

## HISTORY

### **The Poor People's Campaign, 1967-1968**

The Poor People's Campaign was the political campaign that culminated in a demonstration held in Washington, D.C., on June 19, 1968, in which participants demanded that the federal government formulate a plan to help redress the employment and housing problems of all poor people throughout the United States.

In November 1967 civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., and the staff of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) met and decided to launch a Poor People's Campaign to highlight and find solutions to many of the problems facing the country's poor. The campaign would lead up to a Poor People's March on the country's capital.

Martin Luther King, Jr., and the SCLC were excited about the prospect of this campaign following the victories of the civil rights legislation of previous years (including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965). The SCLC's aim for the Poor People's Campaign was to address broadly *economic* inequalities with nonviolent direct action. The SCLC's vision was that the campaign would be the most sustainable, massive, and widespread effort of civil disobedience undertaken by any social movement in U.S. history.

The *plan* for the march was that protestors - Americans from different urban and rural areas—would come together in Washington, D.C., and demonstrate *daily* from May 12 to June 24, 1968. It was hoped that the demonstrations would persuade the federal government to take serious and adequate actions on jobs and incomes. The campaign would culminate in a massive march on Washington on May 30, 1968.

The Poor People's Campaign *was still in the planning stages* when King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, in April 1968 and Ralph Abernathy, a longtime friend of King was promoted to president of the SCLC from his post of vice president. The march on Washington was postponed.

Source: Encyclopedia Britannica

The Poor People's March was ultimately held on Wednesday, June 19 (Juneteenth) and attracted between 50,000 and 100,000 people. The crowd was addressed by politicians and by SCLC leaders—including Abernathy and Coretta Scott King.

source: Wikipedia