

# **Excerpts from the Press Conference Announcing the Poor People's Campaign**

4 December 1967  
Atlanta, Georgia

By Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“Ladies and gentlemen of the press, I’m going to read an opening statement...The Southern Christian Leadership Conference will lead waves of the nation’s poor and disinherited to Washington D.C. next spring to demand redress of their grievances by the United States government and to secure at least jobs or income for all. We will go there, will demand to be heard, and we will stay until America responds. If this means forcible repression of our movement we will confront it, for we have done this before. If this means scorn or ridicule we embrace it, for that is what America’s poor now receive. If it means jail we accept it willingly, for the millions of poor already are imprisoned by exploitation and discrimination. But we hope with growing confidence that our campaign in Washington will receive at first a sympathetic understanding across our nation followed by dramatic expansion of nonviolent demonstrations in Washington and simultaneous protests elsewhere. In short, we will be petitioning our government for specific reforms and we intend to build militant nonviolent actions until that government moves against poverty...”