

January 27, 1967

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE AND THE MOVEMENT FOR PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE (MOVIMIENTO PRO INDEPENDENCIA, M.P.I.), N.Y. Branch

Yesterday, January 26th, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, a joint statement was signed by representatives of SNCC, M.P.I., and the University Federation for Independence (Federacion de Universitarios Pro Independencia F.U.P.I.). In this statement, the three organizations affirmed the need for a joint struggle against the political, economic, social and cultural oppression inflicted upon the Afro-American and Puerto Rican peoples by the United States. Just as black power signifies the struggle for liberation and the control of Afro-American communities by black people, the independence struggle in Puerto Rico aims for control by Puerto Ricans of their own lives and the wealth of their country. Black people constitute a colony within the United States; Puerto Rico is a colony outside the United States.

In that statement and during subsequent meetings in New York, the three organizations have agreed to work together on the domestic and international levels in the following ways:

- 1) Joint action against the draft in particular and the American war in Vietnam in general, to be carried out by Afro-Americans and Puerto Ricans in the urban ghettos of this country;
- 2) Joint action for better housing, education and living conditions generally, as well as against police brutality, in the urban ghettos;
- 3) Joint action to bring international focus to the problems of Afro-Americans and to the Puerto Rican struggle for independence. SNCC has agreed to offer its assistance in M.P.I.'s efforts to raise the colonial case of Puerto Rico at the United Nations during its current session. M.P.I. and F.U.P.I. will offer their assistance in bringing international attention to the case of Afro-Americans, particularly in the United States. The question will be raised there not as a domestic issue but a matter of concern to all humanity, i.e., not as a question of civil rights but human rights.

In the immediate future, the organizations hope to conduct joint demonstrations during the visit to New York of Brazilian President-Elect Arturo Costa e Silva. De Silva, who is scheduled to take power on March 15th, represents the forces of military dictatorship, supported by the United States; continuation of Brazil's economic policy which has maintained the poverty of millions; and support for Portuguese colonial domination in Africa. De Silva has, in a series of statements, indicated that he will seek American military support to suppress so-called "external subversion" in Brazil -- in effect, movements for basic change to benefit the impoverished of Brazil.

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