

# SNCC Says No to Viet War

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

1966

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is the statement issued by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee concerning U.S. involvement in the war in Vietnam. Julian Bond was refused his seat in the Georgia House of Representatives when he publically endorsed this statement.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee assumes its right to dissent with U.S. foreign policy on any issue, and states its opposition to U.S. involvement in the war in Vietnam on these grounds:

We believe the U.S. government has been deceptive in claims of concern for the freedom of the Vietnamese people, just as the government has been deceptive in claiming concern for the freedom of the colored people in such other countries as the Dominican Republic, the Congo, South Africa, Rhodesia and in the U.S. itself.

We of SNCC have been involved in the black people's struggle for liberation and self-determination in this country for the last five years. Our work, particularly in the South, taught us that U.S. government has never guaranteed the freedom of oppressed citizens, and is not yet truly determined to end the rule of terror and oppression within its own borders.

We ourselves have often been victims of violence and confinement executed by U.S. government officials. We recall the numerous persons who have been murdered in the South because of their efforts to secure their civil rights, and whose murderers have been allowed to escape penalty for their crimes. The murder of Samuel Younge in Tuskegee, Ala., is no different from the murder of people in Vietnam, for both Younge and the Vietnamese sought and are seeking to secure the rights guaranteed them by law. In each case, the U.S. government bears a great part of the responsibility for these deaths.

Samuel Younge was murdered because U.S. law is not being enforced. Vietnamese are being murdered because the U.S. is pursuing an aggressive policy in violation of international law. The U.S. is no respecter of persons or law when such persons or laws are counter to its needs and desires. We recall the indifference, suspicion and outright hostility with which our reports of violence have been met in the past by government officials.

We know for the most part that elections in this country, in the North as well as the South, are not free. We have seen that the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the 1964 Civil Rights Act have not yet been implemented with full federal power and concern. We question then the ability and even the desire of the U.S. government to guarantee free elections abroad. We maintain that our country's cry of "preserve freedom in the world" is a hypocritical mask behind which it squashes liberation movements which are not bound and refuse to be bound by the expediency of the U.S. Cold War policy.

We are in sympathy with and support the men in this country who are unwilling to respond to the military draft which would compel them to contribute their lives to U.S. aggression in the name of the "freedom" we find so false in this country. We recoil with horror at the inconsistency of this supposedly free society where responsibility to freedom is equated with responsibility to lend oneself to military aggression. We take note of the fact that 60% of the draftees from this country are Negro, called on to stifle the liberation of Vietnam, to preserve a "democracy" which does not exist for them at home.

We ask: Where is the Draft for the Freedom fight in the U.S.?

We therefore encourage those Americans who prefer to use their energy in building democratic forms within the country. We believe that work in the civil rights movement and other human relations organizations is a valid alternative to the draft. We urge all Americans to seek this alternative, knowing full well that it may cost them their lives as painfully as in Vietnam.

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