

# POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN



WASHINGTON, D.C., SPRING 1968

The poor people of America will demand decent jobs and income in massive demonstrations in our nation's capital, Washington, D.C., this spring.

The Poor People's Campaign, starting in April, is being organized by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) with the support and participation of many local groups and individuals.

## WHO WILL BE IN THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN?

At the start, several thousand poor people will go to Washington. We will be young and old, jobless fathers, welfare mothers, farmers and laborers. We are Negroes, American Indians, Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, poor white people.

## WHERE DO THESE POOR PEOPLE LIVE?

All across the nation. SCLC is recruiting poor people in 10 big cities and five Southern states. Poor people in all other communities and cities are also invited to join the Campaign.

## DO YOU HAVE TO BE POOR TO BE IN THIS CAMPAIGN?

No. Most persons at the start of the Campaign in Washington will be poor, but other people from all walks of life must be prepared to take their place in the lines of this campaign.

## WHY ARE WE GOING TO WASHINGTON?

Washington is the center of government power, and the national government has the money and resources to end poverty and fight racism. But that government has failed to do this. Therefore the Poor People's Campaign will demand government reforms.

## WHAT WILL THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN DO IN WASHINGTON?

We will build powerful nonviolent demonstrations on the issues of jobs, income, welfare, health, housing, education, human rights. These massive demonstrations will be aimed at government centers of power, and they will be expanded if necessary. We must make the government face up to the fact of poverty and racism. In order to carry out our demonstrations, we will not reveal to the government in advance exactly what we plan to do and where we will demonstrate.

## WHAT WILL WE DEMAND?

We will present to the government a list of definite demands involving jobs, income, and a decent life for all poor people so that they will control their own destiny. This will cost billions of dollars, but the richest nation of all time can afford to spend this money if America is to avoid social disaster.

## WHAT IF THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOTHING?

We will stay until the government responds, building up the pressure for action by calling for thousands upon thousands of people, rich and poor, to come to Washington or stand up and be counted in demonstrations in their home communities.

## SOME NEEDS FOR THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

- Local support committees
- Discussions in churches and other community groups
- Recruitment of persons to go to Washington
- Planning demonstrations in your own community
- Letter-writing campaigns to Congressmen and others for action against poverty
- Publicity through leaflets, news releases, etc. in your area
- Fund raising for transportation to Washington, local offices, housing, office supplies and equipment, and other expenses
- Special services such as legal and medical aid, local transportation, baby-sitting, volunteer office work

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## POOR PEOPLE IN AMERICA

### Who are the poor?

The poorest Americans are 35 million persons who do not have enough money for a decent life. The government says they fall below the "poverty line," earning less than \$3,130 a year for a family of four, or \$1,540 for an individual.

### Why are people poor?

Poor people are kept in poverty because they are kept from power. We must create "Poor People's Power."

### What happens to poor people?

Poor people do not get decent jobs, decent incomes, decent housing, decent schools, decent health care, decent government, decent police. Poor people do not even get respect as human beings.

### What do poor people do?

Most poor American adults work hard every day but are not paid enough for a decent life for their families. Unemployment is a severe problem, especially among men, and the unemployment rate in many places, especially most big cities, is so high that there is a Great Depression. Seven million people are on welfare (mostly children, old people, the sick, and mothers unable to work). Less than 1 per cent of these people are able to work — if they get proper training.

### Rich people and poor people.

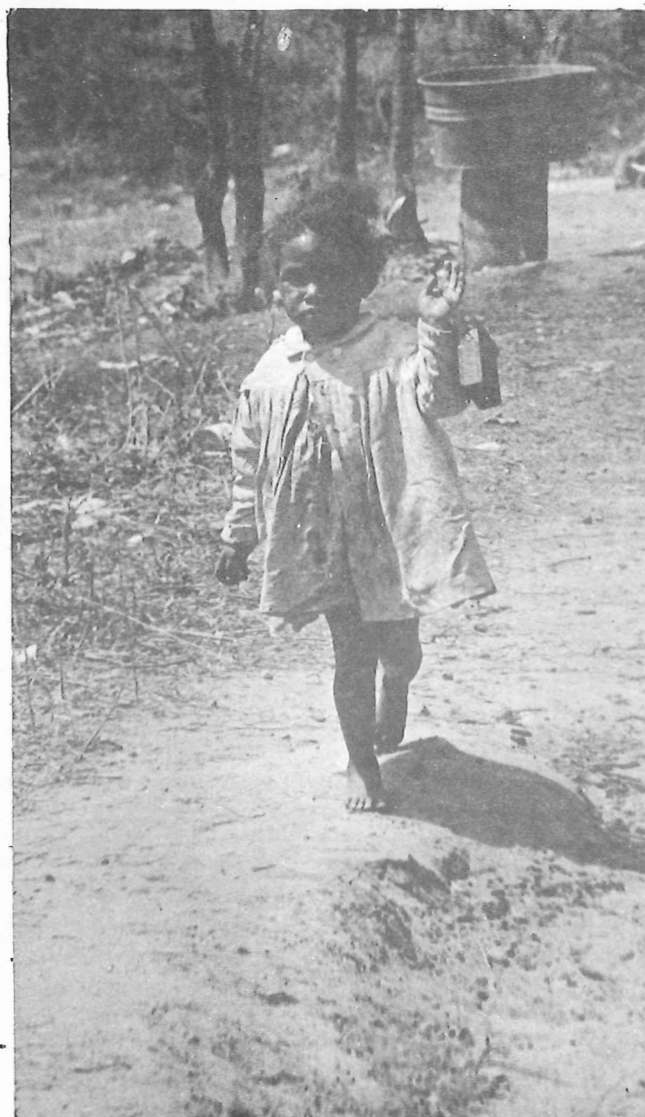
There is great contrast in the lives of rich and poor people in America. For example, a U.S. Congressman is paid nearly \$600 a week, but a Southern sharecropper's family sometimes earns less than \$600 a year. A maid in a big Northern city may earn \$50 a week, while her rich boss may get \$50 an hour.

### Can America end poverty?

Yes. Many nations that are poorer than rich America provide decent incomes and services for all poor people. America spends 10 times as much money on military power as it does on welfare. The government subsidizes big companies and farms, and gives tax favors to rich people, but punishes the poor. America spends more money in one month to kill in Vietnam than it spends in a year for the so-called "war on poverty."

# THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW!

*"POOR PEOPLE'S LIVES ARE DISRUPTED AND DISLOCATED EVERYDAY. WE WANT TO PUT A STOP TO THIS. POVERTY, RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION CAUSE FAMILIES TO BE KEPT APART, MEN TO BECOME DESPERATE, WOMEN TO LIVE IN FEAR, AND CHILDREN TO STARVE."* Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,



## HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

You or your local group are welcome to join the massive Poor People's Campaign. All Americans concerned about poverty can participate — rich and poor, black and white, young and old.

The campaign action starts in April, in Washington, D.C. A definite date will be announced soon.

But much work must be done NOW to prepare for this campaign.

If you want to work directly, you can help organize for the Campaign in your community.

If you want to go to Washington, you can begin to prepare yourself and others for this effort.

If you can not work actively, you can still be in the Poor People's Campaign by contributing financial aid or services. Our resources are very limited, and we need all possible help in printed materials, supplies, office space, transportation and many other expenses.

### PLEASE STAND UP FOR POOR PEOPLE BY CONTACTING:

Rev. Bernard Lafayette, Coordinator  
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