
67 Civil Rights Movement Heavyweights Back Black Lives Matter

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Members of the U.S. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, one of the most important organizations of the 1960s Civil Rights movement, have expressed their unconditional support for the Black Lives Matter movement, calling on their fellow comrades to continue the decades-long struggle against racism in the United States.

"The reason for today's powerful and persistent insistence that Black Lives Matter is based on the irrefutable evidence throughout American history that Black lives have never mattered," said the letter, signed by 67 delegates from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

The letter was sent to the leading Black Lives Matter group on July 29 and was posted on its website Tuesday. The letter draws connections between the struggle in the 1960s and what the Black Lives Matter movement is facing some 40 years later.

"We in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, SNCC, were part of that long struggle in the 1960s," the SNCC delegates wrote. "The voices of white supremacy insisted that Black lives were not human lives and any claim to human rights was subversive and threatening to the country."

The delegates dismissed as a "deliberate, cynical deception" the notion that the Black Lives Matter movement is a "terrorist group" responsible for attacks on law enforcement. The letter comes just weeks after the movement released its first formal list of demands.

"With their protests and demands, the Movement for Black lives is continuing to exercise their rights, guaranteed to all Americans under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution," the letter states. "We, the still-active radicals who were SNCC, salute today's Movement for Black lives for taking hold of the torch to continue to light

this flame of truth for a knowingly forgetful world!"

The SNCC is a major organization that played a big role in civil rights movement. Its members led the March on Washington that is best remembered by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s iconic "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

"From voter registration drives to Freedom Rides, SNCC paved the way for radical Black organizing and fortified Black communities by demanding and fighting for Black power," Black Lives Matter said in a statement remarking on the letter of support from SNCC.

"The Black Lives Matter Global Network is honored to have SNCC's support. Our leaders and organizers pull from the SNCC playbook often, tethering our intergenerational struggles for Black liberation and justice just as our ancestors did before us," said the movement's co-founder Patrisse Khan-Cullors. "We could not do this work without their sacrifice."

Black Lives Matter is facing the same backlash against its activists that groups like the SNCC and others faced in the 1960s.

Vox reported that a 1964 survey by the American National Election Studies found that 57 percent of people in the U.S. described Black people's actions during the civil rights movement as mostly violent.

Meanwhile a July study by Pew Research Center found that just 43 percent of U.S. citizens support the Black Lives Matter movement, with most of that support coming from Black people.

The support from civil rights-era heavyweights comes after some pro-Israel groups expressed anger over the Black Lives Matter movement's support for Palestine as expressed in its recently released platform, where the group called Israel an apartheid state and demanded that the U.S. stop funding its "genocide" against Palestinians.

The Black Lives Matter movement was born out of a viral hashtag following a jury's acquittal of George Zimmerman for the 2012 shooting death of Trayvon Martin.

It has since evolved into a movement against police killings of Black people, taking off following the high-profile cases of Eric Garner, Michael Brown and Freddie Gray, all of whom were unarmed.
