

STATEMENT ON H. RAP BROWN

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, call upon all Americans who believe in the Constitution of the United States to defend the right of free speech now being denied to H. Rap Brown, Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Specifically, we demand that Attorney General Ramsey Clark stop the present persecution of Mr. Brown and secure his immediate release from prison.

Rap Brown is presently imprisoned by the federal government in Louisiana under bonds totalling \$65,000 and, when Louisiana is through with him, must be returned to Virginia to be held there without bond until he is turned over to authorities in Cambridge, Md., where bond of \$50,000 has already been demanded. Regardless of the complicated legal issues of his case, two facts are indisputable and unchallenged:

1. Mr. Brown, although he now faces criminal charges in two states, has not been tried on or found guilty of any of them. His imprisonment now, under exorbitant bonds, is a clear violation of the age-old principle that a man is presumed innocent until proven guilty, as well as the "excessive bail" provision of the Eighth Amendment to our Constitution.

2. His present imprisonment came about because he made a trip to California from New York City and made two speeches there. The government claims this violated the terms of a previous bond which had restricted him to the Southern District of New York. Brown's attorneys claim that his trip to California was to confer with them, which was allowed by the court in its travel restrictions. Regardless of who finally wins that argument in the courts, it is significant that there is not an implication that Brown was trying to escape the jurisdiction of the courts, that he had ever failed to appear when required to do so by any court, or that he had any intention of failing to do so. Under our constitutional system, there is only one purpose of a bond: to insure the appearance of a defendant when required.

Thus, the conclusion is inescapable that the government is making a special case of Rap Brown - that it wants to keep him in jail although he has been convicted of no crime, that it wants to keep him from speaking, and that it has violated the most basic tenets of our Bill of Rights to accomplish this.

This nation's black citizens are angry and have served notice that they will no longer tolerate the conditions under which they have lived for so long. The President's Commission on Civil Disorders, in its historic report, has stated clearly that recent uprisings in our city ghettos have occurred because of the racism of white America and the conditions under which ghetto residents live. Yet, despite the conclusions of the government's own commission, Mr. Brown's imprisonment coupled with recent arrest of other militant black spokesmen - gives notice that certain powerful forces in our government have made a decision to try to cope with urban unrest not by programs to improve people's lives but by the police power of the state - by jailing of some militant leaders and the intimidation of others.

Such a decision affects the future of us all. We who sign this statement are dedicated to correcting social injustice and building a better society. Our methods of work and programs differ. Some of us would agree with positions taken by Rap Brown, while others would not. But all of us agree profoundly that we have a vital stake in ending the persecution of this man.

As people in organizations committed to social change, we believe the goals we work for are crucially threatened when our government makes

a decision to cope with social problems by using its police power to jail its critics and crush its dissenters. We do not want to live in a country that handles its problems in this way.

Furthermore, as critics and dissenters ourselves, each of us knows that if one group of dissenters is silenced, no one is safe. Especially those of us who are white know that if the government jails and silences and crushes militant black spokesmen, it is only a matter of time until white critics of governmental policies will be treated in much the same way.

If there is anything that history teaches us, it is that those who sit silent while another's rights are violated inevitably come to one of two sad ends: either they ultimately compromise their own principles to survive in a police state, or they are eventually crushed themselves when it is too late to resist. Those who would protect their own freedom must do so by making their stand each day at that point where the present brunt of the attack is. Today the brunt of the attack on freedom in America is Ray Brown. We take our stand in resistance to the attack on his rights. We are convinced that at this moment our own future hangs on his fate.

We most urgently call on our fellow Americans who value their own freedom to join us in this resistance.

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Partial List of Signers

- Tom Gardner, Chairman, Southern Student Organizing Comm. (SSOC)
Laurence Guyot Jr., Chairman Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP)
Myles Horton, Director, Highland Center, Miss.
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., President, Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)
Floyd B. McKissick, National Director, Congress for Racial Equality (CORE)
Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, President, Southern Christian Educational Fund (SCEF)
Dr. John C. Bennet, President, Union Theological Seminary, N.Y.
Rev. Owen Brooks, Director, Delta Ministry, Miss.
Rev. Charles Cobb, Executive Director, Comm. for Racial Justice, United Church of Christ
Edward Cross, Secretary-Treasurer Local I47, Compressed Air, Free Air Workers AFL-CIO
Dave Dellinger, Chairman, National Mobilization Comm. to End the War in Vietnam (NMC)
Prof. Douglas F. Dowd, Dept. of Economics, Cornell University
Rev. Milton Galamison, Pastor, Siloam Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.
Father David Gracie, Episcopal Diocese, Philadelphia, Pa.
Prof. Donald Kalish, Chairman, Dept. of Philosophy, UCLA
Jack Pemberton, Executive Director, ACLU
William Pepper, Executive Director, National Conference for New Politics (NCNP)
Victor Rabinowitz, Chairman National Lawyer's Guild
Cleveland Robinson, President, Negro American Labor Council;
Secretary-Treasurer, District 65, Retail, Wholesale, & Dept. Store Workers AFL-CIO
Rev. J. Metz Rollins, Executive Director, National Council of Negro Churchmen
Bobby Seale, Chairman, Black Panthers for Self Defense
Steve Steve Schonberg, President, University Christian Movement
John Wilson, Chairman, National Black Anti-War Anti-Draft Union (NEAWADU)
Dagmar Wilson, Chairman, Women Strike for Peace

Stanley Wise, National Executive Secretary, Student Nonviolent
Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
Rev. George Woodard, Member of Executive Council of the Episcopal Church
Dr. Quentin D. Young, M.D., National Chairman, Medical Committee for
Human Rights
Prof. Howard Zinn, Dept. of Political Science, Boston University

For the National Steering Comm. of RESIST

Prof. Noam Chomsky, MIT, National Steering Comm. of RESIST
Prof. William Davidon, Haverford College, RESIST
Prof. Louis Kampf, MIT, RESIST
Paul Lauter, Antioch-Putney Graduate School, National Director of RESIST
Hans Koningsberger, New York
Rev. Richard Mumma, Presbyterian Ministry, Harvard University
Richard Ohman, Provost, Wesleyan University
Grace Paley, Sarah Lawrence College
Sandra Silverman, Brooklyn College, CUNY

Medical Committee for Human Rights
Southern African Comm., University Christian Movement

Donna Allen, National Director, National Committee to Abolish HUAC
Rev. William T. Baird, Executive Director, Chicago Committee to Defend
the Bill of Rights

Norma Becker, Coordinator, Fifth Ave. Peace Parade Comm.
Carl & Ann Braden, Executive Directors, SCEF
Anne M. Bennet (Mrs. John C. Bennet)
Tom Cornell, Catholic Peace Fellowship
Richard Criley, Secretary, Chicago Comm. to Defend the Bill of Rights
Jan Cramb, President, Vietnam Veterans Against the War
Dorothy Day, Catholic Worker
Barbara Flynn, Southern Regional Director, National Committee to Abolish HUAC
Mrs. Eleanor French
Paul Green, Steering Comm. Veterans for Peace in Vietnam
Allene Ford, Secretary, Missionary Personnel, Methodist Board of Missions
Ft. James Gorman, Chairman, Louiseville Peace Council
Tom Hayden
Florence Howe, Steering Comm. RESIST
Prof. Louis Kampf, Associate National Director RESIST
Leonard P. Liggio
Dave McRenolds, War Resisters League
Rev. Joseph Merchant, Chairman of Urban Staff, United Church of Christ
Linda Morse, Co-ordinator, Student Mobilization Committee
Robert Nemiroff
Rev. Sandy Ray, Corner-Stone Baptist Church, Brooklyn
Sandra Silverman, Steering Committee, RESIST
Dr. David Spain, Governing Council, Medical Committee for Human Rights
Mike Spiegel, National Interim Committee, SDS
Rev. John Stevens, Assist. Director, Urban Emphasis Program of the Episcopal
Church

Mrs Paul Sweezy
Rev. George Todd, Assoc. for Metropolitan Strategy Development
Abe Weisburd, Director, White Americans to Support Black Liberation
Cora Weiss
Javis Tynor, Chairman, DuBois Clubs of America
Mnsgr. Charles Owen Rice, Holy Rosary Church, Pittsburgh Pa.
Richard Solbol, Chief Staff Council, Lawyer's Constitutional Defense Comm.
Dr. Nathan Wright, Executive Director, Dept. of Urban Works, Episcopal
Diocese of Newark, Chairman, Newark Black Power Conference