A few months before his death, King made an assessment of the struggle for the staff of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference meeting in retreat at Frogmore, South Carolina.

In describing the first phase of the Movement, King pointed out the differences between the expectations of the black participants in the struggle and their white liberal allies and supporters. "Negroes became outraged by blatant inequality. Their ultimate goal was total, unqualified freedom. The majority of the white progressives were outraged by the brutality displayed. Their goal was improvement or limited progression." 12

King felt that where black Americans felt a sense of achievement after every hard-fought victory over some aspect of discrimination, the white liberals felt a sense of completion. Therefore, white resistance began to mount with each attempted move from one plateau to another. "The arresting of the limited forward progress by white resistance revealed the latent racism which is deeply rooted in our society. The short era of widespread goodwill evaporated rapidly." 13

"I must admit," said King, "I'm not totally optimistic. But I cannot accept defeat. . . . our most fruitful course is to stand firm, move forward with aggressive nonviolence, accept disappointments and cling to hope. Our determined refusal not to be stopped will eventually thrust open the door to fulfillment." 14

The attempt on King's part in November, 1967, to prepare the SCLC for the Poor People's Campaign which was scheduled for the spring of 1968, is clearly different in tone from the vibrant call to commitment and high expectation in 1963.

The shadows of an ambivalent past caught up with our efforts on April 4, 1968, and they have been deepening and spreading every since that fateful day when an assassin's bullet wrote finis to the life and effort of a great spirit. What has followed in the wake of that crushing blow to brotherhood has brought us face to face with our past and a disturbing present.

The Disturbing Present

In the 22 years since the Supreme Court decision on segregated education, almost every legal barrier to full participation by blacks in American life has been lowered or removed. Few institutions will publicly declare themselves to be segregated. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 has resulted in more black elected officials in every area of government. But real integration has been successfully thwarted in most areas.

In 1968, the Kouner Commission reported that America was rapidly moving toward two societies, one black, one white. But America had always been at least "two societies."

In 1903, W.E.B. DuBois said that the problem of the 20th