

[1965?]

WE DECLARE PEACE
CALL FOR AN ASSEMBLY OF UNREPRESENTED PEOPLE
in Washington, D.C., on August 6 through 9

"I like to believe that the people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than our governments. I think the people want peace so much that one of these days government had better get out of their way and let them have it."

--- President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Aug. 31, 1959

In Mississippi and Washington the few make the decisions for the many. Mississippi Negroes are denied the vote; the voice of the thirty per cent of Americans now opposed to the undeclared war in Vietnam is not heeded and all Americans are denied access to facts concerning the true military and political situation. We must make it plain to the Administration that we will not be accomplices to a war that we did not declare. There can be no doubt that the great majority of the people of the world do not approve of the presence of American troops in Vietnam. We who will come to Washington on August 6 through 9 can not in any sense represent this majority, but we can let our voices be heard in a symbolic Assembly of Unrepresented People to Declare Peace.

August 6 is the twentieth anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima; August 9 the anniversary of the Nagasaki bomb. Therefore, we choose August 6, 7, 8, and 9 for a new attempt to draw together the voices of nonviolent protest in America; not only those who have for so long been calling for an end to the Cold War, but also those whose protests focus on racial injustice, inquisition by Congressional committees, inequities in labor legislation, the mishandling of anti-poverty and welfare funds and the absence of democratic process on the local level. We invite not only those now active in organized protests but ministers, members of the academic community, teachers, women professional people, students, people from the newly formed community groups in slums and rural areas, industrial workers, anyone who wishes to symbolically withdraw his support from the war and who wishes to explore the possibilities of inter-action inherent in this community of concerned people.

Briefly, the activities of the four days will be as follows:

August 6: A demonstration at the White House centering around a "Declaration of Conscience" that has already received over 6,000 signatures; it declares the signers' complete refusal to assist in the carrying out of the undeclared war in Vietnam. Those of the signers who can come to Washington will constitute the core of the demonstration; non-signers will be welcomed in the supporting picket line. The Declaration has been sponsored and circulated by Committee for Nonviolent Action, War Resisters League, Student Peace Union and the Catholic Worker. These groups will therefore have full responsibility for the conduct of this aspect of the four-day assembly. There may be non-violent civil disobedience by a small number of the signers who will seek to present the Declaration to the President.

August 7 and 8 will be the heart of the Assembly of Unrepresented People. They will be devoted to workshops, probably carried out in the open on the grass surrounding the Washington Monument.

August 7 (PROGRAM WORKSHOPS): The Assembly will divide itself according to the section of the protest movement which claims the greatest attention of each individual.

There will be groupings of community people and staff who have been working at the local level on organizing the poor to have a voice in the lives of their communities and in the administration of federal anti-poverty funds.

There will be another grouping of people whose interest and work centers on the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's attempt to have Congress unseat the five improperly elected representatives from their state.

There will still be other groupings to discuss the recent threats of destructive investigation by the House Un-American Activities Committee of elements of both the peace and civil rights movements.

We hope that there will also be present representative groupings from the ranks of organized labor to discuss labor's attempt to have repealed the so-called "right-to-work law" provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act.

Additional workshops on other aspects of nonviolent direct action will be scheduled to meet the interests of those present.

August 8; Vietnam (CONSTITUENCY WORKSHOPS): There will be workshops of ministers, teachers, members of the academic community, women, professional people, students, people from local communities, union members and other "constituency groupings" to plan how they can work in the summer and through the year to stop the war.

A Declaration of Peace drawn up by the initiators of the demonstration will be circulated in the workshops for use on the 9th.

August 9 ("Governments had better get out of their way, and let them have it."): Those members of the Assembly of Unrepresented People in a position to face possible arrest and willing to pledge themselves to nonviolent behavior during the course of the demonstration will assemble and walk toward the Capitol with the intention of convening the Assembly in the chamber of the House of Representatives and thus deny that Congress has the right to declare war in our names. If stopped along the way we will sit down and declare the Assembly of Unrepresented People in session. One of the group will rise and begin to read the Declaration of Peace circulated in the workshops on the 8th. If, as seems likely, the person reading is arrested before the Declaration is fully read, another person will rise and continue the reading. The Assembly will be open to the reading of additional declarations of peace that individuals or representatives of organizations may bring with them. We hope that this demonstration will serve as a symbol of the desire of the people of the world to express their opposition to the Vietnam War in a democratic fashion.

To implement this plan, we suggest that one focus for community organization between now and August 6 be discussion of what the government should do in Vietnam. The results of these discussions could be embodied in declarations of peace which representatives would bring to Washington. Some groups, particularly those farthest away from Washington, may want to create assemblies at state capitals and city councils on August 9.

Preparation for the Assembly will be coordinated at 107 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. Before and after the Assembly related activities will go on in Washington concerning Vietnam, FDP, IL-B, HUAC and community organization. Volunteers are urgently needed. We can probably provide free housing.

Norma Becker
Bob Swann
Donna Allen
✓ Bob Parris
Mel McDonald
Carl Bloise
Peter Kellman
Barry Weisberg
Dena Clamager
Steve Weissman

Stephen Amdur
Eric Weinberger
✓ Walter M. Tillow
Carl Oglesby
✓ Ed Hamlett
Jeffrey Gordon
Jimmy Garrett
✓ Courtland Cox
Dave Dellinger
Ray Raphael

Sandra Adickes
✓ Francis H. Mitchell
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