

STATEMENT OF JOHN LEWIS

July 1, 1964

I understand a New York newspaper has linked me today through inference with a new movement which espouses black nationalism and armed self defense. The group, I understand, is called The Organization of Afro-American Unity, and is headed by Malcolm X. I am completely surprised that a responsible newspaper would not contact me to confirm my membership in such a group, knowing the historical position of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and my often stated personal position with regard to nonviolence.

I have no connection with this group. I would like to reaffirm my philosophical adherence to nonviolence both as a means of protest and as a way of life. The SNCC believes today, as it has since its formation in 1960, in achieving an interracial democracy through peaceful protest.

In certain segments of the press serious efforts seem to be under way to discredit those organizations which are currently at work in the most difficult areas of the South. It would seem that the attention of these particular media might better be turned to discrediting those groups and individuals whose activities are a constant threat to those limited forces which labor in the interest of effective civil rights for all Americans.

JOHN LEWIS

given to: Jackson AP and UPI

Atlanta AP

Prettyman - NYC

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