

# BLACK POWER



**SNCC Speaks for Itself**

**a collection of statements and interviews**



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# THE BASIS OF BLACK POWER

(Following are excerpts from a working paper prepared by members of S N C C in Winter 1965-66; according to the N Y Times of 5 August 1966, from which this is taken, the working paper serves as the basis for S N C C 's 'black power' philosophy.)

The myth that the Negro is somehow incapable of liberating himself, is lazy, etc., came out of the American experience. In the books that children read, whites are always 'good' (good symbols are white), blacks are 'evil' or seen as savages in movies, their language is referred to as a 'dialect', and black people in this country are supposedly descended from savages.

Any white person who comes into the movement has these concepts in his mind about black people, if only subconsciously. He can not escape them because the whole society has geared his subconscious in that direction.

Miss America coming from Mississippi has a chance to represent all of America, but a black person from either Mississippi or New York will never represent America. Thus the white people coming into the movement cannot relate to the black experience, cannot relate to the word 'black', cannot relate to the 'nitty gritty', cannot relate to the experience that brought such a word into existence, cannot relate to chitterlings, hog's head cheese, pig feet, ham-hocks, and cannot relate to slavery, because these things are not a part of their experience. They also cannot relate to the black religious experience, nor to the black church, unless, of course, this church has taken on white manifestations.

## WHITE POWER

Negroes in this country have never been allowed to organize themselves because of white interference. As a result of this, the stereotype has been reinforced that blacks cannot organize themselves. The white psychology that blacks have to be watched, also reinforces this stereotype. Blacks, in fact, feel intimidated by the presence of whites, because of their knowledge of the power that whites have over their lives. One white person can come into a meeting of black people and change the complexion of that meeting, whereas one black person would not change the complexion of that meeting unless he was an obvious Uncle Tom. People would immediately start talking about 'brotherhood', 'love', etc.; race would not be discussed.

If people must express themselves freely, there has to be a climate in which they can do this. If blacks feel intimidated by whites, then they are not liable to vent the rage that they feel about whites in the presence of whites -- especially not the black people whom we are trying to organize, i.e., the broad masses of black people. A climate has to be created whereby blacks can express themselves. The reason that whites must be excluded is not that one is anti-white, but because the effects that one is trying to achieve cannot succeed because whites have an intimidating effect. Oftimes the intimidating effect is in direct proportion to the amount of degradation that black people have suffered at the hands of white people.

## ROLES OF WHITES AND BLACKS

It must be offered that white people who desire change in this country should go where that problem (racism) is most manifest. The problem is not in the black community. The white people should go into white communities where the whites have created power for the express purpose of denying blacks human dignity and self-determination. Whites, who come into the black community with ideas of change seem to want to absolve the power structure of its responsibility for what it is doing, and saying that change can only come through black unity, which is the worst kind of paternalism. This is not to say that whites have not had an important role in the movement. In the case of Mississippi, their role was very key in that they helped give blacks the right to organize, but that role is now over, and it should be.

People now have the right to picket, the right to give out leaflets, the right to vote, the right to demonstrate, the right to print.

These things which revolve around the right to organize have been accomplished mainly because of the entrance of white people into Mississippi, in the summer of 1964. Since these goals have now been accomplished, whites' role in the movement has now ended. What does it mean if black people, once having the right to organize, are not allowed to organize themselves? It means that blacks' ideas about inferiority are being reinforced. Shouldn't people be able to organize themselves? Blacks should be given this right. Further, white participation means in the eyes of the black community that whites are the 'brains' behind the movement, and that blacks cannot function without whites. This only serves to perpetuate existing attitudes within the existing society, i.e. blacks are 'dumb,' 'unable to take care of business', etc. Whites are 'smart', the 'brains' behind the whole thing.

How do blacks relate to other blacks as such? How do we react to Willie Mays as against Mickey Mantle? What is our response to Mays hitting a home run against Mantle performing the same deed? One has to come to the conclusion that it is because of black participation in baseball. Negroes still identify with the Dodgers because of Jackie Robinson's efforts with the Dodgers. Negroes would instinctively champion all-black teams if they opposed all-white or predominantly white teams. The same principle operates for the movement as it does for baseball: a mystique must be created whereby Negroes can identify with the movement.

Thus an all-black project is needed in order for the people to free themselves. This has to exist from the beginning. This relates to what can be called 'coalition politics'. There is no doubt in our minds that some whites are just as disgusted with this system as we are. But it is meaningless to talk about coalition if there is no one to align ourselves with, because of the lack of organization in the white communities. There can be no talk of 'hooking up' unless black people organize blacks and white people organize whites. If these conditions are met, then perhaps at some later date -- and if we are going in the same direction -- talks about exchange of personnel, coalition, and other meaningful alliances can be discussed.

In the beginning of the movement, we had fallen into a trap whereby we thought that our problems revolved around the right to eat at certain lunch counters or the right to vote, or to organize our communities. We have seen, however, that the problem is much deeper. The problem of this country, as we had seen it, concerned all blacks and all whites and therefore if decisions were left to the young people, then solutions would be arrived at. But this negates the history of black people and whites. We have dealt stringently with the problem of 'Uncle Tom', but we have not yet gotten around to Simon Legree. We must ask ourselves, Who is the real villain -- Uncle Tom or Simon Legree? Everybody knows Uncle Tom, but who knows Simon Legree? So what we have now in S N C C is a closed society, a clique. Black people cannot relate to S N C C because of its unrealistic, nonracial atmosphere; denying their experiences of America as a racist society. In contrast, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Martin Luther King, Jr., has a staff that at least maintains a black facade. The front office is virtually all black, but nobody accuses S C L C of being racist.

If we are to proceed toward true liberation, we must cut ourselves off from white people. We must form our own institutions, credit unions, co-ops, political parties, write our own histories.

To proceed further, let us make some comparisons between the Black Movement of the early 1900's and the movement of the 1960's -- i.e. compare the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People with S N C C. Whites subverted the Niagara movement (the forerunner of the N A A C P) which, at the outset, was an all-black movement. The name of the new organization was also very revealing, in that it pre-supposed blacks have to be advanced to the level of whites. We are now aware that the N A A C P has grown reactionary, is controlled by the black power structure itself, and stands as one of the main roadblocks to black freedom. S N C C, by allowing the whites to remain in the organization, can have its efforts subverted in the same manner, i.e. through having them play important roles such as community organizers, etc. Indigenous leadership cannot be built with whites in the positions they now hold.

These facts do not mean that whites cannot help. They can participate on a voluntary basis. We can contract work out to them, but in no way can they participate on a policy-making level.

## BLACK SELF-DETERMINATION

The charge may be made that we are 'racists', but whites who are sensitive to our problems will realize that we must determine our own destiny.

In an attempt to find a solution to our dilemma, we propose that our organization (S N C C) should be black-staffed, black-controlled, and black-financed. We do not want to fall into a similar dilemma that other civil rights organizations have fallen into. If we continue to rely upon white financial support we will find ourselves entwined in

the tentacles of the white power complex that controls this country. It is also important that a black organization (devoid of cultism) be projected to our people so that it can be demonstrated that such organizations are viable.

More and more we see black people in this country being used as a tool of the white liberal establishment. Liberal whites have not begun to address themselves to the real problem of black people in this country -- witness their bewilderment, fear, and anxiety when nationalism is mentioned concerning black people. An analysis of the white liberal's reaction to the word 'nationalism' alone reveals a very meaningful attitude of whites of any ideological persuasion toward blacks in this country. It means previous solutions to black problems in this country have been made in the interests of those whites dealing with these problems and not in the best interests of black people in this country. Whites can only subvert our true search and struggle for self-determination, self-identification, and liberation in this country. Reevaluation of the white and black roles must NOW take place so that whites no longer designate roles that black people play but rather black people define white people's roles.

Too long have we allowed white people to interpret the importance and meaning of the cultural aspects of our society. We have allowed them to tell us what was good about our Afro-American music, art, and literature. How many black critics do we have on the 'jazz' scene? How can a white person who is not part of the black psyche (except in the oppressor's role) interpret the meaning of the blues to us who are manifestations of the songs themselves?

It must be pointed out that on whatever level of contact blacks and whites come together, that meeting or confrontation is not on the level of the blacks but always on the level of the whites. This only means that our everyday contact with whites is a reinforcement of the myth of white supremacy. Whites are the ones who must try to raise themselves to our humanistic level. We are not, after all, the ones who are responsible for a genocidal war in Vietnam; we are not the ones who are responsible for neocolonialism in Africa and Latin America; we are not the ones who held a people in animalistic bondage over 400 years. We reject the American dream as defined by white people and must work to construct an American reality defined by Afro-Americans.

#### WHITE RADICALS

One of the criticisms of white militants and radicals is that when we view the masses of white people we view the over-all reality of America, we view the racism, the bigotry, and the distortion of personality, we view man's inhumanity to man; we view in reality 180 million racists. The sensitive white intellectual and radical who is fighting to bring about change is conscious of this fact, but does not have the courage to admit this. When he admits this reality, then he must also admit his involvement because he is a part of the collective white America. It is only to the extent that he recognizes this that he will be able to change this reality.

Another common concern is, how does the white radical view the black community, and how does he view the poor white community, in terms of organizing? So far, we have found that most white radicals have sought to escape the horrible reality of America by going into the black community and attempting to organize black people while neglecting the organization of their own people's racist communities. How can one clean up someone else's yard when one's own yard is untidy? Again we feel that SNCC and the civil rights movement in general is in many aspects similar to the anticolonial situations in the African and Asian countries. We have the whites in the movement corresponding to the white civil servants and missionaries in the colonial countries who have worked with the colonial people for a long period of time and have developed a paternalistic attitude toward them. The reality of the colonial people taking over their own lives and controlling their own destiny must be faced. Having to move aside and letting the natural process of growth and development take place must be faced.

These views should not be equated with outside influence or outside agitation but should be viewed as the natural process of growth and development within a movement; so that the move by the black militants and SNCC in this direction should be viewed as a turn toward self-determination.

It is very ironic and curious that aware whites in this country can champion anticolonialism in other countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, but when black people move toward similar goals of self-determination in this country they are viewed as racists and anti-white by these same progressive whites. In proceeding further, it can be said that this attitude derives from the overall point of view of the white psyche as it concerns the black people. This attitude stems from the era of the slave revolts when every white man was a potential deputy or sheriff or guardian of the state. Because when black people got together among themselves to work out their problems, it becomes a threat to white people, because such meetings were potential slave revolts.

It can be maintained that this attitude or way of thinking has perpetuated itself to this current period and that it is part of the psyche of white people in this country whatever their political persuasion might be. It is part of the white fear-guilt complex resulting from the slave revolts. There have been examples of whites who stated that they can deal with black fellows on an individual basis but become threatened or menaced by the presence of groups of blacks. It can be maintained that this attitude is held by the majority of progressive whites in this country.

### BLACK IDENTITY

A thorough re-examination must be made by black people concerning the contributions that we have made in shaping this country. If this re-examination and re-evaluation is not made, and black people are not given their proper due and respect, then the antagonisms and contradictions are going to become more and more glaring, more and more intense, until a national explosion may result.

When people attempt to move from these conclusions it would be faulty reasoning to say they are ordered by racism, because, in this country and in the West, racism has functioned as a type of white nationalism when dealing with black people. We all know the habit that this has created throughout the world and particularly among nonwhite people in this country.

Therefore any re-evaluation that we must make will, for the most part, deal with identification. Who are black people, what are black people, what is their relationship to America and the world?

It must be repeated that the whole myth of 'Negro citizenship', perpetuated by the white elite, has confused the thinking of radical and progressive blacks and whites in this country. The broad masses of black people react to American society in the same manner as colonial peoples react to the West in Africa, and Latin America, and had the same relationship -- that of the colonized toward the colonizer.

## STATEMENT BY STOKELY CARMICHAEL

(The following statement was given to the National Guardian and appeared in their issue of 25 June 1966.)

The goal of our (SNCC's) program is indeed 'black power'. What does this mean? It means, for example, that in Lowndes County if a Negro is elected tax assessor, he will be able to collect and channel funds for the building of better roads and schools -- things which determine the quality of daily life. If elected sheriff, he can end police brutality. It means, ultimately, the freeing of colonies -- which is what the ghettos of this country, North and South, really are. If, for example, the Negroes of Watts had organized their political power, Los Angeles Police Chief Parker might not remain in office today.

SNCC will therefore be working for freedom through the acquisition of economic and political power on the local level. We will encourage black people to use their majority where it exists, as other Americans use theirs, to exercise control of local government. Such power bases can then work to change state-wide or nation-wide patterns of oppression through negotiation -- from strength, rather than weakness. Negroes cannot form alliances with the white community until they have that strength, and until there are white groups with which Negroes can coalesce.

As we work toward organizing black power, we intend also to help build a base of poor whites -- not moderates but militants -- with whom poor Negroes may eventually combine their strength. This is the form of coalition we can accept.

We have also found that the power of black people as a group force cannot be developed as long as they are fearful and believe, consciously or unconsciously, that they are inferior. We must change the attitude expressed by a Wilcox County, Ala., Negro who voted for the white sheriff on May 3, saying, 'We aren't ready to have a colored sheriff. The white folks wouldn't have liked that a bit.'

We are therefore encouraging the developing of 'black consciousness': pride in black history, culture, institutions, as other ethnic groups have developed cultural awareness and pride. In the light of all this, it should be clear why we believe black organizers can organize best in the black community. It should also be remembered that what attracted Southern students to SNCC in the first place was that nowhere else in the society could they participate

in something with social significance not dominated by whites. The phrase 'something of our own' represents a feeling which brings with it commitment, energy, creativity.

None of our thinking about black power is basically new to SNCC. Nor has 'pro-black' ever meant 'anti-white' -- unless whites choose to make it so.

The heart of our present program, in short, is our belief that the key to basic change is power and it must be the power of group strength -- as every oppressed people in history has learned. The Black Belt of America, which extends from the Southern U S to Brazil, has been the home of an absolutely powerless black mass for nearly two centuries. In Africa today, millions remain powerless because they are black and because they are property-less. Black people in this country must use their weight, their majority power where it exists, to voice the needs of black people wherever they are. We understand that Lowndes County cannot be free independently of black people everywhere, for the struggle is one of a people.

## STATEMENT BY H. RAP BROWN

(This statement by SNCC Chairman H. Rap Brown was made minutes before he was arrested in the Washington, D.C. airport on 26 July, 1967.)

I am charged with inciting black people to commit an offense by way of protest against the law, a law in which neither I nor any of my people have any say in preparing. The law against which the protest was directed (the law which denies freedom) is the law which established this country. I consider myself neither morally nor legally bound to obey laws made by a body in which I have no representation. That the will of the people is the basis of the authority of government is a principle universally acknowledged as sacred throughout the civilized world and constitutes the basic foundation for law. Those not involved in making laws are not legally bound by them. It should be perfectly understandable that we, as black people, should adopt the attitude that we are neither morally nor legally bound to obey laws which were not made with our consent and which seek to oppress us. Nor can we be expected to have confidence in courts that interpret and enforce such laws. The white man makes all the laws, he drags us before his courts, he accuses us, and he sits in judgment over us.

Do not deceive yourselves into believing that penalties will deter men from the course that they believe is right. History shows that penalties do not deter men when their conscience is aroused, nor will they deter my people or the colleagues with whom I have worked.

We stand on the eve of a black revolution. Masses of our people are on the move, fighting the enemy tit-for-tat, responding to counter-revolutionary violence with revolutionary violence, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life. These rebellions are but a dress rehearsal for real revolution. Neither imprisonment nor threats of death will sway me from the path that I have taken, nor will they sway others like me. For to men, freedom in their own land is the pinnacle of their ambitions; and nothing can turn men of conviction and a strong sense of freedom aside. More powerful than my fear of the dreadful conditions to which I might be subjected in prison is my hatred for the dread conditions to which my people are subjected outside prisons throughout this country. I hate the practice of race discrimination, and in doing so, in my hatred, I am sustained by the fact that the overwhelming majority of mankind hate it equally. There is nothing any court can do to change in any way that hatred in me; it can only be removed by the removal of the injustices and the inhumanity which exist in this country. We seek to move that injustice from the political, social and economic life of the United States.

A stable and just society cannot mount a successful offensive action against a black youth who breaks a window and at the same time plead that it is powerless to protect black youth who are being murdered because they seek to make American democracy a reality. Each time a black church is bombed or burned, it is an act of violence in our streets. Each time a black body is found in the swamps of Mississippi or Alabama, that is violence in our land. Each time black human rights workers are refused protection by the government, that is anarchy. Each time a police officer shoots and kills a black teenager, that is urban crime.

We see America for what it is, and we recognize our course of action.

## INTERVIEW WITH H. RAP BROWN

(This interview first appeared in the National Guardian in July 1967.)

(National Guardian's note: The following interview between H. Rap Brown, new chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and Robert L. Allen, National Guardian staff writer, took place June 1 in SNCC's Atlanta headquarters. Brown, elected May 1 to replace Stokely Carmichael, was born 23 years ago in Baton Rouge. After attending Southern University he was SNCC state project director for Alabama.)

Allen: Mr. Brown, in the policy statement released after the staff meeting of SNCC last month, SNCC is described as a human rights organization. How does that differ from the concept of SNCC as a civil rights organization?

Brown: At this time, due to the world crisis, to our position on Vietnam, we felt it necessary to make it clear that we are for the liberation of all people, for the freedom of all people, regardless of nation, regardless of race, and that we are for the destruction of the oppressor -- and the main oppressor at this time is Lyndon Johnson and the United States.

Q: How do you see SNCC's relation to other liberation movements?

A: They are integrally tied up in our work; there is a common bond with other organizations. We support, we endorse any and every organization for the liberation of oppressed people.

Q: In what way does your election represent a change in SNCC's policy?

A: There has been no policy change; the only thing that changed was you know, like, people. Our programmatic projection will be along the lines of freedom organizations. Included will be a high school anti-draft movement, you know, like, how to beat the draft.

Q: What is a freedom organization?

A: The freedom organization concept derives from our model project in Lowndes County, Ala., to which we attribute great success politically. Lowndes County is peculiar in that a freedom organization could become a freedom party because of Alabama laws regarding the establishing of a political party. Now this is not feasible for New York, where the laws are more rigid. So we have to talk about organizing independent politics around freedom organizations that are not committed to the Democratic or Republican Party. Freedom Parties are not practical in a lot of places.

Q: When you say that freedom organizations will be concerned with independent politics, what does this mean in terms of the Democratic and Republic Parties or in terms of established black politicians in the ghettos?

A: America is monolithic politically. There is only one party and I don't hesitate to add that that is the white, Nazi and racist party and its only derivatives are the Republican and Democratic machinery. What black people have to do is to organize themselves because there is a lack of organization in every black community in America. The political machine in urban areas is controlled by white people and white people (hire) out the black people to go down there and beg for their vote during election. You can beat that by organizing black people because black people are not part of that machine. So the political machine has no relevance when you talk about organizing people, because that political machine does not speak to, does not speak for, those black people. So you organize black people with the concept that the way to get power is that you control your vote.

Q: Would you then run independent candidates or would you seek to influence the other parties?

A: We will run independent candidates where we are a majority or where the population is so designed that we can be victorious. Where that is impractical, we will be using the vote to coalesce, but to coalesce on our terms. Which means that the white folks, if it be a white group, or if it be a black group of Republicans, and they choose to, you know, coopt our vote, they're going to have to do it on our terms. It's very much like Meany and the Democratic Party -- that labor's vote was not obligated to the Democratic Party, but it was on the table for bargaining.

Q: How do you see SNCC's role in the urban ghettos, many of which are said to be ready to explode right now?

A: Not only the urban ghetto may explode, black America in total is ready to explode. We see our position as (that) of the bearers of truth about America. We feel America is headed toward a race war, and it becomes our responsibility to make black people aware of this. Genocide is being committed in Vietnam. It is being committed right here in America -- physically and mentally. When you look at what happened to the Jewish population in Nazi Germany, these people were so conditioned that they allowed themselves to be led to the gas chambers. That mental type of genocide always precedes the physical extermination. So black people are being conditioned -- by that war in Vietnam, and daily by the second-class citizenship that is imposed upon them -- to be killed off. Twenty-six concentration camps are being renovated across America. If America got out of Vietnam tomorrow, I daresay that that violence will be turned on black America, inwardly. We have to address ourselves to that and we feel it is our responsibility to make black people aware that America is about to play Germany. That if America chooses to play Nazis, black folks ain't going to play Jews.

Q: How does SNCC plan to go about building a black anti-draft movement?

A: It is necessary to reach prospective draftees at an early age, that is high school, because for black American males there are only two alternatives. Either you become a hustler or you go in the Army. Especially those who drop out. Now the exception to that rule in the black community are those people who are motivated enough, and can afford to go to college -- and I emphasize that's the exception to the rule. The masses of black people have only two alternatives: to be either a hustler -- do menial jobs which is hustling; and when you do menial jobs you always got to have a sideline which is also hustling -- or go into the Army and be killed. And that reverts back to that thing, genocide. So it will be our responsibility, our duty, to organize, to mobilize a movement. We have now about six cases pending in court and if we can beat the draft structure in terms of legality, we will move to do so. But we plan to resist this thing by any means necessary -- because the survival of the black race depends upon that.

#### DEVELOPING THE COMMUNITY

Q: A black man is often reluctant to fight the draft because he doesn't have any alternative. If he doesn't go in, he can't get a job. Does SNCC have any plans for providing alternatives?

A: We definitely do. In working for the freedom organizations, you address yourself to the black community and this is where the whole salvation of black employment lies. This is the only place black people are going to be able to work and not do menial jobs. We have to get people to realize that by developing that community, which is a job in itself, they don't have to address themselves to, you know, like 'we don't have anything to do.' There's a lot to be done in that black community and people just have to face up to it. That should be the alternative chosen by black people. If they graduate from high school and are motivated to go to college, they should go to college and obtain technical skills and bring them back to the black community. If they drop out of high school, they should begin to work and develop their black community. That's their work.

Q: How does SNCC plan to relate to the black college student?

A: Up to now college students have obtained degrees and technical skills and taken them all to General Electric, to Ford Motor Corporation and all these various monopoly-type organizations. They do not bring them back to their own community. That completely depletes the black community, is a drain on resources. And that is why the black community does not develop. Our most important product is being taken away from our community and implanted in the white -- and not even integrated -- environment. And these blacks are still being exploited because they are not being paid what their white counterparts are paid. They might be getting more than another black person, or more than somebody back home, but they are not getting the same salary as their white counterparts. So it's still exploitation. Until we can bring black people with those skills back to the black community and develop our community, we can't address ourselves to becoming viable as a black community. SNCC must address itself to those students. We have a very strong campus program; it is going to get stronger. A lot of the things that happened on the campuses this past term can be attributed to the SNCC campus program.

Q: What kind of organizing is SNCC doing among the black college students?

A: We feel that college students are the answer to our resource problem in SNCC. The campus programs are geared around student problems, black student problems, which are peculiar to other students' problems. They are geared to



enlightening and educating black people about what is going on in the black community, what is going on in America, where they fit in America, and why they are being victimized and oppressed. It's the same thing we do in the community. But on a college campus it is articulated by those people on a different level than it is articulated in the community. And the reasons for those rebellions is that people could directly relate to what we are saying.

These rebellions began to occur because black students met opposition even to their assured right of self-expression, of free speech. So you get these flare-ups, these rebellions -- and it's not a thing that's going to die out because school is closed over the summer. And we are going to step up our campus program.

Q: What will be SNCC's relation to white student organizations sympathetic to its goals?

A: The only relationships that we intend to have are with those white organizations that are sympathetic. And you know what we would say to all white organizations, sympathetic or not? It is that they better civilize their own community. We feel like, I quote Bernard Shaw, when he says that America is the only country that he knows that came from barbarism to decadence without going through civilization. So their problem, and it IS a problem, is that they've got to civilize their communities. Because black folks has always been civilized.

Q: What is the role of the white workers within SNCC itself?

A: Those few left are associated with SNCC in a non-staff context. They are employed as technicians with the understanding that whatever skills they have will have to be transferred to some black person. Once that's accomplished their job is ended.

Q: How does SNCC see itself in relation to Afro-American culture in this country?

A: We think it's essential in any movement that people are aware of their history, because when you are aware of your history you can get some perspective of your future. We think it's essential that black people begin because America has lied to black people for so many years. The word 'black' itself is derogatory -- the definitions are all derogatory. It is essential that black people not see themselves in that perspective because if they do then you have the problem you had a few years ago when everybody began saying 'let's integrate' as the solution to the problem. But that's not the solution to the problem of black people in America. America was not designed to accommodate 20 million black folks into its existing society.

Q: Some people have asserted that the civil rights movement in the South is dead?

A: It's not only dead in the South; the civil rights movement, as it was termed, is dead all over. So when you talk about it, you talk about it post-humously. And like -- the civil rights movement was geared for white people, it was geared or assigned for white people and its programs were carried out in terms of white people. It had no overbearing purpose to free black people. And black people are still enslaved. For example, Ramsey Clark, attorney general of the United States, gets up and says that black folks are, you know, worse off than they were 30 years ago. Now that speaks directly to that movement, which was called the civil rights movement. And it says that it did not do anything, and thank goodness it's dead, as far as I'm concerned. So what we're talking about now is mounting a black movement for total liberation by any means necessary.

Q: As SNCC created a black anti-draft movement, do you foresee the possibility of cooperation with the developing white anti-draft movement?

A: Of course, a coalition should occur -- as coalitions will occur throughout the political spectrum of our organizing. However, again, blacks will control the black anti-draft movement and will make any coalition from a position of power. We feel that white folks should organize their white community. In reality, more poor white people are being killed in Vietnam than anybody else. And they have an obligation to organize their communities to resist that draft, as we do to organize our community for survival -- which includes resisting the draft. A young fellow refused induction the other day in Lowndes County, Alabama; they gave him a 4-P, seems to be a new classification and we interpret that as the draft's concession to 'Hell no, we ain't going.' So that's our position, 'Hell no, we ain't going.' It's not our war. I refuse to kill yellow people for white racist dogs.

Q: There have been reports that SNCC has lost financial support because of its espousal of black power. What is SNCC's present financial status?

A: Well, we could use money, of course. But we dictate policy. Finances will not control or influence our policy-making machinery. We don't accept money with conditions attached.

Q: Can you sum up what SNCC has done to make black power a reality?

A: First of all, black power is not a program; it's a slogan and has to be viewed in that context. Through it we have raised the level of black consciousness which is essential to mounting a movement or guiding people toward a revolution -- if it be necessary. Political revolution or whatever revolution is necessary. It's important to note that the Democratic Party was the first to react to the slogan 'black power' -- because they knew exactly what it was. It was a challenge to the Democratic Party's vote in the black community. The Democrats raised it as a scare tactic. The Democratic Party and its machinery -- which is government, which is newspapers, which is television, which is radio, which is public schools -- used all these to scare black people.

#### CHALLENGE TO DEMOCRATIC PARTY

We survived it and we came out on top. Because as we raised the level of black consciousness, people began to look around and see who their real enemy was. And it's that Democratic Party. There's no difference between a Democrat and a Dixiecrat, because any time Humphrey can come down here to Atlanta, Ga., and hug Lester Maddox and call him a good Democrat, the same Mr. Maddox who's beaten people on the head with ax sticks only a few months ago, there's something got to be wrong. You have to understand that politics in America is run on a monolithic basis. I cannot talk about the Democratic Party without also attacking the Republican Party. There are more similarities than differences in those parties -- and they're both white men's parties. For that reason we cannot with a clear conscience support either one of these parties. Once we develop a base in our community we can influence the decisions of these parties. Then we'll start talking about coalescing with them. Until then they will be under constant attack by people from black communities and by us.

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