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An Address by:
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
Chicago Freedom Festival
The Amphitheatre
Chicago, Illinois
Saturday, March 12, 1966

ON BEHALF OF THE COORDINATING COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, IT GIVES ME THE GREATEST PLEASURE TO SPEAK TO ALL OF YOU WHO BY YOUR PRESENCE HERE TONIGHT HAVE EVIDENCED GENUINE SUPPORT FOR OUR CAMPAIGN IN CHICAGO. NEVER IN THE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT HAS AN ACTION CAMPAIGN BEEN LAUNCHED IN SUCH SPLENDOR. NEVER HAS A COMMUNITY RESPONDED MORE SPLENDIDLY TO THE CALL FOR SUPPORT THAN YOU HAVE IN CHICAGO.

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO JOIN WITH YOU IN THIS FREEDOM FESTIVAL, PROCLAIMING THE DAWN OF A NEW DAY OF DIGNITY AND OPPORTUNITY FOR THE NEGRO IN AMERICA'S CITIES.

I AM HAPPY THAT MY GOOD FRIENDS, MAHALIA JACKSON, HARRY BELAFONTE, SIDNEY POITIER AND DICK GREGORY WERE ABLE TO BE WITH US AND SHARE THEIR TREMENDOUS RESERVOIR OF TALENT ON THIS OCCASION. THOSE WHO ENTERTAIN US TONIGHT ARE THE TRIED AND TRUE FRIENDS OF THE MOVEMENT WHO HAVE A GENUINE SENSE OF SOCIAL CONCERN AND WHO SEE THEIR PROFESSION AS AN AVENUE THROUGH WHICH THEY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEGRO'S SENSE OF SELFHOOD AND TO THE REALIZATION OF THE PROMISE OF DEMOCRACY.

THEY HAVE WORKED WITH US THROUGH THE TURBULENT DAYS OF ALBANY, BIRMINGHAM, AND SELMA; AND THROUGH THE DANGEROUS AND DESOLATE DAYS OF MISSISSIPPI; SO IT IS ALTOGETHER FITTING THAT THEY SHOULD BE ON HAND TO SUPPORT US IN THE LAUNCHING OF THIS CAMPAIGN TO REMOVE GARGANTUAN STRUCTURES OF INJUSTICE IN THE NORTH.

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UNTIL RECENTLY, THE CONCERN OF THE MASS, NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION ARM OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT HAS BEEN FOCUSED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY UPON THE SOUTH. THIS REGIONAL RIVETING OF OUR ATTENTION WAS DUE TO THE FACT THAT IT WAS IN THE SOUTH THAT THE DARK CLOUDS OF RACIAL INJUSTICE HAD CAST THEIR LONGEST SHADOWS. HOWEVER, IN THE COURSE OF THE LAST DECADE THE DARKNESS HAS BEGUN TO BE DISPELLED. IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT WE STILL HAVE A LONG, LONG WAY TO GO IN THE SOUTH BEFORE JUSTICE IS A TOTAL REALITY FOR THE NEGRO, THE SOUTH IS EXPERIENCING A NEW BIRTH OF FREEDOM WHICH COMES AS A BEACON LIGHT OF HOPE TO MILLIONS OF DISINTERESTED PEOPLE. IN THE PROCESS, THERE SHINES FORTH A NEW NEGRO, WITH A NEW SENSE OF DIGNITY AND DESTINY, HIS PROFILE ETCHED IN CONFIDENCE AND COURAGE. ARMED WITH HIS POWERFUL METHOD OF NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION, HE HAS ELECTRIFIED THE WORLD, CHANGING EMBEDDED CUSTOMS AND PROVOKING HISTORIC LEGISLATION AND GIVING NEW MEANING TO THE AMERICAN DREAM OF FREEDOM.

WHILE THE SOUTH, BURST FORTH WITH THE DYNAMIC VIBRANCY OF NEW DEMOCRACY, THE NEGRO IN THE NORTH FOUND HIMSELF INCREASINGLY PRESSED DOWN BY THE CRUEL WEIGHT OF VICIOUS AND DISCRIMINATORY FORCES.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RACE RELATIONS IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH IS ALL THE MORE SEVERE SINCE THE NEGRO HAS INCREASINGLY BECOME AN URBANIZED NORTHERNER. WHEREAS TWO-THIRDS OF ALL NEGRO AMERICANS LIVED IN THE ELEVEN STATES OF THE OLD CONFEDERACY TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, BY 1960 MORE THAN FORTY PER CENT OF THE NATION'S COLORED CITIZENRY WAS NORTHERN-BASED.

THE NEGRO HAS COME NORTH, CROWDING INTO THE CONFINES OF ALREADY TEEMING BLACK GHETTOS, SEEKING A PROMISED LAND. LURED BY THE PROMISES OF A BETTER LIFE, HE HAS FOUND NOT A LAND OF PLENTY BUT A LOT REplete WITH POVERTY. HE EXPERIENCED NOT THE BOUYANCY OF HOPE BUT THE

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FATIGUE OF DESPAIR. HE FOUND NOT A PROMISED LAND BUT RATHER ANOTHER EGYPT-LAND OF DENIAL, DISCRIMINATION AND DISMAY. INSTEAD OF FULFILLING HIS DREAMS, THE NEGRO IMMIGRANT HAS FOUND HIMSELF MIRED AMID THE DECAY OF FESTERING SLUMS ON CHICAGO'S SOUTHSIDE AND WESTSIDE, IN NEW YORK'S HARLEM, IN DETROIT'S PARADISE VALLEY AND BLACKBOTTOM, IN LOS ANGELES' WATTS AND IN SCORES OF BLACKBELT COMMUNITIES OF THE NORTH.

WHEN WE LOOK CLOSELY AT THE NATURE OF THE SLUM, WE SEE AN URBAN AREA WHICH IS EXPLOITED BY THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE, AN AREA WHERE FREE TRADE AND EXCHANGE OF CULTURE AND RESOURCES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO EXIST. IN A SENSE, WE ARE USING THE WORD SLUM INTERCHANGEABLY WITH WHAT THE SOCIOLOGISTS REFER TO AS THE GHETTO. ON THE ONE HAND, SLUMS INCLUDE BLIGHTED RATHER THAN INVESTED HOUSING CONDITIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY INCLUDE ALL THOSE CRIPPLING CONDITIONS WHICH VICTIMIZE THE GHETTO NEGRO: HIS UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT, HIS STIFLING EDUCATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, HIS SENSE OF REJECTION, HIS SENSE OF ALONENESS AND HIS UNCONCIOUS SELF-HATRED.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SLUM IS TO CONFINE THOSE WHO HAVE NO POWER AND PERPETUATE THEIR POWERLESSNESS. IN THE SLUM, THE NEGRO IS FORCED TO PAY MORE FOR LESS, AND THE GENERAL ECONOMY OF THE SLUM IS CONSTANTLY DRAINED WITHOUT BEING REPLENISHED. IN SHORT, THE SLUM IS AN INVISIBLE WALL, WHICH RESTRICTS THE MOBILITY OF PERSONS BECAUSE OF THE COLOR OF THEIR SKIN. THE SLUM IS LITTLE MORE THAN A DOMESTIC COLONY WHICH LEAVES ITS INHABITANTS DOMINATED POLITICALLY, EXPLOITED ECONOMICALLY, SEGREGATED AND HUMILIATED AT EVERY TURN.

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT CHICAGO HAS A SEVERE SLUM PROBLEM. THE NEGRO STILL ISN'T GETTING A SQUARE DEAL IN MISSISSIPPI;

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BUT NEITHER IS HE GETTING A SQUARE DEAL IN CHICAGO. THE FACTS ARE BOTH STAGGERING AND REVEALING. CHICAGO HAS THE LARGEST CONCENTRATION OF NEGROES IN AN URBAN GHETTO OF ANY MAJOR CITY IN THE UNITED STATES. THE NEGRO, UNLIKE THE WHITE URBAN RESIDENT, FINDS HIMSELF AND HIS HEIRS EVEN UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION, LOCKED IN. HE IS CONFINED BY THE CONSPIRATORIAL NOOSE PULLED TIGHT BY THE RACIST ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS OF SELFISH PROFITEERING REAL ESTATE INTEREST AND WHITE RESIDENTS WITH THEIR RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS AND (UN) GENTLEMEN (LY) AGREEMENTS, ABETTED BY THE PREJUDICIAL PRACTICES OF MORTGAGE-MONEY LENDING INSTITUTIONS.

ACCORDING TO THE BUREAU OF THE CENSUS IN 1960, OF THE TEN LARGEST CITIES CHICAGO HAD A GREATER PERCENTAGE OF SUBSTANDARD HOUSING THAN ANY EXCEPT ST. LOUIS. FORTY-ONE PER CENT OF ALL NEGRO FAMILIES IN CHICAGO WERE REPORTED LIVING IN DWELLINGS THAT WERE DILAPIDATED, DETERIORATING OR LACKING IN PLUMBING FACILITIES. NEGROES WERE PAYING TEN DOLLARS A MONTH MORE THAN WHITE FOR COMPARABLE RENTAL UNITS. AT THE SAME TIME, NEGRO PURCHASERS PAID ON AN AVERAGE OF \$1,500.00 MORE THAN WHITES WHEN BUYING HOUSES. ON TOP OF THAT, NEGRO HOME BUYERS PAID HIGHER INTEREST RATES ON MORTGAGES AND CONTRACT PURCHASES. IN EFFECT, THE NEGRO IS FORCED TO PAY A COLOR TAX WHILE RECEIVING LESS THAN WHITES IN QUALITY AND SERVICE.

BUT HOUSING IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF A BROAD BASE OF EXPLOITATION. RACIALLY SEGREGATED, SLUM HOUSING HAS ADVERSE EFFECTS ON EDUCATIONAL CHANCES FOR CHICAGO'S NEGRO SCHOOL CHILDREN. SLUM HOUSING, INVARIABLY LEADS TO "DE FACTO" SEGREGATED SCHOOLING. THUS, IN CHICAGO, PRESENTLY, OVER 90 PER CENT OF THE COLORED PUPILS ATTEND SCHOOLS WHICH ARE MORE THAN 90 PER CENT NEGRO. A 1965 ANALYSIS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION'S

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OWN FIGURES SHOWED THAT 92.9 PER CENT OF THE CITY'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS COULD BE CLASSIFIED AS "DE FACTO" SEGREGATED, THAT IS, WITH A RACIAL PREDOMINANCE OF MORE THAN 90 PER CENT NEGRO OR WHITE. THE SAME STUDY SHOWED THAT 88.6 PER CENT OF THE CITY'S HIGH SCHOOLS WERE SIMILARLY SEGREGATED, WITH 90.0 PER CENT OF THE INTERMEDIATE GRADE CENTERS FALLING INTO THE SAME CATEGORY.

NEGRO SCHOOLS HAVE A FAR HIGHER AVERAGE OF NON-CERTIFIED TEACHERS THAN WHITE SCHOOLS. THEN, TOO, WHEN THERE ARE CLASSROOM TEACHER VACANCIES, THE NEGRO-SEGREGATED SCHOOL IS FAR LESS LIKELY THAN THE WHITE SCHOOL TO RECEIVE A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER. A REPORT OF THE U. S. CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION IN 1962 REVEALED THAT IN CHICAGO IT COSTS \$342.00 TO EDUCATE A STUDENT IN A WHITE SCHOOL, AS AGAINST \$269.00 IN A NEGRO SCHOOL. THE NUMBER OF LIBRARY BOOKS AVAILABLE PER CHILD IN WHITE SCHOOLS WAS DOUBLE THAT IN NEGRO SCHOOLS. ALL OF THESE ASPECTS OF SLUM EDUCATION CONSTITUTE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGIC DETRIMENTS, LEADING TO LOWERED SELF-ESTEEM AND MOTIVATION ON THE PART OF NEGRO YOUNGSTERS, LOWERED ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, HIGHER DROPOUT RATES, AND AS A CONSEQUENCE, MORE JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND WELFARE RELIEF DEPENDENCY.

THE NEGRO HAD COME NORTH, SEEKING A PROMISED LAND, WHICH, IF NOT FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY, HE AT LEAST EXPECTED TO BE LADENED WITH JOBS AND OPPORTUNITY. IT WAS IN THE CRUSHING OF SUCH DREAMS THAT THE NORTH HAS BEEN MOST CRUEL TO THE NEGRO. UP AND OUT OF THE DELTA HEARTLAND OF DIXIE, UP FROM ALABAMA AND MISSISSIPPI, STILL THEY COME POURING IN, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE STREAM OF JOBS WHICH ONCE AWAITED THEM HAS LONG SINCE DRIED UP. FOR THEM, THE JOB OPPORTUNITIES WHICH ONCE WERE SO ABUNDANT HAVE "GONE WITH THE WIND," DIMINISHING AND DISAPPEARING WITH THE

PRECIPITOUS DECLINE IN THE DEMAND FOR UNSKILLED LABOR. GROWING OUT OF THE STEP-UP IN AUTOMATION, THERE HAS BEEN A SHARP RISE IN UNEMPLOYMENT FOR NEGROES, THE RATE RISING FROM 4.1 PER CENT IN 1953 TO 10.9 PER CENT IN 1963. DISPLACED BY AUTOMATION AND PLANT MOVE-OUTS, MANY NEGRO MEN WHO HAD A HISTORY OF GOOD INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT WOUND UP WELFARE RECIPIENTS.

ONE OUT OF EVERY FOUR NEGRO FAMILIES IN CHICAGO FINDS THEMSELVES ON WELFARE ROLLS. ALTHOUGH THE NEGRO EMPLOYMENT RATE, NATIONALLY, HAS REMAINED FAIRLY CONSTANT, TWO TIMES THAT OF WHITES, TODAY IN CHICAGO IT IS THREE TIMES HIGHER THAN THAT OF THE WHITE JOBLESS. THIS IS, DESPITE THE FACT THAT CHICAGO CONSTITUTES ONE OF THE MOST PROSPEROUS COMMERCIAL CENTERS IN THE NATION, ACCORDING TO THE LATEST DEPARTMENT OF LABOR STATISTICS. YES, THE CHICAGO NEGRO, AND THE NORTHERN NEGRO, GENERALLY, FINDS HIMSELF AN URBAN PEASANT, AN IMPOVERISHED ALIEN IN AN AFFLUENT SOCIETY. HE IS TOO POOR EVEN TO RISE WITH THE SOCIETY; TOO IMPOVERISHED BY THE AGES TO BE ABLE TO ASCEND BY USING HIS OWN RESOURCES. IF THE REMAINDER OF THE NATION'S WORK FORCE WERE UNDERGOING THE SAME DIRE FLIGHT AS IS THE NEGRO, TODAY, OUR COUNTRY WOULD BE CAUGHT IN THE GRIPS OF A STAGGERING DEPRESSION. WHILE THE REST OF THE NATION'S ECONOMIC TEMPERATURE DIPS UP AND DOWN BETWEEN GLOWING PROSPERITY AND SLIGHT RECESSION, THE MERCURY OF THE NEGRO'S ECONOMIC THERMOMETER FREEZES, HAVING REGISTERED CHILLIEST DEPRESSION.

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PRESENTLY, THERE IS AN ARMY OF 60,000 UNEMPLOYED NEGRO MALES SEEKING JOBS IN CHICAGO. THAT TOTAL WOULD CERTAINLY APPROACH 100,000 IF ONE INCLUDES THE DISCOURAGED, THE ONES WHO HAVE GIVEN UP

EVERY HOPE AND WHO ARE NO LONGER LOOKING FOR JOBS. SUCH OF THE FORLORN
HAVE LONG AGO BEEN TURNED BACK TOO MANY TIMES BY DOORS SLAMMED IN THEIR
FACES, TURNED BACK TOO MANY TIMES BY THE "I'M SORRY, THERE'S NOTHING
TODAY FOR YOU, DON'T CALL US, WE'LL CALL YOU." TURNED BACK TOO MANY TIMES
IN BEING "THE LAST HIRED AND THE FIRST FIRED."

PSYCHOLOGICALLY, SUCH NEGROES ARE THE ILL-STARRED AND
DEEPLY WOUNDED VETERANS OF WHAT CAN BE CALLED "SLUM SHOCK." THEY ARE
THE VICTIMS OF THAT WHICH MY FRIEND, EDWIN BERRY, OF THE URBAN LEAGUE
HAS LABELLED "CULTURAL CASTRATION." THEY END UP SAYING UNCONSCIOUSLY
IN THE WORDS OF PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR:

A CRUST OF BREAD AND A CORNER
TO SLEEP IN,
A MINUTE TO SMILE AND AN HOUR
TO WEEP IN,
A PINT OF JOY TO A PECK OF TROUBLE,
AND NEVER A LAUGH
THAT THE MOURNS COME DOUBLE,
AND THIS IS LIFE.

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SLUM SHOCK, THEN, IS THE PSYCHOLOGICAL RESPONSE OF THE BEATEN, THE BRUISED AND THE OPPRESSED. THE CHICAGO MOVEMENT TO END SLUMS COMES, JUST AS DID THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE SOUTH, TO GIVE THE NEGRO NEW DIGNITY, NEW SELF RESPECT AND NEW POWER. IT COMES TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE LONG NEGLECTED CHILDREN OF GOD TO SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES -- TO TELL OF THEIR ANGUISH, THEIR DESPERATION, THEIR DISCONTENT, AND TO FORCE THOSE IN POSITIONS OF POWER TO ACT.

GIVEN OUR PRESENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF SLUMS, WHAT THEN ARE THE CHALLENGES WE FACE? TIME WILL NOT PERMIT ME TO OUTLINE OUR PROGRAM OF ACTION. BUT IT IS CLEAR TO ME THAT WE MUST ORGANIZE THIS TOTAL COMMUNITY INTO UNITIES OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL POWER. WE MUST ALSO REAFFIRM OUR ALLEGIANCE TO THE TIME HONORED TACTICS AND STRATEGIES THAT HAVE SERVED US SO WELL IN THE PAST TEN YEARS. AS LONG AS INJUSTICE IS AROUND, DEMONSTRATIONS WILL BE NECESSARY. SO WHEN IT IS APPROPRIATE, WE WILL ENCOURAGE SIT-INS, STAND-INS, RENT STRIKES, BOYCOTTS, PICKET LINES, MARCHES, CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND ANY FORM OF PROTEST AND DEMONSTRATIONS THAT ARE NONVIOLENTLY CONCEIVED AND EXECUTED.

AT THE SAME TIME WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY AND PROTEST IS A RELATIVE RIGHT SUBJECT TO REGULATIONS TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS. FOR THAT REASON BEFORE A PROTEST CAN BE APPROVED BY RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP THEY MUST ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. DO WE HAVE A JUST GRIEVANCE, OR IS OUR PURPOSE MERELY TO CREATE CONFUSION FOR ITS OWN SAKE AS A FORM OF REVENGE?
2. HAVE WE FIRST USED EVERY FORM OF NORMAL MEANS TO ELIMINATE THE PROBLEM BY NEGOTIATION, PETITION AND

APPROPRIATE APPEALS TO AUTHORITY?

3. HAVING FOUND THESE CHANNELS USELESS OR FORCIBLY CLOSED TO US WHEN WE EMBARK UPON ANY TYPE OF LAW-BREAKING, ARE WE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES SOCIETY WILL INFLICT, AND TO MAINTAIN, EVEN UNDER PUNISHMENT, A SENSE OF BROTHERHOOD?
4. DO WE HAVE A CLEAR PROGRAM TO RELIEVE INJUSTICE WHICH DOES NOT INFLICT INJUSTICE UPON OTHERS, AND IS THAT PROGRAM REASONABLE AND GROUNDED IN THE ETHICS AND BEST TRADITIONS OF OUR SOCIETY?

IN ESTABLISHING THESE PREREQUISITE CONDITIONS BEFORE EMPLOYING DIRECT ACTION, THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT MEETS ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO SOCIETY AND FULFILLS ITS OBLIGATIONS TO DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES.

SO WE MUST CONTINUE TO MARCH WHEN NECESSARY. OUR MARCHING FEET HAVE CAUSED THICK WALLS OF SEGREGATION TO CRUMBLE BEFORE THE BATTERING RAMS OF THE FORCES OF JUSTICE. OUR MARCHING FEET HAVE RESURRECTED CRUCIFIED TRUTH AND PLACED BRIGHT-EYED WISDOM BACK ON HER SACRED THRONE. OUR MARCHING HAS TAKEN WOUNDED JUSTICE, LYING PROSTRATE ON THE STREETS OF OUR CITIES, AND LIFTED IT FROM THIS DUST OF SHAME TO REIGN SUPREME IN THE LEGISLATIVE ANNALS OF OUR NATION. OUR MARCHING FEET HAVE BROUGHT POWER TO THE POWERLESS AND SIGHT TO THE BLIND. YES, OUR MARCHING FEET HAVE CARVED TUNNELS OF HOPE THROUGH THE DARK MOUNTAIN OF DESPAIR.

IF WE ARE TO SUCCEED, WE MUST ALSO EXPLODE THE MYTH OF TOTAL RELIANCE ON THE BOOTSTRAP PHILOSOPHY. NOW, OF COURSE, WE ALL BELIEVE THAT WHENEVER POSSIBLE WE MUST SEEK TO LIFT OURSELVES BY OUR OWN BOOTSTRAPS. I HAVE SAID OVER AND OVER AGAIN THAT WE

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MUST WORK HARD TO IMPROVE OUR STANDARDS AND TO MAKE FULL AND CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF THE FREEDOM WE ALREADY POSSESS. WE MUST NOT USE OUR OPPRESSION AS AN EXCUSE FOR LAZINESS AND MEDIOCRITY. WE MUST DEVELOP CONCRETE PROGRAMS TO REDUCE THE CRIME RATE IN THE NEGRO COMMUNITY. WE MUST INSTILL WITHIN OUR PEOPLE THE CONVICTION THAT NARCOTICS AND EXCESSIVE DRINK ARE DAMAGING AND SELF-DESTRUCTIVE METHODS OF ESCAPE. WE NEED NOT WAIT UNTIL THE DAY OF FULL EMANCIPATION BEFORE SEEKING TO PLUNGE AGAINST CLOUD-FILLED NIGHTS OF OPPRESSION NEW AND BLAZING STARS OF INSPIRATION.

BUT IN SPITE OF THIS, IT IS NECESSARY TO RECOGNIZE HUMAN LIMITATIONS. YES, WE MUST SEEK TO LIFT OURSELVES BY OUR OWN BOOTSTRAPS, BUT IT IS A CRUEL JEST TO TELL A BOOTLESS MAN TO LIFT HIMSELF BY HIS OWN BOOTSTRAPS. THE FACT IS THAT MANY NEGROES HAVE BEEN SO TRODDEN AND CRUSHED BY THE IRON FEET OF POVERTY THAT THEY HAVE BEEN LEFT WITHOUT A BOOT. A FAILURE TO REALIZE THIS HAS OFTEN CAUSED MANY MIDDLE-CLASS NEGROES TO ACCEPT THE JUDGMENT OF MANY WHITES THAT THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN CONDITION, AND THAT NEGROES ARE POOR BECAUSE THEY ARE LAZY AND LACK INITIATIVE AND MORAL FIBER. I RECEIVED A LETTER THE OTHER DAY FROM A LADY WHO ARGUED THAT PEOPLE WHO LIVE ON DIRTY STREETS COULD NOT HOPE TO GAIN THE RESPECT OF OTHERS. THEREFORE, SHE SUGGESTED THAT I ORGANIZE A COMMITTEE TO BUY BROOMS AND GET SQUADS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN TO SWEEP THE STREETS. THIS, SHE SAID, WOULD GIVE THEM PRIDE IN THEMSELVES. THIS WELL-INTENTIONED LADY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS NOT THE JOB OF PEOPLE TO SWEEP THE STREETS. IT IS THE JOB OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION. IT DID NOT OCCUR TO HER THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO ORGANIZE THE PEOPLE TO DEMAND THE SERVICES TO WHICH THEY ARE ENTITLED. THOSE WHO LIVE BY THE MYTH OF TOTAL RELIANCE ON THE

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BOOTSTRAP PHILOSOPHY FAIL TO REALIZE THAT MANY NEGROES ARE SO ECONOMICALLY INCAPACITATED THAT THEY CAN NEVER LIFT THEMSELVES BY THEIR OWN RESOURCES. OUR GREATEST NEED IS ECONOMIC SECURITY. WHAT DOES IT PROFIT A MAN TO BE ABLE TO SEND HIS CHILDREN TO AN INTEGRATED SCHOOL IF THE FAMILY INCOME IS INSUFFICIENT TO BUY THEM SCHOOL CLOTHES? WHAT WILL HE GAIN BY BEING PERMITTED TO MOVE TO AN INTEGRATED NEIGHBORHOOD IF HE CANNOT AFFORD TO DO SO BECAUSE HE IS UNEMPLOYED OR HAS A LOW PAYING JOB WITH NO FUTURE? WHAT ADVANTAGE IS IT TO THE NEGRO TO ESTABLISH THAT HE CAN BE SERVED IN INTEGRATED RESTAURANTS, OR ACCOMODATED IN INTEGRATED HOTELS, IF HE IS BOUND TO THE KIND OF FINANCIAL SERVITUDE WHICH WILL NOT ALLOW HIM TO TAKE A VACATION OR EVEN TO TAKE HIS WIFE OUT TO DINE? NEGROES MUST NOT ONLY HAVE THE RIGHT TO GO INTO ANY ESTABLISHMENT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, THEY MUST ALSO BE ABSORBED INTO OUR ECONOMIC SYSTEM IN SUCH A MANNER THAT THEY CAN AFFORD TO EXERCISE THAT RIGHT. A NATION THAT CAN SPEND BILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO PUT A MAN ON THE MOON, CAN SPEND BILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO PUT A MAN ON HIS TWO FEET ON EARTH.

LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO URGE EACH OF YOU TO JOIN IN THIS MOVEMENT TO END THE SLUMS. I WANT TO EXTEND THIS INVITATION TO ALL CHICAGOANS AND THE REST OF AMERICA TO SUPPORT THIS ENDEAVOR TO REVITALIZE THE DREAM OF FREEDOM AND MAKE IT REAL FOR ALL URBAN AMERICANS REGARDLESS OF RACE, CREED OR COLOR.

I WANT TO APPEAL, PARTICULARLY TO MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO ARE IMPRISONED WITHIN THE WALLS OF THE SLUMS. COME FORTH OUT OF YOUR SLUM SHOCK, OUT OF THE DARKNESS OF YOUR DESOLATION, KNOWING THAT YOUR LOT CAN BE BETTER. SUCH AN OUTCOME LIES, BASICALLY WITHIN YOUR HANDS, FOR ONLY YOU CAN RECAPTURE YOUR SENSE OF SELF-ESTEEM AND SOMEBODINESS. THE BUGLE OF YOUR DESTINY AND DIGNITY CALLS YOU FORTH

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TO FIGHT AGAINST THE SLUMS. DO NOT STAND BY AND BE A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR IN THIS WAR TO END SLUMS.

I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE OFTEN BEEN TEMPTED TO STRIKE OUT IN REVENGE AGAINST WHITE PEOPLE FOR THE MANY WRONGS PERPETRATED AGAINST YOU AND YOURS. I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE LONG WANTED TO LASH OUT AT YOUR OPPONENT TO LET HIM KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOT A NOBODY, THAT YOU ARE HUMAN, CAPABLE OF BEING HURT, SCARED AND BRUISED. I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE BEEN TEMPTED TO TAKE UP THE TORCHES AND DO AS DID THE SLUM TENANTS OF LOS ANGELES WHO LIT THE FIRES OF WATTS, SCORCHING THE NATIONAL CONSCIENCE INDELIBLY WITH THEIR SEETHING RESENTMENT AND SMOULDERING FRUSTRATION. BUT LET ME REMIND YOU THAT THERE ARE MANY WHITE MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE OUR FRIENDS, MANY WHO HAVE SUFFERED AND SACRIFICED AND DIED WITH US AS WE STRUGGLED TO BRING TRUE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY TO OUR BELOVED LAND. WE MUST NEVER FORGET THAT IT WAS A WHITE MOTHER FROM MICHIGAN, NAMED VIOLA LIUZZO, WHO WENT SOUTH TO SELMA TO MARCH WITH US AND WHO WAS SHOT DOWN IN THE DARK OF NIGHT ON ALABAMA'S HIGHWAY 80. WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT IT WAS A YOUNG EPISCOPALIAN SEMINARIAN, NAMED JONATHAN DANIELS WHO WORKED WITH US IN VOTER REGISTRATION IN LOWNDES COUNTY, ALABAMA, AND, WHO THERE GAVE HIS LIFE ON FREEDOM'S ALTAR, WHILE BESIDE HIM WAS WOUNDED A CATHOLIC PRIEST, FATHER MORRISROE, FROM THIS VERY CITY, CHICAGO. WE MUST NEVER FORGET THAT THERE WERE ONCE TWO JEWISH LADS, MICHAEL SCHWERNER AND ANDREW GOODMAN, FROM NEW YORK, WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR FREEDOM ALONG WITH A BLACK FRIEND IN MISSISSIPPI. WITH SUCH VALIENT MARTYRS IN MIND, LET ME CALL YOU AWAY FROM THE BITTERNESS OF BIGOTRY, BACK TO LOVE AND RECONCILIATION, REMINDING YOU THAT SUCH GREAT SOULS WERE TRULY OUR FRIENDS. FOR EVEN AS JESUS HAS SAID, "GREATER LOVE THAN THIS HAS NO MAN, THAT HE

SO, I WANT TO CALL YOU TO A PATH OF LOVE AND JUSTICE,
THE PATH OF NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION. FOR I AM STILL CONVINCED
THAT THE PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF NONVIOLENCE AFFORDS A MORE
EXCELLENT WAY TO IMPROVE THE INADEQUACIES IN THE AMERICAN SOCIAL
SYSTEM. THE METHOD OF NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE IS EFFECTIVE IN THAT IT
HAS A WAY OF DISARMING THE OPPONENT. IT EXPOSES HIS MORAL DEFENSES,
IT WEAKENS HIS MORALE AND AT THE SAME TIME IT WORKS ON HIS CONSCIENCE.

IT IS MY HOPE THAT AS THE URBAN NEGRO PLUNGES DEEPER INTO THE QUEST FOR FREEDOM, HE WILL PLUNGE EVEN DEEPER INTO THE PHILOSOPHY OF NONVIOLENCE. AS A RACE WE MUST WORK PASSIONATELY AND UNRELENTINGLY FOR FIRST CLASS CITIZENSHIP, BUT WE MUST NEVER USE SECOND CLASS METHODS TO GAIN IT. WE MUST NEVER SUCCUMB TO THE TEMPTATION OF USING VIOLENCE IN THE STRUGGLE, FOR IF THIS HAPPENS, UNBORN GENERATIONS WILL BE THE RECIPIENTS OF A LONG AND DESOLATE NIGHT OF BITTERNESS, AND OUR CHIEF LEGACY TO THE FUTURE WILL BE AN ENDLESS REIGN OF MEANINGLESS CHAOS.

LET ME ALSO APPEAL TO OUR BROTHERS OF THE WHITE COMMUNITY FOR SUPPORT IN THIS MONUMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT AGAINST THE SLUMS. THERE CAN BE NO LASTING ESCAPE FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE FLED BEHIND THE SUBURBAN CURTAIN, FOR YOUR BLACK BROTHER YET LANGUISHES IN THE SLUMS, CRYING OUT TO YOU. YOUR LOT IS INEXTRICABLY INTERWOVEN WITH HIS, SINCE HE RETAINS THE CAPABILITY OF RINGING DOWN THE CURTAIN ON THE AMERICAN DREAM. A MINORITY THAT IS SICK WITH DESPAIR CAN POISON THE WELLSPRINGS FROM WHICH THE MAJORITY, TOO, MUST DRINK, THE ANSWER TO THE STAGGERING PROBLEMS THAT WE FACE IN CHICAGO, IS TO BE FOUND IN A GRAND ALLIANCE OF THE FORCES OF GOOD WILL WITH THE UNDERPRIVILEGED TO END THE DARK DAYS OF POWERLESS EXISTENCE. FOR IN REALITY, THE SLUM IS A COMMUNITY WITHOUT THE POWER TO DETERMINE ITS OWN DESTINY, A DOMESTIC COLONY WHICH, THOUGH TAXED, HAS NO REPRESENTATION IN FACT. DECISIONS ARE HANDED DOWN TO THEM AND THEY LIVE AT THE MERCY AND BOUNTY OF THE PEOPLE WITH REAL POWER, EITHER POLITICALLY OR ECONOMICALLY.

WHAT IS NEEDED IS THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE ORGANIZED IN COMMUNITY GROUPS AND AROUND ACTION PROJECTS AS A THIRD FORCE TO BRING TO BARE THEIR POWER ON THE PREVAILING POWER ELITE. ONLY AS THIS NONPARTISAN MORAL FORCE SPEAKS ITS VOICE, CAN WE BE SURE THAT TRULY DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT SERVES IN OUR CITIES.

WE SAW THIS HAPPEN NATIONALLY AROUND BIRMINGHAM. CHURCHES, LABOR AND INTELLECTUALS RALLIED TOGETHER AGAINST THE STRUCTURED BRUTALITY OF SOUTHERN RACISM AS EXEMPLIFIED IN BULL CONNER AND HIS DOGS AND CHANGE TOOK PLACE TO RESHAPE THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOUTH IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF JUSTICE.

NOW A PATTERN OF ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION STILL EXISTS IN OUR NORTHERN CITIES, AND IT CAN BE EVERY BIT AS TRAGIC AND

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VICIOUS AS BULL CONNER AND THE KU KLUX KLAN. WE CAN PUT AN END TO CHILDREN DYING OF RAT BITES OR CATCHING PHEUMONIA FROM UNHEATED BUILDINGS BECAUSE THE COURTS FIND IT FITTING TO GIVE THE LANDLORD A THIRTY DAY EXTENSION TO FIX THE FURNACE.

THE FORCES OF GOOD WILL IN THE CHURCHES AND IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT HAVE ALREADY COME FORTH AND PLEDGED THEMSELVES AS ALLIES IN THIS STRUGGLE. AND THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THE LEADERS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY ARE BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THAT THEY HAVE NOTHING TO GAIN THROUGH SWOLLEN WELFARE ROLES, UNEMPLOYMENT AND CHILDREN FINISHING HIGH SCHOOL READING AT A SIXTH GRADE LEVEL. THESE PROBLEMS ARE A DRAIN ON OUR WHOLE SOCIETY AND WE MUST JOIN TOGETHER NOW TO EFFECT A GRAND ALLIANCE FOR SOCIAL REFORM OF OUR CITIES IN A CONTROLLED NONVIOLENT PATTERN, LEST THE HOLOCAUST OF FRUSTRATION AND BITTERNESS DESTROY THE VERY VALUES WHICH WE CLING IN FEAR.

THESE, THEN, ARE THE BASIC ISSUES WHICH OUR MOVEMENT MUST FACE. THIS IS THE ROAD WE MUST TRAVEL FROM THIS JUNCTURE IN OUR ONGOING STRUGGLE.

LET US, THEREFORE, RESOLVE TO BE ENGAGED IN A SORT OF DIVINE DISSATISFACTION UNTIL THE AMERICAN DREAM IS A REALITY.

LET US BE DISSATISFIED UNTIL EVERY SOCIALLY OPPRESSIVE GHETTO AND RAT INFESTED SLUM IS PLUNGED INTO THE JUNK HEAPS OF OUR NATION AND NEGROES AND WHITES LIVE SIDE BY SIDE IN DECENT, SAFE AND SANITARY HOUSING. LET US BE DISSATISFIED UNTIL EVERY VESTIGE OF SEGREGATED AND INFERIOR EDUCATION WILL BECOME A THING OF THE DARK PAST AND NEGRO AND WHITE CHILDREN STUDY SIDE BY SIDE IN THE SOCIALLY HEALING CONTEXT OF THE CLASS ROOM.

LET US BE DISSATISFIED UNTIL ALL MEN WILL HAVE FOOD

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AND MATERIAL NECESSITY FOR THEIR BUSINESS, CULTURE AND EDUCATION FOR THEIR MINDS, FREEDOM AND DIGNITY FOR THEIR SPIRITS. LET US BE DISSATISFIED UNTIL EVERY HANDCUFF OF POVERTY IS UNLOCKED AND WORK-STARVED MEN WILL NO LONGER WALK THE STREETS IN SEARCH OF JOBS THAT DON'T EXIST. LET US BE DISSATISFIED UNTIL WRINKLED STOMACHS IN MISSISSIPPI ARE FILLED, UNTIL THE IDLE INDUSTRIES OF APPALACHIA ARE REVITALIZED AND UNTIL BROKEN LIVES IN SWELTERING GHETTOS ARE MENDED AND REMODELED. LET US BE DISSATISFIED UNTIL RACE BAITERS DISAPPEAR FROM THE POLITICAL ARENA: UNTIL THE WALLACES AND EASTLANDS TREMBLE AWAY INTO SILENCE; UNTIL BROTHERHOOD BECOMES MORE THAN A MEANINGLESS WORD IN AN OPENING PRAYER, BUT THE ORDER OF THE DAY ON EVERY LEGISLATIVE AGENDA. LET US BE DISSATISFIED UNTIL THE SACRED HALLS OF CONGRESS ARE FILLED WITH MEN WHO WILL DO JUSTLY, LOVE MERCY, AND WALK HUMBLY WITH THEIR GOD. LET US BE DISSATISFIED UNTIL MEN EVERYWHERE WILL BE EMBUED WITH A PASSION FOR JUSTICE, UNTIL THE LION AND THE LAMB WILL LIE DOWN TOGETHER AND EVERY MAN WILL SIT UNDER HIS OWN VINE AND FIG TREE AND NONE SHALL BE AFRAID.

THE ROAD AHEAD WILL NOT ALWAYS BE SMOOTH. THERE WILL STILL BE ROCKY PLACES OF FRUSTRATION AND MEANDERING POINTS OF BEWILDERMENT. THERE WILL BE INEVITABLE SETBACKS HERE AND THERE, AND SUNLIT PATHS OF HOPE WILL AT TIMES BE TRANSFORMED INTO DARK AND DESOLATE VALLEYS OF DESPAIR. OUR DREAMS WILL SOMETIMES BE SHATTERED AND OUR ETHERIAL HOPES BLASTED. WE MAY AGAIN, WITH TEAR DRENCHED EYES, HAVE TO STAND BEFORE THE BIER OF SOME COURAGEOUS CIVIL RIGHTS WORKER WHOSE LIFE WILL BE SNUFFED OUT BY THE DASTARDLY ACTIONS OF BLOODTHIRSTY MOBS. BUT DIFFICULT AND PAINFUL AS IT IS, WE MUST WALK ON IN THE DAYS AHEAD WITH AN AUDACIOUS FAITH IN THE FUTURE.

AND AS WE CONTINUE OUR CHARTERED COURSE, WE MAY GAIN

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