

FROM: SPRING MOBILIZATION COMMITTEE TO END THE WAR IN VIETNAM
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300,000-500,000 PEOPLE JOIN APRIL 15 PEACE DEMONSTRATION

The official Spring Mobilization Committee estimate of the crowd at Saturday's Peace Demonstration is between a minimum of 300,000 and perhaps half a million. The committee is now analyzing aerial photos of the crowd to obtain a closer determination of the exact size. The demonstration was the largest demonstration of any kind in the history of the United States. An estimate of 125,000 which was widely published and attributed to the New York City police, referred only to that small part of the demonstration which was able to get into the area of the United Nations Plaza that the police had set aside for the demonstrators. The police were extremely strict in not allowing any additional persons to enter this area and most of the marchers, therefore, were not able to get into the rally area and were not counted in this "police estimate".

In his remarks at the giant assembly at the United Nations, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. declared the size of the turnout to be larger than the famous 1963 Washington Civil Rights March which enlisted 250,000 people. The day after the rally, according to the April 17 New York Times, "Dr. King challenged a police estimate that between 100,000 and 125,000 people took part in the rally outside the United Nations building here Saturday. 'I have no quarrel with the police estimate,' he said, with a slight smile, 'just an absolute denial of the accuracy of it.'

'Dr. King, who said he had taken part in demonstrations for years and had had wide experience in estimating the size of crowds, 'perhaps more experience than the New York police,' declared, 'There were fully 300,000 and perhaps

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PEACE LEADER RIPS JOHNSON ON BOMBING; ANSWERS WESTMORELAND

NEW YORK-- Rev. James Bevel, national director of the Spring Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam, today assailed President Johnson for turning a deaf ear to the growing anti-war sentiment in the United States.

Rev. Bevel rebuked the President in connection with the latest U.S. bombing raids close to the center of Hanoi. He said that Johnson was "power mad" and "in a futile attempt to cover up his own mistakes, the President is driving this country closer and closer to a nightmarish confrontation with Red China and nuclear catastrophe."

The National Director of Spring Mobilization said that Johnson was ignoring the will of the people and said that his group would intensify a "massive non-violent program of resistance to the war."

Mr. Bevel said that he was disturbed that the President had not seen fit to reply to a telegram sent to the White House last week, advising Johnson that a delegation of peace leaders would be in Washington on May 17 to express their determination that the war be stopped immediately. A second wire, requesting an interview with Johnson on May 17, went out yesterday. A delegation representing the half million Americans who demonstrated against the war on April 15 in San Francisco and New York City, will knock on the White House door on May 17, even if Johnson still hasn't replied to the wires.

The date of May 17 was chosen for the confrontation because it is the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in public schools. The date underscores the organization's emphasis on involving large numbers of black people in the peace movement by stressing the theme that the U.S. policy in Vietnam borders on the genocide of non-white people.

In replying to criticism by General William Westmoreland that anti-war groups were prolonging the war and are unpatriotic, Rev. Bevel said that "the concern registered by hundreds of thousands of Americans that the U.S. role in Vietnam is evil is in the highest tradition of free dissent as established in the U.S. Constitution. I ask General Westmoreland: "Did the 500,000 Peace Marchers manufacture the napalm bombs that have maimed or killed Vietnamese women and children? Did we destroy villages and rice paddies leaving peasants without shelter or nourishment? Did we 'accidentally' bomb 'the wrong villages'? Did we murder over half a million innocent Vietnamese citizens? Did we send over 10,000 American boys to their death, 50,000 to the jungles to be wounded, and 470,000 more to fight and perhaps die in a fruitless, illegal war?"

Rev. Bevel said that Westmoreland's statements this week "smacked of the days of McCarthyism" and reflected the administration's attempt to harass the peace movement via the House Un-American Activities Committee and the F.B.I. who harassed members of the Rosebud Sioux Indian tribe for participating in the April 15 Mobilization.

Rev. Bevel praised Senator George McGovern of South Dakota for his forthright statement Tuesday denouncing Johnson's Vietnam war policy. "We need more men with Senator McGovern's courage," he said.