

November 26, 1966

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The enclosed material is a letter and a proposal for a National Anti-Draft Program sent out sometime ago to Black People across the Country who are concerned with the menace of the Draft to Black people.

The proposal though dealing with SNCC as an organization specifically attempts to speak to the drastic need for a National Anti-Draft Program for Blacks.

Yours in trust,

8/9/66

Dear Bros. and Sisters,

Some of us in and around SNCC are alarmingly aware of the need for a Black Anti-Draft Program. Realizing how the draft is taking more and more of our Bros. from the Freedom Struggle and from our Black Communities, we sense the urgency of our having begun yesterday.

We know if the pattern continues ( and we have no reason to believe that it will end ) that the country has devised a way of killing two birds with one stone, i.e. brutalizing and murdering people of color around the world and exterminating the Black men of this country in the process. We are the ever-growing army of mercenaries that this country will send to the slaughter year after year to continue the slaughter of our Bros. in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

These things we know you know, and we know that the rage within you is growing as ours is.

In that the peace movement has not offered ( nor do we expect ) it to ) any viable program of resistance to the draft for Black men, WE MUST. We must begin toward building a resistance which will prevent this country from dealing with each Bro. as an individual and cause them to know that the induction of each Bro. will bring the fury of the Black Community down on their heads.

Some of you are already engaged in such activity. We feel that the time has come to Nationalize our resistance. In that way, we can combine our strength into a forceful unit.

We have some ideas and plans that we have already begun to use here in Atlanta that we would like to discuss with you.

We feel that the urgency of this matter necessitates our coming together as soon as possible to begin to outline a program for a National Anti-Draft Program.

Because of the urgency, we would like to propose two possible meeting dates; the last Saturday in the month or the first Saturday in September.

As you know, the October Draft Call is going to be 46,000 men. We have very little time.

#### PREAMBLE

It is time SNCC took position on the fdraft as it affects Black people in this country. While we can oppose the draft and the war in Vietnam on moral grounds or organizational grounds, on the grounds of extreme atrocities; and/or on legal grounds, necessity dictates that we oppose it also on the grounds of the survival of the organization and the survival of us as a people. It is obvious to any person in SNCC that the best way to break up the organization would be to draft all the young men who are of draft age and send them to Vietnam and have them shot. If the country is able to get away with busting up SNCC by drafting its young members and also by drafting young Black people in general, the pattern will be clearly set for our

destruction as a race in this country. We will become the mercenaries of the future. We will be the ones who will fight all foreign wars. There will be no one here to carry on effective protest and we will be slaughtered both home and abroad.

SNCC as an organization has no choice but to take the position opposing the war and opposing the draft. The only debatable point is HOW. In other words, how can you oppose the draft and at the same time remain an organization that is effective in organizing our people and leading agitation?

I would like to offer a few suggestions for a program to end the draft. The first point I would like to make is that the organization is not strong enough to make a frontal attack on the draft, that is, I don't think the organization should come out and say, "We oppose the draft" for whatever reasons that we might think of. This approach, I believe, would lead the power structure to act to destroy us before we gain momentum. So I think that we must approach this in terms of certain acceptable American concepts.

For example, the way we were able to bring down many of the barriers in Miss. was to talk about the right to vote. Well that wasn't the issue really; it was the right to organize. Since we cannot approach the opposition to the draft on a frontal level, we must work to develop a high level of consciousness about the draft in the Black Community.

The draft is destroying our people and we want to get this across to the people through whatever program we have without opposing the country directly, wherein we could be charged legitimately with treason or even worse, being un-American.

The following are a few ideas that I think can be used to develop consciousness in the Black Community that would lead to opposition to the draft.

The first is what I call the Freedom of Choice Plan. This plan would on the surface, be a petition to allow Black people the freedom to decide where they fight for their freedom. Whether they decide to fight in this country or in any foreign country such as Vietnam. What it would consist of would be the collection of names from all over the country of young fellows of draft age who would petition the country to allow them to fight in this country for their freedom. This would be similar to the Freedom Registration Forms in Miss. wherein the people were required to sign a form indicating that they wanted to register to vote and they became freedom registered.

It didn't mean anything except it began to make them think and when the petitions were presented at the Democratic Convention, they were turned down and the people became more conscious of how the country operates. The same thing could happen with the draft Freedom of Choice Plan wherein the names could be submitted to Congress, having representatives from all over the country to attend for the submission.

When the Congress turns it down, the people become more conscious and more determined to act for themselves. One other thing that the young fellows who sign the petition could do would be to stage some kind of protest when any one of the group was drafted. For example, if you had 500 people in Atlanta sign this petition and if they had the agreement that anyone signing was drafted, the others would stage some type of protest, you would have a very explosive potential which would cause the draft in the country a considerable amount of work.

Another idea would be an across the country march to get the Congress to exempt Negroes from the War in Vietnam. We can say that such a thing would be so dangerous that the fellows would prefer to die on the high-ways of their own country protecting the right to walk on these high-ways ( which in fact does not exist ) than to die in Vietnam.

There could be joint marches from all over the country that would coincide on a certain day and arrive in Washington with the petitions. Perhaps as the March was progressing, it would stop in cities to get

petitions to take to Congress.

This is a variation of the first idea on a local level. The person upon receiving his notice of induction could go down to the draft prior to the scheduled induction and pass out leaflets to the prospective inductees, dividing the groups because leaflets would be material that declares the racist nature of the war and that Black people should not be a part of it. That person would probably be arrested; whereupon, he would remain in jail until his date for induction has passed. He could then be released. Each time induction is scheduled, this process is repeated.

In all cases, it is important that the person has a group on the outside which is actively backing him so that if he is arrested on phony charges, there would be a group to agitate and bring the issue out to the public. They could picket the jail or selective service, etc.

Another idea would be to relate the draft to the Third World, Africa in particular. That is the young fellows who have been drafted could decide to sit-in on the South African Embassy or the American Embassy in Washington and demand that the US break off relationships with the Union of South Africa because it is a racist country or demand that the US take its nuclear bombs out of South Africa because they are the bombs that are going to be used to kill Black people. He could also express a desire to help the guerillas in South Africa or South America. This would put the country in a spot and it would not be in direct opposition to the War in Vietnam (its not even a war yet - legally). But it would be effective in asking the country to withdraw its support of South Africa.

#### POSSIBLE PROGRAMS OR ACTION

- I. Make a call for Black men who return from Vietnam to use the knowledge gained in the armed services to fight for LIBERATION of their own people in this country.
- II. Have a Congressman introduce a Bill exempting Black people from the War in Vietnam.
  - a. This can be done by getting petitions from young Blacks of draft age stating that they do not want to go in the Army.
- III. Send letters to Foreign Contacts.
  - a. We could use contacts made on our tours across the waters to get sympathy.
- IV. Petition Congress
  - a. There are many arguments which can be used, i.e. injunctions to get draft boards from drafting Black people because more Black people are on the front lines in proportion to their numbers.
  - b. Draft Boards don't represent poor Black people who make up the bulk of the cannon fodder.
  - c. Draft Boards are acting illegally because they are drafting men to fight in an illegal war.
  - d. Civilians should not have to respond to a draft being called by the military/industrial complex in this country and not the Congress.
- V. Petition the UN
  - A. An attempt should be made to make the Black anti-draft struggle international.
    - a. Arguments which can be used
      1. Charge country with Genocide
      2. Charge country with making Colonized people kill other colonized people.
      3. Use Nuremberg Trials as the basis for a case.