

# Call for an Assembly of Unrepresented People in Washington, D.C.

August 6-9, 1965

Robert Moses, revered director of the Mississippi Project of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was the leading spirit behind this Assembly. His name appears on the list of signers as “Robert Parris,” as he had recently begun using his mother’s maiden name. Also behind the Assembly is the spirit of SNCC’s emerging effort to move white folks, along with black folks, toward understanding that they, too, were oppressed – unrepresented – in the “land of the free.”

# CALL FOR AN ASSEMBLY OF UNREPRESENTED PEOPLE in Washington, D.C., August 6-9

*"I like to believe that the people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than our governments. I think the people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of their way and let them have it."*  
--- President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Aug. 31, 1959

## WE DECLARE PEACE

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**I**N MISSISSIPPI and Washington the few make the decisions for the many. Mississippi Negroes are denied the vote; the voice of the thirty per cent of Americans now opposed to the undeclared war in Vietnam is not heeded and all Americans are denied access to facts concerning the true military and political situation. We must make it plain to the Administration that we will not be accomplices to a war that we did not declare. There can be no doubt that the great majority of the people of the world do not approve of the presence of American troops in Vietnam. We who will come to Washington on August 6 through 9 cannot in any sense represent this majority, but we can let our voices be heard in a symbolic *Assembly of Unrepresented People to Declare Peace.*

**A**UGUST 6 is the twentieth anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima;

August 9 the anniversary of the Nagasaki bomb. Therefore, we choose August 6, 7, 8, and 9 for a new attempt to draw together the voices of nonviolent protest in America; not only those who have for so long been calling for an end to the Cold War, but also those whose protests focus on racial injustice, inquisition by Congressional committees, inequities in labor legislation, the mishandling of anti-poverty and welfare funds and the absence of democratic process on the local level. We invite not only those now active in organized protests but ministers, members of the academic community, teachers, women, professional people, students, people from the newly formed community groups in slums and rural areas, industrial workers, anyone who wishes to symbolically withdraw his support from the war and who wishes to explore the possibilities of inter-action inherent in this community of concerned people.

Norma Becker  
Bob Swann  
Donna Allen  
Bob Parris  
Mel McDonald  
Carl Bloise  
Peter Kellman  
Barry Weisberg  
Dena Clamager  
Steve Weissman

Stephen Amdur  
Eric Weinberger  
Walter M. Tillow  
Carl Oglesby  
Ed Hamlett  
Jeffrey Gordon  
Jimmy Garrett  
Courtland Cox  
Dave Dellinger  
Ray Raphael

Sandra Adickes  
Francis H. Mitchell  
John Porcelli  
William Hartzog  
Barbara Deming  
Mack Smith  
Staughton Lynd  
Dennis Sweeney  
Russ Nixon  
Florence Howe  
Paul Lauter

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# Activities of the Four Days

## WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

August 6: A demonstration at the White House will center around the Declaration of Conscience which has already received over 6,000 signatures; it declares the signers' complete refusal to assist in the carrying out of the war in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic. Those of the signers who can come to Washington will constitute the core of the demon-



August 7 and 8 will be the heart of the *Assembly of Unrepresented People*. They will be devoted to workshops, probably carried out in the open on the grass surrounding the Washington Monument.



## PROGRAM WORKSHOPS

August 7: The *Assembly* will divide itself according to the section of the protest movement which claims the greatest attention of each individual.

There will be groupings of community people and staff who have been working at the local level on organizing the poor to have a voice in the lives of their communities and in the administration of federal anti-poverty funds.

There will be another grouping of people whose interest and work center on the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's attempt to have Congress unseat the five improperly elected representatives from their state.

There will still be other groupings to discuss the

## CONSTITUENCY WORKSHOPS

August 8: Vietnam. There will be workshops of teachers, members of the academic community, women, professional people, students, people from local communities, union members and other "constituency groupings" to plan how they can

August 9 ("Governments had better get out of their way and let them have it."): Those members of the *Assembly of Unrepresented People* in a position to face possible arrest and willing to pledge themselves to nonviolent behavior during the course of the demonstration will assemble and walk toward the Capitol with the intention of convening the *Assembly* in the chamber of the House of Representatives and thus deny that Congress has the right to declare war in our names. If stopped along the way we will sit down and declare the *Assembly of Unrepresented People* in session. One of the group will rise and begin to read the Declaration of Peace circulated in the workshops on the 8th. If, as seems likely, the person reading is arrested before the Declaration is fully

strated; non-signers will be welcomed. The Declaration has been sponsored and circulated by the Committee for Nonviolent Action, War Resisters League, Student Peace Union and the Catholic Worker. These groups will therefore have full responsibility for the conduct of this aspect of the four-day assembly. There may be nonviolent civil disobedience by some of the signers.

recent threats of destructive investigation by the House Un-American Activities Committee of elements of both the peace and civil rights movements.

We hope that there will also be present representative groupings from the ranks of organized labor to discuss labor's attempt to have repealed the so-called "right-to-work law" provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act.

A special workshop on *religion and social action* will be held on the 7th for ministers and lay people.

There will be workshops on Free Universities and Student Unions.

Additional workshops on other aspects of non-violent direct action will be scheduled to meet the interests of those present.

work in the summer and through the year to stop the war. There will be a large evening meeting.

A Declaration of Peace drawn up by the initiators of the demonstration will be circulated in the workshops for use on the 9th.

read, another person will rise and continue reading. The *Assembly* will be open to the reading of additional declarations of peace that individuals or representatives of organizations may bring with them. We hope that this demonstration will serve as a symbol of the desire of the people of the world to express their opposition to the Vietnam war in a democratic fashion.

To implement this plan, we suggest that one focus for community organization between now and August 6 be discussion of what the government *should* do in Vietnam. The results of these discussions could be embodied in declarations of peace which representatives would bring to Washington. Some groups, particularly those farthest away from Washington, may want to create assemblies at state capitals and city councils on August 9.

Preparation for the *Assembly* will be coordinated at 107 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. Address correspondence to Eric Weinberger or Bob Parris. Before and after the *Assembly* related activities will go on in Washington concerning Vietnam, FDP, 14-B, HUAC and community organization. Volunteers are urgently needed. We can probably provide free housing. (A few hundred dollars are needed for office expenses. Checks to Washington Summer Action are requested.)