

SPEECH DELIVERED BY JAMES FORMAN TO THE BLACK CAUCUS OF NCNP CONVENTION ON
SEPTEMBER 2nd, 1967

Brothers and Sisters,

On July 12, 1967, Howard Moore, Jr., the law officer of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and myself left the United States to attend the International Seminar on Racism, Colonialism and Apartheid in Southern Africa held in Kitwe, Zambia sponsored by the United Nations. We were official observers to this conference with the right to speak on all agenda items. This we did.

The invitation to attend was not only extended to SNCC, but also to CORE, SCLC and the NAACP. These were considered Civil Rights organizations who were in touch with African-Americans in the United States and it was the understanding, correctly, that any successful fight against the triple hyenas of racism, colonialism and apartheid had to involve the masses of black people in the United States. For the United States is heavily involved, financially and militarily in Southern Africa. The invitation to these groups was especially significant since it was the first time in the history of the United Nations that Afro-American organizations had a chance to present the cause of black people in this country before the world body. We presented a paper called The Indivisible Nature of Racism, Colonialism and Apartheid. In the kits which will be passed out at the end of this general assembly, you will find that paper which we have mimeographed along with the lists of documents circulated at the conference. You may order these by writing to: Mr. E.S. Reddy, African Affairs Division, United Nations, New York, New York. I strongly urge every delegate at this conference to order this material. Not only is it current but also extremely valuable information if we are to better understand Colonialism, Racism and Apartheid in Southern Africa.

It was due primarily to the efforts of the Guinean delegation to the United Nations headed by Mr. Maroff and the Tanzanian delegation headed by Mr. Malechela that this invitation was extended. The original resolution only invited SCLC, CORE, and SNCC. However the American through its Ambassador to the United Nations, Arthur J. Goldberg, objected furiously to the exclusion of the NAACP and the Urban

League. He claimed that the African delegation, especially Tanzania and Guinea had no right to split the so-called Civil Rights movement as if it was united or even could be, given the ideological differences between organizations. The NAACP was later included as a delegate.

It is important to stress that an invitation was extended to all these groups, for at the Conference only we in SNCC appeared and presented a position paper. Representatives from SCLC and the NAACP were not in attendance, an insult to the Afro-Asian delegation. CORE did submit the names of four delegates and had planned to attend.

The CORE DELEGATION arrived at the very end of the conference, stating they were unable to make it earlier given the internal developments in the United States—namely the armed rebellions resulting from the massive police brutality and long history of the denial of the rights and degradation of black people in this country. They felt they should help give some articulation to the rebellions especially in the light of the vicious attacks made upon the masses of our brothers and sisters who fought and died in the streets of fifty-seven cities this summer. Even as we talk today, Whitney Young, is in Vietnam protected by the United States government and its soldiers in order to witness the mockery of so-called free elections in Vietnam. That this Negro consents to allows himself be used by the government is a disgrace to all black people but understandable when one realizes that the Urban League is backed by among others, the Rockefellers, the strongest capitalists in the world whose interest in the Chase Manhattan Bank and oil is well-known.

At the conference itself, because of SNICK's forthright position in opposition to the policies of the U.S. Government in Vietnam and South Africa many attempts were made to discredit us. We were informed by one delegate that he had been told by the United States delegation that SNCC was the only organization invited and that there were other Civil Rights groups that did not share our opinion.

The attempt to blunt the force of our arguments by lying was simply another form of treachery for which the United States Policy Makers are famous the world

over. After returning from the United Nations Conference on Racism, Apartheid and Colonialism I was invited to attend this conference. Upon reflection and consultation with my brothers and sisters in SNCC I decided to take the opportunity to report to a large a body as possible the finding and results of the Seminar.

Of greatest importance is the fact that the Liberation groups, especially the African National Congress, indicated to the entire Seminar that they were going to take up arms and fight the illegal regime in South Africa. They said they were not going to fight like our forefathers who threw spears against the white man's rifles. They are going to exchange automatic fire for automatic weapon fire. They have stated the struggle there will be long and bitter but they will win.

They will win and those of us in this room who are black talking about New Politics must have one major objective: We must help them win, even if this means that we must take up arms and die in the Southern African Liberation struggle. We cannot any longer be quiet and not show active concern in the face of the death of our brothers at the hands of the brutal white supremacist who rule South Africa and the other territories comprising Southern Africa, namely Mozambique, Angola, Rhodesia, South West Africa.

The Liberation Movements consider the entire Southern tier of Africa as one even though different colonial powers occupy and control various countries, the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique, the white minority that has declared Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Rhodesia, the Afrikaners in South Africa. Naturally there is an alliance between all the white Western Powers supporting these dictatorial white regimes and I will not cite details, but hope you will educate yourself to the nature of the facts.

There are wars of Liberation going on in all these areas and in the recent two weeks the African National Congress and Zimbabwe African People Union have decided on a massive direct armed revolutionary struggle against the governments of Rhodesia and South Africa. They have waited too long and too many of our people in these countries have died unnecessarily. Man has only one life and he

must choose between life and servitude, death or freedom.

Chairman Brown has said that violence is necessary and is as American as cherry pie. That is true. So are revolutions. Remember, this country led the way in breaking away from colonialism by armed revolutionary struggle, but it made the mistake of not insisting in the early stages of independence from colonial Britain that no country can really be free if it keeps a large segment of its population in slavery and allows the wealth to concentrate in a few hands. White America was unable to realize the potential discord of stating, on the one hand that all men are free and then forcing those of us who are black to a slave position on the other hand. The discord created by this dichotomy will exist so long as the United States remains an imperialist country sucking the life blood and the profits from people and countries all over the world in order to enjoy the highest standards of living of all mankind. We speak of standard of living in the mechanical sense, the industrial and technological sense; certainly not in the sense of human values, for here the United States is the low man on the totem pole.

Why am I at this conference? Why have I elected to say what I am saying at this time? There are three principal reasons. 1) When we returned from Africa we heard of the conference and some of the trouble the staff was having with some of the white liberals on its board. It became apparent to us that the young black militants who were coming from all over the country were being put unknowingly in a trick if certain facts about the liberal - labor leadership circle in this country was not made known.

We in SNCC and those in CORE have had our experience with the liberals and the moderate labor wing that believes in coalition politics as a dogma, even to the extent where the main exponents in the liberal - labor leadership circle will try to tell black militants there is no organic connection between the War in Vietnam and the so-called Civil Rights Movement in the United States.

We in SNCC have been the victims of their lies, their false propaganda, their attempts to destroy our organization, their misleading of the masses of people in

this country and we say no. No longer can we allow young black militants to assemble in the presence of these double crossing liberal - labor - coalition exponents, both Negro and white, without raising our voice in protest and without telling those who have not experienced what we have the truth about some of the activities of this syndrome, the liberal - labor leadership.

Failing to speak out and to inform our black brothers and our white allies who too are ignorant of the inner workings of this nefarious, undermining and Democratic party oriented liberal - labor leadership circle is in fact to retard the liberation of all black people around the world and especially here in the United States.

Make no mistake about it, while they have kept our attention on the internal problems resulting from race in this country they have been busy exporting the same line that the United States is good and that all Negroes in the United States simply want a fair shake at the cream of American society. That is a lie; there are those of us who are black who are bitterly opposed to the policies of the United States Government, both internally and internationally. We have a responsibility to inform our brothers and sisters of what has gone down. If we don't then we in fact become a reactionary force.

The second principle reason we are speaking today deals with the liberation of Southern Africa, the hardship of that struggle, and the imminent possibility of the United States sending troops to Southern Africa and especially to South Africa to fight on the side of the Vorster, the Afrikaners, the white Nazis of South Africa. There are more than 15000 American white Nationals in South Africa and millions of dollars invested in plants. Walter Reuther is supposedly to have said that the goose gets fatter no matter how much they cut off. The weakness in his analysis is that he fails to realize that General Motors and most other monopoly concerns in the United States are getting fat on the lives of black people in Africa and all over the world. For him and other so-called union leaders to only attack the problem of more wages for some, not all, American workers and to participate in the slaughter and murder of our people in South Africa is in fact to make

him an enemy of the people.

This participation, as an enemy of the people, occurs my friends because these unions are not taking the necessary action to halt the investment of United States capital, machinery and buildings in Southern Africa. They are in no sense of the word internationalist, but in fact reactionary people trying to make every American worker, except many of our black brothers, emerging and satisfied capitalist. In that sense they must be considered an enemy of the people, not to mention their manipulation within the United States, of which I shall speak later.

The third reason for speaking today flows from the first two: Namely, it is absurd to talk of a new form of politics, a New Conference on Politics, if in fact the lessons of history are going to be repeated -- the collaboration of young black militants with the liberal - labor white alliances and their Negro counterparts. Also, if there is to be any new brand politics, it cannot just be based on a peace movement designed to stop wars when they are full blown. But, in fact, the only new kind of positive politics that can emerge from this conference, so far as I am concerned, and I assure you I speak with the full weight of SNICK behind me -- there can be no new form of politics unless the people engaged in it are willing to actively support the armed Liberation of Southern Africa.

There must not only be resolutions demanding the withdrawal of American investments from South Africa and its nationals, but there must be a concerted effort to force this withdrawal. I assure you, my friends, White Americans are going to be killed and American plants sabotaged and destroyed in the South African war of Liberation! This is a fact, if they stay in South Africa.

We cannot wait until the cargo planes go with soldiers to protect the White American nationals and their dollars. We must begin mobilizing now to neutralize the possibility of the United States intervening as it did in the Congo, in Vietnam, in Santa Domingo, in Cuba!

We must make it very difficult for those companies that invest in South

Africa. In fact we must punish our enemies by whatever means necessary, including the use of force if they continue to help in the murder of our people.

I also assure you that the White Power structure does and is planning in a more deliberate manner to punish the voices that speak out against their imperialism. But it cannot silence all of us and those who live must solemnly swear they will carry on. Remember from the blood of martyrs flows the seeds of revolution.

In discussing, clarifying and speaking to the three points of why I accepted the decision to speak at this conference I shall of necessity be long: For those of us brought up in the Pepsi generation, the flashing neon lights as the best method of communication, the slogan filled press, massive headlines, two paragraphs under each, my presentation may be long. I urge you to have patience!

The best way to alert the black militant to the dangers of getting too involved with the liberal - labor leadership circle is to trace summarily or briefly certain events in SNCC at the Democratic National Convention at Atlantic City in August, 1964. This summary is only an outline of a longer work I am preparing which documents in greater details some of the assertions contained herein. I have chosen to call the paper: Profiles in Treachery: From Atlantic City to Black Power. I shall read only the first eight pages of the document and then proceed to a discussion of the second point -- the necessity to support the revolutionary armed struggle in Southern Africa.

PROFILES IN TREACHERY FROM ATLANTIC CITY TO BLACK POWER

At the Atlantic City Democratic Convention in August, 1964, SNCC demonstrated it not only sought political power in the national arena, but that it also had power and the capacity to use it. The small group of students who once cooperated

with the Justice Department in obtaining information about voter discrimination had become a determined, greatly enlarged, organized political force opposed to the policies of the Democratic Party.

We were alienated from the mainstream of American values, rejected them, sought power, not for ourselves, but for the very poor people with whom we had been working for four years. This drive for power for poor people became apparent and a threat to the old-style liberal hooked on the Democratic Party. It signaled danger to the officials of the Democratic Party, including and especially, President Lyndon Baines Johnson and Vice-Presidential Hopeful Hubert Humphery. It signaled Danger, Red to others who could not control us and enlist our energies in their compromising so-called coalition efforts, a great deal of which rested on attitudes about the cold war and its implications.

The power base operating for SNCC at Atlantic City not only involved the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and its constituents. It also had the political and moral support of many students, churchmen, radicals, old and new Americans moved to action by indignation over the blantant denial of the right to vote and overt police brutality rampant in the South.

As SNCC forged a new coalition of these forces and brought it to bear at Atlantic City, it disrupted the old and usual arrangements between the officials of the Democratic Party and the white-dominated liberal - labor leadership circles. If this new emerging political force led by SNCC had been allowed to further strengthen itself, its influence in the State of Mississippi and other parts of the country would have naturally further weakened the influence of the old-time brokers between the masses of black people and the Democratic Party.

Therefore, the destruction and the neutralizing of the power of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee after the Atlantic City Challenge became a must for the Democratic Party, the political party in control of the United States Government.

The disruption by SNCC and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at Atlan-

tic City was in and of itself enough to warrant the above conclusion. But immediately after this convention, however, SNCC began to plan a Black Belt Summer Project for 1965 that would extend from the Tidewater of Virginia to East Texas. It hoped to build a record of discrimination in the Democratic Party as well as develop counter political institutions. It had planned that by 1968 not only would there be one Freedom Democratic Party, but independent political units throughout the Black Belt South, and pockets of Black Power in the North. It sought to further confront the Democratic Party with the contradictions between the resolution it passed at the 1964 convention concerning discrimination in State Parties and the realities of racism that would continue in Black Belt politics far beyond 1968. Also following the Atlantic City Challenge, in an effort to develop ties with African countries, SNCC sponsored a delegation of ten people to Guinea, one of the few remaining nonaligned countries in Africa.

The government of Guinea realized we considered this visit extremely important, for our delegation included our Chairman, John Lewis, Bob Moses and his wife, Dona; Julian Bond, Communications Director, now a representative in the Georgia House of Representatives; Ruby Doris Robinson, currently Executive Secretary; William Hansen, then project director of Arkansas; Donald Harris, project director of Southwest Georgia; Prathia Hall, active for many years in SNCC; Matthew Jones, spokesman for the SNCC Freedom Singers; and myself. We were afforded the privileges of visiting heads of state and had informal and formal talks with Sekou Toure, the President of Guinea. News of our visit, along with that of Harry Belafonte's spread throughout Africa. We created goodwill in many parts of Africa. John Lewis and Donald Harris remained in Africa for two more months.

This effort to further internationalize our struggle obviously caused the United States Government and its CIA much alarm, coming on the heels of the nationwide protest around the summer of 1964. Given all the efforts of the National Student Association to align African students with American's foreign policy -- it takes no genius to deduce that our presence embarrassed the United States government.

It was so concerned that one of its control agencies, the United States Information Agency, some time in 1965, put out the first issue of TOPIC, a magazine distributed exclusively in Africa. It showed pictures of Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer and Bob Moses' winning representation for Mississippi Negroes at the Democratic National Convention. Internally in the United States newspapers continued the hatchet job on Guinea, trying to frighten and discredit us by saying we associated with the left-wing government of Sekou Toure.

Our trip to Africa almost coincided with Malcolm X's trips. John Lewis and Donald Harris even talked to him in the Nairobi airport. So alarmed was the government about the ground swell of radical blacks going to Africa, it decided to send James Farmer of CORE there. He was supposedly representing the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa.

Two months after Atlantic City, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, backed by the support of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, planned a legal challenge against the five Mississippi congressmen. The challenge was based on the undisputable grounds that the Mississippi Congressmen had been illegally elected due to the denial of the vote to Mississippi blacks. The United States Justice Department had already proved the case for the Mississippi blacks in its many voting suits. But the U.S. Governmental apparatus and big business had no intention of letting some crazy niggers from the MFDP and SNCC push through to its logical conclusions the naked facts created out of the struggle to get Mississippi blacks the right to vote. Two years later, though, the same honorable bunch of southern crackers and northern Republican would unseat Adam Clayton Powell on less grounds and some of them would even admit that racism played a part in his ouster.

If the white-dominated liberal - labor leadership circles were angry with SNCC and the MFDP during the Atlantic City Convention challenge -- they were horrified and appalled during the Congressional Challenge. For no longer was Joseph Rauh the legal counsel for the MFDP -- but who -- Arthur Kinoy, William Kunstler, Morty Stavis. They had the help of many other lawyers who often worked with the

National Lawyers Guild. This was indeed the time to fight, to destroy SNCC. It no longer could be saved. It had been taken over. Nothing it could do would ever be good -- not within the framework of the cold war psychology by which the white - dominated liberal - labor circle moved.

The power of SNCC became more dangerous with the election of Julian Bond in September 1965 to the Georgia Legislature. Julian was an officer of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. He endorsed and never relented in his support of SNCC's opposition and statement against the war in Vietnam. These factors, linked with the dinner by African delegates at the United Nations in honor of Julian, were enough to upset Lyndon Baines Johnson and the United States Power Structure, for now these fools who belonged to ten percent of the population were further and more effectively dealing with the external policies of the United States. This most definitely could not be tolerated. One ambassador told me he had received several calls from the U.S. Mission saying this dinner was an interference in the internal affairs of the United States.

Within the Democratic Party structure, it was known that many people in SNCC were urging that Julian's election be seen as a new model for political action in the Deep South. Given the recent Supreme Court decision on reapportionment -- the One Man, One Vote decision -- soon there would be enclaves of newly created black Assembly Districts, especially in the South, but also throughout the country. These forces argued that SNCC should consider itself as a political party and run candidates in the name of SNCC who would use their election as a radical base from which to speak and act. Although Julian was a State Assemblyman, he had power within the City of Atlanta and throughout the country. When he spoke in the public arena, he was heard. This situation could be multiplied.

Some of us argued for the necessity to move quickly into the newly created Assembly District in the Deep South before the Democratic Party established political machines as it had done in the North. At first Julian was the only elected Assemblyman who had a political organization backing him -- SNCC. That is not to say the Democratic Party did not aid the other candidates; it did. But

that aid and support at first was not entrenched as it is becoming. The candidates themselves did not have the type of machines that politicians have after long years of service. They could not muster the type of support and manpower that SNCC could muster for Julian. The effectiveness of SNCC had to be minimized, curtailed. It would take more effort to do this in the South, but it could be done...

All of a sudden there appeared a triple-barrel shot gun with which to shoot at SNCC:

Lowndes County: The year of the Black Panther.

Boom!

Coup in SNCC: Lewis and Forman ousted.

Boom! Boom!

Black Power!

Boom! Boom! Boom! Zoom! And away we go!

The Vietnam single-shot repeater that we were no longer a Civil Rights organization and that we should not worry about Vietnam was not sufficient. One could not effectively destroy SNCC with this charge, although many of the so-called peace people at first told us that we should leave peace to them and not confuse the two issues. After all there was no relationship between peace and civil rights. One could separate them, for there are people in the coalition who will go with us on Civil Rights but not to attacking the Administration on Vietnam. We need allies in the Civil Rights movement. Don't confuse the issues.

By April 1966 the very idea that blacks in Alabama and Lowndes County would advantageously use the state law that said any group of people could organize a convention and form a separate political party -- this was repugnant even to some members of the New York Times editorial staff. The actions of SNCC were in reckless disregard for the votes of Negroes who have "waited" years to get them. This flagrant disregard for the two-party process is abominable. Why that band of Civil Rights renegades called SNCC even ruined the chances of Richmond Flowers to be governor!

Following the Kingston Spring staff meeting in May 1966, the coup in SNCC was

manufactured in the press, deliberately to confuse people. Given to look for intrigue and double deals, the press acted as if there could be no orderly election or even a resignation in SNCC. No, there must be a coup with sinister, black militant overtones. The defeated Forman was in hiding, hobbling along with swollen ankles, trying to support the Younger Howard clique to curry a few remaining crumbs from the table, according to the New York Times and the Washington Post.

On the Mississippi-Meridith March in June 1966 SNCC raised the cry: Black Power! Power for black people -- Black Power. But that meaning carried with it an assumption that some white power must move over and give way. Two objects cannot occupy the same place at the same time. Since blacks are struggling for power, of necessity it means that whites will lose out. That is the danger of the slogan.

The cry of Black Power has so galvanized public opinion in segments of the black community that many blacks are now viewing their lives differently. A new sense of hope has been infused into many powerless people.

In the ghettos and cities of the North, the Democratic Party stands to lose by the widespread use of the slogan Black Power. It must react to destroy the promoters of the slogan, since we urge independent political action and opposition to the war in Vietnam as a necessary ingredient of Black Power. That is why Hubert Humphrey flew to Los Angeles. That is why he said we must support the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in its cause of integration. That is the reason.

The Democratic Party more than any other group in this country is fully aware of the explosive potential of enclaves of blacks in this country organizing themselves into independent political units outside of its control and even outside of the control of the white-dominated liberal - labor alliance which is integral to the Democratic Party. Not to understand this is to miss the boat.

Even more important, the concept of Black Power divides, forces a link up in the black community on class issues. No longer can people talking about Civil

Rights and Human Rights go around and say all Negroes want the same thing. We are on different lanes going down the same highway, but we are heading for the same city, the Mainstream of American Society. That is a lie

Differences between Civil Rights Organizations and the conflict with the white-dominated liberal-labor leadership circle must be clarified, for the evidence indicates that we in SNCC have too long been silent in the face of destruction to our organization and its impact in this country and abroad by some of the same people with whom we worked.

On the other hand, it should be clear from my preceding analysis that I believe the United States Government will try to neutralize, crush, destroy or kill any opposition it feels dangerous to the preservation of the status quo, the continued economic and political control by a few people in this country. It has at its disposal many agencies by which to do this, the CIA being just one of them. It has, for example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Information Agency, the Internal Revenue Service, a network of state and local police agencies, to mention only a few.

It also has the cooperation of the white-dominated liberal - labor leadership alliance and a host of Negro leaders, so-called, who curry favor with the White House and their white liberal - labor allies.

In order to destroy or neutralize the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and thereby weaken or kill the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, the United States Government enlisted the aid of this white liberal - labor leadership alliance.

Concerning the second point -- the Armed Liberation of Southern Africa, the hardships of that struggle and the imminent possibility of the United States intervention -- SNCC has already launched an appeal contained in the Message from

Chairman H. Rap Brown to black communities throughout the United States. There is nothing else to say on this point except that his appeal must be implemented, reproduced and distributed widely especially among grammar and high school students. It remains for all those here present to implement this appeal.

Concerning the third point and this is the most important for this conference, there can be no new kind of politics that does not recognize and support the legitimacy of armed revolutionary struggle in Southern Africa. It is now necessary to talk about the nature of the leadership of oppressed people. Black people in the United States have undergone the worst form of oppression for the longest time known to mankind, in so far as I am concerned. We are a people who have been ruptured from our native continent and dispersed throughout Latin America, the Caribbean and the United States. It is us who have built the great foundations of modern western technological society. This is a fact and cannot be refuted. Paris which is indeed a beautiful city has been able to survive because of the exploitation of our brothers labors in Africa. England would certainly not enjoy the position of wealth that it has if it had not been for the colonies she directly controlled and still controls through neocolonialism. West Germany today is building a new empire through the export of capital and machinery through the world, but let us not forget that Germany had control for a long time of Tanganyika.

I hardly need to talk about the exploited labor of all us who are black and who tilled the fields without pay while the white man reinvested the capital from our labor.

Therefore, even today, here in the United States we are the lowest class on the economic ladder. We suffer the most from racism. What does this mean? This means that we and we alone have the responsibility to wage our own war of liberation as we see fit to do that and no one who has not suffered as we have has the right to dictate to us the forms of our struggle. That is not to say we cannot

listen to suggestions and advice, but those of us who will pay with our lives for our liberation must insist upon the right to determine the manner in which we will fight.

For instance, a hue and cry when up over the concept of Black Power, and the white press and the liberal whites were horrified. They were horrified along with the Democratic Party for the upsurge of Black Power meant the loss of white power and that meant a loss of privilege and exploitation by those who would profit from our labors and our efforts.

What I am saying brothers and sisters is that you must realize that this is not to deny the long-standing oppression of the Puerto Ricans, the Mexican Americans, the Indians. But no group but we as the most exploited and most oppressed group in the United States must assume the leadership and give direction to the forms of our struggle. This is our right. This is our responsibility and anyone who does not like it can go to hell.

No group of people in the United States except perhaps the American Indians, have had to suffer the degrading effects of racism, the total twisting of the personalities as we have. Even the so-called white progressive and radical is still white and cannot understand fully the impact of racism upon us. He may understand the nature of the class struggle and he may well want to change the system that produces racism. We welcome his help. But he has not experienced the racism we have. He has not had to struggle with all its subtleties day in and day out. And, therefore, for the black militant to abdicate his leadership is to betray a historical role he has to perform. That does not mean the black militant does not look for allies. The mere fact that we are here at this conference gives the lie to the fact that we black militants believe that we can change the system by ourselves, but we must give leadership to the nature of our struggle.

There are trade unions and other organizations all over the country, supposedly working for the betterment of man, yet the leadership of all these unions

and many other organizations is primarily white and even in some trade unions there is blatant discrimination. So far as I am concerned there is only one way to break the stranglehold of conservative union leadership and that is for black men and women who are workers to form black caucuses and demand that they have positions of leadership, for it is the leadership of these unions which is extremely reactionary and conservative and not the people who must work by their hands.

Let us look at this conference. This is a conference on new politics and one prominent board member has already withdrawn his support because the staff understood the implication of getting poor blacks, poor whites, but especially those blacks who have paid in tears and sweat and bloodshed to bring the revolutionary movement in the United States to the point where it is. This board member, I am told, complained because this conference was going to be most likely all black and represented by very poor people.

There is the catcher, my brothers and sisters: There can be no new concept of politics, no new coalitions unless those of us who are the most disposed assume leadership and give direction to that new form of politics. If this does not happen we are going to see the same old liberal - labor treachery of very rich white folks and Democratic Party oriented whites and Negroes trying to determine what they can do for us. The best thing that anyone white can do for us is merely to support that for which we call. If he cannot do this, then we should not despair but tell him to go on his merry way and not get in our path for we shall liberate him whether he wants it or not.

In this connection I should like to say something about our organization which has come under severe attack. Why have we been able to withstand these attacks and continue on our goal of fundamentally changing the system of the United States. There are many reasons, but primarily the leadership has always been in the hands of black. Since October 1961 the organization SNICK and I speak from experience, has always insisted that its leadership had to be black and that whites were wel-

come to assist in our struggle. It has always been the policy of our organization that we make the policy. This is our position. These are our programs. If you wish to help, fine. If you don't, then we will find support somewhere.

History will bear out the fact that SNCC has played a vanguard role in giving direction to white militants throughout this country. We must continue to do this and the circle of influence must be broadened. We must say to all our black brothers, assume leadership.

But there are two types of leadership: Reactionary and Revolutionary. We are talking about revolutionary leadership and that only comes when people are committed to changing the system of economics and the resulting political structures that have kept us in bondage these many years. This is fact brothers and sisters, and we must not forget it. We must assume leadership in a revolutionary fashion. We must not have black leadership that is striving to make black men capitalist like our exploiters.

Any leadership that does not recognize the legitimacy of revolutionary armed struggle in Southern Africa, inside and outside the United States, is a reactionary leadership and must be replaced.

The second factor which has kept us on a revolutionary path is our attitude about money, not to mention our hard work and dedication. We have always talked against the American value of making money and we instituted within our own organization that people should work for need. Need varies, but certainly we know when need goes to the state of luxury. We decided that it was important to work for need for when people began making money they are apt to lose their militancy and they get vested interest in making their money. We ask you a very simple question: How can a labor leader who is making \$30,000, \$50,000 and \$100,000 a year really be concerned about the welfare of workers. It is absolutely impossible for him to keep his revolutionary spirit and he has in fact lost it if he accepts this kind of salary, by definition. One of the reasons people cannot understand SNCC is because they are not poor as we are and have not suffered with poor people. That was the

problem at Atlantic City. There was a psychological gap based on income and social position between Hubert Humphery, Bayard Ruskin, Martin Luther King, Joseph Rauh on the one hand and Bob Moses, Fannie Lou Hamer, E.W. Steptoe, Unita Blackwell on the other hand.

There is only one thing the man can do to us in SNCC, kill us. We have accepted the possibility of death, for being killed is inherent in taking revolutionary positions. Once a militant loses his fear of death, all these other press attacks and misunderstandings are not very relevant. Even in accepting our death or Freedom we have tried to prepare a host of other people to carry forth the struggle.

May I for a moment just recall that this speech is being given in my home town, Chicago. Here I grew up after I left the farm in Mississippi. Here I had to physically fight white people on 61st street in order to have the right to cross South Park and Collage Grove. Here a cracker put a gun in the back of my neck at the age of sixteen and told me he was from Mississippi and that he was going to kill me. Here I used to have parlor discussions in the early and late fifties, discussions in the barber shops, on the streets and all the brothers were saying that we as niggers can't stick together. I finally got tired of talking believing that it was necessary for us to prove to the masses of people that black people could do something. The question then arises where: The sharpest contradictions in the United States in 1960 rested in the southern part of this country. There our people did not have the right to vote and the right to use public accommodations. It was also in the south that we began to see models of young black students sticking together, protesting, using nonviolence as a technique, very few as a way of life. Their early struggle has often been misunderstood by the brothers in the big cities who believed in self defense but only in their living room. They were not on the streets actively participating at that time. If SNCC has contributed nothing else to the cause of the black man's struggle -- it certainly has forged a consciousness in all black people that we as a people can do something about our condition and if

we don't no one else will. Therefore the technical destruction of SNICK is irrelevant for too many brothers have taken up the cry: Freedom or Death. If all the current activists in SNCC are killed, we will die knowing that we have moved history ahead a few steps. We do not despair or fear the future. Young people we know will not turn back in their quest for total liberation of all black people around the world.

Thank you!