to a heathenistic economy where men in a land of plenty . . . (have) so much food that . . . (they're) throwing it in the water . . . Oln that society where you (have) ample medicine, men are competing for health. So you have men actually killing each other at the hospital door in a land of plenty because our heathenistic economy has not adjusted to the people."

"The psychological state of the nation," Jackson said, "because of the death of Dr. King, is that everybody is sad and respectful and the white people are going through feelings of guilt. And many black people are also going through feelings of guilt because

A Short Letter

To My Dearest Friend Martin Luther King Jr.

Delivered By Dr. Ralph David Abernathy Sunday, April 7, 1968

To my dearest friend Martin Luther King in a city called Heaven:

Martin, I miss you, and it has just been a few days. I thought I would write you a short letter. It is probably more for my good than it's for yours. I hope it will not be too long before you read it. In heaven I know you have so much to do, so many people to see, and I know many of them have already been looking and waiting for you. It wouldn't be a surprise to me, Martin, if God didn't have a special affair just to introduce his special activist black son to so many others like you that have gone on ahead.

But look up those black friends and talk to the ones you and I have talked about and the ones that you and I lead and the ones who so gallantly followed our leadership. Say thanks to those prophets we quoted from all over America and everywhere else that they asked for us. Give a special word from me to Pe-

ter, the man who was once sand but Jesus made him a rock, give my warmest felicitations to my favorite apostle John who loved my Master so much until he stood with his mother at the foot of the Cross, pass my greetings on to Issiah who had the prophetic vision to see the coming of a Savior whose name would be wonderful, a mighty Counselor, an ever-lasting father and a Prince of Peace; stop by and find Ghandi, the man who inspired us so much in our struggle to free black people through the philosophy and techniques of non-violence.

Look up Bartholomew, for some strange reason I always like d him. But above all I want you to see Jesus, go to the throne and tell how thankful we are. Yes, go see Jesus and tell him about us down here--all of us and all of our families--and how we have sustained ourselves in the many battles all our lives, tell him how much we love him. Tell him how his name is music in our ears. Tell him how at his name our knees will

forever bow and our tongues will always confess. Tell him that we follow not only his words but we follow his life...

then, Martin, go from the throne and find Jimmy Lee Jackson, Medgar Evers, William Moore, Jimmy Lee, Viola Liuzzo, Johnathan Daniels, James Reeb, Swerner, Goodman and Chaney. And then, Martin, find Frederick Douglass, Nat Turner and Marcus Garvey. And don't forget Malcolm. Look for Malcolm! Remember, our God is a loving God. He understands things we don't think he does. The four children of Birmingham and all who have died across Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and in Chicago, New York and in all other places where men have died for the liberty and justice of other men. Martin, it may seem like a big order, but if you find one of them he will know where the rest of them are. I know they have founded the grand international company of freedom fighters and can't wait to introduce you and talk over the final hours...



**Dr. Ralph David Abernathy Will Direct SCLC
As It Works "To Make That Dream A Reality"**

STATE OF THE NATION

they didn't do what they could have done while Dr. King was livin'."

Politically, according to Rev. Jackson, "We have but a few choices and none has a program. Neither Johnson nor Kennedy nor McCarthy nor Nixon nor Rockefeller. None of the politicians have a program and that is because of the darkness of the hour. No politician has a program . . . We (SCLC) are closest in the nation to having a program to deal with the problems publically and privately than any other group on earth . . . Ralph David Abernathy's program right now is more profound than Johnson's and he is more qualified to

be president than Johnson."

Rev. Jackson said the United States has been on the wrong side of all the world revolutions as in Greece, Jerusalem, Egypt, Vietnam, Thailand, South Africa, and Rhodesia. He likened the United States pay off of top-level leadership in these countries to the war on poverty in this nation. Rev. Jackson said America's dilemma is that the American flag is flying higher than the cross in the churches. He called upon his listeners to free each other and to hook up with people in other cities to build a nation.

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MEMPHIS-- A Victory Forged From Defeat

"They bidden high and we're going to out bid them. The price of freedom has gone up in Memphis," SCLC staff members have said since the assassination of Dr. King April 4 in Memphis where he'd gone to lead a sanitation worker's struggle.

After burying Dr. King and conducting the largest funeral in the history of this nation SCLC staff returned to Memphis to finish the work started there by their leader. And finish it they did in grand style! Threatening to lead "the most militant and creative nonviolent demonstrations ever in any city" SCLC gained a complete victory for the workers from the city.

As they returned to Memphis, the SCLC staff under the direction of Dr. Ralph Abernathy, were conscious of the admonitions to the disciples, friends and followers of the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ. For inside the supulchre where Jesus was buried an angel said, "go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee." As the business of the disciples in Galilee was to "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," so was the business of Martin Luther King Jr.'s disciples to go to Memphis and preach the gospel.

It was in Memphis Monday night, April 15 that Dr. Abernathy told a crowd of 4,000 at Metropolitan Baptist Church that if the demands of the sanitation workers were not met SCLC was prepared to intensify day marches, night marches, demonstrations in the most affluent white suburbs in Memphis, stop

burbs in Memphis, stop scab garbage trucks with human bodies, suffer mass jailings if necessary and totally tie up the entire city of Memphis.

The day after Dr. Abernathy's speech the seemingly impregnable defense of the city against

progress collapsed.

The sanitation workers victory provided the following agreement:

(1) There will be recognition of the union and collective - bargaining rights for the union.

(2) There will be union dues check-off.

CONTINUED PAGE 4

PPC in high gear

The 1968 Poor People's Campaign -- largest mass movement in history -- starts April 29 in Washington, D.C., and will build up in intensity until the U.S. Government responds to the demands of the poor.

Rev. Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, successor to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and 100 poor people and national leaders will present demands for decent jobs and income to Government officials on April 29 and 30 and May 1.

On May 2, the movement of masses of people toward the Nation's capitol begins from the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, where Dr. King was assassinated April 4. After placing a memorial star and cross in the cement balcony where Dr. King fell, Dr. Abernathy will lead a march to Marks, Mississippi.

In Marks, a community of extreme Negro poverty the Memphis marchers will help poor people prepare their carts and mules for a wagon train through the South to Washington. Then the Memphis group, as many as 1,000 strong, will go by a bus caravan to build a shanty-town "City of Hope" for poor people in Washington.

At about the same time, other masses of people will begin their caravans to Washington from Boston, Chicago, Edwards, Miss., Denver, Colo., and Los Angeles, Calif. Dates of departure and arrival are shown in the map and timetable with this article.

For the first half of May, the Poor People's Campaign will be stream-

ing toward Washington by bus, cart, wagon, car, truck, and foot. People in each caravan will walk part way.

The thousands of marchers will include poor whites and blacks, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, American Indians, farmers and city folk, men, women and children from all parts of America.

The City of Hope will be built in the week of May 12.

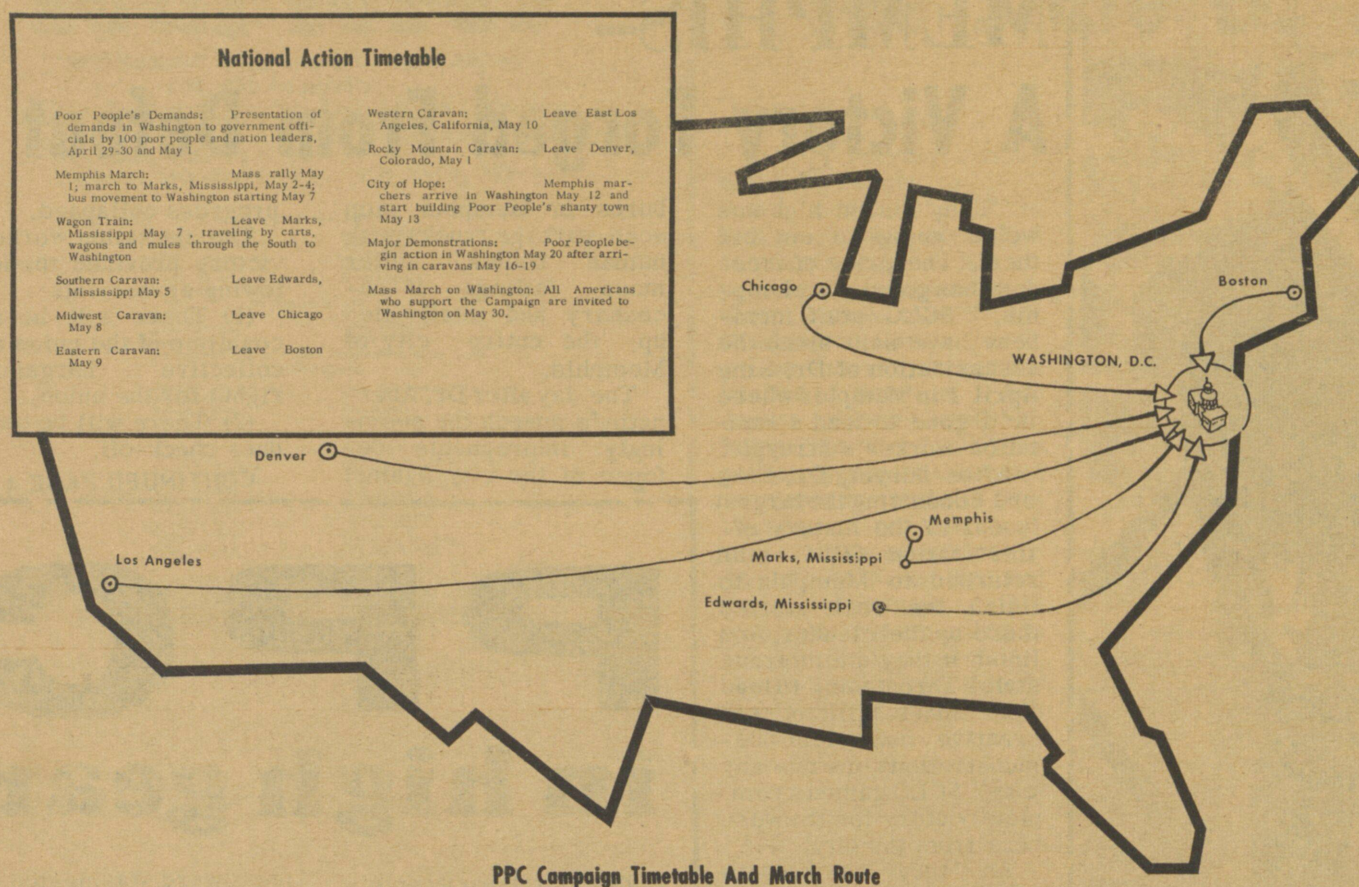
On Monday, May 20, the caravans of poor people will begin major demonstrations in Washington.

These demonstrations will be aimed at such injustices as inadequate housing, unemployment, slave wages, poor health care, poverty incomes, and bad education which abuse the nation's 50 million poor people.

The demonstrators at government offices and facilities will build in nonviolent militance, and protesters will make the Government and America face up to the issue of poverty and racism, even if it means mass jailings and repression of the Poor People's Campaign. Dr. Abernathy has pledged that the Campaign "will not be run out of Washington."

On Memorial Day, May 30, all Americans who support the Campaign are invited to come to Washington for a huge march in the Capital, reinforcing the demands of the poor. If necessary, those who join the Campaign on Memorial Day are welcome to stay in Washington and continue the intensified actions.

Sympathy demonstrations during the Campaign in Washington will be called in other cities and communities throughout the country.



Minorities Build Unity

Watch out! American Indians, Poor Whites and Spanish-Americans are on the march.

Who would have thought, the day would ever come when Indians would have to fight for fishing rights? That Mexican - Americans would have to fight for the land of New Mexico? That Spanish speaking people would have to struggle for the right to speak Spanish? No one would have thought of these things at all for they were in the area relegated to the self-evident, but these are pre-

cisely the struggles these minority groups face today.

Seventy leaders of organizations representing America's most depressed minorities were called to Atlanta by SCLC March 15 where they organized the National Poor People's Steering Committee to co-ordinate the Washington Campaign.

The late Dr. M. L. King, Jr., SCLC President said, "This is a highly significant event, the beginning of a new cooperation, understanding, and determination by poor people of all colors

and backgrounds to assert and win their right to a decent life and respect for their culture and dignity."

As the delegates began their discussions it became evident that many people faced similar problems of poor pay, poor schools, and poor treatment and even had experienced some of the same organizational difficulties trying to deal with these problems. People began making connections. It was as though a constantly opened wound had finally decided to close. Chicanos, (from Mexican - American) Americans, who form 20% of the population of the Southwest are working for self-identity, self-education, land and economic power. According to Jose Angel Gultierrez, Chicanos, "Have been slaves since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848.

Mr. Thadis Oxendine representing the Lumbee Indian Citizens Council of Pembroke, N.C. was concerned about political control of his county and registering voters.

The Poor People's Campaign will begin from many different areas of the country. Thousands of Mexican - Americans from Los Angeles and Indians from the Northwest will begin their marches to Washington. As they cross the nation they will meet and combine with still more groups of Mexican - Americans, Indians, Negroes and poor

whites. Numerous rallies will be held in such large urban areas as Chicago, Kansas City, Denver and Los Angeles. By the time the western leg of the campaign arrives outside of Washington, D. C. it will number in the hundreds of thousands, demonstrating an extensive and united representation of the nation's poor peoples.

The well represented National Welfare Rights Organization said its 100 affiliates in 22 states will begin taking relief supported children to the doorsteps of the Nation's public officials July 1 to dramatize the "brutality" of the new Federal welfare laws. They insist that no one who has birthed a baby is going to let the Government send their children to day care centers and force mothers to leave their homes to work, as the new laws, effective July 1, provide.

MEMPHIS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

(3) Promotion will be by seniority and merit so that black men will have supervisory positions.

(4) A pay raise of 10 cents an hour will be effective May 1 and an additional 5 cents an hour starting September 1, 1968.

The victory came after 1,375 sanitation workers had been off their job for two months.

The sanitation workers -- the men who pick up tons of decayed animals in alleyways, who "bust" their backs picking up cripplingly heavy oil drums of garbage, who've seen many of their fellows crushed and mangled in garbage packing machines because of faulty equipment -- walked out after twenty-two black employees were sent home January 31 when it began raining and white employees were not sent home.

Strikes by sanitation workers, hospital workers and other public employees have been discouraged generally by the courts, politicians and by labor leaders. It would not be imprecise to say that the strike could not have been won without the solid support of Memphis Negro ministers, the Negro community, SCLC, the NAACP and other civil rights organizations as well as Local 1733, the sanitation Department Local of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

The Memphis victory, forged out of defeat, will be an example to other service workers around the nation of how even the lowest and most menial sort of jobs may some day be dignified through organization and struggle.

HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

The Poor People's Campaign is just now starting and will have to continue until the Government responds to the needs of America's poor. You alone or with a local group or organization are welcome to join this Campaign.

IF YOU WISH TO WORK DIRECTLY, please contact The Poor People's Campaign, SCLC, 1401 U St., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20009. Telephone (202) 462-7000. We need volunteers for housing, transportation, food, publicity, typing and other office work, marching, printed materials, and other work to stand up for Poor People.

IF YOU CAN NOT WORK ACTIVELY, you may want to join the Poor People's Campaign by contributing financial aid or services such as food, cars, buses and materials. Please contact the Washington office listed above if you can provide services.

PLEASE SEND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN TO:
The Martin Luther King Memorial Fund
SCLC Poor People's Campaign
334 Auburn Avenue, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

...Let Dr. King's Work Continue

Those of us who worked with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. every day through every battle know that the greatest memorial to him will be the continuation of his work.

His work was all of the programs and activities of SCLC, including the Poor People's Campaign, Citizenship Education, Ministers Leadership Training, Voter Registration and Political Education, Anti-Poverty Programs, Protection of Civil Rights, Economic Development and Operation Breadbasket.

All contributions for the work of Dr. King should be sent to this address only:

The Martin Luther King Memorial Fund
SCLC
334 Auburn Avenue, N. E.
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