

Southern Christian Leadership Conference  
**SCLC**

332 Auburn Ave., N.E., Atlanta, Ga. 30303

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

(1929-1968) - FOUNDER

RALPH D. ABERNATHY, *President*

Resurrection City  
Washington, D. C.

June, 1968

Dear Friends:

The savagely cheated poor have come to Washington to make Congress and the Administration face the persisting disgrace of poverty, racism and war. Some of the press with cynical delight have told us we have mismanaged Resurrection City but they neglect to tell the government it is mismanaging our society.

We have also come here because at Martin Luther King's bier we promised him we would fulfill his project - the Poor People's Campaign - and we promised his assassins and his enemies that Martin Luther King would not die.

The market place is filled with tokens of Martin Luther King; the mail is filled with fund appeals of many groups associating themselves with him.

SCLC, however, has not made any mail fund appeals because Martin Luther King was our founder, President and teacher. We could not write until we had honorably carried forward his work.

Even before we buried him in the dignity and majesty he merited we returned to Memphis and won a solid victory for the garbage workers in whose behalf he fell. Without pausing for breath we then transported thousands of America's desperate poor to Washington because no one else was inclined or prepared to assume this burden. We honestly concede that we stumbled under fatigue, sorrow and strain but we are here and no violence stains our path.

Dr. King admonished us to go to the nation's capital and to ignore those who would raise the spectre of failure. He said if no significant remedies resulted we would not have failed -- the government would have failed, because it has the resources and the power to abolish unemployment, discrimination and injustice.

Our presence has already forced hundreds of millions of dollars out of government agencies into the areas of squalor -- it has extended food programs to 1,000 counties previously excluded from relief measures. Yet, this is far from enough. Unemployment stalks the steaming ghettos, stirring wrath and bitterness. Reliable polls reveal an astounding 78% of Americans favor federal action to afford everyone a job. Yet,

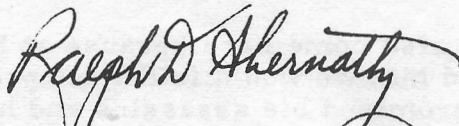
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Congress answers with a malevolent "no". We can force them to say "yes". The poverty of America is scandalous when the nation abounds with wealth. We are forced to remain here until we have reformed the character of the nation. It is more than our morality that is at stake. America cannot survive in a tempestuous world as a violence-prone nation or as a hypocritical giant.

We can become a proud people again if we stand fast for progress.

To keep constructive pressure unrelentingly applied we need your help. To the many who have already spontaneously given their support and expressed condolences we are grateful beyond expression. Your contributions will light up the darkness that has fallen over the land. This is a moment of opportunity as much as of despair. Please send a check today to fuel a revival of hope and redemption. Dr. King always counted on you. Among his last words were "Tell them I tried to feed the hungry, tell them I tried to clothe the naked". Will you join him and continue his noble work and life through support of his organization.

With sincerest good wishes,

  
RALPH D. ABERNATHY

Tax deductible contributions may be made to fund the educational and voter registration projects of SCLC. If tax deductibility is important to you, or will enable you to increase your contribution, you may make your check payable to SCL Foundation.

## **LAST MINUTE FLASH!**

### **Kindly read this first...**

The above letter was written to you before the Washington police violently demolished Resurrection City. In seizing and destroying this symbol of poverty, in jailing the poor -- men, women, and children -- not one constructive step towards a solution is involved. Therefore we shall stay. Others will return. Washington cannot abolish poverty by hiding it. More than ever your support is critical. Please read our full message, starting on the other side.

R. D. A.