

Without Dr. King,

By Bruce Galphin
Washington Post Staff Writer

ATLANTA — One year after the death of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., his organization and his philosophy of nonviolence face a critical challenge to their survival.

After a quiet winter, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference is on the eve of launching a Nationwide drive for a more equal distribution of the Nation's wealth.

Specific goals for "Chapter Two of the Poor People's Campaign" will be announced in Memphis on April 4, the anniversary of Dr. King's assassination, by the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, who succeeded Dr. King as president of SCLC.

In an interview a few days ago, Mr. Abernathy called this the SCLC's "most difficult period" because it no longer is tackling clearcut targets like state segregation laws but rather "the whole economic system" and "the most powerful institution in this world, the Federal Government."

A year ago, SCLC rode the emotional waves of Dr. King's death. Today that tide has ebbed.

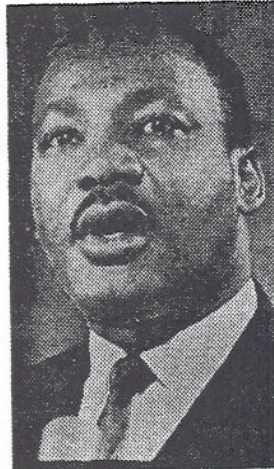
Credo in Question

SCLC faces the ultimate question of whether nonviolence without the charismatic presence of Martin Luther King can remain an effective force for change in the face of stiffening white resistance and the competition of more aggressive black action.

Mr. Abernathy believes it can, and he believes SCLC can maintain discipline among nonmembers who take part in the organization's demonstrations: "At the point a demonstration becomes violent, then of course I will call it off," he pledged.

But, he warned, as Dr. King had, that "we must win some nonviolent victories" if tensions in the black ghettos are to be relieved.

Mr. Abernathy spoke as he sat in his windowless, modestly furnished office in SCLC's cramped headquarters on Auburn avenue — "Sweet Auburn" as it sometimes was known in the days when it was the center



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
... his philosophy challenged

of Atlanta's Negro community life.

The SCLC president showed fatigue from a heavy schedule of speeches and daylong conferences about the coming week of confrontations.

Covers Wide Range

Speaking in slow, measured phrases reminiscent of his predecessor, he ranged over a wide variety of subjects concerning SCLC, its goals and his own philosophy.

His April 4 speech in Memphis will launch a week of "confrontations" across the Nation. These will be followed by spring and summer campaigns in the country's 13 largest cities, as well as a number of smaller communities.

In some, SCLC will concentrate on welfare distribution; in others, housing or food stamps or voter registration.

"Some will be large demonstrations," Mr. Abernathy explained. "Many of the other demonstrations will take on other forms. We may not have large numbers, but there will be other persons to replace them in case of arrest . . . We will be prepared to commit acts of civil disobedience which will lead to going to jail."

As for its Washington plans, SCLC will present demands to the Congress and the Administration through a "committee of 100" rather than a massive demonstra-

tion like last summer's Poor People's encampment.

On other topics, Mr. Abernathy had this to say:

On the Congress and the President: "I'm not optimistic at all. I was not optimistic about the last Congress. They're about the same."

"President Nixon is a very articulate person. He has assumed his duties and responsibilities in a forthright and impressive manner. I'm very disappointed over the fact that he has taken us a step backward . . . in that he did not appoint a black person to the Cabinet.

"Also, I'm afraid that his affluence and his background prevent him from being sensitive to the real needs of black people and poor people in this country."

On SCLC'S finances: "During the Poor People's Campaign we hired a large number who were not ordinarily staff members. We're in the process now of eliminating that staff and bringing it back to its normal number, which is around 100 in all.

"SCLC has always had financial problems . . . People unfortunately give only when something spectacular — something emotional enough — is going on."

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SCLC Power Ebbs

News Analysis

"From our recent appeals, it appears that our receipts are about the same as they were a year ago (before Dr. King's death).

"Our total operating budget is about \$1 million . . . The bulk of our contributions come in from mail appeals."

On nonviolence and civil disobedience: "We will confront local, state and Federal governments on the issues that I will spell out on April 4 . . . and we will be prepared to commit acts of civil disobedience which will lead to going to jail . . .

"All the persons in our ranks will be trained thoroughly not to engage in aggressive or even retaliatory violence. Whenever we break what we consider to be an unjust law, we are willing to suffer the consequences because of our respect for the law and because of our determination to be obedient to a higher law."

On SCLC's spring and summer programs: "We plan rather than to center in any one particular area to raise

the issues in several communities across the country. And the national focus will shift. It may be in Alabama for a while, and then I will come out of Alabama to Washington or to North Carolina, to Mississippi, or to Chicago or to Philadelphia or New York or Baltimore—wherever I think I'm needed most at that time."

"I think they will give the people creative and legitimate channels through which to express their discontent, and if the Nixon Administration and the Con in the ghettos.

"I venture to say that if strong, able-bodied men were given jobs and every American was made to feel that he was a part of the mainstream of life in this country, if welfare was not so dehumanizing, if the country was not sick with racism, then we would not have this problem existing at all.

"It is the Federal Government's job, more than any other institution, to remove the obstacles."

On the "Committee of 100" in Washington: "This will probably be around the anniversary date of the Poor People's Campaign when we will go again to the agencies



RALPH DAVID ABERNATHY
... sees 'difficult period'

gress would act forthrightly on these problems, I think that would certainly lessen the tension which is found of the Government and the Cabinet and present our demands.

"We are going to lift from the broader goals some specific goals that we feel are vitally important . . . goals that are achievable even through this session of the Congress . . .

On reports of internal dissension: "I've answered that question over and over again, and I really feel that it does not deserve another answer. If there is any conflict within the ranks of SCLC, certainly I am unaware of it, and I haven't found anybody on the staff or the board of SCLC who is aware of any internal conflict whatsoever. The only conflict I ever hear about is something I read about in the newspaper."

On integration vs. black separatism: "I believe in an integrated society . . . I do not believe that black people must abandon all their institutions and go over to the white institutions. The only way that we can build the beloved community that I envision is through the desegregated society . . . where every man regardless of his previous condition of servitude is respected because of his worth and dignity, his somebodyness, and he is given a chance to participate fully in the society."