



Boston Friends of the

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

New England Regional Office / 1555 Massachusetts Avenue / Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138 / 868-0939

February 3, 1966

Robert Penn Warren
2495 Redding Road
Fairfield, Conn.,

Dear Mr. Warren,

We hope you have received our telegram. Enclosed is a copy of our Vietnam Statement. Which only expresses the views held by SNCC staff and in no way attempts to express the opinions of our supporters.

We sincerely hope you will reconsider your decision as tickets have been printed and pre-publicity work has been started.

Since the issuing of our statement there has been an considerable amount of mis interpretation and we in the Boston office hope by reading the entire statement it will clarify the issues. Please feel free to call us collect at your convience.

Freedom is an ever constant struggle,

Pattye Mapp

Pattye Mapp
Boston Friends of SNCC

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STATEMENT BY THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON THE WAR IN VIETNAM

FOR RELEASE: 1:30 PM, JAN. 6, 1966

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee has a right and responsibility to dissent with United States foreign policy on any issue when it sees fit. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee now states its opposition to United States' involvement in Vietnam on these grounds:

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

We, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, have been involved in the black peoples' struggle for liberation and self-determination in this country for the past five years. Our work, particularly in the South, has taught us that the United States 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 victim of violence and confinement executed by United States governmental officials. We recall the numerous persons who have been murdered in the South because of their efforts to secure their civil and human rights, and whose murderers have been allowed to escape penalty for their crimes.

by whom?
The murder of Samuel Young in Tuskegee, Alabama, is no different than the murder of peasants in Vietnam, for both Young and the Vietnamese sought, and are seeking, to secure the rights guaranteed them by law. In each case, the United States government bears a great part of the responsibility for these deaths

Samuel Young was murdered because United States law is not being enforced. Vietnamese are murdered because the United States is pursuing an aggressive policy in violation of international law. The United States is no respecter of persons or law when such persons or laws run counter to its needs and desires.

We recall the indifference, suspicion, and outright brutality which our reports of violence have been met in the past by government officials.

We know that for the most part, elections in this country, in the North as well as the South, are not free. We have seen the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the 1964 Civil Rights Act have not yet been implemented with full federal power and sincerity.

We question, then, the ability and even the desire of the United States 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 expediences of United States cold war policies.

We are in sympathy with, and support, the men in this country who are unwilling to respond to a military draft which would compel them to contribute their lives to United States aggression in Vietnam in the name of the "freedom" we find so false in this country.

We recall with horror at the inconsistency of a supposedly "free" society where responsibility to freedom is equated with the responsibility to lend oneself to military aggression. We take note of the fact that 16% of the draftees from this country are Negroes called on to stifle the liberation of Vietnam, to preserve a "democracy" which does not exist for them at home.

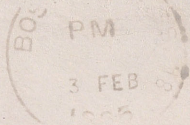
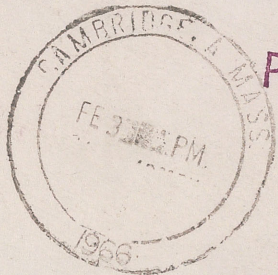
We ask, where is the draft for the freedom fight in the United States?

We therefore encourage those Americans who prefer to use their energy in building, democratic forms within this country. We believe that work in the civil rights movement and with 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.

END

SNCC STAFF

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